

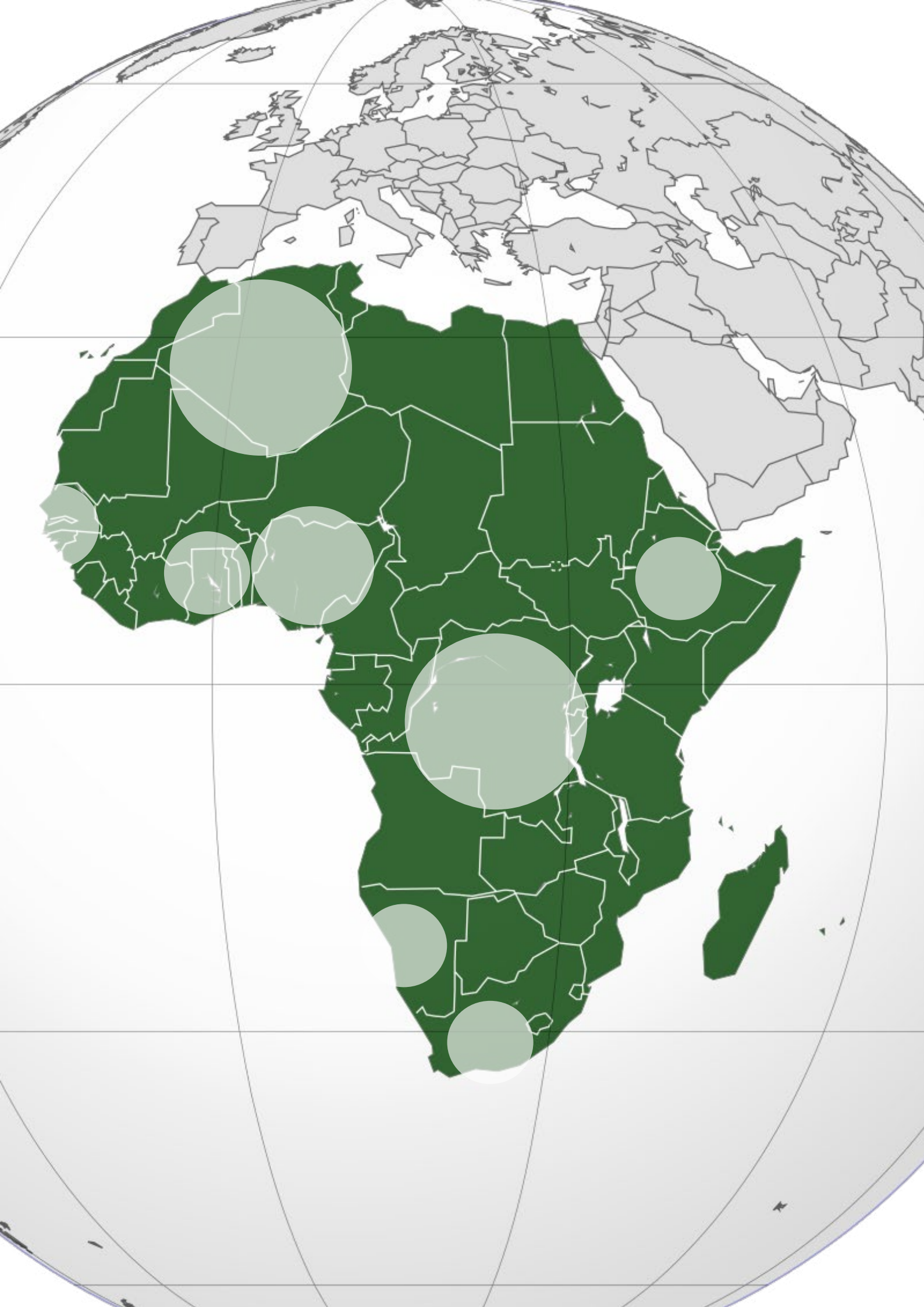


# Drilling and Draining Africa

## Fossil Fuels Hotspots in Africa

This document highlights the growing infringement on the rights of community people by extractive companies across Africa. It depicts the growing importance of the struggles by community people.

The report highlights selected fossil fuel hotspots across Africa. It brings to the spotlight, areas of oppressions and what some term “ethnocide.” This mapping will be useful for the media, activists, CSOs and CBOs who are fighting against harmful extractive activities. Below are the hotspots.





## ALGERIA

Algeria is the largest country in both Africa and the Arab world with total landmass of 2.382 million square kilometers.<sup>1</sup> The country is rich in natural resources and is an OPEC member. It has the 11<sup>th</sup> largest proven reserves of natural gas in the world<sup>2</sup>, is the sixth-largest gas exporter, and has the third largest reserves of shale gas. It also ranks sixteenth in proven oil reserves. Algeria recorded the largest gas production in 2020—reaching 85 billion standard cubic meters in output.

Skikda, Aran and Oran, are the three cities in Algeria that serve as export terminals and host major refineries in the country—being the major source of oil pollution in the Algerian waters. Effluents, leaks from the onshore refineries, discharges and runoffs from oil export terminals cause the death of aquatic lives and the loss of livelihood in the area.

The impacts of continuous extraction of oil and gas by multinational companies such as Skikda LNG has led to: respiratory ailments, air pollution, water pollution and deaths has led to:

- respiratory ailments
- air pollution
- water pollution and
- Deaths

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

In DRC, oil and gas production is limited to the Coast Basin, yielding 25,000 barrels per day of offshore production, all of which are exported. There are three major oil companies conducting extractive activities in the DRC—**Perenco** (conducting offshore oil extraction in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Muanda in Kongo Central), **Total**, and **DRC parastatal Cohydro**, which is conducting exploratory and preliminary extractive operations in Eastern DRC.

The country has estimates of total petroleum reserves as high as three billion barrels, natural gas and methane reserves exceeding 10 billion cubic meters, and a comparatively low production rate ranging between 20,000 and 25,000 barrels per day.

The government of the DRC intends to expand oil production by making licenses obtainable for bigger foreign oil companies to commence activities in the Virunga.

The Virunga National Park, located in the Ituri region of the country, is home to endangered mountain gorillas and other species. Increased explorative activities in the area would result to more loss of biodiversity. **SOCO international** is one of the companies drilling and extracting oil from the Virunga Park.

The park is economically valuable to about 50,000 people who undertake fishing activities in the park. It stands as one of the world's most extraordinary natural places, Africa's oldest national park, a World Heritage Site and a RAMSAR wetland of international importance. This park is protected by the Congolese and international law.

Oil exploration in Virunga National Park<sup>3</sup> by SOCO International Plc., has resulted in the displacement of community people. Other impacts include: biodiversity loss (wildlife, agro-diversity), oil spills, deforestation and loss of vegetation cover, air pollution, desertification/drought, loss of landscape/aesthetic, land

1 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1207844/largest-countries-in-africa-by-area/>

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_natural\\_gas\\_proven\\_reserves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_natural_gas_proven_reserves)

3 [https://www.banktrack.org/project/oil\\_exploration\\_virunga\\_national\\_park/pdf](https://www.banktrack.org/project/oil_exploration_virunga_national_park/pdf)



degradation, water pollution/ decreasing water (physico-chemical, biological) quality and large-scale disturbance of hydro and geological systems.

## ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is endowed with energy resources such as coal, biomass, solar energy and natural gas. Oil and gas in Ethiopia have a history a little over a century.

The **Ogaden basin**, one of the oldest regions for oil exploration, covers 135,000 square miles (350,000 square kilometers). It is believed to hold massive reserves of natural gas and crude oil. The first actual exploration of oil and gas in Ethiopia took place in **1915** and 43 wells were drilled in the Ogaden region between 1950 and 1995.

The company leading the development of natural gas and crude oil in the Ogaden basin is the **Chinese owned company Poly-GCL**. There are reports of Ethiopians who live in proximity to the oil/gas, extraction sites bleeding from their noses and mouths before dropping dead because of a mystery sickness. The sickness is suspected to be caused by toxic waste dumping from Chinese oil drilling company, POLY-GCL—a joint venture between state-owned China POLY Group Corporation and privately owned Hong Kong-based Golden Concord Group.<sup>4</sup>

4 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8062709/Villagers-Ethiopia-bleeding-noses-mouths-dropping-dead.html>

5 <https://www.nsenergybusiness.com/projects/area-1-mozambique-lng-project/>

6 Energy report on Mozambique project areas <https://www.nsenergybusiness.com/projects/area-1-mozambique-lng-project/>

## GHANA

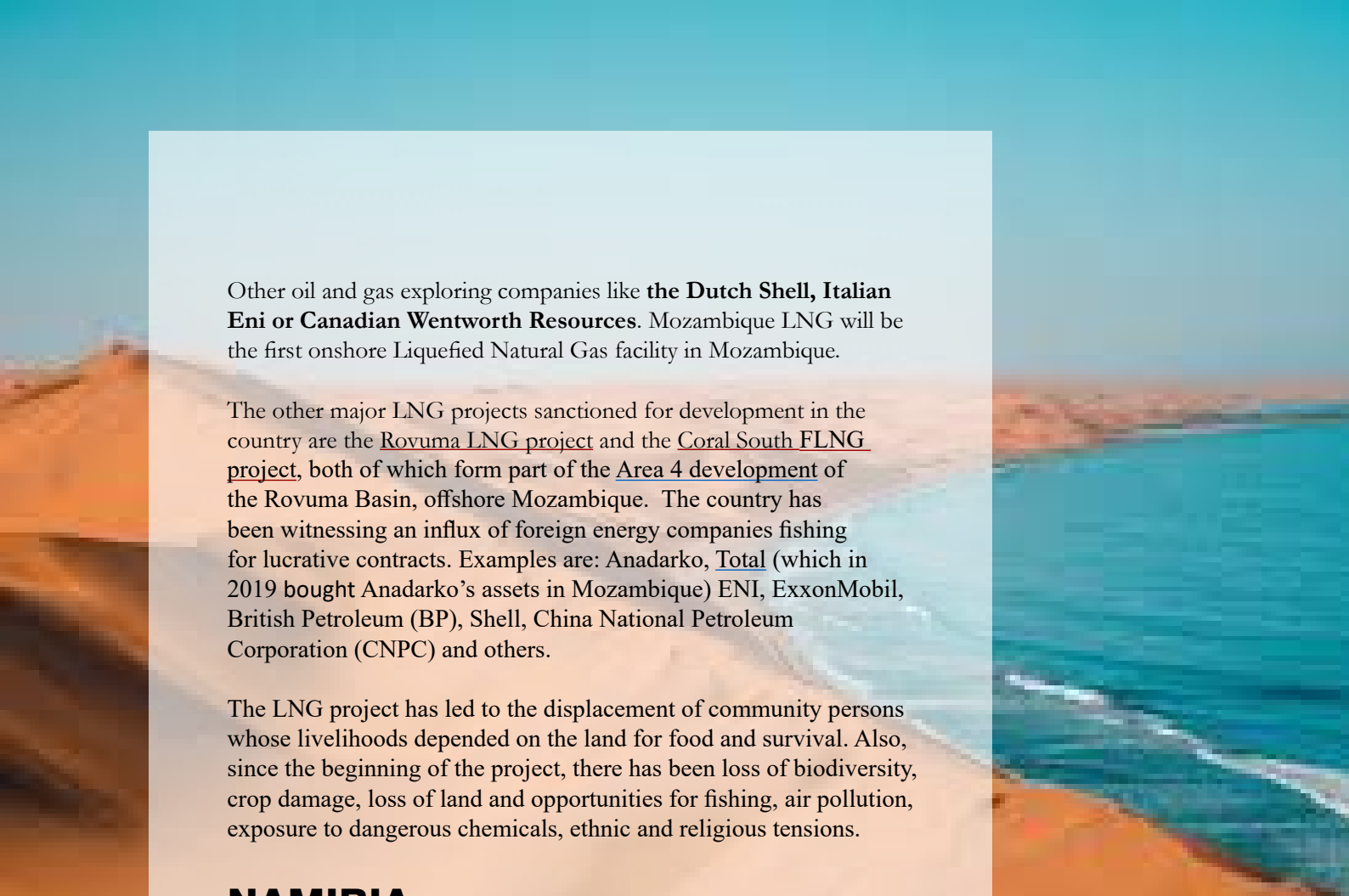
Offshore oil in Ghana was discovered in 2007 and extraction began in 2011 with the operation of oil companies like **Tullow oil, Sabre Oil and gas, Kosmos Energy** and others. Ghana is already experiencing oil pollution which has restricted fishing zones and increased sea traffic among other negative impacts. Activities on the Jubilee Oil field, located 60km, between the Deepwater Tano and West Cape three Points blocks, have affected the area adversely. The impacts include again:

- biodiversity loss (wildlife, agro-diversity)
- noise pollution
- oil spills
- land and water pollution
- fishing restrictions
- loss of livelihood

## MOZAMBIQUE

In Mozambique, **Cabo Delgado gas project** is an enormous project for the extraction and export of natural gas. Discoveries of gas and oil deposits, in the northern region of Mozambique (Cabo Delgado, by the Rovuma Basin), triggered the interest of several fossil fuels multinationals.

This brought about the **LNG project**<sup>5</sup> which is led by **Texan company Anadarko** alongside many both of which form part of the Area 4 development of the Rovuma Basin, offshore Mozambique<sup>6</sup>. Since then Mozambique has seen an influx of foreign fossil fuels companies fishing for lucrative contracts: Anadarko, Total – which in 2019 **bought** Anadarko's assets in Mozambique – ENI, ExxonMobil, BP, Shell, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and others.



Other oil and gas exploring companies like **the Dutch Shell, Italian Eni or Canadian Wentworth Resources**. Mozambique LNG will be the first onshore Liquefied Natural Gas facility in Mozambique.

The other major LNG projects sanctioned for development in the country are the Rovuma LNG project and the Coral South FLNG project, both of which form part of the Area 4 development of the Rovuma Basin, offshore Mozambique. The country has been witnessing an influx of foreign energy companies fishing for lucrative contracts. Examples are: Anadarko, Total (which in 2019 bought Anadarko's assets in Mozambique) ENI, ExxonMobil, British Petroleum (BP), Shell, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and others.

The LNG project has led to the displacement of community persons whose livelihoods depended on the land for food and survival. Also, since the beginning of the project, there has been loss of biodiversity, crop damage, loss of land and opportunities for fishing, air pollution, exposure to dangerous chemicals, ethnic and religious tensions.

## **NAMIBIA**

The regions of Okavango East and Okavango West are home to 200,000 people, including the indigenous San making a living from farming, fishing and tourism. The region plays host to diverse landscapes sustained by the Okavango Delta—a home to more than 1,000 plant and 500 bird species. The Delta is also a wetland paradise for mammals and home to the continent's largest remaining elephant herds. ReconAfrica, an oil and gas company headquartered in Canada, is currently drilling wells in the sedimentary Okavango Basin of Namibia with a target of hitting 100 wells in their 25-year production license period. The renowned Okavango Delta is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It should be protected and conserved from every form of extractive activity capable of destroying the rich biodiversity of the area. ReconAfrica's operational area is home to the Okavango people who are made up of five people groups mostly making their living through fishing, cattle herding, and farming pearl millet, maize and sorghum. The impacts of ReconAfrica's exploration activities include: destruction of biodiversity hotspot, land grabbing, water pollution, displacement of community people, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity and crisis.<sup>7</sup>

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7 <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2021/05/12/okavango-oil-drilling-and-tragedy-africa>

## NIGERIA

In Nigeria, one common denominator in the oil and gas industry is the extent of environmental degradation and pollution in all areas of oil extraction and exploration in the Niger Delta. The oil industry has been in business for 64 years with non-stop oil spills and gas flares which has led to loss of biodiversity, air pollution, and loss of livelihoods, human rights violations, land dispossession, respiratory ailments (asthma, bronchitis), visual challenges and death. The degradation of the [Ogoni](#) environment in the Niger Delta is just one out of many cases. Some of the multinationals responsible include:

- Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC),
- Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NOAC) and
- Nigeria Petrochemical and Refining Company, a subsidiary of NNPC.

The Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) affirms the illegality of gas flaring. Nonetheless, the Act creates a series of exemptions which ensures that the same gas flare regime continues literally unchecked and empowers the government to give companies permission to flare. The PIA also does not state a definite date for ending [gas flaring](#), given the health and environmental challenges associated with it.<sup>1</sup>

## SENEGAL

In the Ngadiaga area, the Thiès of Senegal, sits a gas field consisting of 11 wells with a production capacity of 30,000 cubic meters per day. On 19 December 2020, a fire broke out at the Dieleuk Peul site following a natural gas eruption during a drilling operation in the Ngadiaga area (an onshore platform in the Thiès region of Senegal).

The well continued to burn for several days. The Senegalese authorities claimed to have secured the site which is surrounded by several villages. Such fire incidences are prevalent with oil production and leads to environmental degradation, loss of livelihood, loss of biodiversity, displacement of community people amongst other adverse impacts.

## SOUTH AFRICA

Transnet Pipelines experienced a massive oil spill into the Umbilo River in Durban. The river runs through a natural reserve, several communities, and the Durban harbour. The oil pollution resulted to: the fight against oil and gas exploration by fishers, coastal communities and others. In September 2022, the activists have used litigation and peaceful protests as means of halting the exploration activities. The impacts of the oil exploration activities have included:

- loss of livelihood for fishers and community people;
- displacement of community people;
- air pollution; water pollution and;
- loss of marine and aquatic organisms, same experiences, and outcomes in Capetown and Somkhele.

This document stresses the fact that all forms of extractive activities have one negative component or the other on the environment. The commonalities amongst the nations impacted by the extractive industry are environmental degradation, water, air and land pollution, community displacements/land grabbing, destruction of lives and properties, loss of livelihoods, loss of biodiversity, food insecurity, emergence of strange diseases, communal clashes/violence, oil-wars as well as human rights violations.

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8 <https://ndac.africa/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Niger-Delta-Convergence-Manifesto.pdf>



See Hotspots of Conflicts – HOMEF (2021) Fossil Fuels driven community conflicts in Africa. <https://homef.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/hotspot-of-conflict.pdf>



Oilwatch Africa is a network of resistance to the impacts of fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal) industries on people's and their environments. It is the African unit of Oilwatch International.

Oilwatch's creation was inspired by the need to develop global strategies for the communities affected by oil activities, support their resistance processes, and work for sustainability and collective rights. We facilitate the exchange of information on oil activities in each country, the different resistance movements and the international campaigns against specific companies.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

### Halt the expansion

Oilwatch aims to stop the expansion of fossil fuel activities that are degrading to the environment

### Self determination

We recognise people's rights to self-determination as one of the main solutions to environmental problems

### Local Action

Our members act at the local level and join together at the international level to protect the environment

### Network of Resistance

We are a network of resistance to the negative impacts of the fossil fuels industry

### Network of Support

The network exists to support the independent monitoring of the devastations and violations of fossil fuel activities.

### Debate

Oilwatch promotes the debate on issues around oil activities such as human rights, climate change, etc.

### Solidarity in diversity

We build solidarity and promote a common identity in the peoples of the south

### Decentralization

Oilwatch works as a movement, allowing us to combine our energies and preserve our identity

### Moratorium

We promote moratoriums to new projects of hydrocarbons extraction