THE KILLING FIELDS OF LOLIONDO

This report explores the negative impacts on Maasai communities, wildlife, and their shared habitat of the Ortello Business Company, a United Arab Emirates hunting company operating in the Loliondo Game Controlled Area in northern Tanzania. A compilation of information gathered by the Maasai Environmental Resource Coalition (MERC), the report highlights environmental and human rights concerns, as well as the desperation of the Maasai people of Loliondo and adjacent areas in their efforts to be heard. The report calls for urgent action by the Tanzanian government and the international community to avert the looming ecological crisis in Loliondo. It also calls for a more in-depth, scientific examination of the important issues presented.

The experiences recounted herein are of those who have been most acutely affected–Maasai community members whose voices are so often neither heard nor heeded, like so many other indigenous peoples worldwide.

Background: Tanzania and Loliondo

Located on the coast of eastern Africa, Tanzania encompasses varied climates, diverse wildlife populations, and a host of natural wonders including the snow-capped Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain, and the famed Ngorongoro Crater. Tanzania has one of the highest concentrations of biodiversity on the continent and is known as a *mega-diversity* country, in the company of others such as Brazil and Indonesia. Serengeti and Kilimanjaro National Parks, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and the Selous Game Reserve are designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO's Convention for the Protection of World Culture and Heritage. Serengeti-Ngorongoro, Lake Manyara National Park, and East Usambara are Biosphere Reserves.

Tanzania is party to a number of international and regional legal instruments involving conservation and wildlife protection. These include the Africa Convention for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention

on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and the Bonn Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Animals of 1979. Tanzania is host to a number of critically endangered, endangered, and vulnerable animals. Black rhinoceros and Pemba flying fox are among the critically endangered. The wild dog, African elephant, and Aders' duiker are among the endangered. The lion and cheetah are among the vulnerable.

Tanzania has a long history of various conservation schemes; fully or partially protected areas constitute nearly 14 percent of the country's land. The creation of the different categories of protected areas began during the colonial era in late 1930s and continues to this day, as dictated by the country's conservation needs.

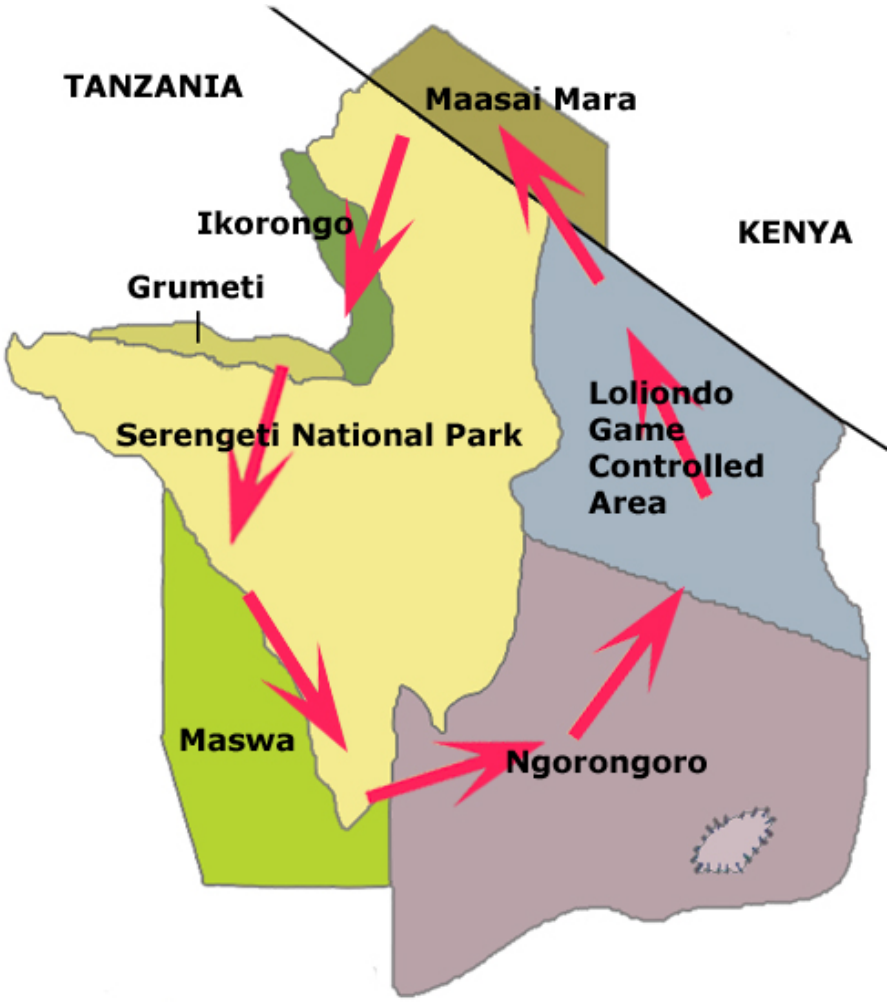
For several years, Tanzania has been engaged in a difficult process of transitioning out of a colonial approach to wildlife and its preservation. Commonly known as the *"fences and fines"* model, the practical objective of this approach was to separate wildlife from native communities to the greatest extent possible, operating on the assumption that human activity and animal life are incompatible. Recognizing the need to amalgamate conservation and human development objectives, the Tanzanian government is now working on ways to involve communities in wildlife conservation and management to ensure that community members, most of whom have inadequate access to basic services, directly benefit from the utilization of wildlife and environmental resources located on their traditional lands.

In the case of Maasai areas, the environmental and wildlife conservation that has benefited the national economy so greatly can be directly attributed to centuries of indigenous preservation practices. The Maasai way of life is indeed compatible with conservation objectives, and had the government and others in the environmental and political realms, both nationally and internationally, learned this lesson long ago, many conflicts, both ongoing and past, could have been avoided. It is precisely the Maasai way of life that has led to the preservation and prosperity of wildlife and their habitats, which provide hundreds of millions of tourism dollars to Tanzania, while numerous other areas have suffered damaging environmental degradation. As this report will demonstrate, this lesson has yet to be adequately learned.

Today, the majority of the wildlife of Kenya and Tanzania is found within the Maasai cross-border belt, a continuous region comprising the southern part of Kenya and the northern part of Tanzania. Within this area, the Ngorongoro-Serengeti-Maasai Mara "biosphere reserve," totaling an estimated 2,305,100 hectares, is considered by wildlife and ecology experts as one of the most

important ecosystems on the continent in terms of biodiversity concentration and vastness of the natural habitat. This ecosystem is actually only a small portion of the larger Maasai cross-border conservation belt, which runs from Amboseli-Tsavo National Park-Mt. Kilimanjaro ecosystem to the northern end of Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem. The major protected areas in the Maasai cross-border belt include: Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mkomazi, Lake Natron, Ngorongoro, and Serengeti in Tanzania, and Tsavo, Amboseli, Lake Natron, and Maasai Mara protected areas in Kenya.

Loliondo is located in Maasai ancestral lands in the northern part of Tanzania along the common border with Kenya. It borders the Ngorongoro highlands to the south, Serengeti National Park to the west, and the Maasai Mara Game Reserve in Kenya to the north. The Loliondo Game Controlled Area (LCGA) encompasses an estimated 4,000 square kilometers, roughly a third the area of Serengeti National Park. There is no physical barrier separating the LGCA from these other protected areas; it is a continuous ecosystem. LGCA was initially established in 1959 as a Game Reserve by the British colonial government under the then Fauna Conservation Ordinance, Section 302, a legal instrument the colonial authorities used to set aside portions of land for wildlife conservation. The legal status of the reserve was later changed to that of a Game Controlled Area to allow for commercial trophy hunting, a status that defines LGCA today and haunts the wildlife of the region.



Loliondo forms an important part of the

semi-annual migratory route of millions of wildebeests and other ungulates northward into the Maasai Mara Game Reserve and Amboseli National Park in Kenya between April and June, and returning southward later in the year. The survival of the Ngorongoro-Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem and the wildlife it supports is inextricably linked to the existence and health of Loliondo and other surrounding communal Maasai lands in Tanzania and Kenya. Similarly, the survival of the Maasai people is dependent upon the protection and preservation of their traditional land for economic viability and cultural reproduction. Land to the Maasai is the foundation for their spirituality and the base for personal and collective identity.

History of OBC in Tanzania

OBC is undoubtedly involved in very unethical practices–killing wildlife and threatening and/or bribing people to keep quiet. Police, wildlife authorities, politicians, and community village leaders have all fallen into this trap. So, who will save Loliondo's endangered wildlife?

Kairung Ole Saipere, Loliondo resident

Although government-sanctioned hunting activities in Tanzania date back to the nineteenth century, the industry witnessed dramatic growth in the 1990s when the government shifted from state-controlled to market-driven economic policies. Between 1965 and 1989, for instance, there were only an estimated 47 blocks set aside for hunting. However, between 1990 and 1997, the number increased to 140, nearly tripling in just seven years. This sharp increase in the number of hunting blocks reflects the importance the government of Tanzania had come to attach to commercial trophy hunting and to the hunting industry as a whole. Today, Tanzania attracts hunters from Europe, North America, Asia, and the Middle East.

The administration of former president Ali Hassan Mwinyi granted the entire Loliondo Game Controlled Area (LGCA) as a hunting concession to the Ortello Business Company Limited (OBC), a game-hunting firm based in the United Arab Emirates. The government licensed OBC for hunting activities and allocated it hunting blocks on January 1, 1993. OBC's license permits hunting of wild game and trapping of some live animals to be flown to the UAE. The people of Loliondo were not party to this agreement and, in fact, were not meaningfully consulted.

OBC is owned by Brigadier Mohamed Abdul Rahim Al Ali, deputy minister of defense of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and his associates. Brigadier Al Ali

is believed to be a member of, or closely linked to, the royal family of the UAE. He is known locally as "Brigadier," a name feared throughout Loliondo.

The history of OBC in Tanzania first garnered attention in 1992 when Brigadier Al Ali submitted a formal request to president Mwinyi's government for exclusive concessionary rights over Loliondo Game Controlled Area for a period of 20 years in exchange for an unspecified fee. In the proposal, Brigadier Al Ali outlined the benefits of his operations in Loliondo to the central and district government, the local communities, and wildlife conservation in the Serengeti-Maasai Mara-Ngorongoro ecosystem. "The vision," the proposal claimed, "is to demonstrate to all the seriousness that the Arab world is giving to wildlife conservation…" The proposal promised to deliver what other hunting operations had not done in the country's centuries-old industry. Among the most important objectives of the proposal were:

- To protect and conserve an area contiguous to the Serengeti National Park, which is essential to the long-term survival of the ecosystem and its migration.
- To develop a new role and image for the Arab world as regards wildlife conservation, management, and human development.
- To improve local peoples' access to revenue, development facilities, and to create employment.
- To generate revenues for the central and district governments, payable on an annual basis.

The OBC now stands accused of self-contradiction and violation of legal and moral obligations in virtually all the above areas, resulting instead in environmental destruction; unfulfilled promises and economic exploitation of the local communities; and direct undermining of the stability of the region's wildlife and natural habitats.

Sources in the central government and Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) told MERC that the application did not go through normal channels for approval or consideration, nor did it receive any expert evaluation. Instead, it was hurriedly approved, and hunting licenses were issued following instructions from the office of the President. Since its inception, OBC's operations in Tanzania are widely believed to have involved large-scale government corruption. It is unclear if former president Mwinyi himself has a stake in OBC, but it seems clear that the corporation enjoys protection from senior authorities in Tanzania. A joint team of Tanzania's elite paramilitary wing, the Full Force Unit (FFU), and members of the UAE army provide the hunting company with security, and a

significant Tanzanian police presence is the norm. The UAE royal family has given the Tanzanian army a passenger aircraft and has provided the Wildlife Division with vehicles to reciprocate the Tanzanian government's continued protection of OBC's interests in Maasailand.

After five years, stakeholders, including the central government, the district council, Maasai communities, and OBC were supposed to review and consider renewal of the contract between OBC and the government. No renegotiation occurred; Maasai community members were merely informed that OBC will remain, and the government had sealed a deal.

The desperation of the Maasai over continued marginalization and alienation from their land and resources is captured in the following words of an elder to whom MERC spoke on July 23, 2001, at Ololosokuwan village:

The government and, indeed, justice are not on our side. We have been forced to accept things as they are because we have no power to stand up against this Arab.

In light of a recommendation by a 1994 parliamentary commission charged with investigating the practices of OBC, the Tanzanian government briefly revoked OBC's license in 1999 because it was flying too many animals out of the country. However, the license was reissued in 2000 and will not expire until 2005.

Recording Our Voices: OBC and the Maasai of Loliondo

I was born here, grew up here, and I am now 60 years old. Are we not the owners of this land? And why do we have no voice?

Sianta Ole Nainyo, Ilusien/Loliondo resident

There is no justice here... OBC treats us like criminals in our own traditional lands.

Siamanta ene Nonkiito, Ilusien/Loliondo resident

Is this what you call civilization? Killing innocent animals?

Well, nature will have to judge you by your actions.

Kailol Ole Pere, Olosira Lukunya/Loliondo resident

These are the voices of the Maasai of Loliondo, speaking for themselves and for their wildlife.

Seven associates of the Maasai Environmental Resource Coalition, all but one of whom are Maasai, interviewed over 300 Maasai in various villages in Loliondo. Fieldwork took place from July 20 to September 15, 2001. MERC representatives also interviewed church personnel, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), officials from Serengeti and Maasai Mara parks, wildlife conservationists, consumptive and non-consumptive tour operators, present and former OBC employees, and Maasai residing across the Kenyan border.

The main concerns expressed by the majority of the people interviewed by MERC were:

- OBC's unrestricted capture and indiscriminate killing of wildlife.
- OBC's highhandedness and interference with regard to Maasai grazing rights; and
- Continued alienation of the Maasai from their ancestral lands by the central government.

The government of Tanzania does not recognize Maasai traditional land rights nor their right to full access and control of the natural resources therein.

The Maasai of Loliondo have for a long time accused OBC of grave human rights abuses and environmental violations. They have described acts of intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, and even torture by OBC officials and security forces, as well as by Tanzanian police and military in the name of OBC; brazen violations of grazing and land rights; and wanton environmental destruction and imminent extermination of wildlife. They have seen leaders who once opposed OBC's practices corrupted and bought-off. They have witnessed OBC officials trying to convert them to Islam, with further instruction to abandon Maasai culture. This exploitation of the Maasai's lack of sophistication and impoverished situation to abandon their faith, culture, and lifestyle for a religion they do not understand has been a source of serious concern for traditional and religious leaders in the area. One church, which has been in Loliondo for over 20 years, Kanisa Kitakatifu ya Kiinjilisti ya Kilutherani (the Holy Lutheran Evangelical Church) has continued to express not only concerns over the "the senseless and indiscriminate killing of wildlife" but also decried the "long-term negative impacts" of OBC's activities on the traditional belief system and religious faith of the Maasai people. "The act of buying people into a faith defies the teachings of any religion and is a deliberate act to destroy the Maasai people," said one church leader we spoke to in Loliondo. The church has already raised the matter with its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, and at the time of compiling this report a plan of action was under consideration.

It was clear from these interviews that government institutions such as TANAPA, which has a clear mandate to deal with OBC, nongovernmental organizations, political leaders and business interests, were intimidated by the thought of questioning OBC's operations. One ecotourism operator in Loliondo wrote: "…we cannot provide you with more information concerning OBC. We hope you will understand that it is imperative that we remain on good terms with the government for the sake of our business."

Not surprisingly, therefore, many Maasai were hesitant to talk with MERC about OBC for fear of retribution. They said OBC operates like a separate arm of the central government. Many in Loliondo believe OBC is even more powerful than the government. The Maa word for "the Arab", *Olarrabui*, is often used to refer Brigadier Al Ali, and by extension OBC. Whether referring Brigadier Al Ali personally, his proxies in the area or OBC, the word *Olarrabui* has become synonymous with power, authority, brutality, fear, and entities larger than life. The psychological implications of this situation on the local people are summed in the words of one Maasai elder we spoke to at Olopiri village, 12 miles from OBC's main camp in Loliondo: "Those with power use it to dominate and oppress those without. Power is like poison; it blinds the lenses of justice and corrupts wisdom."

Before going further with the experiences of the Maasai at the hands of OBC, it is useful to first look at the destructive "hunting" practices Loliondo residents and others described repeatedly to MERC, as well as their overt environmental impacts.

Hunting Practices and Environmental Impacts Fire Movement-Control Technique

Loliondo Game Controlled Area's proximity to Serengeti National Park was not lost on Brigadier Al Ali in his quest for long-term hunting interests in Loliondo. He clearly points this out in his proposal to the government:

> Loliondo is to the east side of Serengeti National Park, which makes it an important dispersal area for the Serengeti wildebeest and zebra migration, as well as a holding area important to the resident population of wildlife.

Ten years later, it has become evident that OBC had a long-term agenda for exploiting the high concentration of wildlife in Loliondo. OBC's hunting operations are guaranteed by the continuous flow of wildlife from the Serengeti National Park, Maasai Mara, and surrounding areas. According to a 1994 report of the International Union for Nature Conservancy (IUCN) on Serengeti

National Park, OBC "was taking advantage of migratory patterns of wildlife coming out of Serengeti National Park." The report has repeatedly been corroborated by the Maasai who say they witness on a daily basis OBC's unabated exploitation of wildlife.

According to residents of Loliondo, OBC illegally uses fire to control the movement of wildlife within and around the Loliondo hunting concession. Additionally, during the peak hunting season, OBC often restricts Maasai access to pasturelands in the northwestern part of LGCA and at the common border known as the "triangle point," where the Serengeti, Maasai Mara, and LGCA borderlines meet.

MERC learned that fires are usually started at the beginning of the prime hunting season, between June and December, to coincide with the great ungulate migration–wildebeests, zebras, elands, hartebeests, giraffes, buffaloes and plains game. Park authorities from Maasai Mara Game Reserve, Serengeti National Park, and TANAPA confirmed to MERC that OBC ignites fires along the common border area to prevent animals from crossing into Kenya, where commercial hunting is banned, and instead forces them to retreat to hunting blocks. A long stretch of fire is usually started on the northern end of the hunting concession area to delay the crossing, creating high concentrations of wildlife in Loliondo and the northeast section of Serengeti. Since so much resident wildlife has already been killed and captured, this artificially created abundance of animals is said to have become the most important factor in OBC's hunting operations. These large numbers of animals make hunting very easy for OBC and it's guests.

The halted migration of large herds of plains game also attracts increased numbers of carnivores–lions, cheetahs, leopards, hyenas, hunting dogs and jackals. This provides OBC with an opportunity to capture large cats–particularly the much favored lion, cheetah, and leopard–and transport them to UAE. According to some OBC workers, at least 70 lions, 28 cheetahs, and 17 leopards were captured and transported to UAE between June and December of 2000, while an estimated 23 lions were killed after they were discovered to be either in poor health or relatively old. One of the victims of these killings was a male lion that was considered unfit because it had sustained serious injuries from another lion during a territorial fight.

Once the fires have subsided and new vegetation emerges, some animals choose to remain in Loliondo for greener pastures. A continuous supply of wildlife for hunting and live capture is thus assured until the next migration season.

MERC associates in the area in 2001 witnessed widespread use of fire from mid-June to late July. In an effort to avoid fires spreading along the north-to-northeastern part of LGCA, ungulate herds in Loliondo ready to cross into Maasai Mara in mid-June retreated southward before re-entering the Serengeti National Park. The animals did not cross into Maasai Mara until late July through early August and were eventually forced to change their point of entry by retreating into Serengeti and entering Maasai Mara from near the Sand River border gate. According to Maasai Mara officials, such interference causes congestion problems that negatively impact the area's vegetation. The officials expressed very serious concerns over current methods of wildlife hunting in Tanzania, which clearly violates international legal instruments, in particular, the Bonn Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Animals of 1979, to which both Tanzania and Kenya are signatories. They observed that the management of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve could not try to seek a solution to this problem because it was beyond the scope of its mandate. Rather, according to one official, "the Kenyan government and international community should take an interest and seek an urgent solution before the region's wildlife is completely depleted."

It is worth pointing out that as a result of this work, the government of Kenya has taken an interest in the matter and is now planning to petition the East African Community, a new economic block for Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, to intervene over OBC's operations. Troubled by the recent revelations of OBC activities, Joe Kioko, the Kenya Wildlife Service Director, told the East African on February 18, 2002 that there was "need to harmonize wildlife conservation in areas that run astride our common border; and in order to protect the migratory species shared by the two countries."

Bait and Capture Operations

Baiting is a hunting practice that circumvents the need for long searches for wildlife, especially big cats (lion, leopard, and cheetah), and hyenas. A common form of baiting used by tourist hunters entails using carcasses to lure animals into traps. In Loliondo, the scenario is a bit more complicated. In addition to carcasses, OBC reportedly digs artificial watering holes and small dams to lure large numbers of mammals and even birds for easy shooting. Many residents contend that OBC's hunting is killing such a large number of animals that the company deliberately sets up salt-licks and pumps water to lure wildlife from the Serengeti and other areas. They believe that, whereas the negative impacts of OBC's hunting on wildebeest and zebra might not be detectable immediately

because of their large numbers, Thompson gazelle, impala, giraffe, hartebeest, topi, and buffalo populations may have long been destabilized.

According to Loliondo residents, OBC relies heavily on small dams during the dry season to entice large numbers of thirsty animals. Local guides keep watch and radio to OBC when animals head in the direction of the dams. The hunters rush, take cover before the animals arrive, and then strike with machine guns. According to Mr. Tino Colombo, a former manager at Kleins Camp who was expelled from the country for complaining about OBC, the company uses this practice to hunt species, including wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, impala, waterbuck, and topi, that move in large numbers and exhibit certain predictable feeding and drinking habits. Three Maasai guides working for OBC confirmed this, telling MERC on August 10, 2001 that luring operations are often successful because animals are caught unaware and are shot at close range with automatic guns. They said that hardly a day passes without at least 15–and sometimes up to 45–animals being captured or killed, and referred to the area as "*the killing fields of Loliondo*." They also recalled an incident in early July 2001 when a hunting expedition of five people ambushed a herd of animals trying to drink water from a small natural dam at Oltigomi area (roughly 15 kilometers northwest of Kleins Camp) and killed ten wildebeests and five zebras using AK-47s. The guides said the killing was indiscriminate–among those killed were the very young, the very old, pregnant females, as well as healthy males and females.

Throughout the northern part of LGCA, MERC saw spent bullet cartridges indicative of a high level of hunting activity. Law enforcement officials in Maasai Mara told MERC that the bullets were 34-caliber, used for close ranging shooting at animals as large as buffalo.

Night Hunting

Night hunting is not a new practice in the world of hunting, but it is gaining popularity in some parts of Tanzania. In Loliondo, MERC learned that OBC uses powerful spotlights mounted on vehicles to locate animals at night. Blinded and confused, animals stagger in front of vehicles, making them easy targets. This appears to be an exercise in shooting for fun or practice rather than trophy hunting. According to the Maasai, including former OBC laborers employed during night hunts, this is popular among OBC's guests because they get to shoot animals at close range surrounded by darkness. Of this, the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) said: "JET is informed that there is haphazard killing of wild animals in the area by using remote sensing techniques at night."

Other OBC Practices and Their Impact on Wildlife and the Environment

According to a UN Environmental Program-World Conservation Monitoring Center report about the Serengeti National Park, "A controversial hunting lease to the Loliondo Game Control Area next to the park was granted to a Brigadier of the Dubai Army. The lease is an exclusive permit for ten years and takes advantage of the migratory patterns of wildlife coming out of the park. Reports received from the first hunting season noted the indiscriminate use of machine guns and the taking of non-game species and it is feared that the concession has had a severe impact on wildlife in the area."

Numerous Maasai, park officials, NGOs, and non-consumptive tourism companies reported the wanton killing of wildlife in LGCA. Although Tanzanian law only allows tourist hunters to kill males who are no longer active reproductively, OBC personnel and guests reportedly shoot and capture animals young and old, male and female, lactating and pregnant. Some of the species that the Maasai say they have seen captured include: lion, leopard, cheetah, impala, baboon, velvet monkey, gerenuk, giraffe, hyena, warthog, and bird species, particularly ostrich. In some cases, dead animals are transported in lorries to nearby non-Maasai communities and sold as bush meat, potentially encouraging poaching and an illegal market for such meat. (Maasai do not eat wild game.) Tanzanian law forbids foreign tourist hunting companies from utilizing game for commercial purposes.

OBC has built a three-kilometer all-weather airstrip in LGCA believed to seriously harm the seasonal migration of wildlife between the Serengeti and Maasai Mara. The Tanzanian Association of Environmental Journalists (JET) has questioned "the motive of constructing an airstrip in a game controlled area and an important migratory route for wild animals." MERC witnessed use of the airstrip by UAE military aircraft.

Many Maasai reported repeatedly witnessing larger-sized animals, such as eland, buffalo, giraffe, zebra, and waterbuck, shot with tranquilizers, loaded onto red trucks, transported to OBC camps, and then held until planes fly them elsewhere, presumably to the Middle East. If the tranquilized animal is found to be old or unhealthy, Maasai on numerous occasions have witnessed OBC employees rain bullets into its body. By Maasai rough estimates, from 40 to 100 animals are flown out of the country on a weekly basis. Several workers said that OBC justifies the airlifting of such large numbers of wild animals, saying, "a lot of these animals die on the way because of stress associated with poor transport procedures." This situation was described by three OBC employees as follows:

"…the cage might be too small for the animal but we squeeze it in anyway. We do not know of any person involved in this operation–either loaders or supervisors–who is a professional in any way–some of them are handling a wild animal for the first time in their life." They further pointed out that, based on information from their colleagues involved in the dispatch of animals, there were reports of certain species being more likely to die of such causes than others: the impala, zebra, eland, giraffe and ostriches were particularly vulnerable.

OBC has set up several campsites throughout LGCA. According to some Maasai staff at the camps, captured animals are airlifted one or two times per week. Large military and other planes containing weapons, communication gear, motor vehicles, and other hunting paraphernalia often fly into Loliondo on Tuesdays and Saturdays. After loading, the planes may go through Kilimanjaro International Airport or directly to UAE. According to JET and the Maasai, regardless of the port of exit, the planes are not subject to inspection. Hunting trophies and meat are apparently airlifted together with live animals. Referring to this practice, JET has said it is " surprised why the government is not monitoring flights which take away live animals from Loliondo wildlife enclave to the United Arab Emirates."

The *East African* reported that Kenya could lose vast sums of money in tourism dollars because of the depletion of wildlife along the border and in Maasai Mara. The same animals protected in Kenya are shot along their migratory route in LGCA. OBC's hunting operations also go beyond the confines of LGCA. There are numerous accounts of hunting within the common border and inside Maasai Mara Game Reserve, a clear violation of international boundaries.

In addition to the very serious decline in absolute numbers of animals, some with whom MERC spoke voiced great concern about the degeneration of the genetic lines of certain species. Since hunters target prime, alpha males, genetically inferior males who ordinarily would not reproduce are able to breed, resulting in less than optimum lines of offspring. Because of their territorial nature, this is a particular problem for the lions of Loliondo.

There are also fears that the large-scale hunting of prey has caused predators to turn to domestic animals for food, thus increasing human-animal conflict. Maasai in Ololosokwuan, Kuka, Oltigomi, Olgayanet, Olosira Lukunya, and neighboring areas narrated deadly incidents of lion attacks on livestock and people. Although lions have attacked humans and livestock since time immemorial, the frequency and degree of viciousness of the attacks is reaching worrying proportions. The Maasai believe that this problem is associated with years of being hunted and

diminishing wildlife, both of which have forced the lions to adapt for their own survival. A Maasai elder told MERC at Oiborr Motonyi, north of Ololosokuwan village: " You have to remember that some of these lions have been wounded or escaped capture attempts. As such, their survival instincts will remain alive for a long time to come. They will attack anytime they see a person. But I guess this is a remote thing for those who do not live with the lions in the savannahs to comprehend. But it is reality to us."

OBC has detrimentally impacted the environment in a number of other ways. The company has built a large warehouse at the source of the Olosai River, which is widely believed to interfere with the water supply to both communities and wildlife. The felling of trees is also harming water sources. Furthermore, MERC observed a broken borehole that OBC had drilled next to a cattle dip at Ole Polos village, 100 kilometers north of Loliondo town. This combination could lead to chemical leakage from the dip to the water table, if this has not already occurred, poisoning the drinking water pumped from the ground.

On August 13-15, 2001 MERC witnessed a hunting expedition in LGCA with King Abdullah II of Jordan, accompanied by a very large entourage. Maasai movement during the king's two-day visit was severely curtailed around Oltigomi, Ololsira-Lukunya, and Ololosokwuan areas. Numerous vehicles with radios, a helicopter, and two small planes patrolled the entire area. King Abdullah's entourage used these helicopters and vehicles to herd wildebeest and other large groups of wildlife toward the foot of the hills for easy hunting. For two days, MERC heard gunshots almost continuously from the morning until the late afternoon. Some of the killed animals were loaded onto trucks and taken to OBC camps, while others were loaded onto at least seven trucks and sold to people in nearby communities. It is hard to estimate the number of animals killed by the king's expedition or any other but Maasai believe that at least 60 animals were killed or wounded in the two-day hunting expedition. It is also now known that the OBC workers take advantage of official hunts to kill animals for their own consumption and sale in the neighboring communities. Over the following month, the Maasai encountered many wounded animals, particularly buffalos, zebras, and wildebeests. In fact, MERC associates on two different occasions encountered two wounded buffaloes between Kleins Camp and Ololosokwuan village and were almost attacked by one of them. The animals appeared to be in tremendous pain and were too agitated to move from the road, a common behavior from wounded animals. MERC observed that one of the buffaloes had a shattered front leg, while the other had a wound in the left side of the neck.

Encounters with wounded animals suffering from excruciating pain are a common scene in the hunting fields of Loliondo, particularly during the peak hunting season from June to December. The Maasai narrated stories of animals they have had to spear to death to relieve them of their suffering. On some instances, domestic dogs have come across and killed wild animals too sick to defend themselves. To demonstrate the seriousness of this problem, MERC was shown two two-week-old wildebeest carcasses lying next to each other with the horns barely one meter apart. MERC associates were told that the animals were caught unaware and gunned down by OBC while fighting over females and territory. The posture of the carcasses indicates that the animals were gunned down, devoured by vultures, and left as bones in the same position they were fighting. The Maasai continue to question the reason behind this killing of wildlife and feel justified in terming OBC's operations an "irresponsible destruction of wildlife" in Loliondo.

How much science do people need to tell that there will soon be no quality wildlife left in this regions?

Nkadado Ole Saingeu, resident of Ole Polos, Loliondo

OBC Violations of Maasai Rights

The purpose of this report is two-fold–to highlight the plight of Maasai communities in LGCA, as well as that of the area's wildlife and environment. However, because of the interdependency of all life forms, it is MERC's view that the two are inseparable. The ill treatment of Maasai in Loliondo and the appropriation of their lands to create hunting concessions go hand-in-hand with the environmental harm inflicted by OBC.

The killing of wildlife for sport is in itself an offense to the Maasai worldview. Maasai traditionally believe that the present generations hold all natural resources, including the land, in trust for future generations. The killing of wildlife for pleasure or commercial purposes is not permitted. Maasai believe that trophy hunting leads to greed, over-exploitation of wildlife resources, and often irreversible damage to delicate ecosystems. As was mentioned earlier, today's East Africa owes much of its wildlife prosperity to traditional Maasai conservation practices. This invaluable conservation role has gone largely unappreciated. And worse, in the name of modernity, it continues to be undermined and targeted for elimination.

Many Maasai also feel that tourist hunting jeopardizes a relationship they have developed with wildlife over centuries. Cattle and wildlife have shared water and grass throughout Maasai history; ungulates, smaller animals, and cattle often

graze together freely. In the company of Maasai, the animals feel safe from predators. However, hunting practices used by OBC and other companies have caused wildlife to become unpredictable, hostile, and fearful of all humans. Some predators, especially lions, have become more aggressive due to baiting at watering holes. This practice leads them to attack cattle when they previously would not, as the lions have come to expect food at such places.

The hundreds of Maasai whom MERC interviewed told of arrests, beatings, and psychological torture inflicted on those said to have violated OBC's imposed "grazing restrictions." Tanzanian police harass Maasai for trespassing and illegal grazing activities. OBC security personnel usually make the arrests. In most cases, those detained are not charged but released with a stern warning to other Maasai to observe restrictions. Such harsh treatment has created widespread fear and a sense of helplessness on both sides of the border. The following two incidents are examples of a pattern that is unfortunately all too common in Loliondo.

In July 2000, OBC staff caught two Kenyan Maasai grazing cattle on the Tanzania-Kenya border. The people in this area dread encounters with OBC. (It should be noted that Maasai on the Tanzania-Kenya border regularly cross country lines to graze their cattle. In fact, few people are aware of where the actual borderline is located.) In this particular incident, one man escaped but the other did not. The one captured was physically assaulted and held overnight at an OBC camp. The next day, he was driven to a different village and handed over to the police. He was further beaten for entering Tanzania illegally with his cattle and detained for two months. He was released with a heavy fine only after becoming very ill. Throughout this period, authorities would not tell his family his whereabouts.

In another case, a Loliondo resident attempted to document the negative impacts of OBC's hunting operation. Accompanied by two others, he ventured within one kilometer of an OBC camp to take photographs and to interview people. After taking two photos, the three Maasai were confronted by seven men demanding an explanation of their presence. The three Maasai were then forced into a truck and beaten on the OBC camp premises by security personnel. The two elderly companions of the man taking photographs were released, but he was delivered to the police on trespassing charges. According to several village residents, the man was in police custody for almost two months, being moved from one prison to another before finally being released with a heavy fine and a stern warning that the authorities would monitor his activities lest he engage again in such "illegal activities."

Moreover, people often cannot feel safe even within their own homes. Many Maasai reported incidents of OBC hunting within one mile of their homestead, jeopardizing the security of their children and livestock.

OBC has not only impinged on Maasai grazing rights, the company has attempted to restrict freedom of human movement regardless of the presence of cattle. In 1998, OBC erected a gate on the only road to the northern part of LGCA. They controlled access to the road. Those living north of Loliondo town needed special permission to go through the gate; otherwise, they would have to take a route that was twice as long. The road was finally opened in 1999, after complaints by members of Parliament.

Corruption is widespread in Tanzania in general, and is especially evident in the circumstances surrounding OBC. OBC is reported to have co-opted a number of village leaders previously vocally opposed to their practices. OBC is believed to have rewarded these leaders with money, employment opportunities for relatives, and other benefits. Many such leaders have built large modern houses. Village leaders are also said to enjoy unlimited access to OBC camp managers. In return, these leaders act as the mouthpiece of OBC at the community level. They silence dissenting voices among village members and, when necessary, report them to the police and government authorities for further disciplinary action.

The Tanzanian newspaper *The Guardian* reported that the area's regional commissioner "denied that there was a land dispute between the company and the villagers … saying that the row, between top district leaders, was political." MERC tried to interview the district head of Loliondo but was turned away with a warning not to interfere with OBC operations and to desist from further investigation of problems associated with hunting in Loliondo. Likewise, the Community Resource Management Team, a regional human rights NGO, has been completely stymied by the district and national-level government in their efforts to secure the land sale agreement in a controversial arrangement with a UAE prince.

Numerous mosques have also sprung up in Loliondo in recent years. Maasai report being paid up to US$40 by OBC management to convert to Islam and abandon Maasai traditional beliefs and culture.

OBC can claim a few token benefits to the community, some of them disputed. Several schools have been built and a number of boreholes sunk. But widespread complaints exist of undelivered promises, such as plans to build and complete Loliondo Secondary School and to sink 32 boreholes. When compared, the costs seem to far outweigh the benefits of OBC's presence in Loliondo.

Consumptive Tourism:

General Impacts and Experiences of Maasai and Other Local Communities

OBC in Loliondo is only one example of the tense relationship between indigenous communities and consumptive tourism companies in Tanzania. As stated in the previous sections of this report, the consumptive tourism industry is the main form of wildlife utilization promoted by the Tanzanian government, demonstrated by the increase in hunting concessions from approximately 47 in 1989 to 140 in 1997. Most hunting blocks are within communal lands adjacent to protected areas–a strategy that targets migratory patterns of wild animals to maximize utilization. Some of the major hunting concessions are located next to Serengeti, Taangire, Lake Manyara, Mkomazi, Arusha, Selous, and Maswa protected areas. As expected, the number of hunting expeditions to Tanzania has continued to grow at a staggering rate over the last 10 years, and today, 85 percent of game-controlled areas and communal lands are designated for hunting, while the remaining 15 percent are open to ecotourism operations.

Host communities are rarely, if ever, consulted in any meaningful manner and, even more rarely given real decision-making powers regarding if and how hunting safari companies are to use their land. Agreements are between the company and the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in the central government. The entire process is top-down; hunters have little obligation to local communities.

The central government claims to give 25 percent of its annual intake from tourist hunting operations to the local communities. It is common knowledge that the people on the ground, those who are the real custodians of the land, rarely see the fruits of this 25 percent. District councils use the money for their own plans. Some of it undoubtedly ends up in the wrong pockets. The "benefits" for affected communities are far outweighed by the costs–hunting within miles of their homes, stray bullets that on occasion kill livestock, decimation of wildlife, threats to cultural survival, land appropriation, curtailment of grazing rights, and, in the case of OBC, severe harassment of the population.

Furthermore, overall operations of the hunting industry have continued to cause concern over the misuse and overexploitation of the country and region's wildlife. Many people and NGOs interviewed by MERC pointed out at the lack of transparency and widespread corruption in the process of awarding licenses, allocation of hunting blocks, and, enforcement of hunting regulations. This assertion is corroborated by the Tanzanian Department of Wildlife, which in its 1994 Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management pointed out that, "lack

of transparent methods for allocation of hunting concessions, corruption, and the government's inability to justify large areas devoted to hunting areas" are among the key problems bedeviling the hunting industry in the country.

In the Tarangire National Park area, for instance, a company associated with a former powerful politician has been accused by local communities of capturing leopards and lions for trophies and live export over the last several years. The Department of Wildlife, which favors commercial hunting, has been at loggerheads for some time with the local community for entering into a contract with an ecotourism operation to conduct tours in the area. The government fears that the community's joint venture with the ecotourism operator will undermine hunting activities. As in Loliondo, some local leaders were either threatened or paid off to stop opposing hunting operations in Tarangire. The tour company itself has been threatened with the revocation of its business licenses if it persists in conducting ecotourism activities in areas designated for hunting. The company is facing a similar problem in Isinya, near Mkomazi wildlife preserve, where it also has an agreement with the local Maasai people.

The situation in Tarangire illustrates yet again the sources of conflicts that pit local communities and ecotourism operators on the one hand against the government and the hunting industry on the other. Conflicts of this nature have been reported in many parts of Maasailand including Isinya, Oloonkiito (Longido), Lake Manyara, and Kilimanjaro areas. In all these areas, hunting companies, as well as their hunter-clients, are accused of indiscriminate hunting of wildlife, insensitivity to the rights of the local people and to the overall well-being of the environment.

Allegations of widespread corruption in the field–for example, bribing wildlife rangers to condone violations of legal off-take quotas, allow hunting in the designated locations, and permit the use of proscribed hunting methods–are commonplace. As outlined in the earlier sections of this report, OBC has been accused of conducting hunting activities as far as 15 kilometers inside Serengeti National Park with impunity. This violation of the law is common practice throughout the hunting industry. For instance, local communities in Tarangire and Mkomazi areas told MERC that hunting expeditions often venture deep into the parks in search of wildlife that is increasingly becoming scarce in the designated hunting concessions because of depletion.

The misconduct of the hunting industry in Tanzania even ignores territorial sovereignty. Kenya wildlife officials have expressed concerns over the violation of international boundaries in pursuit of wildlife by Tanzania-based hunting

companies. The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) cites two dramatic incidents to demonstrate the threats of hunting operations to wildlife not only in Tanzania but the region as a whole. The first incident occurred in 1995. Four bull elephants, subjects of a 20-year study in Amboseli National Park by world-renowned scientist Cynthia Moss, were killed on the Kenya-Tanzania border by a hunting expedition of a Tanzania-based operation. This incident caused outrage among the global environmental and wildlife conservation community. Kenya wilfdlife officials, the Amboseli Elephant Research project, and local Maasai say that the hunting company knew of the Amboseli elephant study but nevertheless chose to kill the elephants for their large tusks. The controversy has since ended, but the company continues to exploit transnational migratory routes of the region's wildlife.

The second incident, which MERC associates witnessed, occurred on August 7, 2001 around 2:00 p.m. in Olgulului Group Ranch adjacent to Amboseli National Park. On that date, a hunting expedition of a South African-owned Tanzania-based company, Northern Tanzania Hunting Safaris, crossed into Kenya and killed four wildebeest before local Maasai spotted them and alerted the Amboseli authorities, who happened to be in the area on patrol. Following a short pursuit, the hunters (a South African, an American, and three Tanzanians) were arrested and taken to the cross-border town of Namanga where they were charged with illegally entering and hunting in Kenya. Local people in the area told MERC that they believed the hunters were on "their usual search for lions" because there were few, if any lions left across the border in Tanzania. MERC was told that Northern Tanzania Hunting Safaris regularly conduct hunting activities in Kenya where wildlife comes for refuge.

Corruption is not limited to field officers, but also occurs at the bureaucratic level. Hunting permits, which indicate the maximum number of animals the permit-holder can kill, often go unaudited. Several employees of local hunting and photographic safaris in Arusha told MERC that depending on the amount of money involved, blank permits are often issued to hunting companies. The issuance of blank licenses has been decried by locals and conservationists alike as a "dangerous practice" that undermines the future of the country's wildlife.

An employee of an outfitter based in Arusha said that field rangers sometime demand as much as US$300 to go along with the demands of the hunting company. For their part, hunting companies feel obligated to ensure their clients get quality trophies in order to build their name and reputation and to ward off competition from other practitioners. "The last thing an outfitter wants to hear is complaints from an unsatisfied client who feels that he or she paid too much

money to come on a ‘big-five’ hunting expedition only to be told to hunt an impala or hyena: this would mean a bad name for the company and immediate loss of business," said the employee. "The majority of hunters want to be guaranteed a good hunt before they go on an expedition and it is the individual company’s responsibility to do whatever it takes to make sure that happens," he continued. When MERC asked him what he exactly meant by "doing whatever it takes," he pointed out that bribes remain the most effective tool to ensure the company’s clients are happy and that business continues to prosper.

You know, at the end of the day, they will eliminate these animals and then go back to their wealthy homelands and leave us more impoverished than when we had our animals

Lemido Saunae, a Tarangire resident.

The Tanzanian government is aware of the general nature of the conflict between indigenous communities and consumptive tourism companies. To address the lack of community ownership and input in the tourism industry, and to direct economic benefits to host communities, the government has introduced the concept of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). The Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources introduced WMAs in its 1998 Wildlife Policy. WMAs are defined as "an area declared by the Minister to be so and set aside by village government for the purpose of biological natural resource conservation." The idea behind WMAs is to ensure that communities are direct stakeholders and benefactors in the conservation and management of wildlife found on their lands.

A number of pilot projects involving non-consumptive tourism have been established. Because the Wildlife Policy has not yet become legislation, the legality of contracts between these tourism companies and villages has come into question, polarizing debate among the hunting industry, ecotourism companies, district governments, the central government, and local communities. Moreover, a great deal of skepticism prevails on the part of numerous Maasai community members and NGOs regarding the sincerity of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in the implementation of the WMA guidelines. Official adoption of the draft WMA guidelines as law has been slow in coming. Many believe this is due to the central government’s reluctance to devolve power to local governments and communities, which would result in the central government losing the direct revenue it now reaps from contracts with hunting companies. Moreover, under WMAs, hunting companies would at least be partially under the authority of the local community.

Conflicts involving wildlife utilization go deeper still. A fundamental problem is that property legislation is at odds with conservation law. According to various

pieces of legislation, villages may own land, but the government owns all wildlife resources. In reality, of course, it is impossible to separate the two. Legally incorporating the concept of WMAs into an already conflicting legislative framework complicates matters further. The government does have experts attempting to harmonize the various laws. Resolution of these legislative quandaries could potentially go a long way in ensuring that impoverished communities do indeed benefit from their own resources. But such hopeful thinking is premised on respect for the law by all stakeholders and its effective enforcement, a risky assumption, as anecdotally demonstrated by the following quotes MERC collected from foreign hunters in Tanzania.

There is so much wildlife, and one can even hunt inside the park.

> Gutterman, a trophy hunter from Germany, interviewed in Arusha. When MERC asked if he was aware of the consequences for hunting inside the park, he said:

There are none because most of the time we let the money do the talking and before too long, you find the park rangers are now the guides for the hunting expedition both inside and outside the park. They also stop paying attention to the species and hunting quotas restrictions.

Here in Tanzania, we can kill what we want because money speaks. I know how the system works here.

Mortensen, a trophy hunter from Denmark, interviewed in Arusha.

I will have to bring my friend Randy to Tanzania next time. He would enjoy shooting without having to worry about the hunting limits.

Troy, a trophy-hunter from Montana, USA, interviewed in Arusha.

Like OBC in Loliondo, many hunting Safari outfitters clearly operate above the law, and for companies' personnel, laws are irrelevant in practice. Again, while OBC is an extreme example of severe disregard for the environment, human rights, and legal process, it is by no means an isolated case. Of the many NGOs, park officials, and others MERC interviewed, few expressed confidence in enforcement of government regulations or in hunters' adherence to government quotas. MERC repeatedly heard that game scouts required to accompany hunting safaris can be bought off. Thus, the number of animals killed and captured is most likely under-reported, resulting in a quota system based on inaccurate data. It is

quite possible, then, that the populations of some species in Tanzania are far smaller than reflected on paper.

Conclusion and Recommendations

We are shocked, but ready to fight for our land because the company [OBC] is acting against the law, destroying the environment and our source of water.

A Maasai elder in Loliondo

"This is a despicable and shameful event not only to Tanzanians but also to people all over the world who care for wildlife and the environment.

JET, criticizing the practices of OBC and calling for action against the company.

On April 10, 2000, 13 Maasai elders traveled from Loliondo to the Tanzanian capital Dar es Salaam to protest OBC's practices and to demand government action against the company to stop the "wanton killing of wildlife that was responsible for the serious decline in lion, leopard and cheetah populations in northern Tanzania since OBC arrived." BBC reported that prior to the elders' journey, some 20,000 Maasai gathered at a site where OBC was constructing a mansion to protest the environmental degradation and land alienation caused by the company. Dozens of Maasai were arrested. In response to the elders' demands, the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism said that government experts would conduct an environmental audit to determine the impact of OBC's hunting exploits. More than one and a half years later, Loliondo residents are still waiting for the results of the audit. To date, the Maasai have not seen any government officials conducting investigations.

An official of Serengeti National Park told MERC on August 13, 2001 at Ololosokwuan:

Have you ever heard of anybody apart from the Maasai complain about these unethical hunting activities in Loliondo? Have you even heard the Maasai political leaders say anything about this unacceptable use of their people's land? I am a wildlife conservation officer for Serengeti National Park and I see and know what is going on here. What I see, I cannot just say to anyone, but, since I know you are trying to help, I will tell you this–you must raise this concern because there is serious wildlife destruction going on here. Perhaps you can implore international conservation regimes to carry out thorough investigations to ascertain what we are saying here.

In light of the grave human rights and environmental injustice committed by OBC in Loliondo, MERC makes the following recommendations.

To the Government of Tanzania

The complaints of the Maasai people and environmentalists in the country and around the world concerning the negative impacts of OBC's operations in Loliondo deserve every possible consideration in the interest of the Maasai, the environment, and wildlife. Authorities cannot ignore claims concerning OBC's violation of national hunting laws and international agreements to which Tanzania, as a signatory, is bound. Failure to address these concerns raises questions about the Tanzanian government's commitment to international agreements to which it is a signatory. Complaints concerning killings, captures, and airlifting of vulnerable species such as the cheetah and the hunting dog also deserve attention. There is also urgent need to investigate the possibility that OBC might have violated CITES regulations by killing or capturing animals on the CITES Appendix I listing of endangered species.

MERC urges the government of Tanzania to:

- Make public the results of the environmental audit conducted by the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism. If the audit has not been completed, ensure expeditious completion.

- Sanction an independent investigation team to thoroughly examine the numerous complaints about OBC's practices in the field and their impacts on human rights, wildlife, and the environment. This should include an examination of the role of Tanzanian security forces and government officials. The team should be composed of international and Tanzanian experts, but should not include members of the Tanzanian government due to allegations of widespread corruption.

- Suspend OBC's hunting privileges pending the results of the independent investigation.

- Justly resolve questions of land alienation and grazing rights in Loliondo caused by the presence of OBC as reported by Maasai communities.

- Hold OBC accountable to Tanzanian law and appropriately utilize the judicial system when laws are violated.

- In addition to the independent team investigating OBC's practices, set up a government taskforce to investigate alleged decimation of wildlife and environmental degradation caused by consumptive tourism throughout northern Tanzania. The taskforce should gauge the health of wildlife populations and the accuracy and enforcement of the government quota system. Be prepared to implement an action plan in response to the taskforce's findings.

- Implement a moratorium on hunting in northern Tanzania pending the findings of the government taskforce, especially in light of reported abuse of laws regulating the tourist hunting industry and lack of government oversight.

- Enforce hunting regulations and substantially increase efforts to stop corruption from the field level up.

- Expedite the official adoption of the WMA guidelines into law. Resolution of these legislative quandaries could potentially go a long way in ensuring that impoverished communities do indeed benefit from their own resources.

- Increase overall transparency of government actions–from the national level down.

To the UN and Other Governments

MERC urges the United Nations and its member states to:

- Ensure that the Tanzanian government has the necessary technical and financial resources to carry out an independent investigation of OBC in Loliondo, as well as the government investigation of the health of wildlife populations throughout northern Tanzania. Guarantee that the government has the ability to act upon the recommendations of these investigatory teams.

- Use political and economic leverage to ensure just resolution of the Loliondo human rights and environmental crisis, as well as implementation of the WMA guidelines. Pressure should also be brought to bear regarding the issues of land alienation of indigenous communities and wildlife conservation throughout Tanzania.

- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should (a) consider sending a special reporter to investigate and report on the human rights and environmental crisis in Loliondo; and (b) address land alienation of indigenous peoples in Tanzania.

To International NGOs

MERC appeals to international NGOs to:

- Work, as partners, with the Maasai of Loliondo and other indigenous peoples to ensure the protection of environmental, land, and human rights in Tanzania. Among the main purposes of this report is to get international NGOs involved in the crisis of environmental and human rights violations in Loliondo and in other locales in Tanzania. MERC remains committed to these concerns, but a concerted international effort will be more effective in bringing to this issue the action and it deserves. MERC therefore urges the NGO community to take this issue up with sustained energy and dedication.

- Support the formation of the aforementioned independent investigation team and the government taskforce to examine complaints about OBC's practices in the field and their impacts on human rights, wildlife, and the environment.

- Assist local NGOs in properly recording and documenting abuses committed by OBC and other hunting companies, as well as by the Tanzanian security forces and government officials. Further assist local NGOs in the appropriate utilization of these records and documentation to effect change in Loliondo and other areas of indigenous communities in Tanzania.

- Help indigenous NGOs build local capacity.

To Tanzanian and Kenyan NGOs and Individuals Concerned with Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Justice:

Let us pool our resources and unite to non-violently fight for our rights and the rights of those creatures who have walked this land with us for centuries. As a Maasai elder once said:

Our sacred responsibility to the young and unborn generations of humankind is to jealously protect Mother Earth and all life on her.

The Maasai Environmental Resource Coalition (MERC)

OUR MISSION

The Maasai Environmental Resource Coalition (MERC) is an advocate for the protection of traditional land rights of the Maasai people, and for conservation, management and sustainable use of the great ecosystems of East Africa.

OUR GUIDING VISIONS

Preserve the integrity of East African Ecosystem, with their rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, for the benefit of the Maasai people, the nation states of Kenya and Tanzania, and the present and future generations of the world.

Ensure the survival of the Maasai people by preserving our cultural heritage, supporting sustainable socio-economic development within our communities, and protecting traditional land rights and political representation so that we can determine our own destiny.

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