

PIPELINE TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL · DRILLING

# UK High Court Lawsuit Threatens to Halt Uganda-Tanzania Crude Oil Pipeline

Saga deep read · 07 July 2026 · Score 66

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Ugandan farmers have filed a lawsuit in the United Kingdom's High Court targeting EACOP Ltd., the England-and-Wales-incorporated corporate entity managing the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). The legal claim, filed Tuesday, seeks to apply Ugandan constitutional, environmental, and climate laws directly to the UK-registered operator — a novel jurisdictional strategy aimed at halting the pipeline before it ever enters service.

The 1,443-kilometre pipeline is designed to carry crude oil from landlocked Uganda across Tanzania to an Indian Ocean export terminal. French energy major TotalEnergies holds a majority stake in the project. The claimants allege that land acquisition along the pipeline corridor will displace or significantly disrupt more than 100,000 people, and that the route cuts through critical freshwater systems and protected wildlife habitats, creating serious risks to regional biodiversity and water security. EACOP Ltd. had not issued a formal response to the filing at time of publication.

The lawsuit represents an escalation of a long-running campaign against EACOP. Construction has faced sustained opposition from international climate activists, human rights organisations, and affected communities, who argue the project entrenches fossil fuel dependency in East Africa while imposing disproportionate environmental and social costs on vulnerable populations. By targeting the London-registered entity rather than pursuing claims through Ugandan or Tanzanian courts

alone, the farmers are leveraging a growing legal doctrine that allows multinational corporations to be held accountable in their home jurisdictions for the conduct of overseas operations.

For the energy industry, the case introduces a material legal risk variable that extends beyond East Africa. If successful, the ruling could establish a precedent that any multinational infrastructure company registered in England and Wales — including project operators, FPSO owners, and pipeline developers active across Sub-Saharan Africa — may be subject to host-country constitutional and environmental law adjudicated in UK courts. That precedent would have direct relevance to Norwegian and other European-headquartered service companies and operators with African upstream exposure.

Construction progress and the timeline to first oil remain contingent on this and other pending legal, financing, and regulatory developments. Norwegian service companies that have been monitoring EACOP for pipeline installation, pumping infrastructure, or export terminal work should now factor heightened litigation risk into their market assessments. Until the High Court rules, commercial momentum on the project is likely to remain constrained.

### **Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga**

Norwegian service companies tracking EACOP for pipeline construction, export terminal infrastructure, or associated upstream work should treat this lawsuit as a material risk flag that warrants a hold-and-monitor posture rather than active bid preparation. The novel jurisdictional strategy — applying host-country law to a UK-registered entity — could affect project financing timelines and operator decision-making across the wider East African upstream. Partners should brief their legal and compliance teams on the precedent implications for any African pipeline or infrastructure project involving a UK-incorporated project vehicle.

#### **PARTNER ANGLES**

- **Pipeline:** Pipeline installation and pumping station contractors should defer mobilisation planning until the High Court filing is resolved, as a ruling against EACOP Ltd. could suspend or permanently block construction authorisation.

- **FPSO:** FPSO and floating storage operators eyeing the Tanzanian export terminal as a future offtake point should reassess scheduling assumptions, given that first-oil timing is now subject to additional legal uncertainty.
- **Drilling:** Drilling service companies active in the Ugandan upstream fields feeding EACOP should monitor whether litigation-driven financing delays translate into deferred well programmes.
- **Subsea:** Subsea contractors with interest in any nearshore or terminal infrastructure at the Indian Ocean export point should track the case outcome before committing pre-FEED resources.
- **Service:** Legal, risk, and compliance advisory firms supporting Norwegian operators in Sub-Saharan Africa should use this case to review exposure under UK jurisdiction for any African projects managed through England-and-Wales-registered entities.

[Original source: Pipeline Technology Journal →](#)

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