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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and
Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels, 1 February 2018

Dear Federica,

I have recently been warned about the continuous violence being enacted by the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) upon the Sengwer indigenous peoples in Kenya. On January 16, KFS guards, who are engaged in the implementation of the EU-financed Water Towers Protection and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation project, shot two members of the Sengwer community while they were herding their cattle. In December 2017, on multiple occasions, the Forest Service Guards reportedly entered the lands of the Sengwer, firing gunshots, burning multiple homes and killing livestock.

The Kenya Forest Service has been engaging in a longstanding campaign to forcibly evict the Sengwer from their ancestral lands in the Embobut forest, rather than supporting community land management programmes that would protect the forest and the rights of the Sengwer. This is a serious violation of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The EU announced earlier this year that it would suspend its support for the WaTER project in light of the recent escalations – a welcomed first-step. It is now important for the EU to take action to ultimately ensure that all evictions and forms of harassment against the Sengwer are stopped. I urge you, through the EU's Delegation in Kenya, to reach out to the relevant authorities in Nairobi and instigate them to put an end to the repeated violations of the rights of indigenous peoples in Kenya, and create a platform of dialogue through which the Sengwer community can be consulted in good faith about the future management of their ancestral lands.

*Best regards,
Ana Gomes*

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament