

Tanzanian Tribe Says Luxury Safari Companies Are Burning Down Their Homes and Stealing Their Land

Colonizers gone colonize. SMH.

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Luxury safaris favored by wealthy foreigners have prompted the Tanzanian government to seize land promised to the Maasai people in previous government agreements, [The Guardian](#) reports.

The global elite favors the safaris and often pay large sums of money for big-game hunting such as lions, zebras and giraffes.

Proceeds from the hunting fees are supposed to go toward wildlife conservation. In recent years, these tours have become increasingly popular, and to capitalize on the demand for them, the indigenous Maasai people are being driven from their land.

A study from The Oakland Institute says hundreds of Maasai homes have been burned down, and hunting camps have been erected in the middle of villages.

Additionally, villagers have been assaulted and arrested by police officers, security guards and park rangers patrolling the area. Over 20,000 people have been left homeless according to Tanzanian news outlets.

Villagers say the destruction has left the Maasai susceptible to famine since the new camps block access to watering holes and other resources. They have appealed to the government for resources due to an alarming number of malnourished children.

“Imagine, a stranger comes and constructs a big building in the centre of your home,” one Maasai said. “Our livestock cannot go to the waterhole – there is no other route for the villagers or their livestock.”

The report centers on the actions of two firms, Thomson Safaris and Otterlo Business Corporation. Thomson is currently battling three Maasai groups for over 12,000 acres of land.

“The evictions are not justified because more and more land is being taken away from the villages without due process or compensation even though they have legal titles,” said Rashid S. Rashid, one of the lawyers defending the Maasai. “The policies of the government are based mainly on the arguments advanced by Thomson and Otterlo because they have more political influence than the villagers.”

Rick Thomson, a director of Tanzania Conservation, a sister company of Thomson Safaris, denies the allegations.

“These interventions have been played out to attract attention, provide stories and to disrupt the working relationship between company and communities on the ground,” Thomson said. “In these events, the endangered staff have a protocol of disengaging any way they can to avoid escalation and reporting to the authorities any situation where any people and property, are physically threatened. These situations have been rare, and no such events have occurred for the last four years.”

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