

## Challenges and Opportunities Resulting from Mau Forest Evictions of Ogiek Community, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper presents the results and discussions of the objective of the study, which assessed the challenges and opportunities resulting from the evictions of the Ogiek people from the Mau Forest Complex. The study looked at the challenges faced by the Ogiek and the government following the evictions. Secondly, it examined the opportunities that the Ogiek community and the government experienced after the evictions. Public interest and human needs theories underpinned the study. The study used a descriptive research design. The study sampled 465 respondents, who included 384 household heads, 1 county commissioner, 2 deputy county commissioners, 7 chiefs, 14 village elders, 1 county police commander, 2 sub-county police commanders, 5 conservationist organizations, 5 environmentalist groups, 1 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) officer, 1 UN Habitat officer, 1 officer from the ministry of environment, 10 officers from Kenya Forest Service (KFS), 10 officers from Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), 5 officers from NGOs, 1 officer from the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), and 15 heads of NGOs and CBOs. The study applied simple random, purposive, and census sampling techniques. Interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGD), and observation made up the data collection instruments. SPSS version 26 was used to analyze quantitative data and was presented in tables, graphs, and charts. The study examined the challenges and opportunities of Mau forest evictions, where poaching, animal attacks, hunger, malnutrition, mental illnesses, and poor health plagued the Ogiek community. The study recommends clear and transparent guidelines regarding the eviction process and any form of compensation set and discussed with the affected households so as to avoid unnecessary impoverishment and protect livelihoods. This information is useful as it will better inform forest managers, policymakers, and other actors in their efforts to fairly and responsibly manage and balance ecological and social development. The study suggests that the government of Kenya adopts a more humane and sustainable relocation policy and involves the Ogiek community in decision-making and investment in alternative livelihoods.*

**Keywords:** Challenges, Mau Forest Evictions, Ogiek Community, Opportunities

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of human security is not only hotly debated but also profoundly controversial. Its genesis could be traced back to the gradual emergence of human needs, coupled with the threats posed by both natural and anthropogenic hazards (Matanga, 2018). Today, the concept has undergone a drastic expansion to incorporate issues such as economics, environment, and culture. This is attributed to the scholarly works of figures such as Chattopadhyay et al. (2018). The concept of human security is linked to human development by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994). In light of this, there is a widely held assertion that human security contributes to human development and that the core elements of human life, such as survival, dignity, and livelihood, are essential. This makes the concept of human security a people-centered approach to addressing the bedeviling human threats.

The Ogiek community has historically been recognized for their residence in forested regions, such as the Mau Forest located in southeastern Kenya. The Ogiek, as a hunter-gatherer society, possess exceptional proficiency in the domains of hunting and trapping methodologies. The group's traditional economy and dietary practices are primarily dependent on the production of honey derived from the forest. This resource not only serves as a means of subsistence for the community but also holds significant value as a commodity for trade with adjacent communities. The Ogiek frequently engage in the exchange of honey for grains as a means to augment their dietary intake, which mostly revolves around the consumption of meat and honey. Nevertheless, starting from the beginning of the 20th century, the Ogiek community has consistently encountered oppression and involuntary displacements from their traditional territory. The Mau Forest was subjected to colonial occupation in 1957, and despite Kenya's attainment of

independence in 1963, issues surrounding land ownership and forced removals continued to endure. The government issued successive directives for the incineration of Ogiek dwellings, compelling people to undergo repeated displacements. During the 1990s, the Ogiek community actively confronted the Kenyan government, under the leadership of the late President Daniel Arap Moi, following a prolonged period of ambiguity, forced relocation, and apprehension (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2018). Imperatively, the evictions of the Ogiek community from Mau Forest pose a huge threat to their survival, thus jeopardizing their security and the pursuit of economic development and prosperity. Notably, the eviction has deprived them of what they claim to be their ancestral land. Additionally, since they depend on the forest for their livelihood, eviction has restricted this as well. The key role played by the government is to provide security to its subjects, including personal security.

The idea of evictions of forest communities like the Ogiek is based on the view that some areas, such as national parks and forests, among others, should be protected by them (Guha, 2000). This is done without giving credence to the kind of impact these evictions would most likely have on the security of forest communities. Even though the Ogiek have for many years co-existed with nature, the government declared the Mau Forest a protected area, leading to evictions that have had far-reaching ramifications on their security (African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights, [ACtHPR], 2013). The evictions happened despite Chapter 4 of the Kenya Constitution (2010), particularly Articles 19(2) and 21(3), which give all Kenyans fundamental rights and freedoms that the government is expected to guarantee and protect. The main objective of the study was to examine the challenges and opportunities resulting from the evictions of the Ogiek community from the Mau forest in Kenya.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design. The study sampled 465 respondents, who included 384 household heads, 1 county commissioner, 2 deputy county commissioners, 7 chiefs, 14 village elders, 1 county police commander, 2 sub-county police commanders, 5 conservationist organizations, 5 environmentalist groups, 1 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) officer, 1 UN Habitat officer, 1 officer from the ministry of environment, 10 officers from Kenya Forest Service (KFS), 10 officers from Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), 5 officers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 1 officer from the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), 15 heads of NGOs, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The study applied simple random, purposive, and census sampling techniques. Interviews, questionnaires, FGDs, and observation made up the data collection instruments. SPSS version 26 was used to analyze quantitative data and was presented in tables, graphs, and charts. Narratives and verbatim quotations were used to present the qualitative data.

## III. RESULTS & FINDINGS

### 3.1 Challenges Faced by the Ogiek as a Result of Evictions

This study sought to assess the challenges faced by the Ogiek community members and the government during and after the evictions. These challenges are the difficulties that the Ogiek have faced as a result of the evictions. The results from the questionnaires are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Challenges faced by the Ogiek as a Result of Evictions*

Challenge	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Integration challenges	100%	0%	0%
Psychological challenges	100%	0%	0%
Communication challenges	100%	0%	0%
Cultural preservation challenges	100%	0%	0%
Governance and administrative challenges	100%	0%	0%
Financial challenges	99%	1%	0%
Educational and health challenges	99%	1%	0%
Cultural challenges	98%	2%	0%
Legal challenges	98%	1%	1%
Social challenges	98%	1%	1%

### 3.2 Integration Challenges

The findings revealed that the evictions of the Ogiek from the Mau Forest complex have presented significant challenges for household heads, particularly in the dimensions of integration. The Ogiek people have a long-standing history of occupation and utilization of the forest, and their eviction has resulted in a loss of livelihoods and displacement from their homes. This has led to an increase in conflicts between the Ogiek and other communities as they compete for resources and land outside of the forest. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and quoted the following:

*I can attest to the challenges faced by the household heads in my community. Many families have been forced to leave their homes in the forest and have resettled in areas where they do not have traditional land rights. This has resulted in conflicts with other communities over land and resources, which has led to violence and insecurity. Parents are worried about the safety of their families and the future of their children as they struggle to find a new source of livelihood. I have lived in this community for many years, and I have seen firsthand the impact of the evictions on our people. We used to live in the forest, and we had everything we needed there. But now, we have been forced to leave, and we are struggling to survive. Our children are no longer able to go to school, and we cannot afford basic needs like food and medicine. We are constantly worried about our safety, as we have to compete with other communities for resources (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

The aforementioned findings align with the outcomes of external research, underscoring the significance of human needs in the context of conflict scenarios. Maslow's hierarchy of needs posits that human needs are hierarchically organized in a pyramid structure, commencing with fundamental physiological needs at the foundational level. Subsequently, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and ultimately self-actualization needs occupy progressively higher tiers within the hierarchy. When individuals experience deprivation of fundamental necessities, such as sustenance, housing, and security, they exhibit an increased propensity to partake in conflicts as a means of safeguarding these essential requirements. This issue holds particular significance within the framework of the Ogiek evictions, as households have been dispossessed of their customary means of subsistence and are currently grappling with the challenge of fulfilling their fundamental necessities.

### 3.3 Psychological Challenges

Psychological challenges dimension was found to be the most significant challenge experienced by household heads due to the Ogiek evictions from the Mau Forest Complex. This finding was derived from a study conducted to investigate the socio-economic and cultural impact of the Ogiek evictions on the affected households. The psychological challenges identified include depression, anxiety, stress, and trauma. These challenges have led to emotional and mental distress, affecting the overall well-being of the household heads and their families. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and quoted the following:

*The Ogiek evictions have led to immense psychological challenges for the affected households. The uncertainty of their future, the loss of their ancestral lands, and their displacement from their homes have caused emotional and mental distress among the household heads. Many are experiencing depression, anxiety, and stress, affecting their ability to function effectively in their daily lives (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

Numerous studies looking at instances of forced displacement show that the Ogiek experience psychological difficulties that are not unique to their community. In Kenya, Naanyu et al. (2021) conducted a study that revealed that the occurrence of forced evictions resulted in significant emotional and mental anguish within the households affected by such actions. The research findings indicate that the households' emotional and mental distress can be attributed to the deprivation of their residences, social connections, and personal identities. Forceful eviction caused psychological distress and had long-lasting effects on the mental health of the households involved, according to a study by Chan et al. (2019) in Hong Kong.

### 3.4 Communication Challenges

According to the findings, household heads ranked communication difficulties as the biggest challenge they faced during the Ogiek evictions from the Mau Forest Complex. The data showed that 100% of the respondents agreed that communication challenges were a significant problem. This implies that the Ogiek community was not adequately prepared for the evictions, and the government did not provide sufficient communication channels to address the community's concerns. Communication challenges may have led to misinformation, misunderstandings, and a lack of coordination, which further exacerbated the challenges faced by the community. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and quoted the following:

*Communication challenges were a significant issue during the evictions. We were not aware of the government's plans, and there was no proper communication about the eviction process. This lack of communication made us feel*

*helpless and frustrated, and we were unable to take appropriate measures to protect ourselves and our property (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

The human needs theory posits that communication is an essential need for human beings, and it plays a crucial role in satisfying other needs such as safety, security, and social belonging. In the case of the Ogiek community, communication challenges led to a lack of access to essential information, which affected their ability to meet their basic needs. This finding is consistent with an external study by Holtzhausen and Zerfass (2019), which found that effective communication is critical in addressing social and environmental challenges. The lack of communication channels during the evictions may have contributed to a breakdown in trust between the Ogiek community and the government. According to a study by Tshuma and Ncube (2021), trust is a crucial factor in building sustainable relationships between communities and governments. The lack of trust can lead to further marginalization, which may hinder the community's ability to access essential resources and services.

### 3.5 Cultural Preservation Challenges

One of the primary challenges identified was the preservation of culture. The Ogiek community has a rich cultural heritage, but the eviction from their ancestral land has threatened their ability to preserve their traditions, language, and way of life. This challenge was ranked as the top challenge by all respondents, with 100% agreement. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed the findings and stated them as follows:

*Our culture is our identity, and it's what makes us unique. The Ogiek have a rich cultural heritage that we must preserve for future generations. But with the eviction from our ancestral land, we are at risk of losing our culture, language, and traditions. We need support to ensure that our cultural heritage is protected and preserved (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

The preservation of culture is a fundamental human need, according to the human needs theory, which suggests that individuals have universal needs that must be met to achieve well-being. The preservation of culture is necessary for individuals to have a sense of identity, belonging, and purpose. The loss of culture can lead to a sense of displacement, isolation, and marginalization.

A study by Fuentes and Ehlers (2020) supports the findings of this study, indicating that the eviction of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands can lead to the loss of cultural heritage, language, and traditional knowledge. The study highlights the importance of recognizing the cultural rights of indigenous peoples and supporting their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage. A second study by Zhang et al. (2021) highlights the importance of community-based approaches to cultural preservation. The study emphasizes the role of community involvement in the preservation of culture and the need for collaboration between indigenous communities, governments, and other stakeholders to support cultural preservation efforts.

### 3.6 Governance and Administrative Challenges

Governance and administrative challenges appeared as the top challenges, with a 100% agreement rate among the respondents. This challenge was ranked as the most significant issue faced by the community, indicating the severity of the situation. The findings of the study were based on numerical data collected through surveys conducted among the Ogiek community. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and quoted the following to show a reflection of the frustrations and grievances felt by the Ogiek community, which has been struggling to protect their rights for years.

*The lack of clear policies and proper governance structures is the primary reason for the challenges experienced by the Ogiek community. The government's lack of clear policies and accountability mechanisms has resulted in the eviction of our people from their ancestral lands, which has caused significant harm to our way of life (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

The human needs theory helps to explain the challenges faced by the Ogiek community. This theory suggests that individuals have basic needs, including the need for food, shelter, safety, and social interactions. When these needs are not met, individuals experience challenges that affect their well-being. In the case of the Ogiek community, their basic human needs for land, water, and natural resources have been violated, resulting in significant challenges for the community.

A study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2018) found that good governance is essential for sustainable development. The study emphasized the importance of transparent and accountable governance structures that prioritize the needs of marginalized communities. The lack of such governance structures in the case of the Ogiek community has resulted in significant challenges, as highlighted in the current study. Another study conducted by the World Bank in 2020 identified the challenges faced by indigenous communities, including discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization. The study highlighted the need for policies

and governance structures that respect the rights and needs of indigenous communities, ensuring their participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. The findings of this study align with the challenges experienced by the Ogiek community due to the lack of clear policies and governance structures that prioritize their rights.

### 3.7 Financial Challenges

The findings indicate that the Ogiek evictions from the Mau Forest Complex have led to economic challenges for household heads. This challenge was ranked second highest by the respondents, with 99% agreeing that it is a challenge. Economic challenges include the loss of livelihoods, a lack of access to basic needs, and reduced income. These challenges have greatly affected the ability of household heads to provide for their families. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and quoted the following:

*Before the evictions, we had access to the forest for hunting, gathering, and farming. We could sell our produce and animals in the local markets and earn a decent income. Now, we have lost our livelihoods and struggle to make ends meet. Our children are malnourished, and we cannot afford to pay for their education (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

These challenges threaten their ability to meet basic human needs and may have long-term negative consequences for their well-being, which aligns with the human needs theory on which this study is based, emphasizing the importance of economic security as a basic human need. This theory posits that individuals require basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and income, to thrive. The economic challenges experienced by the Ogiek due to the evictions threaten their ability to meet these basic needs and may result in long-term negative consequences for their well-being.

The economic challenges experienced by the Ogiek due to the evictions are not unique. Studies have shown that indigenous communities often face economic challenges when they are displaced from their lands. For instance, a study by UNEP (2018) found that indigenous peoples in Kenya, including the Ogiek, face economic marginalization due to their limited access to natural resources.

### 3.8 Educational and Health Challenges

The study conducted on the challenges experienced by household heads due to the Ogiek evictions from the Mau Forest Complex revealed that educational challenges were among the top challenges faced. According to the findings, 99% of the respondents agreed that educational challenges were a significant challenge they experienced. This challenge ranked second in the list of challenges faced by the respondents. The numerical data and the ranking of this challenge demonstrate the severity of the issue and the need for immediate action. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and quoted the following:

*The Ogiek community has always placed great emphasis on education. However, due to the evictions, most of the children have dropped out of school, and some have never even attended school. The lack of access to schools and educational resources has greatly affected the educational development of our community (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

In an interview, the head of OPDP confirmed that:

*After the eviction, the majority of the people lost their belongings. This means the affected individual had to go and start a new life in the new places where they settled. In the new environment, it was not easy to find a school where they could take their children. In some instances, the head of school was asking for admission fees, which most of the Ogiek parents did not have. Up to date, there are a large number of children who have yet to go back to school. Back at home, the environment was not welcoming either, as the Ogiek community was forced to settle in crowded settlements with poor sanitation facilities, thus being infected severally by a number of diseases (interview with the head of the OPDP on September 22, 2022).*

The human needs theory explains that education is a fundamental human need that should be accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, the evictions have severely impacted the Ogiek community's educational system, violating their basic human rights. According to a study by Orodho et al. (2021), the eviction from the Mau Forest complex had a significant impact on the Ogiek community's educational system.

The lack of access to education has also led to poverty and economic instability within the Ogiek community. The study by Orodho et al. (2021) further explains that education is a crucial tool in breaking the cycle of poverty, and the lack of access to education perpetuates poverty. Therefore, the educational challenges faced by the Ogiek community due to the evictions have a ripple effect on the community's economic stability.

### 3.9 Cultural Challenges

The study explored the challenges experienced by household heads due to the Ogiek evictions from the Mau Forest Complex. Among the challenges identified, cultural challenges ranked highest, with 98% of the respondents

agreeing that they experienced cultural difficulties. These challenges included loss of identity, cultural practices, and values, as well as dislocation from sacred sites and religious shrines. The findings indicate that the Ogiek's cultural heritage is deeply rooted in the forest ecosystem, making their eviction from the forest particularly challenging. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings and stated the following:

*Our cultural practices and beliefs are intertwined with the forest. We believe that the forest is the source of our livelihood, our spiritual beliefs, and our cultural identity. The eviction has disrupted our way of life and has caused us great pain and suffering (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

The elder went on to explain that the Ogiek's culture is based on a deep connection with the environment, and their traditional practices, such as honey harvesting, gathering medicinal plants, and hunting, are all closely linked to the forest. The loss of access to the forest has disrupted their way of life, and they are struggling to adapt to their new circumstances.

The human needs theory argues that the eviction of the Ogiek from the forest has denied them access to their basic human needs, such as food, shelter, and water. This denial has caused great suffering, particularly among women and children, who are often left to fend for themselves. A study by Brodsky et al. (2019) found that the eviction of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands often results in increased poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition.

### 3.10 Legal Challenges

The study established that the legal challenges were of significant experience to the household heads due to the Ogiek evictions in the Mau Forest Complex. The data collected during the study revealed that 98% of the respondents had faced legal challenges. This finding suggests that the Ogiek eviction was not only a matter of displacement but also a legal battle that the community is still battling to date. Furthermore, the legal challenges were ranked third on the list of challenges, indicating that they were a significant obstacle for the Ogiek people. During the focus group discussions, a village elder stated the following in confirmation of the findings:

*We have faced many legal challenges, and this has caused us a lot of pain and suffering. We have been in and out of court, trying to get justice for our people, but it has been a long and difficult process (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

This is not specific to the Ogiek people. Cernea and McDowell (2018) conducted a study examining the phenomenon of displacement and resettlement. Their findings indicate that displaced populations often encounter several social obstacles, including the loss of community, social fragmentation, and the weakening of social networks. The aforementioned difficulties are frequently intensified when communities are compelled to vacate their residences and territories, as is the circumstance with the Ogiek.

### 3.11 Social Challenges

The study found that social challenges were a major issue experienced by household heads as a result of the Ogiek evictions from the Mau Forest Complex. According to the findings, 98% of respondents agreed that they faced social challenges due to the evictions, with only 1% disagreeing and another 1% indicating that they did not know. These challenges were ranked as the third most significant challenge faced by household heads, indicating that they were a significant concern for the affected communities. During the focus group discussions, a village elder confirmed these findings with the following quotation:

*We have experienced a lot of social challenges since we were evicted from our ancestral land. The Ogiek community had a strong sense of identity with regard to our cultural practices, and when we were evicted from our homes, we lost not only our land but also our sense of belonging. Many families were separated, and we lost touch with our neighbors and relatives. This has made it difficult for us to rebuild our lives and support each other as we used to (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

These social challenges are not unique to the Ogiek community. In a study on displacement and resettlement, Cernea and McDowell (2018) found that social challenges such as loss of community, social fragmentation, and weakened social networks are common among displaced communities. These challenges are often exacerbated when communities are forced to leave their homes and land, as is the case with the Ogiek evictions.

The social challenges experienced by the Ogiek community can be understood through the lens of the human needs theory. According to this theory, humans have basic needs that must be met for them to thrive, including the need for a sense of belonging and community. When these needs are not met, individuals may experience social challenges such as isolation, loneliness, and a lack of support networks (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The Ogiek evictions have disrupted the community's sense of belonging and identity, leading to these social challenges. In the context of public interest theory, marginalized communities are often excluded from decision-making processes due to power

imbalances, which can lead to social challenges. The Ogiek community's longstanding marginalization has resulted in their exclusion from land-related decision-making processes, leading to evictions and subsequent social challenges (Gaventa, 2019). Furthermore, this power imbalance has made it challenging for the community to advocate for their rights and address the difficulties they encounter.

### 3.12 Opportunities Experienced by Ogiek as a Result of Evictions

This study identified some opportunities on the side of the Ogiek as a result of evictions. The opportunities are grouped into six dimensions: economic, social, environmental preservation, educational, political, and cultural. The respondents were asked to agree, disagree, or indicate they did not know regarding each opportunity. The findings from Table 2 highlight the various opportunities that the Ogiek community experienced as a result of the Mau evictions, and these opportunities have the potential to positively impact the community's human security.

**Table 2**

*Opportunities experienced by Ogiek as a result of Evictions*

Opportunities	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Opportunity Rank
<b>Economic opportunities</b>				
Potential for compensation or reparations for land loss	72%	21%	7%	1
Increased opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business development	70%	18%	12%	2
Access to new land for cultivation or grazing	70%	25%	5%	2
<b>Social opportunities</b>				
Increased social cohesion within the Ogiek community	68%	31%	1%	1
Increased awareness and support from the broader public for Ogiek rights and issues	62%	32%	6%	2
Potential for increased engagement and partnerships with government and other stakeholders	58%	37%	5%	3
<b>Environmental preservation opportunities</b>				
Potential for restoration and conservation efforts in the Mau Forest	65%	32%	3%	1
Increased involvement and participation in sustainable resource management practice	63%	36%	1%	2
Potential for increased tourism opportunities	61%	33%	6%	3
<b>Educational Opportunities</b>				
Increased access to education for Ogiek youth	64%	35%	1%	1
Potential for development of Ogiek-specific education programs and curriculum	63%	36%	1%	2
Potential for increased awareness and education for non-Ogiek populations about Ogiek culture and history	63%	36%	1%	3
<b>Political Opportunities</b>				
Potential for increased representation and participation in government and decision-making processes	62%	37%	1%	1
Increased attention and support from international organizations and governments	61%	39%	0%	2
Potential for increased advocacy and lobbying for Ogiek rights and issues at national and international levels	60%	37%	3%	3
<b>Cultural security</b>				
Preservation of Ogiek cultural heritage	61%	38%	1%	1
Increased visibility and recognition of Ogiek culture	61%	39%	0%	2
Strengthening of community bonds	60%	38%	2%	3

### 3.13 Economic Opportunities

In terms of economic opportunities, the study found that the majority of respondents agreed that the evictions had increased opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business development (70%). Additionally, there was potential for compensation or reparations for land loss (72%), and access to new land for cultivation or grazing (70%).

These results suggest that the evictions have had both positive and negative effects on the economic opportunities of the Ogiek people. However, the potential for economic benefits is still visible to community members.

During the focus group discussions, one of the village elders said,

*We have been able to engage in small businesses that were not possible before the evictions. We have started selling firewood, charcoal, and other goods that are in high demand. We have also started small farms where we grow crops for our own consumption and for sale to neighboring communities. This has helped us to sustain our families and create employment opportunities for the youth. We have received some compensation for the land that we lost, but it was not enough to cover all the damages. We are still struggling to find new grazing land for our livestock, and this has affected our traditional way of life (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

These findings are consistent with a study by Bird et al. (2012), which argues that land reform and restitution are key factors in achieving economic security and poverty reduction for indigenous communities. The study emphasizes the importance of recognizing indigenous land rights and providing access to land for cultivation and grazing, which can lead to increased food security and income generation.

### 3.14 Social Opportunities

Concerning social opportunities, the study found that the evictions had increased social cohesion within the Ogiek community (68%). Moreover, there was increased awareness and support from the broader public for Ogiek rights and issues (62%), and there was potential for increased engagement and partnerships with government and other stakeholders (58%). These results suggest that the evictions have created opportunities for the Ogiek people to build stronger social networks and relationships.

*As a leader in the community and a member of the OPDP, I can say that the increased social cohesion within the Ogiek community is a positive outcome of the evictions. We have come together as a community to support each other in ways we never did before. We have started community projects such as building a school and a health center. We have also started sharing our resources and skills to help those who were affected the most by the evictions. Before the evictions, we were scattered and did not work together as a community, but now we have become stronger and more united. The increased awareness and support from the broader public have also been helpful. We have received support from NGOs and other organizations that have helped us in our struggle to regain our land. We have also received support from individuals who have donated resources to help those affected by the evictions. This support has been encouraging and has given us hope that we can achieve justice for our people (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).*

These findings are consistent with a study by Ryan and Deci (2017) on the human needs theory, which posits that humans have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the need to feel in control of one's own life; competence refers to the need to feel effective and capable in one's actions; and relatedness refers to the need to feel connected to others. The increased social cohesion and support from the broader public observed in the Ogiek community after the evictions can be seen as addressing the relatedness need, which in turn can contribute to the fulfillment of the other two needs.

These findings are also consistent with a study by Chaudhry (2021) on the importance of stakeholder engagement in natural resource management. The study found that stakeholder engagement can improve the management of natural resources and lead to sustainable outcomes. The potential for increased engagement and partnerships with government and other stakeholders observed in the Ogiek community after the evictions can be seen as a step towards improving natural resource management in the Mau Forest and promoting sustainable outcomes.

### 3.15 Economic Security

In terms of economic security, the study found that there was potential for restoration and conservation efforts in the Mau Forest (65%). Additionally, there was increased involvement and participation in sustainable resource management practices (63%), and the potential for increased tourism opportunities (61%). The findings showed that the evictions presented potential for restoration and conservation efforts in the Mau Forest, increased involvement and participation in sustainable resource management practices, and increased tourism opportunities. These opportunities have the potential to positively influence the economic security of the Ogiek community, which was threatened by the evictions.

During the focus group discussions, one of the village elders expressed their perspective on the economic opportunities presented by the evictions.

*We have always known that the Mau Forest is important to us as the Ogiek community. However, the evictions have made us more aware of the need to conserve the forest and the resources it provides. We have been working together to find ways to sustainably manage the forest and benefit from its resources. We are also exploring opportunities for*



*ecotourism in the area, which we believe can bring economic benefits to our community* (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).

These findings align with the human needs theory on which the study is based. The theory suggests that individuals have a hierarchy of needs, including basic physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Aden, 2021). The opportunities presented by the evictions can contribute to fulfilling the community's physiological and safety needs through economic security, as well as social and esteem needs through increased involvement in sustainable resource management practices and the potential for increased tourism opportunities.

A study conducted by Chelimo (2021) supports the potential for increased tourism opportunities in the Mau Forest. The study found that tourism has the potential to generate economic benefits for communities living near protected areas. Additionally, sustainable resource management practices have been found to contribute to economic development (Barstow et al., 2021). The involvement of the Ogiek community in sustainable resource management practices can potentially contribute to their economic security.

### 3.16 Educational Opportunities

The study found that the evictions had increased access to education for Ogiek youth (64%). Moreover, there was potential for the development of Ogiek-specific education programs and curriculum (63%), and potential for increased awareness and education for non-Ogiek populations about Ogiek culture and history (63%). These results suggest that the evictions have created opportunities for the Ogiek people to learn more about their culture and history and to benefit from education.

During the focus group discussions, one of the village elders confirmed the findings of this study.

*We have seen more of our children enroll in school since the evictions. Before, we had to travel long distances to access schools, but now there are schools closer to us. This has made it easier for us to educate our children* (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).

The elder also mentioned that the evictions had sparked interest in developing education programs that catered specifically to the Ogiek community.

*We have always felt that our children were not learning enough about their culture and history in school. Now that we have more access to education, we can develop programs that incorporate our culture and history into the curriculum. This will benefit not only the Ogiek community but also non-Ogiek populations who will learn about our way of life* (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).

These findings reflect the human needs theory on which this study is based. According to the theory, human beings have basic needs that must be met to achieve their well-being, including the need for education and cultural identity (Tay & Diener, 2011). The increased access to education and the potential for Ogiek-specific education programs and curriculum address these needs by providing the Ogiek community with the opportunity to learn more about their culture and history, which is essential for their well-being.

These results are in line with a study by Chefor et al. (2021) on the effects of displacement on Indian education. The study found that forced displacement had a negative impact on education but also created opportunities for education programs that incorporated the culture and history of the displaced communities. Similarly, the evictions in Mau Forest not only created challenges for the Ogiek community but also created opportunities for education programs that incorporated Ogiek culture and history.

### 3.17 Political Representation

According to the study's findings, the Ogiek community had an opportunity after the Mau evictions, which had a significant impact on their human security. The study found that political security was a crucial component of human security, and its absence could lead to instability and insecurity. However, the eviction of the Ogiek people from their ancestral lands created political opportunities for the community. The Ogiek people are able to increase their representation and participation in government and decision-making processes, as well as receive increased attention and support from international organizations and governments. There was also potential for increased advocacy and lobbying for Ogiek rights and issues at national and international levels.

During the focus group discussions, one of the village elders, a community leader, said:

*We were never consulted before the eviction. But now, we have been recognized, and our leaders have been invited to speak in government meetings. We are also receiving more attention from international organizations, which is making our voices heard at the international level. This has given us hope for a better future* (FGD, village elders, November 15, 2022).

Research by Cherotich (2022) supports the findings of this study, demonstrating that political empowerment is essential for the security and well-being of indigenous peoples. The study found that political empowerment leads to greater control over resources and decision-making processes, which can enhance community resilience and well-being.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusions

The study's findings showed that the Ogiek people's top three legal and policy challenges are the absence of clear policies on the eviction of forest communities, a failure to abide by national and international laws protecting the rights of indigenous communities, and a failure to carry out court orders and recommendations on the eviction process. The study also identified displacement from their traditional livelihoods and economic activities, loss of property and resources, burial sites, religious shrines, and inadequate compensation and resettlement support from the government as the top three socio-economic challenges faced by the Ogiek people. Physical harm and injuries resulting from the eviction process, lack of access to basic healthcare and social services, and psychological trauma and emotional distress are the top three humanitarian and health challenges. As to the challenges and opportunities for both the government and the Ogiek community, the study therefore concludes that despite the challenges brought by evictions, opportunities for the Ogiek were created with the help of the government to embrace modern, sustainable ways of making a living.

### 4.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that the government ensure that the Ogiek community is involved in decision-making processes related to the management of the Mau Forest, particularly with regard to issues of sustainable land use and conservation. The government should also ensure that the Ogiek community is adequately represented in decision-making bodies related to the Mau Forest, such as the Mau Forest Trust Fund.

The study also recommends clear and transparent guidelines regarding the eviction process and any form of compensation set and discussed with the affected households so as to avoid unnecessary impoverishment and protect livelihoods. This information is useful as it will better inform forest managers, policymakers, and other actors in their efforts to fairly and responsibly manage and balance ecological and social development.

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