



Kipsigis Community Clans

P.O. Box 763-20200 Kericho, Kenya
P.O. Box 315-40200 Bomet, Kenya

Mr. Tom Franks
Chair of the Board of Directors
Ethical Tea Partnership

11/7/2024

Lipton - Violation of Human Rights

We are Kipsigis Community Clans Organization representing the voice of the indigenous 1.5 million Kipsigis people in Kericho and Bomet counties in Kenya. Between 1902 and 1963, our Kipsigis Community Lands in Kenya were forcefully taken by the British colonial Government and given, or leased, to European White Settlers. A portion of this land is currently operating as a tea estate for Lipton in Kericho, Kenya.

We applaud the work being carried out by Ethical Tea Partnership to build a thriving, socially just, and environmentally sustainable tea sector and to catalyse long-term, systemic change, to benefit everybody who works in tea – especially people in tea-producing regions.

Lipton has made public commitments to “responsible sourcing” which includes a commitment to adhere to the principle of gaining “free, prior and informed consent” from the local community regarding the use and/or transfer of community land. (ref. Lipton’s Responsible Sourcing Policy, May 2023 – Item 11). On 7th May, Lipton announced the sale of its tea estates in Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda to Browns Investments (of Sri Lanka). This transaction includes the sale of the tea estate on our ancestral land. It has been announced without the free, prior, and informed consent of the local community stakeholders including the Kipsigis Community Clans Organization. Furthermore, our local community has offered to match the other bidder to buy the tea estate under community ownership. Our offer was ignored and then rejected. These are acts of discrimination against a marginalized indigenous community.

To catalyse change in the tea industry, it is vital that major brand-owners such as Lipton are held accountable for their human rights commitments. We therefore request Ethical Tea Partnership to publicly demand that Lipton stands by its commitment to gaining “free, prior and informed consent” from the local community in Kericho. Inaction on the part of Ethical Tea Partnership would perpetuate the historic injustice suffered by our community.

Yours Faithfully,

Signed:

John K. Rop
Chairman

Signed:

Joel K. Kimetto
Secretary General

Signed:

Joseph K. Towett
Treasurer

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF KIPSIGIS COMMUNITY CLANS ORGANIZATION / PARTNERS