



AS IT IS

## Oil Drilling Begins at Chinese-run Field in Uganda

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Drilling has begun at a Chinese-operated oil field in Uganda. Officials in the East African nation say they expect oil production to begin by 2025.

A spokesman for Uganda's ministry of energy and mineral development, Solomon Muyita, spoke to The Associated Press about the **drilling** operation. He said the start of drilling at the Kingfisher oil field in the Kikuube district of western Uganda was a big step toward industrial oil production.

The China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) operates the field. The project has been strongly criticized by environmental groups.

Uganda is estimated to have recoverable oil reserves of at least 1.4 billion barrels.

Muyita also said construction would begin this year on the 1,443-kilometer East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline. That project is being developed jointly by CNOOC and the French energy company TotalEnergies. The pipeline will run between Uganda and the Indian Ocean port of Tanga in Tanzania.

Officials have described the project as the world's longest heated oil pipeline. It should also be completed by 2025, Muyita said. Climate activists have raised concerns about the effects of the pipeline on local communities and the environment.

Last year, Uganda's president was angered by a resolution by the European Parliament that urged the international community to put "**maximum** pressure" on Ugandan and Tanzanian officials over the project. The resolution said the pipeline would threaten environments "in protected and sensitive ecosystems, including the shores of Lake Albert."

The EU parliament also warned that the pipeline project placed 100,000 people “at **imminent** risk” of displacement, without providing effective guarantees of payment, known as compensation.

Ugandan officials consider the pipeline important to economic development. They argue that oil wealth can lift millions of people out of poverty.

Uganda’s National Environmental Management Authority has sought to ease environmental concerns. And Muyita told the AP that thousands of families displaced by the project have already been compensated.

I’m Bryan Lynn.

*The Associated Press reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**drill** – *v.* to use a tool or machine to make holes in a hard substance

**maximum** – *adj.* the largest amount possible

**imminent** – *adj.* coming or happening very soon

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