

# Radiating Africa – The Menace of Uranium Mining in Tanzania

## Exploration:

- Since middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century uranium exploration was pushed forward
- 1970s: systematic research by mining companies (support: German Uranerzbergbau GmbH)
- In 2009 announcement of 70 licenses to various companies by the Minister for Mining and Energy
- Numerous exploration companies active in Tanzania: Mantra Resources (Australia) – their flagship project Mkuju River within Selous Game Park has been taken over by Canadian Uranium One and Russian ARMZ (100% daughter of Russian state owned ROSATOM), other examples: Uranex NL (Australia), East African Resources, Atomic Resources and KORES (South Korea)

## Selous Game Reserve / Mkuju River:

The project which has reached the most advanced state is the **Mkuju River Project** in Namtumbo District, Ruvuma Region. The project is partly situated within the Selous Game Reserve, a National Park-like area which is protected as World Heritage Site. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee agreed in St. Petersburg in 2012 to change the borders of the World Heritage site to pave the way for the mining project. Numerous other companies are also pushing forward exploration projects in this area – with already noticeable consequences for human beings and nature.

**Accessibility:** Mkuju River Project area ca. 80 km away from the border of the next villages; the road leading through the villages to the site is not yet suitable for heavy trucks, upgrade necessary

**Current status:** Explorations has reached a final stage and owners are preparing extraction

**Current legal status:** In 2013 a special mining license has been issued. Currently a Mine Development Agreement (MDA) is negotiated with the Tanzanian government. Timelines for start of mining are varying – currently 2016 is discussed.

## Bahi/Manyoni/Itiqi/Handa:

Various companies active in this area; mostly Mantra Resources and Uranex NL.

**Accessibility:** In populated area, ca. 600.000 inhabitants in the area, easily accessible



CESOPE, 2011. Bahi wetland overview

## Livelihood conditions of population and environment in the affected areas

### Bahi/Manyoni/Itiqi/Handa:

- Area dominated by Bahi Wetland – periodic flooding create unique ecologic conditions which enable various economic activities
- Agriculture (main economic activity), especially rice farming, plays a dominant role
- Forest products harvesting, livestock keeping
- Fish and water products harvesting. Bahi Wetland is considered part of the East African Flamingo Habitat Network and might be protected under Ramsar Convention.
- Human rights violations

### Mkuju River and Bahi/Manyoni/Itiqi/Handa:

- Menace of destruction of unique nature and unique ecological conditions
- Negative impact of uranium exploration on environment and population due to (chemical) waste, drilling, violation of human rights and international safety regulations



Mantra Resources Ltd, 2010. Annual Report

## FACT SHEET

### (Potential) impact of uranium mining

- Land destruction and water demand
- Potential release of toxic and radioactive compounds
- The principal risks: human health (particularly if radiation spreads to agricultural and livestock systems and via the food chain) and environmental damages, e.g. water contamination, threat to natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity of the area
- Possibly impact on the genetic resources
- Financial loss for the country – the profit remains with the mining companies
- Hampers sustainable development in the country

### Policy recommendations and conclusions

- The Tanzanian government should develop its own capacity and consequently an adequate regulatory framework and policy, and supervise the implementation of these regulations that govern the mining of uranium in the country
- Indispensable: dialogue and consent between all interested and the affected parties and awareness campaign
- The Tanzanian government should ensure that legal procedures are adhered to and civil and human rights are respected
- Highly valuable areas like natural reserves and areas of special importance for food security like Bahi Wetland have to be excluded from uranium mining
- The Tanzanian government should determine the levels and limits of radiation before the companies start mining uranium in the area
- Perspectives: the Selous Game Reserve area could be further developed into a tourist attraction spot, in addition to the current economic activities
- Measures for storage of radioactive waste are required
- Uranium should be included in the (draft) guideline of the European Union on *Responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas (guideline towards an integrated EU approach)*
- Involved stakeholders, multinational companies and nuclear energy consuming countries should recognize and take their responsibility and fulfill criteria of corporate accountability
- The whole fuel chain should be more transparent and monitored more
- Nuclear energy (with all its negative consequences as e.g. uranium mining) should be abandoned

The basis for this Fact Sheet is the project *Enhancing transparency in the uranium chain and supporting responsible practices; uranium mining: a comparison of producing and near-producing countries.*



#### More information:

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