

# African Leaders Must Help Continent, Not Sell It Off

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

The struggle for Africa's independence from its colonial rulers has always been centred on land and the natural resources beneath.

For decades its resources were looted by these imperialist masters. Gold, oil and diamonds are some of the resources still extracted from Africa by multinational companies without its people benefiting from them.

African countries remain poor as if they are not major producers of these jewels.

Today, water and land are valuable resources that are being sold and leased to multinational companies by African governments and this leaves our people without land to farm and less water available for their agricultural projects.

The disturbing trend is that African governments do too little to empower African farmers. The ongoing scramble, that of partitioning African land into commodities for foreign companies is a new form of colonialism.

The modus operandi of these companies is to lease huge stretches of agricultural land not only to farm but to control water resources.

The challenge with this approach is that Africans are not in charge of their own food production. This in turn defeats our endeavour to feed ourselves and take charge of our economy.

It must not sit well with us as heads of states give away our agricultural land simply because African farmers are behind with technology.

It should be our collective responsibility to empower African farmers. Why are African governments removing their people from their land and leasing it to foreign owned companies? Why are we not standing up against our own governments, who even take water rights away from small African farmers to give them to foreign multinationals.

Mali is the recent example which has leased 470ha of land to UK and Saudi Arabian companies which are exporting their harvests to their own countries.

Even the Nile has not been spared from the problem of leasing land and giving away water rights, now threatening to suck it dry. Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan and Egypt have leased out 8 640000ha of agricultural land.

This means that those millions of hectares in Africa belong to foreign companies. Kenya and

Mozambique are other African governments that gave away water rights and land to foreign companies while literally destroying their local agricultural schemes run by small farmers, including rural women engaged in subsistence farming.

Africa is being auctioned to the highest bidder. The irony is that sooner or later the continent will be economically controlled by foreigners, leaving only political control to indigenous populations.

This will undo the blood and sweat of the founding fathers who fought for liberation from colonial rule.

As a way to reverse the imbalance created by this unsustainable situation, African governments must revoke lease agreements with these foreign companies and empower their citizens by funding locally controlled projects that will employ locals and exploit the resources for their benefit.

#### KEY POINTS

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- » For decades African resources were looted by colonial and imperialist masters
- » Gold, oil and diamonds are some of the resources extracted from Africa without the people benefiting from them.
- » African countries remain poor as if they are not major producers of these commodities
- » Today water and land are valuable resources that are being sold and leased to multinational companies

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