

A PREVIEW FROM THE "EARTH DEFENDERS" GRAPHIC NOVELLA

THE KEEPERS



UN 
environment
programme

THE KEEPERS

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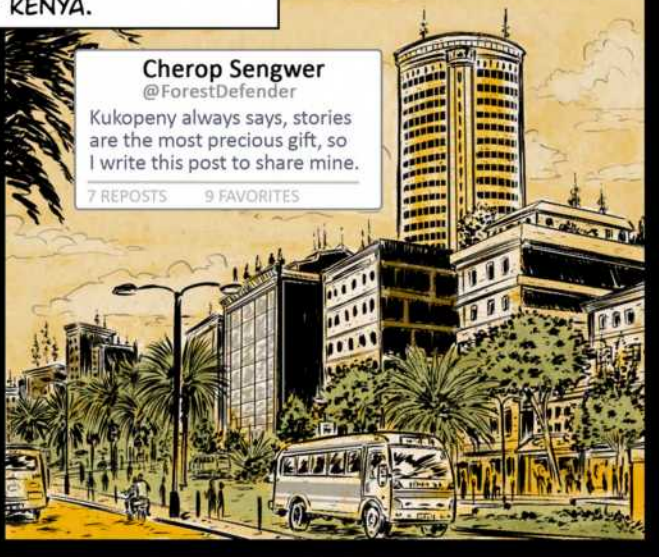
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THE KEEPERS

EMBOBUT FOREST,
KENYA

NAIROBI, CAPITAL CITY
OF KENYA.



Cherop Sengwer
@ForestDefender

Kukopeny always says, stories
are the most precious gift, so
I write this post to share mine.

7 REPOSTS 9 FAVORITES

It's not a happy one. Today
I stared into the gaping mouth
of cultural destruction and
land grabs.

19 REPOSTS 27 FAVORITES



I left my home in the Embobut
Forest to get a degree. To
protect our people. Our land.

64 REPOSTS 303 FAVORITES



But today...
it was useless.

SIGHHHHHH



My own family and Sengwer
brothers and sisters were
driven out of their home.

256 REPOSTS 842 FAVORITES



We have lived in union with
the forest for generations.

718 REPOSTS 2029 FAVORITES



And our own government
evicted us.

1934 REPOSTS 4671 FAVORITES



10 HOURS EARLIER.

IT'S SO GREAT TO HAVE YOU VISIT, CHEROP!

I KNOW!

HERE.. YOU CAN HELP ME CARRY THE HONEY.

OKAY!

KUKOPENY! WHO ARE ALL THOSE GREEN MEN?



IT'S THE KFS*! GO TELL YOUR IYOO!
RUN!

*KENYA FOREST SERVICE



CHEROP, IS THERE SOMEONE YOU CAN CALL?!

NO. I DON'T GET CELL SERVICE HERE.

BUT LET'S TALK TO THEM. THIS IS OUR LAND, THE LAW PROTECTS US.

ABWONY CHI KAU.**

YOU NEED TO LEAVE.
NOW!

**WELCOME TO OUR HOME.



THIS IS CONSERVATION LAND. YOU CANNOT LIVE HERE.

ACTUALLY, THIS IS OUR ANCESTOR'S LAND. THE CONSTITUTION SAYS...

NO! WE WON'T LEAVE.

THIS IS...
...NOT A DISCUSSION!

STOP!
I HAVE RIGHTS!



BROTHERS, PLEASE! FOR GENERATIONS OUR FAMILIES HELD AND PROTECTED THIS LAND.



OUR COUNTRY AND THE U.N. RECOGNIZE OUR "TRADITIONAL RIGHTS" TO THESE LANDS...

...IT'S MORE THAN JUST WORDS ON...



ENOUGH!

SHRIEEE!



BY ORDER OF THE **LAW** YOU **WILL** LEAVE!

DO.

NOT.

MOVE.

PLEASE... JUST..



WE HAVE NOWHERE TO GO.

IT'S ALL WE HAVE.



NOT MY PROBLEM...

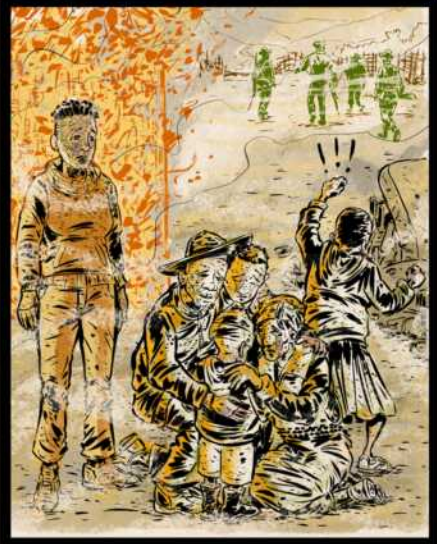



...IT'S YOURS.



YOU DO THIS ONE.

PLEASE...

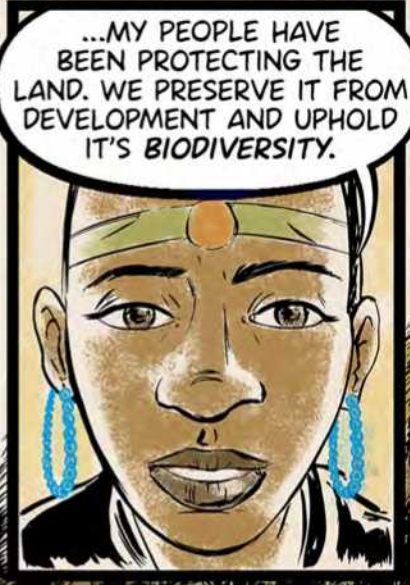





I AM A SENGWER.
THE EMOBOT
FOREST WHERE I WAS
BORN, IS IN CRISIS.




BEFORE ANY LAWS
WERE INSCRIBED ON
PAPER, SINCE TIME
IMMEMORIAL...



...MY PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN PROTECTING THE
LAND. WE PRESERVE IT FROM
DEVELOPMENT AND UPHOLD
IT'S BIODIVERSITY.




AND YET,
WE ARE TARGETED
AND VIOLENTLY
EVICTED.



A HEALTHY FOREST
IS THE ANSWER TO THE
CLIMATE CRISIS AND
WE SENGWER ARE
THE KEY.




THIS IS OUR
LAND, NOT SOME
TERRA NULLIUS
WAITING FOR THE
GOVERNMENT
TO GIVE IT
MEANING.



WE HONOR OUR
ANCESTORS BY
FIGHTING TO PROTECT
OUR FOREST OF MILK
AND HONEY.
...



WE ARE THE
KEEPERS.



SINCE 2009, MORE THAN 2000
SENGWER HOMES HAVE BEEN BURNED
DOWN AND 5000 PEOPLE EVICTED.
SCORES OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS, RELIGIOUS
INSTITUTIONS, AND SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN
DESTROYED. WOMEN AND CHILDREN
HAVE ENDURED UNTOLD SUFFERING
DURING THE EVICTIONS, INCLUDING
SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

THE ATTACKS CONTINUE.

End

EARTH DEFENDERS

THE UNTOLD STORIES OF ACTIVISTS
AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.

SIX ORIGINAL STORIES THAT SHINE A
SPOTLIGHT ON ENVIRONMENTAL
DEFENDERS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE
URGENT NEED TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:



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