

To:

Namibia's Minister of Mines and Energy, Mr. Tom Alweendo

Namibia's Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Mr. Pohamba Shifeta

Open letter

December 23, 2020

No oil drilling and fracking in Namibia's unique landscape worthy of protection

Dear Ministers Tom Alweendo and Pohamba Shifeta,

we, the undersigned groups and organizations, write to you as members of the German civil society and passionate environmental/climate protectors to express our dismay about the intended exploration and extraction of oil in one of the most pristine areas in Namibia.

According to its own statements, the Canadian company ReconAfrica Limited plans to develop the so-called Kavango Basin and, in case of a promising exploration, to extract oil mainly from shale layers in the licensed area in Namibian and Botswana for a period of 25 years.[1] For this purpose, the company has especially hired Nick Steinsberger, who is called the "father of modern fracking", as senior vice president for the drilling projects.[2].

As you know, the licenses awarded in Namibia and Botswana occupy ecologically highly sensitive - in some cases very arid - nature reserves, UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Ramsar sites. The region is also home to one of the last large elephant populations in the world[3].

The largest nature reserve on earth (the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, abbreviated KaZa) is also affected. Since 2012, KaZa has been financially supported by the state-owned bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau on behalf of the German government as the main funder[4]. To the north, the licenses directly border on the Kavango River, which flows in the globally unique Okavango Delta.[5]

The region targeted for oil exploration is not only a unique treasure for international institutions, scientists and environmentalists, but also a very popular destination for tourists from all over the world. As you know, the tourism sector as a whole contributes to one-third of Namibia's gross domestic product - with the potential to increase.[6]

Contrary to recent pronouncements,[7] ReconAfrica will need to conduct at least one fracking operation at the end of the exploration phase in order to decide whether it is worth entering the production phase. During the envisaged 25-year production period, the large-scale extraction of shale oil - which is also a possible development presented to investors - will not be possible without the extensive use of fracking and the successive industrialization of the licensed areas.[8] The question of cumulative effects of the production phase therefore already arises in the exploration phase.

The decisive factor for ReconAfrica is access to millions or even billions of liters of fresh water to carry out the necessary fracking operations. In its July 2020 Research Report, the company refers to the need for water usage for "*fracture stimulation*". However, ReconAfrica also emphasizes that this would not be a problem for them in this highly arid area because water surface rights and access would be provided by the government.[9] Competition with the water supply of the affected population as well as the water needs of the highly sensitive flora and fauna are unavoidable conflicts for the envisaged extraction period. This would also violate the internationally enshrined human right to water.

The enormous and diverse negative effects on the climate, the environment and human health caused by the fracking technique are very well documented. These include stress on road infrastructure and increased risk of accidents from increased heavy truck traffic, the unresolved problem caused by the disposal of highly toxic wastewater, failing well integrity, methane leaks, extremely high water consumption, and the risk of the contamination of soils, streams, and areas used for drinking water production (such as the Kavango River and the Okavango Delta).

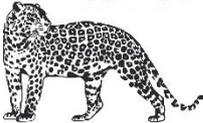
The most extensive documentation can be found in the Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction). The updated seventh version was published on December 14, 2020, explicitly referencing the ReconAfrica case.[10]

For good reasons, fracking - particularly in shale deposits - faces fierce opposition in all parts of the and has been banned in many regions. Even if fracking won't be at stake, the extraction of oil in the targeted area of Namibia as such would significantly threaten the ecological balance and destroy all existing sustainable development prospects and revenue potential for decades to come.

We believe that Namibia's true treasure lies in what it has been able to preserve and that is truly unique in the world.

We hereby declare our solidarity with all activists who courageously stand in the way of this project and at the same time urge you to put an end to ReconAfrica's plans.

In the hope that we have laid the foundation for an open international dialogue, we remain with kind regards

Organisation/Grassroots group	Logo
<p>Andy Gheorghiu Consulting</p>	<p>andy gheorghiu consulting</p> 
<p>urgewald</p>	<p>urgewald</p> 
<p>Dachverband der Kritischen Aktionärinnen und Aktionäre e.V.</p>	

<p>Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (BUND)</p>	
<p>Deutsche Umwelthilfe</p>	
<p>Energy Watch Group</p>	
<p>AGU (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Umweltbeauftragten der Gliedkirchen der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland)</p>	
<p>PowerShift e.V.</p>	
<p>Bürgerinitiative Gesundheit und Klimaschutz Unterelbe</p>	

IG Fracking-freies Artland
e.V.



Wittorfer für Umwelt und
Gesundheit e.V.



Berliner Wassertisch e.V.



Forum Ökologie & Papier



Ökumenisches Netz Rhein-
Mosel-Saar e.V.



Bürgerinitiative "Hände weg von Schwedeneck"



Bürgerinitiative "Saubere Umwelt & Energie Altmark"



Bernd Ebeling, AWA-Ingenieure



AG Erdgas-Erdöl-Fracking der Bürgerinitiative Umweltschutz Lüchow-Dannenberg e. V.



Bürgerinitiative gegen CO₂-Endlager e.V.



**BürgerInneninitiative
Umweltschutz Uelzen**



**Arbeitskreis Fracking
Braunschweiger Land**



BI lebenswertes Korbach

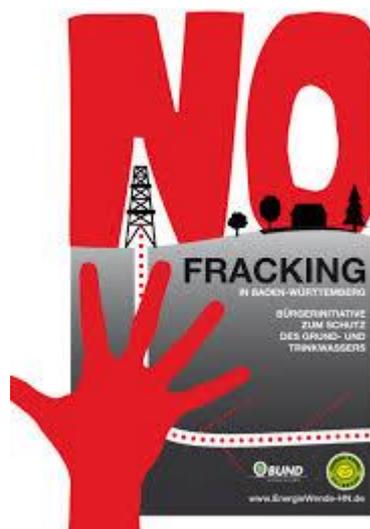


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... aus Liebe zur **Natur**
... aus Liebe zum **Land**
... unseren **Kindern** eine Chance
... aus Liebe zur **Zukunft**
... wir meinen es ernst - mit uns müsst ihr rechnen – **BürgerStark!!!**

**NoFracking Bodensee-
Oberschwaben**



<p>Aktionsbündnis No Fracking Mülheim an der Ruhr</p>	
<p>Bürgerinitiative Rote Hand Thedinghausen/Achim</p>	 <p>BI RoteHand Thedinghausen/ Achim</p>
<p>Bürgerinitiative Walle gegen GasBohren</p>	 <p>Keine Chemie in unsere Erde!</p> <p>www.gegen-gasbohren.de</p>
<p>Bürgerinitiative "No Fracking" im Erdgasfeld Völkersen</p>	
<p>Bürgerinitiative Flecken Langwedel gegen Gasbohren</p>	 <p>BÜRGERINITIATIVE Flecken Langwedel gegen Gasbohren</p>

**Bürgerinitiative Lintler Geest
gegen Gasbohren**



**Bürgerinitiative Intschede
Wesermarsch ohne
Bohrtürme**



**Bürgerinitiative
FrackingFreies Hamburg**



**Bürgerinitiative für
Gesundheit
Hemslingen/Söhlingen**



**Bürgerinitiative LK
Oldenburg**



**Prof. Dr. phil. Wilhelm J. G.
Möhlig, Jurist, Afrikanist und
Autor**

[1] <https://reconafrika.com/operations/kavango-basin/>

<https://reconafrika.com/wp-content/uploads/ReconAfrica-Investor-Presentation-6.pdf>

[2] <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/reconafrika-appoints-mr-nick-steinsberger-as-senior-vice-president-drilling-and-completions-840808441.html>

[3] <https://www.ramsar.org/wetland/namibia>

[4] <https://www.kfw.de/stories/umwelt/naturschutz/kaza-nationalpark/>

[5] <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2020/10/oil-drilling-fracking-planned-okavango-wilderness/>

[6] https://www.met.gov.na/files/downloads/9f1_Executive%20Summary%20NSTGDS%20and%20NTIPPS.pdf

[7] <https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/africa/266953/namibia-reconafrika-fracking-drilling/>

[8] <https://www.fractracker.org/map/national/>

[9] <https://reconafrika.com/wp-content/uploads/ReconAfrica-Research-Report-July-2020.pdf>

[10] <https://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>