

Investor Relations, Media & Sustainability Team
Aggreko PLC
(Group Head Office)
120 Bothwell Street, Glasgow
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March 9, 2021

Dear Investor Relations, Media & Sustainability Team,

We are writing to you on behalf of Freedom United, the world's largest anti-slavery community, and Eritrea Focus, an association of NGOs, human rights organizations, exile and refugee groups and individuals concerned by the gross human rights abuses in Eritrea, to urge Aggreko to reconsider its agreement with Danakali on the Colluli Potash Project in Eritrea. We are calling for all foreign businesses and institutions to divest from Eritrea given the endemic nature of forced conscript labor and for companies to publicly declare their opposition to the government's practice of forced conscription.¹

Given that Aggreko maintains that your business practices comply with human rights laws and that Aggreko states, in your [Modern Slavery Statement](#), to have a "zero tolerance approach" to modern slavery, we would like to share relevant information about how this project benefits from and contributes to modern slavery and gross human rights violations.

Eritrea's National Service program forces Eritreans to work for an indefinite period, sometimes lasting for decades, under abusive working conditions, including torture, imprisonment and threats to life and family. The United Nations Human Rights Council has likened Eritrea's system of forced labor to slavery² and has called for Eritrea's government to be referred to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity³. In addition to the military, National Service conscripts also work for state companies, including in the mining and construction sectors.

As the Colluli project is a joint venture with the Eritrean National Mining Company (ENAMCO), there are allegations that National Service conscripts are working and more will work on this project. Furthermore, it is certain that profits from this project will bolster the state's ability to sustain this forced conscription system. Much of the government's income comes from mining projects. Indeed, the UN has noted that "one important and undisputed source of revenue is proceeds from mining operations owned jointly by the Eritrean state and a transnational corporation⁴."

¹ <https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/eritrea/>

² https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColEritrea/A_HRC_29_CRP-1.pdf

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20779&LangID=E>

⁴ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColEritrea/A_HRC_32_CRP.1_read-only.pdf

Canadian mining giant, Nevsun Resources — which, as Aggreko’s former partner, you must be aware — was the subject of a lawsuit alleging forced conscript labor and torture at its Bisha mine in Eritrea⁵ in the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Nevsun had claimed it was explicit with the Eritrean government and local suppliers that National Service conscripts could not be used on its project and yet, potentially hundreds of conscripts were made to work on the Bisha mine⁶. As you know, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed Nevsun’s appeal of the case and allowed it to proceed in British Columbia, ultimately leading to an out-of-court settlement between the Eritrean plaintiffs and Nevsun.

The Nevsun case should be a warning to any company planning to work in Eritrea, especially in the mining sector, and that to do so is to risk complicity with the state’s ongoing abusive system of forced conscription. Incidentally, Bisha was a joint project between Nevsun and ENAMCO. Just like Nevsun, Danakali cannot ensure that National Service conscripts will not contribute to this project. In fact, in 2018, Danakali’s former project director, Seamus Cornelius, admitted that the company had conducted no human rights due diligence audits and “[couldn’t] guarantee” that forced labor on its projects “will never happen⁷.” Furthermore, Ron McMullen, the former U.S. ambassador to Eritrea, told Reuters that “Can you operate in Eritrea without benefiting from forced labor? Probably not. No company working there can claim to be lily white.”⁸

Aggreko has already provided power to one mining company in Eritrea that was subsequently taken to the British Columbia Supreme Court over alleged charges of forced labor, slavery, and torture. If Aggreko continues to partner with Danakali on this project, it is with open eyes to the high risk that Aggreko will break its commitment that workers across all operations are not subject to “any form of forced, involuntary or debt bonded labour.” Furthermore, through this partnership, Aggreko would certainly once again be benefitting the Eritrean government which is responsible for the enslavement of over 450,000 people, placing Eritrea at number two on the Global Slavery Index with a rate of modern slavery second only to North Korea⁹.

The only way that Aggreko can ensure it stays true to the terms of its Modern Slavery Statement is to divest from operations in Eritrea immediately. The company may be liable to legal action as it is listed on the London Stock Exchange which is something we may be forced to explore. Furthermore, and when we have evidence that Aggreko makes direct or indirect payments to the Eritrean government for minerals extraction, we will demand that the Financial Conduct Authority carries out its own investigation.

⁵ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/settlement-amnesty-scc-africa-mine-nevsun-1.5774910>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/trafficking-canada-eritrea-idAFL5N1125D420150917>

⁷ [Mining-and-Repression-in-Eritrea-Corporate-Complicity-in-Human-Rights-Abuses-EMBARGOED-COPY.pdf \(eritreahub.org\)](https://www.reuters.com/article/trafficking-canada-eritrea-idAFL5N1125D420150917)

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/trafficking-canada-eritrea-idAFL5N1125D420150917>

⁹ <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/data/country-data/eritrea/>

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We hope that you will seriously reflect on our concerns. We are available for further dialogue or clarification on any of the above.

Sincerely,

Joanna Ewart-James
Executive Director, Freedom United

Habte Hagos
Chairperson, Eritrea Focus