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## Indian companies involved in Ethiopia land grab: activists

Indian investors eying Ethiopia should ensure that the local population is consulted before they are displaced for projects that involve the transfer of vast tracts of land, activists on Tuesday said, citing what they alleged were multiple instances of land grab in the east African country.

The Ethiopian government had committed "egregious violations of human rights" in leasing over 600,000 hectares of land to Indian companies, Anuradha Mittal of the US-based Oakland Institute said in New Delhi on Tuesday - charges that country's government has consistently denied.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, Obang Metho, the exiled head of the Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE) said the India must choose whether to support globally established human rights, as the world's largest democracy. "I call this daylight robbery," Metho said.

Several thousand members of the Anywaa tribe have been displaced, and are being denied access to their farm lands, Nyikaw Ochalla, the director of the Anywaa Survival Organization - a group supporting the community - said.

The Ethiopian government under the late former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi started attracting large scale investment from foreign countries, including India, China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Zenawi and current Ethiopian officials have insisted that the investment will help develop Ethiopia, ranked near the bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index.

They have also asserted that displacement of locals in land deals with Indian companies has been minimal.

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