

# Broker held over Shs10b land scam

**Defence.** Mr Warren Mwesigye testified before the land commission that he saw an opportunity to make profit through the Land Fund.

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**KAMPALA.** A land broker was arrested by police detectives and delivered to the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters on Wednesday to testify in a Shs10b land scam.

Mr Warren Mwesigye, who describes himself as a real estate dealer, was then quizzed over payment of more than Shs10b from the Land Fund in compensation for 20 properties owned by eight purported absentee landlords in Kibaale District.

They were paid under the Land Fund through Uganda Land Commission (ULC).

Mr Mwesigye had defied witness summons requiring him to appear before the probe over accusations of corruption, influence peddling and conspiracy to defraud landlords of their entitlements.

Appearing before the Justice Catherine Bamugemereire-led commission, Mr Mwesigye said he dealt with lawyers Richard Buzibira and Frank Tumusiime to access more than Shs10b from the Land Fund.



**Implicated.** Mr Warren Mwesigye before the land probe commission on Wednesday. PHOTO BY EPHRAIM KASOZI

The lawyers allegedly purporting to hold letters of Attorney for their clients processed and received billions of shillings on both their individual and company bank accounts.

Mr Buzibira had earlier in his testimony said some of the clients instructed him personally and as a law firm to handle all

the processes on their behalf.

It is alleged that Mr Buzibira's clients presented titles for land where they are registered as administrators having acquired letters of administration from Hoima Chief Magistrate's Court, which had no jurisdiction to handle transactions above Shs100m while some of the titles were a

fraud. Mr Mwesigye amused the probe when he confessed he did not visit the land that he purportedly bought and that the titles were never transferred to his name as required by law.

It is alleged the same land titles remained in custody of Mr Buzibira, who received the money from the Land Fund in the names of former landlords.

Mr Mwesigye admitted he paid the landlords trivial amounts of money purporting to buy their valuations in order to access the billions from Land Fund.

He said he borrowed from lenders, including Legacy Group owned by businessman Ben Kavuya, who charged him hefty interests.

He said he foresaw an opportunity to make profit through the Land Fund because land was cheaper in Kibaale compared to other areas in the country.

## SOME OF THE DEALS

Mr Mwesigye identified those whose interests were purportedly bought as Mr Joseph Sande, whom he paid Shs360m for the land he sold to ULC at Shs2.4b in less than two years. He also paid Dimitilia Katusabe Shs95m but ULC valued and paid Mr Mwesigye Shs700m for the same land.

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