

## PATEL FAILED TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTS TO BACK UP HIS CLAIMS THAT HE OWNS THE PROPERTIES

BY EDWARD ANYOLI

THERE was tension between the land probe commission and a witness during the hearing in Wandegaya, Kampala, when a witness angered the chairperson, Justice Catherine Bamugemereire.

On Thursday, the commission was treated to drama when Parful Patel, 80, a Mbale-based businessman turned hostile towards the judge.

Patel, on several occasions, remained defiant and casually answered questions. At some point, he refused to respond to questions being put to him by the commission's lead counsel.

Earlier, Bamugemereire had warned Patel to answer questions as put to him by the lead counsel, but he disregarded the advice.

"The problem is not your language, the problem is whether you take us serious or not," she said.

Patel, who also appeared upset, retorted saying: "I do not take matters seriously? Is that what you are suggesting? I think you are not happy, from the very beginning I could see you are not happy."

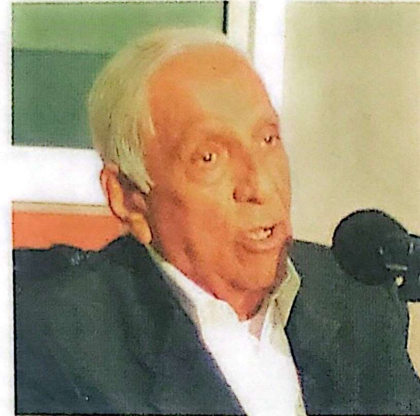
"Are you saying you do not take us seriously? Then you speak like somebody who takes us seriously," Bamugemereire added.

"Please continue and do not speak back at me. In case you are used to speaking back at Africans think again," the visibly angered Bamugemereire said.

Patel's response further angered the judge when he said: "Do not bring the matter of Africans here. I am not against Africans myself I am an African, we are all Africans."

At this point, the judge ordered the Police attached to the commission to take Patel to Wandegaya Police Station for contempt.

"Can you take this man to Wandegaya. He will come back tomorrow when he has cooled down," she ordered, adding: "Mr. Patel, we cannot stand your racist stance. We



Patel



Bamugemereire

# Witness angers judge at land probe hearing

have watched your body language the whole morning, we cannot put up with your insolence. We have put up with your attitude, please get up and go."

### ■ CLAIMS AGAINST PATEL

The commission is investigating several allegations against Patel pertaining properties in Mbale.

Properties being claimed by Patel include Plot 5 Nakibo lane, Plot 33/35 Pallisa Road, Elgon Avenue, Plot 34 Nkokonjeru Terrace, Plot 9/11 Nkokonjeru Terrace, Plot 16 North Road, Plot 38 Nkokonjeru Terrace and Plot 2 Bugwere Road.

However, during the hearing, Patel failed to produce documents to back up his claims that he owns the properties.

Patel told the commission that some of the documents are with his lawyers, while others are kept at his home and promised to give them to the commission.

He said he acquired some of the properties through powers of attorney, while others he inherited from his late father. Patel said he owns the properties jointly with his brothers and sisters.

He said he has filed a suit in Mbale High Court and Court of Appeal seeking to repossess the properties.

### ■ COMMISSION TEAM

Justice Bamugemereire is the commission chairperson. The commissioners are Fredrick Ruhindi, Mary Oduka Ochan, Robert Ssebunnya, Joyce Gunze Habaasa, Dr Rose Nakayi, and George Bagonza Tinkamanyire.

Ebert Byenkya is the lead counsel, John Bosco Suuza is assistant lead counsel, while Judiciary deputy registrar of planning and development Olive Kazaarwe Mukwaya, heads the secretariat.

### ■ COMMISSION MANDATE

The commission's mandate is to probe efficiency of the laws, policies and processes of land registration, acquisition, administration and management.

It is also tasked with inquiring about the effectiveness of the Uganda Land Commission in administering public land and relevant bodies in the reservation of wetlands.

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