

Fishermen protest order on fish maw extraction

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KAMPALA. Fishermen have protested a directive by the Fisheries ministry, requiring them to sell fish to companies without removing the maw.

Fish maw, commonly known as swim bladder, is a delicacy in Asia. According to Dr Edward Rukunyu, the director fisheries, the fishermen have been selling fish after removing the maw, which is against quality guidelines.

However, Mr Musa Mulika, the general secretary of Balia Association of Uganda (BAU), said they are ready to defy the government order.

"We sell fish to Indian firms at between Shs5,000 and Shs10,000 per kilo after

removing the maw. We sell the byproduct to Chinese firms. But now we have been told to sell the whole fish to the Indians without removing the maw at the same cost. This is cheating of the highest order which we shall not accept

VALUE OF FISH MAW

According to the Uganda Fish Processors and Exporters Association, dried swim bladders of large fish such as Nile Perch, is highly demanded in China. In China, fish maw is served in soups or stews and is also used as a source of collagen.

allow," Mr Mulika said last week.

"The fish maw fetches us 65 per cent more revenue than fish fillet," he added.

Mr Elly Wasajja, the chairman of BAU, said they are petitioning Parliament about what he described as "an unfair" government directive.

"We are already counting loses. We appeal to legislators to call the fisheries department to order. We have more than 90,000 members in our association. Many of our members will be jobless due to the directive," Mr Wasajja said.

However, Dr Rukunyu advised the fishermen to renegotiate with the fish companies on the additional cost of leaving the maw.