

Govt starts registering war veterans

By Eddie Ssejjoba

The Government has started registering war veterans in urban areas, beginning with Kampala city, in a bid to recruit them back into the forces where they will be assigned different tasks, including serving in peace missions abroad.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Bananuka said current records indicated there were about 800 war veterans in the five divisions of Kampala.

Presiding over the launch of *Miyonzi Ya Imaani* (Ray of Hope) programme and exhibition of projects by war veterans and widows at Nakivubo Blue Primary School in Kampala on Saturday, Beti Kamya, the Kampala minister, said the Government had embarked on collecting data to, among other reasons establish avenues in which they can be helped to get out of poverty, including channelling money through their Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies (SACCOS).

"President Museveni's government is on record for having injected the largest sum of money directly to the communities. Unfortunately, a bigger percentage has been swindled. We, therefore, have

strategies to block the channels through which it is diverted," Kamya said.

Kampala resident city commissioner Sarah Bananuka said the exercise of documenting the war veterans was underway for people serving various forces, including army, Police, prisons, local defence unit (LDU) cadres and civilians who supported the bush war.

She said current records indicated there are about 800 war veterans in the five divisions of Kampala.

Complaints

Different veterans and their leaders, however, complained that Government had sidelined them and that many had tried to claim their gratuity and retirement package from the Uganda People's Defence Forces without success.

Ann Akugizibwe, a reserve force veteran who headed one of the groups that fought against the Allied Defence Forces in Bundibugyo, reported that a group of widows and orphans of 13 former reserve forces soldiers who died during the war in 1999 and 2000 have never been given their package.

Corporal Alex Kamoga (RA67475) said that since 1992, when he was discharged, he had been walking to different offices to claim his sh8.9m retirement package without success.