Nonve forest surveyor is not qualified, land probe told

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KAMPALA. A surveyor who surveyed Nonve Central Forest Reserve land in Kakiri Sub-county, Wakiso District leading to illegal titling and acquisition does not have the requisite qualifications required by law, the commission of inquiry into land matters heard.

Under the regulations, surveyors undergo a process leading to registration and award of practicing certificate.

It is alleged that 600 acres of Nonve Central Forest Reserve in Kakiri Sub-county have been parcelled out and allocated to private developers who have since acquired land titles.

The commission led by Justice Catherine Bamugemereire heard that businessman, Mr Haruna Semakula contracted Mr Israel Sserumpanise to carry out field surveying of the public land and paid him in terms of land.

Appearing before the commission, Mr Sserumpanise testified that in 2014, Mr Semakula instructed him to survey the forest land at Kakiri on his behalf and prepared preliminary documents for processing the land titles but he does not remember the survey company under which he did the work.

"…. I went there to view the land. Mr Semakula told me it was a big chunk and I saw shrubs and people were cultivating maize and cassava on part of it. I was not sure of the name of the place at that time but I later realised that the village is called Buwanuka. I organised my group to go and pick coordinates of the place for me to first know where it falls because the client said it is a public land," he said.

Mr Sserumpanise, who confessed to not having instructions on which he acted to survey the same land as required by law, testified that Mr Semakula paid him in terms of land measuring 20 acres.



Chairperson. Justice Bamugemereire

He said Mr Semakula processed the land titles but only gave him one title of plot 53 on blocks 266 and 269 instead of the two for the agreed land.

"At first I didn't know that it was a forest reserve but I realised it when we went to identify a certain mark stone that was required along the road and that is when I realised that the land had issues. We met Prof Bukenya and he told us that land was a forest and we should leave," he added.

Mr Sserumparise said: "It is unfortunate I lost that title but when I realised it was false, I felt so bad because I had invested in so much. And somehow I lost the title but it is still in my names. I did not take possession of the land."

Asked if he could do a professional survey work upon developing interest in the land he is surveying, Mr Sserumpanise said he did not see any problem as long as the process of acquisition has checks and balances.

He also admitted doing the job without carrying out due diligence saying he was not given enough time by Mr Semakula and hence he did not do a proper job.

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