

# Developer excavates Muyenga hill, exposes water tanks to risk

By Andrew Ssenyonga

Kampala and its suburbs are at a risk of descending into an acute water crisis after a developer commenced excavating Muyenga Tank Hill that hosts vital water distribution facilities.

Christopher Higenyi, a private developer is excavating land on the slopes of the Muyenga Tank Hill where National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) has its tanks with 25 million litres of water.

The excavation is threatening many lives in case the soil weakens and the water in the tanks spills over.

The land in question is located at plot 6146 Muyenga Tank Hill in Makindye, a Kampala suburb. The areas that could be affected include Kansanga, Muyenga, Bunga, Ggaba, Makindye, Bukasa, Kiwuliriza, Kisugu and Kabalagala.

On Friday, the NWSC officials stopped the ongoing works at the reservoirs after sensing the danger it would cause if the excavation continues.

Eng. Alex Gisagara, the NWSC director of engineering services, said they have stopped the developer because of breaching the structural integrity of the reservoirs.

"In the structural plan of the reservoirs; excavation of the land near the hill would undermine the strength of the soils that host the tanks, hence leading to its collapse and causing a spill-over," he said.

He added that there is fear that the current heavy rains might wash away the soils, which may lead to plunging of the tanks and cause floods in the city.

"The tanks on top of the hill hold a total of 25 million litres and if they spill, a big number of city dwellers risk being buried or washed away," he said.



Samuel Apedel (left) and Eng. Alex Gisagara (centre) inspecting Muyenga Tank Hill recently. In the background is a water reservoir. Photo by Juliet Kasirye

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Gisagara explained that the corporation had put a caveat on deep excavation in the area, which was supported by Kampala Capital City Authority.

"How can someone undermine a national project with their illegal activities? No sounding engineer can allow this to continue. This has to stop and the culprit faces the law," Gisagara said.

NWSC spokesman Samuel Apedel warned that the hill is threatened by a landslide.

"The persistent rains have weakened the soil in Monkey zone below Kampala's main water reservoirs," he said.

He added that indicators show the slope is slowly failing with the rocks being pushed down and are completely weathered. He noted that

rainwater is washing away the soil, exposing the residents to danger.

Yassin Omar, the area LC1 chairman, blamed former Kampala City Council (KCC) engineers for failing to guide the development of structures in the area.

Higenyi, the developer, admitted his mistake and said he was ready to work with the NWSC to restore the soils.

"I have realised my mistake, but I am willing to work with the corporation to restore the soils to avoid an upheaval," he told the corporation in a letter.

Muyenga Tank Hill stands at the peak at 1,306m above sea level is one of the highest points in Kampala.

For that reason, the hill was chosen to house the water storage tanks, which supply Kampala, Kira and Mukono.