

Bailiff accuses lawyers of grabbing his sh700m

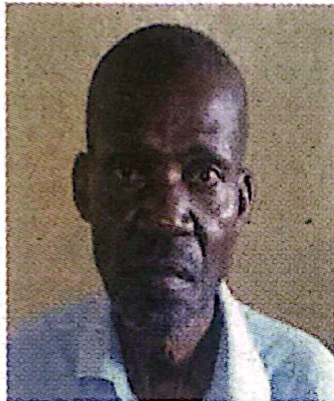
BY CHRIS KIWAWULO

A court bailiff, who handled a case in which former Dairy Corporation staff wanted to auction the company to recover their benefits, is crying foul after two city lawyers allegedly took money that was due to him.

This was after former Dairy Corporation workers filed four separate civil suits against their ex-employer and the Government in which they sought to be paid their terminal benefits and compensation. They won the cases and court awarded them sh10.2b, including lawyers' and bailiffs' fees.

Now battling diabetes and a stroke, Charles Hasolo Oundo, the proprietor of Oduya General Stores Limited Court Bailiffs, claims his sh777.6m accruing from the case was in February 2009 picked by lawyer Augustine Semakula when he fell ill, but it has never been remitted to him.

Oundo had in 2007 secured a court order to attach and sell Dairy Corporation following the Government's delayed payment of the Corporation's ex-staff. Oundo says the Government called him for



Oundo seeks sh700m

negotiations and they agreed to pay him sh777.6m as his fees so that he does not proceed with the sale of the Dairy Corporation.

"But when I went to lawyer Semakula (of Semakula and Company Advocates) to ask for my money, he simply chased me away. I then contacted another lawyer, John Peter Nagemi (of Nagemi and Company Advocates) to recover my money from Semakula. But Nagemi also got sh50m and he never helped me," Oundo said.

Consequently, Oundo petitioned the Uganda Law Council (ULC), accusing Semakula and Nagemi of defrauding him of sh777.6m.

In a May 2, 2009 complaint to the ULC chairperson,

CHARLES HASOLO OUNDO, PROPRIETOR OF ODUYA GENERAL STORES LIMITED COURT BAILIFFS

When I went to lawyer Semakula of Semakula and Company Advocates to ask for my money, he simply chased me away.

Oundo stated "I was appointed by the deputy registrar of the High Court to recover terminal benefits of former Dairy Corporation workers, who were represented in court by Semakula and Company Advocates."

"I advertised, valued and placed a caveat on the property of Dairy Corporation, which action prompted the Attorney General to file stay of execution and thereafter agreeing to settle the full amount of sh10.2b, covering terminal benefits of Dairy Corporation workers, lawyers' fees including my sh777.6m as the court bailiff in the matter."

Oundo further contends that when he suffered a stroke, Semakula started erasing evidence of his involvement in the case, prompting him to enlist the services of Nagemi to take care of his interests in

the matter.

After Oundo's petition, the then ULC chairperson, who was also a Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice John Wilson Tsekooko (now retired), on May 6, 2009 wrote to the then acting ULC secretary, Hellen Obura, asking her to take appropriate action over the matter.

When contacted, Semakula said the case happened long time ago and that he had since paid Oundo the money that was due to him.

"Do not waste time on that man. That money was for former Dairy Corporation workers. Oundo wanted to connive with someone in the finance ministry to take the money. Even the law council ruled in that case," he explained.

However, Semakula could not produce the said ruling.