Arua municipal divisions lock horns over park relocation

Conflict. Officials of Oli and Arua Hill divisions are fighting for revenue collected from the taxi operators and lock up shop owners.

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ARUA. The ongoing relocation of taxi operators and lock-up shop owners from Arua's old park to Oli Division and Arua Hill Division playgrounds to pave way for construction of a modern park has sparked off bickering among the officials of the two divisions.

Both divisions are fighting for revenue collected from the taxi operators and lock up shop owners.

At the beginning of the year, World Bank through Uganda Support to Municipalities Infrastructural Development (USMID) programme provided Shs25 billion to redevelop Arua Taxi Park, build a modern abattoir and rehabilitate Enyau Road.

"We are not against the project but our concern here is that they should not divide us because of the revenue interest by the municipal authorities,"
MAWA SAFI, TAXI OPERATOR

The modern taxi park that is expected to cost Shs8b, is expected to be completed in June 2018. The projects are to be implemented within one year, beginning in June this year.

However, there have been delays due to wrangles over relocation of the park to a temporary location and failure to agree on which division would collect money from the temporary park.

The taxi operators and lock-up shop owners have been given up to the end of this week to relocate to new sites near the old abattoir in River Oli Division, and in Arua Hill Division playgrounds.

More than 200 taxis operate from Arua Taxi Park everyday but the municipal authorities receive about Shs30 million per month as local revenue.

But the taxi operators are blaming the division authorities for creating two different places to relocate the taxi park, which they say have caused confusion.

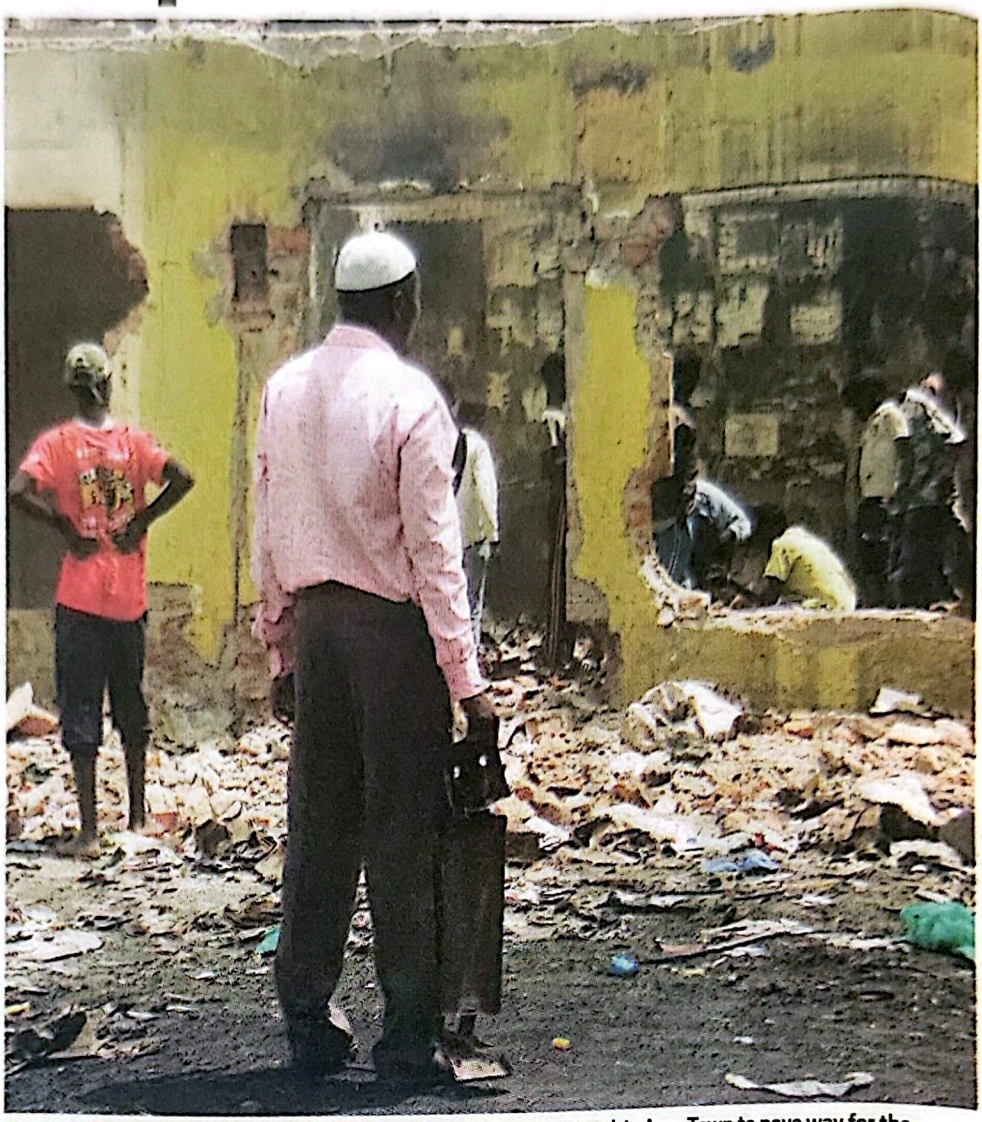
Abdulzaki Turabi, a stage manager at the taxi park, says while Arua Hill Division, where the park lies, is directing them to move to Arua Hill playgrounds, the mayor, Mr Isa Kato, and the town clerk are telling them to relocate to the former CICO works yard near the abattoir in Oli Division.

"We are now confused because the mayor and town clerk are telling us to move to Oli and yet Arua Hill Division officials say we should relocate to the playgrounds," Turabi says.

The Arua Municipality principal community development officer, Ms Judith Drate, says: "We have relocated the taxi park adjacent to Lemerijoa road and any other stages formed by the drivers remain illegal because they are not in our design. Already the demolition of the old park has started to pave way for the development."

She says the modern park will enhance their revenue collection, improve the infrastructure within the centre, and make it comfortable for travellers waiting to board taxis.

Meanwhile, Mr Mawa Safi, the manager of Nebbi stage, says relocating the taxis to River Oli Division may inconvenience travellers because the place is far and hard to access.



Progress. Arua Municipality workers demolish buildings at the taxi park in Arua Town to pave way for the construction of a modern one. PHOTO BY FELIX WAROM OKELLO

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