

MPs grill KCCA officials over vendors' confiscated goods

By Mary Karugaba

Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) officials on Wednesday had a hard time explaining the disposal process of confiscated goods from vendors, especially perishables.

Led by the executive director, Jennifer Musisi and the Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago, the officials were put to task to explain why the goods are never returned to the claimants after the court process.

The team was invited to appear before the presidential affairs committee chaired by MP Jessica Ababiku to explain the operations of the city's law enforcement unit and their alleged harassment of vendors.

"Every day, KCCA confiscates

goods from vendors, where do you put them? Do you return them to the owners? What happens to them?" Ababiku asked.

Musisi declined to comment and passed the question to the head of the enforcement unit, Kituma Rusoke — a Police officer.

"I don't feel able to communicate this morning, let the head of enforcement respond," Musisi said as MPs accused her of not being in charge.

"Every time you come here, you always ask your staff to respond. You should stop delegating and take responsibility," Ababiku said.

Kituma said all confiscated items are handed to

prosecution as exhibit. "For the perishables, court always guides us on how to dispose them of. However, on all occasions, they are forfeited from the claimants," he said.

"You are not answering the question. I asked you, after the court process, do you auction them?" Ababiku asked.

Goods at Nakawa?

"We take them to the stores. We have a skip in Nakawa where we collect them from," Kituma said as other members bombarded him with questions on whether the goods eventually rot and are destroyed from the stores.

"Can you take us there and we see how they rot?" MP Susan Amero asked.



Jennifer Musisi

During the meeting, members complained about harassment of vendors by law enforcement officers.

MP Ibrahim Kasozi accused the officials of "heartlessly"

mistreating the vendors under the cover of development.

"You are heartless, inhuman civil servants hiding under the cover of development. The way you are handling human beings in the name of collecting taxes, do you have feelings? Do you have to chase someone to death?" he asked.

Never dismissed

He wondered why Kituma was never dismissed despite KCCA council's resolution to fire him.

This was after Lukwago complained of impunity by the enforcement officers under the leadership of Kitumi.

He described the enforcement team as a militia group who operate with impunity, adding that Kituma

"has no respect for the rule of law". "How this officer was recruited into KCCA is not known. He carries the law in his hands and he is in charge of recruitment and training. All these enforcement officers just worship him," Lukwago said as Kitumi listened.

When he requested to defend himself, Lukwago objected, saying Parliament was not court where he presents the position of the council and then the officer defends himself.

The committee ruled that the matter be investigated and handled later.

When Musisi was asked to comment, she declined saying: "We shall make a written statement. I have nothing to say at the moment."