

FAMILY, LDC LOCK HORNS OVER PRIME CITY LAND

BY CHRIS KIWAWULO

The family of the late Abdullahi bin Wadriff has cried foul over delayed compensation for their prime land that Law Development Centre (LDC) took over in Kagugube zone, Kampala.

The delay followed the family's rejection of sh143.5m that the chief government valuer (Gilbert Kermundu) had set as the compensation amount for their 0.26 hectares (0.64 acres) of land on block 9, plot 221, saying it was little.

The family argued that the land located adjacent to the LDC offices, about 1km from Makerere University along Gadaffi Road, is worth at least sh450m.

The family of 12 males and 15 females represented by the administrators of the late Wadriff's estate; Ahmad Wadriff, Ali Wadriff and Abdulkali Wadriff, said they want sh450m as compensation and not sh143.5m, because their land is in prime location.

"The sh143.5m is very little money given the prime location of our land. But the moment we complained that the money awarded was little, the government valuer appears to have abandoned us. We suspect foul play in this compensation," noted the administrators.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

The then minister of lands and surveys, Ben Okello Luwum, through statutory instrument number 74 of 1987, announced that government had taken over Wadriff's land and awarded it to LDC for a public purpose.

The instrument was published in the Government gazette on October 28, 1987. According to Wadriff's family members, their neighbours' land was also awarded to LDC, but they have since been paid.

"What shocked us is that the squatters who were on our land have been paid before us the holders of the title," the children complained.

Besides Wadriff's land, documents show that LDC took over another piece of mallo land measuring 0.28 hectares belonging to Wadriff's neighbour, Dan Wasswa, and the government valuer valued it at sh579.6m.

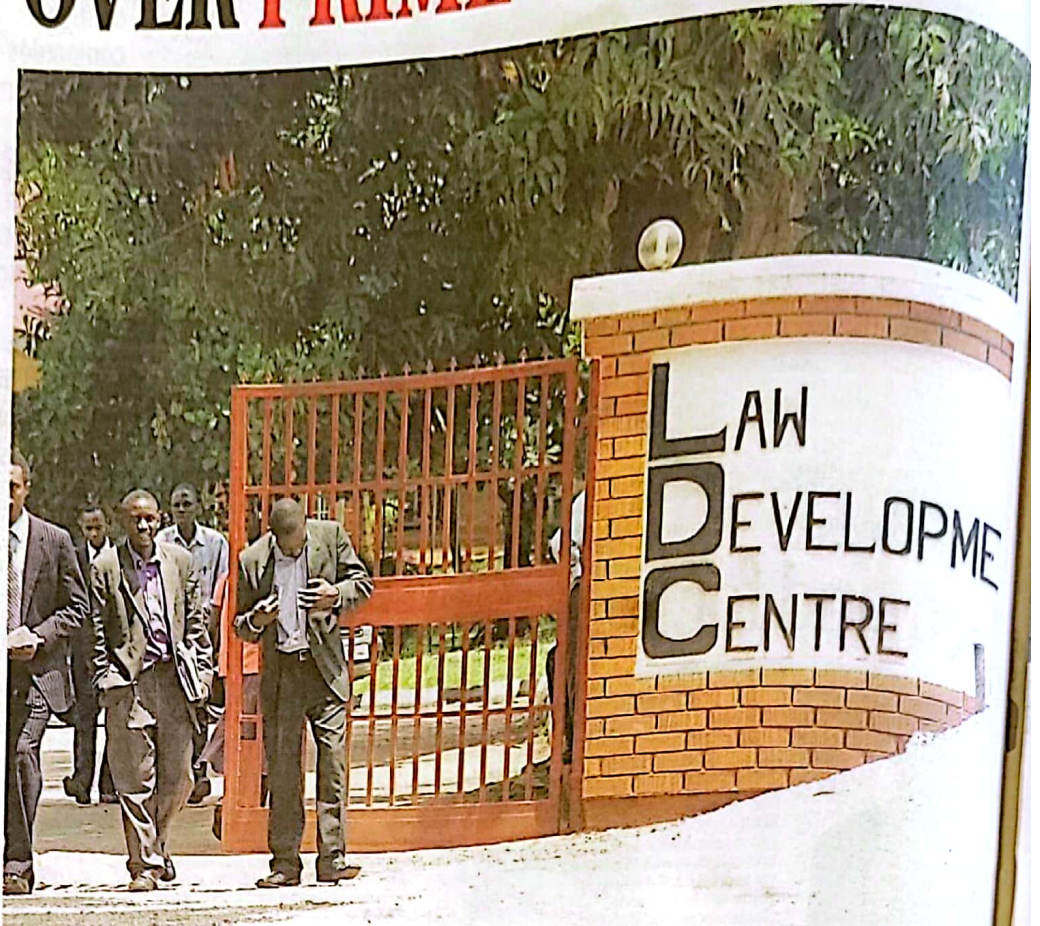
Documents also show that the four squatters on the land, including the Kagugube chairman, Darwin Ssebadduka, have since also been considered for compensation and Wadriff's children say some have already been paid amounts ranging from sh3.4m to sh22.5m.

Besides Ssebadduka, the other squatters are; Medi Kamoga, Jeff Katunga and R. Nanyonjo, whose interest on the land was registered as *kibanja* holders with structures, timber and bricks among other property.

The family members said they contacted the office of the chief government valuer but they were referred back to LDC. "We wrote to LDC complaining about the little money, and LDC in turn also wrote to the chief government valuer, but we have not got any response to date," they argued.

LANDS, LDC RESPOND

Attempts to get a comment from Kermundu and the lands ministry spokesperson, Dennis Obbo, were futile. However, the LDC administrator, who is also the spokesperson, Hamis Lukyamuzi, explained that they were handling the Wadriff family's issue.



People walking out of the LDC in Kampala. The Wadriff family wants the centre to pay them sh450m as compensation for their land



Hassan Wadriff, one of the family members

He said LDC initially thought that government had compensated Wadriff's family upon acquiring their land in 1987 as required under the law. But, he added, the family members claimed they had never been compensated, and that they discovered other claimants. "So, we engaged the chief government valuer who valued their land (at sh143.5m) and that of

FROM WADRIFF'S DEATH TO DATE

- In 1974, the land owner, Abdullahi Bin Wadriff died
- In October 1987, lands ministry gave Wadriff's land to LDC
- In May 2008, family wrote to LDC informing them about ownership of the land
- In July 2008, LDC wrote back to the family expressing willingness to compensate
- In the same month, the chief government valuer wrote to the registrar of titles to verify ownership of the same piece of land
- In March 2012, family's 0.26 hectares of land valued at sh143.5m
- In June 2013, family wrote to government valuer complaining of undervaluation
- In February 2017, family also wrote to LDC over undervaluation
- In March 2017, LDC lawyer wrote to government valuer about family complaint
- No response given to family to date

TIMELINE STEP-BY-STEP

(four) others. We submitted the valuation report to Parliament for approval of our budget for compensation of the people whose land we had acquired. Even members of the parliamentary legal committee visited the land before they approved the payment," Lukyamuzi explained.

When the finance ministry released the money in the 2016/17 financial year, Lukyamuzi said, the Wadriff family complained that the money given to them was little and they refused it. "Up to now, the money is still lying idle on our account. But we have paid the others." Lukyamuzi said they advised the Wadriff

family to direct their concern to the chief government valuer since the LDC management was not responsible for valuing land. "It seems they failed, and they came back to us and asked us to write to the chief government valuer informing him about their complaint, which we have done," he stated.

Lukyamuzi said they wrote to the chief government valuer last year but they have not yet got a response to date. "We asked the family to first take the sh143.5m and wait for a top up after their issue has been addressed but they refused."