

Parliament Infrastructure Losses Land

By Mary Karugaba

MPs on the parliamentary committee on commissions, state authorities and state enterprises (COSASE) have directed the proprietors of Centenary Park to grant unlimited access to National Water and Sewerages Corporation (NW&SC) to start the sewer line project immediately.

Despite the controversies surrounding ownership of the land, the committee, chaired by Abdu Katuntu (Bugweri County), directed that public infrastructure should be given first priority and ordered NW&SC to immediately move in and start work which had stalled for over a month.

"No one should sabotage public infrastructure. The money being used to construct this project is our money. If government institutions do not utilise it, we shall ask them to account for it. This story of people blocking the project and causing delays will not be entertained," Katuntu emphasised.

"The committee, therefore, directs that the contractor should be granted unlimited access to the land and if we hear that you (Sarah Kizito, the proprietor of Centenary Park) have organised any obstruction, we are going to evoke other powers," he added.

Security at the site

The MPs also summoned the Inspector General of Police, Gen. Kale Kayihura, to appear before the committee to discuss issues regarding the security of the project contractors while on site.

This was after both the managing director NW&SC, Dr Silver Mugisha and the executive director Kampala Capital City Authority, Jennifer Musisi, reported that Kizito had blocked the

NW&SC cleared to start works at Centenary Park



Musisi (second-left), Nyakana and Kizito after appearing before COSASE yesterday. Photo by Miriam Namutebi

implementation of the project by denying contractors access to some parts of the park to do the work.

Mugisha told the MPs during the meeting that as a result, the contractor had left the site and the Government was losing money in the form of contractual claims.

"The project is being funded through a loan from the Japanese government. The loan is already effective and as a result of delayed site access contractual claim, NW&SC has already incurred a loss of sh979m. The losses will continue to rise unless this

BETWEEN THE LINES Development projects

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impasse is resolved," he said.

NW&SC, through a \$200m loan, is currently implementing the improvement of the existing sewerage infrastructure of Kampala city under the framework of the Lake Victoria protection phase II project.

Development on the park

According to the plans, two

other projects; the Kampala flyover and the relocation of the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company limited are expected to occupy a major part of the park.

Musisi informed the committee that although Kizito, through her company, Nalongo Estates, ceased being the rightful owners of the land,

they have refused to vacate.

They have also reportedly insisted that they will not vacate unless KCCA compensates them for the structures in the area.

"When the company's lease expired and they refused to hand over vacant possession of the land, KCCA has since tried to forcibly re-possess the land, but to no avail. They have made it categorically clear that they will not vacate unless KCCA grants them lease over the land so that she can directly deal with the agencies," Musisi said.

During the meeting, Kizito accompanied by her husband

Godfrey Nyakana, whom she referred to as 'personal assistant', told the committee that the company had signed a memorandum of understanding with NW&SC, allowing them to access the area.

The MPs, however, argued that the MOU was invalid since Nalongo Estates was no longer the owner of the land.

The legislators challenged Kizito to prove ownership of the land. They also demanded to know why they had not handed over the land to KCCA after the lease expired.

Kizito had also come with a lawyer, Aaron Mutabazi, but later fired him during the meeting after he failed to defend her in the committee.

Kizito's response

Although Kizito admitted that the lease had expired, she insisted that she still owns the park since the KCCA had promised to renew the lease.

She accused Musisi of witch-hunting her by refusing to implement the council resolutions to renew the lease.

"We are there rightfully, KCCA said that the status quo remains until a final decision is reached. The executive director has refused to implement the council decision.

I don't know why these two women have decided to squeeze their fellow woman like this," she said.

MP Anita Among demanded to know whether Kizito still legally owns the land and which law mandates them (Nalongo Estates) to have automatic renewal of the lease.

"Is there any law that mandates KCCA to renew the lease? You are also asking for compensation; do you know that the lease expired and, according to the agreement, you were supposed to return everything to KCCA?" Among asked.

Government gazettes compulsory land acquisition Bill