

THE VICTIMS SAID MURUNGA WAS PROTECTED BY POLICEMEN WITH GUNS AND CLAIMED HE OWNED THE LAND

By Andante Okanya and Edward Anyoli

Kayihura's former aide accused of land grabbing

Residents of Butuntumula in Luwero district have accused Ambrose Murunga, a former aide to the Inspector General of Police, Gen. Kale Kayihura, of land grabbing and in the process affecting over 50 families.

On Friday, three residents from Gayaza, Kakabala parish, in Luwero district, testified at the land inquiry commission, claiming they were arrested and intimidated at the prompting of Murunga.

At the time the incident occurred, Murunga was still an aide of Kayihura.

As they testified, a clean-shaven Murunga sat aside and sipped on water from a bottle.

The victims claim Murunga was protected by armed Policemen and that he told them he owned the entire square mile of land.

The hearing was conducted at the National Records Centre and Archives, in the city suburb of Nakasero.

'Mystery man'

Asked whether they had any information on Murunga's history, the trio: Christopher Ssenoga, Charles Ssekitto and Boaz Kigozi, branded him a 'mystery man'.

It was also not mentioned in the public hearing if Murunga was an ex-aide of Kayihura.

However, Murunga served

as technical advisor to the Inspector General of Police, from 2004 to 2015. Murunga previously served in the Kenya Police.

Testimony

In his testimony, Ssenoga, 53, said he was arrested, detained, and produced at Luwero Chief Magistrate's Court on charges of trespassing and was remanded to Butuntumula Government Prison for one week in February 2012. Ssenoga said he was born on the land and has lived there his entire life.

"The Police arrested people who they found in their gardens. They were told that the land purchaser did not want anybody to till the land. I was also affected because I was arrested and detained at Luwero Police station on the orders of Murunga," Ssenoga said.

Prodded further by Suuz, Ssenoga explained that he owned seven acres on the



Ambrose Murunga speaking before the land probe commission on Friday. Photo by Richard Sanya

kibanja, which he used for farming. He said the only landlord he knew was the late John Kivumbi.

Speaking through an interpreter, Ssenoga said he paid sh800,000 as bail

money and that the case was dismissed when Murunga did not show any more interest in the case. Ssenoga added that the then Luwero Woman MP, Brenda Nabukenya, was instrumental in helping him

regain his freedom. Ssenoga said it was later that he heard that Murunga was a Kenyan national.

He lamented that when he tasked Murunga with displaying the land purchase agreement, he was instead mocked and given conditions.

"Murunga has failed to give me the purchase agreement until now. He instead told me he was only leaving me with a piece of land that had a house, latrine and kitchen on it," Ssenoga said.

Ssekitto, 45, also accused Murunga of grabbing seven acres of land belonging to his brother, Bosco Tamale, which he bought at sh7m in 2009 from Rose Nalutaaya, who died in 2010.

Asked what he wanted the commission to assist his family with, Ssekitto pleaded that the commission should stop Murunga from grabbing their land.

Kigozi, 40, purported that his siblings and mother, Norah

Naiga, were arrested and detained at Luwero Police Station on Murunga's orders.

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Commissioners

Justice of the Court of Appeal Catherine Bamugemereire is commission chairperson.

The commissioners are Robert Ssebunnya, Mary Oduka Ochan, Joyce Gunze Habaasa, Dr Rose Nakayi, Fredrick Ruhindi and George Bagonza Tinkamanyire. Ebert Byenkya is the lead counsel, while John Bosco Suuz is assistant lead counsel. The Judiciary deputy registrar of planning and development, Olive Kazaarwe Mukwaya, heads the secretariat.