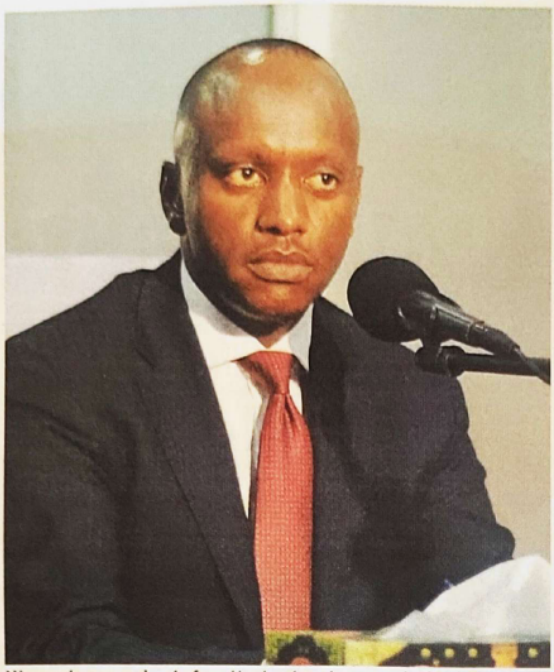
Ntaganda grilled over Kajjansi wetland





Ntaganda appearing before the land probe commission in Kampala on Tuesday. Photo by Denis Dibele

City businessman Ephraim Ntaganda on Tuesday appeared before the commission set up to probe the land sector and was quizzed over the illegal sale of Kajjansi Central Forest reserve at sh9b to a private developer.

The commission is headed by Justice Catherine Bamugemereire. Other commissioners are Robert Ssebunya, Mary Oduka Ochan, Joyce Gunze Habaasa, Dr Rose Nakayi, Fredrick Ruhindi and George Bagonza.

Ebert Byenkya is the lead counsel, Bosco Suuza is assistant lead counsel while Olive Kazaarwe Mukwaya is the secretary to the commission.

The hearings are being held at the National Records Centre and Archives on Lourdel Road in the upscale city suburb of Nakasero. Tuesday's proceedings were recorded by **Edward Anyoli**.

Suuza: Your name
Witness: Ephraim Ntaganda.

Suuza: Age?
Ntaganda: 42 years old

Suuza: Where do you reside?
Ntaganda: Bunga Kalungu, Makindye division

Suuza: What do you do for a living?
Ntaganda: I am a businessman in real estate. I also produce soap and cosmetics.

I have a master's degree in economic policy and planning and a bachelors of arts in education and religious studies, both from Makerere University.

I received an honorary doctorate from United Graduate and Seminary of Tennessee, US.

Suuza: That was in recognition of what service to mankind?
Ntaganda: They call it humanitarian service.

Suuza: What does that mean? Are you involved in relief services?
Ntaganda: No.

Suuza: There must be a background How did that come about?
Ntaganda: There was no process. I was called, the idea was introduced to me, I accepted the honour and it was awarded.

Suuza: Have you ever held titles for land that constitutes Kajjansi Central Forest Reserve?
Ntaganda: Not as far as I know. But I have held land titles for different pieces of land at Kajjansi. The total acreage was around 37 acres. It was held jointly in the name of a company Choclas Financial Services Ltd, where I am a director and shareholder.
Suuza: Who are the other shareholders?
Ntaganda: My wife Monica Wantege.

Suuza: How many shares do you hold?
Ntaganda: I think it is 51% and 49%

Suuza: When was this company registered?
Ntaganda: It should be five to seven years old.

Suuza: I have documentation here (gestures) which suggests that the other shareholder in Choclas Financial Services Ltd, is a one Malcolm Muzima.
Ntaganda: Malcolm is our first born? He is 14 years old. He is going to Senior Two.

Suuza: You run this company?
Ntaganda: Yes.

Suuza: How did Choclas acquire land in forest reserve?
Ntaganda: I'm not aware that these titles are in a forest reserve. My brother Cedric Songoza was buying from *bibanja* holders in Kajjansi.

On one of the occasions I was trying to find out about a vacant piece of land and when I inquired from the area chairman and from the little information that Cedric had collected, I was told that it is public land and it is available.

From the little knowledge I have about public land I thought it falls under the district land board or Uganda Land Commission and, therefore, it can be applied for use.

Suuza: You got that information from the LC1 chairman?
Ntaganda: The chairman LC1 just identified that there is nobody using that small portion of land. The small portion of land that we are talking about was near a big chunk occupied by other people. Cedrick Songoza was buying *bibanja* from different individuals who claimed to be having permits from the National Forest Authority (NFA).

Suuza: Why did you think the LC1 chairman was the custodian of knowledge as to which land was available for acquisition and which one was not?
Ntaganda: I didn't think the chairman was the custodian of the land available, but I thought the information he gave me was true.

Suuza: Where were you born?
Ntaganda: Bukomansimbi, formerly Masaka district.

Suuza: How long have you lived in Kampala?
Ntaganda: I came to school in Kampala in 1994.

Suuza: Did you believe that there could be vacant land; land that belongs to nobody in and around Kampala?
Ntaganda: At first I did not believe that but my lord, later I realised that this land was not occupied.

Suuza: Who are this people you interacted with?
Ntaganda: One is called Semakula who was close to the chairman. And from that time nobody has claimed that land.

Suuza: What is the name of the chairman?
Ntaganda: Haji Ibrahim. I can't recall the second name.

Suuza: So that land covers the 37 acres and then you said coincidentally your brother Mr Songoza was curving up some chunk of land next to the land you are interested in?
Ntaganda: He had acquired interest in the *bibanja*, just like Bob Kanaabi, one of the directors of a company called Logic Real Estate Developer Ltd. He was also buying some *bibanja* interests from different individuals.

Suuza: And he is the director of Logic Real Estate Developer Ltd?
Ntaganda: Yes.

Suuza: Are you a shareholder in that company?
Ntaganda: I am not director and I have never been a shareholder in that company.

Suuza: How do you know this Bob Kanaabi?
Ntaganda: Bob is my aunty's son.

Suuza: So he is a relative?
Ntaganda: He is a relative.

Suuza: How old is he?
Ntaganda: He is in his 30s.

Suuza: Your family was fortunate to know about this land and to find it available and all that was coincidence?
Ntaganda: The *bibanja* they were buying were not available. They were buying them from the people who were occupying them and were using them. Most of them were doing clay and sand mining or brick making.

Suuza: These were unrelated activities by the three of you up to that point?
Ntaganda: Yes my Lord.

Suuza: Chancing upon the 37 acres, Mr Songoza's acquisition of *bibanja* and Mr Kanaabi acquisition, they are not related? You just found yourself on the land?
Ntaganda: These are people I talked to.

Suuza: Do you run business together?
Ntaganda: No. But we share a lot and often help each other.

Suuza: You said you don't hold shares in Logic Real Estates and Developers Ltd?
Ntaganda: I don't my lord.

Suuza: You don't hold shares in Logic but you are a signatory in that company. Take a look at this document and explain to us how that happens.
Ntaganda: The document I am holding is a board resolution of Logic Real Estates and Developers Ltd for a particular transaction.

Suuza: What does it say?
Ntaganda (Reads).. It says in the matter of Logic Real Estates and Developers Ltd board resolution, at the dully convened meeting the board of directors of Logic Real Estates and Developers Ltd held at the Company's registry in 2013.

The following resolution was passed that the company sells its property comprised in freehold register volume 13524 , Folio 3 Plot 3 Lugogo Channel Road, Kampala.

That Ephraim Ntaganda be authorised to execute all document pertaining to the sale of the land on behalf Logic Real Estates and Developers Ltd and that the Registrar of Companies be notified. The above is a true extract from the company board meeting by orders of the board of directors signed by Bob Kanaabi and Innocent Kabaruka, both directors.

Hearing continues at the in upscale city suburb of Nakasero, Kampala

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