

KENYA HAD OFFERED SH1.5B WITH EACH FAMILY GETTING SH291M

By John Odyek

Ugandan and Kenyan delegations failed to agree on the amount of compensation to be paid to the families of three Ugandan geologists and two Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) soldiers who were killed by armed Turkana herdsmen in Moroto district on March 21, 2022.

The disagreement emerged during a meeting held on Wednesday at Mestil Hotel, Kampala following the arrival of a Kenyan delegation led by John Munyes Kiyong'a, the special presidential envoy of Kenyan president William Ruto.

Uganda's negotiating team was led by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Community Affairs Rebecca Kadaga, together with David Pulkol, the principal advisor to Gen. Salim Saleh, the Coordinator of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC). They had proposed compensation of \$4.3m (sh16.2b) for the five affected families but did not specify how much each family would get.

Kiyong'a and officials from Turkana county, expressed surprise at the proposal and instead offered \$385,000 (sh1.5b) with each family getting sh291m. Uganda rejected the offer, prompting Kenya to request an adjournment until today to allow consultations with president Ruto.

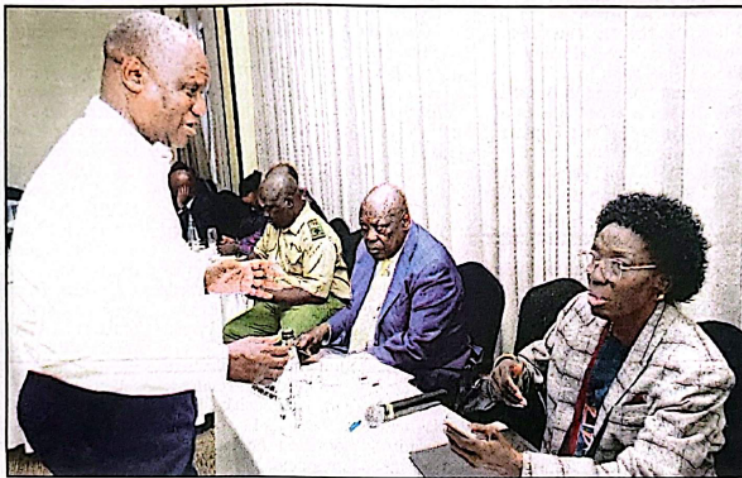
Museveni and Ruto have since agreed that the families of the slain geologists and soldiers should be compensated and directed their technical teams to reach consensus on the amount and report back to them.

The two leaders have endorsed a framework for the traditional reconciliation process known as Okukaraba, practised among communities along the Uganda-Kenya border. The process is expected to pave the way for the release of 10 Turkana herdsmen currently detained at Kitalya Prison.

Kadaga said Uganda and Kenya have maintained strong relations over the years, although the killings strained

SLAIN GEOLOGISTS: UGANDA, KENYA TO DECIDE ON COMPENSATION TODAY

Pulkol (left) speaks with Kadaga, during the second meeting with a Kenyan delegation from Turkana County on compensation for three geologists and two UPDF soldiers killed by Turkana warriors at Mestil Hotel & Residences on Wednesday. Centre is the Minister for Karamoja Affairs, Peter Lokeris



the ties. "The families of the affected people have forgiven the herdsmen and have given their consent that remedies for compensation be pursued," Kadaga said.

She added that Kenya had requested the release of the 10 detained herdsmen and that legal procedures would be pursued once compensation for the victims is agreed upon and implemented.

"It is not just about the loss of lives. The killings created fear and caused economic losses. Ugandans became reluctant to work in Moroto and undertake similar geological

exploration activities," Kadaga said.

Kiyong'a said Kenya was still learning about the concept of okukaraba. He explained that under the Turkana traditional justice system, compensation for the deceased would amount to about 250 cows.

He argued that such compensation would be inadequate in the present circumstances and said Kenya was prepared to offer monetary compensation beyond the traditional arrangement.

"Kenya is in agreement with the principle of traditional justice. However, the two countries have different

methods of calculating compensation. If a Member of Parliament in Kenya is killed, compensation can be about Ksh10m (sh291m), while civil servants may receive above Ksh5m (sh145m) or more," Kiyong'a said.

Pulkol argued that compensation should be determined through objective and scientific methods, considering the status and responsibilities of the deceased.

Pulkol said the parties were pursuing a hybrid model that combines financial compensation, reparations and traditional reconciliation measures.

BACKGROUND

According to Pulkol, the geologists and soldiers were ambushed while conducting exploration work to verify the presence of minerals in Lokisilei village, in Lotisan sub-county, Moroto. "The Turkana pastoralists had a kraal in the area. Reports indicate that some of the pastoralists had carried out cattle raid the previous night. When they saw the geologists and soldiers, they thought they were pursuing them and attacked them. It is not clear who fired the first shot and some of the details remain unknown," Pulkol said.

The five victims were geologists Richard Kigwe, Edna Musiime and Charles Olweny and soldiers Lt. Col. Bosco Obwona and Jimmy Otwi Otim.

MUSEVENI'S ORDER

Huda Abason Oleru, the state minister for veterans affairs, said Museveni issued Executive Order No.3 of 2023 to promote peace and justice in Karamoja and the Acholi sub-region.

Oleru said the order barred Turkana pastoralists from crossing into Uganda until compensation for the slain Ugandans is settled. In Acholi, the directive restricted Balalo herdsmen from occupying land in ways that fuel conflict between pastoralists and local communities.