

Mbale market chokes on uncollected garbage stench

Concerned. The traders say the garbage goes uncollected for weeks yet they pay a monthly fee for the purpose.

BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA
 & SALLUME AKELLO
 editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

MBALE. The continued non collection of garbage in Mbale Main Market has seen a stench engulf the facility, making it undesirable.

The Shs27 billion market, which was built under government's Markets and Agricultural Trade Improvement Programme, hosts about 8,338 vendors.

"The market is stinking. Heaps of garbage are littered everywhere. We operate in a very filthy environment yet we pay money to the municipal leaders to keep the market clean," says Mr James Wandulu, a watermelon seller.

5,000

AMOUNT PAID FOR GARBAGE COLLECTION BY FARMERS EVERY MONTH

Mr Wandulu says as traders, they have got used to the odour but he pities his customers, who are often seen covering their noses to avoid the stench.

"When you enter the market, it's the smell of garbage that welcomes you, that is the reason why most of our customers cover their noses. The stench is too much to bear," he says.

Each vendor pays to Municipal council Shs300 every month for garbage collection and the farmers who bring



Filthy. A heap of uncollected garbage in Mbale Main Market recently.

PHOTO BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA

their produce to the market pay Shs5,000.

"I have developed a running stomach which I believe is as a result of inhaling bad air," says Ms Annet Gidudu, a tomato seller.

Ms Gidudu says poor hygiene in the market has tremendously affected their business.

"We are making losses

because customers have been chased away by the smell. Those that come always order us to serve them very first and they leave," she says.

They accused the municipal council leaders of demanding money from them and yet they fail to collect garbage.

Mr Ayub Madoyi, the chairman of the market, says the trouble started after the municipal council terminated their contract last year.

"The leaders terminated our contract and awarded it to HomeTake Investments (U) Ltd and all responsibilities were shifted to the contractor. That was the beginning of the problem," he says.

Mr Madoyi says when they were in charge of garbage collection, the market was clean.

He says municipal council leaders should consider giving back the contract to market management.

Mr James Kutosi, the municipality spokesperson, acknowledges the vendors grievances, saying they are looking for a permanent solution to the garbage.

"We know what they are going through that is why the council has resolved to repair two trucks and one truck will be stationed at the market on a daily basis," he says.

He adds that this will help solve the problem of garbage piling up in the market.

He adds that they have also decided to terminate the contract awarded to Hometake Investments (U) Ltd.

"The company has failed to perform well its duties as garbage could stay on the road for several days without collecting it yet the vendors pay the revenue for tax collection," he says.

Mr Kutosi adds they have already got a team to manage garbage until they find a lasting solution.

RECENT CASE

Demonstration. The vendors have on numerous occasions demonstrated over the matter. Last Thursday, they blocked the Cathedral Avenue, paralysing the traffic flow for hours.