

Parliament committee directs on Centenary Park demolition

By Mary Karugaba

After several years of pull and push over the ownership of Centenary Park, it has finally been agreed that the illegal structures be demolished to pave the way for the construction of the Kampala sewer project.

The decision was reached yesterday in a meeting attended by Kampala Capital City Authority, MPs on the commissions, statutory authorities and state enterprises committee, the proprietors of the park represented by Godfrey Nyakana and the Inspector General of Police, Gen. Kale Kayihura, at Parliament.

Both Kampala Capital City Authority executive director Jennifer Musisi and the managing director National Water and Sewerage Corporation Dr Sliver Mugisha, said they were not going to incur the cost of demolition. Musisi said the Act puts the responsibility on the party that constructs the illegal structures on top of the water pipes.

Mugisha informed the meeting that a total of four structures will

be demolished.

Although KCCA did not mention all the illegal structures and where they are located in the park, Musisi said Centenary Park proprietors breached the agreement and put up temporary structures in an open green space that had been preserved for public access. Some of the structures include Blue Bar, 4 Points Bar and Waikiki Pub.

"The proprietors went against the Water Act, which prohibits the construction of structures on top of the pipelines or within an area of 4 metres from the facilities according to the project contractors," he said.

Mugisha said because the proprietors of the park, led by Sarah Kizito, had blocked the project, the contractor has since demobilised and left the site. Although Nyakana insisted that he had no problem with the structures being demolished, he insisted that it was only one.

Katuntu told Nyakana to stop holding Government at ransom, insisting that the institutions should be allowed to work without any hindrance.

"Public infrastructure should



Nyakana insisted that he had no problem with the structures being demolished

be given priority. National Water should immediately mobilise the contractors and start works. If there are buildings, you know they are illegally built in the project area; you know what to do. Police should carry out its constitutional

mandate and ensure law and order," Katuntu directed.

"KCCA says you (Nyakana) have personally been involved in the mobilisation of goons to disrupt the works of Government," Katuntu said.

"I find that statement derogatory. If I had organised goons, would I have been a division mayor for two terms?" Nyakana responded.

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

According to the plans, the project and other two projects, the Kampala flyover and the relocation of the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company (UEDCL), are expected to occupy a major part of the park, especially where there are structures.

Musisi informed the committee that although Nalongo Estates ceased being the rightful owners of the land, they have refused to vacate the land and return it to KCCA.