

Outcry as families are evicted from Soroti University land



Desperate. Augustine Erimu, one of the victims, wails for help. PHOTO BY GEORGE MURON

Unlawful. The affected families contend that the court's eviction order did not include destruction of their homes and property.

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SOROTI. A total of 15 families that were recently evicted from the contested Soroti University land in Aputon Village, have run to Soroti High Court to review the eviction process.

The affected families contend that the court's eviction order a fortnight ago did not include destruction of their homes and property, contrary to what the bailiffs did.

On August 17, Justice David Batema asked Soroti University to evict the families that were allegedly occupying part of its land on Block 50.

This followed the opening of the boundaries by the Minister of Lands, Ms Betty Amongi, in

In the course of the eviction exercise, all the structures, homes and property that were found on the contested land were razed down.

Mr Richard Omongole Anguria, the lawyer representing the affected families, told *Daily Monitor* that there were anomalies in the execution of the eviction order which should be reviewed by the same court.

"The issues of the case were misrepresented by people who had interests in them," he explained.

Commencement

The first hearing of the review is expected to commence tomorrow.

Mr Omongole also said it was wrong for the university to evict people who had stayed on the disputed land for more than 50 years without compensation.

The chairperson of the aggrieved families, Mr Geresem Eotu, said the eviction was

was not located during the first phase of boundary opening.

He added that it was prudent for them to have waited for the second phase of the boundary opening and demarcation to establish the exact location of Block 50 before acting.

"The judgment did not mention destruction of people's homes and properties. This was a fix by the interested party to have bailiffs do what they did,"

RICHARD OMONGOLE ANGURIA,
VICTIMS' LAWYER

"This is deceit. Time will expose the illicit officers behind the fraud," Mr Eotu said.

He added that the evicted people are now homeless and struggling to find food.

Augustine Erimu, William Ocen, and Charles Okiria, are among those who were evicted. They said the ruling against them was so erroneous.

Mr Hassan Juma Nyene, explained that the eviction was justified because Justice Batema gave them a week to vacate the land.

The land was originally owned by Teso College Aloet.

In the 1980s, the late founders of Teso College Cuthbert Obwongor, contacted Teso College Aloet board to establish Teso College of Higher Education (Teche) but failed to take off due to financial challenges.

Later on, the elders, who founded Teso College Aloet, were approached by Pilgrim Africa to establish a private university but equally failed.

Following the failed attempts, Teso Sub-region comprising Kumi, Soroti, Bukedea, Ngora, Serere, Amuria, Katakwi, and Kaberamaido districts gave the same land to the central government for the establishment Soroti University in 2012. The university yet to start has since been riddled with