

Junior Sentubwe, the agriculture ministry director for animal resources, in a situation report on

an incubation period. Baluka, who is also a lecturer in the College of Veterinary Medicine at

are not favourable. "It becomes active during the rainy season," she said, adding that some

to health authorities — veterinary doctor for animals and medical doctors in case of humans.

soldiers into rebel activities with the intention of prejudicing the security of the country.

MPs grill energy officials over Umeme ghost meters

By Mary Karugaba

MPs yesterday grilled officials from power distributor Umeme for reportedly charging the Government sh1.3b from non-existing meters.

A confidential audit report carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers Limited, a private audit firm, reportedly established that a sample of the invoices sent to the Government by Umeme had 48 non-existent meters.

The audit was commissioned and submitted to Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL).

However, during the meeting, MPs on commissions, state authorities and state enterprises committee

(COSASE) grilled officials from UEDCL and Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) on whether they had taken any actions against Umeme over the allegations.

"These issues were raised sometime back, what action did you take against Umeme? Did you try to audit the remaining meters since a sample had established that there was a problem?" committee chairperson Abdu Katuntu asked.

UEDCL chief finance officer Paul Mwesigwa instead asked for more time to respond, but Katuntu declined and insisted that the officials should respond to the queries.

Ziria Tibalwa, ERA's chief executive officer, asked the



Katuntu

committee to allow the team go and get an explanation from the UEDCL managing director who was not present in the meeting.

"The study was for a purpose. Allow us to ask the UEDCL managing director to respond," she said.

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ A confidential audit report reportedly established that a sample of the invoices sent to the Government by Umeme had 48 non-existent meters.

The MPs asked Umeme officials headed by the chief co-operate and regulatory affairs, Blessing Nshaho, to respond to the allegations.

"The report was presented to UEDCL. I cannot confirm whether what they reported was true," he said.

The officials were appearing before the committee over accusations by Uganda

Electricity Transmission Company Limited that Umeme is currently withholding sh80b on account of failure by government institutions to pay electricity bills.

According to the Umeme contract, when the government institutions fail to clear their power bills, Umeme has the right to withhold money that it is supposed to pay for power purchased to clear the debt.

Nshaho while appearing before the committee last week said according to the Concession Agreement, the Government is both a power consumer and supplier.

"When we bill the Government and they do not pay, we conduct a temporary offset and if they do not pay

after 60 days, we conduct a permanent withdraw. We used to draw from the Escrow Account. Unfortunately, it was depleted. In case the Government pays, we reimburse the money," he said.

Nshaho told MPs that the Government entities owe Umeme sh34b of which sh27b is beyond 60days required to institute a permanent withdraw.

During the meeting yesterday, committee vice-chairperson Anita Among asked the officials whether they had a system of verifying Umeme's bills to the Government.

Katuntu later adjourned the meeting and ordered a forensic audit of Umeme bill to government and meters.