

Support the Amuru sugar factory project

Members of the Acholi Parliamentary group have again expressed their opposition to the Madhvani Group acquiring 10,000 hectares of land in Amuru district to establish a sugar factory.

This move by the Acholi Parliamentary group is very unfortunate considering that this matter has dragged on for over a decade and it had appeared a breakthrough had been achieved for the project to go ahead.

It should be recalled that in June, a group of MPs from the greater Acholi sub-region held a meeting with President Yoweri Museveni over the Amuru land issue and resolved to support the establishment of the sugar factory project. The MPs then argued that they had opposed the project because they hadn't been involved in the consultations on the matter.

On June 26, cultural leaders of the project affected areas gave their assent to a consent agreement between the Government and individuals that had resorted to litigation to challenge the giveaway of Amuru land to Madhvani Group. Among the terms of the consent agreement is creating a legal entity to hold shares for the benefit of the people of Amuru in the project.

In January 2015, the Government and the Lamogi community of Lamogi sub-county of Kilak County in Amuru district signed another agreement for the withdraw of the pending case in the court of appeal to pave way for the establishment of the sugar factory in Lamogi sub-county. The agreement that was signed in 2015 provided for compensation of the affected communities and shareholding in the factory.

After all, these protracted consultations and agreements with the local leaders, it is rather baffling why the Acholi Parliamentary group is shifting position on the project. What the Members of Parliament from Acholi ought to do isn't to oppose the project, but to ensure that whatever has been agreed on by the community, the Government and the Madhvani Group is implemented to the letter. Instead of obstructing investors, the MPs ought to be exerting pressure on the Government to promote investments in the region, taking advantage of the hydro-power projects underway.

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