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special report

ISSUE **3.3%** **Why public parks are important.** Recent World Health Organisation estimates show that physical inactivity, linked to poor walkability and lack of access to recreational areas, accounts for 3.3 per cent of global deaths.

Pain as public loses access to Kampala's recreational parks



Park management. The controversy surrounding the management of Kampala's recreational parks seems far from over as new details show how private investors continue to wield control of the facilities by denying city residents the opportunity to enjoy their recreational purposes writes **Amos Ngwomoya.**

Although all city recreational parks are supposed to be managed by the city authority on behalf of the people, *Sunday Monitor* has learnt that the public's control over the facilities remain a wild-goose chase.

During one of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) council meetings at City Hall in October, there was a heated debate on the same, with city political leaders questioning the technical team about the manner in which these facilities are given out.

The meeting resolved that instead of losing the facilities to private investors yet their revenue to KCCA is not worth the value of the land on which their businesses are, all recreational parks should be reverted to the institution and be utilised to serve their purpose.

The debate was triggered by clashes between KCCA and Nalongo estates over Centenary Park in July, where the latter deliberately refused to surrender the facility to the former despite expiry of their 10-year contract.

This newspaper understands that the committee on physical planning headed by Mr Abubaker Kawalya is currently probing the stalemate that has since plagued the management of the facilities.

Currently, the recreational parks under KCCA's jurisdiction include, Centenary Park, Jubilee Gardens (Sheraton gardens), City Hall Gardens, Constitutional Square, Railway Grounds, Kiswa Children's Park, Chogm Grounds at Parliament, Nakawa Business park and Kamwokya children's park.

Recreational parks usually contain campgrounds, modern facilities, picnic areas, and other utilities used in modern recreational camping.

A letter from the then IGG, Faith Mwondha seen by this newspaper shows that although KCCA had earlier on been advised by government to recover the parks that are in the hands of the private investors, they have instead gone ahead to give away some parks.

This has raised queries from both residents and leaders over the future of the facilities.

The facilities that are currently in the eye of the storm are Kiswa Park, Centenary Park, Jubilee Gardens (Sheraton gardens) and Children's Park on Kira Road.

Saturday Monitor has further learnt that the KCCA public accounts committee (PAC) has commenced investigations into the controversial give away of Kampala's recreational parks.

KAMWOKYA CHILDRENS PARK

The KCCA public accounts committee (Pac) report for the period February to September 2017, which was released on December 1 states that although the then KCC leased out Plot 9B on Kira Road to Formar (U) Ltd, they ended up encroaching on the children's park on Plot 9A by 77 decimals.

Formar (U) Ltd was supposed construct a fuel station on Plot 9B while Plot 9A would be reserved as a children's park.

On 7 October 2014, KCCA management executive committee resolved that Formar (U) Ltd should apply for a fresh lease for Plots 9A and 9B for breaching the terms of the initial lease, a resolution the latter accepted.

However, the report further stated that there is controversy surrounding the park hence it could end up being grabbed if KCCA doesn't take action.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN OTAGE



