

NALONGO ESTATES BREACHED THE AGREEMENT OF MAINTAINING THE PARK GREEN WITH FREE PUBLIC ACCESS

# KCCA to take over Centenary Park

By John Agaba and Juliet Waiswa

In a new standoff, the Kampala Capital City Authority announced yesterday that it plans to evict the managers of Centenary Park, Nalongo Estates, and assume control of the block and buildings there in, after the contract binding the estates company to the park expired.

According to Godfrey Nyakana's wife, Sarah Kizito, the company has worked on Plot 34E-38E along Jinja Road in Kampala since 2006.

In a notice to Nalongo Estates issued on November 30 last year, the director of legal affairs at the city authority, Mike Okua, reminded the proprietors of the expiry of their lease and asked them to hand over the park "not later than December 30" 2016.

"This is notice to you that the management contract executed on May 16, 2006, between the then Kampala City Council (KCC) and Nalongo Estates Limited, under which you bound yourselves to develop and maintain the premises

In May 2006, KCC signed a management agreement with Nalongo Estates Limited to "develop, use and preserve Centenary Park as a recreational park and bridal garden."

Proprietors included Sarah Kizito, Babirye Kizito and Aisha Kizito. According to the 10-year contract, the developer had to ensure that no other permanent structure was constructed in the park "other than those components which are a subject to the environmental impact assessment", such as a swimming pool, office facility, toilets and walkways.

However, in 2012, KCCA moved to take over the park after it accused Nalongo Estates of violating the agreement of maintaining it as a 'green area', with free access to the public. The chaos was resolved after trade minister Amelia Kyambadde intervened.

## HISTORY OF PARK

known as 'Centenary Park' for a period of 10 years, has lapsed," the notice said.

"Accordingly, I am instructed by the accounting officer to demand, as I hereby do, that you deliver and hand over vacant possession of the said property to Kampala Capital City Authority (as successor to the former KCC) within 30 days from the date hereof (November 30), and in any case, not later than December 30," the notice

continued.

Okua added that clauses 12 and 13 of the agreement stipulate that "at the expiry of the contract, the structures in Centenary Park put up by the managers shall revert to the Council (now KCCA) and further use of the Centenary Park after this agreement shall be at the discretion of the Council."

KCCA assistant spokesperson Robert Kalumba said the decision not to renew Nalongo



One of the buildings in Centenary Park. Photo by Norman Katende

Estates contract was informed by a plan to construct a flyover, which will include a "substantial portion" of the park.

According to Kalumba, KCCA intends to hand over the park to Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) soon "so that the construction project can commence."

He said procurement of the contractor for the works would begin this year.

But the move by KCCA will not go easy. Already the management of Nalongo Estates has already petitioned the Kampala City Lord Mayor, Erias Lukwago, through their lawyers,

seeking his "intervention and indulgence".

Through its lawyers, Nalongo Estates sought to retain the management of the park, arguing that the authority had earlier resolved the impasse in the company's favour.

When contacted, the office of the Lord Mayor said: "standing committees of physical planning and legal affairs had been directed to handle the matter with the office of the executive director" before any eviction could be executed.

However, some other sources were pessimistic Nalongo Estates would have a chance

in their petition, after they 'mismanaged the park and erected permanent structures yet the area should have been kept a green belt'.

"It should be a free park, where people relax, but one cannot access it without paying," some sources said.

A trader in Kampala, Amos Bahati, said the KCCA Act gives the authority onus to take over management of the park "if the contract has expired."

But managers (Nalongo Estates) will "fight" to keep their buildings, especially the house which contains Club La-bourgeoisie.