

By Martin Kitubi

The Ministry of Public Service will subject over 25,000 pensioners to manual checking and analysis at the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA).

"NIRA will assist us analyse pension data; the analysis will focus mainly on biometric data, including matching fingerprints, pictures of the beneficiaries and even manual checking to see that we include only the right individuals on the payroll," Victor Leku Bua, the assistant commissioner in charge of pension at the public service ministry, said.

He said this on Wednesday in an interview with *New Vision* at the ministry headquarters in Wandegaya, Kampala.

"We want to clean the pension payroll to ensure that no ghost beneficiary is recorded, but we found out that there are people with varying names, dates of birth, and places of origin, which we want to rectify before we make the final list of pensioners," he said.

A total of 49,861 pensioners were captured in the just

# Govt orders pensioners to get new thumbprints

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concluded validation and verification exercise, but only 24,000 pensioners had

their national ID information matching with the employment (pension) documents.

In the verification exercise this year, there have been varying numbers of pensioners captured from 71,261, 71,232, and 71,827 and to 49,861 in March, April, May and June respectively.

Leku attributed the disparities to deaths and continuous retirement of civil servants.

Leku revealed that several ministries and other government institutions have written to them requesting for an extension of the verification exercise due to the numbers of unverified pensioners. As a result, the

## Background

Last year, the Ministry of Public Service established 11 new reforms in pension management, including pensioner's census, computeration of the processing of pension and transition from cash payment to cheques. Other reforms include implementation of the Integrated Personnel Payroll System (IPPS), transfer of pension records from legacy systems to IPPS, decentralised management of pension and gratuity to the respective votes of retirements. The verification exercise began in June 2015. By December

public service ministry is proposing to petition Cabinet and Parliament to extend the pensioners verification.

According to a list of unverified pensioners that

*New Vision* has seen, 110 and 55 pensioners were from the ministries of finance and foreign affairs respectively. Others are seven from the office of Director of Public

Prosecutions (DPP), two from Law Reform Commission and ministries of defence and education, among others.

According to Leku, the highest number of unverified pensioners are retired teachers and army veterans. He declined to reveal the actual number of veterans.

When contacted, the acting commissioner in charge of pension at the defence ministry, Mike Mabonga, said, "the numbers of unverified veterans are increasing, some were not aware about the exercise, and there are those working abroad like in Iraq and Afghanistan as security officers."

## NIRA speaks

The public relations and corporate affairs manager at NIRA, Gilbert Kadilo, noted that "we already have a team that has been working on unverified pensioners from public service, and we will work on them and send back the report after scrutiny."

The verification exercise begun in June 2015. By December 2016, the number of active pensioners on payroll was 70,085.