

National News

The city authority recently issued a two-week ultimatum, directing vendors to vacate streets and verandas.

BY SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

With barely two days to February 19, the date set for the eviction of street vendors from Kampala's central business district, tension is rising between city authorities and traders over the impending crackdown and relocation plan.

The Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) recently issued a two-week ultimatum, directing vendors to vacate streets, pavements and verandas, saying the move is intended to restore order in the city and improve accessibility for motorists and pedestrians.

However, despite the notice, many vendors continue to operate in the city centre, conducting business as usual amid uncertainty over what will unfold on the enforcement day.

KCCA Executive Director Sharifah Buzeki reaffirmed the Authority's commitment to implementing the directive, arguing that the continued occupation of roads and walkways disrupts traffic flow and undermines organised trade.

"We have set up a joint enforcement team to conduct the eviction on the D-day, all our enforcement team will be identified with a number on their uniform and from cameras," she said.

She warned that vendors found trading on the streets during the operation would be arrested, arraigned in court and have their merchandise impounded as evidence of illegal operation.

KCCA spokesperson Daniel Nuwabine said vendors have been sensitised and allocated spaces in gazetted markets across the city and surrounding areas.

"Vendors have the right to choose any of the 17 markets we allocated where there are available spaces and they are required to approach the market masters for guidance," he said.

He explained that interested vendors must submit applications through market masters, which are then forwarded to allocation committees.

Inside KCCA's plan to resettle street vendors



Some of the street vendors display their goods on the streets along Namirembe Road in Kampala. PHOTO/FILE

warded to allocation committees. Stalls are assigned according to the type of merchandise sold. "You will be allocated space according to your merchandise because markets are organised in departments. Government markets are free of charge, while in private markets, occupants pay a small fee as per management procedures," he said.

Mr Nuwabine, however, acknowledged that KCCA does not have an accurate figure of the total number of street vendors, noting that some operate during the day while others trade at night.

According to the authority, 2,520 spaces are available within Kampala markets, including Busega (500), Usafi (1,000), Wandegaya (250), City Abattoir (250), Kamwokya (200), Nakawa (100), Luzira (100), New Ntinda (100) and Na-

teete (20).

An additional 1,980 spaces have been secured in surrounding municipalities such as Mukono (1,000), Entebbe's Kitoro Market (400), Nansana (200), Namulata (200) and Kira Municipality (180). Priority KCCA says, will be given to registered vendors and vulnerable groups, including women.

Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago described the eviction of street vendors as a "vicious cycle" that has persisted for years. He recalled a four-pillar policy previously proposed to address the matter sustainably.

"The first pillar was to build two markets in each division to accommodate street vendors, but due to limited funds, only Wandegaya and Busega were constructed," Mr Lukwago said.

"The law provides for licensing un-

der the Trade Licensing Act of 1969 and other structural instruments, including the Trade Order Ordinance," he said, referring to the second pillar that sought to license vendors to operate in designated areas.

He also called for proper regulation of flea markets, saying many lack sanitary facilities and clear operational schedules. "There are no proper sanitary facilities, and there is no clear calendar for their operations. We agreed on creating a roster so they can operate in gazetted areas on a rotational basis from Monday to Sunday," he said.

Mr Lukwago further proposed evening markets operating from 4pm until late to allow vendors to trade after formal businesses close. He emphasised enforcement of the Landlord and Tenants Act to regulate relationships between

AVAILABLE SPACE

MARKET NAME	STALLS
Nakawa Market	100
Luzira Market	100
Wandegaya Market	250
City Abattoir	250
New Ntinda market	100
Usafi Market	1,000
Kamwokya	200
Nateete	20
Kira Municipality	180
Mukono Municipality	1,000
Entebbe Municipality	400
Nansana Municipality	200
Mpigi District	200

landlords and tenants, accusing some decade owners of charging high rents that push traders onto the streets. "Rent taxes are ever increasing, and the oppressive policies of some landlords have made it difficult for vendors to operate in areas. That is why many of them end up on the streets," he added.

Street vendors insist they will only comply if government fulfils earlier promises to expand market infrastructure.

Mr Kenneth Kazibwe, the chairperson of street vendors in Kampala, said relocation would only be feasible if each division is provided with at least two functional markets. "The President directed that every division should have at least two markets, but this has never been fully implemented," Mr Kazibwe said.

He added that pledges to establish evening and Sunday markets have not materialised. "Instead of discussing how to improve our working conditions, they are discussing how to arrest vendors," he said.

Mr Kazibwe disputed KCCA's figure of available spaces, arguing that some stalls are either nonexistent or already occupied. He criticised what he termed the criminalisation of informal work. "This is the only country where someone is arrested for trying to work for survival while thieves remain free," he said.