

Jinja market vendors protest as garbage repels customers

JINJA

By Donald Kiirya

Sarah Kisakye, a food vendor in Jinja Central Market, woke up early on Tuesday and went to do her daily work but did not make any sales.

The trend continued three days in a row. Customers are keeping away from an awful smell from uncollected garbage at Jinja Central Market.

"The situation has become unbearable and we have lost customers due to the awful smell and flies emanating from heaps of garbage," Kisakye said.

Kisakye is not the only one facing the challenge. More than 100 food vendors are losing customers due to the stench from the garbage. This has prompted them to protest by blocking Lady Alice Muloki Road until Jinja municipality officials collect all the garbage.

Police officers led by one Asimwe, the acting officer in charge of operations at Jinja Central Police Station, faced a hard time trying to calm the vendors who were also joined by residents.

Garbage dumped on roads

Vendors collected garbage in their utensils and dumped it in the middle of the road, paralysing traffic for close to four hours, which prompted the Police to intervene.

They got jerrycans and started drumming them as they threw garbage all over the road.

Residents were seen walking with the garbage packed in buckets, heading to the municipality offices but were blocked by Police officers. Even those who tried to jump on bodabodas were also blocked.

Henry Mujimba, the chairperson of Jinja Central Market Traders Association, defended the vendors' protest, saying they pay exorbitant taxes for garbage collection.

"Vendors pay between sh10,000 and sh15,000 per month for garbage collection and over sh40m is collected monthly from Jinja Central Market," Mujimba said.

He added that the management of the



Jinja Central Market vendors gather around a garbage bin near the market. Photos by Donald Kiirya

vendors' association requested to be awarded a tender of collecting garbage but it was turned down and given to a company which uses old garbage trucks.

"When it rains, water washes the garbage into the market, posing a risk to people's lives," Mujimba said.

Political flares

Juliet Nanangwe, a food vendor, said during times of general elections, Majid Batambuze, the current mayor, used to plead with voters to elect him so that he turns Jinja into 'London'. But surprisingly, they do not see any change.

The Jinja town clerk, Francis Byabagambi, said he would talk to us later as he was headed for a security meeting.

Lawrence Ssemaganda, the defence secretary in Jinja Central Market, requested the Government or the municipality to give youths jobs of cleaning the town.



Vendors protesting because of uncollected garbage in Jinja

RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT



Muzamiru Izimba, bodaboda rider

I used to have lunch from the food and beverages section in Jinja Central Market but I stopped due to the awful smell from the rotten garbage outside the market.



Joy Presley, food vendor

Waste management has never been a priority for the Jinja central division or municipality authorities yet we pay a monthly fee for the services.



Mohammed Ssemplija

It is now close to two months without municipal officials collecting garbage around the market and from other places in Jinja town.

Stephen Wolra

I regret electing Majid Matambuze because he has not kept his promises of turning Jinja into 'London'.