

Buliisa landlords, govt disagree on payment for land

BULISA

By Priscillar Nyamahunge

Some residents in Buliisa district are demanding a higher pay as compensation for land which the Government has procured to construct the oil central processing facility.

Over 800 residents are likely to be affected by the project that will occupy land measuring up to 700 acres in Kasenyi village, Ngwedo sub-county.

Reports indicate that the Government had earlier proposed to pay sh2.1m per empty acre, an amount that residents rejected.

On Friday and Saturday, a team led by the lands minister, Betty Amongi, visited the area in question and had a meeting with residents and land owners in order to reach an agreement.

The team comprised of finance minister Matia Kasajja, the Bunyoro affairs state minister, Ernest Kiiza and other officials from the Office of the Prime Minister.

Others were representatives of the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), works ministry, Chief Government Valuer and the minister of state for defence.

"This is becoming an industrial park. We want value for money." LC1 boss

During the meeting, the Government officials said at most they will pay sh3.5m per empty acre, something which some locals still reject.

Some residents claimed they had no plans of selling their land and, therefore, the Government should give them chance to determine their own price.

Stephen Kaliisa, the LC1 chairperson of Kasenyi, said: "I request the Government to make a fair payment to the people. This is becoming an industrial park and we would like to get value for money."

According to Kaliisa, residents wanted at least Sh10m per acre.

Simon Kinene, the Buliisa district chairperson, said in addition to the sh3.5m, a disturbance allowance of 30% will also be paid.

Kinene said the Government will make a disclosure of how much each person will be paid by January 15.

But minister Kiiza, said: "I think some people had politicised the issue and others were not aware of the whole process, until we explained to them during the meeting."

Kiiza, who also hails from Bunyoro, said most people had already agreed to the proposed amount of sh3.5m.

Henry Bawuzuki, former economist