

# National water drainage works kick off at Centenary Park

By Juliet Waiswa

National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), backed by the Police, on Monday embarked on demolishing structures at Centenary Park, where the sewer lines are expected to pass.

Three popular bars; the New Blue Bar, Chinese restaurant, Nyama Choma and some grass-thatched structures were brought down.

This follows last week's directive by the parliamentary committee on commissions, state enterprises and statutory authorities (COSASE) regarding the demolition of illegal structures in the controversial Centenary Park.

President Yoweri Museveni however, intervened and directed that after determining the land required for the proposed infrastructure projects, Nalongo Estates, the managers of Centenary Park, should be allowed to use the remaining land.

NWSC, through a \$200m loan, is currently implementing the improvement of the existing sewerage infrastructure of Kampala city under the Lake Victoria protection phase II project. According to plans, the project and other two projects – the Kampala flyover and the relocation of the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL) station – are expected to occupy a major part of the park.

NWSC managing director, Dr. Silver Mugisha last week said because the



Sogea Satom engineers putting aggregates in one of the trenches at Centenary Park where they will be installing water pipes on Tuesday. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo

managers of the park had blocked the project, the contractor had been demoralised and left the site. The delays allegedly cost the corporation over sh1b in contractual claims. The contract was due to expire this month.

The demolition, which began on Monday, took some of the operators of the bars and eateries by surprise as they said they were not informed.

"We have been reading stories in the papers, but we have been caught

unawares this morning. They should have told us that we are going to be affected. There have been conflicting media reports," one of the workers at the New Blue Bar said.

The situation at Centenary Park was calm as the owners of the bars removed their crates of beer, sodas, cooking utensils, chairs and tables to pave the way for the graders to excavate the area.

Nalongo Estates Limited's agent,

Godfrey Nyakana, who is also husband of Sarah Kizito, the manager of Centenary Park, said they had consented with NWSC to allow them start works around the Centenary gardens, which stretches from Yusuf Lule Road up to the entrance of the park, opposite Electoral Commission.

Nyakana assured the bar and restaurant operators that once the sewer lines have been laid, they would be free to rebuild their

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structures.

The pipes to be installed by NWSC will run from the Centenary Park gardens, where the Kampala city centenary jubilee monument is located near the NWSC water booster and will affect some of the clients operating small businesses in the park and the UMEME power station.

"The pipe will run through the UMEME power station up to Airtel, where NWSC will construct a three-metre wide pipe," Gisagara said.

The project is part of the Lake Victoria Nakivubo programme, which will join sewer lines from Kololo, Nakasero, Mulago, the city centre up to Naguru, then connect to Nakivubo Channel. The Uganda National Roads Authority plans to construct a flyover around the Centenary Park under the Kampala infrastructural project funded by the Japanese government.