

Complaint. East Division leaders say they were not consulted on the relocation of the abattoir.

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Municipal council leaders fight over abattoir project

NTUNGAMO. Leaders of Eastern Division in Ntungamo Municipality have demanded that the top council leaders cancel the plan to relocate the abattoir from Park Ward to Western Division.

The municipal council is planning to construct a modern abattoir in Kahunga Ward in Western Division using Shs100 million grant they got from Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries in October last year.

The Eastern Division chairperson, Hajj Hakim Muheli Rwomushana, says some top council leaders have been plotting to relocate the abattoir for selfish and political reasons.

Revenue collection

"The abattoir is the second major source of revenue. We have not failed to manage it or provide land for a new one, why do they want to relocate it?" Hajj Rwomushana asked.

According to statistics available at the council, the abattoir generates Shs96 million for the division every financial year.

The fights on relocating the slaughterhouse climaxed after Eastern Division leaders on Monday walked out of a meeting for division leaders protesting the move.

The meeting had been convened by the mayor, Mr Jacob Kafureka, and the town clerk, Mr Christopher Ahimbisibwe.

The East division leaders vowed to go to court to block the relocation of the abattoir saying the action is in breach of section of 177 of the Local Government Act.

Petition

They have since written to the Solicitor General seeking interpretation of the law.

"The municipal council has no powers to transfer any revenue source from the division when we have not agreed to it. They needed to have consulted us before doing this but this looks like



Contested. The current slaughterhouse in Eastern Division of Ntungamo Municipality that will be relocated to Western Division. PHOTO BY PEREZ RUMANZI

they are in a hurry," Mr Anatori Betubiza, councillor for Kyamate Ward II and secretary for production at the division, said.

Ms Grace Mugisha, the division secretary for finance, said Mr Ahimbisibwe wrote to them at the end of last financial year asking them to look for suitable land for an abattoir which they did only to be told later that it has been taken to another division.

"We got land at Ruhoko but the municipal authorities rejected it saying it was near a health facility-Ruhoko Health Centre II. We got another one at Ruberera off Ntungamo Mirama Hills Road which the municipality said would be against the structural plan. Finally we zeroed on private land at Mpama cell, Kyamate ward. However, the land has not been paid for because town clerk has refused to sign for the money," Ms Mugisha said.

She added: "When they were still negotiating for the land, the municipal council advertised for construction of the abattoir in

Western Division and a contract was awarded in January."

Mr Ahimbisibwe however said

MAYOR SPEAKS OUT

According to Mr Kafureka, the Eastern Division had a lion's share of the municipality revenue with the taxi park, bus park and abattoir contributing more than 60 per cent of the municipal local revenue.

"The municipal council is like a husband with many wives who wants to avoid conflict by giving everyone an equal share of what he has, but the Eastern Division wants to behave like a side dish. They want to take away everything and leave all the other divisions malnourished," he said.

the division was given a chance to retain the abattoir by looking for alternative land because the current site is near the road but the process has taken too long and the grant risks being taken back to central government if it not used before the end of this financial year.

"We have our land and an old minute of council. This money has a timeline so what do we do? Do we return the money or build the abattoir and maybe we resolve our conflict latter?" said Mr Ahimbisibwe.

Distribution of revenue

Mr Kafureka said the abattoir has to be transferred for equitable distribution of resources to the divisions.

Ntungamo Municipality was created in 2010 and has three divisions; Eastern Western and Central. The Western Division chairperson, Mr Jacob Binyere, welcomed the move saying resources should be allocated equitably.