TAX

# URA tightens controls on bonded warehouses

With license cancellation now firmly on the table, URA makes it clear that compliance is compulsory, and operators must fall in line.

**Bonded Warehouses.** |

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Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) has intensified enforcement on Customs Bonded Warehouse operators, rolling out sweeping compliance measures and warning that failure to meet the new standards could result in automatic cancellation of operating licenses.

The stance signals a decisive shift in oversight of bonded facilities, critical in Uganda's international trade system, where imported goods are stored under Customs control before duties are paid goods are re-exported. Because taxes on these goods are suspended while in bond, bonded warehouses represent significant revenue exposure to government, making accountability and security central to URA's mandate.

In a notice, URA noted that all licensed warehouse keepers are required to immediately strengthen internal controls, tighten access management systems, and ensure full accountability for goods under customs supervision.

The notice signed by URA commissioner general John Rujoki Musinguzi noted that the measures seek to seal compliance gaps that have in the past led to revenue leakages, diversion of goods, and weak traceability.

"All goods in bonded warehouses remain under customs control, and we expect full accountability at all times. Any loss, substitution, or unaccounted-for goods is not just a breach of procedure; it is an offence under the East African Community Customs Management Act," he said. Under the new directive, bonded warehouses must implement controlled access systems capable of recording the identity and purpose of every person entering or leaving the premises.

URA also requires that all staff and visitors wear reflector jackets while inside warehouse facilities to enhance visibility and monitoring.

In addition, loaders and casual workers must be issued distinct uniforms and unique identification numbers, with operators maintaining updated staff records that include photographs and National Identification Numbers (NINs).

The URA says these measures seek to strengthen traceability, eliminate anonymity within warehouse operations, and reduce opportunities for illegal diversion of goods.



URA commissioner general John Rujoki Musinguzi

Bonded warehouses are required to maintain adequate and functional facilities to support customs operations, which include proper examination areas for inspections, reliable record-keeping systems, and secure storage infrastructure that prevents tampering or unauthorized access.

URA said performance will be monitored through inspections and key performance indicators, which will inform the renewal of bonded warehouse licenses for 2027 and subsequent years, warning that operators who fail to meet the prescribed standards risk penalties, payment of duties on unaccounted-for goods, and possible automatic cancellation of their licenses.

"We will not hesitate to take enforcement action, including license revocation, where operators fail to meet the required standards. These measures are about protecting Uganda's revenue and ensuring fair trade practices," Musinguzi warned.

The enforcement push is part of URA's broader compliance and revenue protection strategy aimed at strengthening customs oversight amid growing trade volumes and increasingly complex supply chains.

## License revocation

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