

Kisoro MP, LC5, RDC and Police clash over forest

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The Bufumbira North Member of Parliament, John Nizeyimana Kamara, has clashed with the office of the Kisoro resident district commissioner (RDC) and the Police over Kafuga Pocket reserve forest in Nyabicence and Rushabarara villages, Kirundo sub-county.

Kamara alleges that the RDC's office and the LC5 chairman, Abel Bizimana are conniving with rich people in the district to displace the locals from their ancestral land. He said the Police on Monday arrested nine residents of Nyabicence over clearing their land deemed to be a reserve. The Police was acting on the orders of the deputy RDC, Elias Nuwagaba Kateba,

"Last November, the same residents were arrested and charged with illegal entry into the land, but court dismissed the case and the Government did not appeal. When they went back to till the land, they were arrested again," Kamara said. The case was dismissed by the Kisoro



Bufumbira County North MP Kamara John Nizeyimana clashed with Kisoro RDC and the Police over Kafuga Pocket reserve forest

Grade II Magistrate, Charles Wako on November 29.

The residents claim that the land belonged to their great grandfather, Comas Sembeba. But they were surprised when, as they cleared land for cultivation of maize, a group of people from Nombe village attacked them. As the scuffle ensued, the Police arrived and arrested them instead.

Cyprian Bahungirehe, 60, said he suspected a well-planned move to grab the land.

"I was born here and have been utilising this land since. It is clearly demarcated! Why am I being arrested?" Bahungirehe said from Kisoro Central Police Station.

A resident, John Nizeyimana, who was among the attackers from Nombe, said they want the Government to clarify whether the land reserve belongs to individuals or the whole community.

"I cannot allow only a few people to cultivate land belonging to all of us," he said.

The district chief administrative officer, Wilson Tibugyenda, said.

"We are in the final stages of appealing."

Bizimana, said the MP Kamara was responsible for the residents' riot.

"Kamara has become a public disgrace in Kisoro. We are going to write to the Speaker of Parliament about it," he said, adding: "If he wants the land, he should use proper channels."

Kateba, the deputy RDC, said he called the Police after receiving intelligence of possible bloodshed among communities.

"I don't know whether the case is in court or not but as the heads of security, we authorised the preventive arrests," he stated.

Kisoro RDC Shafiq Sekandi denied having interests in the land or conniving with those who do.