

Govt accused of fuelling Mubuku land dispute

Hotbed. Kasese District is a hotbed of land and ethnic conflicts. Also, Kidodo which was an industrial area and Katadoba, for Kilembe Mines Ltd, have both been grabbed.

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KASESE. Kasese District land board has accused the ministry of Agriculture of fuelling the controversy surrounding Mubuku Irrigation Scheme land which has been claimed by individuals.

More than 196.7 hectares out of 1,620 hectares of Mubuku land reserved as a cattle corridor have been claimed by residents.

"We have a challenge of the boundaries of the Mubuku Irrigation Scheme; we offered the communities land titles which are being challenged that they are on Mubuku Irrigation Scheme land," Mr Uriah Baluku, the chairperson of Kasese land board, said last Friday.

Mr Baluku noted that Mubuku Irrigation Scheme land is assumed to be starting from River Nyamwamba to River Sebwe on the lower side of the Kasese-Fort Portal highway yet the whole stretch is occupied.

"It is a tricky situation to clearly know who grabbed what because the whole land has been taken away by those with or without land titles," he noted.



According to Mr Baluku, Mubuku land is being claimed by four groups: Mr Constantine Siwako of Siwarama Commercial Farmers Ltd, Mr Nackson Thaheramboko of Bataka Community Group, Late Sebastaino Bakoko and Abashaija Kweyamba community group that is in full control of the scheme, and residents that have constructed houses on the main road.

"All the four groups claim ownership of the scheme land and one fails to know whether the land belongs to government or not. I know that the first three have land titles

but the Abashaija Kweyamba were processing their land title through the Uganda Land Commission," Mr Baluku said adding that ministry of Agriculture must pronounce itself on the ownership of the scheme land.

He noted that many people have put up permanent structures on the

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The debate

Mr Uriah Baluku, the chairperson of Kasese land board, says government should prove ownership and that government must know the people hiring the land.

Impressed. Farmers in Mubuku Irrigation Scheme show President Museveni onion gardens during his tour around the scheme in 2015.
PHOTO BY ENID NINSIIMA

scheme is being grabbed. In 2014, government rehabilitated Mubuku Irrigation Scheme, part of the land which is owned by individuals who processed land titles, at a cost of more than Shs19b.

Presidential directive

On January 24, 2015 President Museveni ordered Kasese District authorities to immediately save the Mubuku Irrigation Scheme land that had been grabbed by some residents.

"Recover Mubuku Irrigation Scheme land. I hear it has been grabbed," President Museveni ordered then Kasese District chairman, Lt Col Dura Mawa Muhindo, while he was touring the scheme.

The visibly irritated President told the district leaders that the scheme belongs to government and those using it were tenants, not owners.

Asked why his office has not implemented the presidential directive to reacquire the scheme land, Mr Baluku feigned ignorance about the directive.

When contacted, the officer in charge of Mubuku Irrigation Scheme, Mr Lawrence Tibesigwa, said the matter is before court and they are waiting for court to pronounce itself on the same.

The State minister for Agriculture, Mr Christopher Kibanzanga, confirmed that the scheme land has been grabbed.

scheme land, besides claiming many acres that they rent.

"As the problems come up, we fail to know which Mubuku we are talking about because we (the land board) do not know how much government handed over and how much it is going to cover in the next phase.

He said the ministry of Agriculture must avail all documents pertaining Mubuku land to solve the conflict.

As government plans to extend the rehabilitation of Mubuku II Irrigation Scheme in 2018, leaders have decried the rate at which the irrigation