

NEMA in Entebbe waste dump row

WAKISO

By Julius Luwemba

Entebbe municipality officials led by the deputy town clerk, Dan Fred Lutaaya, have stopped a company engaged in sand mining beneath the municipal garbage dumping site located at Nkumba-Bukolwa in Katabi town council, Wakiso district.

Lutaaya, who had gone to deliver a letter to officials of Porch Group Ltd, which is involved in sand mining, blamed the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) which he claims licensed Porch Group to destroy the wetland that has been acting as a natural buffer for solid waste.

"Our dump site has a buffer preventing solid waste from polluting Lake Victoria. Of late, through a company called Porch Group, our dump area, specifically the buffer, has faced immense degradation by mechanised mining through a dredger machine," Lutaaya said.

According to a letter addressed to NEMA on the same issue, the environmental authority sanctioned the activity of sand mining through permit number NEMA/RB//LS/WT "without due consideration of the prevailing stakes in the area as warranted by Entebbe municipal Council."

The letter reads: "Aware of our inter-government commitment on protection of Lake Victoria as a shared resource, we strongly believe you will rescind inter alia commitment with the



Lutaaya assessing the damage at the dump site (in the background). Top: An excavator from Porch Group spreading the mined sand. Photo by Julius Luwemba

sand miner to give our dump site the desired protection."

Charles Okello, who was found at the mining site and is the work supervisor, said Porch Group was a registered and licensed company endorsed by NEMA and Katabi town council. He did not disclose the real owners of the company.

The Katabi town council mayor, Ronald Kalema, confirmed that there is ongoing sand mining at the dumping site.

He, however, blamed NEMA, saying Porch Group was first assessed and certified by the environmental authority before they acquired a licence from the town council.

"After showing us an environmental impact assessment certificate from NEMA, we licensed the company so that it meets the relevant tax obligations towards our town council," Kalema said.

The dump site sits on 15 acres of land and is located in Katabi town council, but is owned by Entebbe municipal

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council since 1998.

It serves sister councils like Katabi town council, Kajjansi town council and Makindye Ssabagabo municipality.