

Nambooze halts demolition of park

MUKONO

By Henry Nsubuga

The Kayunga-Mukono road works were expected to terminate at a modern roundabout in the centre of Mukono town. But that process has been brought to a halt after the area MP, Betty Nambooze, blocked the re-location of the taxi park to pave the way for the works.

Nambooze on July 4 petitioned Parliament over the pending relocation of Mukono taxi park by the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) and Mukono municipality.

Nambooze alleges that officials intend to give the land to a private developer, Paul Karegeya, who wants to set up a shopping mall there.

"Karegeya approached me and requested me to back his proposal. But I cannot back such illegality and theft," she said.

Nambooze told *New Vision* that Karegeya has held discussions with Mukono mayor Fred Kagimu and reached an agreement that he provides land at Njogezi valley to relocate the taxi park

WHAT RESIDENTS SAY



Kasozi Muwonge, newspaper seller, Nambooze may tell us to stay, saying that the matter is before Parliament, only for us to wake up one day to find our property demolished.



David Kizza, driver, Nambooze should not halt the demolition of the park. This has delayed the completion of the road, barring development.



Rose Najjemba, trader, I have tried to look for places to relocate, but they are expensive, yet I had already been established here.

as he builds a shopping mall where the taxi park is currently located.

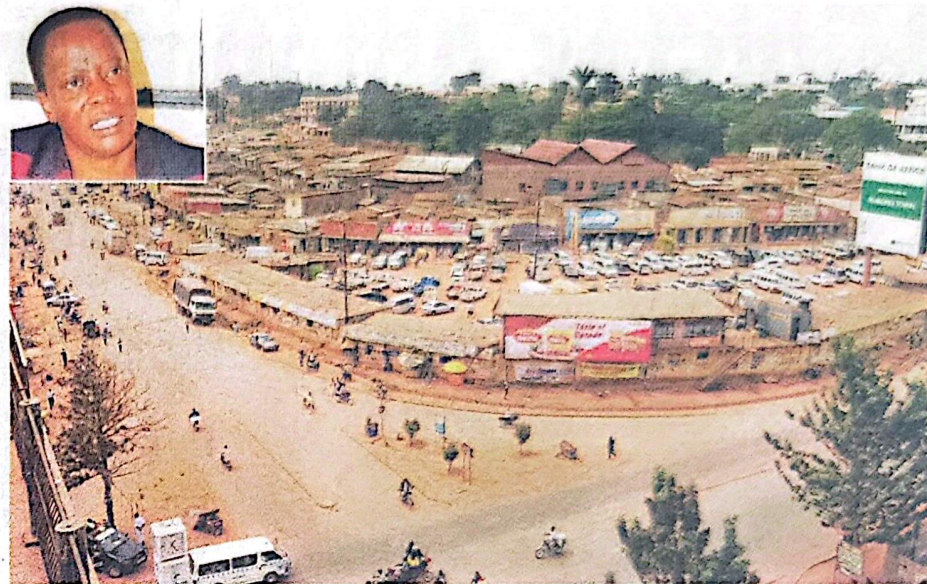
"It is not wise to chase away the people who have been working in the taxi park for years, just to replace them with shopping malls by rich people. Let the shopping malls be built outside the town centre," she said.

Nambooze adds that she first received a petition from the traders and the landlords who own the over 60 stalls surrounding the taxi park, which UNRA intends to demolish to

pave the way for the completion of the Mukono-Kayunga road, complaining about the plan to have them sent away without compensation.

She said according to information she received from UNRA engineers, the previous road design would not affect the taxi park, but Kagimu asked UNRA to construct an arch at the roundabout, which called for a redesign that would affect people's businesses.

"I warned the mayor and council against the move, but they did not heed my advice.



The roundabout joining Kayunga Road to the Kampala-Jinja highway and the shops around Mukono taxi park which UNRA plans to demolish. Inset is Nambooze. Photos by Henry Nsubuga

With the Democratic Party leadership being in control of the municipality, if things get messed up and I just keep quiet, the electorate will hold me liable," she said.

Parliament on July 11 heard Nambooze's petition and the Speaker asked the committee on local government to go to Mukono and find out what was going on.

Kagimu acknowledged having received the letter from Parliament informing him about the development and Nambooze's petition.

"I have perused through the petition, I am eager to receive the committee and help the legislators find out the truth,"

the mayor of Mukono said.

Kagimu said some of his fellow leaders could be envious of his new developments.

"The design which was presented by UNRA to construct a roundabout, which will join Kayunga Road to the Kampala-Jinja highway is meant to rid Mukono town of its persistent traffic jams," he said.

Kagimu also said although some of the kiosks which the former Mukono town council leaders constructed are in the road reserve, UNRA accepted to compensate the owners before demolishing them, which process has also delayed the road's completion for the last eight months.

"UNRA has completed compensation and in less than a month, owners of the shops will receive the money so that work commences," he said.

The traders and taxi drivers in the park, when contacted, had mixed feelings regarding the move.

Some backed the demolition of part of the taxi park to make way for redevelopment, while others blamed UNRA for wanting to evict them from the place where they have been working for over 20 years.

Some businesses have already been shifted due to fear that the shops around the Mukono taxi park are soon going to be demolished.