

## EX- AG MISADVISED GOVT TO PAY PRIVATE FIRM SH1.3B

BY EDWARD ANYOLI

The former Attorney General (AG), Peter Nyombi, misadvised the Government to pay sh1.3b to Ngabo Academy, a private entity.

On Friday, William Matovu, the head of land acquisition at the Uganda National Road Authority (UNRA), told the commission probing the land sector that the money was paid basing on Nyombi's advice.

According to the commission, Ngabo Academy based in Mbarara is linked to retired Capt. David Bashaija as the proprietor. The ownership of the school is linked to top military officers.

Led by the commission's lead counsel Ebert Byenkya, Matovu also clarified that the advice given by Nyombi regarding Wilson Tumwine, that he is a bonafide owner and was entitled to sh294m compensation for land measuring 3.35 acres at Kashari, Mbarara was also erroneous.

He said the AG's advice that Ngabo Academy be compensated as bonafide occupant on the land was misleading.

The commission wondered how UNRA could rely on Nyombi's advice in which he said when a lease expires, the holder of the lease can be considered as a bonafide occupant.

A bonafide occupant is that person who has occupied a piece of land unchallenged for 12 years, before the 1995 Constitution came into force.

According to information obtained by the commission, Tumwine had been occupying the land

by a way of a lease which he reportedly acquired irregularly because it is a forest reserve.

"With due respect to the learned AG I am wondering whether this did not look strange to UNRA," Byenkya tasked Matovu to explain.

Matovu admitted that UNRA was wrong to pay basing on Nyombi's advice and without verification.

"I also believe that once someone attains the state of acquiring a leasehold title and the same expires, they relinquish their equitable interests in that property until the time when they reapply," Matovu said.

The commission was surprised to learn that even when the Uganda Land Commission (ULC) declined to renew Ngabo Academy's lease, Nyombi still advised the Government to compensate it.

The commission later detained Katusabe, a private surveyor, who was contracted by COWI to survey the land at Wandegeya Police Station.

The commission accused Katusabe of concealing information about Mbarara central forest reserve.

### COMMISSION MANDATE

The commission's mandate is to probe the efficiency of the laws, policies and processes of land registration, acquisition, administration and management.

It is also tasked with inquiring into the effectiveness of the Uganda Land Commission (ULC) in administering public land and relevant bodies in the preservation of wetlands, forests, road reserves and national parks, among other gazetted space.