



PRESS STATEMENT

ON

**ALLEGED EVICTION OF NATIONALS FROM KYANGWALI
REFUGEE LAND AND CURRENTLY CAMPED AT KIKUBE
DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS**

BY

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**MINISTER FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND
REFUGEES**

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

1ST MARCH, 2022

BRIEF ABOUT THE ALLEGED EVICTION OF NATIONALS FROM KYANGWALI CURRENTLY CAMPED AT KIKUBE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS.

Date: 1st March 2022

Preamble;

The purported eviction is stage managed by some self seekers who want to depict the Ministry for Relief Disaster Preparedness and Refugees as having failed on its mandate while pursuing personal political agenda.

We are going to investigate this line and expose all those behind the stage managed eviction and camping at Kikube district headquarters.

Back ground

1. Kyangwali Refugee Settlement was established in 1960 following a land offer by Bunyoro Kingdom on 20th April 1960 **there is a copy of the offer to Government.**
2. The offer letter clearly defined the boundaries of the Settlement as Lake Albert on one side, River Nguse on one side, Bugoma Forest Reserve on the other and Kabwoya to Kyangwali Road. The land the encroachers are claiming to be theirs falls within the boundaries stated above.
3. The people agitating as land owners had encroached land close to River Nguse and Lake Albert which are within the boundary of the settlement.
4. The encroachers came on the land post 1995 return of Rwandan Refugees and following the 1997/99 attacks by ADF which forced the remaining refugees back to the base camp leaving the rest of the land vacant and vulnerable to encroachment.

5. Most of the encroachers are from neighbouring subcounties of Mpefu and Ruganshari in current Kagadi district. They were resettled there by Government after they were evicted from Mpokya Forest reserve.
6. Government had continued to remind the encroachers that they were illegally occupying Settlement land and should vacate it but many remained adamant.
7. In 2012; following a large influx of Refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo through Bundibugyo Government decided to settle them in Kyangwali and the encroachers were requested to and they vacated Government land voluntarily.
8. Encroachers were remobilized to come back on the land by some local politicians especially a one Rwemera Mazirane former LC111 of Kyangwali and some Members of Parliament such as Hon Bernabas Tinkasimire, Hon Muhumuza former MP Mwenge North and Hon Junjura former MP for Buhaguzi County.
9. Then Rt. Hon Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi set up a task team to investigate allegations that OPM officials were settling refugees on land for Nationals.
10. The investigations were headed by Late Gen. Julius Oketa whose findings were that the land in issue belonged to Government and encroachers did not deserve compensation from Government ***there is a report on this.***
11. The encroachers numbering around 1200 remained camped at Kyangwali Sub county headquarters and in 2015, Government gave them three months food ration and transport to their districts of origin and demolished the IDP camp created thereon.

12. After relocation, some pseudo “land lords” assisted by the Parish Priest of Nyamisanga in Kyangwali remobilized the encroachers and created a new IDP at the Parish as a strategy to rekindle the Kyangwali land problem with the main objective being to regain a foothold in the Refugee Settlement.
13. After pressure from Government to disband the new IDP mounted, the priest together with the Area Member of Parliament relocated the IDP camp to inside the refugee settlement allegedly to compel Government to allow them return to the bibanja they had grabbed.

Government moves to find a durable solution for Kyangwali Settlement land problems

14. In 2016 H E the President directed then Prime Minister to find a lasting solution to the Kyangwali Problem which had become protracted since 2012.
15. The Rt. Hon Prime Minister composed a team headed by then RDC for Hoima District the late Isaac Kawoya to verify claimants on the land for possible resettlement. The verification exercise for encroachers commenced in August 2016 until March 2017 and came up with a list of beneficiaries attached as *we have a list*.
16. With funding support by UNHCR Government embarked on the process of plot demarcation in July 2018 to settle the encroachers but the process was halted by the State House Anti-corruption team on allegations that OPM staffs were grabbing land for nationals.
17. H. E. the President set up a team of investigators from both Army and Police to investigate the allegations of land grabbing by OPM staffs, which were proved to be baseless.

18. Again in September 2018, the Area Member of Parliament Hon. Dan Muhairwe raised the issue of Kyangwali land as a matter of national concern alleging that, there was an impending eviction of local nationals from their land by to pave way for the expansion of the refugee settlement. The Presidential Affairs Committee investigated the allegations from 2019 until April 2021 and still found the allegations to be false ***there is the report.***

19. In April 2019 Cabinet approved UGX 6.2 Billion to re-settle the encroachers who had been listed as the most deserving on part of Kyangwali Refugee Land.

20. The activities below were planned and budgeted under the resettlement program budget above;

- I. Land plotting and allocation to the affected people off Kyangwali Refugee Settlement which was completed in December 2020.
- II. Establishment of community infrastructures such as schools, health centres, administrative centres, markets, and road infrastructures.
- III. Establishment of a new boundary between the land allocated to encroachers, what remained of the refugee resettlement and the Land for the UPDF.
- IV. Resettlement packages in form of building materials, agriculture tools, start up seeds and three months food to enable the resettlees to transit to their first season.

Activities implemented so far

21. All landless people registered by the Late Isaac Kawoya team were allocated land of 2.5 acres per House hold of

five members and less and more acreage for Households above 5 House Hold members.

22. OPM entered into an MoU with UPDF Engineering brigade who completed construction of 35km of high class marrum roads in the newly settled area including culverts and bridges making the entire 8 square miles resettled area accessible.

Next steps/ planned activities

23. The next planned activities included
 - I. Construction of three Primary Schools to enable children to access education in the new area.
 - II. Construction of one secondary school and a vocational institution for the resettlement area.
 - III. Construction of three Police outposts to ensure law and order in the newly resettled area.
 - IV. Construction of a Health Centre 3, three markets, and Parish Administrative unit.
 - V. Provide the resettled people with resettlement packages in form of food, agriculture tools, iron sheets and other building materials.
 - VI. Avail a communal land title to the resettled people on condition that individual parcelling of the land is prohibited for 20 years.

Challenges

24. The main challenge has been sabotage from bigger encroachers who continue to make false claims to own the refugee land and are always listened to by those in

authority hence endless investigations every time we are about to conclude the resettlement process.

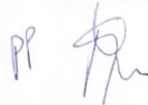
- I. In 2012 after Government had successfully dislodged the encroachers from Kyangwali refugee settlement they were brought back to stage manage an IDP camp by then area M Ps including others like Hon. Bernabas Tinkasimire and Hon Muhumuza of Mwenge North who were even not direct leaders (MPs) of the area.
- II. In 2018 the Land Inquires Commission halted the Resettlement processes to investigate allegations that OPM had grabbed land for nationals only to establish later that Government was the rightful owners of the land and was on the right path of resolving the problem.
- III. In 2018 still; the very encroachers sought the assistance of State House anti corruption Team which also halted the process yet again to carry out independent investigations into allegations of land grabbing by OPM officials only to come to the same finding that land was for Government.
- IV. Because of funding challenges, Government opted to use Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) resources for emergency infrastructure projects but this support was blocked by the so called pseudo land Lords on grounds that there were land ownership questions and they are false.
- V. The Hon Minister for Relief Disaster Preparedness and Refugees has written to the PS to commence resettlement activities and yet the so called land lords are mobilizing and paying people to camp at the Office of the RDC Kikube allegedly to protest against Government delayed final resolution of the land the problem for Kyangwali. The encroachers believe that by exerting intense pressure on Government, will be

allowed to regain entry into much of the land they had grabbed especially in Bukinda area.

25. There has also been dishonesty on the part of some Government Officials at local level and the Office of the RDC is suspected to be behind these stage managed evictions. There is a deliberate move to depict Government or the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees as the problem for selfish motives.
26. Endless investigations by different offices without making objective analysis of complaints before venturing into proving baseless allegation resulting into a simple land problem being protracted.
27. Majority of the encroachers are happy with the Government durable solution where now they have been allocated land which they can own in perpetuity. They are however being held hostage by the pseudo Land Lords who don't want to let go the square miles of land they had grabbed.
28. Lack of sufficient funds to implement the remaining activities most especially construction of schools which should have been concluded during the COVID 19 school break but could not; because of none cooperation from the project beneficiaries.
29. Following the opening of Schools, OPM mobilized NGOs working in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement to pool resources and build semi-permanent classrooms as Government plans interventions. The bigger encroachers supported by the area Woman Member of Parliament threatened to fight which ever NGO went to the resettled area to construct schools. This was very unfortunate and yet innocent children are not accessing education.

Way forward


30. OPM to work with Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development to avail the resettlement funds worth UGX 4.2 billion to resume resettlement activities by UPDF Engineering Brigade.
31. OPM will not entertain any more issues concerning land ownership of Kyangwali Land as this has been settled via the Kingdom allocation letter that defines settlement boundaries.
32. Government will isolate and deal with the perennial saboteurs of the resettlement exercise including more so the Office of the RDC and DPC Kikube for inciting a rebellion against Government.
33. Government will continue to fight encroachment of Refugee Settlement Land no matter the price and shall provide necessary protection to staff in the storm of trying to finding a lasting solution for the Kyangwali Land problem.
34. OPM shall investigate and expose all those behind the stage managed eviction of people settled by Government and they will pay for their mischief.



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