



MINISTRY OF LANDS, HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT



11<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

### **Media Statement on The President's Directive stopping illegal Evictions.**

Good morning, members of the Press.

You will recall that during my acceptance speech as Minister for Lands, I listed the issue of stopping illegal land evictions as my number one priority.

Illegal land evictions are happening everywhere and in all regions of this country and have turned life in the villages very difficult.

They target the poor, the voiceless, the uneducated communities, disrupting their livelihoods and hampering Government programmes aimed at empowering the citizens. On several occasions, these evictions have destroyed property and led to loss of innocent lives.

As a country, we have always had the laws criminalising such land evictions.

For example, the Land Act Section 92 (1)(e) and (5)(a) provides a punishment of 7 years or a fine of one million twenty thousand for anyone who participates in the eviction of a lawful or bonafide occupant.

However, over the years, people participating in these evictions have been ignoring all the existing legal procedures.

This is why the President's new directive is very important.

I want to thank His Excellency, our President and Commander in Chief, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who

has come out with a Presidential directive that puts an end to this unfortunate practice.

**In His Directive, the President commands as follows;**

- **No eviction should be allowed to take place in a district without the District Security Committee, chaired by the RDCs, meeting, looking and consulting directly the Minister of Lands.**
- **If this is not done and evictions take place, the President will take action on all the Members of the District Security Committee, except the UPDF representative because he/she may not know the substance of the issues involved.**
- **His Excellency the President requested His Lordship the Chief Justice to prevail on his Magistrates and Judges from violating the Constitution by illegally evicting people in collusion with land grabbers.**
- **The President also directed the Minister of Lands to inform the Attorney General about abuses by Judicial officers so that legal action can be taken on them.**

I therefore want to call upon the District Security Committees to take note of the President's directive. I will be issuing a circular to all RDCs and CAOs on implementing this directive. I have already addressed all RDCs on this matter.

The District Security Committees must now adjust their Terms of Reference to include implementing the Presidential Directive.

The District Security Committee must ensure no land eviction takes place especially on unregistered

or land with tenants on it.

All the necessary guidelines as stated must be followed.

For those paying Busuulu, the rent shall remain basic or nominal because the occupants cannot afford economic rent. This rent was gazetted under Statutory Instrument 2011 No 55. Finally in light of the President's Directive, I want to Guide the Resident District Commissioners on the following.

The RDCs chair the District Security Committees and I want to remind them about some of their roles under the land sector.

Below are some of the responsibilities that RDCs must fulfill.

1. To advise the Minister responsible for lands on all eviction related matters reported in their respective districts;
2. To comply with implementing the Presidential ban on land evictions;
3. To monitor, inspect and report on a monthly basis the land acquired by large scale land investors in order to ensure that land being taken over is not occupied by tenants or customary land owners;
4. To carry out the function of District Mediation as provided for in the National Land Policy, 2013 as a means of curbing all evictions.
5. To draw the attention to the Ministry of Lands on any divergence from or noncompliance with Government policies, laws and Presidential directives on land evictions.
6. Evictions from critical ecological systems, forest reserves and wetlands shall be handled on a case by case basis. The law provides for a period of 6 months and so measures should be put in place not to cause distress, but move out gradually under proper supervision.

I call upon the RDCs to be vigilant and give me evidence based information on all eviction related matters.

I call upon everyone who feels they are being violated or threatened to reach out to your local leaders for protection against destroying your livelihoods and causing landlessness in this country.

Find your RDCs and tell them about those threatening you with eviction so that necessary action is taken.

I thank His Excellency the President for this important Directive that strengthens the work of my Ministry.

**For God and my Country**

**Judith Nabakooba**

**Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development**