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Speaking when he addressed the aggrieved families, Dr Chanda assured the victims that the PF government was in the process of developing a land policy, which would address their problem.

"I have strongly condemned the dispossession and displacement of over 800 Zambians from the land that they have lived on and farmed for over 26 years in Ndola's Sichele area. I have addressed the aggrieved families in Sichele area, that is in Bwana Mkubwa constituency, and I have said that the indiscriminate land displacement of Zambians to accommodate foreigners in Sichele and other parts of the country is the reason the PF government is developing the national land policy, which will be finalised soon and which must state categorically that land ownership is a sovereign right of Zambians and not of foreigners. As you are aware, Zambia has had no land policy since 1964, which has actually led to a lot of chaos in the land sector like we are seeing in the case of Sichele and many other areas, not only in Bwana Mkubwa, but across the country," Dr Chanda said.

He said displacement of Zambians without compensation or alternative land was a moral and legal issue.

He also promised the affected families that he would take up the matter urgently with Lands Minister, Jean Kapata, and other land management bodies in Lusaka.

Dr Chanda further promised the victims that he would table the matter before Parliament until justice was delivered.

And chairperson for the displaced families, Abraham Manda, explained that the contested land in question was a state farm under the Dairy Produce Board (DPB) in the UNIP government in the 1970s and 1980s.

"The displaced people are former casual workers and their families at the State Farm. When the MMD government came to power in the 1990s, the Dairy Produce Board (DPB) collapsed under the privatization programme, and a former DPB farm manager, a Mr Mutambo, was given 300 of the 3,000 hectares of land as his retrenchment package since the company had no money. The farm casual workers continued living on the rest of the farm cultivating with their families. When Mr Mutambo sold the land to a South African company, Golden Lay, who deal in chicken eggs some years back, the original land title he had was only for 300 hectares of land. Under unclear circumstances the 300 hectares land title was later changed to 3,000 hectares at Ministry of Lands offices in Ndola and then Mr Mutambo sold the entire 3,000 hectares to Golden Lay and relocated to live in the UK," explained Manda.

"Thereafter, the farm casual workers and their families were forcefully chased from their small farms by individuals hired by Golden Lay with support of some police officers. Only 47 former farm workers were compensated with 200 hectares of land while the rest are still stranded. The matter has been in court several times, with the last ruling being in favour of Golden Lay Company."

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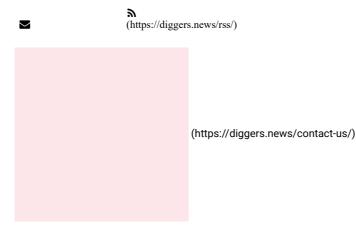
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