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## A senior lands officer is arrested in connection to the Kiryandongo district land grab

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Witness Radio | 17 June 2021

## A senior lands officer is arrested in connection to the Kiryandongo district land grab

Kiryandongo – Uganda – A team of police detectives attached to the Land Protection Unit, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), and the Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) have arrested a

senior lands officer, Kiryandongo District Land Board for land fraud that caused a forced displacement of thousands of natives off their land.

John Lubambula is the second person to be arrested in connection to the Kiryandongo district land grab saga after a land broker Mwesigye Reuben, who was arrested and charged with three counts including fraud by a chief magistrate court based in Masindi district, mid-western Uganda.



According to police investigations, While acting as the secretary to the Kiryandongo District Land Board, Lubambula John, Mwesigye Reuben, and others at large, fraudulently transferred land ownership comprised in Block 7, Plots 66, 68, and 69 at Kimogora in Kiryandongo, and gave it to multinationals for large scale agribusiness.

Police investigations further establish that upon stealing land from the poor communities, the benefactors created plots of land and shared them amongst themselves.

The stolen land belonged to families that are part of the 35000 people being forcefully displaced by three multinational companies including Great Seasons SMC Limited, Agilis Partners Limited, and Kiryandongo Sugar Limited.

The communities plagued by the continued forced evictions comprise three categories: The first category consists of people who were born on the land since 1935; the second, those that settled on the land during and after civil wars, including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which lasted for 2 decades in Northern Uganda from the late 1990s; and lastly, those who settled on the eviction site at the instance of government in 2011 through the Nyamalebe Landless Association.

Victims of forced land eviction accuse the group of land brokers of perpetrating violence through hiring and using machete-wielding men, private security guards, and police officers attached to Kiryandongo district police to commit violent acts which include: sexual and gender-based violence, illegal arrest and detention, torture, kidnap, demolition of houses, cutting down their food crops, and stealing their household properties among others.

“We are dying of hunger, we have nowhere to dig, and all our farming gardens were taken by the grabbers. If they see you digging, you are beaten and arrested and charged,” said, Martin Haweka, one of the project-affected families.

Led by detective Richard Ekebu, Lubambula was arrested from his office located at Kiryandongo district land board, at 1:30 pm local time on June, 16th 2021.

Lubambula is currently being detained at Kabalaga police station, waiting to be taken to Masindi magistrates court.

**Original source:** [Witness Radio](#)

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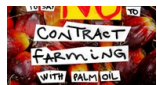
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