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Raila Odinga: I don't owe Mumias Sugar Company any money

By Alex Wakhisi

Updated Monday, July 27th 2015 at 00:00 GMT +3

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Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga with Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale when they attended a funeral service at Matungu in Mumias. Raila used the opportunity to defend himself over Sh300 million Mumias Sigar Company debt. [PHOTO: CHRISPEN SECHERE/STANDARD]

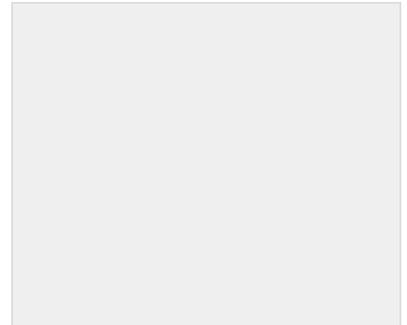
Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) leader Raila Odinga, has defended himself against accusations that he contributed towards the near collapse of Mumias Sugar Company.

The former premier dismissed allegations that his molasses plant in Kisumu owes the sugar miller more than Sh300 million accrued for years after being supplied with molasses.

Speaking in Matungu, Kakamega County over the weekend, Raila insisted that his company paid all dues owed and that where the company failed to settle the debts, he paid using his own money.

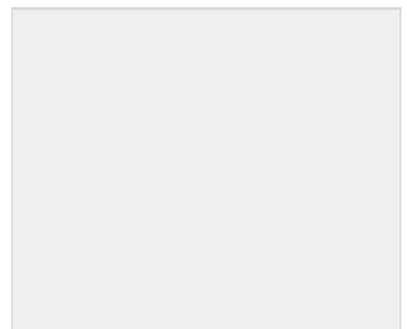
He also revealed that Mumias supplied molasses to his company through a bank guarantee of Sh2 million.

"There have been claims and accusations that I am among people who contributed towards the financial woes affecting Mumias Sugar Company. My molasses plant does not owe the



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sugar firm even a single cent," Raila said.

"Mumias supplied molasses to my company on a bank guarantee of Sh2 million. Where is the Sh300 million debt coming from?" asked CORD leader.

He said Spectre International gets molasses not only from Mumias, but also from other sugar millers in the region.

Cheap imports

"The company buys molasses from all sugar companies in the region. We get molasses from Nzoia, Chemilili, Muhoroni and Sony sugar companies and we pay them promptly," he said.

Raila explained that Mumias Sugar woes are both internal as well as external, and urged the national government to fight cheap sugar imports into the country, instead of lying to Kenyans that mismanagement was the main

reason why the industry was performing poorly.

He alleged that almost all sugar factories in the country are facing the threat of closure due to lack of market.

"The Government has failed to reign on cheap sugar imports brought in the country by some rich individuals. While the imported sugar sells cheap, Mumias Sugar is left lying on the shelves. Unless cheap sugar imports are dealt with, we see most sugar companies collapsing," Raila said.

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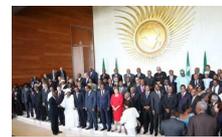
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