



Commission on Administrative Justice chairman Otiende Amollo speaks to the Press at the commission's offices in Nairobi yesterday. (PHOTO: COLLINS KWEYU/STANDARD)

Ongeri named in Kisii market land grab

Kenya's envoy to UN-Habitat, however, says he followed the right channels to get the land and has ownership documents

By ALLY JAMAH

An ambassador has been accused by the Ombudsman of illegally acquiring public land in Kisii.

A report by the Ombudsman released yesterday indicated the ambassador used his position as a Government officer to hive off a plot from the Kisii Municipal Market.

The Ombudsman's report accused Kenya's envoy to the UN-Habitat Sam Ongeri of allocating himself the land while he was Local Government minister in 1982.

Also adversely mentioned in the damning report are businesspersons and other officials of the defunct Kisii Municipal Council.

Ombudsman Otiende Amollo said yesterday the report has been forwarded to President Uhuru Kenyatta for action against the envoy whom he recently appointed.

The Office of the Ombudsman has requested the envoy and those holding the six other plots to surrender

them to the Government.

"Our investigations reveal that Ongeri abused his office in acquiring that plot. It is up to the President to decide on the next course of action. Other arms of the Government also need to take action on this matter," he said.

He added: "Only title deeds of land that is acquired legally can be respected by the law. The titles of the seven plots should be revoked and the land returned to the public," said Amollo.

Amollo said that by the time the envoy was undergoing vetting in Parliament for the ambassadorial position recently, they had not finalised investigations into the alleged land grab and could therefore not file complaints.

REFUTED CLAIMS

But when contacted, Prof Ongeri refuted the claims that he had acquired the land illegally, saying he followed the right channels to get it.

"I applied for the land through the Commissioner of Lands, and it was duly surveyed by the Government and letters of allotment and ownership given to me. I have been paying land rates since then," he said.

Amollo also called on the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Lands Mariam El Maawy to punish public officers in her ministry who facilitated the acquisition of the seven plots.

It also emerged that the grabbed land is not registered. Otiende called for surveying and registration of all public land in the county.

“Our investigations reveal that (name withheld) abused his office in acquiring that plot. It is up to the President to decide on the next course of action.- Ombudsman Otiende Amollo

Torture victim to receive Sh9.7m, finally

By STANDARD REPORTER

The Ombudsman has compelled the Interior ministry to release Sh9.7 million by way of compensation to a victim of police torture.

Commission on Administrative Justice chairman Otiende Amollo revealed yesterday that Lisa Catherine Wangari, who won the compensation following inhuman treatment by police officers in June 2001, will finally receive her payment.

Ms Wangari was stripped naked by police officers, flogged and sexually molested more than a decade ago.

She filed a case for compensation at the High Court in Embu where a decision was made in her favour on November 29, 2010.

However, despite serving the Interior ministry with the court order, no payment was made,

prompting her to lodge a complaint with the commission.

"We understand that there might be some delays in Government institutions, but when the delays become unreasonable, we are forced to step in to find out who is not doing their work. Our role is to fight maladministration within the Government," said Mr Amollo yesterday.

MINISTRY COMPELLED

The Ombudsman decided to move to court to compel the ministry to pay Wangari after it failed to release the money as requested by Amollo's office.

"When we sought explanations from the Ministry of Interior regarding the unreasonable delays, we received answers that we didn't find to be satisfactory. So we moved to court to compel them to make the payment," he said.

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