

# KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY TO EVICT 70 LECTURERS OVER RENT

BY PAUL KIWUWA

Kyambogo University management has asked 70 of its lecturers to immediately vacate its premises over failure to clear rent arrears.

Kyambogo University secretary Charles Okello, without mentioning the period when the dons started occupying the houses, said they are there illegally and efforts to evict them have proved futile.

Speaking to the Parliament public accounts committee (PAC), Okello said the continued stay of the lecturers in the university houses has caused the institution a financial loss of sh22.5m.

He explained: "The rent arrears have accumulated since 2017."

The committee chairperson, Nandala Mafabi (Budadiri West), asked Okello why the university had failed to collect rent arrears and what the tenancy agreement says.

In response, Okello said: "According to the tenancy agreement, the university must deduct rent from the lecturers' salaries."

He said the majority of the lecturers occupying the houses are

retired. They refused to vacate, on the grounds that the Government had not cleared their gratuity and that the university cannot throw them out of the premises.

"PAC cannot support dons to cause this financial loss to the Government while the occupants enjoy free utilities, including accommodation, water, electricity, security. They must vacate the premises," Mafabi said.

The committee also recommended that the Auditor General carries out a special audit into how Kyambogo University collects rent from its premises and how it uses its revenue.

"PAC wants to know the number of houses for rent and other commercial buildings owned by the university and the current rates of pay. We have realised many anomalies and laxity on rent collections and how the revenue is utilised," Mafabi added.

This was supported by Lwemiyaga MP Theodore Sekikubo, who said: "Public servants should plan for their accommodation before retirement."

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The Kashari County MP, Wilberforce Yaguma, said the anomalies arise from lack of policies in managing income-generating assets owned by the university, despite the recommendation by the Chief Government Valuer (CGV).

The query raised by the Auditor

General (AG) report 2017/2018 reads: "Staff occupying 73 Kyambogo University houses were billed at sh173m, using the old rates, instead of sh295m, using the minimum rate approved by the CGV. The use of old rental income has caused the university loss of sh122m.

The AG report notes: "Failure by the university management to collect rent implies laxity or negligence. The accounting officer should provide evidence of the recoveries made of sh36.4m and the status of collection of rent revenue accruing then of sh22.5m.

Okello, accompanied by the university bursar, Steven Kasirye Bukulu and Mildred Tibananura, the dean of students, appeared before the committee to answer queries raised by the AG's report.

He also disclosed that some lecturers vacate the houses without giving prior notice. He added that sometimes the houses are re-occupied by persons not approved by the housing allocation committee.

Okello explained that several times the university management has engaged the lecturers to vacate

the houses, but they are adamant, saying when they leave the university premises, the Government will not pay their gratuity, because they will have no basis to claim.

The AG's report says: "Audit, however, noted that 10 non-university staff occupied the university houses without approval of the housing allocation committee and no rental fees were paid for three houses — number 41 Mackay Road, 8 Sempala Road and 5 White House Rise, causing financial loss of sh25.2m."

Bukoto East MP Florence Namayanja asked what steps the university management had taken to ensure that the Government clears the lecturers' gratuity,

Okello said: "I have written several times to the education ministry and the Public Service Commission regarding the issue."

MP Mathias Mpuuga (Masaka Municipality) asked whether the university has an estates manager and what his roles are, to which Okello responded in affirmative, adding that he would present his roles.