



Press Statement:

21 September, 2021

RE: Four arrested as NEMA cracks whip on wetland encroachers

On September, 1st 2021 NEMA received a new Executive Director, Dr. Barirega Akankwasah who, in his acceptance speech highlighted statistics on reducing wetland coverage having reduced from 15.5% in 1994 to 13% in 2017. He further indicated that if the trend goes unchecked, the country is bound to face dire consequences including extinction of the country's national symbol, the Crested Crane, whose habitat is wetland.

Consequently, he issued a public notice indefinitely suspending receipt, issuance and consideration for all projects within wetlands effective September 2, 2021. The decision was made to reduce pressure on wetlands and to enable Government build capacity to regulate developments in wetlands.

Subsequent operations targeting encroachers in and around Kampala have led to arrests, and a number of trucks have been impounded for backfilling wetlands, namely in;

Kyetinda wetland system

This system is located in Makindye Division around Ggaba-Munyonyo area. Aside from the other hydrological functions of this wetland such as flood control, the wetland is particularly important because it acts as a natural purification system for the water that feeds the National Water intake plant in Ggaba. The 20th September 2021 operation by the environment police led to impounding of;

- Two trucks; UAQ 704 W and UAS 249 P in Munyonyo, near Auto Spa backfilling part of the above wetland system. Two suspects were arrested, but released on Police bond.

Nsooba-Lubigi wetland system

This expansive wetland system has been targeted by encroachers for settlement, farming, bricklaying etc. Aside from being a critical habitat for certain species, the wetland plays a critical role in shielding parts of Wakiso and Kampala from flooding.

- Two trucks; UAU 520X belonging to Energo and UAV 605G have been impounded from Kyanja while backfilling part of the Nsooba - Lubigi wetland system.
- One suspect is currently detained at Kololo Police station; while the other is out on Police bond

All suspects will be arraigned in court to face the law.

NEMA has noted that some impounded trucks belong to construction companies and therefore calls on the owners of these companies to prevail over their employees who have made it a habit to utilize company trucks to engage in environmental degradation – specifically backfilling wetlands at a fee.

About NEMA

NEMA is a semi-autonomous institution of the Government that coordinates, monitors, regulates and supervises environmental management in the country. NEMA spearheads the development of environmental policies, laws, regulations and standards, and guides Government to make sound environmental management decisions.

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