



**Press Statement:**

July 27, 2022

**RE: NEMA and the leadership of Born Again Christian Church in Uganda agree on measures for noise management**

Ever since resumption of public gatherings following Covid-19 related restrictions, complaints about noise pollution mainly from religious gatherings and recreation areas particularly bars, have increased across the country.

NEMA acting within the law started operations to regulate noise pollution.

Consequently, the Born Again Christian leadership petitioned NEMA complaining about rampant arrests and prosecution of their members regarding noise pollution citing several issues relating to the operations. This followed several arrests and prosecutions of suspects for noise pollution.

In order to have a harmonious coexistence and the need to have Church leadership work with NEMA to regulate the noise pollution, a meeting was convened with Pastors first, to address their complaints related to what they regarded as rampant arrests, confiscation of equipment and disruption of church services, discrimination regarding enforcement, use of environmental law to settle land disputes, faith disputes, community conflicts, definition of noise pollution threatening their faith, the law being harsh with big punishments and needing review among many other complaints.

In a meeting chaired by the Executive Director of NEMA, Dr. Barirega Akankwasah and members of the Born Again Christian Faith, led by the president of the National Pastors Platform of Uganda, Bishop David Kiganda, and attended by representatives of all Born Again Christians, the meeting deliberated on mechanisms to strengthen the relationship between NEMA and the Church leadership and agreed as follows;

- No arrest shall be made for noise pollution unless an improvement notice has been first issued in writing by either NEMA, Urban Authority or Local Government
- Churches will designate focal persons for coordinating environment compliance issues including noise management
- Government will through NEMA, undertake scientific review of the standards for noise to establish whether the standards we have today are appropriate
- Arrests should be preceded with criminal summons and no arrests should be effected during a church service
- NEMA will work with the Church leadership to sensitize the churches and the general public about noise standards
- Noise meter readings should be transparently recorded and where possible counter signed by the complainants and the accused person
- Noise mapping will be undertaken to establish noise pollution levels for different parts starting with Kampala and Wakiso

- Measurements for noise should take into consideration the environmental and background noise to ensure that the readings taken are attributable to the entity complained against

The Executive Director assured the Born Again Christians that NEMA is there to implement the law and that self-regulation was the most effective approach to implement the law. The two parties resolved to strengthen the working relationship including regular engagements to effectively prevent noise pollution and promote best environment practices through the Church.

Ends

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