

State to audit maize supplies, says Kiunjuri

Agriculture Cabinet secretary tells House committee suspect deliveries to NCPB have been detected

by Anthony Mwangi
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Somebody was behind these unscrupulous traders and the truth will come out once the audit is done -Kiunjuri

Agriculture and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Mwangi Kiunjuri said yesterday that the ministry will embark on an audit in the next 21 days to determine whether suppliers delivered six million bags of maize to the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB).

He told a parliamentary committee that suspect deliveries have been detected and hence the need to audit the supplies.

It also emerged that the government may have lost billions of shillings in the current maize scandal after questions arose as to how the weigh bridges at the facility are operated.

Appearing before the Agriculture committee, Kiunjuri however, did not name the powerful individuals said to have delivered the maize in question to the NCPB.

"Somebody was behind these unscrupulous traders and the truth will come out once the audit is done," he said.

At the same time, the CS said

ABOUT THE SCAM

The Agriculture ministry has released a list of 21 traders suspected to have allegedly conspired with National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) officials to supply maize illegally.

The traders earned at least Sh1.4 billion that should ideally have been used to buy maize from genuine Kenyan farmers.

Some of the large-scale suppliers are thought to have been actual farmers who bought off smaller farmers and combined their stocks for delivery but not the 21.

the government has no plans to buy maize being held by farmers as no money had been availed for the exercise.

Only Sh1.7 billion was allocated to the ministry by Parliament for the purchase of maize in the Supplementary budget.

The committee chaired by Manderu South MP Adan Haji has initiated the probe on the current maize scandal involving NCPB where eight traders were paid Sh2 billion after delivering maize instead of purchasing from farmers.

The government buys a 90 kilogramme bag of maize at Sh3,200



Agriculture Cabinet secretary Mwangi Kiunjuri (centre) and PS Richard Lesiyampe (right) when they appeared before the parliamentary committee yesterday. PHOTO: SAMUEL KARIUKI

and it was not clear how some traders were allowed to supply maize imported from Uganda instead of buying from farmers.

It also emerged that some of the unscrupulous traders went on to buy maize from desperate farmers at extremely low price.

The CS told MPs that the matter has since been taken over by the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission but so far no action has been taken.

The CS revealed that one of the traders Celestine Chepchirchir is said to have made 786 deliveries to the Eldoret depot of 226,108 bags of maize and received Sh400 million.

The eight traders, the committee heard were paid within three to five days after supplies were made.

Interestingly, the deliveries were made in 102 days amounting to about seven trips per day, which the CS said raised issues.

MP wants anti-graft commission disbanded

by Mercy Mwai
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Plans to disband the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) have kicked-off after an MP vowed to table a motion to amend the Constitution once the House reconvenes next week.

Aldai MP Cornelly Serem said the agency has failed Kenyans.

He also revealed that he will be petitioning the Budget and Appropriation Committee not to approve the anti-graft agency budgetary allocation as it is of no use to Kenyans. Addressing the press yesterday, the lawmaker said the powers of the commission should be transferred to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Minimal role

According to Serem, the speed at which the two offices have dealt with the Sh9 billion National Youth Service scam is a clear indication that they are ready to serve Kenyans and ensure that there is no loss of public money.

He said that going by the NYS case, there is a clear indication that EACC plays a very minimal role in the fight against corruption as there was no officer present when the 30 accused persons were charged in court.

"I will be moving a motion to disband EACC and instead give more powers to the DCI and the DPP as they have proven they can deliver," he said adding that it is regrettable that EACC has continued to receive funding annually yet most graft cases are dismissed for lack of evidence.

Carry your own cross, President tells suspects in graft cases

by Irene Githinji
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President Uhuru Kenyatta has warned public servants and leaders against engaging in corruption saying they will carry their own cross when caught.

Coming against the backdrop of prosecution of National Youth Service scam suspects on Tuesday, the Head of State said his Government will not tolerate impunity, even as he maintained that he is not afraid of anyone or discharging his mandate.

He dismissed the narrative that a community is being targeted whenever a leader is apprehended for breaking the law saying that all monies that has been plundered must be returned to fund development projects in line with Jubilee's manifesto.

"We no longer want to engage in petty politics. We want to see the face of Kenya change and to anyone out there stealing public funds, your days



President Uhuru Kenyatta, his deputy William Ruto, Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko and Lands Cabinet secretary Farida Karoney at Jacaranda grounds in Nairobi yesterday. PHOTO: TIMOTHY NJENGA

are numbered," the President said.

"We do not want to hear the petty politics that whenever a leader is apprehended, a certain community is being targeted. Politics of using your tribe to defend yourself are long gone and if you are a thief, you are a thief and

if you stole, you stole alone and you will be arrested... you should carry your own cross," he said. He spoke at Jacaranda grounds in Embakasi East, Nairobi when he presided over the hand over ceremony of 50,000 title deeds to Eastlands residents.

Supplies agency hails Sh9b NYS scam probe

by PD Correspondent
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Kenya Institute of Supplies Management (KISM) has welcomed investigations into the National Youth Service (NYS) scandal and vowed stern action, including de-registration and blacklisting, of members that may be found culpable. Chairman Chris Oanda said the Institute stands for procure-

ment professionalism and will be ruthless with any of its members that may have facilitated theft of public funds.

"We will pursue this objective for purposes of strengthening the profession and supporting initiatives for establishment of functional, efficient and effective procurement systems within the public sector," he said.

Officer held in Mtwapa saga

by Sophie Njoka
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Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) detectives have arrested an officer manning Mtwapa Weighbridge in Kilifi county after he allegedly detained a lorry ferrying relief food to Tana River flood after the driver refused to give a Sh30,000 bribe.

Pascal Chibindo had allegedly demanded the money so that he could release the lorry claiming

it was overloaded. The suspect works with an inspection and verification company contracted by Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) to manage the weigh-bridge.

EACC Lower Coast regional manager George Ojowi said the driver of the lorry had complained to EACC about the rogue officer. "Our officers later confirmed that indeed the truck was not overloaded. The officer will be charged in court," he said.