

KIGUNGU – MAKUSA ISLAND EVICTION

Phase: Pre-violation

Context causes: Post-disaster/climate change/resettlement/insecure tenure/militarization

Location and Background

Makusa Island is a very small (1 acre, 0.4 ha) island in Lake Victoria, very close to Entebbe, the equator and on the flight path to Entebbe airport.

Visiting Makusa Island is a unique experience, as over 400 people are crowded onto a tiny rock.¹ Everyone lives in a wooden shack, with tiny alleys between the shacks. All the men work as fishermen. They are here because the fishing is so good.²

Incident

A fishing community at Mayanzi, a landing site adjacent to Kigungu have protested an eviction notice issued to them orally by two Uganda Peoples Defense Air Force officers. The two officers, Isaac Ongwen and Herbert Mwesigye, claim ownership of the land in question.

The contested land is located along the shoreline of Lake Victoria in Entebbe municipality. This is where fishermen had found refuge after initially being evicted from Makusa and Lwamunyu landing sites,³ located on an outlying island of Entebbe municipality. It is now home to 3,500 people.⁴

Over 700 residents who settled at **Mayanzi** village, Kigungu sub-ward, Entebbe municipality in Wakiso district⁵ after being evicted from islands of Makusa and Lwamunyu in May 2018, are facing further displacement after the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) Fisheries Protection Unit (FPU) gave the residents a forty-day ultimatum to vacate their new settlement.

The UPDF's FPU, led by Lt. Col. James Nuwagaba, stormed the newly established settlement and ordered residents to vacate the area. According to Nuwagaba, the newly settled residents had started engaging in illegal fishing and that the newly established landing site is not gazetted and, therefore, illegal.

"I divided those people among three groups to be integrated to the already gazetted landing sites of Kakyanga, Lwazi and Kavenyanja, and if they insist on staying at Mayanzi, they risk losing everything," warned the army officer.⁶

However, Entebbe Mayor Vincent Kayanja de Paul has led municipality officials in condemning the move by the FPU to forcibly evict the residents, claiming the army officers had no mandate to determine which area becomes a landing site. He explained: "As the municipal authorities, we had already gazetted this area as part of Kigungu landing site and all plans to provide for necessities and services to the people, were underway." He vowed not to allow the army to further displace the newly settled residents.⁷

¹ "African One-Acre Island Home to Over 400 People," *Canadians under News Tyranny* (undated), at: <https://canadiansundernewstyrranny.wordpress.com/2012/05/22/african-one-acre-island-home-to-over-400-people/>.

² "Entebbe: Makusa Island, *Trip Advisor*, at: www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g298044-c217370/Entebbe:Uganda:Makusa.Island.html.

³ Eve Maganga, "Army evicts encroachers," *Daily Monitor* (4 May 2018), at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Army-evicts-encroachers-UPDF-Makusa-Entebbe-Museveni/688334-4543898-an6249/index.html>.

⁴ Lubulwa Henry, "Fishing Community Protests Eviction from Entebbe," (28 June 2018), at: <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/entebbe-residents-protest-forceful-eviction>.

⁵ "Wakiso District," *Wikipedia*, at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wakiso_District.

⁶ "Resettled Island residents face further eviction," *Excavator UG* (3 October 2018), at: <https://excavatorug.com/resettled-island-residents-face-further-eviction>.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Some reports also claim that the local residents of the Mayansi suburb also oppose the presence of the fisher community.⁸ School proprietors and owners of residential houses in the area claim the fishermen are a security threat.⁹

In a meeting held at Kigungu Church of Uganda, the two UPDF officers led by Herbert Mwesigye said they were offered a lease title to work on the same land where fishermen operated. However, the fishermen, led by Elly Wasajja, indicated that they wouldn't vacate the shoreline of Lake Victoria, which acts as a buffer zone and a landing site, but not land that can be leased out by the Uganda Land Commission and the Wakiso District Land Board. Wasajja also indicated that they are legally using the area as a landing site.

Specific Women Affected

65% of population is women and children

No schools

No livelihood

Some fall into prostitution

Prevalence of HIV

No health facilities

Women left vulnerable to hostile surrounding community and other harassments while men are out fishing

Women's Values at Stake

Livelihoods

Education

Health

Security of person

Child rearing

Serial dispossession and discrimination

Remedy

The community remains in Muyanzi with secure tenure and services. (Ideally with full reparations in the event that the initial displacement from Makusa is recognized as forced eviction.)

Other remedial interventions:

1. Sensitisation of the people affected, engage the duty bearers to action and officially resettle the displaced residents
2. Support them with the basic needs; e.g., blankets, water filters, sanitary pads, food, shelter, alternative livelihood support (income generating activities).
3. Construct public toilet facilities and improve access to clean water.
4. Education support for children at all levels.

See *6_Makusa-Mayanzi_SWOT.ppt* for strategic planning of intervention strategy.

⁸ Eve Maganga, "Residents want fishermen evicted," *Daily Monitor* (25 May 2018), at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Residents-want-fishermen-evicted/688334-4578392-10k0300/>.

⁹ Eve Maganga and al-Mahdi Ssenkabirwa, "Residents want fishermen evicted," *Daily Monitor* (25 May 2018), at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Residents-want-fishermen-evicted/688334-4578392-10k0300/index.html>.