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There is more money to steal in Uganda than to benefit the tax payers

Posted by Musa

Kampala — MPs on the public accounts committee want Prime Minister Apolo Nsibambi to explain the diversion of sh1.7b meant to purchase ox-ploughs for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Uganda. It seems that in Uganda there is more money to steal than to inject into the public sector!

"During our interaction with officials from your office, it came to the attention of the committee that under your guidance, the ministry purchased pangas and hoes instead of ox-ploughs," committee chairman Nandala Mafabi said in an October 26 letter to the Prime Minister. We can not make Pangas but we manufacture AK47 what a development under M7!

Mafabi noted that the pangas were never supplied. In the 2007/8 financial year, Parliament approved the ministry's sh18.6b budget for the purchase of farm equipment and inputs for the IDPs. These included resettlement kits (hoes, pangas, axes, sickles, ox-ploughs and seeds) for 632,880 households in 10 districts. Three years later into the election year the investigations begin!!

The beneficiary districts were Gulu, Lira, Kitgum Pader, Adjumani, Amuria, Apac, Soroti, Kaberamaido and Katakwi. However, while meeting officials from the Prime Ministers office on Monday, Dorcas Okalany, the ministry's former undersecretary, told the MPs that the swap was done with Nsibambi's approval. Really M7 is working towards this election year, he has arrested car thieves who have ached people for over 7yrs, murderers who have been on the go for 10yrs and embezzlers!

She said this was after the supplier, whom she declined to name, said he did not have ox-ploughs at the time and preferred to supply hoes. "Since it was an emergency issue, we proposed that the supplier give us hoes. The proposal was forwarded to the Prime Minister, who agreed with us," Okalany said.

She regretted that they did not seek authority from the finance ministry. In a report to Parliament for the year 2008, the Auditor General said inspection of Gulu district stores showed that 40,835kg of seeds, worth sh97.6m, had not been distributed because they were of poor quality.

The report also added that out of the 904 hoes found in the stores, 189 pieces were not of the recommended type. Investigations into the supply of sub-standard seeds and farm implements to the IDPs was also carried out in July 2007 after Nobert Mao, the Gulu district chairman, complained.

The matter was also investigated by the agriculture committee.