



# FEED BACK ON MISUSE OF GOV'T VEHICLES



KCCA Spokesperson Peter Kauju

## UDN, RED PEPPER CAMPAIGN AGAINST MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES YIELDS RESULTS

By Nicholas Wwesigye

A campaign codenamed 'misuse of government vehicles' by Uganda Debt Network (UDN) in partnership with Red Pepper almost a year ago is beginning to cause the desired change.

UDN is a non-governmental organization aiming to "promote and advocate for poor and marginalized people to participate in influencing poverty-focused policies, demand for their rights and monitor service delivery to ensure prudent, accountable and transparent resource generation and utilization."

In our second episode (call it part II) against misuse of government vehicles, we bring you the changes the previous campaign has caused in various government ministries, departments, institutions, the Local district governments to mention a few.

Some of the questions we asked included; did the relevant authorities appreciate the first campaign/awareness? How did they respond to the campaign? Did they take any action against misuse of government vehicles? If not, why?

UDN didn't only remind KCCA officials but the entire government of its obligation to protect its properties.

"This campaign has worked a lot for us and indeed it has created change because all of our officers are aware of the implications if they are caught on the wrong side of the law especially regarding this matter (misuse of government vehicles)," Kauju said in an interview. He said some of their officers had been prosecuted after being caught by our cameras misusing government vehicles though he couldn't give actual figures as he asked for some time to consult the prosecution unit.

At the Ministry of Works and Transport, Susan Kataike, the Senior Communications Manager says although the awareness has not yet brought much impact at the ministry; they are doing everything possible to ensure government vehicles are not misused. She noted that soon after the campaign, the Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Works and Transport, Okello Bwanga-moi issued an order to have all the Ministry's vehicles recalled to the head offices located at Old Port Bell road in Kampala.

"The point here is to know who drives what car, how many cars do belong to the Ministry. How many are old? Which ones deserve to be disposed off or auc-

tioned," Kataike said, adding that this will help them keep records and know which officials are responsible for which vehicles so that if a picture of a vehicle being misused appears in the papers; then they will know the officer to implicate.

Kataike says it is the Ministry policy to have all cars parked by 5pm and those who breach the law are dealt with.

She highlighted an incident when one of their officers whom she refused to divulge was pictured misusing the vehicle and was interdicted. However, she couldn't confirm whether the said officer was sacked.

Kataike concludes that since the pictures of government vehicles being misused and published in newspapers have drastically reduced, UDN and Red Pepper

campaign could have "created awareness."

About the campaign The campaign was designed to expose all government officials who misuse government vehicles by using them for private businesses, breaching rules (by driving them past the official time of 5pm) and auctioning them illegally.

In our first campaign, amazing pictures of government vehicles loaded with charcoal, animals, food stuffs, passengers and merchandise among others were published in this newspaper. The pictures taken from different parts of Uganda became a talking point on social media sites, traditional media and in offices.



Some Gov't officials are now covering what they are carrying for fear of cameras



During the interview with Red Pepper in his office; Johnson Mutungwanda, the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in charge of Administration and Health Kasese District

By Simon Turibamwe

Recently, Seith Tibenda, the head (in-charge) of Rwensande Health Centre IV in Kasese district was arrested for allegedly using the health ambulance service van for his private transport purposes and private clinic (St. Elizabeth) located in Nyamwamba division, Kasese Municipality.

The arrest follows a campaign against misuse of government vehicles run by Uganda Debt Network (UDN) in partnership with Red Pepper a year ago.

The campaign and the arrest of Tibenda have seen Kasese district administration embark on a serious campaign against the vice (misuse of government vehicles) in the area.

The arrest was coordinated by the area Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), District Health Officer (DHO) and the police.

In an interview, the Kasese district Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in charge of Health and Administration, Johnson Mutungwanda says since Red Pepper started publishing pictures of government vehicles being misused, district officials and drivers "have changed for the better in fear of being photographed".

He however says the vice of misusing government vehicles by public and civil servants is still a challenging issue in Kasese district despite several warnings by supervisors and friendly policies in place.

Mutungwanda says they have authorized the police and sensitized the public to impound and arrest any vehicle found outside the gazetted parking premises after official working hours of 5:30 PM.

He says the official parking place for government vehicles after working hours is police

posts/stations. He revealed they have 'planted' spies especially in Kasese town to monitor officials with government vehicles at midnight.

"In case an officer wanted a vehicle without a driver, they are supposed to seek permission from the CAO and give reasons, though most who go without drivers, sometimes have bad behavior they are hiding from the public and fear drivers may expose them," Mutungwanda said.

On the issue of the government vehicles seen on roads with passengers and items like charcoal, foodstuffs and firewood among others, Mutungwanda says since these officials travel to different destinations, they can be excused for carrying food for domestic consumption but if they are for markets/sale, they should be penalized.

"It only becomes an offence if an officer turns the vehicle for commercial purposes but where it is for purposes of domestic consumption, you can sympathize with a person who carried only one bunch of banana or a sack of charcoal," he said.

### Difficult to control

He however says it is difficult to control the government vehicles from carrying goods since they are sometimes used to transport both district staff and members of the public to social gatherings like weddings and burials-on request.

"You will find that a member of the public is kneeling before the CAO or LCV chairperson for transportation of the body (corpse) or that our staff has a wedding and needs a van and we officially authorize it," he revealed.

He added, "Sometimes we release vehicles officially for private duties especially when it is our service contribution."

To further stop misuse of government vehicles by public and civil servants, Mutungwanda, says Kasese district has locally procured a prequalified contractor for minor mechanical faults to avoid finding government vehicles in "every corner of the town under the disguise of mechanical repair."

"They used to damage our vehicles beyond working hours and later park them in the garages around town, but since the establishment of prequali-

## Kasese District Moves to Stop Massive Misuse of Gov't Vehicles

ified mechanical contractors, the damages have reduced," he said. When asked why some of the vehicles are rotting in the district park yard, Mutungwanda said some vehicles are damaged beyond repair yet there is no budget for it (repair) at the district.

"We still appeal to whoever finds a government vehicle parked on streets or official's residence to report to police or the CAO's office," he concludes.



Despite some changes, many Gov't vehicles are still grounded

## Report Misuse Of Government Vehicles, Kabale CAO Urges Public

By Javura Twizukye

Frank Ntaho, the Chief Administrative Officer at Kabale district has appealed to the public to report all civil servants who misuse government vehicles by using them for private businesses especially beyond the recommended working hours of 5pm.

In an exclusive interview with Red Pepper, Ntaho said he will not be scared to arrest any civil servant found using the government ambulance or any other government vehicle beyond the working hours or using them for their own businesses.

Ntaho's stance follows a campaign carried out by Uganda Debt Network and Red Pepper to reverse the tide against misuse of government vehicles a year ago. He said government uses

a lot of money (tax payers' money) to purchase and repair these vehicles so civil servants should value them. "I am the only one of all civil servants in the district and chairman (LCV) who are supposed to go with the vehicles at home and the rest should be parked in the yard by 5pm, except when there is an emergency," Ntaho said, adding that he has always punished officers who misuse government property.



Gov't vehicles still misused: A Kabale district Ambulance was recently impounded by locals for transporting private property

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