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Millions lost in housing rip-off



A union leader, Mr. Peter Odede, addressing a workers' Kamukunji at the Great Court last Friday. The workers threaten to go on strike tomorrow.

Plots over-valued

By MUMBI KYALO

Members of Chuna Housing Co-operative Society are in deep trouble. The future of the multi-million society hangs in the balance following a massive rip off.

Plots which members bought in Kitengela for Kshs 150,000 per acre in 1993 were overvalued by 400 per cent. The market value then was Shs 30,000 per acre.

To add insult to injury, members who had been informed that the money they remitted was for one eighth of an acre have discovered that the plots that were allotted to them are ridiculously smaller, with some measuring one sixteenth of an acre.

Members suspect beacon certificate issued to them are fake. Beacon numbers that were deliberately marked with ink have been washed off by the rains.

And last Wednesday a noisy and highly charged crisis meeting of the society demanded a special general meeting

in Taifa Hall on June 19.

Amounts of money running into millions is alleged to have been pocketed by officials. Indeed, late last year, Mr. S. O. Obura, who was then the accountant for both the Chuna SACCO and the Housing Society, astonished an Annual General Meeting (AGM) when he

disclosed that he and the officials had shared a whopping Shs 1.2 million, money taken from the members. He argued that none of the officials was clean. Mr. Obura, who resigned from the University, admitted publicly that he pocketed the society's Shs 1.8m which he promised to repay.

The chairman of the housing society, Mr. Romanos Philip Onyango, says Mr. Obura's case will not be handled as a criminal one. "Obura admitted in writing that he owes the society money. We will deal with this as a civil case," he said.

Following the rip-off, a probe team under the chairmanship of Dr. Vincent Simiyu of the Department of History was set up to investigate the historic theft after demands by members.

This team has compiled its report. However, the report is yet to be tabled because Mr. Onyango has declined to call an AGM.

In an interesting turn of events, the Provincial Co-operative Officer, Mr. J. O. Oseno, has condemned the probe committee arguing that it has no legal basis. And the Commissioner for Co-operative Development, Mr. Raymond Bomett, appointed a two-

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Workers threaten to down tools over pay

By DENNIS ONYANGO

Unionisable employees of the University of Nairobi have threatened to go on strike if the Vice-Chancellor does not respond to their demands by tomorrow.

Officials of the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied workers (KUDHEHIA), told *The Anvil* they want workers' allowances increased as recommended by the Omollo Okeru Report. The chief shopsteward, Mr. Alfred Mulati, lamented workers at the University of Nairobi are getting a raw deal.

The leaders said they have tried to meet the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Francis Gichaga, in vain adding that he has ignored their letters. "Each time we raise issues affecting us, the University administration think we are being used by the Opposition," the union chairman, Mr. John Ongoro, said. He asked the VC to admit inability to handle the case so that they can see the Chancellor, President Moi.

In a bid to contain the situation, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance), Prof. Raphael

Munavu, told the union officials he had appointed a committee to look into the workers' demands.

Addressing a workers' Kamukunji at the Great Court last Friday, the officials urged the workers to remain united and stop betraying one another. They asked the workers to be prepared for anything from Wednesday, a call that was met with cheers from the angry workers.

The union leaders also called for the resignation or immediate replacement of the Administrative Registrar Mr. J. G. Wachira accusing him of misleading the VC and awarding himself a salary of a full professor. They also accused Students Welfare Authority (SWA) director, Prof. Joseph Kimani, of tribalism claiming he appointed his tribesmen to key positions in the Authority.

Among the things the workers demand are an increase in commuting allowance popularly known as *Mguu*, increase in housing allowance, hospitalisation allowance and equal and fair treatment for all university workers.

A letter addressed to the VC demanded a Kshs 1500 flat rate housing allowance for all staff, revision of owner-occupier rates and incorporation of unionisable

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THE SCANDAL AT A GLANCE

- Members demand a special general meeting on June 19 at Taifa Hall.
- Frozen account re-opened 'secretly'.
- Accountant admits to sharing out Shs 1.2m and pocketing Shs 1.8m.
- Kitengela plots worth Shs 30,000 sold at Shs 150,000.
- Members asked for a further Shs 50,000 fee for infrastructure.
- Plots measure far less than expected.
- Beacon certificates fake?

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