

NEWS

Disputed town in park allowed

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A new town will now be established at the Nairobi National Park and Kajiado District's border, it was announced yesterday.

The New Kaputieti Town, which is a project of a community organisation—Jamii Bora Charitable Trust—will start with the construction of 2,000 low class houses worth Sh300 million.

The houses to cater for 2,000 families, will be constructed on a 293-acre piece of land at Kaputiet area, which has been a subject of controversy between the Trust and more than 10 local and international organisations, including the Kenya Wildlife Service .

They were to be constructed in phases for a period of three years. The members were to acquire the houses for Sh150,000 each, payable in instalments.

And the scheme, at Kisanju sub-location of Isinya Division in Kajiado, about 60 kilometres South of Nairobi, is then projected to grow with the construction of more small industries, a commercial centre, educational institutions and other social amenities.

Overtured decision

The National Environmental Tribunal, which is headed by Mr Donald Kaniaru, overturned a decision by the National Environment Management Authority (Nema) not to allow the project to go on and issued the Trust with an Environmental Impact Assessment licence.

The Trust had appealed against the Nema's decision on January 14, which had effectively halted the project. They filed the appeal on March 11, last year, through lawyer Macharia Njeru seeking to have the decision quashed.

The Trust was founded in 2000 by Mrs Inrid Munro, a retired UN Habitat employee from Sweden. It has 112,000 members across the country, most of whom live in various city slums and engaged in small-scale income generating activities.

The Trust claim its mission is to alleviate poverty and improve the living condition of its members.

Officials say the project will enable the families in the slums to move into decent homes and to secure job opportunities.

On their part, Nema claims that the project cannot be licensed because it has been opposed by leading agencies involved in environmental and wildlife conservation, interest groups and local communities.

Migration corridor

Through its acting legal services director, Ms Anne Angwenyi, it also argues that the project is located on a wildlife migration corridor and dispersal area and would affect the movement and management of wild animals.

Other organisations opposed to the project included the International Livestock Research Institute, the Friends of Nairobi National Park and area residents through lawyer Lucas Naikuni.