

IG recovers more than sh300m from corrupt officials

Over 200 individuals, including civil servants, private contractors, business persons and lawyers, face prosecution over the alleged theft of sh2.3b in public funds.

The Inspectorate of Government (IG) has recovered more than sh335.6m from 62 public officials who had defaulted on refunding public funds.

A total of 202 individuals were put on notice on March 16, this year, to appear before the IG and reconcile their outstanding balances by March 31, failure of which would result in prosecution.

The 202 individuals, including civil servants, private contractors, business persons and lawyers, face prosecution over the alleged theft of sh2.3b in public funds.

However, in a statement released on Wednesday, the IG noted that of the 62 officials who had made payments, 38 cleared their outstanding balances in full, amounting to sh214m, while 24 officials made partial payments totalling sh121.6m.

"The recoveries follow a public notice issued by the Inspectorate highlighting an outstanding amount of sh2.36b, which had been irregularly utilised by the officials for personal gain, to the detriment of public service delivery," the statement said.

The IG noted that of the remaining 140 officials who had not made any payments, two had surrendered properties, which are to undergo

valuation.

"These recoveries affirm the Inspectorate's commitment to promoting integrity, transparency and accountability in public offices," the statement said.

The outstanding balances arose from funds that the officers used for personal gain at the expense of public services, causing loss to the Government. The individuals asked the IG to allow them to refund the funds instead of facing prosecution.

Among those listed was former agriculture ministry permanent secretary Pius Wakabi, from whom the IG was seeking to recover sh205m.

From Lewis Paul Ayesiga, an energy ministry accounts assistant, the IG sought to recover sh164m. Joel Musisi, a former chief administrative officer of Kaabong and Kitgum districts, now

a lecturer at one of the universities in Kampala, was required to refund sh155m.

AGRICULTURE FUNDS

According to the IG, Wakabi is among 15 former and current government officials involved in the diversion of sh8.7b, which they channelled to Bukalasa Agricultural

College (BAC) and the Fisheries Training Institute (FTI) in Entebbe during the lockdown period of 2020 to 2022, before sharing it amongst themselves.

The officials were ordered to refund the money to the IG's asset recovery account number 003030088000007 at the Bank of Uganda, using Electronic Fund Transfer, and thereafter to present evidence for verification.

Wakabi was among the seven permanent secretaries retired by President Yoweri Museveni in the public interest in July 2021 and was required to pay back sh850m. Wakabi has since paid back sh645m, leaving an outstanding balance of sh205m.

Gelvan Kisolo, the principal of Bukalasa Agricultural College, was required to pay sh663m, while

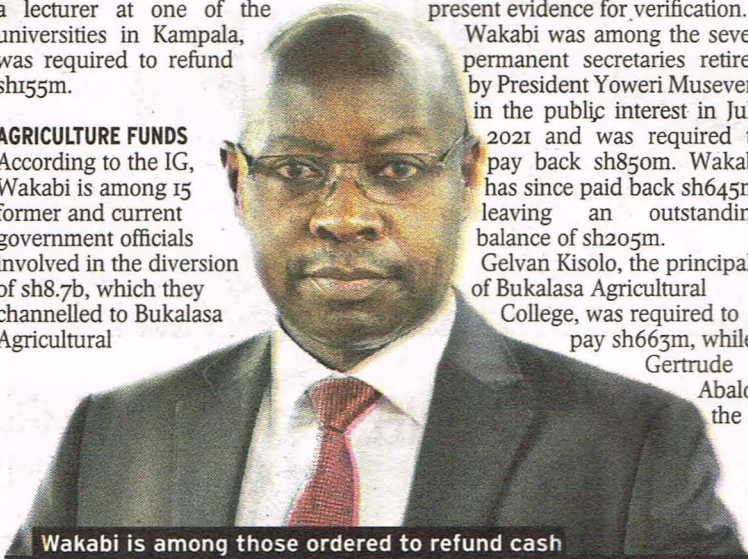
former principal of the Fisheries Training Institute, was required to pay sh730m.

Rogers Nayebare, a senior auditor with the agriculture ministry, was required to pay back sh599m, while Herbert Kiguli, a former commissioner in the ministry, was required to pay sh46m. Kisolo, Nayebare and Kiguli have since paid back the money.

While revealing the fraud in 2023, former Inspector General of Government Beti Kamywa said investigators had established that during the financial year 2020/21, the agriculture ministry's technocrats transferred sh10.2b to BAC and FTI at different times.

Of the sh10.2b, a total of sh8.7b was spent on non-existent activities. Sources at Bukalasa said after wiring the money, senior agriculture ministry officials led by Wakabi subsequently siphoned it out and forged accountability records.

In one of the accountability documents, the group claimed to have used sh800m to renovate the metal workshop and repaint the students' hostel. They also claimed to have used part of the money to renovate the college farm.



Wakabi is among those ordered to refund cash