

President Museveni rejects three Bills

By Vision Reporters

President Yoweri Museveni has sent back to Parliament three Bills over some of their provisions, which he does not agree with. Two of the Bills in question relate to taxation and the President has asked the House to revisit them.

The Bills include the Finance (Amendment) Bill 2014, the Excise Tariff (Amendment) Bill 2014 and the Public Private Partnership Bill, 2014.

The President is against a decision taken by Parliament to scrap tax on kerosene.

He is also unhappy with the MPs' decision to allow the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to retain the revenue generated from a levy on

telecommunication companies for the Rural Communications Development Fund. The Government wants all the money sent to the Consolidated Fund.

In the third Bill, the President says it was wrong to subject all public-private partnerships to parliamentary approval as the Bill passed by Parliament provides. This is the first time in about eight years that the President has invoked his constitutional veto powers against a Bill passed by Parliament.

The President's decision was communicated to Parliament by Speaker Rebecca Kadaga yesterday. The three Bills were re-tabled in Parliament by state minister for finance Aston Kajara and Kadaga

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ The President rejected a number of Bills in 2003 and 2006 also relating to taxes and land.

referred them to the finance committee for scrutiny.

She directed the committee to report back to Parliament in two weeks. The Speaker is required by his rule 132 of the Parliament Rules of procedure, to communicate the President's message on any Bill returned to the House.

In a September 29 letter, the President said during the passing of the Excise Tariffs (Amendment) Bill, Parliament had refused to enforce the sh200 tax on kerosene on

grounds that it would lead to increase in prices.

He, however, said that there is no evidence that consumers have benefitted from the removal of duty on kerosene. He said scrapping the duty on kerosene would result in the loss of sh68b in revenue.

He also said the Excise Tariffs Bill did not have a commencement date and urged the House to consider July 1, 2014 as the commencement date.

The MPs had argued that the sh200 tax would hurt the consumers and that students in rural areas would not be able to compete with those in urban areas as they depend on kerosene to read at night.

On the Finance Bill, Museveni asked Parliament

to reconsider Clause 2, which had proposed that the 2% tax revenue from telecom companies, which UCC has been retaining go to the Consolidated Fund. Parliament had resolved that UCC retains the money with MPs arguing that the ICT sector was underfunded.

On the Public Private Partnership Bill, the President objected to Parliament's decision to subject public-private partnership agreements to parliamentary approval.

He said with that decision, Parliament would be usurping the Attorney General's powers to approve the Government's agreements. He also noted that the provision would be a disincentive to investors.

MPs had argued that in many public-private partnership agreements the country had entered into, the country had gotten a raw deal as some government officials connived with investors.

The President rejected a number of Bills in 2003 and 2006 also relating to taxes and land. Under Article 91 of the Constitution, Parliament is required to reconsider a Bill sent back by the President.

However, if the President sends a Bill back twice, the Parliament can override the President's veto by passing the Bill in question a third time with the votes of at least two-thirds of all MPs. The Bill then becomes law automatically without the President's assent and signature.

Kooki is part of Buganda, says Mengo

By Eddie Ssejjoba

Buganda Kingdom has insisted that Kooki is one of the 18 counties of Buganda as per the 1995 Uganda Constitution and must remain under the administration of Buganda.

The kingdom's spokesperson, Dennis Walusimbi, said according to the Constitution,



Prince David Wasajja (left) and Walusimbi after the ceremony where some of the land titles and part of

Uwera appeals 20-year sentence

By Michael Odeng and Betty Amamukirori

Jacqueline Uwera, the widow of the late Juvenal Kananura Nsenga, has lodged a notice of appeal against her conviction and 20-year jail sentence at the Court of Appeal.

Uwera was convicted of murder and handed a 20-year jail term on September 23, after High Court Judge Justice Joseph Ssendikuzi found her guilty.