

# Fort Portal, Arua Boma grounds in sorry state

By Wilson Asimwe and Robert Ariaka

Although Fort Portal town is famous for being clean and organised, its Boma grounds, where it hosts major events, is the opposite.

The ground, which was commissioned in 1952, is currently under the management of Fort Portal municipality. Before commissioning, the land belonged to the Toro kingdom government.

Seventy-four-year-old Samuel Musinguzi, a resident of East division in the municipality, said he was present when former Ugandan president Apollo Milton Obote visited then Toro district in December 1962 – two months after Uganda had attained independence.

“Toro hosted Obote for the first time at Boma grounds. It also where we gathered to receive our sons who had participated in World War II,” Musinguzi said.

Currently the ground is in a sorry state and there is stagnant water whenever it rains. The latrines that were built there are dilapidated. Driving school instructors also use the area as a training ground.

“I feel like shedding tears when I look at the current state of Boma grounds. It was well-maintained in the 1960s and 1980s,” Musinguzi added.

William Karamagi, a resident of Nyabukara in Fort Portal, said the colonial government used to hold its public functions on the grounds.

“I was present when the grounds were commissioned at a colourful function. There was a parade mounted by the Police and Prisons – that was



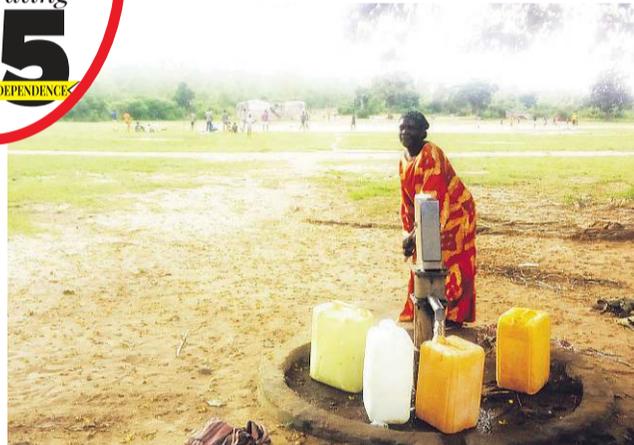
Dilapidated latrines at the Boma grounds in Fort Portal. Photo by Wilson Asimwe



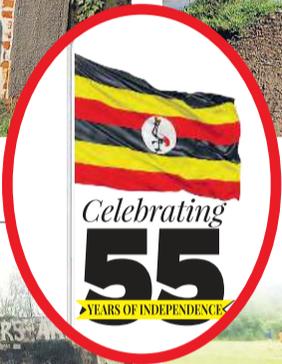
The old shade built by colonialists in Barifa near Arua Hill Boma grounds. Photo By Robert Ariaka



The Fort Portal Boma grounds have potholes. Photo by Wilson Asimwe



A woman fetching water from a borehole at Bariffa near the Arua Hill Boma grounds. Photo by Robert Ariaka



the first parade in Fort Portal. We were excited,” Karamagi said.

Banabas Mugisa, who takes care of the ground, said: “Permission to use the ground is granted by me. You can use it at no cost but on condition that you leave it as was. I was appointed by Kabarole district local government to oversee the grounds,” Mugisa said.

Fort Portal is the only town in Uganda with an English name. It was named after

the British consul general of Zanzibar, Sir Gerald Portal, who came to Uganda in the 1890s to formalise British control over Uganda.

### Arua Hill Boma grounds

Arua Hill Boma grounds are in no better state. They are in a dilapidated state and people use them as grazing grounds.

“Our children will not be able to see the natural look of the recreational grounds,” David Dramadri, the district

sports officer, said.

According to John Godo, 80, the grounds were used by the colonial administration for public functions. It is on these grounds that the British flag was lowered and the Ugandan flag raised on the night Uganda attained independence.

Dramadri, the district sports officer Arua, said during colonial times, Arua Hill Boma grounds and Bariffa, now called Dorcus Inzikuru

Stadium, were gazetted as recreational grounds.

Charles Asiki, the former mayor of Arua municipality, said there is a plan to construct a stadium on the grounds but it remains on paper.

“Our people love sports, the construction of the stadium would widen the revenue base for the district and help people doing physical activities like jogging. It would also attract people from South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo

### RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT

**Gilbert Bwambale, resident of Fort Portal:**

The ground is no longer as beautiful as it used to be. The municipal council should work on it because it remains an important site where Fort Portal hosts public functions.



**Juliet Kamusiime, resident of Fort Portal:**

The place should be refurbished because of its historic importance. It is in a bad state.



**Florence Kabagweri, resident of Fort Portal:**

Boma grounds used to be good and green with trees. The place is like a potato garden, especially when it rains. Authorities only think about it when there is a public function.



**Samuel Musinguzi, resident of Fort Portal:**

I was there when Obote came to address the people of Toro in December 1962.



The whole region was at Boma grounds and it was colourful.

for international games,” Asiki said.

Dramadri said most public grounds in the district, including the West Nile Golf Club, are in a sorry state because people have misused them.

## Ugandans urged to help the needy

By Lawrence Mulondo

Ugandans have been urged to help others and be compassionate to the needy.

The call was made by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Uganda, country director, Charles Aguilar.

He made the appeal while preaching to Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church members during Sabbath prayers at Bugema University on Saturday. Aguilar urged Ugandans to help the needy, especially orphans, widows and refugees with whatever little they can raise.

“God’s heart bleeds for the

*“God’s heart bleeds for the poor and those suffering.” Aguilar*

poor and those suffering. He wants our hearts to be like his,” he explained.

He added that many people, including Church leaders, care more about what people think about their physical appearance and ignore good deeds like justice and love.

“When you realise that there is something you can do to end the suffering in one’s life, just go for it,” Aguilar said.

Solome Katasi, an SDA church children’s teacher in Kotido district, said it is important to teach children values of compassion at home.

“When children are showed love through helping them out whenever in need, they can also grow up and extend help and love to others,” she said.

She, however, said some parents pamper children and end up making them selfish.

The prayers were spiced by praise and worship music from the Bugema University choir.



Aguilar (centre) preaching at Bugema varsity on Saturday. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo