

Elite Pastoralism: An Invisible Hand Grabbing Land in the Uganda Cattle Corridor

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Recent trends in the Uganda cattle corridor point to the emergence of growing phenomenon of land speculation and accumulation by a group of affluent and influential pastoralists and other livestock keepers. Economic, political and in some cases military power has been used to alienate peasant farmers and local pastoralists from their lands. The land targeted is institutional/government land, communal and customary land and tenants on mailo land. The complexity of the processes used to acquire this land masks the impropriety of the actions, underlying objectives, the human right abuses and disenfranchisement.

Often the alienation process utilises legal channels that take advantage of loop holes in the land laws in regard to these categories of landholdings, or influence decisions to their favour. Often destitute pastoralists have been used to effect land grabbing under protection of these elite pastoralists.

This has resulted in an escalation of resource based conflict as disenfranchised peasants and local pastoralists have resorted to meting out revenge. This paper uses case studies to highlight the methodologies used, the impacts on pastoral livelihoods, and the gaps in policy and regulation.

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