Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to contribute to the Statement on the issue of land guards.

Mr Speaker, there are a number of causes for the issue that we are debating this morning. The land owners who sell the lands are also to blame. This is because, they sell the lands to multiple buyers. If we can have a system where land owners can sell to only one prospective buyer, the issue of land guards may be solved.

The second group of people who are also to blame are the buyers. One goes to buy a land without verifying whether that land is available or genuine, but one goes ahead and buys the land which has already been sold to somebody else. So, you the one buying the land would also take part of the blame.

Mr Speaker, even the process of verifying whether the land is genuine is another problem. All our institutions by which we can verify; Land Title and Lands Commission — How to verify if the land is genuine is another problem. How do we solve that problem?

What is the willingness of the people who are land guards to even become land guards in the first place? Why do they agree when somebody calls them to come and protect his or her land? This can be attributed to the level of poverty and unemployment we have, where because of this, people want to do that in order to earn a living.

That would also be a factor; that because of unemployment, our young ones are willing to offer themselves to protect land for their owners. That is also one of the areas.

Most of the time, we want to rely on the Police to protect the land for us. However, when the Police goes to protect the land or drive away these land guards, they become friends. The way some of the land guards operate is such that, you can have two or three groups of land guards.

Even if you buy the land, to you, you have a genuine process to buy the land. Before you can put up a property or start developing the land, this group of people come to you and demand money. Some are called ‘digging fee’. If you want to start digging the land, you have to pay. Meanwhile, you have gone through the genuine process to acquire the land; but that is how they operate.

Mr Speaker, how do we solve all these problems? If all these groups of people are involved? It is not only the land guards who are to blame. The sellers of the land, the buyers and the institutions that ensure that the land is genuine are all involved. What do we do as a people in order to ensure that we control this?

We have solutions proposed by a number of people who spoke on this issue. It is a matter of us referring this issue to the appropriate Committee. In the House, the Committees that can be involved could be the Defence and Interior Committee and the Lands and Forestry Committee.
The issue could be referred to these two Committees so that they could meet with the appropriate stakeholders to come out with a system on how we can resolve the issue. This is because, it is not only one group of people who are involved in this but a number of groups. How do we handle this issue?

Mr Speaker, we would want to propose that, you refer the Statement to these appropriate Committees so that, they can resolve the issue and make a proposal on how the menace of land guards can be dealt with.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.