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400 acres of Behsud land retaken from grabbers

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Nearly 400 acres of land, which was illegally grabbed in different parts of Behsud district of eastern Nangarhar province, has been recovered during a campaign, the district chief said on Wednesday.

Mohammad Seddiq Dawlatzai told Pajhwok Afghan News the land recovery campaign in his district had been ordered by Governor Gulab Mangal and was underway in cooperation with security forces.

He said the campaign was still underway in Qasamabad, Benegah, Samarkhel, Bahrabad, Wach Tangi and some other areas of the district.

Buildings and walls constructed by encroachers on the usurped land were being demolished and construction works on such lands prevented as part of the campaign, he added.

He said the campaigners on Tuesday retook land plots which were part of a township for university lecturers in Baharabad area of the district.

Dawlatzai said 30 people involved in usurping government land had been arrested and referred to the attorneys for interrogation.

He did not provide information about how much land has been usurped but said hundreds of acres of land was recovered from grabbers.

Nangarhar provincial council secretary, Zabihullah Zamarai, said local officials should recover all grabbed land in the province.

He said homes of poor people and small land grabbers were being demolished and powerful individuals who had grabbed hundreds of acres of land were spared in the campaign.

A number of civil society activists also called the campaign as symbolic and said such drives were launched to deceive the masses.

A tribal elder and civil society activist from Behsud, Mir Agha Munsif, said that the local government should decisively act against land grabbing.

However, Nangarhar land prevention commission head, Ahmad Shah Sadat, said the governor was decisive in recovering grabbed land and he had ordered all usurped lands to be retaken.

He said wealthy and poor people were treated equally in the campaign and the grabbed land would be retaken from all.

President Ashraf Ghani in his recent visit to Nangarhar had ordered the recovery of all grabbed land in the province. He had even directed security organs to shoot the grabbers if they refused to accept the law.