

Kenyan agricultural firm Kakuzi will soon resume exports of avocados to supermarkets in Europe which stopped buying its produce in October last year when the firm was accused of serious human rights abuse, [Business Daily Africa](#) reports.

Supermarket chains Tesco, Sainsbury's and Lidl suspended Kakuzi supplies in the wake of reports of rape and violence at Kakuzi by The Times of London.

Camellia Plc, the parent company of Kakuzi, says actions and reforms taken since then have made it possible for the Nairobi Securities Exchange-listed firm to be taken back as a supplier of the major retailers.

"The serious human rights claims the group faced relating to its operations in Kenya led to a number of European supermarket chains suspending Kakuzi as a supplier of avocados," the multinational says in its latest annual report.

"We are proactively working to address these customer concerns, including with the assistance of leading human rights advisers and are pleased that a number of our customers intend to resume trade in the new season."

Kakuzi's exports of avocados to the UK and continental Europe rose 21.8 percent to Sh2.2 billion in the year ended December, indicating that the sales would have been even higher without the boycott which took effect in the last quarter.

Camellia and its local subsidiary have paid a heavy price to win back the confidence of customers in Europe who value ethical corporate behavior nearly as much as the quality of produce.

The multinational spent a total of £16.1 million (Sh2.4 billion) in legal and other costs after it was sued in the UK by law firm Leigh Day which represented victims in Kenya and Malawi.

The amounts include £4.6 million (Sh695 million) and £2.3 million (Sh347 million) which were paid out to the victims in Kenya and Malawi respectively to settle the case.

Kakuzi had separately spent Sh137.4 million on lawyers in the year ended December to defend itself against the human rights abuse charges.

The agricultural firm had been sued alongside Camellia but was later dropped as a party to the proceedings in July 2020.