

Kibaale district peace committee members after their training at Kibaale Hotel

Internal affairs ministry forms peace committees

KIBAALE

By Ismael Kasooha

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has formed and trained peace committees in the Albertine sub-region to deal with increasing conflicts.

The Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism (CEWARN) department head, Nickson Olwa, said the ministry deemed it necessary to strengthen institutions so that they can detect, prevent and manage conflict.

"We have formed and trained peace committees in all the seven districts in the Albertine sub-region due to the increasing conflicts," Olwa said.

According to Olwa, the discovery of oil and gas in the region has triggered many conflicts both social and economic.

The economic conflicts are mainly associated with land as rich people rush to the region in anticipation of reaping much in land compensations from the Government and oil companies.

This has led to increased conflicts, which has prompted the Government to form and train peace committees in all the districts of Hoima, Kibaale, Kakumiro, Kagadi, Buliisa, Masindi and Kiryandongo.

The peace committees are led by the resident district commissioner (RDC) as the chairperson while the LC5 chairpersons are co-chairpersons and comprise of both technical, religious and civil society representatives.

The peace committee arrangement began in the Karamoja sub-region in 2003 and is being rolled out to other regions, such as Rwenzori, Bunyoro and districts neigbouring South Sudan, due to the conflicts in those areas.

CEWARN was put in place with the objective of establishing and operating an effective, sustainable sub-regional mechanism that will undertake conflict early warning and early response and foster co-operation among relevant stakeholders to inform and enhance peaceful settlement of disputes and respond to potential or actual violent conflicts in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region.

Olwa said the committees have been trained in conflict early warning systems, conflict detection, prevention, mitigation and resolution.

The peace committees shall be established right from the district, sub-county to village level, to ensure they are detected early enough and mitigation measures put in place. The RDC of Kibaale, Samuel Kisembo, while addressing the participants said the initiative has come at the right time when sporadic conflicts are emerging in the region.

WHAT OTHERS SAY



The Rev. Jimmy Kyamulesire, the parish priest of Kikangara Church of Uganda: I am happy the Government has come up with such an initiative and even brought religious leaders on board. If the peace committee work plan is implemented, people will live in harmony.



Kizito Nyanzi, Kibaale district senior labour officer: The peace committees are encompassing all stakeholders, which is a good start. Most conflicts are natural resource-related, which requires everybody, to prevent such conflicts.

John Byabasalja, the head of the laity, Bujuni Catholic parish: Peace committees at all levels will play a great role in harmonious co-existence because any impending conflict shall be detected and managed in its infancy.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

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