

Monkey, baboon meat impounded in transit to DR Congo

By Dismus Buregyeya

Two trucks of fish, baboon and monkey meat are currently held at the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) armoured brigade operation base in Masaka.

The meat was impounded by the UPDF marine and the fisheries enforcement unit while in transit to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The brigade's public relations officer, Lt. Geoffrey Sande, said the suspects fled when they were intercepted at Panyol, between Pakwach and Nebbi districts on Tuesday.

New Vision learnt that the fisheries enforcement unit met tough resistance during the operation.

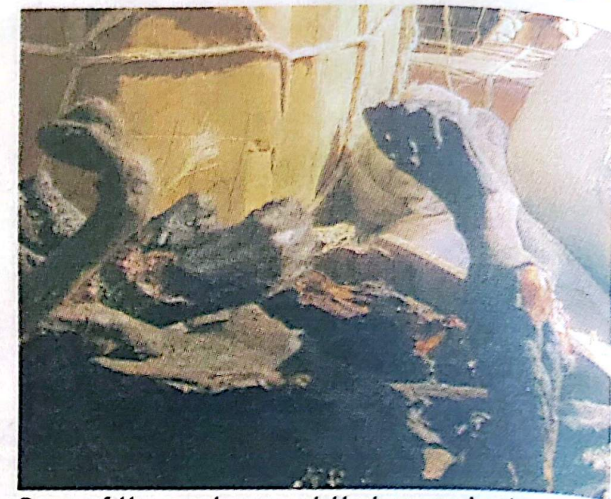
"After intercepting the trucks, a group of thugs chased us, using arrows. We had to call for reinforcement," a soldier attached to the mission, said.

Abdu Ssempebwa, who is attached to the fisheries enforcement unit, said the traders have resorted to transacting in smoked monkey and baboon meat because of its increasing demand in the DRC.

An official from the fish enforcement unit in Bunagana, Kisoro district, said the hunters kill the monkeys and



The fish which was impounded at Panyol in west Nile. Photos by Dismus Buregyeya



Some of the monkey meat that was seized

baboons using arrows and also set traps for them. He said the meat is smoked with salt to preserve it.

"The meat is slightly more expensive these days because of the scarcity of immature fish coming from Uganda," he said.

He added: "The wildlife authorities should pick interest in this matter as it will affect the tourism sector."

The assistant UPDF marine operations commander, Capt. Isaac Ewaga, said they swung into action after receiving information that the fish traders smuggling immature fish had changed tactics and routes.

He said because of the intensifying operations against immature fish transactions in Masaka, the fish traders are using alternative routes to

access the DRC.

Ewaga noted that the number and size of fish is steadily picking up in Lake Victoria.

"Today, a mature Nile perch weighing 280kg costs sh1.8m at factory price," he said.

Early this year, President Yoweri Museveni deployed the UPDF in Masaka after reports had cited the

area as a base for immature fish blackmarket.

The head of the marine force operations, Maj. James Nuwagaba, pitched camp in Masaka, Rakai, Kalungu and Kalangala fishing landing sites last month on a crackdown mission of the habitual immature fish and illegal fishing gear trade.