

Rubaga residents cry foul as Nalukolongo channel construction work stalls

Pending. Kampala Capital City Authority had promised to construct Nalukolongo drainage channel in 2014

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KAMPALA. Residents of Rubaga Division will have to prepare for risks caused by floods as Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) grapples with the construction of Nalukolongo drainage channel.

The state of the channel that has reportedly claimed some lives is appalling and whenever it rains, the areas around Ndeeba, Nateete, Nalukolongo and Rubaga on Masaka Road are regularly flooded with the blocked channels spilling into people's houses.

The stalled project whose construction was to commence in 2014, came to a standstill after KCCA indicated it did not have enough money to compensate about 450 residents who had surrendered their land for the project to start.

The construction of Nalukolongo drainage channel would be sponsored by the Kampala Institutional Infrastructure Development Project -I (KIIDP-I) which is funded by the World Bank.

However, the affected residents were to be compensated first before construction work could commence, a condition that KCCA claims it failed to meet.

Residents who spoke to *Daily Monitor*, accused KCCA of failing to expedite the project, arguing that Nalukolongo and Lubigi drainage channels have become a death trap.

"Whenever it rains, it worries me because people drown in this Nalukolongo drainage channel. Our children are at risk because they like playing along this channel and some children in the neighbourhood have drowned before. KCCA has been promising us that they would construct it since 2014 but three years later, the project still remains undone," said Ms Mariam Nakabugo, 54, a resident of Nalukolongo village.

Upon expiry of KIIDP-I project, the second KIIDP-II, whose implementation started in 2015, took over the construction of Nalukolongo and

other drainage channels.

However, KCCA is still grappling with how to compensate the affected residents before the project commences, something that continues to raise eyebrows among residents and area leaders.

Implementation of the five-year project estimated at \$183.7m (about Shs661b) in the five divisions of Kampala: Central, Nakawa, Makindye, Kawempe, and Rubaga started in May 2015. The project is funded by the World Bank and the government of Uganda, and is implemented by KCCA.

Shs8b

AMOUNT OF MONEY
CONSULTANTS HIRED BY
KCCA HAD PROPOSED FOR
COMPENSATION

It's first component is to widen, upgrade and construct city roads, junctions, drainage and associated infrastructure. The second component is establishing an automated register for all properties and roads in the city, constructing a Traffic Control Centre, locating and naming premises and roads within the city and streamlining the revenue management systems.

Ms Joyce Ssebugwawo Nabbosa, the Rubaga Division mayor, accused KCCA of delaying to construct the two drainage channels, saying Nalukolongo drainage channel is a time bomb for the people of Rubaga.

"Nalukolongo is one of the major problems in Rubaga now and as leaders, we are very much worried because this concerns our people. Government must release funds to compensate residents who surrendered their land to pave way for construction works. The lives of our people are at risk because of the ever flooding Nalukolongo," she said.

The key flooding points in Nalukolongo are: Nalukolongo Road, Sembule Road, Wankulukuku and Ndeeba. The main cause of flooding in the area is the continued development pressure on the swamp that is meant to act as a buffer zone. The tributaries that are meant to drain the nearby communities are heavily silted.

Daily Monitor has since established that there is a clash between KCCA technical team and the political wing over compensation funds for the affected residents in Nalukolongo.

Although the consultants hired by KCCA had proposed a staggering Shs8b compensation, the political wing has since disagreed with them, arguing that the whole compensation process would take approximately Shs5 billion.

KCCA councillors told this newspaper that they disagreed with the recommendations of the consultants because they had inflated the compensation funds yet in actual sense, the compensation exercise would require about Shs5 billion only.

They accused KCCA technical team of frustrating the construction of Nalukolongo drainage channel.

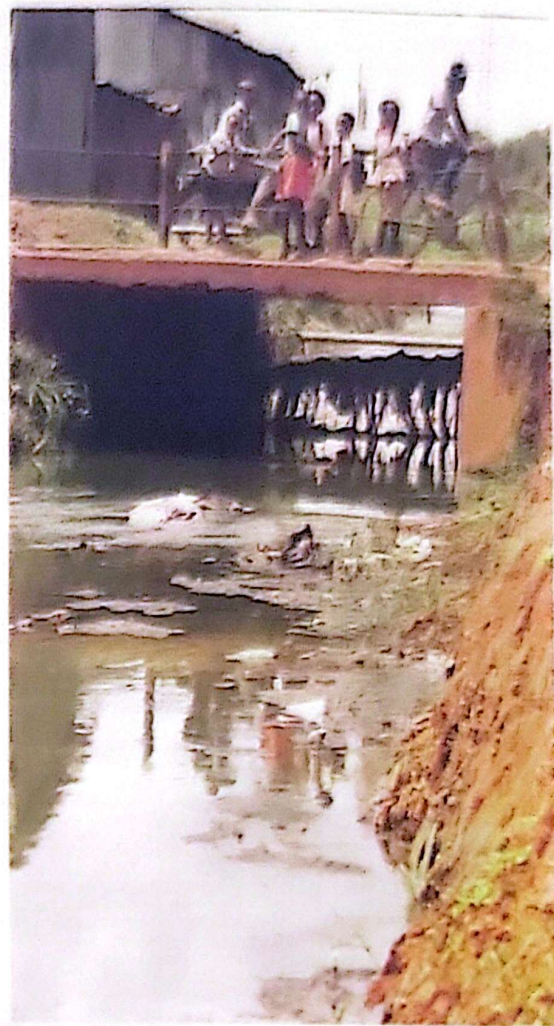
Mr Kennedy Okello, the KCCA chairperson of engineering and technical services, said the committee made recommendations to the technical team among which is to reject the recommendations of the consultants and also embark on the construction of the channel.

"We visited Nalukolongo and the situation there is appalling because people around this area are heavily affected whenever it rains. We have since made our recommendations to the team and one of the pertinent issues is that we want transparency in the whole process because consultants had inflated the compensation costs yet it wasn't true. We will soon get communication from them on when the project will commence," he said.

During KCCA council meeting recently, councillors from Rubaga threatened to boycott the meeting because the item of Nalukolongo drainage channel wasn't indicated on the order paper.

"We are leaders of the people and we must deliver services to them because they entrusted us with power to make decisions on their behalf. Nalukolongo is a key issue which should be given urgent attention because we are losing people every other day who drown," said Mr Abubaker Kawalya, Rubaga councillor.

Other drainage channels in the city whose flooding is also a threat to city residents are: Kiyanja channel (Lumas Road), Kawaala channel, Kyambogo-Banda-Jinja road channel, Clock Tower-Queen's Way channel, Luthuli-Bandali Rise channel, Lugo-



Risky. Construction of Nalukolongo drainage channel has stalled for three years. PHOTO BY ASUBAKER LUBOWA

go-Jinja Road channel, Old Port Bell Road and Lubigi channel.

According to the May 31 flood report, a copy this newspaper has seen, KCCA plans to construct Nalukolongo

channel and its eight tributaries to relieve the section and nearby communities from further flooding after the KCCA technical team has approved the budget and after fresh evaluation of the affected people to be compensated has been done.

KCCA director of engineering and technical services Andrew Kitaka explained that the major challenge faced by the drainage team is the lack of representation in the development process, which he said, results into encroachment on major drainage buffers, blockage and diversion of drains.

"We have made several notifications to the director of public prosecutions on encroachment and demolitions have occurred in some places such as Nakawa Division and Nakivubo container village," Mr Kitaka said in his report.

However, Mr Kitaka called for an establishment of a full time emergency team that is always on standby, but noted that this team should be fully facilitated to operate even beyond normal working hours.

Mr Kitaka also recommended that there is need to recruit and station permanent teams on all the key flood spots for construction and maintenance of the critical drainage sections.

Voices

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"Nalukolongo is one of the major problems in Rubaga now and as leaders, we are very much worried because this concerns our people. Government must release funds to compensate residents who surrendered their land to pave way for construction works," JOYCE SSEBUGWAWO NABBOSA, RUBAGA DIVISION MAYOR

Nalukolongo drainage

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