



Inspection. Mt Elgon region police commander Francis Chemusto (centre) and other residents inspect the landslide scene in Mbale on Sunday. PHOTO BY YAHUDU KITUNZI

Mbale leaders raise red flag over eminent landslides

Issue. According to Mr Micheal Mabonga, new cracks have been cited in the areas of Bukhatoko, Namanje, Bubirabi lower and upper villages.

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MBALE. Mbale District leaders are predicting devastating landslides and have appealed to the government to relocate people settled on Mt Elgon immediately to avert a likely disaster.

Mbale is still recovering from a string of disasters and the leaders' appeal comes a day after one person died and two others were seriously injured during landslides on Sunday.

The landslides buried acres of plantations mainly onions as the area is currently experiencing heavy rainfall. The district councillor for Wanale

Sub-county, Mr Micheal Mabonga, during an interview with *Daily Monitor* yesterday, said about 2,700 residents of four villages surrounding Wanale Hill are living in fear and could face dangerous flooding effects.

Mr Mabonga explained that new cracks have been cited in the areas of Bukhatoko, Namanje, Bubirabi lower and Bubirabi upper villages.

"We have observed some fresh cracks in these villages and appeal to our people to vacate the area for the good of their lives," Mr Mabonga said.

He added: "The ongoing rains pose a serious threat. We want to avoid a repeat of another catastrophic landslide in the area."

The district Woman MP, Ms Connie Nakayenze Galiwango, has called on the government to intervene before the situation worsens.

KEY ISSUES

The Sunday landslides that killed one person and injured two others, also buried acres of plantations mainly onions as the area experienced heavy rainfall.

"Government should relocate these people immediately in case of emergencies like this one. Life should be treasured," Ms Galiwango said.

The State minister for Water and Environment, Ms Mary Goretti Kitutu, said cracks are a pointer to more landslides.

"People should not settle in such areas. Planting trees in such steep areas is the only remedy. You know I have not been in the landslide zones since 2015 but the main trigger is rain water and steep slopes. The soils are also stony, loose and highly unfilterable. This is a high risk area not fit for human settlement," said Ms Kitutu.

Police led by Elgon regional police commander Francis Chemusto

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briefly

Suspect shot dead

BUIKWE: Rift Valley Railway security personnel in Buikwe District last Saturday allegedly shot a man dead after he was found removing railway slippers on the Lugazi-Nyenga railway line. Speaking to *Daily Monitor*, police confirmed identified the deceased as Collins Kalenzi, a resident of Busemeya village, Buikwe Town Council. According to workers from Rift Valley Railway, who spoke to *Daily Monitor* on condition of anonymity, 36 railway slippers were found missing on the fateful morning. [Denis Edema]

Man petitions Kadaga

KIBUKU: Mr Peter Munywera, a voter in Bulangira Sub-county, Kibuku District, has petitioned Speaker Rebecca Kadaga over government's decision to continue training enrolled comprehensive nurses who are discarded by the district service commission during recruitment. "It's understood that the government set up teams and dispatched them to all district local government instructing them not to recruit enrolled comprehensive nurses but to only accept enrolled nurses and midwives..." the June 15 petition reads in part. [Mudangha Kolyangha]

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Voices

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WANALE SUB-COUNTY
COUNCILLOR



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MARY GORETTI KITUTU,
STATE MINISTER
FOR WATER AND
ENVIRONMENT

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FRANCIS CHEMUSTO,
ELGON REGIONAL
POLICE COMMANDER

have since asked the people of Mbale to vacate the dangerous mountainous area. Mr Chemusto warned that the area was declared a no-go zone following deadly mudslides in the past.

"We have assessed the area and found out that people are at risk. There are some fresh cracks," said Mr Chemusto, adding that he had already communicated to the Office of Prime Minister [OPM] for interventions.

The Elgon region has registered several spates of deadly landslides.

In March 2010, more than 150 people were killed and 10,000 displaced in Nametsi, Bududa District.

Residents, especially in Bulucheke Sub-county were displaced and others driven into refugee camps.

Government, in a bid to avoid similar occurrences relocated the survivors to Kiryadongo District.

Speaking to *Daily Monitor*, the spokesperson of the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr Julius Mucunguzi, said a number of people from Bududa District had been relocated to Kiryandongo District.

"That is the evidence that governments taken this matter of landslides seriously. The process of relocating others who are still in mountainous areas is under way," Mr Mucunguzi said.

However, many of the relocated residents have since returned reasoning that government had abandoned them.

Some claimed they didn't easily adapt to the new environment since the soils were not as fertile as the ones in Bududa District.

But the commissioner for disaster management in the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr Martin Otori, said Kiryandongo has better facilities compared to Bududa.

Government said it had acquired about 2,800 acres of land in Bunambuye Sub-county, Bulambuli District for resettling landslide victims.

However, seven years later nothing has been done yet.

briefly

Police arrest nine

BUYENDE. Police in Buyende District last week arrested nine

130 girls defiled