

Fear in Busia as police injure Kenyan expectant mother



Desperate. Ms Anastancia Nthambi shows the hand that was shot by officers from the URA anti-smuggling unit. PHOTO BY TOM MALABA

In pain. Apparently, the bullet ripped through the door and hit the back of her left palm.

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BUSIA. A 22-year-old expectant woman in Busia, Kenya, is nursing injuries on her left hand and the right thigh after a stray bullet fired by Uganda anti-smuggling personnel hit her.

Ms Anastancia Nthambi, a resident of Mayenje Village in Buduruku Sub-county in Busia District, was shot on September 25.

Speaking to the *Daily Monitor* at her home where she is recuperating, Ms Nthambi said on the fateful day, she heard a gunshot, which prompted her to call out her husband who was bathing but that her husband advised her to close the door.

That is when she saw blood oozing from her palm and the right thigh.

The bullet had ripped through the door and hit the back of her left palm.

It broke the bone right below the middle finger, exited and scraped her left thumb and lodged in the right thigh.

"After closing the door, I saw blood and realised I had been shot," Ms Nthambi said.

She also said she was lucky the bullet did not hit her foetus. She was taken to Dr Egesa's clinic in Busia where doctors stitched her wounds.

Kenya Police arrived at the scene of the shooting soon after Uganda's anti-smuggling unit personnel had retreated.

They (Kenya Police) referred Ms Nthambi to Busia District Hospital where an x-ray confirmed a bullet had lodged in her upper thigh.

The incident left Nthambi demobilised in the left palm.

"When they are chasing smugglers, they fire at anything that crosses before them and bullets land in homesteads,"

ANASTANCIA NTHAMBI, VICTIM

"I cannot handle anything with my hand," Ms Nthambi said showing the finger now numb and bent inwards.

Ms Nthambi's mother-in-law said they live in fear of bullets fired by Uganda's anti-smuggling unit.

"When they are chasing smugglers, they fire at anything that crosses before them and bullets land in homesteads," she said.

She said even though the smugglers run away, the Uganda anti-smuggling pursues them into homes while firing.

Ms Nthambi's mother-in-law is yet to recover from the shock, wondering what could have happened had the bullet been fatal.

"My son is yet to pay pride price for that girl. I do not know what we could be doing now," she said.

Down River Bwahira, which serves as the border between Uganda and Kenya, smugglers can hardly push their loaded bicycles but are helped by young men, who cultivate rice on the river banks, to cross the stream into Uganda.