5 killed as mine collapses

Residents say the rain left the soil waterlogged and unstable yet despite the risky conditions, miners reportedly resumed work in the pit on Monday morning.

BY HILLARY TWINAMATSIKO

Grief has engulfed residents of Kayanga Village in Kyamuhunga Sub-county, Bushenyi District, after some miners were buried alive when a gold mine collapsed following heavy overnight rains.

The incident occurred on Monday. According to the residents, it had been raining throughout the night of February 23, which caused structural instability.

Residents say the rain left the soil waterlogged and unstable. Despite the risky conditions, miners reportedly resumed work in the pit on Monday morning.

At about 1pm, the weakened walls of the mine caved in, trapping the men under heaps of mud and soil.

"The rain started at around 1am until morning. This ground is like porridge when it gets wet," Mr Moses Ayebare, a veteran miner and resident of Kayanga Village, said.

"We had told them to wait until it dried, but hunger drives people to desperate moves," he added.

Ms Sarah Ahumuza, who operates a small food stall near the mining site, said she heard the ground rumble moments before the collapse.

"I was preparing tea when I heard the ground groan. After the heavy rain, you could feel, the earth was heavy. We all ran there, but the mud was so thick. If it hadn't rained, those boys would be coming for evening tea by now but that water turned a gold mine into a grave," she said.

Distraught relatives gathered at the scene as rescuers struggled to retrieve the bodies from the thick mud.

Four bodies were exhumed on Tuesday evening, while the fifth was recovered yesterday afternoon.

Mr Robert Mugabe, who lost his son in the incident, said the young man had worked at the mine for two months to support his family.

He called on government to intervene and regulate mining activities to prevent similar tragedies.

The Bushenyi District Police Commander, SSP Felix Mugizi, confirmed the deaths.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the mine had previously been closed, but miners continued accessing the site in search of a livelihood.

"For now, we have stopped people from mining in this area until investigations are done in ascertaining the rightful owner of the place and whether proper safety regulations were being followed," he said.

The Bushenyi Deputy Resident District Commissioner, Mr Donanto Katsigazi, urged residents to cooperate with authorities as they investigate the cause of the mine collapse.

"Police will do its work so that we can see how to stop such incidents. We had just lost two primary pupils who were struck by lightning in this area and this tells us that prayers are also needed," he said. He added: "We have agreed with police that this mine will be closed in the meantime and families should move on with burial arrangements as police continues with their investigations."



Locals join the police to hunt for the bodies of miners killed after a gold mine in which they were working collapsed in Kayanga Village in Kyamuhunga Sub-county, Bushenyi District, on Monday. PHOTO/ HILLARY TWINAMATSIKO

PREVIOUS MINE DEATHS

In December 2025, police identified Simon Izobaryomwe, a 30-year-old casual labourer, and Umaru Mbonigaba, a 31-year-old driver as people who died in a sand mine. Both were residents of Kanyamisinga Village in Katete Sub-county, Kanungu District. A third person escaped with injuries.

One person was killed and three others injured when a gold mine collapsed at Kagaba Village in Bukuya Town Council, Kassanda District, in December 2025.

In the early hours of Tuesday on June 3, 2025, Richard Muhumuza, a resident of Mukatasa Village and Cleophas Niwariho, a resident of Bushato Village in Rubanda Town Council, were buried alive when a wolfram mine collapsed.

In December 2018, a man identified as Victor Twinomujuni in Rubanda District died after a section of a quarry where he was mining sand collapsed.

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