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Stuck. Some of the canoes that were destroyed recently over illegal fishing in Kyotera District. PHOTO BY IVAN KIMBOWA

Nangoma islanders still stranded

Destroyed. The canoes were destroyed by soldiers over suspected illegal fishing activities.

BY IVAN KIMBOWA
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KYOTERA. More than 4,000 residents, who cross from Nangoma Island in Lake Victoria to access services at Kyotera District, have today entered the tenth day without transport means after Fisheries Protection Unit soldiers destroyed their canoes.

On May 18, the soldiers descended on the island and destroyed all canoes suspected to be used in illegal fishing activities.

However, local leaders insist the canoes were exclusively for transporting islanders to the mainland.

Among the most affected are people living with HIV who cross to get ARVs from Kakuuto Health Centre IV and Kasensero Health Centre III, traders and school children who are expected to start a new term today.

Nangoma is a remote sub-county, south of River Kagera on the Uganda-Tanzania border. The Island is only accessible by boat or plane.

When one uses a boat from Nangoma to Kasensero it is a shorter distance which costs Shs4,000 to and fro. But if one decides to use a vehicle from Kyotera Town, he has to first cross Mutukula border and enter Tanzania, covering a distance of 195km, which costs Shs40,000.

Due to difficulties in transportation on the Ugandan side, some residents in Nangoma find it convenient to access basic social services like medical care and education from the Tanzanian side.

Ms Edna Kumanya, the chairperson Nangoma Sub-county, says poor residents have been solely relying on the destroyed canoes to cross to Nasensero.

"It is a pity that the govern-

ment sent men in the army uniforms to destroy boats our people have been using to access the mainland without giving them alternatives. They [soldiers] ignored all our pleas to spare the canoes," he said.

"But after negotiations with district leaders, we have resolved to assist the islanders with our emergence boat for a period of 40 days, which we think is enough for the district to purchase a legalised boat to transport people," LT COL JAMES NUWAGABA, FPU COMMANDER

However, Lt Col James Nuwagaba, the FPU commander, said his team had spared four canoes to operate at Nangoma, but they later destroyed them after they were used in illegal fishing.

"But after negotiations with district leaders, we have resolved to assist the islanders with our emergence boat for a period of 40 days, which we think is enough for the district to purchase a legalised boat to

transport people," he said by telephone last Saturday.

FPU was established by government last year to crack down on illegal fishing in the country.

During their operations, many people dealing in immature fish have been arrested and several ungazetted landing sites destroyed on the shores of Lake Victoria in the districts of Wakiso, Mpigi, Kalangala, Masaka, Kyotera, Rakai, Mukono, Buwuma and Buikwe.

Ms Robina Ssentongo, the Kyotera Woman Member of Parliament, asked government to check the conduct of some soldiers under FPU, saying they have meted out untold brutality to fishermen.

"The government must accept that on those islands there are bona fide residents, who stay there and are supposed to access the mainland daily. In areas where they have failed to provide free public means, simple boats should be left to operate on the lake since they are not involved in fishing," Ms Ssentongo said.

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Age limit: Youth urged

KAYUNGA. The Kayunga District National Resistance Movement chairman, Mr Moses Karangwa, has appealed to the youth to stop asking elderly persons to quit political offices. Speaking during a fundraising for Ssukka Orthodox Church in Kayunga Sub-county last Saturday, Mr Karangwa said youth should take time and learn from their elders with experience. He also asked locals to support local schools and churches through making financial contribution. Mr

Woman detained

SEMBABULE. Police in Sembabule District are investigating circumstances under which a 42-year-old woman allegedly murdered her husband. The suspect is a resident of Lwemberwa Village in Lwemiyaga Sub-county, Sembabule District. Preliminary investigations indicate that the suspect and her husband Charles Lwabukwiiri had a domestic fight that attracted children who allegedly joined their mother to beat up their father. The southern region police spokesperson, Mr Lameck Kigozi, confirmed the incident. (Malik Fahad, Ilinnn)

DPC advises on kidnaps

KAYUNGA. Mr Moses Obia, the Kayunga District police commander, has advised residents in the district against rushing to the media in case of a kidnap incident. Mr Obia said last Saturday that kidnap cases are complex and need to be handled with a lot of caution. "When you share the information with the media before alerting police, it jeopardises our investigations," he said. He also criticised some journalists who report on kidnap cases without first consulting the police for proper and accurate information. He asked youth