Elephants attack residents

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NWOYA. A 42-year-old man was left unconscious after he was attacked by marauding elephants that invaded Pakawera Sub-ward in Kal B Parish, Koch Goma Sub-county, Nwoya District last Sunday morning.

According to the residents, more than five elephants also attacked and killed a bull, left another with serious injuries and destroyed more than four acres of beans and cassava plantations.

The elephants reportedly strayed from the neighbouring Murchison Falls National Park into the community land.

Mr John Bosco Okullu, the Koch Goma Sub-county chairperson, identified the injured person as Mr Alfred Ocaya.

He said Mr Ocaya, who has been hospitalised at St Mary's Hospital Lacor was injured when an elephant destroyed the grass thatched hut that he and four other people were sleeping in.

Mr Okullu said five households have been affected, adding that the trail of destruction left by the elephants is estimated to cost millions of shillings.

"We have complained many times to Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to put intervention measures to stop the elephants from straying into community land, but nothing has been done. Our people are suffering from hunger because their gardens are usually destroyed by the stray elephants," he said.

"My farmland has been destroyed completely by the elephants. I had high hopes in getting money from my garden but all is now lost,"

ODOKI MANANO, AFFECTED RESIDENT

He noted that the locals whose crops and household properties have been destroyed in the past were never compensated by UWA.

"We want UWA to take direct responsibilities for the destruction being carried out by elephants on our residents, animals and crops. Residents are now unable to grow crops because they fear elephants," he added.

In order to avoid more elephant attacks, Mr Okullu appealed to UWA to establish a game ranger post in the area.

Mr Odoki Manano, one of the affected residents, appealed for compensation from UWA for his destroyed crops and cow that was allegedly killed by the stray elephants.

"My farmland has been destroyed completely by the elephants. I had high hopes in getting money from my garden but all is now lost," Mr Manano said.

Mr Tom Okello Obong, the Murchison Falls National Park conservation manager, when contacted, said a team from UWA had been dispatched to drive the elephants back to the national park.

He said UWA is reviewing their past intervention plans of digging trenches, adding that some of the trenches dug within Koch Goma Sub-county could have caved in and needs to be rehabilitated.

Mr Obong, however, said UWA does not have compensation policies for the affected communities, arguing that the law has not been passed by Parliament.

In July 2010, stray elephants killed a man identified as David Oryema and injured nine people from a farm in Dog-ayago village in Nwoya District.

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