

Drought hits hard villages on Uganda-Kenya border

MOROTO

By Olandason Wanyama

Lokiru Ekodakwang, a farmer, says his anticipated harvest this year will not be realised, following a dry spell that swept across the Uganda-Kenya border.

The 68-year-old is from Tim'ngorok village, Tapac parish, Moroto district, a few kilometres to the border.

He says he planted over two acres of maize and sorghum this year, but when the crops flowered, a severe dry spell ensued and all the crops in his garden withered.

"We now depend on birds, fruits and wild animals for food," he notes.

Longora Lokwaale, a resident of Alamai village, Katikeikile parish, says: "I planted maize, sorghum and simsim, but they all withered during the drought that swept through my village," he says.

"I had invested all my meagre savings expecting reasonable

returns but all in vain."

Lokwaale added that he was not looking forward to any harvest, but dealing with hunger in his household.

So far, hundreds of homes are struggling to cope with the dry spell and severe food shortages that have hit the border area.

It has mainly affected the villages of Alamai, Tim'ngorok and Nako'nyen.

The sub-county chief of Tapac, Loru King, says the situation is worrying, adding that the dry spell came at a time when crops were flowering.

Zachary Tuala Lote, the community development officer of Tapac, says: "Farmers spent a lot of energy and money in their gardens, but the persistent dry spell has left them without any harvest," he said.

Lote says most people are now living off wild fruits and animals.

He, however, said with the help of the NUSAF 3 project, most households depend on the sh4,500



Ekodakwang (right) in his garden. Photo by Olandason Wanyama

paid to the beneficiaries in some villages.

Lote adds that those who had no work had crossed into Kenya, while others had migrated to Kosiroy mining sites, near the Kenya border.

According to an alert issued by the Uganda National Meteorological

Authority on north eastern Uganda, the region will soon experience occasional showers and thunderstorms, punctuated with some dry spells, that are expected to continue up to the end of this month. Climate patterns have changed in Uganda over time.

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