

Western Extra

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District are investigating circumstances under which a Senior Four student of Queens Secondary School in Mbarara District died. Patricia Huzabana, 19, a daughter of Mr. Joseph Katabadde of Mbarara District, was found dead near the school compound on Monday morning. The student had staged a strike in the night and ran out of the school. Mbarara District police commander Baker Kawomukama said 13 students have been arrested over the strike and the death of Huzabana. [Perez Tumanyi]



ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION

Residents encroach on Lake Bunyonyi

Part of Lake Bunyonyi shores in Kisoro District that has been encroached on by residents in quest for land for agriculture. Despite the importance of wetlands in sustaining rural livelihoods, there is widespread drainage and degradation, which has led to climatic change. [Perez Tumanyi]



Oil-refinery affected communities petition MPs over resettlement

Stranded. Government took over a 29 square kilometre piece of land belonging to more than 7,000 people in 2012 but it has allegedly failed to resettle some of them.

BY FRED KIVA
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HOIMA. Communities in Kabaale-Buseruka Sub-county in Hoima District, who were displaced from their land to pave way for the construction of an oil refinery, are demanding that Parliament responds to their plight.

Government took over a 29 square kilometre piece of land belonging to more than 7,000 people in 2012 but it has allegedly failed to resettle some of them.

The victims, majority of them women, have petitioned MPs from Bunyoro sub-region asking them to find solutions to what they termed

as a "life-threatening" situation they are living in.

The refinery affected households are being coordinated by Africa Centre for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), a local NGO, to demand for resettlement.

The residents are demanding immediate relocation, food relief, restoration of education and health services in addition to reinstatement of their cultural rights through their immediate relocation by government.

The petitioners complain of hunger and starvation ever since government barred them from growing perennial crops.

"There is a lot of hunger in our homes since government refused us to grow crops such as cassava, bananas, oranges, mangoes, guavas and papaws [perennial crops]. With the bad weather conditions that we experienced last year, our crops that were not drought-resistant were de-

BACKGROUND

Government acquired the 29-square kilometre piece of land in Kabaale Parish where it intends to set up a green field refinery that has a capacity to produce 60,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

The chunk of fertile land will also host an airport and attendant oil industries and other required facilities.

stroyed, leaving us without food," the July 10 petition reads in part.

A total of 7,118 residents are affected.

Ninety three of the affected households preferred relocation, meaning they would be given land equal to what was lost and a house.

However, government turned around and built houses for only 47 households, arguing that the rest only lost part of their land but not houses.

The others were given cash as compensation.

Despite the resettlement houses being complete by December last year, the residents have never been shifted to the area in Kyakaboga village.

Some now stay in overgrown bushes, since their neighbours were compensated and shifted to other

briefly

Leaders urged to make laws

MBARARA. The manager, National Malaria Control Programme in the Ministry of Health, Dr Jimmy Opigo, has asked local leaders to make ordinances and by-laws for enforcement of proper use of mosquito nets used in malaria prevention. Dr Opigo said this while addressing district health officers and other stakeholders, including resident district commissioners from the districts of Kagadi, Mbarara, Sheema, Kasese and Bundibugyo at a one-day consultative meeting in Mbarara Town, on Monday. Dr Opigo revealed that the five districts will receive four million long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets in October. [Fred Anyine]

Parents advised on girls

IBANDA. The Kiruhura District inspector of schools, Mr Robert Agume, has urged parents in Ibanda and Kiruhura districts to educate their daughters because they play an important role in building the nation. Mr Agume was last Sunday speaking to the congregation at St Paul Cathedral in North West Ankole Diocese. Christians were celebrating getting a diocese and a bishop. He asked parents to take keen interest in affairs of their daughters and help them avoid people of bad characters. [Elly Karenzi]

CONTINUES TO PAGE 10

Oil-refinery affected communities petition MPs over resettlement

Voices

FROM PAGE 11

"There is a lot of hunger in our homes since government refused us to grow crops such as cassava, bananas, oranges, mangoes, guavas and papaws. With the bad weather conditions that we experienced last year, our crops that were not drought-resistant were destroyed, leaving us without food."

PART OF THE PETITION

"As you know, the resettlement package includes restoration of livelihood. We are now putting up a school, a health centre, roads and social amenities before people can move in. Government is working with the district and consultants... They will be relocated soon."

GLORIA SSEBIKARI, SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER AT MINISTRY OF ENERGY'S DIRECTORATE OF PETROLEUM

areas. Efforts by local leaders and the civil society to have the residents relocated, have not yielded any positive results.

The petitioners claim their primary schools such as Nyahaira and Kyapaloni were closed and pupils and teachers relocated to other areas.

They said the pupils who completed Primary Seven and were headed to secondary schools cannot afford school fees in the far way areas.

When contacted, Buliisa MP Steven Mukitale admitted that the relocation process had delayed.

He, however, noted that the residents were much better off than their colleagues who opted for cash compensation.

"Actually, the people complaining are better off than those who opted for cash compensation because their resettlement houses are now complete and they will be relocated soon. Those who got cash compensation squandered the money and are now penniless," Mr Mukitale said in a telephone interview.

Ministry speaks out

When contacted about the issue, Ms Gloria Ssebikari, a senior communications officer at Ministry of Energy's Directorate of Petroleum, said government is finalising the restoration of all the social amenities in Kyakaboga village where the affected persons are to be relocated.

"As you know, the resettlement package includes restoration of livelihood. We are now putting up a school, a health centre, roads and social amenities before people can move in. Government is working with the district and consultants," Mr Ssebikari said in telephone interview yesterday.

She added: "They will be relocated soon. I cannot give you the exact time frame because I need to consult."

Meanwhile, a road leading to Kyakaboga has been opened up and the construction of Kyapaloni Primary School in the resettlement area is almost complete.

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briefly

Pressure group formed

MBARARA. Monarchists and environmentalists in Ankole have formed a pressure group dubbed Ankole...

Leaders worried

KAGADI. Authorities in Kagadi...