

when their relatives are too busy to immediately arrange for burial. Others have to wait for relatives, especially

RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT
Senu Okumu, a senior clinical officer at the hospital and a resident of Dabani sub-

in Majaji parish, Majaji sub-county, said when he lost his aunt on July 1, he was forced to transport the dead

dead bodies, a new person have to be followed at the border before the body is

district health officer in the area

Kenya

RWENZURURU WIDOWS WARNED ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

BY JOHN B. THAWITE

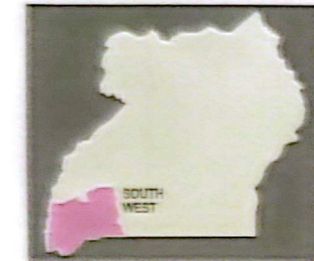
Widows of the deceased Rwenzururu royal guards in Kasese district have been warned against being sexually exploited by men promising them material support.

"Some selfish men might approach you promising they will support you, when all they want is to satisfy their bodily greed," Samson Bagenda, the LC5 chairperson of Bwesumbu sub-county, cautioned the widows.

Bagenda was on Thursday addressing 35 widows who turned up at Kaghandu Primary School, to receive relief donations from the Rwenzori Consortium of Civic Organisation (RWECO). The items included soap, clothes and scholastic materials for 88 orphaned pupils worth sh1.5m. He urged the widows to report any men who attempt to exploit them and also cautioned the general community members against harassing the widows.

The beneficiaries of the RWECO donations included pupils, mainly of Kaghandu Primary School in Bwesumbu sub-county.

The RWECO project officer, Margaret Kidima, cautioned the widows against subjecting their children to corporal punishments and



engaging the school-going ones in their businesses.

"Do not make your children participate in businesses such as carrying luggage to markets on school days," she warned.

Kidima also condemned early marriages in the area saying the practice was one of the killers of children's future.

"We are aware that in some families, young girls are being married off because their parents want bride price," she said.

The Kaghandu Primary School headteacher, Eric Meso, confirmed that early marriages were on the rise in the area, revealing that already one of the female candidates had been married off this term.

"Failing to educate your children and marrying them off early will



RWECO staff delivering some of the donations to the Rwenzururu attack widows and orphans at Kaghandu Primary School in Kasese district

only compound your socio-economic problems," he said.

RWECO is implementing a three-year community-driven project to prevent violence against children and adolescents in eight sub-counties across the district. The organisation's co-ordinator, Jimmy Baluku Odyek, said the project has been implemented in the sub-counties of Karusandara, Maliba, Katwe-Kabatoro, Kisinga, Nyakiyumbu, Karambi, Kitholhu and Bwesumbu, which reportedly rank high in violence against children and adolescents.

BACKGROUND

Bwesumbu sub-county has the highest number of orphaned children partly due to the Kasese incident in which scores of people died in the November 27 clashes between the Government forces and the royal guards. The clash culminated in the raid on the Rwenzururu palace in Kasese municipality.

The Police-backed UPDF operation, commanded by the then Brig. Peter Elwelu, raided various bases manned by Rwenzururu royal guards, who were reportedly involved in acts of insecurity.

This was after President Yoweri Museveni asked the Rwenzururu king, Charles Wesley Mumbere, to disband the royal guards and sent several security delegations to the palace to effect the process.

During the raid, the Rwenzururu king and scores of his royal guards and other loyalists were arrested. A total of 16 Police officers were also killed. The Rwenzururu king, along with 201 of his subjects, including former acting prime minister John Mutesa Kitumbire, have since been appearing in Jinja Chief Magistrate Court. They were charged with various criminal offences, including terrorism, treason, murder, attempted murder, aggravated robbery and destruction of property.

Mumbere and 15 of his co-accused subjects have since secured bail. He is currently living in his Makindye residence, from where he is prohibited from visiting Kasese, Bundibugyo and Wakiso until his case is concluded.

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