



**CHILD
LABOUR**

Survival means

A boy sells onions during an open market day in Lukaya Town Council, Kalungu District, recently. Although child labour is illegal in Uganda, many children have to find work to earn a living.

PHOTO BY SADAT MBOGO

Stray dogs: Police launch shoot-to-kill operation

Operation. Seven stray dogs have been exterminated in the last three days.

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MASAKA. Faced with the growing number of unvaccinated stray dogs in the area that are terrorising school-going children and residents, police in Masaka District have resorted to a shoot-to-kill approach to eliminate the animals.

In an operation mounted by police and the district veterinary team recently, so far, they have managed to exterminate seven stray dogs in the last three days.

By the time police intervened, the affected residents had killed at least eight stray dogs using spears and machetes, bringing the number of stray

dogs so far killed to 15.

Equally, Ms Jane Nansamba, a live-stock farmer in Masaka District, said the dogs have killed five of her goats in the last four months.

According to Masaka District police commander, Mr Henry Kintu, police have joined the hunt for stray dogs and even decided to use bullets following heightened fear among residents.

"As police, we couldn't sit back as stray dogs are attacking people in villages. They (dogs) have really become a threat to the security of the people," Mr Kintu said.

The hunt comes after stray dogs attacked and injured two children both aged five, who had gone to draw water from a spring well in Mpugwe Village in Mukungwe Sub-county, Masaka District on October 7.

Dr Mukasa Kirumira, the Masaka District deputy veterinary offi-

KEY ISSUE

According to reports, stray dogs have for long been a common problem in Masaka sub-region. Every year, they reportedly invade villages in a pack of more than 20 animals, maul people and kill domestic animals, including pigs, goats and sheep.

cer, said a total of 210 people have reported dog bites in the last six months.

"Dogs have continued to attack and injure people but unfortunately there is a stock-out of the anti-rabies serum in the entire sub-region and this now calls for a preventive measure," Dr Kirumira said.

He said they could have preferred to poison the stray dogs but the drug (strychnine), which they used to apply in the past, was banned on the international market.

"The poison was not biodegradable and it was feared that it could get into the food chain which is very dangerous. We were left with few options, including vaccination, birth control or spaying (removing the reproductive system of female dogs) and killing them by shooting."

briefly

House attacks on the rise

SEMBABULE. Leaders in Mateete Rural Sub-county, Sembabule District, have expressed concern over the increasing cases of house attacks in the area. Mr Babu Mpaaka, the chairperson of Mateete Rural Sub-county, said last week that two residents were killed early this month and several families have been attacked and injured by machete-wielding men since. Mr Lameck Kigozi, the southern regional police spokesperson, said police have arrested at least three people in connection with the attacks. [Malik Fahd Jjingo]

'Politics killing saccos'

SEMBABULE. Mr Simon Ddungu, the Sembabule District commercial officer, has said many of the savings and credit cooperative societies in the district have collapsed because of politics and tribalism. "You find that someone takes a loan from the group and fails to payback and when group leaders try to arrest the defaulters, politicians come in," Mr Ddungu said at a weekend. He also said many members want to borrow without saving. The district has 40 savings groups, many of which were formed by dairy farmers. [Moses Muvumba]

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Dr Kirumira explained.

Mr Leonard Lule, the Mpuugwe Village chairperson, told *Daily Monitor* that stray dogs have been on rampage in the area for the last three months, prompting them to alert the district authorities.

Although some residents blamed veterinary officers for not carrying out regular vaccination of dogs, Dr Kirumira said anti-rabies vaccines are available but restrained by limited funds to cater for transport and procuring other items like syringe among others, which are crucial during vaccination.

He blamed the increase of stray dogs on dog owners who cannot afford to feed them, preferring to let them hunt for survival.

Dr Kirumira said there are plans to open up an animal clinic in Masaka where they will be castrating and neutering female dogs to control the rapidly increasing population of stray dogs.

He also called upon sub-counties to pass strict by-laws on dog ownership.

In August, World Animal Protection, an international nongovernmental organisation that looks at the welfare of animals, called upon local urban authorities to stop the habit of poisoning dogs as a way of exterminating them, arguing that it is an inhuman act and not acceptable internationally.

PAST ATTACKS

In October last year, Stray dogs invaded six villages in Bukomansimbi District.

In 2015, Eight people were hospitalised after sustaining severe injuries in separate dog attacks in Sembabule District.

In 2010, Dogs mauled to death a 72-year-old man in Butenga Sub-county, Bukomansimbi District.

In September 2009, More than 20 people in Masaka District sustained wounds after they were bitten by stray dogs. In the same year, stray dogs also killed 35 domestic animals in Ndagwe Sub-county.