

30 years on; residents demand compensation over stolen cattle

Desperate. The victims are mainly cattle keepers from the sub-counties of Iki-Iki, Kamonkoli and Naboa who say they have waited for so long.

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BUDAKA. Residents of Budaka District, who lost thousands of their animals to Karimojong cattle rustlers during the 1987 insurgency, have accused government of failing to compensate them, 30 years later.

The affected victims, mainly cattle keepers from the sub-counties of Iki-Iki, Kamonkoli and Naboa, told *Daily Monitor* that they have waited for so long without any tangible commitment from government.

"The government has failed to respect its promise of compensating us. It has been quite long, waiting without a positive response," Mr Duncan Kabera, a retired civil servant, says.

He adds: "We feel discriminated against. The government is being dishonest in its promises."

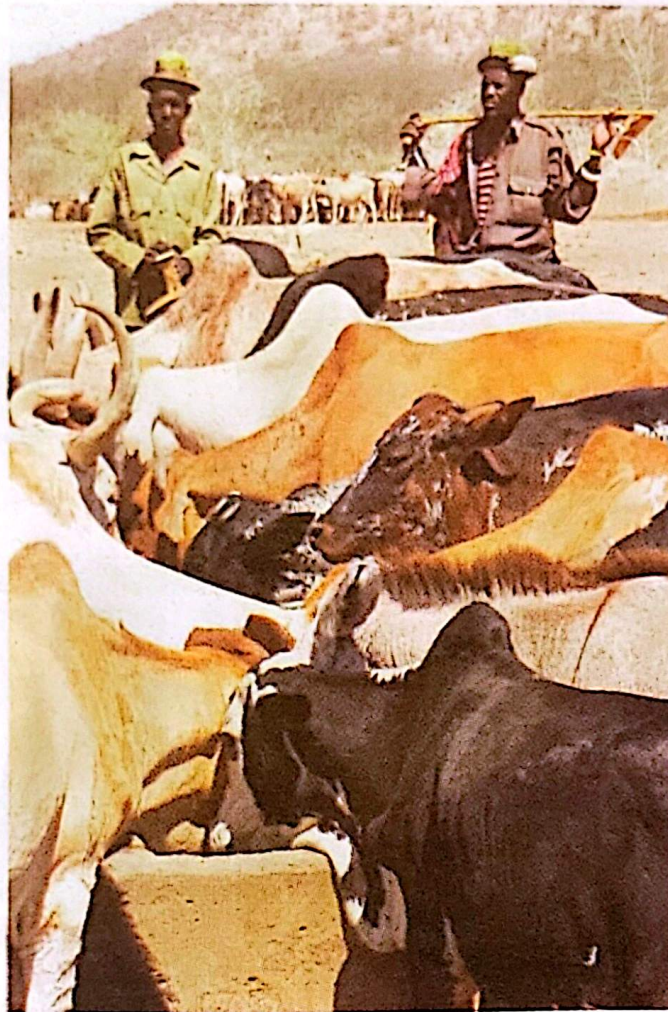
He explains that other regions affected by the insurgency have been compensated but wonders why the government has forgotten them.

"Despite various petitions to the president and the speaker, there is nothing positive," he says.

Abby Musene Lyadda, who lost more than 40 head of cattle, is pessimistic about government compensation.

"It is unfortunate that people lost their animals, lives and properties but government has decided to keep a deaf ear over this matter," he says.

He claims their cattle were intercepted and impounded by the then National Resistance Army soldiers at Kachumbhala in 1987



Poor state. Karimojong pastoralists look after cattle recently. Residents of Budaka District are demanding compensation over their stolen cattle 30 years ago. PHOTO BY STEVEN ARIONG

army trucks to Lubiri Barracks. Mr Gideon Bomma, another victim, says the government should rethink and speed up their compensation.

"Sometimes we think it was a deliberate move by government to make us poor," he says.

"At that time, we managed to identify our animals at Bugema army barracks but surprisingly, the army became harsh. This was the last moment to wave to my animals being taken away

recommended that the victims benefit from the cattle re-stocking programme as it is happening in other affected regions," he says.

The former Budaka LC5 chairperson, Mr Sam Mulomi, in his May 6, 2010 letter, addressed to President Museveni, confirmed that residents' animals were rustled by the Karimojong and therefore needed compensation.

"We will pursue it to the end because there is credible evidence that shows residents were among people who lost their cattle during the insurgency," he said.

He says the affected people should remain calm and united as they lobby for compensation from government.

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ABBY MUSENE LYADDA, VICTIM

Ms Pamela Kamugo, the woman Member of Parliament for Budaka District, says: "They have been waiting for so long. The government should listen to them," she says.

However, the Acting 3rd Division spokesperson of the UPDF, Lt Wilson Agaba, said: "We do not have any records related to cattle rustling in that area. Such allegations should be brought forward so that we can investigate."

In 2014, government unveiled plans to compensate more than 300 people in Budaka District whose animals were raided by rustlers and soldiers during the 1987 insurgency.

The district authorities were asked to verify and register non-

emphasises the need for compensation.

"I personally lost more than 80 cattle from my farm that I had established to help raise school fees for my children. Unfortunately, all my future plans crashed there," he says.

The chairperson of Bugwere Community War Victim's Rehabilitation Association (Bucwavra), Mr Karim Mukatabala, says the matter was investigated by government but never recom-