

Regional News

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7,000 Nakasongola families yet to vacate Kyoga buffer zone

NAKASONGOLA. Two years after the government issued a six-month notice in June 2024 for households to vacate the newly demarcated Lake Kyoga buffer zone in Nakasongola District, more than 7,000 households have yet to relocate.

Although the deadline expired, many residents across various landing sites remain within the buffer zone. At Zengebe landing site in Lwampanga Town Council, some families continue to occupy permanent structures, arguing that the demarcation process lacked transparency and fairness.

Several affected households say they

hold legal documents, including land titles issued by the Government of Uganda, proving ownership of land they developed. They contend that, at the time of purchase, their properties were not within the buffer zone.

"It is not that we are disobedient citizens, but we invested money in land purchase," said Mr Christopher Kambugu, a resident of Zengebe Village, on April 29.

"We expected compensation and possibly a relocation plan that never

materialised," he added.

Mr Kambugu said under the new boundary demarcation, he is required to vacate both his commercial building and permanent home, despite holding a valid land title. The changes leave his family with only a small portion of their original five-acre property.

Another resident, Mr Edmond Ssegawa, said the revised buffer zone followed rising lake levels that submerged the previous boundary. How-

ever, he noted that many affected families lack alternative land.

"I have no money to purchase land for my family that has lived at Zengebe Village for the last 20 years."

The Nakasongola District LC5 Chairperson, Mr Sam Kigula, said on April 24 that the demarcation exercise did not include compensation or resettlement plans.

He said district authorities had proposed relocating some families to land at the former Kyalubanga Central Forest Reserve, which is expected to be degazetted under a presidential directive.

Nakasongola District Natural Resources Officer Mr Charles Andama explained that the buffer zone is be-

ing redefined based on a new low water mark after flooding submerged the previous boundary. Although installation of boundary markers is ongoing, residents have been informed of the new limits.

He said the measure is intended to protect communities and prevent further encroachment on the lake's catchment areas.

Lwampanga Town Council LC3 Chairperson Mr George William Lubega said the exercise has also affected local administrative offices, which must be relocated. "We had anticipated compensation or a resettlement plan, but none has been provided. We await reconsideration from the government after the many appeals."