

District officials ask forestry authority to recall staff

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DATA

Reserves. The district has a total of 31 forest reserves, 14 of which are located in Bujumba County, while 17 are in Kyamuswa County.

Depletion. Recent data estimates Uganda's current forest cover to be at only 10 per cent. Environment minister Sam Cheptoris recently revealed that the depletion level had reached 120,000 hectares up from 90,000 in the recent past.

KALANGALA. Kalangala District Council officials have asked the National Forestry Authority (NFA) executive director, Mr Michael Mugisa, to recall all NFA staff in the district over failure to protect natural forests.

The resolution was reached last week with guidance from the chief administrative officer, Mr Gabriel Atama, following several complaints against the NFA sector manager, Mr Sam Bareke, and other staff members who are accused of perpetrating illegal logging in the area.

"...We believe that by changing the current NFA staff, we will save the few remaining natural forests," Mr Atama said.

The district chairperson, Mr Willy Lugoloobi, said: "We have discussed NFA issues extensively. We are now asking the NFA executive director to act. It will be a disservice if he keeps the same people in employment," he said.

When contacted, Mr Bareke asked council not to personalise issues, saying his team has done a lot to combat illegal logging in the district.

"Forest conservation is a collective effort. Instead of launching a blame game, let them join us to address this problem," Mr Bareke said by telephone on Monday.