

Disadvantage. They say the business has attracted so many people to the area, including criminals.

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BUHWEJU. Leaders in Buhweju District have decried the rising cases of criminality following the booming gold mining business in the district.

The leaders expressed their worry last week during the “voice projection inception workshop” organised by Global Rights Alert, an organisation advocating for women rights in the mining industry in the district.

The district chairperson, Mr John Asiimwe, said the gold mining business has attracted people from different backgrounds to the district, a situation that has threatened security in the area.

“The mining [business] has attracted people from as far as Mubende, Burundi, Congo, Rwanda and other places. This has come with [security] challenges. Crime has increased in the area since we have people from different cultures,” he said.

Mr Asiimwe added that some women in the district have abandoned their families for the mines. He says others have abandoned their marriage partners for fellow miners and gold business dealers. He noted that vices such as prostitution and alcoholism have also increased in the area.

“We have registered a lot of criminal cases and congestion in trading centres near the gold deposits where people from different backgrounds converge. We need to control this industry for the benefit of all,” he said.

Mr Asiimwe, however, said there are plans to register all the miners in the district but pointed out that the district does not have enough resources to conduct the

Gold mining fueling criminality - leaders



Gold rush. Miners dig the ground in search of gold in Buhweju District last week. PHOTO BY ZADOCK AMANYISA.

exercise. He appealed to partner organisations to come to their rescue.

The Buhweju Resident District Commissioner, Mr Emmy Katera Turyabagyenyi, told the meeting that 80 per cent of domestic violence cases registered at his office originate from the mining areas.

He called for mandatory registration of all miners in the district in order to have an

organised industry.

Dr Ramadhan Hizaamu, the Global Rights Alert board chairperson, said they are going to work with the district to have all miners registered to improve security in the area.

According to the miners' spokesperson, Mr Deus Beinomugisha, there are more than 20,000 miners in the district.