

Police impound 15 sacks of immature fish

KISORO

By Kate Atuzarirwe,
and Wilson Manishimwe

The Police in Kisoro have impounded 15 sacks of immature tilapia fish. The fish was intercepted at Kisoro Hill village in Kisoro municipality with a fishmonger identified as Sauda Kamana.

The district Police commander, Charles Okoto, said the operation that led to the arrest of the suspect over the weekend followed a tip-off from a concerned citizen, that immature fish from Katosi in Mukono district was being smuggled into the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Our intelligence team was tipped off that there was an individual dealing in immature fish, which she takes to eastern Congo. We investigated further, we found and arrested the culprit," said Okoto.

Okoto said this is the second time that Kamana has been nabbed by Police over the same matter and that she had been given several warnings. He said the vice that has depleted fish in some water bodies must stop.

"Kamana has made dealing in immature fish a source of income. We are still investigating her and soon, she will be arraigned in the courts

Illegal fishing on Ugandan lakes has led to a reduction in fish stocks on Ugandan lakes. Categories such as tilapia, Nile perch and silver fish have been drastically affected.

EFFECTS

of law to answer to several charges," he stated.

Kamana will be charged with being in possession of immature fish and dealing in fish without a trading licence.

This comes barely two weeks after the Police, in the same districts, impounded six sacks of immature tilapia fish and arrested two suspects; Angelica Nyiramahoro and Ramurata Irankunda. The duo, according to the Police, allegedly transported fish to Congo via the Bunagana border in Kisoro.

The confiscated fish was later donated to inmates at Kisoro Prison. Shafiq Sekandi, the Kisoro resident district commissioner, said the donation followed a court order from Kisoro Grade One Magistrate Pamela Karamagi, saying the fish be given to any government institution.

"It is a presidential directive and all immature fish must

be intercepted and owners prosecuted," said Sekandi, adding that the intercepted fish (tilapia) was seven inches in length, which is far below the required length of 11 inches.

The district assistant fisheries officer, Augustine Baryaruha, said it was discovered that fisheries officers in different districts were overwhelmed by the fish smuggling.

Presidential directive

In November 2015, President Yoweri Museveni ordered the local government ministry to liaise with the chief administrative officers and ascertain why no disciplinary action has been taken against fisheries officers and individuals involved in illegal fishing.

In a letter dated November 11, 2015, the President said: "These illegal activities have led to the depletion of fish in the lakes, which has immensely affected the economy in terms of closure of fish factories, loss of jobs and investors."

Acting on the same orders, the Inspector General of Police, Kale Kayihura, in the same month withdrew security officers and banned beach management units from lake-shores over reports that they were conniving with fishermen to use illegal fishing methods and trade in immature fish.