

Five schools closed over condemned structures

NAMUTUMBA

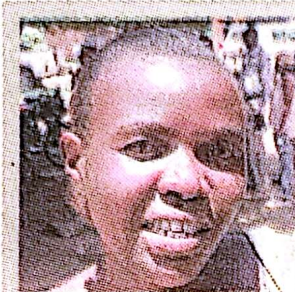
By George Bitu

Over five schools in Namutumba district will not reopen when the school term starts in February unless their dilapidated buildings are replaced.

According to Saleh Kumbuga, the district chairperson, the decision, which was prompted by health inspectors' reports, was unanimously reached during a recent council sitting.

"A probe by the social affairs committee confirmed that pupils were studying under appalling conditions. As leaders, we cannot look the other way, when our children's lives and education are at stake," Kumbuga argued.

He revealed that the heads of the schools had been formally notified about the decision by district authorities.



Annet Neka, Namutumba district secretary

The move to close the schools was done in good faith for the ultimate goal of developing our local government. In this era, pupils should not be studying in such shaky buildings.



Fauza Naigaga, pupil

The new school term is barely a month away. Will those buildings be in place in time to accommodate learners?



Mawazi Nyombi, parent

Our children have suffered for long in the risky buildings. I hope the council's decision causes change in the schools.



Amina Batega, Namutumba district vice-chairperson

The lives of our young ones are precious. As a council, we believe that they can only be safe when those buildings are replaced to create a better environment.

"New structures will enable us to work in a better environment."

Nandiya, a teacher

Monica Nandiya, a teacher at Nsoola Primary School, observed that at times, strong winds violently shake the buildings, prompting pupils and teachers to flee.

"The decision to close the schools may be beneficial in the long run. New structures will enable us to work in a better environment," Nandiya noted.

Francis Kyakulaga, the district health inspector, observed that some of the buildings have lasted over 100 years.

The schools are Mazuba, Luzinga, Isegero, Ivukula and Matyama primary schools.

"Some of the buildings lost their roofs long ago. Pupils just use the remaining shaky

walls as shelter and when it rains, the schools close," Kumbuga said.