

Stagnant water threatens Mabira forest ecosystem

BY DENIS EDEMA

BUIKWE. Prolonged water stagnation in Mabira Forest has raised concern among environmental authorities, with flooding threatening the root systems of indigenous trees and disrupting the delicate balance of flora and fauna that depend on the forest ecosystem.

Officials say the problem is largely caused by blocked culverts along the Kampala-Jinja highway, which have prevented natural drainage. As a result, water has accumulated in parts of the forest, directly affecting vegetation, trees, and wildlife habitats.

Two areas have been particularly affected. The first is near the site where a Kenyan pilgrim was buried, before the bira Police Station, towards Kampala. The second is at Kinoni, past the police station, where stagnant water has begun harming some tree species.

Mr Abudala Ssenyonga, a boda boda rider from Kitigoma in Njeru Municipality, said the problem began during road maintenance works carried out by the Ministry of Works and Transport.



Justification.

Water stagnation in Mabira Forest is creating an ecological imbalance and threatening the root systems of natural trees. We earlier held an urgent engagement with the Ministry of Works, and they have committed to unblocking the choked culverts," Aldon Walukamba, PRO for forestry at Ministry of Water

"When they were doing maintenance on the road, graders pushed heavy soil and pieces of tarmac into the waterways leading to the culverts, completely blocking the drainage system," he said.

"Now, during heavy rains, water flowing from the surrounding hills floods the affected sections because it can no longer pass through the drainage channels."

The road repairs that caused the culverts to become blocked began with emergency and maintenance works from late November 2024 into early December 2024, continuing with further repair phases in May and June 2025.

Mr Aloysius Kitovu, a boda boda rider at Kinoni stage, said motorists often stop along the roadside to observe the stagnant water and ask how long the problem has persisted.

Mr Allan Ssempebwa, a senior communications officer at the Works ministry, acknowledged the problem, noting that a team had been assigned to assess the situation and unblock the culverts.

"The ministry is committed, and a team will go on the ground to address the problem and restore proper drainage in the area," Mr Ssempebwa said.

Mr Aldon Walukamba, the communications and public relations manager for forestry at the Ministry of Water and Environment, said plans are underway to safeguard Mabira Forest's biodiversity and ecosystem.