



A staffer of Uganda Red Cross Society wades across a flooded compound in Humya parish, Bubukwanga sub-county, Bundibugyo district after heavy rains last week. Photo by Geofrey Nyamwongera

Legislators seek help for landslides, flood victims

By Moses Mulondo
and Nicholas Wassajja

The state minister of disaster preparedness, Musa Ecweru, yesterday expressed concern that despite the many incidents of floods and landslides in various parts of the country, there are no funds for any immediate interventions.

The minister explained that although his ministry had come up with a 10-year plan to annually allocate sh10b towards resettling people in areas at the risk of landslides, the project was not allocated funding in the current financial year.

The minister was responding to concerns about the floods and landslides that have ravaged various parts of the country causing loss of lives, destruction of property, leaving many homeless.

Ecweru noted that so far, eight people are confirmed dead due to the floods and landslides in various parts of the country and 10 people are still missing in Amuru, Rukungiri, and the Elgon region.

To demonstrate how disastrous landslides can be, the minister pointed out the Bududa landslides of 2010 that left 150 people dead and over 5,000 displaced.

The minister revealed that the Government had finalised plans to relocate over 600 people in Bududa.

He, however, appealed to Parliament to persuade the finance ministry to allocate them money for interventions,

arguing that the contingency fund from which they draw money for emergencies was not allocated money in the 2017/2018 national Budget.

The legislators, who spent about one year discussing the matter, asked the Government to swiftly get the required funds to save the lives of Ugandans that are endangered by the disasters.

Bungokho County North MP Rabbi Sizomu Wambede, who is also the shadow minister for disaster preparedness, expressed anger, saying government failed to forcefully relocate people in the landslide-prone areas.

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ Many of the 5,000 people relocated from Bududa to Kiryandongo are homeless because government is yet to build the houses for them as it had promised.

"We visited the scene of landslides in Sironko and realised that government had left many people in the path of landslides. We saw many hanging rocks that were about to fall. If I had executive powers, I would have evacuated the people there by force because I could see they were in danger," Wambede said.

Lutseshe County MP Godfrey Watenga, who represents one of the landslide-prone areas, said he had talked to his people and they were willing to be relocated.

"Our people are ready to be relocated even tomorrow, but government should be ready to look after them. Those who were taken to Kiryandongo after the 2010 landslides were left there helpless by government," Watenga stated.

Calling for urgent intervention from the Government, Bulambuli Woman MP Sarah Nambozo said many of the people who have been affected by landslides are homeless and without food.

Bufumbira South MP Sam Bitangaro also informed the House that his constituency had been greatly affected by floods that have even cut off some roads.

"Kisero is a tourist destination. This means tourists cannot access the area. I have not heard the minister including Kisero among areas that have to be helped," Bitangaro complained.

Kiryandongo Woman MP Hellen Kahunde told the House that many of the 5,000 people relocated from Bududa to Kiryandongo are homeless because government is yet to build the houses for them as it had promised.

The West Moyo MP, Tom Aza Alero, also gave an account of floods in Moyo district which have destroyed property and rendered roads impassable.

The Minister for Works and Transport, Monica Azuba Ntegek informed the House that her ministry has deployed teams to assess damage caused by floods on roads and bridges so that they can work on them to ease transport.

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