

NFA arrests 30 over fresh forest clearing

KAGADI

By Ismael Kasooha

The National Forestry Authority (NFA) Kagadi has embarked on operations to save the remaining forest cover in central forest reserves as farmers rush to clear land in preparation for the coming farming season. Usia Ndyanabo, the NFA Kagadi manager, said despite the High Court order restraining forest encroachers from cutting down forests again.

Ndyanabo said they were informed of the indiscriminate cutting of forests for arable land by residents patrolling the area.

"We have re-launched operations in all the 16 forest reserves in the three districts of Kibaale, Kagadi and Kakumiro to save natural forests," said Ndyanabo.

He said the suspects will be arraigned in court and charged in accordance with section 32 of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2005.

Section 32 of the act prohibits clearing of forests, grazing, camping, erecting structures, planting or cultivating in forests, unless such is licensed under the Act.

Those arrested from Kagombe forest reserve on Tuesday are Nathan Kakande, Paul Mugume, John Mwesige, Daudi Mugume, Sulaiman Muhindo, Kalebe Muhumuza and Alfred Bwambale.

From Kanaga forest reserve, over 20 were arrested, including Richard Kusemererwa, Emmanuel Kalanda, Robert Byaruhanga, John Bitanhirwe, Tugume Kobusingye, Zoromina Nyanyenga, Nyangoma Tumuhaise, Omuhereza Turole and Betty Nakarungi.

Others are Peace Kyalimpa, Wilson Bagura, Martin Kigonzi, Robert Tumuhimbise, Charles Setabi, Basobomu Mugarura, Jackson Muusagi, Omuhereza Byabazaire, Kizila Mugerwa, John Serukeera and Lawrence Muwonge.

Ndyanabo said some members of the public are being duped by self-seekers that the High Court gave them the green light to occupy forests.