

# Plastic waste engulfs Iganga

IGANGA

By George Bita

Plastic litter mixes freely with garden soil in Buluza village in Iganga district, making it difficult for farmers to effectively farm their land.

Bakali Sabasi, a resident, said Iganga town council used to dump its waste at the location before a disagreement arose with the landlord.

"The plastic bags you see are a leftover of the huge amounts of plastics that would be ferried here twice a day. Much of the affected territory has rubbish in it that does not get rotten," Sabasi laments.

In the town itself, the situation is not any different. Although drainage channels carry the rubbish away during a downpour, they have become dumping sites for plastic waste.

Along Saza Road, plastic bags of different colours dot the ditches on the side of the street.

According to Ayub Ssebide, the Kasokoso Lc1 chairman, poor waste dumping practices have contributed to the miserable state of affairs.

## Part of a wider problem

In 2005, the district directorate of health services identified the urban locality as the dirtiest in the country.

The public health



A resident dumps rubbish along Saza Road in Iganga town. Photo by George Bita

inspectorate workplan for the 2016/17 financial year quoted sh2.5m for inspection of refuse collection areas and dumping sites. However, except for a council tractor driver report, there is no official council inspector data for the last two years.

Abdu Saleh, the central division chairman, said

## BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Municipal trucks have been occasionally confiscated by court bailiffs over unpaid debts affecting rubbish collection.

municipal trucks have been occasionally confiscated by court bailiffs over unpaid debts hence compromising rubbish collection.

He also cited increased operational costs which leads to irregular garbage collection. Saleh said this frustrates effective waste management in the urban centre.

"The ban on *buveera* (plastic carrier bag) that has never been enforced. This is responsible for the accumulated plastics in the area. This is because the volume being dumped on a daily basis is simply too high," Abdul Samanya, the Iganga district senior environment officer, said.

## Health hazard

"The plastics do not decompose and can block drainage channels, leading to flooding. This stagnant water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes that cause malaria," Dr David Muwanguzi, the district health officer, warned.

He added that rubbish attracts flies that spread diseases like dysentery, trachoma and diarrhoea.

"Market women who cover food with *kaveera* have been told to stop the habit. Scientists are yet to rule out the likelihood of cancer-causing fumes from hot plastic getting into human bodies," he said.

## Way forward

Patrick Kayemba, the Iganga district chairman, said that the last Thursday of each month was set aside as a 'Keep Iganga Clean' day.

"We have notices indicating fines of up to sh50,000 at

## PEOPLE SPEAK OUT

Edward Mpango, resident  
Rubbish is supposed to be removed from residential areas.



Caroline Babita, resident  
The council should use the taxes collected to clean and light the town.



Andrew Balyekoma, resident  
Rubbish on streets shows that local clean-up measures are not working.



designated spots to uncontrolled dump. It is our hope to cause change," Samanya nationwide ban up with punitive offenders would be in ridding the *buveera*.