

Nwoya residents homeless after illegal land eviction

NWOYA

By Arnest Tumwesige

More than 200 people in Moto and Ceke villages in Lii sub-county, Nwoya district were left homeless after a landowner carried out an illegal eviction.

The affected people told *New Vision* on Sunday that their houses were demolished by a group of youth who were ferried to the area on a Fuso lorry. The group was armed with machetes, spears, clubs, bows and arrows.

During the process, all the property that was in the houses, including money, clothes, household items, food and domestic animals was taken.

Eyewitness account

Ben Ocaya Laloka, an eyewitness, said the rowdy youth came on Friday at about 10:00am when most of the residents had gone to their gardens.

Ocaya said his neighbour's shop that was stocked with general merchandise was looted before it was demolished.

Four residents who tried to put up some resistance to the demolition were stabbed.

Molly Ajok, 30, a mother of five, said by the time the youth struck, she was still in the garden.

Ajok, who lost everything, said the attackers, who were under the command of people who looked like uniformed policemen, first came on Monday and warned the residents about the imminent eviction.

"We are stuck. Everything was taken. Life is too hard for us and we think those youth will come back and harm us," she said.

"People have resorted to sleeping in the bush," Ajok, who has lived



Ajok and her son were left homeless after her house was razed. Photo by Arnest Tumwesige

on the land for 30 years, added.

Yoona Tumwesigye, who remained only with a motorcycle, said he lost sh3m that was in the house and a lot of items.

Tumwesigye called for interventions from humanitarian organisations and the Government to provide them with relief items like food, bedding and tents.

Police speaks out

Daniel Okello, the Nwoya district Police commander (DPC), denied the allegations from the residents that his men provided security to the youth that carried out the evictions.

BETWEEN THE LINES

While residents went out to tend to their gardens in Nwoya district, a lorry full of armed youth was ferried to their village and their houses razed.

Okello, however, clarified that the Monday exercise that he was part of was geared towards the opening of the land boundaries of the late Eng. Lagoro Gwari's estate.

"We went to witness the opening of the boundaries. The exercise

was carried out by a professional surveyor," the Police officer said.

The DPC was, however, surprised to learn that before a judgment was passed by the Gulu Magistrates' Court, Vincent Latim Lalobo, a son of Gwari, carried out illegal evictions.

Latim has since been arrested and detained at Nwoya Central Police Station facing three charges of malicious damage to property, robbery and assault.

"As Police we are sorry for what happened," the DPC said. More than 40 people have recorded statements with the Police and the suspect will be