

Regional News

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BY DAN WANDERA

Leopard mauls Nakasongola herdsman to death

NAKASONGOLA. Residents of Wangoilo Village in Nakasongola District are living in fear after a leopard attack.

The attack claimed the life of 21-year old Richard Mutebi and left 19-year old Eriya Mugabi severely injured.

Mr Mugabi is fighting for his life at Mulago National Referral Hospital following the April 4 incident. The two were grazing animals at a bushy eucalyptus plantation when the incident occurred.

Nakitoma Sub-county chairperson Godfrey Lutalo Muwonge said the leopard retreated into the bushes after the attack.

"The residents of Bugyabe and Wangoilo villages live in fear because the leopard, which appeared very determined to fight back, could be hiding in the nearby bushes," he told *Daily Monitor*

at the weekend.

Mr Muwonge added: "We lost one of our sons due to the injuries sustained in the deadly attack. The good news is that we have notified UWA."

Mr Sam Bitagasa, the Nakasongola District councillor representing Nakitoma Sub-county, described the situation as worrying.

He asked the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to intervene by among others, locating the possible hideout area for the leopard, which could potentially be in one of the bushes within Nakitoma.

"When the herdsmen spotted the leopard while grazing the cattle, they hurriedly planned to attack it after reinforcing their group with pangas. They underestimated the strength of this wild beast. The leopard attacked and



An appeal.

While we believe that the herdsmen may have made a mistake by deciding to attack the leopard which has climbed a tree, we are rallying UWA to respond.

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caused serious injuries. It then retreated to the bush after overpowering and injuring two people," he said.

Mr Butagasa added: "While we believe that the herdsmen may have made a

mistake by deciding to attack the leopard which has climbed a tree, we are rallying UWA to respond. It is likely that the leopard could be hiding within the bushes in the area and could make another daring attack on a section of the residents that fetch water at the springs located in the bushy areas and the herdsmen."

Some of the residents of Nakitoma Sub-county claimed that the leopard may be one of the problem animals that are within the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary areas.

Mr Abas Ssekimpi, a resident at Bugyabe Village claimed that the leopard scare in Nakitoma Sub-county is not a new issue, as similar attacks were experienced in 2019 when leopards reportedly killed several goats in the area.

"We call upon the UWA team to hunt down the problem animals in the area. Just a day after the leopard attack, a family in Wangoilo Village reported missing birds from a chicken house at one of the village homes, possibly killed by a wild animal. The villagers followed the feathers and blood drops to the bush. But we could not continue with the hunt because of the leopard scare," he told this publication yesterday.

UWA responds

The UWA Communications Manager, Mr Bashir Hanji, yesterday said teams would be sent to the area to assess the situation.

He explained that while cases involving problem animals in the different parts of the country don't always result in immediate action from the affected communities, UWA does its best to come to the rescue of the communities.