

Hundreds stranded as River Unyama bursts its banks

AMURU

By Jackson Kitara

Residents of Elegu Border Market area in Amuru district have been left homeless after River Unyama burst its banks. This follows the heavy rains that started on Monday night and ended on Tuesday morning.

Bridges were swept away, leaving some areas cut off in the two sub-counties of Atiak and Pabbo. The heavy rain also washed away a bridge over River Unyama, Okidi parish in Atiak sub-county that connects Atiak and Lamwo district from Apyeta parish in Ogili sub-county.

Unyama Bridge is the only route that UN refugee agency UNHCR and others use to connect refugees in West Nile and those that are in Lamwo.

The LC1 chairman of Elegu, Martin Okubo, said the water flooded Elegu, and many homesteads were destroyed by the flood.

He said many people climbed trees and buildings to escape the floods.

"The floods washed away houses and latrines, leaving many people stranded. Gardens were also washed away and others submerged in water," the LC1 boss said.

Okubo appealed to the

Government for relief.

The LC3 chairperson of Atiak sub-county, Wilfred Baguma Odiya, said the heavy rain that flooded the Unyama River washed the bridge away a distance of 500m, leaving people of Okidi parish in Atiak with no access to the sub-county.

He added that the flood also washed away Opara Bridge in Palukere parish, which connects Atiak sub-county and Palaro sub-county in Gulu district.

Odiya also said Auc Bridge in Pupwonya parish was washed away, as well as wii Akwir that connects Lagot Oywec village and Okidi parish.

According to the Aswa River regional Police spokesperson, Patrick Jimmy Okema, a driver identified as Charles Kawooya is alleged to have drowned in the flooded River Unyama, when the flood swept away his vehicle.

Okema said Kawooya, who hails from Masaka district, is presumed dead. However, two others who were with him were rescued by residents of the area.

This is the second time people residing near Elegu border market are being affected by floods. In 2013, over 6,000 people were left homeless after River Unyama stream burst its banks.



Vehicles were submerged at Elegu border post after the floods. Courtesy photo