

UPDF Marine destroys 15 tonnes of immature fish

MASAKA

By Dismus Buregyeya

UPDF Marines Fisheries Unit has destroyed 14,689kg of immature fish impounded in Kasese and Panyamur in Nebbi.

The UPDF operations coordinator for the southwestern sector, Captain Isaac Ewaga, said part of the destroyed immature fish consignment reportedly belonged to motor rally ace Ponsiano Rwakataka.

The fish was burnt on Sunday at Bwala hill in Masaka municipality on the instructions of the Masaka Chief Magistrate, Samuel Munobe. According to Ewaga, the rotting fish, intercepted last month in Kasese, was not fit for human consumption.

Ewaga said the operation against catching the immature fish, especially, in Masaka region, was successful.

"You can hardly find a truck ferrying immature fish on transit in Masaka region. The operation, which has lasted four months, has registered significant success," he said.

He also revealed that two of the fish processing factories in the area have since reopened because of the impact of the UPDF operation.

"The majority of the fish factories had closed down because of the scarcity of fish. Two of them have re-opened," he said. Early this year, President Yoweri Museveni launched the military operations to curb illegal fishing practices and catching of immature fish.



Immature fish destroyed by the UPDF Marines Fisheries Unit operations in Kasese. Photo by Dismus Buregyeya

WHAT LOCALS SAY

Ivan Busulwa

I ask the UPDF and court to give out the impounded immature fish to the locals. Burning it is a waste.



Asuman Rwabukadde

I commend President Museveni and the UPDF for the operation. They should not focus on stopping the importation of illegal nets, but charge the culprits.



Major James Nuwagaba commands the UPDF Marines Fisheries Unit operations on

various lakes and rivers. In most cases, the army works with the Association of

Fishermen and Lake Users of Uganda. The army was deployed

in Masaka and Kalangala districts after reports that the region was a hub for consignments of immature fish being smuggled into Democratic Republic of Congo.

Many businessmen who looked to this trade have since been arrested and imprisoned in Masaka region with hundreds of tonnes of immature fish impounded in a space of four months.

At least 70 vehicles, including motorcycles which were impounded carrying immature fish are being kept at the Kasijagirwa base in Masaka.

Ewaga in an interview with the *New Vision* asked local politicians to support the operation to revive the fish industry.

"I get calls from politicians criticising the operation. Instead, they should appreciate that illegal fishing is dangerous," he said.

New Vision learnt that Masaka district chairperson, Jude Mbabali and the UPDF Marine authorities on Tuesday held a closed-door meeting to discuss the military operations.

In the past, Mbabali had contested the eviction of communities from the landing sites.

However, Ewaga insists that the said landing sites, which are not gazetted, were destroyed because they served as illegal fishing hideouts. The affected landing sites are in Masaka and Kalangala.

Church in Jinja town on Sunday. He added that the number of youth has declined in the Church of Uganda because the preachers have not embraced the modern way of preaching, which requires mixing the Word of God with music.

Hoima women trained in value addition

A total of 40 women in Hoima district have completed a one-week course in making hand-made necklaces, doormats, carpets, dyed clothes and baskets, using locally available materials. The training, which ended on Saturday, was conducted by the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) in partnership with Bunyoro Women Development Association at Millennium Hotel in Bujumbura, a suburb of Hoima municipality. The women, most of them widows, the elderly and girls received startup kits worth sh9m to make items for sale and improve their incomes. Sharipha Nabulya, from Small and Medium Enterprises department at UIA, said they are equipping the woman with lifetime skills to start their own projects to cause family change. Speaking on the behalf of the trainees, Beatrice Baguma said they were also given skills in business.