

Herdsmen ordered out of Otuke

OTUKE

By Patrick Okino
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At least 3,000 herdsmen from Kotido, who crossed into Otuke district in search of pasture and water for their animals, have been ordered to vacate with immediate effect.

The communities accused them of raping women, uprooting cassava and destroying crops. If they

continue grazing cattle and sheep, which are about 10,000, there will be no grass and water by February, local leaders argued.

The group crossed to Ogwete parish in Olilim sub-county with their animals four days ago, after drought severely hit the sub-region.

In a meeting chaired by Otuke LC5 chairman, Bosco Odongo Obote, last week at Anaikopi village, it was resolved that the pastoralists leave and security

deployed to avert their re-entry into the district.

The meeting was attended by Lango members of parliament, Kotido and Otuke district leaders. Kotido LC5 chairman Ambrose Lutuke's attempts to convince the communities to allow herdsmen to continue grazing, hit a snag when most people turned rowdy.

"People should reconsider the decision of going back. I know there have been many problems caused by the

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Karimojong, but there is room for reconciliation.

"The situation in Kotido is not good; we came here because of the drought. All the water points have dried up and we thought our neighbours would be of help to us," he pleaded.

"We all belong to this family called Uganda, but nature has not been favourable to everybody," he added.

But Otuke District Woman MP Sylvia Akello, dismissed the request, saying the herdsmen

are causing havoc and that the security of residents is at risk.

She said there is information that the herdsmen keep saying they are following water, which originated from their land and that is why they crossed into Otuke without notifying the district leaders.

Dokolo MP Felix Okot Ogong urged the Government to construct dams in Karamoja to stop pastoralists crossing into other districts in search of water for their animals.

