

BY HILLARY TWINAMATSIKO

BUSHENYI. Police in Bushenyi District have released the names of the five miners who died after a gold mine collapsed on Tuesday afternoon in Kayanga Village, Kyamuhunga Sub-county.

The deceased are Saul Namanya, 35, Julius Mujurizi, 45, Sansio Twijukye, 32, Stuart Akanyamba Kokyenga, 16, all residents of Kibazi Parish in Bushenyi District. The other is Anthony Nuwagaba, 20, a resident of Bunyaruguru in Rubirizi District.

The Greater Bushenyi Police spokesperson, SP Apollo Tayebwa, said the miners were operating illegally in a gold mine that had been closed by authorities several years ago.

Bushenyi mine deaths: New details emerge

"Working alongside the Ankole Regional Mineral Protection Police Unit, local residents and other security agencies, retrieved the bodies for postmortem examination before handing them over to the families for burial," he said.

Preliminary findings from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development indicate that the miners were using rudimentary tools and did not possess the legal permits required under the Mining and Minerals Act.

Authorities have since cordoned off the scene and temporarily closed the site to the public as investigations continue.

"We extend our sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and pledge to keep the public updated as new details emerge," SP Tayebwa added.

Relatives of the deceased have appealed for government support following the tragedy.

Mr Robert Mugabe, a resident of Rubirizi District who lost his son in the collapse, said: "My son had spent two months working in this mine before the collapse. When I arrived, I found many people gathered, only to realise my own son was among the dead," he said, calling on the government to assist families left behind.

Mr Gideon Matsiko, who lost his

brother in the incident, said several miners had noticed cracks in the tunnel and fled before it caved in.

"We were digging when we heard cracks from the block. Some of us ran out, but those who stayed were trapped. We tried to rescue them, but they were already dead," he said.

Another miner, Mr Edwin Nimwesiga, said he narrowly survived after spotting signs of danger.

"We saw cracks and moved out. That is how I survived being trapped inside," he said.

The Ankole Mineral Protection Unit Zonal Commander, SSP Tobia Odong, confirmed that the mining site has

been officially closed.

"The Minerals Protection Unit exists to fight illegal mining. From now on, this site is closed. Whoever returns here to carry out illegal activities will be arrested," SSP Odong warned.

He urged miners to form organised groups and seek proper licensing in partnership with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to ensure safe and regulated operations.

"We also issue artisanal mining licences in collaboration with the ministry, which allow mining under the close supervision of the mineral police. Form groups and approach us for guidance on acquiring licences," he said.

Police have called on the public to report any other illegal mining activities in the region to prevent further loss of life.