

SEARCH FOR GOLD

Water scarcity

Children draw water from Lake Kyoga in Namasale Town Council, Amolatar District, recently. Scarcity of drinking water in the area has forced residents to turn to the lake, which leaves them at risk of drowning and acquiring diseases. PHOTO BY BILL OKETCH



Residents target school land as fight for space intensifies

Justification. Leaders attribute land conflicts in the area to increase in population.

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OYAM. In April 2015, 180 people were displaced and three primary schools temporarily closed following clashes between a section of Acholi and Lango tribal groups over 10,000 acres of land in Agago District.

Local leaders said 64 houses and 15 granaries were set ablaze, 105 chickens, 75 goats and 15 head of cattle looted when youth from Acholi-dominated Lukwangole village in Patongo Sub-county allegedly attacked the Langi-dominated Acwiko village in Kotomor Sub-county.

A three-year-old child was also killed in the attack while 15 others sustained serious injuries, according to police.

Around that same year, a Uganda

People's Defence Force (UPDF) veteran, Charles Keny, was brutally killed by parents at Wanglobo Primary School in Otwal Sub-county, Oyam District over the land conflict.

Police said the school head teacher, the chairpersons of LCI, the School Management Committee and the Parents Teachers Association allegedly incited the parents into mob action.

The prime suspects in the murder case reportedly convened a meeting in which they generated only two agendas: prayer and a plan to kill the victim.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what they did to Keny, who founded the school before it was taken over by government. Keny was killed and his body set on fire.

An overriding issue that featured recently when a local non-governmental organisation, The Apac Anti-Corruption Coalition (TAACC), was administering a community score card at Wanglobo Primary School is

THE KEY ISSUE

Uganda has the fastest growing population in the world. Forty or 50 years ago, there was a lot of empty spaces across the country. Today, there isn't much land that isn't occupied by people. The need for land has increased its value - making it a very important resource than it was many years ago. This inevitably leads to conflicts over land, as the growing numbers fight over the same land.

the land conflict.

Much as the victim's family has been compensated, the teachers are not allowed to do any activity in the school.

"Actually the whole school area is cultivated to the extent that when PTA and SMC chairpersons mobilise the parents so that they could construct houses for teachers, they are blocked by the same people who have already been compensated," says Mr Tom Superman Opwonya, TAACC's executive director.

Mr Norman Okello, the Oyam District Education Officer (DEO), says many land grabbers are now targeting school land.

"They cannot go to prisons land because there are guns there. Everybody looks at that soft target which is the school land," Mr Okello says.

According to the outgoing DEO, the ministry of Education recently

briefly

Bishop tips youth

NEBBI: Bishop Emeritus Martin Luluga of Nebbi Catholic Diocese has urged Christians to be self-reliant if they are to develop. Speaking during a visit to Addra Agricultural College in Offaka Sub-county, Arua District, at the weekend, Bishop Luluga said government's projects are not making an impact in the community because residents have failed to be self-reliant. "Youth should learn to be on their own other than relying on government for everything," he said. [Patrick Okaba]

Man drowns in river

KITGUM: Police in Kitgum District are searching for the remains of a man suspected to have drowned in River Pager in Kitgum Municipality at the weekend. Paul Odong, 48, a resident of Amida Sub-county is said to have been drunk when he fell in the river. Aswa Region Police spokesperson Jimmy Patrick Okema said they are yet to recover the body of Odongo. In the last one year, at least four bodies were recovered from same river, which sometimes floods during the rainy season. [James Owich]

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warned that it will not invest in any school that lacks a land title.

"The district and the respective schools in Lango cannot afford the cost of surveying the school land. Even foundation bodies that are claiming ownership of these schools are not ready to make any contribution," Mr Okello says.

The former Abim District Police Commander, Mr James Okabo Okello, acknowledges that land conflict is the biggest security threat in the area.

Since security has improved following the disarmament exercise, people are now settling back into the community.

"So it is a very big crisis," Mr Okabo says. Experts say Uganda's population is set to rise to 106 million by 2100, when it is expected that more people will be fighting over less space.

Current population trends are already altering the peace and security landscape even faster and that could pose far bigger problems.

Uganda has the highest fertility rate among the countries of Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania that recently participated in the Demographic and Health Survey programme.

Between 2002 and 2014, the population increased from 24.2 million to 34.9 million. At this rate of growth, the population of Uganda is projected to increase to 47.4 million in 2025.

When population growth is combined with other pressures, such as climate change and human migration, some parts of the country are likely to experience unprecedented levels of urban density.

"Right now we are 38 million approaching 40 [million people]. If we live or we do business as usual, how are we going to fit that kind of population?"

"As of now we are struggling to feed our people. Just imagine the population up eight times the size of land. And land is actually becoming smaller and smaller per household," he says.

Voices

"They cannot go to prisons land because there are guns there. Everybody looks at that soft target which is the school land,"

NORMAN OKELLO,
OYAM DISTRICT
EDUCATION OFFICER



"Right now we are 38 million approaching 40 [million people]. If we live or we do business as usual, how are we going to fit that kind of population?"

GABRIEL AJEDRA,
STATE MINISTER FOR
FINANCE IN CHARGE OF
GENERAL DUTIES

briefly

Woman raped