

Residents in areas most affected by land related challenges and the water problem believe their plight remains unresolved even as the country gears up for the January general election.

BY DAN WANDERA

A section of the population in the cattle corridor districts of Kyankwanzi and Kiboga, whose livelihoods depend on livestock, remain sceptical about their future amid persistent land disputes and water shortages.

As the country prepares for the January general election, accompanied by promises of improved livelihoods from various politicians, many residents in the most affected areas believe their long-standing challenges remain unresolved.

“Unlike other parts of the country where residents are peacefully settled, we are battling threats of eviction and land grabbing. As livestock farmers, water scarcity also persists in many areas, and several families are uncertain about their future because of the unending evictions,” Mr Bernado Kasigazi, a livestock farmer in Katengeto Village in Kyankwanzi Sub-county, told the *Daily Monitor*.

Water scarcity

He added: “As livestock farmers, our main challenge is water for our animals, but we also need clean water for our families. We trek long distances to access water shared with animals at dams. One of the biggest unresolved problems is the threat of eviction by landlords and suspected land grabbers.”

Some water dams are privately owned, while several public ones were constructed on land leased to individuals, forcing communities to continually negotiate access.

“We count on the government to resolve the water problem in our areas,” said Mr Gabriel Ssendege, a resident of Mpango Village in Kyankwanzi Sub-county.

Residents of Bukwiri Village in Butemba Sub-county also said unresolved land disputes, often resulting in the arrest of bibanja holders over alleged trespass on land they already occupy, re-

Kyankwanzi, Kiboga residents want water, land issue solved



One of the water dams at Mpango Village in Kyankwanzi Sub-county, Kyankwanzi District. PHOTO/DAN WANDERA

main a widespread challenge in Kyankwanzi District.

“We are not second-class citizens to be denied the right to own land by rich and untouchable individuals. Our property has been destroyed by people who want to grab our land. They use security agencies and government offices to intimidate us and arrest innocent residents,” said Mr Alfred Kagenzi, who has a pending land case at the Kiboga Chief Magistrate’s Court.

Land conflicts

However, Dr John Mpuuga, the Kyankwanzi District Chairperson, acknowledged the prevalence of land conflicts but said several interventions are underway to improve safe water access in affected areas.

“We have been lobbying for more water dams to support livestock farmers, where scarcity remains a challenge”.

He added that: “The land disputes are real and widespread across the country. For Kyankwanzi, the government should craft long-term solutions to address these conflicts that threaten people’s livelihoods.”

One of the recent major interventions by President Museveni in Kyankwan-

Challenges.

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persists in many areas, and several families are uncertain about their future because of the unending evictions, – **Mr Bernado Kasigazi, a livestock farmer in Katengeto Village, Kyankwanzi Sub-county.**

zi was the directive to compensate Ms Patricia Linda Nyakairima, widow of the late Gen Aronda Nyakairima, with Shs11b for a five-square-mile piece of land after repeated appeals by affected residents and district leaders.

The disputed land, Block 710, Plot 19 in Gayaza Sub-county, covers several villages including Kyerere North, Kiyuni Central, Kiryajoby West, Kyerere East, Kibanda, Butikikiro, Kyakibenje, Dagaza, Nankandula and Dagaza, and hosts more than 5,000 sitting tenants who were at risk of eviction.

Lands Minister Judith Nabakooba

confirmed that the Aronda family had agreed to compensation to allow residents permanent settlement.

In neighbouring Kiboga District, similar land-related challenges persist. The district, also part of the cattle corridor, faces severe water shortages that significantly impact livestock farmers.

At Lwankonge Village in Ddwaniro Sub-county, a family has petitioned President Museveni over a protracted dispute involving 500 acres of land on Block 541, Plot 14, Kiboga, land on which an estimated 60 households now face eviction.

Village chairperson Mr Ham Kiiza said the conflict has escalated despite several government interventions, including a visit by State Minister for Lands Sam Mayanja.

While Mr Samuel Wasswa claims to have a court ruling in his favour, the family of the late William Luwaga insists that the land belongs to numerous households.

Minister Mayanja recently visited the disputed land and directed a Uganda People’s Defence Force officer occupying part of it to vacate and allow rightful owners to repossess it. Residents claim the officer has refused to comply.

In March, President Museveni ordered the arrest of Mr Ronald Ainebyoo-na over alleged illegal evictions on the same land.

However, locals said the directive to return families to their land has not been honoured.

Kiboga District Chairperson Gerald Nsiro admitted that many residents face land-related injustices. He said Kiboga is no different from other districts grappling with illegal evictions and alleged land grabbing.

Land rights activists cite double titling as a major driver of conflicts in Kyankwanzi and Kiboga.

Lawyer Peter Kimanje Nsibambi said although land laws are clear, eviction of bonafide bibanja holders remains common.

Mr Nabakooba said her ministry has issued new eviction guidelines requiring that evictions only occur with a valid court order authorised by the Resident District Commissioner.

She added that all evictions must be supervised, with all executing personnel identified, and local authorities notified in advance.

Water coverage, population

In Kyankwanzi District, safe water coverage ranges from as low as 10 percent in water-stressed areas to as high as 95 percent, with the district’s overall coverage at 59 percent. Officials said several interventions are underway, including a solar-powered water project serving at least 25,000 people in Nkandwa and Kiryanongo sub-counties.

Kyankwanzi has a population of 272,432 according to 2024 National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) while figures from the Electoral Commission put the total number of registered voters in Kyankwanzi at 91,087.

In Kiboga District, safe water coverage averages 74 percent, though some water-stressed areas report coverage as low as 17 percent. The district has 669 domestic water points serving 133,324 residents. However, due to poor bedrock, 210 water sources have been non-functional for over five years. Bukomero is among the areas facing severe shortages.

Kiboga has a population of 183,255 according to NPHC 2024, while the Electoral Commission figures put the total number of registered voters in Kiboga at 67,012.