

# ROADS, ELECTRICITY TOP VOTERS' DEMANDS IN KIRUHURA, KAZO, BUHWEJU AND IBANDA

GRAPHIC BY BRIAN SSEKAMATTE

## THE CONCERNS

As part of the comprehensive coverage of the campaigns, *New Vision* will be seeking views and voices of voters on issues affecting them and expert solutions. In this edition, **Nelson Kiva, Stephen Nuwagira and Edward Anyoli** focus on Kiruhura, Kazo, Buhweju and Ibanda districts.

Located in southwestern Uganda (Ankole sub-region), the districts of Kiruhura, Kazo, Buhweju and Ibanda have a total population of 889,787 people according to the National Population and Housing Census 2024.

The districts' economy thrives on agriculture, with livestock farming being a significant contributor. They are, among others, famous for Ankole cattle, prized for their majestic horns and high-quality meat.

The scenic landscapes and cultural attractions of the districts such as Kiruhura and Kazo, equally makes them potential tourism spots. As part of Uganda's decentralisation agenda, Kiruhura district was created in 2005 after parliamentary legislation that split the greater Mbarara district. Kiruhura was equally split in 2019 to create Kazo district which is emerging as an agricultural hub.

Its fertile soils support crops like coffee, bananas and vegetables, while its livestock sector is driven by dairy farming and piggyery. Out of 14 sub-counties, one, Akayanja sub-county, has no health centre. Seven of the sub-counties have no seed school. There is no general hospital for the district.

## KEY CHALLENGES

According to Kiruhura LC5 chairperson, Mukago Rutetebya, Kiruhura is the leading milk producing district in the country – 1.2 million litres of milk a day during the rainy season. He said the amount dwindles to 800,000 litres during the dry season. The district has 146 milk coolers and according to the district boss, there is a need for more of them.

The district boss said, currently, the district has three milk factories located in Rusherere, Nyakashashara and along Kaguta Road. He added that the district is functioning with a sh31b budget (2025/2026) and is registering steady progress in terms of service delivery.

"We have upgraded seven health

## Kazo and Kiruhura district profiles

### Kiruhura

**Population: 203,502**

**Distance from Kampala: 253km**

### Economic activities:

Livestock farming, focusing on dairy and cattle farming plus mining and trade in agricultural produce.



### Kazo

**Population: 208,898**

**Distance from Kampala: 286.5km**

### Economic activities:

Livestock farming, especially the rearing of Ankole cattle, and agriculture.

## Expert's view

Crispin Kaheru, a commissioner at the Uganda Human Rights Commission, noted that the key concerns that need to be addressed include rapid population growth, historical land fragmentation and fast-paced urban and industrial expansion factors that he warned could converge into a crisis if subsistence agriculture continues unchecked. He said the Government must make land the nucleus of Uganda's transformation. "Embracing these reforms will turn land into the bedrock of industrial sovereignty, agricultural productivity and social harmony," he said.

centres (HC) II to HCIIIs. However, in the new Kashongi constituency, there is no HCIV and we are appealing to the Government to ensure we get one. We are putting up district headquarters in order to leave the current space for the establishment of a community hospital," Rutetebya said. A number of traditional schools, he added, have been upgraded including Karo High School, Lake Mburo in Kanyarwemi, St Peter Seed Secondary School and Nyakashashara Seed School.

## KEY COFFEE GROWER

The district, he added, is emerging as a key coffee grower, saying that last season the crop fetched over sh32b. "The road network has improved with the sh1b for road maintenance and we have road equipment," he said.

The district has a road network of 1,516km and they have been able to maintain at least 300km on average.

"The roads we need to be tarmacked include Kaswa-Kashongi-Ruhumba road, which is over 50km and the other is Nyakashashara-Kanyanya-Kibuzi-Kikasi-Biharwe road (56km). Being a farming district, we also need a water kit including an excavator, a bulldozer, service van, a water bowser and a low loader," Rutetebya said.

The challenges the voters and the leaders in Kiruhura, Kazo, Buhweju, Ibanda and entire Ankole sub-region want to be addressed, cut across the sectors of health, education,

road network and transport issues, agriculture and food security, water and sanitation, employment, poverty, energy/power, security, land management, business and economic issues, environment, domestic conflicts, leadership gaps, among others.

President Yoweri Museveni, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) candidate in his re-election bid, will campaign in Kazo and Kiruhura today ahead of other rallies in Buhweju and Ibanda on Saturday.

According to the Kazo district speaker, Dan Rwamunoga, government-spearheaded development initiatives are turning the tide against poverty in the households. He added that each of the 51 parishes in the district received sh317m to help needy residents set up enterprises for self-reliance.

## EMYOOGA SACCOS

He added that the money injected into Emyooga SACCOS (savings and credit co-operative societies), Uganda Women Empowerment Programme (UWEP) and Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) has gone a long way in improving the living standards of the beneficiary groups.

"The Government also upgraded four health centres II to health centres III. They are Nkungu, Nshunga, Engaari and Kyengando. Additionally, a maternity ward and medical store were built at Kazo Health Centre IV,"

he said.

He added that seed secondary schools, Nkungu, Burunga and Kyantuumo were also built.

Kazo town council mayor Justus Mugarura said residents were consuming unsafe water, calling on the President to increase funding for the water sector so as to improve access to clean water.

More people need to access irrigation equipment in order to boost crop and pasture growing, added Rwamunoga. Both leaders also expect extension of power to all the corners of the district so as to increase access by households.

They added that the issue of low prices for milk and other agricultural products must be addressed so people can benefit from their efforts and investments in farming ventures.

Mugarura said more support to improve animal health was also needed in the district whose mainstay economic activity is livestock production. The other needs voters and local authorities in Kazo want to be worked on include building health centres III in Kazo and Migina sub-counties that currently do not have these facilities and setting up seed secondary schools in the two sub-counties in the district that lack any, including Migina and Kyampangara.

The Byeshembe cell LC1 chairperson, Charles Gumisiriza Kabambe, wants the leaders to address the issue of lack of drugs in government health centres and access to better services in public health facilities.

## CITIZENS' MANIFESTO

The voters' concerns in Kiruhura, Kazo, Buhweju and Ibanda and entire Ankole sub-region, are also reflected in the *New Vision* Citizens' Manifesto conducted between March and May 2025, where prospective voters highlighted key bottlenecks undermining service delivery in the spheres of healthcare, security, roads

## WHAT VOTERS SAY

### Sulaiman Muhoozi, Ibanda trader

When the President goes through, he should outline strategies on how he will support the business community in the country.

### Fridah Birekeraho, resident of Kagongo division

We want the President to increase money for the Parish Development Model, UWEP, the Youth Livelihood Programme and Emyooga SACCOS.

### Johnson Kanyomozzi, leader in Ibanda

The pressing issue in the area is improving health services so that "ordinary people can get good care".

### Winfred Ainomugisha, resident of Kazo

We want the President to fund skills training programmes for women and youth to ensure residents get sustainable and diversified sources of revenue to improve household income.

### Jamson Bagenda, PWD leader

We want increased funding for vocational schools to equip disadvantaged groups like PWDs with artisanal skills for self-reliance.

infrastructure, water and sanitation, poverty, unemployment, connectivity, education, agricultural services, land management, leadership among others.

For instance, only about 10% of the respondents in Kazo contented with the state of the health services, while in the education sector more than 90% believe something should be done to improve the sector's performance.