

ILLEGAL LAND TITLES SPARK COMMUNITY OUTCRY IN BUNYORO

GRAPHIC BY BRIAN SSEKAMATTE

Kagadi and Kikuube district profiles

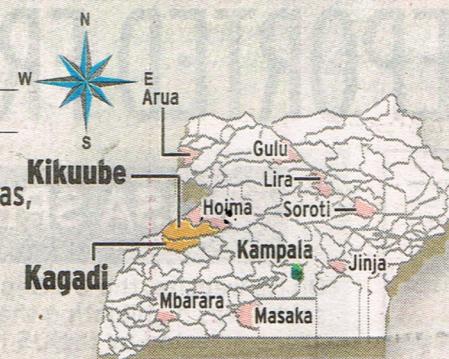
Kagadi

Population: 471,111

Distance from Kampala: 256km

Economic activities:

Agriculture, growing maize, bananas, beans, cassava, rice, coffee, tea, and cocoa plus livestock.



Kikuube

Population: 379,547

Distance from Kampala: 246km

Economic activities:

Agriculture, growing maize, beans, coffee and tobacco plus fishing. Trade, oil and gas mining.

WHAT VOTERS SAY

HENRY TIBENDERANA, FARMER IN KIKUUBE: I request the Government address the issue of markets. Our products are bought cheaply.



SUZAN KEMBONGO, FISHERWOMAN: We want security on Lake Albert strengthened to secure it from Congolese militia who are tormenting fishermen.



GODFREY RUBIHAYO, RESIDENT OF KYANGWALI SUB-COUNTY: We need to be supported with irrigation equipment to boost production all through the year.



PETER ALINDA A RESIDENT OF KAGADI TOWN COUNCIL: We want President Museveni to help us address the issue of having a government school in every sub-county.



DR MWALIMU MUSHESHE, PROPRIETOR AFRICA RURAL UNIVERSITY: We want the President to address our two major pressing issues of inaugurating Kagadi, Kibaale Community TV and elevating Kagadi Hospital to a regional referral hospital.



KIKUUBE, KAGADI VOTERS DECcry INSECURITY ON LAKE ALBERT, LAND CONFLICTS

MANIFESTO

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, Peter Abanabasazi, Andrew Musinguzi and Edward Anyoli** focus on Kikuube and Kagadi districts.

Kikuube and Kagadi were birthed by the 2018 and 2022 parliamentary decisions which split Hoima and Kibaale districts respectively. The Greater Bunyoro districts, with a total population of over 850,000 people according to the 2024 National Population and Housing Census, are pacing to attain parameters of prosperity, challenges notwithstanding.

Given the fact that the districts are located in the Albertine oil graben, they enjoy good connectivity with interconnected oil roads. However, the voters and local leaders say household poverty remains a key challenge.

This is despite the fact that the State spearheads poverty alleviation interventions.

EXPERT'S VIEW

Dr Swaib Kaggwa Nsereko, a lecturer of mass communication at the Islamic University in Uganda, said the President and other presidential candidates must prioritise the issue of migrants who continue to settle in the districts of Kikuube and Kagadi and other Bunyoro districts.

He said the settlement of internally displaced people in those districts has created population pressure, which is now resulting in land conflicts.

Nsereko said the presence of refugees and internal migrants in these areas remains a major concern that

requires urgent attention. Nsereko said people who migrated from different parts of Uganda must be peacefully integrated into the communities where they now live. Similarly, those resettled from foreign areas need clear assurances about their future, whether they are to settle permanently or if they may eventually return to their original homes.

"These are the safety guarantees the Government must provide so that people are not afraid to return to their ancestral homes. These are the issues that presidential candidates must be prepared to address and provide concrete solutions to," Nsereko said.



including the Parish Development Model (PDM), Emoya, Operation Wealth Creation, Youth Livelihood Programme and Uganda Women Empowerment Programme.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the local economy in both districts, with crops such as millet, rice, maize, cassava, potatoes, beans, potatoes, coffee and sugarcanes – grown to serve domestic (consumption) and commercial interests.

The voters and leaders in the administrative units want a number of issues addressed.

Emmanuel Nsimire and Godfrey Rubihayo, farmers from Kyangwali sub-county in Kikuube district, are concerned with the changing weather patterns, with rain no longer enough and reliable, hence affecting farm outputs.

The duo mentioned they were recently supported with WDR-73 rice variety seed to help them realise better yields but they were disappointed by bad weather. It is on this note that they appeal to the Government to support the farmers with irrigation schemes.

"Last season, I was given

rice seeds which I planted in half an acre of land but the crop was hit by drought, and in the field where I expected to harvest two tonnes of rice, I did not even harvest half a tonne," Nsimire said.

Another farmer, Henry Tibenderana, appealed to the Government to work on the issue of markets for agricultural produce.

"Last season, we sold a kilo of beans at sh3,000, but now, a kilogramme is at only sh1,500. A kilo of maize last season was at sh1,500 but currently, it is at sh900. As farmers, we are only making

losses," Tibenderana said.

FISHING ISSUES

Suzan Kembongo, a fisherwoman from Nsonga A landing site in Buhuka parish, Kyangwali sub-county in Kikuube district, said the fishing business on Lake Albert is no longer safe due to persistent attacks from Congolese militia.

"Whenever they invade the waters, they beat us and sometimes kill those who resist to hand over their fishing gear. The invasion has subjected us to losses. When they rob our fishing gear, the militias demand between \$500 [sh1.7m] and \$1,000 [about sh3.4m] before it can be returned. The security service has not helped us. For my case, in 2022, I lost a an outboard engine, nets and a boat – all worth sh15m. But I did not reclaim it because I did not have the amount of money they were asking for," Kembongo said.

Robert Jungiera, the chairperson of the Silverfish Association, said: "The Government is encouraging us to embrace legal fishing methods, but even when the fishermen acquire the recommended fishing gear, Whenever the Congolese militias take our gear, they ask for between sh3m and sh4m to return it. Last year, they stole my boat and its engine; worth sh10m. I gave them sh3m to get it back."

In Kyangwali sub-county, Kikuube district, the LC3

chairperson, Emmanuel Bisemeza, decried the problem of land grabbing in not only his sub-county, but the entire district as well.

He said 14 illegal titles were acquired in his sub-county and that he has since submitted them to Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja who promised to follow up and have them cancelled, but to date, there has been no response.

Olivia Tumusiime, a maize farmer in Mahamba village in Kyangwali sub-county, said the lack of power in the area has left several agriculture-processing machines non-operational.

Francis Kazini, the Buhaguzi County MP, said several areas in the district were surveyed and mapped for connection to the national electricity grid.

ROADS

The Kikuube LC5 chairperson, Peter Banura, said the district is working to ensure that all gaps in service delivery are bridged. On the issue of roads, Banura said the district faces challenges in maintaining its 1,600km road network due to chronic underfunding and a severe shortage of essential equipment.

Banura said the district lacks critical road-maintenance equipment such as compactors, dump trucks and excavators, adding that the works ministry had promised to intervene but was yet to deliver on that.