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Uganda: 'Reformed' Poachers Cry Out for Help

The Monitor (Kampala) (<http://www.monitor.co.ug/>)

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By Ronald Kabanza

A group of self-proclaimed reformed poachers in the districts of Rukungiri, Mitooma and Kanungu have cried out to government demanding income-generating projects.

Members constituting the group are from areas neighbouring Queen Elizabeth National Game Park in Bwambara Sub- County, Rukungiri District, Kiyanga Sub-County, Mitooma District and Kanungu District.

They say "life is becoming harder unlike when they used to poach."

"We didn't want to fight because when the government intervened we stopped so we expected government to have given us the some projects to generate income," one of the poachers, Mr Sipiriano Byensi said.

Mr Moses Kakuru confessed that he started poaching alongside his father at a tender age but said "poaching was very dangerous and their catch was sufficient to sustain his family."

"Life was normal and going on smoothly until after government intervened. The situation totally changed and currently some families fail to raise the regular three meals per day" Kakuru said.

He threatened to resume poaching if government doesn't offer them support.

Bwambara Sub- County Councillor, Mr Gideon Ntungura said that two years back, a group of people from Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) visited the area and convinced poaching communities to stop the vice and promised them income generating activities.

This forced them to hand over their hunting tools which included spears, bows and arrows but since then nothing has been done.

"They handed in their tools after being strongly convinced by UWA people. It hurts that nothing has been done regarding that promise," he said.

The warden in charge of Ishasha sector in Queen Elizabeth national Game Park, Mr Gerrard Abitgyeke advised the reformed poachers to form a group and apply for money under UWA.

"They shouldn't cry because the money is there what they should only do is to form a group and apply for money because every financial year, UWA gives out money to communities neighbouring national game parks and other protected areas," he said.

Poaching is the illegal hunting of wild animals in the national game parks. The practice is common amongst communities residing near national games and other protected areas.

Read the **original article** (<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/-reformed-poachers-cry-out-for-help-3522886>) on **Monitor** (<http://www.monitor.co.ug/>).

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