

By Charles Etukuri

Weeks after the vandalised high-voltage power line in Mukono was restored, National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) is still struggling to restore water supply in several parts of Wakiso, Kampala and Mukono.

The vandalism of the 132-kilovolt Owen Falls-Mukono North-Namanve South lines high-voltage pylons caused a power outage, which resulted in a water shortage that hit Wakiso, Kampala and Mukono.

At least four suspects have been arrested over the vandalism that took place on the night of November 18.

The persistent water shortage has left hundreds of households struggling to access clean water for over a month now.

Wakiso is the most hit, with the shortage noticed in areas of Nabweru division like Katooke, Jinja-Kaloli, Kisumu, Kawanda, Jokolera, Kirinyabigo, Kiti, Kiteezi and Matugga.

In some areas like Kawanda-Kanyogoga, the water supply has been intermittent since last year, with several residents resorting to digging wells, while others are drawing water from unsafe sources.

In most of the affected areas, residents have been seen

Water scarcity persists in Kampala, Wakiso

walking long distances and lining up at the few points with water, usually those with tanks that they fill using water tankers or those with underground wells.

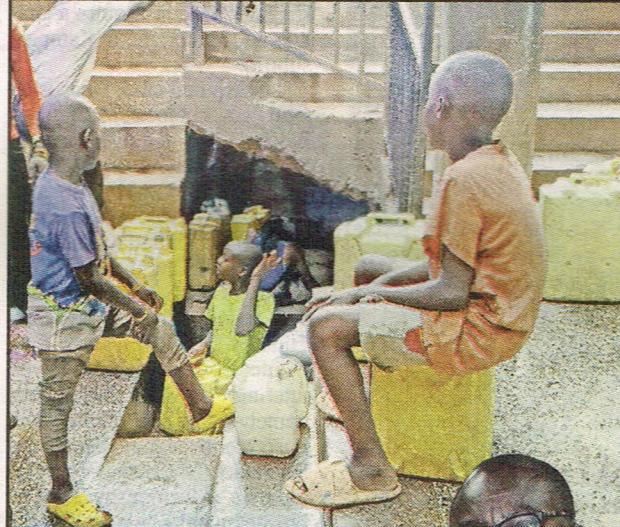
BETWEEN THE LINES

• The National Water and Sewerage Corporation provides services in 282 towns across 96 districts nationwide, according to information on their website.

The shortage came amid the scorching sun, where residents need water to hydrate, as well as for domestic use. Residents have now resorted to buying water.

"With this dry season, a jerrycan of water now costs between sh500 and sh1,000 from those who fill their tanks using water tankers or those who have dug underground wells," said Vincent Sempebwaa, a resident of Kawanda-Kirinyabigo.

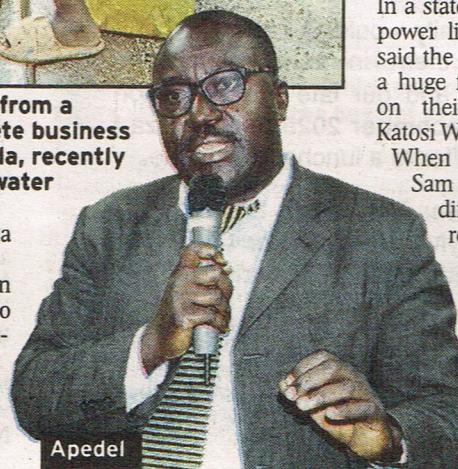
The water shortage comes at a time when NWSC has invested heavily in boosting



Residents fetching water from a protected spring at Nateete business centre in Nateete, Kampala, recently due to insufficient piped water

water supply in Kampala metropolitan area.

It also comes at a time when NWSC has completed the euro 212m (sh810.9b) 160-million-litre Katosi water project, with which the corporation promised to solve the water problem in Kampala and surrounding areas.



Apedel

In September last year, NWSC received a sh373b financial boost to advance the Kampala mega water project, aimed at transforming the city's water infrastructure. The contract to improve the infrastructure was awarded to Sogea-Satom.

Sogea-Satom, a subsidiary of the Vinci Group, brings experience from its previous water project in Uganda, worth \$71m, adding confidence in the success of the current endeavour.

NWSC HAS ITS SAY

In a statement shortly after the power line vandalism, NWSC said the vandalism had caused a huge failure to pump water on their newly constructed Katosi Water Works.

When contacted yesterday, Sam Apedel, the NWSC director of public relations and corporate communications, acknowledged the persistent water shortages, saying they had resorted to rationing to ensure everyone gets water.

He said much as

there is capacity to supply up to 160 million litres of water per day from the Katosi water plant and sufficient transmission and storage capacity exists, there is insufficient water distribution capacity to reach more customers in Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area.

"In 2010, the Government initiated the Kampala Water Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Project to provide a long-term solution to water supply challenges in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area through improved water supply infrastructure," Apedel said.

During the launch of the Katosi water project, NWSC managing director Eng. Silver Mugisha said the project would serve residents of Kira, Kasangati, Kanyanya, Gayaza Road, Kiteezi, Kawanda, Matugga, Kawempe, Nansana, Mutungo, Bweyogerere and other urban centres in Wakiso. However, these areas are experiencing persistent water shortages.

The Katosi plant was designed to produce 240 million litres per day, but currently only generates 160 million litres. Additionally, the Ggaba Water Works, which produces 240 million litres per day, will also see its capacity boosted as part of the improvements.