

Masindi residents say since the start of the political campaigns, several leaders who are still in office have largely stayed away from their workplaces, instead spending most of their time canvassing for votes.

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Masindi Municipality is grappling with a growing garbage crisis, with residents accusing local leaders of abandoning their responsibilities in favour of election campaigns.

Residents say since the start of the political campaigns, several leaders who are still in office have largely stayed away from their workplaces, instead spending most of their time canvassing for votes.

As a result, routine services such as garbage collection have been neglected, leaving large parts of the town littered with waste.

By Wednesday, heaps of uncollected garbage were visible in many areas, especially in the Central Division. Rubbish could be seen dumped along roadsides, in markets, near shops, and within residential areas.

Plastic bottles, polythene bags, food remains, and other waste have reportedly gone uncollected for days.

Some residents say the situation clearly shows that leaders have shifted their

Garbage crisis in Masindi as leaders focus on politics

focus from service delivery to politics.

"Our leaders have forgotten us. They are busy campaigning every day, yet garbage is piling everywhere. They only come back when they want votes. When elections come, service delivery stops. No one supervises garbage trucks, and no one is held accountable. Leaders are busy addressing rallies instead of offices," says Mr Joseph Kato, a resident of Central Division.

Others added that garbage collection has become irregular, with some neighbourhoods ignored for weeks.

Residents further warned that the poor waste management poses a serious health risk.

During rainy days, garbage blocks drainage channels, causing flooding and producing foul smells. Many fear outbreaks of diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and diarrhoea if the situation is not urgently addressed.

In the Central Division, residents say garbage collection remains inconsistent. While some areas receive attention, others are neglected.

Although private garbage collectors operate in the municipality, residents argue that they are poorly supervised and do not cover all neighbourhoods.

At Masindi Central Market, one trader, Mr Micheal Asiimwe, says the garbage piles are affecting their businesses, adding that those who deal in food vending have customers who fear buying food near the rubbish.

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garbage outside stays there for a long time. Flies are everywhere, and customers complain. We fear diseases, but we don't know who will help us," she says.

The Masindi Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Mr Darius Nandinda, says he is deeply concerned about the state of cleanliness in the town and accused leaders of neglecting their duties.

"There is a lot of garbage in Masindi Town, and it is very shameful. The town clerk of the municipality and the division town clerks must ensure the town is cleaned," says Mr Nandinda.

He directed the Masindi Municipal town clerk and the mayor to take immediate action to ensure garbage is collected and the town is restored to a clean state.

He also ordered all division town clerks, including those in Central Divi-

sion, to develop clear and effective plans for garbage control.

"The town clerk of the municipality and the division town clerks must make sure this town is clean because this situation is embarrassing," he added.

Mr Nandinda also criticised politicians who are still holding office but have shifted their attention entirely to campaigns.

"Politicians who are still running offices have abandoned their responsibility of garbage management and are instead focusing on looking for votes. This negligence may lead to serious disease outbreaks," he warns.

Central Division currently spends about Shs16m per month on garbage collection, but officials are proposing an increase to Shs30 million.

The budget covers market cleaning, waste collection from designated points, drainage clearance, and community sensitisation on proper waste disposal. It also caters to paying casual labourers, fuelling garbage trucks, and repairing waste collection equipment.

Masindi Town has expanded rapidly in recent years due to increased business activity, schools and population growth.

This has led to higher volumes of waste, yet resources for garbage management have not increased proportionately.

Mr Nandinda reminded both political leaders and technical staff that garbage management and drainage cleaning

are core responsibilities of their offices.

"One of the main roles of politicians and technical officers is to ensure drainage channels are clean. If this careless handling of garbage continues, Masindi may face a serious health crisis. Leaders must go back to the drawing board and ensure the town and its divisions are clean," he said.

Mr Jackson Mbonereha, the Masindi Municipal secretary for finance, stated that the municipality spends approximately Shs200 million annually on waste management.

"We cannot operate beyond our budget. We are doing our best with the limited funds available," said Mr Mbonereha.

However, a local leader who is still serving and asked for anonymity defended the reduced presence of leaders in their offices, saying it is difficult to separate official duties from politics during the campaign period.

"We cannot sit in the office when our colleagues are out campaigning. We normally divide our time between politics and running offices," the leader said.

He added that some leaders feel less pressure to remain in their offices when programmes are moving according to plan.

"If things are moving the way we budgeted and planned, why should I be there all the time? I also need to campaign because others are campaigning," he said.