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Residents of Kagadi District are now setting a fresh agenda for change after decisively voting out all incumbent parliamentary leaders, the district chairperson, and several sub-county and town council heads in the recently concluded election.

The election outcome has been widely interpreted as a protest against poor service delivery, stalled development projects, and years of unmet community priorities.

Many locals said the ballot was their only tool to punish leaders they accuse of neglecting the district, leaving Kagadi burdened by underdevelopment, weak infrastructure, and struggling public services.

In Buyaga East, incumbent MP Eric Musana, who polled 25,310 votes, was defeated by newcomer Mr Stephen Twesige, who secured 34,637 votes.

In Buyaga West, veteran politician Barnabas Tinkasimiire lost after polling 24,645 votes, while Mr Denis Namara emerged the winner with 42,315 votes.

The Woman MP seat also changed hands after incumbent Jennipher Kyomuhendo Mbabazi, who polled 54,410 votes, was defeated by Ms Naziwa Magret, who garnered 69,233 votes.

At the district level, Mr Gard Tumusiime won the chairperson race

Kagadi locals ask for better social services

with 69,002 votes, defeating incumbent Ndibwami B Yosia, who polled 50,524 votes.

Voters said as new leaders prepare to take office, tangible change must be delivered in the next five years, or the new leaders risk facing the same fate.

Mr Alex Alinaitwe, from Buyaga East, said the focus must be on economic and social development, with priority placed on construction of modern markets, upgrading health facilities, improving access to safe water, extending electricity to rural areas, and establishing schools in underserved sub-counties and parishes.

He added that people want fair taxation and transparency in staff recruitment at the district level.

"All our hopes are in the new regime so that jobs are given to qualified personnel, not to those who bribe," he said.

He said new leaders must follow up on presidential pledges made during campaigns, including compensation and resettlement of families affected by deadly chimpanzee attacks near forested areas.

Chimpanzee attacks

In Buyaga West, residents said one of the most urgent issues awaiting MP-elect Denis Namara is the escalating threat of chimpanzee attacks on people and the apes' destruction of crops in neighbouring forested areas.

John Mugisha, a resident, said the government should fulfil President Mu-

seveni's pledge to compensate victims and gazette affected zones to prevent further attacks.

"These animals destroy our crops, making life unbearable. Many people take loans to grow maize but end up losing everything," he said.

The attacks have claimed lives over the years. On October 29 last year, a five-month-old baby boy, Miracle Ngonzize, was snatched by a chimpanzee while his mother was tending to her garden in Kahyooro B village, Muhorro Town Council, and later died from injuries.

In March 2023, a two-month-old baby girl, Aroho Ahumuza, was killed in similar circumstances.

Mr Rogers Ahaisibwe, who lost a child in the attacks, said the new leaders

must treat the matter as a priority, adding that they should remind the President about the pledge he made to relocate people in areas prone to chimpanzee attacks to safer land.

Local leaders report at least one death annually, alongside frequent injuries in villages such as Kahyooro, Karuswiga, and Nyamiti.

Land wrangles

Ms Jenifer Ahumuza, a resident, also raised concerns about poor road networks, particularly routes connecting Ndaiga to other parts of the district, and weak village-to-village connectivity.

Buyaga West, one of the most congested counties, continues to face land disputes and absentee landlord challenges, which locals said undermines long-term development due to constant eviction threats.

In Buyaga East, residents said upgrading Kagadi General Hospital into a referral facility remains a long-standing priority that the new leaders must push through Parliament. One of the issues is patient congestion and delays due to limited capacity.

Mr Salim Kugonza said the upgrade will also benefit the neighbouring districts of Kibaale, Kakumiro, and Kyenjojo, reducing pressure on Hoima Regional Referral Hospital.

"When a patient is referred to Hoima, he takes hours on transit. Why can't government increase funding for our

facility to get elevated to referral status? That will reduce referral pressure on Hoima," he said.

Buyaga East County hosts Kagadi's central business area, where residents want improved markets, water supply, electricity, and schools.

Salongo Mureju, the Kagadi central market chairman, called for the immediate construction of a modern market, accusing outgoing leaders of turning the project into a political tool.

"Vendors continue operating in poor conditions and making losses. The new leaders must prioritise this project," he said.

Women in Kagadi said they expect Woman MP-elect Naziwa to address persistent challenges affecting women, including poor maternity services, domestic violence, and economic marginalisation.

District officials report between five and 20 domestic violence cases daily, often linked to economic hardship and family neglect.

Women also face limited access to productive resources such as land, while poor healthcare infrastructure and early marriages contribute to cases of obstetric fistula.

Ms Aisha Kusema, a resident, urged leaders to strengthen women's empowerment through savings groups and strict monitoring of government programmes such as UWEP, GROW, and PDM.

VOTER DEMANDS

Voters of Kagadi said the focus has shifted to development, with urgent calls for the construction of modern markets, upgrading health facilities, improving access to safe water, extending electricity to rural areas, and establishing schools in underserved sub-counties and parishes. They also hope that the new regime will ensure that jobs are given to qualified people.