

By Agnes Nantambi

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) under the oil and gas coalition have asked the government to expedite the process of formalising all miners in Uganda. This will allow the government to earn money from small-scale miners, they argue.

According to Siraje Magara Luyima, the energy and extractive industries co-ordinator at Oxfam Uganda, when small-scale miners are informal and not registered, it becomes hard for the government to collect revenue from them.

“When they get registered, get licensed, and are able to pay taxes, then it becomes easy for the government to grow the sector.

“It is important that the government expedites the formalisation and registration of small-scale miners so that they can easily be followed to allow the government to generate revenue through taxes,” he said.

Because of the informal sector, Luyima explained that there are some key minerals, like gold, in Karamoja, where the government is not generating any income because the people mining them are not registered.

At least 90 per cent of Uganda’s mineral sector is composed of artisanal miners, the majority of whom are involved in mining metallic, industrial and building mineral components.

In an effort to enhance transparency and accountability

# CSOS WANT OPERATIONS OF ALL MINERS FORMALISED

PHOTO BY AGNES NANTAMBI



Ngabiirwe, Twesigye and Twebaze during the press conference in Kampala

in Uganda’s extractives sector, the government joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which is a global initiative of more than 50 countries that promotes open and accountable management of natural resources, specifically oil, gas, and minerals.

Luyima was speaking during a press conference organised by the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE).

The press conference, held at Arcadia Suites in Kampala,

was aimed at seeking government’s amplified commitment to the EITI, which requires governments and extractive companies to publish and reconcile data on oil, gas and mining revenues as a mechanism for ensuring transparency, accountability, and subsequently proper management of revenues that accrue from natural resources.

Uganda is scheduled to undergo validation by the EITI International Secretariat next month, to assess the country’s progress in compliance with

and meeting the requirements of the EITI standards.

In the last 10 years, the country has seen growth in mineral exports.

James Opito, the co-ordinator (CSCO) on oil and gas, stated that in 2021, the revenue declared by the investors in oil, gas and mining to the Government totalled sh241b.

“Oil and gas itself earned about sh180b, while mining earned about sh61b. If you look at mining as having only sh61b in a year, it tells you that we are not doing what we are

## STATISTICS

Available statistics indicate that the Gross Domestic Product from mining in Uganda increased to sh395.73b in the first quarter of this year, from sh314b in the fourth quarter of last year.

Currently, the oil and gas sector is the largest contributor to Uganda’s exports, generating over 60% of export earnings, while mining contributes 2.3% to the GDP.

much minerals, especially gold, marble, or tin, are produced from Karamoja alone, since no one weighs them to know the volumes we are producing and the taxes earned,” he said.

Opito underscored the need by URA, the ministries of energy and finance, to set up more weighbridges to know how much production volumes are, in addition to inspecting the mines to ensure that taxes are paid according to production.

He believed that allowing companies to report voluntarily on how much they are producing with no one telling them to file accurately would lead to a continued loss of government revenue.

With most mining being done by non-formal people, Opito said it undermines the extent to which taxes can be collected. “Until we formalise these people doing mining, we shall continue to miss out on government revenue,” he said.

The executive director of Civil Response on Environment and Development, Bashir Twesigye, observed the need to track all those involved in mining for purposes of understanding the sector better and also getting to know who owns the mines and the licences.

Winfred Ngabiirwe from Global Rights Alert called upon government to plug all the loopholes that facilitate revenue leakages in the entire mineral supply chain, in addition to publicly disclosing contracts and licences that provide the terms for the exploitation of oil, gas and minerals.

# Highway robbers targeting produce farmers resurface, four arrested

By Simon Masaba

The Police Flying Squad Unit (FSU) has arrested four men suspected of masterminding the resurgence of highway robbery targeting produce dealers.

The suspects had allegedly seized control of a 1,000-tonne truck loaded with maize flour.

According to the Police spokesperson, Fred Enanga, the suspects include Sula Kyagulanyi, Bonny Weriye, Mustapha Ddamulira. The fourth suspect was not identified.

“Their modus operandi was not for the faint-hearted. They trailed the unsuspecting truck on the Kampala-Jinja highway, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. When the time came, they pounced, overpowering the driver and his companion. With ruthless efficiency, they commanded the truck to an undisclosed location, which was later revealed to be Kyagulanyi’s storage facility in Nakibizzi, Njeru, in Buikwe district,” Enanga said.

He noted that the suspects form part

of the criminal syndicate that has been on the Police’s radar for some time.

“They went underground after multiple security teams busted their cells several months ago,” Enanga said on Monday while addressing journalists during the weekly joint security press conference at the Police headquarters in Naguru, Kampala.

What is shocking is these gangs have resurfaced just under a year after the Police had managed to dismantle similar syndicates, some of which had involved corrupt security personnel.

Enanga said the highway robbers usually target farmers and produce dealers, often under the cover of night, along highways leading to Kampala.

A preliminary Police report indicates that these daring robberies aren’t confined to the Kampala-Jinja highway alone, but have become a pervasive threat, striking fear into the hearts of residents across various areas.

The report reveals similar incidents near Magamaga barracks; Kampala-Mityana-Fort Portal road, especially along Busega-Buloba stretch and near Muhoti barracks, and the Kampala-

## BETWEEN THE LINES

**These gangs have resurfaced just under a year after the Police had managed to dismantle similar syndicates, some of which had involved corrupt security personnel.**

Hoima road near Kakiri barracks.

### WHO ARE THE GANG MEMBERS?

The most unsettling aspect of these crimes, according to the report, is the suspicion that some rogue Police officers allegedly collude with the robbers.

“They possess uncanny knowledge, always striking with pinpoint accuracy and disappearing within minutes. It was as if they operate on insider information, making the task of apprehending them all the more challenging,” reads excerpts of the report.

In June, an inter-district gang of highway robbers, allegedly led by

three senior Police officers, was named by the Police’s Criminal Investigations Directorate. Five suspects were arrested then, including Police officers found with sh30m cash allegedly stolen from a trader.

The arrest was after a few incidents of highway robberies reported at Nyanzi swamp, Nakibanga parish in Mityana district. Like it is the case now, the gang had been trailing businessmen passing through interior roads (in Mityana) at night and robbing them of money and other valuables while threatening to kill them.

Meanwhile, during the press briefing, Enanga also revealed that the Police’s Directorate of Crime Intelligence tabled a report detailing how private security organisation guards are conniving with robbers.

According to Enanga, there have been two incidents where private guards claimed to have eaten food laced with drugs from strangers, only to wake up days later in hospital with robberies registered at places they guard.

“We have routinely told them not to

eat food from strangers in vain. They eat the food in order to conspire with the robbers,” Enanga said.

Yesterday, Enanga said they launched investigations after the territorial Police in Busoga East and Bugweri arrested a female suspect, identified as Halima Namuli, 21, a resident of Nankoma B zone in Bugiri district, over robbery.

It is alleged that she served two private guards of Bugadde SACCO, Idudi branch, with sedated soft drinks on September 14. The two guards — Samuel Okait and Alex Okwaja — fell unconscious and slept off.

After the robbery of the SACCOS, Namuli allegedly escaped to her home village in Mayuge.

She was tracked down and arrested from Luba village, Lwanika sub-county in Mayuge district and transferred to Bugweri Central Police Station. The soda that was allegedly laced with intoxicating substances was submitted to the government analytical laboratory for further forensic analysis