

UPDATE ON FLOOD EFFECT IN KURON

On Tuesday 8th September after a heavy down pour, the night was bitter cold, calm and black as the frogs happily croak. This chirping sound of the night creatures was joined by a soft buzzing sound that was later broken by a peal of roar and thunder, what a horror they out poured on the bosom of the palpitating air.

The people in and around Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron were astonished to the sight in the morning. A large sum of water was squirted out from between rocks on the hill, cascaded and changed in many direction before arriving the compound. The water roared and thundered through the compound exposing rocks and tree roots as it surged and plunged in to river Kuron.

Outside the compound was a brutal and terrifying scene, there stood a great flood because river Kuron had burst (Fig 1 and 2). The two bridges were badly affected. Nothing was left of the foot bridge apart from the winches hanging above its wreckage (Fig 3). The motor bridge which links the two states of Eastern Equatoria and the greater Jongolei was swept off all its timbers as well as some of its metals. Some of these missing parts might have been either buried by the sand or taken to unknown destination (Fig 4). This flood is believed to have been not as a result of heavy rains within Kuron only, but water overflowing from dams and rivers elsewhere especially the side of Ethiopia where the source of Kuron River is believed to have been situated. This flood was the first of its kind in and around Kuron. However this is not the only disaster that happened in the world this year, there is also the COVID-19 pandemic and invasion of desert locusts.



Figure 1: Outside the main compound



Figure 2: At the school pay ground



Figure 3: The foot bridge during the flood and being assessed after the flood

To save the motor bridge, the staff and some of the community members tirelessly volunteered to remove off branches, recovered and returned some of the timbers as well as broken metals without bolts in order to help people cross on foot to the health center, the Airstrip and the proposed St. Thomas Secondary School which is 8km from Kuron base (Fig 5 and 6). The river also eroded off some of the soil at the foot of the motor bridge that has resulted to a lot of anxiety among the community members (fig 7).



Figure 4: Damage caused by the flood on the motor bridge and volunteers cleaning the debris



Figure 5: Recovering metals and timbers from the water on to the bridge.



Figure 6: Returning and replacing the broken pieces of timbers on the bridge



Figure 7: Severe erosion caused by the flood at the foot of the motor bridge

The effect of the flood at the Peace Academy was devastating. The demonstration gardens were badly affected. The young teak trees and the banana plantation were damaged (Fig 10 and 11). The vegetable gardens of water melons, collards, okra and spinach were buried under the sand (Fig 9). The irrigation water tanks were all swept off, the solar pump was destroyed as well. The fence of the demonstration garden covering an area of 1000m was also seriously damaged.

The houses were all submerged at window level resulting to the destruction of beddings (Fig 8). The staffs who live there survived by having climbed and clung on the windows of the multipurpose Hall for twelve hours. The damage caused by this flood was a development which took Holy Trinity Peace Village some years.



Figure 8: The whole compound was flooded and in all the houses where deposition of sand.



Figure 9: The vegetable gardens buried by sand



Figure 10: The young teak trees



Figure 11: Effect of the flood in the banana plantation and the newly planted bananas

In regards to the community, some crops (sorghum and vegetables), livestock and shelter were reportedly destroyed by the flood forcing those severely affected to relocate to the kraals (Fig 12). There is also increased cases of diseases (severe cough, pneumonia and malaria) and snake bites from the wet conditions. The effects of this flood is predicted to cause severe famine in the next few months and next year.



Figure 12: community gardens destroyed by the floods

It is noted that some of the following have contributed to the impact of this flood especially on the fields.

- Positioning of farm lands: Many farmers are cultivating within the river banks in order to utilize the moisture during the long dry season. This has weakened the banks of the river allowing the water to easily overflow.
- Some water conservation practices like redirecting the river water to the gardens has caused high crop damage level.
- Lack of water drainage practices by the farmers has also increased the impact of the floods.

Suggestions.

- There is an urgent need for Holy Trinity Peace Village to contact Humanitarian Organizations to support severely affected flood victims especially women headed households.
- Holy Trinity Peace Village should device ways with the communities on how to best cope up with scarce food in the coming months as they continue to plant new crops.
- There is need to introduce and train farmers on practices of climate smart agriculture (flexibility of switching from soil water conservation practices during dry season to water drainage practices during excess soil moisture) in order to reduce adverse effect of climate change

The Holy Trinity Peace Village management will continue to recover from the floods by accessing the damages and trying as much as possible to fix some they can.

According to the founder Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban, Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron is an Organization Founded on Faith, Love and hope, it is optimistic, will never be discouraged by any cause and never give up. The struggle continues.

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