

The Mayor of Kayonza District, John Bosco Nyemazi, has been dismissed from his duties, alongside two senior district leaders, following concerns over their response to worsening hunger in drought-hit areas of the Eastern Province.

The Vice Mayor in charge of Economic Development, Hope Munganyinka, and the Vice Mayor for Social Affairs, Jean Damascène Harelimana, were removed from office on Sunday, according to officials in the province.

Doreen Basiime Kalimba, Chairperson of the Kayonza District Council, confirmed the decision, saying all three were relieved of their responsibilities “with immediate effect” due to failures in service delivery.

“Their dismissal comes after they failed to provide an adequate response to the recent hunger challenges affecting residents in sectors severely impacted by drought,” she said.

Several residents who spoke to Rwanda Dispatch said the crisis was worsened by what they viewed as a lack of responsiveness from district authorities. “They forget that they are supposed to serve the people,” one resident said.

Performance records from 2021 to 2024 show Kayonza District was already struggling to meet national Imihigo (performance contract) targets, particularly in agriculture. Key issues included:

The authorities were said to be reluctant, when it comes to project implementation, for instance the Irrigation schemes such as Ndego and Kanyegenyege were delayed, partly due to lengthy procurement procedures.

In addition, below-target farmer satisfaction: Satisfaction levels rose to 73.5 per cent in 2020/21 but still fell short of the 80 per cent national target.

There were also gaps in citizen participation: Civil society groups were increasingly involved in planning discussions, but their engagement in evaluating agricultural projects remained limited.

Nyemazi became mayor after being elected by the district council, replacing Jean Claude Mulezi. His tenure has now come to an abrupt end as Kayonza faces renewed scrutiny over governance and the delivery of essential services amid climate-related pressures.