

The arrival of Jopadhola, Iteso in present day Tororo District

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The recent increase in demand by the Iteso from Tororo County to break away from Tororo District has left the Iteso and Jopadhola of West Budama struggling over who between them owns Tororo Municipality.

History, however, suggests that one of the tribes migrated to the area before the other and the latecomers were welcomed as squatters.

Genesis

West Budama was one of the six counties that formed Bukedi District. At the time of arrival of the first Jopadhola immigrants, the area was heavily forested and uninhabited.

The new immigrants being cattle keepers preferred the low lands other than the raised areas.

They moved to the areas bordering River Mpologoma. What became known as Padhola territory was initially divided into three ecological zones.

The first was the western area which was the most fertile with thick forests. It was in present day Katandi and Senda in Kirewa Sub-county which was known as Lul, meaning forest.

In his 1958 paper Anuak Village Headmen published in the 29th edition of International African Institute Memorandum, Godfrey Lienhardt says: "The second ecological zone, which lies in the south is called by the Padhola Mawele." This area had less water and parts of it had tsetse flies, making it not ideal for cattle keepers.

The third zone was the eastern part known as Yo Woko, meaning in the direction of outside. It was the area last settled by the Jopadhola. The areas known as Yo Woko and East Budama, now Tororo County, formed a no man's land between the Jopadhola settlements.

According to History of Southern Luo Volume I, Bethwell A. Ogot writes: "Following the Sewe (Masai) withdrew back into modern Kenya about 10 to 11 generations ago, this area which is the highest and coolest part of the Padhola remained unoccupied until about four to five generations ago when the advance wave of the Iteso moved into it.