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Buganda has duty to fight sickle cell

On November 24, Buganda Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga handed over sickle cell testing kits to the Ministry of Health at Uganda National Health Laboratory Services headquarters in Butabika. The testing kit was bought from part of the proceeds of the Kabaka's Birthday Run that took place early this year.

There have been arguments about what the money would have been used for, with some people saying it should have been used to build a sickle cell treatment centre or buy drugs for people living with sickle cell. But priority has been given to screening those who do not know their sickle cell status. The aim is to reduce the number of babies born with sickle cell disease. I want to address the concern of those who believe that the kit should be only used in Buganda since the Run was in Buganda. I disagree with them given that it was not only people in Buganda that participated in the Run. Besides, Buganda has people from other parts of the country and if sickle cell is not prevented from wherever they are, we may be late forever.

Buganda ranks third with highest number of sickle cell disease and trait cases after eastern, with northern regions, according to Uganda Sickle Cell Survey (US3) 2015. Most importantly, the historical contribution of Buganda to sickle cell disease and trait prevalence in other regions puts it in a position where it has to shoulder the burden of eliminating the disease in the country and beyond.

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