

Full plate for Wakiso leaders

Leaders took office last week, pledging to address long-standing challenges such as staff shortfalls that critics say were worsened by wrangles within the outgoing administration.

BY NOELINE NABUKENYA

The newly sworn-in leadership of Wakiso District faces an uphill task of restoring service delivery in Uganda's most populous district amid a staffing crisis, rising unemployment, political divisions, and growing pressure on social services.

The leaders took office last week, pledging to address long-standing challenges that critics say were worsened by wrangles within the outgoing administration.

For the last eight months, the district, with a population of more than 3.4 million according to the 2024 Census report, has operated without a District Service Commission (DSC) after the previous committee's term expired in September last year.

Attempts to constitute a new DSC reportedly stalled due to disagreements between former district chairperson Matia Lwanga Bwanika and former council speaker Nasif Najja.

District leaders said the impasse affected recruitment and confirmation of civil servants, leaving several offices understaffed.

"We are ending the term when there



Mr Ian Kyeyune takes oath as Wakiso District chairperson on May 18.
PHOTO/ NOELINE NABUKENYA

are big rifts between the duo. Many civil servants have been working in acting capacities, and several positions remain vacant," Mr Juma Mwamula, the district workers' councillor, said.

The staffing gaps have hit the education sector hardest, especially in sub-counties such as Namayumba, Mende, and Masulita, where some government schools reportedly operate with less than five teachers.

The district has also been operating without substantive heads in key departments.

Following the retirement of District Education Officer Fredrick Kinyingi Kinobe last October, Ms Prim Ritah Nanyanzi has been serving in an acting capacity.

Similarly, the position of district health officer (DHO) fell vacant after

the retirement of Dr Emmanuel Mukisa, leaving Dr Mathias Lugolooobi in charge on an interim basis.

The incoming leadership also has to find solutions to growing unemployment among youth and women, especially after the enforcement of trade order regulations that pushed roadside vendors out of temporary structures.

The crackdown left several youth jobless, raising fears of increasing crime in some parts of the district.

Several worship centres in Wakiso have recently reported break-ins, including churches and mosques.

In one of the latest incidents, suspected thieves were arrested in Kavumba with items allegedly stolen from Kavumba SDA Church, including a mixer and amplifier.

The new district chairperson, Mr Ian Kyeyune, said his administration will focus on reconciliation, lobbying, advocacy, and socio-economic transformation over the next five years.

3.4m
POPULATION
OF WAKISO

RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT

Ms Zainabu Bukirwa, a business woman in Nansana, said leaders should ask government to find a solution to unreliable power supply.

She said criminals take advantage of power outages to break into shops and residential houses and steal people's belongings and merchandise.

"I have a salon and most of the hairstyles I do require power, which is always off. We make a lot of losses and yet we have to pay rent, taxes, and take care of our families," she said.

Ms Bukirwa also complained

about taxes imposed on small business owners, saying they are too high. "They don't mind how much capital is in your business. Let them reduce the taxes and also charge basing on the size of the business," she said.

Mr Robert Kafumbe, a boda boda rider in Wakiso, decried the poor state of roads. He said they use a lot of fuel on bumpy roads and end up making losses.

"Most of the roads are still in a poor condition. We have a challenge of Nakawuka road that has taken long to be constructed. Works are very slow and yet we have clients who stay that side," Mr Kafumbe said.