

BY STEPHEN WANDERA
wouma@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. Nurses and midwives have given the government a one-week ultimatum to increase their salaries and improve their working condition before they vote for industrial action.

The Uganda Nurses and Midwives Union (UNWU) in their demand letter to Public Service ministry dated November 27, want their members' salary and allowances raised four times.

"Following a consultative meeting with nurses and midwives on the 23 November 2017, members resolved that government increase their salary and allowances by 400 percent effective with lowest cadre in nursing earning Shs2.5 million," reads part of the letter signed by the union's General Secretary, Mr Paul Henry Bukehya.

The letter was addressed to the Ministry of Public Service, Health ministry permanent secretary, and copied to the Prime Minister, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Permanent

Nurses, midwives threaten to strike

Secretary Ministry of Health and Commissioner Nursing.

DEMANDS

The nurses and midwives are demanding a minimum salary of Shs2.5 million, and a total of Shs900,000 in allowances for housing, risk, medical, responsibility, transport, transfer, leave, funeral and overtime, with each item pegged at Shs100,000.

The looming nurses and midwives strike follows one by the doctors, which industrial action was suspended last week after government promised to fix some of demands raised by the Uganda Medical Association. The nurses and midwives did

not participate in the doctors' strike, arguing it was illegal. Before the doctors called off their strike, President Museveni is reported to have directed the ministries of Public Service and that of Finance to ensure the pay for doctors is competitive, with a medical officer getting Shs5 million salary as opposed to the current Shs1.3 million.

The meeting

"Government must stop deceiving its workers, it met an association of doctors and promised a pay rise, but they do not have the mandate to represent medical workers," said Mr Wilson Usher Owere, the chairperson of National Organisation of Trade Union (NOTU).

He was meeting with UNMU members at Mulago Hospital in

Kampala yesterday.

"This is now the fruit of government's divide and rule. We no longer want to hear of their long-time song of we're still making roads. It is high time workers are paid well. We do not care where the money is coming from. I call upon you to be strong," he said.

Ms Annet Birungi, the National Treasure, UNMU, said it was unfortunate that nurses and midwives who spend longer time with patients are paid peanuts.

"Just make a survey at Mulago Hospital, a doctor comes, spends two hours and is out to do his private work in other hospitals and clinics. It is us and medical doctors on internship who are always in wards treating patients being higher risk of contracting diseases," she said.

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