

Museveni rebukes doctors over strike

Warning. President cautions doctors against disrupting public service.

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President Museveni has warned doctors against striking, saying they must be careful because the government cannot continue to be held at ransom anymore by their actions.

Mr Museveni, who was speaking on Friday during end of year national thanksgiving prayers at State House, Entebbe, warned: "Doctors should be very careful. I will not tolerate any strikes from the doctors. Doctors should not be in habit of disrupting public services. Those habits of wanting to divert public funds into consumption must stop."

Doctors working in the government hospitals went on strike for three weeks, protesting poor pay, poor working condition and lack of facilities in government health facilities.

They demanded an improvement in their working conditions and provision of better medicines and other medical supplies to the health facilities.

But the move received angry response from the government that threatened to sack the striking doctors and recruit new ones. The government also moved to recruit Cuban doctors to replace the Ugandan doctors, a move it later downplayed as only aimed at recruiting specialists who could not be found in the country. The striking doctors only called off the

strike after the government agreed to meet some of their demands.

However, the President again seem to reignite the war on Friday, saying the government cannot be forced to divert public resources into consumption. Mr Museveni said government took a deliberate decision in 2006 to reorganise the budget to refocus on critical issues such as electricity, roads and a host of other infrastructures. He said while many have been achieved, there is still the issue of the railway system, which the government is working on. He said the national backbone infrastructure has been laid and the rest will follow.

“Preachers should help because many of the churches are in the villages where the people are poor. The Christians and the Muslims must take the lead in chasing poverty from Africa,”
PRESIDENT MUSEVENI

Mr Museveni also took a swipe at the high levels of poverty among the citizens, which he urged the religious leaders to work on to eradicate.

“You cannot have a Christian nation, nation of Muslims with poverty. That’s why I want to challenge you because it’s said in another portion of the Bible that we cannot escape by

just praying because we are in trouble. How are you establishing dominions over other creatures when you are poor? 68 per cent of homesteads who are abstaining from money should be encouraged to work harder,” the President charged.

He said the country is on a steady recovery process. The President said Uganda, which used to be a net importer of milk, is now producing 2.5 billion litres annually and hoped that the figures would go up so that more money can be generated.

He called upon both political and religious leaders to do more to help the people fight poverty.



Cordial. President Museveni speaks to the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, Archbishop Augustine Michael Brume during the national thanks giving at State House, Entebbe on Friday. PHOTO BY PPU