

Doctors threaten to strike beginning October 9

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KAMPALA. Doctors under their umbrella Uganda Medical Association (UMA) have given government up to October 9 to address their grievances or witness industrial action that will shut down all public hospitals and health centres.

The doctors cited a myriad of issues, including corruption in government, poor pay, bad working conditions, inadequate compensation, lack of medicines and supplies, among other grievances.

More than 500 junior doctors commonly referred to as “interns” have also vowed to down their tools tomorrow unless the Ministry of Health pays their allowance arrears of three months.

Speaking at the “First Health Sector Barometer” in Kampala yesterday, the newly elected UMA president, Dr

Ekwaro A. Obuku, said government had failed to address their demands they presented to Parliament last year in a document titled: “Mungherera Petition on duty facilitating allowances.”

“The issue of the Mungherera petition has not been concluded and we have not heard from the Ministry of Public Service, which was directed by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mr Jacob Oulanyah, to address this matter within one week. It’s now three months and doctors throughout Uganda have said enough is enough. They have promised that if government does not address this matter by Independence Day, they intend to lay down their tools,” Dr Obuku stated.

He said payment of Shs4b allowances to intern doctors and doctors on further training has not been made since the President announced the money last year.

President Museveni last year re-

DOCTORS' CURRENT PAY

Designation	Amount (Shs)
Intern doctor	750,000
Medical officer	1.1m
Senior medical officer	1.3m
Snr med officer (special grade)	2.2m-2.6m
Consultant	3.2m-3.5m
Senior consultant	3.7m-4.2m

jected the demand by doctors for salary increment but instead promised them land to house their Savings and Credit Cooperatives Organisation (Sacco) projects and a contribution of Shs5b in this financial year.

However, Dr Obuku said only Shs1b has been credited to the UMA Sacco account.

The doctors also demand a review of the code of conduct for health workers in Uganda and Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council to provide guidance on what health

not cause a rise in temperature related complications.

workers should do when there are no drugs and related supplies in government hospitals.

In a text message to *Daily Monitor* yesterday, Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, the Minister of Health, said she had not seen the doctors’ resolutions on the intended industrial action.

“I saw their resolutions on a WhatsApp message forwarded to me by a concerned citizen, but they have not raised their issues with me,” Dr Aceng stated.

Describing their working conditions as “modern day slavery,” Dr Fauz Kavuma, the leader of intern doctors, challenged the minister of State for Health, Ms Sarah Opendi, to wear a clinical coat and work in a government hospital and experience what they go through while treating mothers in labour without being paid for months, without gloves, medicines, lunch, transport or housing.

Last week, Ms Opendi disguised as a patient in a hijab and arrested two health workers at Naguru government hospital who asked her for a bribe before attending to her.