

Kadaga demands audit of two city hospitals

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KAMPALA: The Speaker of Parliament, Ms Rebecca Kadaga, has directed the parliamentary Committee on Health to investigate and submit to her by Tuesday, a report on the state of Kawempe and Kiruddu hospitals.

Ms Kadaga said the report will form the basis to demand an audit into the facilities' contractors, following last week's visit to Kawempe Hospital by MPs who reported it was rundown, only two years after the opening of the hospital.

She was speaking on Friday at a policy makers' meeting to advocate improved funding for maternal health, with a focus on human resources, commodities and equipment for management of hypertension in pregnancy (pre-eclampsia); one of the leading causes of maternal mortality.

Both Kawempe and Kiruddu hospitals were formerly health centre IVs under Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), but were placed under the stewardship of Mulago National Referral Hospital in 2016. Mulago's gynaecology and internal medicine departments were shifted to the satellite hospitals as the referral complex was undergoing renovation.

"My committee went to Kawempe and found that of its 10 theatres, only two are operational and yet it is a new facility. It was built to decongest Mulago and we are hoping that even when Mulago reopens, people from that division [Kawempe] will be able to use that facility without all them having to go to Mulago," Ms Kadaga said.

The blame

Ms Kadaga attributed the high maternal deaths, especially those resulting from on-set of hypertension (pre-eclampsia) to the shoddy work at Kawempe hospital by contractors.

She said delays to attend to emergencies are caused by non-operational theatres, which are still incomplete.

Dr Micheal Bukenya, the Parliament's Health Committee chairperson, shared Ms Kadaga's displeasure with the two hospitals.

"We also found many other issues... non-functional oxygen machines, theatres...so it means there is someone who did not do their work properly," Dr Bukenya said.

KCCA recently threatened to close the two hospitals after their septic tanks were found overflowing and spilling sewage into nearby drainage channels, and causing an unbearable stench to the neighbourhood.

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