PHOTO BY ANDREW MUSINGUZI



Patients and their attendants stranded after medical workers failed to turn up for duty at Kagadi Hospital in Kagadi district

MUSEVENI DEMANDS LIST OF ATTENDANCE FOR DOCTORS

BY VICKY WANDAWA AND EDDIE SSEJJOBA

The President has directed all resident district commissioners (RDCs) to submit a detailed report regarding attendance of doctors at the hospitals and health centres in their respective districts.

The directive, which was prompted by the ongoing strike by doctors countrywide, is contained in a November 8 circular signed by Esther Mbayo, the Minister in Charge of Presidency.

"You will be required, as a matter of utmost urgency, to establish the number of health workers and the frequency of their reporting for duty and those who are not on duty, as well as the exact services offered by those who report on duty," read the circular.

The RDCs are expected to submit detailed reports within a week of receiving the circular.

The deputy resident district commissioner for Entebbe, Rose Kirabira, confirmed receipt of the circular on Friday and immediately made a tour of Entebbe Grade B Hospital.

Kirabira said the medical staff that were meant to be on duty were present.

"I did not find any sign of a strike and there was no complaint from patients," she said. "Usually, the doctors are not on duty all day, they only come and attend to emergencies, such as pregnant mothers who need Caeserean section, after which they go to their private clinics," she said.

President Yoweri Museveni is expected to meet medical workers on November 17 to discuss the way forward concerning their demands.

On Thursday night, health minister Ruth Aceng ordered doctors to resume work immediately and warned that disciplinary action would be taken against those who defied the directive.



President Yoweri Museveni

However, during a press conference at the Kampala Club on Friday, Dr Ekwaro Obuku, the Uganda Medical Association (UMA) president, said following Aceng's directive, they were considering escalating the industrial action and withdrawing emergency health services as well.

Obuku said all they are demanding is to see medical supplies and medicines in health facilities, as well as enhancement of their salaries.

The sit-down strike was declared by UMA at their annual general assembly at Makerere University College of Health Sciences in Mulago, Kampala.

The doctors are demanding an increment in salaries and duty allowances of health professionals, review of the supply chain and management of medicines, vaccines and medical supplies, as well as disbandment of the State House Medicine and Health Service Delivery Monitoring Unit.

> "The health minister warned of disciplinary action against medics who do not report for work.

As a result, health services at numerous hospitals countrywide have been paralysed since Monday.

"We demand a supplementary budget to address the chronic lack of supplies, vaccines and medicines in hospitals, immediately halt the war on doctors by restructuring or disbandment of the health monitoring unit and strengthen the existing professional councils established by law and attend to the doctors' working conditions (allowances and salaries)," Obuku said.

The doctors demanded duty facilitating allowances of sh100b, salaries and emoluments (vehicles, housing, domestic workers) to be reviewed by the respective committee.

They also demanded that intern doctors and senior house officers (doctors pursuing master's degrees) be regularised in the public service structure – complete with meals at their workplace, accommodation and salary.

As a result of the strike, private health facilities countrywide are overwhelmed by a huge number of patients.



Ekwaro Obuku

For example, in Iganga municipality, Dr Juma Isabirye, the proprietor of Fast Care Medical Centre on Kaliro Road, said they used to register less than 20 patients per day, but they are overwhelmed with the turnout. He said the majority of other patients are referred to other private clinics due to the influx.

In Masaka, doctors have are reportedly hired agents, support staff and nurses to refer patients to their private clinics.

Sources from Masaka Regional Referral Hospital told *Sunday Vision* that the medical doctors running private clinics have benefited more from the strike.

"We get commission from each patient we refer to the doctors in their private clinics," the sources said on condition of anonymity.

Only doctors attached to the maternity wing and interns have been available in public health facilities.

Additional reporting by Dismus Buregyeya

UNRA REINSTAT STAFF SUSPEND OVER 138 TITLE

BY VISION REPORTER

The board of Uganda National R Authority (UNRA) could be thro row with the Inspectorate of Go (IGG) over the reinstatement of head of policy William Tumwin

Tumwine, who was suspend July and August, was in Septe with 138 land titles, reportedl in his name, which sources s been ill-gotten wealth.

Earlier, Tumwine had been signed a memorandum of u (MOU) purportedly betwee Godfrey Kibeherere for con

Sunday Vision has reliably the IGG has asked for the to the reinstatement of Tu was done under unclear c

"Yes. The IGG called fo view of establishing the c reinstatement," a source

When *Sunday Vision* c Munira, the IGG's spok Tumwine's case, she re time to verify the infor

The source further t the IGG is opposed to office, a decision whi board two weeks ago

In September, UNR officers, obtained an warrant from the Ar to investigate Tumw enrichment as a pu

The order was gr Magistrate Agnes investigators carri to the recovery of registered in Tur

A source from chairman decide return him to of

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