

Yumbe district leaders decry lack of public mortuary, cemetery

YUMBE

By Robert Ariaka

Yumbe district has no public mortuary and when bodies are retrieved from accident scenes they are immediately handed over to the relatives for burial.

Dr Alfred Yayi, the district health officer, said all Health Centre IVs are supposed to have mortuaries, but due to financial challenges, Midigo and Yumbe Health Centre IVs have none.

He said doctors are forced to carry out post-mortem examinations in the homes where the bodies are going to be buried. He also said this affects the preserving of bodies before they can be identified by relatives.

Yayi said the challenge emerged when construction of Yumbe Hospital started. The site was handed over to Sadeem Al-Kuwait Construction Company in January and construction is to cost sh78b.

"The only existing mortuary which was at Yumbe Hospital is out of use because the hospital is under construction," he said.



Yasin Taban during the interview. Photo by Robert Ariaka

No cemetery

Yayi also said the district lacks a public cemetery and this makes it difficult to bury dead bodies whose relatives cannot be identified.

He said the town council was

advised to get some land within the town where they could bury such bodies temporarily so that if relatives showed up later, the bodies could be exhumed and handed over.

Eng. Sam Mawanda, an official

"Yumbe Hospital was constructed in 1968 and had become dilapidated," Taban

from the health ministry, said the construction of Yumbe Hospital was expected to be completed in a period of two years.

Complicating Police work

In an interview with *New Vision*, Yasin Taban, the LC5 chairperson of Yumbe, said the lack of a mortuary had made work difficult for the Police whenever they collect bodies.

He said Police are sometimes forced to hand over bodies to the relatives without doing post-mortems.

Taban said during planning and

budgeting there must be some resources allocated for the mortuary. He called on the aid organisations to support the district, saying the integrated financial management system which the Government now uses for accountability does not allow districts to reallocate already approved budget to handle emergency projects.

Taban also said Yumbe Hospital was constructed in 1968 and had become dilapidated. He said it had no lagoon and drainage systems.

New structure

Taban, however, said the new structure will come with a lagoon, drainage system, three delivery suites, neonatal icing for babies, five specialised doctors with five new doctors' houses, two apartment blocks for 36 staff and two blocks to accommodate interns. The hospital would also have an ambulance, two staff vans for outreach programmes and new equipment for the various departments.

He said patients, staff and medical equipment were relocated to other health centres in the district.