

# Five children die as blood shortage hits Moroto hospital

**Crisis.** Mr Mark Musoka Aol, the Moroto Regional Referral Hospital management committee chairperson, said they are working hard to end the crisis.

BY STEVEN ARIONG  
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

**MOROTO.** At least five children have died in the last one week in Moroto District following the shortage of blood at Moroto Regional Referral Hospital.

This comes barely a week after eight other people died in Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital over blood shortage.

Mr Mark Musoka Aol, the Moroto Regional Referral Hospital management committee chairperson, confirmed the shortage of blood at the health facility, which he said led to the death of the five children.

He, however, quickly said they are working hard to end the crisis.

"I'm organising with the MPs of Moroto and Karamoja sub-region to meet the Minister of Health and the permanent secretary to see how to establish a regional blood bank for Karamoja sub-region," Mr Musoka said.

He said the hospital is plagued with many challenges, including poor funding, poor pay and poor working conditions, which he warned could continue affecting service delivery at the facility.

A nurse at the hospital who declined to be named for fear of being victimised, said the facility is also grappling with low staffing since majority of senior staff left the hospital to because of poor working conditions.

Relatives of the deceased per-



**Stranded.** Some of the patients wait for blood at Moroto Regional Referral Hospital recently. PHOTO BY STEVEN ARIONG

sons who talked to *Saturday Monitor* recently castigated the hospital management for not having an

ambulance to rush patients to other referral hospitals in case of emergency.

This newspaper has also learnt that patients with complicated conditions are compelled to pay high charges to private vehicles to shuttle them to Mbale and Mulago referral hospitals because the hospital's ambulance broke down.

"You go to the so-called Moroto Regional Referral Hospital but many things are not in the place. We have since learnt that if you want your patient to die, take them to this hospital," said Mr Samule Lokol, a father of the child who died at the facility over alleged blood shortage.

## Other challenges

A nurse at the hospital who declined to be named for fear of being victimised, said the facility is also grappling with low staffing since majority of senior staff left the hospital because of poor working conditions.

Mr Lokol described Moroto Regional Hospital as 'rotten', arguing that it should be demoted from a referral to a health centre III.

Ms Grace Nachap, one of the accident victims who was found at the hospital recently, alleged that some health workers at the facility charge money before attending to patients.

Mr Geoffrey Mawa, the officer in charge of Moroto Regional hospital administration, didn't answer our repeated calls, but when contacted, Ms Vivian Sserwanja, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, said she first need to get details from the regional hospital officials before commenting on the issue.