

# Sexual harassment on the rise in Pallisa

PALLISA

By Lawrence Okwakol

The Pallisa district labour officer has said he is receiving regular complaints about sexual harassment.

George Onyait said on average, his desk receives five complaints weekly from teachers, health workers, maids, bar and hotel waitresses, who complain of being sexually harassed, which affects their productivity at work.

"The openness is the a result of the sensitisation our department of community development conducts. However, men fear to open up, yet they are also sexually harassed at the family level," Onyait said.

Dawson Wamire, the district community development officer, said the practice is worse in the private sector, especially hotels, restaurants and schools, where some directors demand sex and promote only those who give in to their sexual demands.

Jane Amoding, a student of Pallisa Senior Secondary School, said bodaboda riders sexually assault her.

Amoding said the riders make proposals to every woman they carry and throw sexual comments at women as they walk past their stages.

"Police detectives should take the trouble to be at the bodaboda stage and they will record the rate of harassment," Amoding said.

Esther Amulen, the secretary for community-based services in Pallisa district, said officers should get sexual satisfaction from their spouses rather than interfering with the work of the women officers and secretaries.

Amulen said a number of interns

...ing the Senior Four slip, but asked for forgiveness, saying he was trying to make ends meet. However, Kagole told him that he had no powers to forgive him."

When probed by Tusubira, who represented himself, as to whether someone can forge academic papers and go through the public service vetting process, Muwonge

recently, Tusubira told him he is being targeted by Kagole, saying there are many people employed in the Judiciary because they speak good English like him, but they do not have academic papers.



Women from Gogonyo sub-county discussing the causes of sexual harassment during a group discussion. Photo by Lawrence Okwakol

from various universities who go to Pallisa for practice have reported many sexual advances by some officers who supervise them to her office, which is against the standing orders of public servants.

"It may not sound good to female workers, but they should also dress decently to avoid provoking males. The dress code should be adhered to, to avoid this mess," Amulen said.

Rebecca Adeke, the officer in charge of the child and family protection unit, said men also disclose being sexually harassed by their wives, but

do not want to report.

"Men see it as a shame to challenge their wives on the issue of sex in court, yet the law protects both," Mathias Turyasingura, the Pallisa district Police commander, added.

Sulaiman Ogarama, a 64-year-old resident of Kaucho ward in Pallisa town council, said it is worse when a man marries a younger woman.

"I am not ashamed to disclose that I am a victim of domestic violence whose main cause is the sexual demands of my spouses," Ogarama said.

## ON THE GROUND

Amulen said a number of interns from various universities who go to Pallisa for practice have reported many sexual advances by some officers.



Stella Rose Atunyo, the programme officer of women protection centre under Actionaid Pallisa branch, said men should open up to their wives and tell them what tempts them into getting involved in extra-marital relationships.

"Men chat with other women freely than their own wives and this results in suspicion," Atunyo said.

Afulansi Kedi of Gogonyo sub-county said overdrinking by men is the main cause of sexual harassment as they do not respect their spouses and demand sex even when children are still awake.

"Drunkards have no time and most of them do not even know the menstruation cycles of their wives though they have been married for over 10 years. When the wife refuses, she is mistaken to have satisfied their sexual desires elsewhere," Kedi said.