

Nakaseke leaders quizzed over poor health, corruption

By Henry Sekanjako and Vivian Agaba

MPs on Parliament's health committee yesterday put to task leaders from Nakaseke district to explain the mismanagement of health facilities and poor health service delivery.

The MPs questioned the leaders about the alleged extortion of money from patients by midwives at Semuto Health Centre IV in Nakaseke district.

"The health facility is all bushy; there is poor waste management, allegations of extortion and sale of mama kits to pregnant mothers," Michael Bukonya, the committee chairperson, said.

Last week, the committee visited Nakaseke for an on-the-spot assessment of the outbreak of the Crimean Congo fever which was reported to Parliament by Nakaseke County South MP Paul Luttamaguzi.

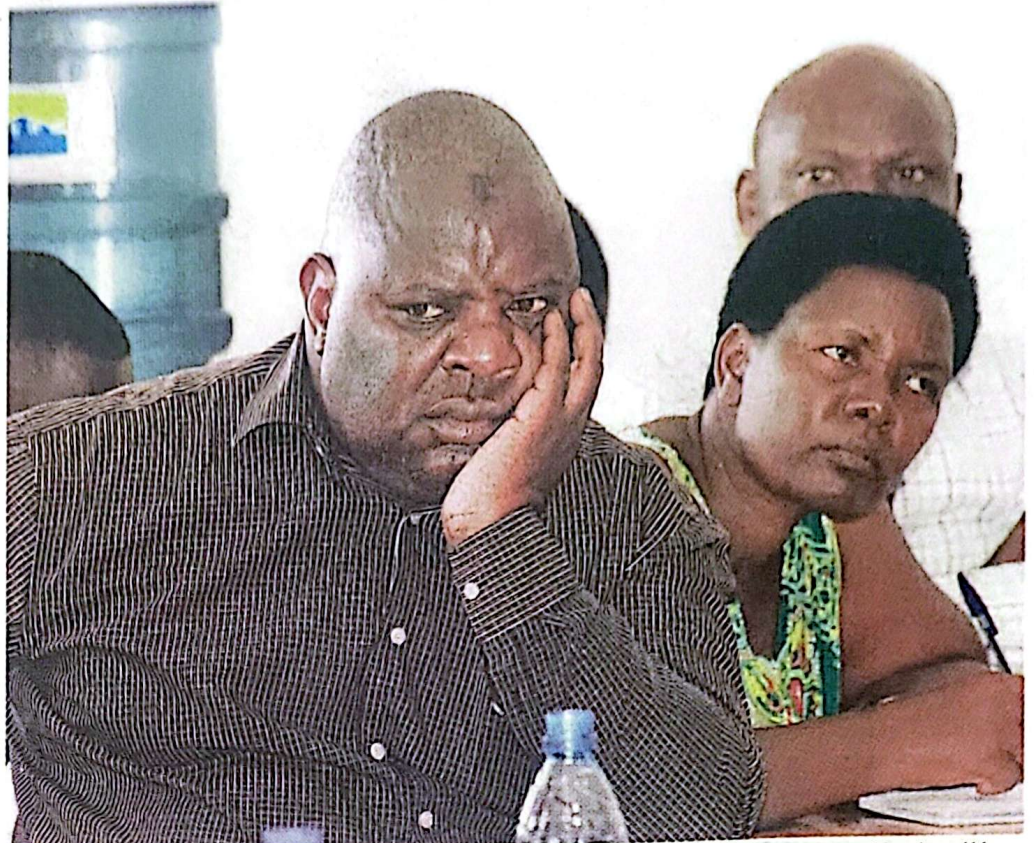
The committee visited a number of health facilities including Semuto Health Centre IV.

They observed that the health centre was surrounded by bush, had poor staff supervision, had no evidence of accountability for primary healthcare funds, poor waste management and hygiene.

"I went to the laboratory and it was so dusty. Even the mortuary was in the bush as if it had never been used," Yoweri Joel Ssebikali, the Ntwetwe County MP, said.

Edward Ssembatya, the Katikamu South MP added; "Some of the medical staff demand for money from patients, before discharging them".

During their interaction with the district officials led by the district chairperson, Ignatius Koomu, MPs demanded that Dr Bernard Kakeeto, who heads Semuto Health Centre



(From left to right) Ssesimba, Tusiime and Kakeeto listen to legislators on the health committee of Parliament, yesterday. Photo by Maria Wamala

IV, resigns. The MPs accused Kakeeto of abuse of public funds and mismanagement of the facility which they said denies the public the right to health.

However, Kakeeto who had appeared before the committee denied the allegations.

He blamed the mess on some

staff members who he said had turned into 'small kings'.

Kakeeto confirmed the allegation made by the MPs that some midwives extort money from patients. He said those found behind the vice had been identified and disciplined.

Koomu, blamed the mess in Nakaseke on the district health facility management committee, which he said is responsible for

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ The MPs on the health committee observed that the health centre was surrounded by bush, poor waste management and hygiene.

monitoring health services.

Edith Mutabazi, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Nakaseke, lauded the parliamentary committee for the investigations, saying it would help them take disciplinary action against errant staff.

Health officer interdicted

The committee also questioned the district authorities over

the interdiction of the district health officer, Badru Ssesimba.

Ssesimba, whose interdiction has since turned into a termination of contract, attributed the mess in the district to mismanagement by the CAO, Edith Mutabazi.

"I appeal to this committee, to investigate the office of the districts' CAO.

"She has mismanaged the health department. Semuto Health Centre IV has collapsed because of non-technical supervision. It is managed by cadres," he said.

However in response, Mutabazi defended Ssesimba's termination of service, saying he had integrity issues, which would affect the district's health unit, especially funding by donors