Fight sexual harassment at workplaces

By Stella Naigino

When you speak of sexual harassment in the workplace, to some people, it sounds like a joke, while others just ignore this fact.

Some reason that it is impossible for a mature person to be harassed without their consent, which has made the vice thrive quietly.

Experts say this is not an issue that should be left hanging.

According to Betty Kampi Namuwaya, the human resource manager at Rehman Motors, sexual harassment is anything with sexual connotations that is unwanted by a workmate, manager or supervisor to another person.

Kampi notes that sexual harassment strongly interferes with the victim's wellbeing and performance at work and creates a threatening work environment.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

Charles Ocici, the director of Enterprises Uganda, says some people sexually harass others, but do not realise that they are actually harassing them.

"This means in case this person tries to fight back, they might lose their job. Many stay silent," she reveals.

Kampi says victims at times end up quitting their jobs simply because they have no one to run to, or they feel they are not safe working in an environment where sexual harassment thrives.

Have a law

"Every company is required to have laws that govern employee conduct and one of the laws that should not be missed is one on sexual harassment," Kampi says.

Speak about it

Kampi advises managers to facilitate meetings, where they can talk about different issues, including sexual harassment.

"While speaking, encourage the victims to come out and report in order for the establishment to deal with the culprits," she notes.

Kampi adds that continuous speaking to your employees on sexual harassment will help many deal with the vice and that way, they will know they are cared for.

Training sessions

She says training opportunities for employees where they are sensitised on how to deal with sexual harassment are important. "In the training, explain to your employees company rules against sexual harassment and be kind enough to explain the different forms of sexual harassment," Charles Ocici, the director of Enterprises Uganda, says.

Establish a team

Ocici says it is possible that employees will report cases of sexual harassment, but you need a team of people that these victims of sexual harassment can confide in.

"Establish an organ that can investigate and carry out disciplinary action on those found guilty of sexually harassing others at work," Ocici advises. He notes that it is also important that bosses strive to end sexual harassment at workplaces and not to be the ones involved in the vice.

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