

BY DENIS EDEMA

Busoga faces blood shortage as students begin holidays

JINJA. The Uganda Blood Bank in Jinja has sounded an alarm over severe shortage of blood across health facilities in the Busoga Sub-region.

This follows the commencement of a two-month holiday by students, who contribute a significant amount of blood to the bank while in schools.

Officials said, schools provide the highest number of blood donors, especially students aged 16 and above.

Mr Adonia Nanhumba, the head of the Uganda Blood Bank and Transfusion Services in the Jinja region, said the region is currently collecting far fewer blood units than its required tar-

get.

He explained that although efforts are sometimes made to source additional blood from neighbouring regions, the supply still falls short of the overwhelming demand in Busoga's health facilities.

Mr Nanhumba revealed that while Busoga is expected to collect at least 3,000 units of blood to meet its medical needs, the region often falls short, collecting fewer than 2,000 units.

This constant deficit contributes to preventable deaths among patients referred for transfusion.

"We have realised that most of our

active donors are students above 16 years," he explains. "Now that they are home for holidays, we face a serious challenge because fewer members of the general public turn up to donate blood voluntarily," Mr Nanhumba says.

He appeals to community leaders, political figures, and other stakeholders to encourage residents to donate blood regularly, saying the life saved could be that of a friend or family member.

Dr Alfred Yayi, the director of Jinja Regional Referral Hospital, reveals that both the Regional Referral Hospital and Nalufenya Children's Hospital are already experiencing high demand for

blood.

He says the situation is especially dire for a referral facility like Jinja, which receives a wide range of emergency cases from within Busoga and beyond.

"We are located along a major highway, which means many of the road traffic accident victims from Iganga, Mayuge, Buyende, Kamuli, and even districts in eastern and central Uganda end up here for specialised attention. Most of these cases require urgent blood transfusion, yet the supply available is not enough."

The hospital currently lacks a fully equipped blood bank capable of meet-

ing the urgent needs that come with such emergency referrals.

Dr Yayi emphasises that this limitation often delays critical care and, in some cases, forces health workers to refer patients to Mulago Hospital simply because blood is unavailable, not because the treatment itself cannot be provided at Jinja.

The Rotary Club of Jinja, led by their president, Mr Tomson Michael Ofwono, organised a blood donation drive across several schools before the official closure of schools. A total of 400 units of blood were collected from schools in Jinja City and Njeru Municipality.