

BY ISAAC KINTU

**JINJA:** A Shs6 billion oxygen plant established to end oxygen shortages in the Busoga Sub-region has broken down, causing a crisis at Jinja Regional Referral Hospital (JRRH) and other health facilities.

The oxygen plant, which has been supplying oxygen to hospitals and multiple health centres across Busoga, has been non-functional since October 2024, raising serious concerns about patient safety, especially in emergency and paediatric wards.

Mr Michael Mukalazi, whose wife was recently admitted to the hospital, said the breakdown caused delays in her surgery.

"My wife needed an operation and ox-

gen was required, but I was told to wait because they had assigned someone to go and collect oxygen from Namanve," Mr Mukalazi said.

The breakdown has left health workers and patients relying on oxygen transported from Namanve, a move that is costly, slow, and unreliable in emergencies.

Patients, caretakers, and health advocates have urged the Ministry of Health to urgently intervene and restore the oxygen plant to prevent loss of lives.

Mr David Mukisa, the chairperson of the JRRH Management Board, said:

# 2024

The Jinja oxygen plant was commissioned in October 2024 with high expectations.

"The hospital's oxygen plant has been showing clear signs of wear and tear for months and is in desperate need of maintenance," Mr Mukisa said.

"Without urgent servicing, the facility risks a complete breakdown, leaving critically ill patients without a life-saving supply of oxygen," he added.

Mr Mukisa said they had requested funds to service the hospital's oxygen plant but it was not given, leaving the facility in a critical state.

Mr Mukisa added that as days passed with no response from the relevant authorities, the situation grew increasingly critical.

"We are pushing for a swift response from the Ministry of Health because the oxygen plant cannot wait any

longer," Mr Mukisa said.

He said the hospital currently has no oxygen supply of its own and is relying on Kayunga Hospital and Namanve to fill the gap.

The Jinja oxygen plant was commissioned in October 2024 with high expectations.

At the time, the Commissioner in charge of Health Infrastructure at the Ministry of Health, Mr George Otieno, said the facility was meant to serve the whole Busoga Sub-region, producing up to 300 oxygen cylinders per day.