

Gen. Muhoozi commended for supporting blood donation efforts

The Ministry of Health has commended the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Chief of Defence Forces, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, for supporting the blood donation efforts, especially within Army barracks.

Dr Samuel Davis Wante, a senior blood collection team leader with Uganda Blood Transfusion Services (UBTS), said with Kainerugaba's intervention, they have been able to regularly collect blood from the Army barracks and save lives.

Wante revealed that they recently collected 6,000 units of blood from three UPDF barracks of; Kaweweta and Singo in Nakaseke district, as well as Butyaba in Buliisa district.

He noted that they have registered a significant increment in the quality of blood collected across the country, with over 98% of the collected blood safe for human use (transfusion).

Wante made the revelation while presiding over the launch of a four-day blood donation drive organised by the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) in Kampala last week.

The exercise took place at Goodshed

460,000 units
The average amount of blood needed annually for Uganda's approximately 46 million people.

Railways headquarters, Mulago traffic lights, City Square, Kalerwe market and at the UNOC head offices. Close to 500 units of blood were collected.

"Most of the donated blood is collected from students from secondary schools, tertiary institutions, the army and police barracks. It is one of the reasons for the improvement of its safety," he said.



Robert Mukondo (right), a social development specialist and community relations officer with UNOC during the launch of the four-day blood donation drive spearheaded by UNOC in Kampala

SAFER BLOOD

Wante said the improved safety of donated blood was majorly attributed to the continued sensitisation to potential donors about the requirements, including being free

from HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

"In the past, a substantial percentage of collected blood was put to waste through burning as it was contaminated with infections, pathogens, viruses,

bacteria, parasites that can transmit diseases to patients," Wante said.

He said the current blood needed for a population of about 46 million people stands at an average 460,000 units annually in all medical facilities. "This achievable if Ugandans understand the essence of blood donation as it is health." Wante said currently the country can only collect 86% of the required blood in hospitals across the country, which is still a challenge.

"If only 1% of the entire population can donate blood, the country can have enough blood and constant supply in hospitals," Wante said He noted that the months of December and January are always challenging in blood collection as students, who are the major donors, are always at home for end of year holidays.

Robert Mukondo, a social development specialist and community relations officer with UNOC, said they are prioritising the blood donation campaign to save lives.