

# 11 parents arrested for failing to send children to school

By Emmy Alomu

Eleven parents and guardians in Morungatuny sub-county in Amuria district were arrested and detained at Amuria Central Police Station on Monday for failing to send their children to school.

The 11 parents were arrested in an operation that was carried out by the office of the resident district commissioner, Paul Eseru, in collaboration with the Police after it emerged that many children were loitering in trading centres instead of going to school.

"Some of the children have ended up in gangs," Eseru said. Some of the arrested parents said they had not sent their children to school due to a lack of money to buy uniforms and scholastic materials.

About half of the parents who gave convincing reasons to the security officers were released, while others remain detained.

**Some of the arrested parents arriving at Amuria Central Police Station on Monday. Although schools opened on Monday, the turnout in most Amuria schools was low**

"The rest will have to explain why they have not sent children to school despite the Government offering to pay for them under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative. This operation serves

as a warning to all parents who are not sending their children to school. We shall extend these operations to Abarilela, Amolo, and Wera sub-counties where school absenteeism is common,"

Eseru said.

Although schools across the country opened on Monday, the turnout in most Amuria schools was low.

At Odekere Primary School, Morungatuny sub-county,

PHOTO BY EMMY ALOMU



## LC LEADERS

Vigilio Opio, the LC2 chairperson of Morungatuny parish in Morungatuny sub-county, said many parents no longer buy scholastic materials for their children. "Some even keep them [children] at home to do household chores," he said.

only 45 out of 611 pupils reported to school on day one of term II. Some classes did not register any learners on the first day of term II.

Teachers informed the Eseru that they used various fora to encourage parents to send their children to school, in vain.

Benson Ekwee, the executive director of the Public Affairs Centre of Uganda, a non-government organisation,

attributed the low turnout of learners for term II to inadequate inspection, school fees and the economic hardships that families are currently facing.

He urged the Government to regulate the charging of school fees across the country to ensure fair access to education for all students.

"If the fees are affordable, parents will send children to school on time," Ekwee said.

Michael Elagu, a parent and lay reader at Ajenit Church of Uganda, said many parents struggle to send their children back to school during the first week of term.

"The children often complain about the heavy cleaning tasks awaiting them in the first week of the term. Some parents also assume that learning does not happen in the first week.

He explained that many parents do not know the official reporting dates because they do not read their children's report cards.