

Press Release

For Immediate release
Kampala –Uganda
20th July, 2016

PROTECT HEALTH WORKERS' RIGHTS WHILE ON DUTY: IMC CLINICS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Kampala, Uganda -Today the Center for health human rights and Development filed a complaint jointly with Dr. Diana Stella Nasike with the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council (UMDPC) to challenge the poor working environments and conditions in which many of our health workers are subjected to.

Prior to November 6th 2015, Dr. Diana Stella Nasike had raised concerns with the human resource department at the International Medical Centre Clinic in Kololo where she works in a poorly ventilated room where she had to attend to patients. This is Consultation Room 2 at the International Medical Center (IMC), Upper Kololo Terrace which has no window but just a small hatch sized opening. Dr. Diana works a 12 hour day shift and at least 180 hours a week! Her patients' are mostly people with respiratory infections, coughs and colds. Being the health worker, she notified the administration and management of IMC that poor ventilation was a risk to her health as patients cough in her face from time to time. Indeed a few months later she was diagnosed with tuberculosis and had to continue work while undergoing treatment. As though that's not enough, the treatment room at IMC Kololo provides no privacy at all for patients who are being attended to. Anyone can walk in, watch and or listen in while a health worker is attending to a patient.

The management of IMC Clinics –an affiliation of the International Medical Group has however made no effort to rectify the situation even after several letters from CEHURD were written to their office to desist from abusing their employees' rights to work in a clean and healthy environment.

*“TO DO NO HARM- that is a clause in the Hippocrates' Oath that we take as doctors. That is a vital clause that should govern both our personal and institutional medical practice. A medical doctor or medical institution that does not uphold this becomes a danger to themselves and to the very people they serve.”*Dr. Diana Stella Nasike notes in her statement to the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioner's Council.

All Ugandans have rights to privacy of information –this is re-echoed in our 1995 Constitution, the Ministry of Health Patients Charter, the Medical Code of Professional Ethics and a guaranteed right to a clean and healthy environment. Uganda's parliament has guaranteed that occupational health and safety is underscored in our domestic laws through enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, of 2006. IMC's deliberate disregard to employees' rights and patients' rights to privacy while they access services in their facilities is in utter violation of these obligations.

“It is our appeal to the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners' Council to suspend all health services to patients at the International Medical Centre located on Plot 51A, Upper Kololo Terrace until these complaints are addressed by the management of IMC. All employers ought to understand that it is a constitutional obligation for all persons, health facilities, and government, to respect, uphold and promote human rights of individuals including patients and health workers in private practice.” notes Ms. Primah Kwagala –Program Manager Strategic Litigation at the Centre for Health, Human Rights & Development (CEHURD).

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