

## **Matany Hospital cut off from Uganda**

It is 10 pm of Thursday, 9th August 2012. A mother with her sick child knocks at the door of Paediatric Ward after having walked for 14 hours to reach the Hospital. What an effort of a caring mother. Unfortunately the baby on her back was so weak that it had died just before reaching the Ward. Who can feel the pain and grief of that mother who was full of hope to reach in time. It is painful to see a mother who has tried everything in her possibilities to save her baby. I am afraid there are many more in Karamoja who undergo the same pain.

What is happening? Who is going to take the responsibility for the loss of so many innocent lives due to the poor infrastructure in this remote area of Uganda? Possibly 50 lorries of stones could secure the passage as emergency intervention and directing the traffic one way at different hours.

Lorengchora and Nakicumet along Iriiri - Moroto road have become famous as some spots of this road turned into seasonal rivers and since the surface of this road is inadequately maintained mingled with soft mud and sand. Deep holes created by lorries hoping to be able to push through are another obstacle and force small cars out of the road. Some vehicles are across the road hence no passages. Buses are also stuck and passengers doomed to spend the night(s) on the road. Hospital staff among many others delay to return from their leaves or cannot reach home on time, students delay to reach their schools or institutions.

How to run a Hospital without proper access at all times and yet it is the mission of St. Kizito Hospital to care for the most vulnerable in this region. Who comes to our aid in order to fulfil our mandate? What a struggle to get supplies on time. Last week the Hospital lorry with many other vehicles were stuck for three nights on above named spot. Eventually help came from Moroto District in form of a grader, which had to be repaired and put back on road first. But since three days ago people travelling that road are back to the same fate.

Imagine no blood to help patients with anaemia, with malaria or other conditions in need to substitute blood loss. The journey of a staff to the Mbale Regional Blood Bank turned out to be a nightmare. On his way back the bus got stuck. He had to walk with the cool box until he reached MP Terence Achia who himself was stuck with his vehicle. He helped him with some money to mount a Boda Boda around midnight up to where the Hospital vehicle was waiting for him for many hours in order to bring him back from the other side of the cut off road. At 3 a.m. they finally reached. Thank God the blood was still viable. Calls to Nakasero Blood Bank for help are at times not possible as there is shortage of available donor blood as well or needed elsewhere. When there is blood available MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) flies it up either to Moroto Airfield or Matany Airstrip. A Regional Blood Bank in Karamoja could help in such difficult times. But there is none.

Food items are very scanty in the market and the prices are high. People's and the staff of the Hospital have to restrict the variety of food. Good enough there are some fresh vegetables growing now in the rainy season. There is uncertainty of the arrival of medical supplies. The diesel stock is soon depleted. Which company risks coming and delivering it? The Hospital has to generate its own electricity to run its services. MTN communication is unreliable and often not available, even the whole day, making it impossible to receive and answer emergency calls.

Patients remain many hours on the way. Ambulances from the Hospital get stuck during efforts to rescue patients. Others from the Hospital have to go out to pull them out. Patients who used to come from far cannot reach the Hospital. Who is helping them?

This is an open appeal to receive the needed attention as to be enabled to continue the struggle for life in this North Eastern Region of Uganda.

Brother Günther Nährich

"We Dress The Wound, God Heals it"  
The Administrator/CEO

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N.B Can someone forward this message to the members of parliament whose address he/she has please!!!