The Government of Kenya Should Stop Mocking Persons Living with HIV/AIDS!

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Amnesty International Kenya is deeply concerned about the ongoing shortage of key medical supplies for life-saving tests and medication. The county governments are short of medical professionals, and persons with HIV do not have access to treatment, and prevention commodities such as ARVs, laboratory reagents as well as TB diagnostic and prevention medications.

Kenya currently has over 1,500,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. This population is living with unbearable anxiety and helplessness drawn from the perceived neglect by the government to protect them and allow them to enjoy not only the highest but even basic standards of health.

We are greatly concerned over the responses provided by the Ministry of Health before Parliament where it blatantly ignored the core problem of the ongoing impasse and the accountability questions regarding the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA). It is the lack of accountability at KEMSA that has resulted in the ongoing impasse on the release of HIV/AIDS and TB management, testing and treatment commodities.

The dwindling confidence in KEMSA is apparent not only from donors who support the healthcare systems in Kenya but also from the Kenyan public. This confidence hit rock bottom after the COVID 19 millionaires expose where no one so far has been prosecuted or even taken professional responsibility for the plunder and mismanagement of COVID 19 resources.

“The ongoing impasse between the Kenyan government risks rolling back decades of long gains made in the fight and management of HIV/AIDS. It would very likely compound the ongoing health burden on the healthcare system from COVID by adding the management and treatment of TB and HIV patients.” Says Diana Gichengo, Campaigns Manager, Amnesty International Kenya.

We therefore:

1. Demand that the Ministry of Health urgently resolves the ongoing impasse and shortage of HIV/AIDS and TB drugs and other supplies immediately and communicate to the public on the status daily.
2. Call on the Ministry of Health to move with speed and communicate to the public on measures taken to strengthen accountability and integrity for health resources that it manages through KEMSA.
3. Demand that the Ministry of Health displays goodwill by undertaking a comprehensive audit of the COVID millionaires’ scandal, the HIV/AIDS, and TB resources distribution processes.
4. Require that parliament take seriously their oversight role in matters of health by making public all their parliamentary inquiries around health resourcing in this country.
5. Urge the general public to keep up the demands of the government to avail HIV/AID and TB medications and accountability within the health sector.

END

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