

# Govt threatens action against public health staff charging exempted groups

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PUBLIC health personnel found guilty of soliciting or receiving cash payments for treatment of exempted groups will face stern legal repercussions.

The special need groups exempted from service charges in public hospitals include children under five, expectant mothers and the elderly.

Spokesperson from the Health and Social Welfare ministry, Nsachris Mwamaja told a news conference yesterday in Dar es Salaam that demanding payment from these groups is a gross violation of the national

health policy.

The official bid the public to report all such cases to their municipal councils for legal action.

"The free health services policy for the mentioned groups must be adhered to and all public health facilities in the country must comply," Mwamaja said.

"I urge citizens to report these corrupt elements so we can bring to justice the perpetrators," he urged.

In a different but related development, the spokesperson condemned ongoing practice by persons and institutions that use the guise of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) yet they only serve personal gains.

"Most of them are unregistered and even the

registered ones, many are not committed to the cause," he said.

In this regard, Steven Gumbo the ministry's Social Welfare Officer (Children rights and behavioral change Unit) said while there are as many as 282 NGOs registered as active bodies working to provide for special need children, the increase of street children is appalling.

Similalry, Daniel Masunzu, the ministry's Senior Social Welfare Officer urged Regional Administrations to set out budgets for centres of the elderly in their jurisdictions.

Tanzania has a total of 41 registered centres for the elderly, 17 of them are run by the government and 24 are under various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).