

Zim only has two pathologists

Zimbabwe has just two qualified forensic pathologists forcing families to wait for weeks before they can bury loved ones in cases of murder, it has emerged.



Health and child care minister Obadiah Moyo told senators last week the shortage of pathologists was forcing government to rely on semi-qualified personnel.

He was responding after Chief Ngezi, Peter Pasipamire, highlighted that post mortems were taking too long for murder victims.

"People are spending two weeks waiting because they cannot bury their relatives before the post-mortem results," said Ngezi.

"If there is no history of any chronic disease of a dead person, we have to wait for the police and the involvement of police means that there is need for a forensic pathologist."

In response, Moyo said the country was struggling with a shortage of forensic pathologists.

"In Zimbabwe, we have very few forensic pathologists, I think we have two," he said.

"In Bulawayo we have one and we were being assisted by the Cubans who used to send forensic pathologists.

"What this means is that if it is in Harare, we must wait until Wednesday to get the forensic pathologist to do the post mortems.

"However, we have other pathologists who are not called forensic pathologists, they are histopathologists who can conduct general post mortems."

He added; "The histopathologists are also assisting in some cases which are simple.

"However, if a human body is found in a river or a well, it becomes a police case and it needs the services of a forensic pathologist.

"We are working towards getting our own forensic pathologists in Zimbabwe. It is a challenge that will persist until we get these pathologists.

"We are also submitting requests to allow us to engage histopathologists so that they also do what forensic pathologists do."

The delay in burials, the minister added, could also be helpful.

"On a contrary note, you will understand that if your relative is deceased through murder, you would want to have ample evidence on the case," he explained.

"Therefore, it is necessary to have pathologists who can do a professional job. It is sometimes better to wait, particularly on murder cases, to get evidence from a specialist in the name of a forensic pathologist."

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