

More Ugandan children facing online sexual abuse

By Vicky Wandawa

There has been a rise in the cases of children exposed to online sexual abuse as result of increased access to affordable Internet.

According to Emmanuel Mugabi, a research analyst at the National Information Technology Authority (NITA), online sexual abuse of children is usually done by paedophiles — adults who are sexually attracted to young children. He says they befriend children online, for example, on social media platforms and interest them in sexual-related content.

Moses Binoga, a commissioner in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, adds that paedophiles influence children's attitude to develop the habit of sharing indecent pictures of themselves and other children online.

"They may ask them to share 'selfies' of themselves and their friends, naked or in sexual postures, the images are then used for sexual arousal or even sold to other paedophiles.

Even worse, when the paedophiles have earned the



Children might fall victim to such individuals online

trust of the children, they may then ask to meet physically, which can result into defilement," Binoga warns.

What is fuelling the vice?

Many children are using the Internet without the supervision of adults. Some

even own smartphones, so they can easily be abused without their guardians' knowledge.

Mugabi also points out that the UK and US have strict laws against online sexual abuse, so paedophiles are now targeting Africa and Asia, where so far, no stringent laws are in place.

How to detect abuse

Mugabi explains that children who are undergoing online sexual abuse will suddenly want to use the Internet in secret and might as well become withdrawn. He says children's Internet gadgets should be in the open and not tucked away in bedrooms.

Where to report

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has put in place a multi-sectoral working group on prevention of online child sexual exploitation, with representation from NITA, Uganda Police Force, Ministry of Gender, among other civil society organisations to develop a strategy to counter this new wave of cyber crime.

NITA has put in place the 'child sexual abuse reporting page' for Uganda. Mugabi advises anyone who comes across child pornographic materials on the Internet to report by filling out a simple form via report.nita.go.ug/ug.

The portal will help rescue victims and assist in investigating and prosecuting cyber criminals.

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By David M

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HCG Hospitals, Ahmedabad, India in association with Victoria University Health Center is conducting a Orthopaedic & Spine camp

Dr. Yuvraj Lakum

Joint Replacement and Spine Specialist

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