



**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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**Ireland-Uganda ambulance convoy to expand palliative care access across Uganda**

Kampala, Uganda - The Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) has welcomed a humanitarian convoy from Ireland bringing 11 donated ambulances to strengthen palliative care services across Uganda.

The ambulances, donated by the National Ambulance Service, Dublin Fire Brigade, the Irish Red Cross and Civil Defense, are being driven overland from Mombasa to Kampala by 23 volunteers mobilized by Hope on Wheels Africa. The convoy began its journey on May 24 and is expected to arrive in Uganda in early June after traveling more than 1,200 kilometres across Kenya and Uganda.

In partnership with Uganda's Ministry of Health and PCAU, the ambulances will be handed over to selected hospices and hospitals with palliative care units. The vehicles will serve as mobile outreach clinics, helping critically ill patients in remote and underserved communities access pain relief and essential care.

"This convoy is about more than delivering ambulances. It's about delivering pain relief, dignity, comfort and care to people at the most vulnerable time in their lives," said Tom Doyle, Board Chairperson of Hope on Wheels Africa.

Uganda is recognized as one of Africa's leaders in palliative care development, but major gaps remain. More than 500,000 Ugandans require palliative care annually, yet only an estimated 11% currently access services. Over 35 districts still lack accredited palliative care facilities, while the country has just over 350 trained palliative care workers against a need for more than 3,000 specialists.

The growing burden of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases, alongside Uganda's large refugee population, continues to increase demand for services.

The convoy also supports fundraising efforts for the newly established Dr. Anne Merriman Fund for Palliative Care in Uganda, named in honor of the late Dr. Anne Merriman, founder of Hospice Africa Uganda and a pioneer of palliative care on the continent.

The fund, jointly managed by PCAU and Hope on Wheels Africa, will support training, home-based care, children's palliative care, outreach services, medical supplies and expansion of services to underserved areas.

Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Uganda's former prime minister, has agreed to serve as patron of the fund.

"The world faces rising demand for palliative care due to increasing non-communicable diseases and aging populations," said Mark-Donald Mwesiga, Executive Director of PCAU. "In Uganda, thousands of individuals and families continue to suffer from preventable pain and distress that compassionate palliative care can address."

PCAU said the fund aims to support at least 24,000 new patients during its first year of implementation.

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*The Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) is the National Association for Palliative Care Providers and well-wishers in Uganda established in 1999. PCAU works in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to support and promote the development of palliative care in Uganda. PCAU is composed of 38 Organizations and over 2100 individual Members.*

**To know more about PCAU and how to support the organization,**

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