



Uganda Watch Update

18th- 25th October 2017



Summary

In Uganda a controversial bill was tabled in Parliament that seeks to lift the current age limit of 75. Chaos ensued in parliament with fistfights after opposition members of parliament opposed to the bill tried to halt the motion. Tensions have been high ever since with the government leaning MPs facing serious questions from the voters who are vowing that the constitution should not be amended. The bill is seen as President Yoweri Museveni 's attempt to stand in 2021 when he will be well above the 75 years cap.

Two shot dead

Two people were confirmed dead and several others injured with bullet wounds after an altercation between the police, opposition leaders and their supporters in the western district of Rukungiri. Opposition Forum for Democratic Change Presidential (FDC) presidential candidate Dr Kiiza Besigye and MP Patrick Amuriat organized to have a rally at the Rukungiri municipal stadium. Accompanying him the Kampala's Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago and several other opposition figures.

The police stopped the officials and their supporters, who were chanting "Togikwatako," (loosely meaning don't touch the constitution) from accessing the stadium and soon started firing tear gas and live bullets to disperse the gathering. The crowd was relentless, pelting the police with stones and during this exchange Edson Nasasira was shot in the head and several others were injured, including one individual who later died in hospital.

The District Police commander said that the police were not informed of the rally and would never have approved such a gathering. However, the FDC spokesperson insisted that they informed the police in a timely manner and had been given permission.

The police first denied that Nasasira was not killed by bullet but later rescinded the story after a postmortem confirmed that he was shot.



Figure 1 Police in running battles with the crowd in Rukungiri. Photo by Edson Kinene

Trouble in the East

In Eastern Uganda town of Mbale police again banned consultative meetings by members of parliament meant to get the people's opinion on the amendment of the constitution to remove the presidential age limits.

When the Mbale municipality Member of Parliament Jack Wamanga met his constituents. All was well until the leader of opposition in parliament Winfred Kiiza arrived.

The police commander of the district ordered the organizers to call off the rally. Tear gas and live bullets were fired to disperse the crowd. The politicians strongly condemned the acts of the police force and accused them of sabotaging their activities, yet MPs were sent on recess to consult on the controversial bill

2 MPs hospitalized

IN Lira district police fired tear gas and live bullets at a crowd attending a consultative rally organized by Joy Atim Ongom, the Lira woman member of parliament. The MP was with other legislators Cecelia Ogwal, Otuke, Sylvia Akello and Charles Angiro. It was when Cecilia Ogwal stepped on the podium that the police proceeded to disperse the crowd, which became rowdy and with locals pelting police with stones. Two MPs Cecelia Ogwal and Sylvia Akello were hospitalized after inhaling tear gas.

MPs paid \$8,000 each

The Central Executive Committee of the ruling NRM party on Tuesday through a press release confirmed their full backing of the amendment of the constitution to remove both the lower and upper age limits presidency that currently stand at 35 years and 75 years respectively. The proposed amendment has been a point of contention which some see as an attempt to extend the current president's reign for another term or possibly for life.

Yesterday all MPs received in their bank accounts Uganda Shilling 29million (about \$8,000) intended for facilitation in consulting their constituencies about the age limit bill. Opposition MPs have since returned the money claiming it was aimed at bribing the MPs to change their mind on the bill.

We may recall that in 2005 Member of parliament were each given \$2,500 to change the constitution and remove the term limits, which at the time stood at two-five year terms.

Atrocities Watch Africa

Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA) is a non-partisan, civil society organization that provides continental leadership in matters pertaining to the prevention of mass atrocities within Africa and beyond, through multi-pronged approaches that infuse ownership, legitimacy, and sustainable engagement. AWA's strategy and approaches are grounded in the realization that atrocities can be prevented through various interventions, including, but not limited to, early warning, diplomatic efforts, use of social media and new technologies, litigation, and advocacy campaigns.

info@atrocitieswatch.org

www.atrocitieswatch.org

www.facebook.com/atrocitieswatch

www.twitter.com/atrocitiesw