



## Uganda Watch Update

26 – 31 October 2017



### Summary

*In Uganda a controversial bill was tabled in Parliament that seeks to lift the current presidential age limit of 75. Chaos ensued with fist fights in parliament after opposition members opposed to the bill tried to halt the motion. Tensions have been high ever since with the government aligned MPs facing serious questions from voters who are insistent that the constitution should not be amended. The bill is seen as an attempt by President Yoweri Museveni to stand again in 2021 despite being well above the 75-year-old age limit.*

### Chaos in parliament again

During the sitting on Tuesday 31st October of the parliamentary committee on legal and parliamentary affairs, chaos broke out between Hon. Raphael Magyezi who proposed the constitutional amendment, his witnesses and the other members of the committee. The committee members were quick to question the authenticity of the bill's supporting documents. Among the issues of concern was the manner in which Hon. Magyezi was able to gazette the bill. Questions were raised about the certificate of financial implications from the Finance Ministry as well as the irregular timeframe in which Hon. Magyezi got leave to draft the bill. Hon. Ssemujju one of the members of the above mentioned committee was not pleased with Magyezi having Hon. Kafuuzi as a witness. The accusations soon spread, the chairperson of the committee, Jacob Oboth, was accused of being partial because despite him being listed as an independent, he attended the ruling party's caucus. He was accused of having been bribed by the president. As the heated exchange escalated, Magyezi and his team walked out of the room in protest.

## **Speaker says no more closed door consultative meetings**

The Speaker of the Parliament Honorable Rebecca Kadaga advised members of parliament to stop having closed door consultative meetings with few people and local politicians only. She pointed out that she sent MPs to consult with their constituents, not just a few people who they believe represent the majority. Some of the MPs whose constituents have been strongly against the bill decided to have closed door meetings with only a few people. She also questioned the behavior of the police saying that the police should not chase legislators but let them collect the views of their people.

## **MP calls off consultative meeting**

The consultative meeting organized by Trade Minister Hon. Amelia Kyambadde ended abruptly after her constituents got rowdy and accused her of trying to alter their decision to reject the constitution's amendment. When the minister went to the rally, she asked the people to stand in lines to be counted depending on whether or not they were for the amendment. When the exercise was done and those against the amendment appeared to be more, the final result was not announced. Failure to announce the final numbers resulted in a rowdy crowd. Her attempts to calm them were futile and the situation turned chaotic. Residents accused her of not accepting the decision of the majority and trying to favour those who were for the amendment. She was swiftly escorted out of the venue and taken to her car by security, ending the meeting abruptly.

## **Opponents should fight for power**

Minister without Portfolio Hon. Abdul Nadduli made violent remarks when speaking to veterans in Masaka district. During his speech, he said that the opposition which is fervently opposed to the amendment of the constitution cannot take over the government by simply staging demonstrations, but they should instead fight for it and consolidate it as the NRM is doing. He also said that the debate on the amendment of the constitution should not be an issue for everyone. "When it comes to

serious matters like this one, only senior citizens like members of parliament should be given the opportunity to decide, not primary six pupils,” Naduli is quoted to have said during his speech.

### ***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.*

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