



## Uganda Watch Update

18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

A Ugandan Member of Parliament Raphael Magyezi proposed a bill to amend the 1995 constitution of Uganda to remove the age limit for presidency that currently stands at 75 years. This motion sparked a chain of events that led to fights in the parliament.

*Beginning today and every Wednesday we bring you what is happening in Uganda on the remove of presidential age limit from the constitution.*

### **Drama on the floor of Parliament**

During a parliament sitting to table the bill that lifts the presidency age limit, a fighting broke out in the parliament after opposition legislators alleged that a minister had a gun in the chamber of parliament contrary to standing orders. This quickly escalated into a fistfight.

That was not the end. The next days session to discussed the same bill turned equally violent after the speaker of parliament announced the suspension of 25 of legislators that are believed to have rebelled against the bill.

When the 25 MPs s refused to leave the floor of parliament, they were violently evicted out of the parliament building by security operatives. In the process some of the legislators were badly injured and some are still in hospitals nursing injuries.

## **Age Limit Arrests**

The announcement of the tabling of the bill to abolish the presidential age limit did not only affect the members of parliament but also in other none state actors that are opposed to the removal of the age limit for the constitution. Several civil society activists, university students and opposition figures took to the streets to demonstrate against the bill. Police used tear gas, beatings and arrests on those protesting. Among those detained were the Mayor of Kampala city Erias Lukwago arrested from his home. Other arrested were the president of the opposition party called Democratic party Norbert Mao, newly elected member of parliament and musician Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine) and main opposition leader of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) Dr Kizza Besigye. ]

## **Grenade attacks on MPs**

Days after the brawl in the parliament, three opposition legislators had grenades attacks at their homes. MPs Robert Kyagulanyi, Allan Sewanyana and Robert Kasibante were woken up in by the sound of exploding grenades in their homes. No one has claimed any responsibility of the grenade attacks. Police say they are investigating.

## **Raid on CSOs**

The offices of Action Aid, an NGO that advocates against injustice was raided by police officers. The bank accounts of the organization have since been frozen by Bank of Uganda. Similar raid happened to another organization Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies (GLISS) and its leader Godber Tumushabe has been interrogated by police for several hours for his role in advocating for not amending the constitution.

## **We can be violent – President**

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni during a ceremony in Namutumba district in Eastern Uganda warned those opposed to the amendment of the constitution to stop intimidating people. The president said that the ruling NRM party is a master of violence only that its violence is disciplined and purposeful.

Last week, the president publicly stated that he supported the amendment of the constitution to remove the age limit that now includes the lower age limit of 35 years on top of the cap of 75 years for presidency. This makes him eligible to stand for another term in 2021. Museveni has been president of Uganda since 1986 making him among Africa's long serving presidents.

### **Atrocities Watch Africa**

Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA) is a non-partisan, civil society organization and institution that intends to provide 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 interface. AWA's strategic and approaches are grounded in the realization that atrocities can be prevented through various interventions, including, but not limited to, early warning mechanisms, diplomatic efforts, use of social media and new technologies, litigation, and advocacy campaigns.

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