

Kayihura sacking a mere change of guard - Besigye

KAMPALA

By Jerome Bitswande

Former Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) president Dr Kizza Besigye has said the recent reshuffle in the Police will not have any effect on the performance of the force.

On Sunday President Yoweri Museveni dropped Gen. Edward Kale Kayihura from the position of Inspector General of Police (IGP) and replaced him with Okoth Ochola deputised by Brig. Sabiiti Muzeei.

The reshuffle came at a time when Police was struggling with managing rampant crime including kidnaps, murders and robberies.

Speaking during a press conference at his Katonga Road offices in Kampala, Besigye referred to the Police reshuffle as a mere change of guard which will not in any way improve the operations of the force.

“Provided Police remains obsessed with regime protection, nothing will change; they will continue wasting time on arresting Besigye instead of concentrating on apprehending criminals,” he said.

Besigye who said he knew Kayihura long before he became IGP, said the former Police boss is actually a good man who only served a wrong system; revealing that Okoth could turn a bad man too while at the helm of the Police.

He argued that although Okoth, a professional Police officer, might want to clean up the force, the system which he said was hell-bent on regime



Kizza Besigye talking to journalists outside his office. Photo by Jerome Bitswande

protection will not facilitate him.

Besigye, however, also quickly discounted the appointment of Okoth, a long-serving Police officer, deputised by Brig. Sabiiti Muzeei, a former commandant of the Military Police. He said Okoth is likely to work as a figure head IGP while Muzeei will be the de-facto Police chief.

Responding to the claims by Besigye, Ofwono Opondo, the executive director of the Government’s media centre, said if President Museveni wanted to appoint Brig. Muzeei as new Police chief, there would be no reason to appoint him as deputy.

He said the President has

formerly appointed brigadiers Katumba Wamala and Kale Kayihura, to lead the force upon promotion to the rank of major general.

Besigye said Kayihura’s sacking could be a result of a strained relationship.

According to Besigye, Rwanda and Uganda have had a strained relationship dating as far back as 2000 when the Rwandan Patriotic Army and the Uganda People’s Defence Forces were involved in a fierce fight in Kisangani, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He claims the relationship between the two countries has never healed.

However, Opondo dismissed Besigye’s claims explaining that

reshuffles in security are normal processes of government and ought not to cause any hullabaloo.

He accused Besigye of trying to use the reshuffles to become politically relevant.

“Since Togikwaatako ended, Besigye has been politically dead. He is using the security reshuffles to politically resurrect himself,” said Opondo. Besigye added that Lt. Gen. Henry Tumukunde could have been dropped as security minister because he had stayed for long outside government and thus could not appreciate the current operations of the Government.

Tumukunde was replaced by Gen. Elly Tumwine.



Speaker Rebecca Kadaga greeting Prof Fred Ssewamala at Parliament. Photo by Eddie Ssejjoba

Call for child-friendly healthcare laws

By Eddie Ssejjoba

A US-based Ugandan professor has appealed to Parliament to make child-friendly healthcare laws and policies that will address mental health challenges among children and adolescents.

The laws, according to Dr Fred Ssewamala, a professor at Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in the US, should emphasise prevention and early intervention of mental health problems among school-going children and youth.

He said if such problems are not tackled at an early stage, they may compromise healthy transition to adulthood, and in the long run increase economic and social costs for families, government and society in general.

Dr. Ssewamala made the comments recently during a meeting with the Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga in her office where he submitted his proposals and contributions to the Mental Health Bill 2014.

The Bill, currently before the health committee of Parliament, seeks to provide care and treatment for persons with mental illness at primary health centres.

Dr Ssewamala, who is also the founding director of the International Centre for Child Health and Development (ICHAD), told the Speaker that the current Bill does not cater for children’s mental health issues, yet they constitute about 56% of the country’s total population and face numerous mental challenges.

The ICHAD project based in the Greater Masaka region contributes to the reduction of poverty and improvement of health outcomes for school children, adolescent youth and families in low-resource communities.

The chairperson of the health committee of Parliament, Dr. Michael Bukenya, country director of Child Fund Simba Machingaidze and Abel Mwebembezi, the executive director Reach the Youth Uganda attended the meeting.

Dr. Ssewamala said that large numbers of Ugandan children live in communities with high rates of chronic poverty, domestic violence, physical violence toward children, depression, malaria and HIV or AIDS. “These factors require thoughtful policy interventions that will allow them an opportunity to thrive and lead healthy and productive lives,” he said.

The professor said mental health challenges that emerge during childhood and adolescence may compromise healthy transitions to adulthood.

MPs reject rehabilitation facility over shoddy work

KAMPALA

By Paul Kiwuuwa

Legislators on the gender, labour and social development committee of Parliament have stopped a private contractor from handing over to the Government newly rehabilitated structures of Ruti Rehabilitation Centre for Children with Disabilities

(CWDs) in Mbarara district due to shoddy works.

During their oversight tour recently, the committee chairperson, Alex Ndeezi, also MP for Persons with Disabilities (central region), said: “The committee has halted the handing over of the structures due to shoddy works, besides there is no value for money.”

The centre under contention is a government facility seated

on 25 acres of land. The centre offers vocational training skills and agriculture and animal husbandry, among others.

“Faulty construction poses risks including deaths or injury to the occupants,” Ndeezi said. When the MPs entered the compound of the renovated site, they had smiles on their faces because of the beautiful exteriors, but these soon faded when they saw the cracked

interiors, leaking ceilings and a poorly done car park.

“We insist that all the defects first be corrected by the contractor before officially handing it over to the Government and users for occupation,” the rather perturbed Ndeezi added.

Parliament appropriated sh6b in the financial years 2013/2014, 2015/2016 for the renovation of institutions country-wide

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