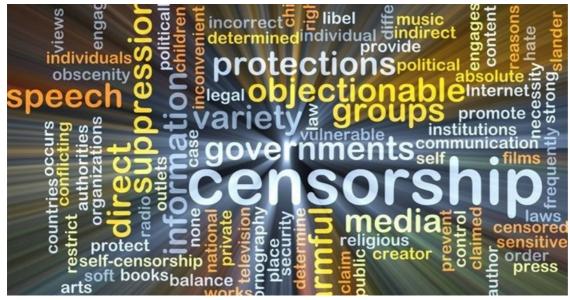


Police attack journalists in Uganda

Two journalists, Siraji Kiberu of Kingdom Television and Dodoviko Mukasa of Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) radio were assaulted by police on 31 March 2017. The journalists were covering the arrest of an opposition member of parliament for Mukono Municipality, Betty Nambooze Bakireke.



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Another journalist - Henry Kasomoko of Bukedde paper - had his camera destroyed during the fracas.

Nambooze is the opposition Democratic Party vice president in charge of the central region. The police arrested her, along with other supporters as they tried to make their way into Nsambya Sharing Hall, where they had scheduled to hold a party consultative meeting. They were taken to Kiira Road police station.

Journalists followed on commercial motorcycles (boda bodas) up to Kiira Road police station. While there, a scuffle ensued between the police and Nambooze's supporters, who were resisting her continued detention.

Police were uneasy with the journalists covering the scuffle, so they turned their wrath on them. Henry Kikomeko told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda that, "there was a fracas [and] police did not want journalists to cover the scuffle. As I was pulling out my camera, the police officer who was standing next to me hit my camera and smashed it. I reported the matter to Kiira Road Police station."

Kiberu was badly beaten. He told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda: "I was standing at the reception only to be beaten by a police officer. He boxed me in the stomach and I fell down. I stood up immediately and got out but he followed me and continued beating me up."

The Kampala Metropolitan police spokesperson, Emilian Kayima, feigned ignorance of the attack when contacted. "... nobody should beat journalists, why should they beat them, who are those who were beaten, let them make a formal complaint at police and we shall deal with those who beat them in accordance with the law," Emilian told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda.

Police has continuously continued to be the lead perpetrators of violence against journalists in Uganda for the last six years according to different local and international human rights reports, but little is done by the authorities to reprimand the implicated errant officers

'We highly condemn the continued actions by the Uganda Police Force of assaulting journalists in the course of their duties. Such actions violate the journalists' constitutionally guaranteed right of practicing their profession. We will follow this matter and ensure that justice prevails," said the HRNJ-Uganda national coordinator, Robert Sempala

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