

Mak probe team clears suspended staff members

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KAMPALA. Makerere University appointments board has cleared two of its staff members who had earlier been accused of misconduct by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Barnabas Nawangwe.

According to the investigating team chaired by Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka, prosecution failed to present evidence that Mr Joseph Kalema and Mr Benet Magara committed acts that are prejudicial to the proper performance of duties of the university's image.

Prosecution alleged that the duo were engaged in a scuffle and heated exchange that caused a standoff with security officers at the Vice Chancellor's office, mobilised their colleagues to escort Ms Ruth Iteu Eyuko to the inaugural meeting at the Main Building yet they knew she hadn't been invited and invited the media to cover them.

"It is our view that in this case, prosecution relied on mere allegations, hearsay, as well as unsubstantiated facts and failed to prove the guilt of the respondents. Their evidence is so weak that it does not prove the ingredients of the offence with which the respondents are charged. It is our decision that the charges against the respondents should be dismissed. The respondents are, therefore, discharged," reads part of the report dated May 6.

The committee members included Mr Jude Mbabaali, Dr Winston Tumps Ireeta, Ms Jolly Uzamukunda Karabaaya and Dr Sarah Ssali.

Prof Nawangwe yesterday said: "It is my appointments board that has been looking into the issues. If my staff failed to prove that these individuals committed the offences, we have to accept and move on."

The committee noted that they spent their time discussing a matter that was not related to the charges laid before the respondents, though those matters could also constitute offences.

Mr Magara chairs Makerere Administrative Staff Association (MASA), while Mr Kalema is his general secretary.

BACKGROUND

Suspension. The duo were suspended on December 21 last year on WhatsApp by the Vice Chancellor. In January, Prof Nawangwe again suspended Dr Deus Kamanyu, the Makerere University Academic Staff Association (Muasa) chairperson but whose case is still before the committee.

Subsequently, the associations in a joint assembly declared a strike demanding that management's decision be retracted. The staff accused management of trying to get rid of their colleagues who were critical of their leadership style.