

# MAKERERE CRISIS DEEPENS!

Makerere University crisis has deepened following a secret dossier detailing why the institution is in murky waters of recent. This explosive bombshell now in the hands of top authorities has been authored by an insider who has been in the system for a longtime. In the dossier, it has been revealed that the 96-year old institution has been captured by an Octopus-like monster comprised of mafia whose interest is money. This octopus organization, according to the dossier, often cites their connections with top figures in Government, in order to manipulate the University Management. That by purporting to be operating in the name of Government, they have created a toxic atmosphere and a general mistrust among the University community towards Government in whose name they claim to be acting. The dossier reveals that in the process this Octopus Organization has managed to create a patronage and corrupt system that they exploit for their self-enrichment through constant manipulation of University systems, processes, policies and activities. It said to comprise among others, individuals who are careerist members of the university and they often switch constituencies to stick around. Under the grip of this octopus organization, the dossier adds that Management and Council became one juggernaut of improprieties, whose members arrogantly placed themselves above scrutiny, transparency and accountability. "As a result they operate as a criminal enterprise, contemptuous of laws and regulations and dealing ruthlessly with whoever is seen as standing in their way. Using their access to institutional resources, and exaggerating the protection they enjoy from government, they openly and frequently dare anyone to question them or initiate legal action against them. The impression they have created among members of the University community is that this is a jungle country in which anyone with the right connections can operate above the law and there is nothing anyone can do about it," the dossier points out, adding that "As a result, any attempt to question or expose their misconducts and improprieties are invariably regarded as acts of indiscipline and insubordination for which critics are irregularly subjected to disciplinary action, which are often predetermined to result in suspensions or dismissals." The Octopus Organisation in

the University Management and Council, the dossier adds, it seem to view their tenures as opportunities for self-enrichment. Some of the individuals named in this dossier who comprise this octopus like monster organization include one with an office opposite the new central teaching facility and a prominent politician. The accomplices include, a certain professor with visible noise hair, another top official who sits in the main building and he is new, a sexy-looking old lady in finance department, a one Jenny Mwebaz and another powerful PA to some top officials who sources allege that he even owns a fire arm and a radio call. This mafia is said to have allegedly accumulated staggering amount of wealth in the form of expensive vehicles and properties worth billions of shillings spread all over Kampala and upcountry even though some of them have never held any formal employment outside their roles in the university. It adds that this mafia is strategically placed in all departments that matter including Council (the university's top decision making body), management, appointments unit, finance unit and in the areas of procurement. The author warns that unless this mafia is checked on, the university is yet to experience its worst under the management of Prof Barnabas Nawangwe as the Vice Chancellor. Since assuming the reigns of Makerere University's top job in 2017 Nawangwe has attempted to stamp his clout with far-reaching reforms something that has put him on a collision path with those who know where the exact problem underlies. The dossier further portrays the picture of Prof Nawangwe being not fully in charge but also under the control of this octopus organization — who are always directing him on what to do for any staff who happen to sniff into their actions. "Prof. Nawangwe's over-hyped enforcement of discipline among staff in nothing but a pretext for subduing into submission to this Octopus Organisation, so that they can create an atmosphere in which no staff member can dare question



Makerere's Main Building-Ivory tower

their administrative excesses and improprieties anymore," the dossier emphasizes. It adds that, with this octopus organization well positioned, powers of the human resource department have been usurped, especially when it comes to recruitment. Unconfirmed reports indicate that the current VC is also a victim of this and he had to wet this mafia's beaks handsomely in order to get where he is today. There is also another top official in management, who according to sources remits part of his monthly earnings to this Octopus organization as part of the deal for helping him to get that job. Similarly, there is another official who recently threw in the towel after he grew tired of incessant demands from this octopus organization who always insisted "always never forget the person who first broke this news to you." Similar stories are common amongst the academic staff especially those who want promotions to, in the DICTS and legal directorates among others. The dossier also points at allegations of "conflict of interest" and "insider trade" propagated by this octopus organization — it controls the procurement process and as such dictates who takes which bid. It is this Octopus mafia that always receives gratifications from almost all service providers and contractors.

In case there are queries about any anomaly the answer is always "this is for big man so and so in the main building." On top of that, in areas of purchases, the dossier talks about being done half: If for instance the university orders purchase of 100 computers, only 50 are delivered to the institution and the rest goes to this octopus organization. According to the

dossier, it is this reason that the university finances have never been stable and no wonder most of the bursars have unceremoniously left their jobs due to this Octopus Organization — the most recent being Augustine Tamale who left last year, only after two years on the job. "With oversight giving way to outright collusion, the University Management and Council have lately masterminded irregular human resources practices, recruitments characterized by nepotism, cronyism, and bribery; unconstitutional amendments of the University's Human Resources Manual; abuse of office/power; misappropriations of resources; fraudulent sale of University land and properties; and several other forms of improprieties, often with total impunity. The unprecedented levels of irregularities, improprieties and irregularity in the University undermine not only the very essence of a University but also the public confidence in the University and Government as a whole, given the way perpetrators often exaggerate their purported connections to Government. Using personal connections, they have blocked repeated attempts by well-meaning staff to report their irregularities to mandated government officials, ensuring that such complaints do not reach their intended recipients," the staff in their petition to parliament recently also summarized.

## STAFF ASSOCIATIONS DEMAND REINSTATEMENT OF SUSPENDED LEADERS

The joint Makerere University Staff Associations are demanding the reinstatement of their leaders. On January 17th, 2019, Nawangwe suspended Dr. Deus Kamunyu Muhwezi, the Chairperson Mak-

erere University Academic Staff Association- MUASA, Magara Bennet, the Chairperson Makerere Administrative Staff Association and his General Secretary, Joseph Kalema for alleged indiscipline and inciting staff. The suspension of the trio followed disagreements between staff associations and university administration over pending issues including salary enhancement. Now, three staff Associations including Makerere University Academic Staff Association-MUASA, National Union of Educational Institutions of Uganda-NUEI and Makerere University Administrative Staff Association-MASA have tasked the university to reinstate their leaders. In a joint statement issued on Sunday, the staff associations reaffirm their resolution to withdraw their labor until their demands are met. They say as students resume school, they will not be there to work. The Association has also called for an end to attacks on University associations and its staff members by the vice chancellor. On their list of demands, the Associations want Dr. Thomas Tayebwa and Bruce Balaba Kabaasa removed from the University council, saying their stay is irregular. They also want Ruth Iteu to represent MUASA on the University council. They have hired the services of Isaac Ssemakadde, a lawyer from the Centre for Legal Aid to ensure justice for the suspended officers. However, Prof Nawangwe told us on phone that the associations don't have the mandate to demand the reinstatement of the suspended officers, adding that lecturers who want to stay home and strike can do so knowing that they may never return.

## NRM WORKERS' LEAGUE: MAK VC GAGGING STAFFS

The Worker's League of the ruling National Resistance Movement- NRM Workers League has condemned the suspension of Makerere University staff association leaders. In a statement issued Monday morning, James Tweheyo, the Chairperson of the NRM Workers' League, says "the suspension of leaders of staff associations was an action not call for at this very movement and the Vice Chancellor handled it personal." He wonders why the Nawangwe didn't subject the affected leaders to the relevant disciplinary organs to take action. "If these people were undisciplined did he not submit the concerns and subject them to the relevant University Disciplinary Organs to take a decision on them?"

Adding: "it looks as if the Vice Chancellor is trying to gag the Associations and this begs the question; in whose interest is he working?" He commended the staff for standing with their Leadership and encouraged them to remain calm and firm but open to discussion. "We also call up on the Vice Chancellor to swallow his humble pie and call off the suspension of staff Association's leadership and if they have any issues let him present them to the relevant University Organs for scrutiny and action," reads the statement. "As National Workers' Leadership, we cannot fold our hands and see workers being trampled on. This unfortunate incident could have a ripple effect on other Public Universities in the whole country and create unnecessary paralysis to the student's detriment."

## UNIVERSITY PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER FIRED

Amidst all this drama, the university has now fired its Public Relations Officer Rita Namisango and appointed Dr Mohammed Kiggundu Muoske as the acting Manager Communications and International Relations. Dr Kiggundu, a senior lecturer in the department of Humanities and Language Education is tasked with providing overall leadership to the communications office and overseeing the universities communications policy, over the next one year. He is also expected to offer secretarial support to the office of the Vice Chancellor in communications through monthly press briefings, monitoring news articles, reports and periodicals about the university operations and monitoring and reviewing the coverage of the University in the media. His appointment took effect on January 18, 2019, according to a letter, written on the same day by the Human Resources Director Andrew Abunyang.

"The Vice Chancellor has authorized an offer of an appointment to you as a Manager, Communications and International Relations in the office of the Vice Chancellor for a period of one (1) year with effect from 18 January 2019," Abunyang states in a letter.

Kiggundu is the immediate former chairperson of Makerere University Academic Staff Association -MUASA. He handed over to the suspended Dr Deus Kamunyu Muhwezi in February last year.