

STUDENT LEADERS SAY ABOUT 24 STUDENTS WERE ADMITTED AT THE VARSITY CLINIC AFTER THEY WERE BEATEN

Stalemate persists at MAK

By Vision Reporters

The stalemate at Makerere University has persisted after the students' guild leadership rejected the University council's decision relaxing the contentious fees policy.

The student leaders are demanding a halt on the tuition increment policy entirely.

The decision to denounce the council statement issued on Tuesday evening, rekindled tension at the country's main university, erupting into Police and students' fresh clashes.

While at the offices of Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) in Kampala, the student leaders faulted the council for ignoring their submissions at a joint meeting held on Tuesday.

"They did not listen to us and we do not know how they reached their decisions," Abbas Luyombo, the guild constitutional affairs minister, said.

But the university manager of communications and international relations, Dr Muhammad Kiggundu, yesterday maintained that whatever was contained in the statement issued by the council was agreed on during the meeting.

He said the top student leaders were in full agreement with the council's statement.

According to the statement signed by Lorna Magara, the council chairperson and the secretary, Yusuf Kiran, following the meeting with students leaders on Tuesday, the council halted 15% increment on functional fees, but retained the increment on tuition for first-year students.

However, the students are demanding a halt on the increment on the tuition, review of guild election regulations and revocation of suspension of students engaged in the strike.

"The university management should not suppress our voices, but accept to engage us in productive dialogue for the



Mufano Heritier, the external affairs minister, Luyombo, Mugisha and Rodney Kiggundu, the minister for information communications technology, addressing the press at the Uganda Journalists Association in Kawempe, yesterday. Photo by Jimmy Outa

FRESH clashes

Police fired teargas at the Freedom Square to disperse students who had gathered for a general assembly that was to be addressed by the guild president, Julius Kateregga, on the Council resolutions and the President's telephone call.

The Police's move sparked off fresh clashes with the students.

The teargas also forced some students to abandon their halls of residence.

Some of the students were seen vandalising property, chanting slogans denouncing the university administration led by the vice-chancellor, Prof. Barnabus Nawangwe. Several journalists were also caught up in the fracas.

The entry into the university campus was restricted and many journalists were unable to gain access to the place.

Business was paralysed in Makerere Kikoni, a Kampala suburb, the whole day as Police clashed with protesting students. Police fired teargas to disperse the students. Many hostels are located in Kikoni.

Stranded school children were seen being rescued by residents, after inhaling teargas.

The Kampala Metropolitan Deputy Police spokesperson, Luke Owoyesigire, argued that Police dispersed the students assembly, because it was unlawful.

betterment of the university," Luyombo said.

In its statement, the council said the 15% fees increment shall continue to be applied on tuition fees for the remaining three years.

However, the adjustment in

fees shall not apply to functional fees for the remaining period of implementation of the fees structure as adopted in July last year.

Functional fees, according to the council, shall be capped at the rate applied

on the admission cohort for 2019/2020 academic year for the next three years.

On the students' guild constitution (elections) regulations, the Council demanded that the students' guild provides written

proposals of the amendments to be considered by the council.

The council says this will be considered through its legal, rules and privileges committee.

On suspended students, the council resolved that the four cases of suspended students be handled by the students' disciplinary committee, within two weeks.

But Mariam Mugisha, the guild deputy prime minister, said the university administration and the security forces should stop maligning the students with unsubstantiated allegations.

Both the university administration and the Police have linked the students to drug abuse and working with political actors and activists to undermine the university and the Government.

Parliament debates crisis

The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, condemned the involvement of the military in the university strike that saw the armed soldiers manhandle students.

Altering the order paper for a statement by the education minister on Makerere saga, Kadaga said the army vacates Makerere University with immediate effect, recalling the 1977 attack on students at Makerere by the army, during the Idi Amin regime.

"They have been occupying the university for now one week. Explain to us what has been happening to students and what the army is doing there," Kadaga said.

Later, there was a heated debate that ended with Parliament passing a resolution condemning acts of brutality and violation of the rights of students by the security forces.

Kadaga said: "What we cannot postpone concerning this matter is the need for Parliament to condemn the brutality against Makerere University students."

However, Parliament was not able to finalise debate on the issues that students raised in their petition. It was agreed to continue the debate on the matter to today.

The the minister of state for higher education, Dr Chrysostom Musingo, also made a statement explaining that the 15% increment was agreed on with student leaders.

Following demands by several MPs that government holds accountable the soldiers and Police officers who brutalised the students, Kadaga directed the ministers for internal affairs, security and defence to prepare to present statements to Parliament today, on the violations committed by the army and the Police.

The President on Tuesday ordered the army out of the university and instructed the council to engage the students' leadership for an amicable solution.

According to the students' leaders, about 24 students were admitted at the university clinic, after they were beaten up.

The Police have since denied allegations of the security forces assaulting the students, blaming it on fake news and negative propaganda.

According to the University Council, four students are on suspension. But the student leaders claim the suspended students are Frank Bwambale, Siperia Saasiraabo, Derick Ojumbo Wabwire, David Musisi, Seiz Mutatina, Ivan Kyeyune, Simon Ssenoga, Job Dhabona and Rogers Mbajjo Ssebiraalo. Another 21 students were served warnings.

Compiled by Nelson Kiva, Henry Sekanjako and Moses Mulondo