



Weekly
Sept 25 - 1st Oct

ActionAid joined the rest of the Civil Society to condemn the manner in which Parliament was invaded by security agencies in what they described as a coup of the parliament. In the image is Hon Angelina Osege, MP Soroti District, being helped by colleagues. She is currently admitted in hospital. This and no more in this weekly edition

CSOs condemn Parliament "Defilement"!



CSO leaders address a Press Conference condemning the brutal eviction of Members of Parliament from the House

On Thursday last week, ActionAid together with other CSO leaders gathered at the Uganda National NGO Forum offices to condemn the brutal defilement of parliament that happened last Wednesday.

"We condemn the brutal arrest of Members of parliament and many activists, journalists and Ugandans that expressed dissent about the proposed attempts to amend article 102b of the constitution to remove the age limit cap for the president", read Mr Richard Sewakiryanga while addressing the media.

The leaders also condemned the increasing lawlessness, intolerance and impunity that has brought Uganda to shame.

Irene Ovonji, the Executive Director of FIDA Uganda withheld her greetings and instead passed on a condolence message to Ugandans for the current death of democracy characterised by the invasion of parliament by security agencies.

"I thought I would never see another coup in Uganda. Unfortunately for me, I witnessed one on Wednesday. September 27th will forever be remembered as the day this Government raped the parliament of Uganda", she stated emotionally.

Farida Lule, a civil Society Activist broke down in tears as she recounted the Women murders in Entebbe that the security agencies have failed to prevent.

"The dogs have come to our country. Instead of working to ensure peace and security for all Ugandans, our Government is instead terrorising Ugandans. This is very painful and one day this Government will answer for its actions", she said amidst tears rolling down her face.

Crispy Kaheru of CCEDU called upon Ugandans who are represented by the suspended MPs to rise up and demand for their representation during the sittings that will be held when their MPs are not in the house while AAU's Arthur Larok called for isolation of the leaders and MPs who are determined to lead this country by short cut to chaos by removing the Presidential age limit.

Beyond the condemnation, the leaders affirmed their commitment and stand to defend article 102b of the constitution.

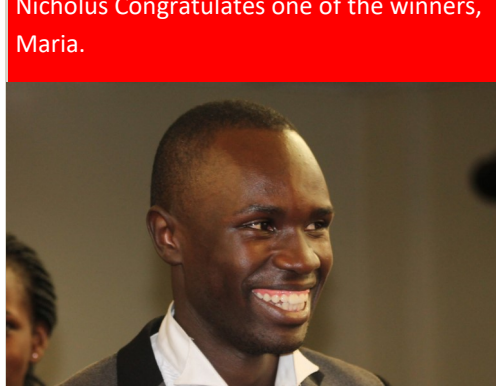
"We may be threatened, arrested or even killed but we shall not stop giving counsel to our Government that all Uganda needs is peaceful transition and hence article 102b should not be lifted", Stated Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative.

The leaders also called upon all Ugandans, regardless of political persuasion, ethnic belonging or economic status to join and promote peaceful struggle for peaceful political dialogue and transition. Ugandans were urged to use their influence to reject any oppression of citizen rights and positively work towards building a new democratic culture and governance system.

On Wednesday last week, the Speaker of the Ugandan parliament suspended 25 Members of the house over a heated presidential age limit motion. According to her, the actions of the MPs had brought the law-making chamber into disrepute. They were suspended for the next three sittings. Meanwhile, after the 25 were forced out by security operatives, the opposition bloc left the chamber in protest and the controversial motion was subsequently moved and seconded paving the way for a private members' bill on presidential age limit to pass.

The age limit motion is largely seen as a piece of legislation seeking to allow incumbent President Yoweri Museveni to stay in power. The 73-year-old will be ineligible to stand by 2021 when next polls are held.

Muk Students debate to protect Cyber space



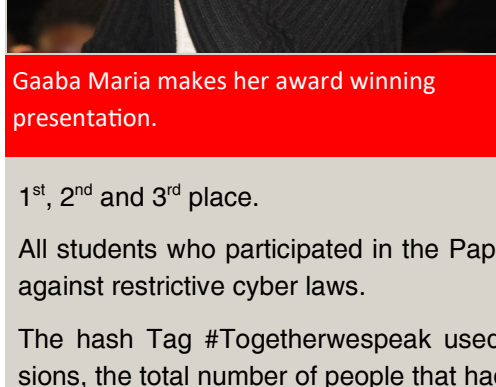
Nicholus Congratulates one of the winners, Maria.



The winners smile— Steven took home UGX600000 for his brilliant Paper



AAU Board Chair poses with the student winners



Gaaba Maria makes her award winning presentation.

ActionAid in collaboration with Makerere University held a convention on Cyber Laws and Internet Rights last Tuesday. The event was organized to bring together key actors from Civil Society, Academia, Journalists, Students and the general public to raise awareness about existing cyber laws in Uganda and how these impact on freedom of expression.

In his opening remarks, the Head of the Department of Journalism and Communication, Dr. William Tayeebwa noted that he was delighted by the partnership that exists between the University and ActionAid Uganda.

"We stand in solidarity with ActionAid and pledge our continued support to the work that you do. As an academic institution, we stand to defend good governance and there is no better time to debate freedom of expression than now, when individuals and organizations are being gagged by the Government", he said.

During the convention, Students presented papers on how the existing cyber laws affect the practice of journalism and equally infringe on freedom of expression.

Gaaba Lakel Maria, a fourth year student of Journalism and Communication noted that the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the International Human Rights instruments such as The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights all guarantee freedom of expression.

"The cyber laws in Uganda such as the 2010 Regulation of Interception of Communications Act interfere with both privacy and freedom of expression and should be challenged because of their inconsistency with the Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land," she said.

Steven Mayombwe, another student recommended that the Data Protection and Privacy for all Internet users bill be immediately enacted such that the information Ugandans seek, receive, and impact remains confidential.

Professor Nassanga Goreet stressed that cyber ethics is important for all internet users. She advised that internet users ought to enjoy their user rights responsibly with obligation to society norms and values.

A panel discussion among the students, Dons and Human Rights lawyers led by the AAU Governing Board Chairperson, Nicholas Opiyo agreed to the fact that social media platforms should be used to promote human rights and denounce social injustices in society. However, this should be done within the confines of the law.

Nicholus urged the students to utilize their academic rights by seeking knowledge which will make Uganda a better place. Most importantly, he tipped the students to at all times post the truth on social media.

"It doesn't matter how restricted the cyber space will be. So long as you have posted nothing but the truth, the law establishments will protect you", he concluded.

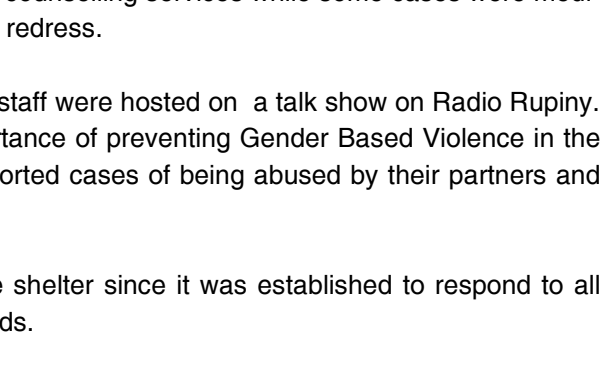
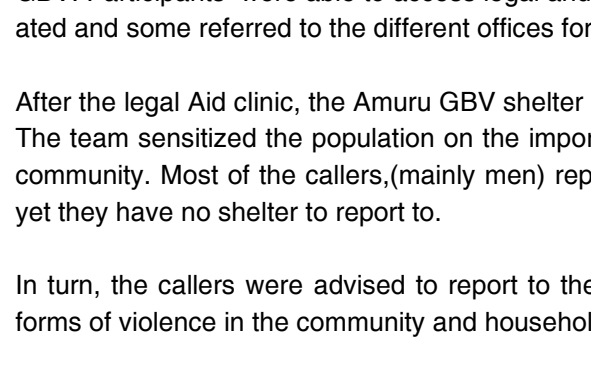
The top three students who had previously participated in a Paper competition to test their knowledge on cyber laws and their implications on freedom of expression in the country were awarded cash prizes. Steven Mayombwe, Gaaba Lakel Maria and Christopher Tusime received UGX 600,000 300,000 and 100,000 respectively for the

1st, 2nd and 3rd place.

All students who participated in the Paper competition are going to be enrolled into the campaign against restrictive cyber laws.

The hash Tag #Togetherwespeak used during the convention generated seven million impressions, the total number of people that had been reached by the event in the world.

After the Siege; Updates from AAU Offices



AAU has not been stopped by the Police Siege. All offices are operating normally apart from a few inconveniences in Hoima last week!

Smooth Activities in Amuru

Unlike in Bwaise where a legal aid clinic was closed prematurely by the Police, the same activity successfully took place in Amuru. The Gender Based Violence Shelter Program officer, Josephine Laker stated that the police and other district officials were some of the facilitators.

The activity that attracted over 170 participants created awareness on the existing laws relating to GBV. Participants were able to access legal and counselling services while some cases were mediated and some referred to the different offices for redress.

After the legal Aid clinic, the Amuru GBV shelter staff were hosted on a talk show on Radio Rupiny. The team sensitized the population on the importance of preventing Gender Based Violence in the community. Most of the callers, (mainly men) reported cases of being abused by their partners and yet they have no shelter to report to.

In turn, the callers were advised to report to the shelter since it was established to respond to all forms of violence in the community and households.

Hoima School Debate Blocked

While the activities in Amuru were a success, the story was different in Hoima. The Extractives Governance unit, which was meant to conduct an inter schools debate on oil and gas was told that the activity could not go on for security reasons. Efforts for the team to have dialogue with the Police officers were not successful as they (Police) threatened to use violence to disperse the students if they continued to engage them.

Government Newspaper Condemns Police in Editorial

In today's editorial of the New Vision (the only column where a media house is allowed to be subjective), the media house has condemned the police act of blocking the debate, which they describe as incomprehensible and unfortunate.

"It is perplexing that the police invoked the provisions of the public order management Act to stop the students debate. Certainly, this is a clear case where the public stretched the provisions of the Act. This Act does not apply to such gatherings", read the opinion.

The New vision further explains that "public meetings" regulated by the Act do not include those for educational purposes such as the debates.

This editorial, coming from a Government Newspaper shades some light amidst our dark clouds.

Police loses interest in Program Director's Office

In the Kampala Office, Police seems to have lost interest in searching the Office of the Programs Director, which they had previously sealed off pending a search. After waiting for the officers for three days, the Officers called to instruct the seal to be broken. However, management demanded that the police, who had put the seal be the ones to break it which they honoured.

Work has continued to stabilize, despite the inconvenience caused by the police siege 12 days ago as we count down to the launch of the 5th Strategy Paper early next month. Keep reading for updates on this.

Why NGOs are being targeted-Perspectives from the CD!

POLICE SIEGE AT NGO OFFICES
POLICE RAIDS ACTION AID, GLISS OFFICES
GO APP NOW, FROM GOOGLE PLAYSTORE AND BE PART OF THE NTV

In a press statement released, Police said ActionAid Uganda and Great Lakes Institute of Strategic Studies (GLISS) possibly received funding from foreign elements to facilitate the protests.

"...We received intelligence that these organisations had received funding to destabilise the city and some parts of the country following the intended debate in parliament on age-limit," a statement signed by Police spokesperson Asan Kasingye said.

The statement came after police, both in plain clothes and uniforms, stormed the premises of the duo and searched offices. The act drew a barrage of condemnations from human right activists all-over the world.

However, Kasingye defended the act saying it was justified to forestall a possible destabilization of peace in the country. In the days that followed, Police sieged the offices of Solidarity Uganda in Lira and by press time, the Offices of UHURU Institute were also under siege.

AAU's country Director brings his perspective, by explaining why NGO offices are a current target and what lessons we must draw from those that have already been sieged. Of course he totally disagrees with the Police Spokesperson.

[More in this blog](#)

Week Ahead

- ActionAid will conduct its 3rd ordinary Country Management Team meeting this Friday
- ActionAid is currently consolidating the Strengthening Uganda's Response to Gender Equality (SURGE) proposal with partners. All partners will receive funding for the program through ActionAid (the lead partner)