



Weekly

May 29 — 4 June

Social media today is more of an entertainment site than a platform to engage with the powerholders. If you point to the real issues, you will most likely end up in a maximum security prison. We need to rise up and protect our freedom of expression before its too late. Welcome to the Weekly!

Freedom of Expression campaign to be rolled out!



ActionAid staff have joined the campaign against restrictions on freedom of expression. A meeting was held to draw strategies and tactics for the campaign

Last Week, ActionAid held a breakfast meeting with civil society Actors to strategize on a campaign against oppressive cyber laws.

According to Fredrick Kawooya, the Policy and Campaigns Manager at ActionAid, Uganda has a number of cyber laws and these are being used to gag freedom of expression, a key component of the civic Charter.

“We want to roll out a joint campaign against these restrictive laws. We believe in partnerships and numbers. That is why we are leaving no body behind”, he said.

In a new [report](#), Civil Rights Defenders and the Ugandan NGO [Unwanted Witness](#) provide a joint analysis on cyber laws in Uganda and their failure to protect online freedoms.

According to Dorothy Mukasa, the AG-CEO of Unwanted Witness, most of the existing cyber laws are not compatible and consistent with the provisions in the 1995 Constitution and International Human Rights Standards.

“Freedom of expression is in certain forms criminalised under the laws which contravene international human rights law” she said.

Robert Sempala of the Human Rights Network for Journalists added that Uganda has in the recent past witnessed an all curtailment of access to social media under the pretext of national security during the 2016 general elections. At the same time, the more legitimate criminalisation of certain forms of expression have also been witnessed, the most recent being the arrest of Dr Stella Nyanzi over her Facebook posts which the authorities have termed abusive.

The meeting agreed to joint campaigns that will among others advocate that the problematic provisions within the laws be modified so that they become more transparent and unambiguous.

“The grounds under which freedom of expression can be limited in the digital environment need to be re-thought and redefined. We must promote conversation rather than restrict it”, stated Ms Eunice Musiime of Akina-Maama Wa-Afrika.

Actors also agreed to seek out interventions that will strengthen adherence to the rule of law and uphold the civic charter by both individual officers and security institutions.

The participants are also considering establishing Independent oversight bodies and procedures over such actions that have the capability of negatively impacting fundamental rights and freedoms.

There will be another meeting this week to further build the campaign with clear activities, timelines, strategies and tactics.

Cleaners dispense Drugs in Agago health facility



In Agago Town Council Health centre III, unqualified personnel have been found to be diagnosing and treating patients.

This was revealed during a stakeholders meeting conducted in the district under the Harnessing Citizen Imagination, Agency and Power for Greater Leadership and Institutional Accountability (HCP) project funded by the Democratic Governance Facility. During the heated meeting that brought together both right holders and duty bearers, participants stated that in addition to the inadequate

drugs at the health facility, cleaners have taken on the job of treating patients.

Unfortunately, the head of the health facility did not deny the allegations. He informed the meeting that it's the desperate situation that the facility is in that has called for the desperate measures.

“In some instances, you find that we have only one nurse on duty at night to attend to about 20 patients. This causes the askari to come in and support the nurse”, he confessed.

He added that the health facility is understaffed and even the few staff that are there go for unplanned study leaves leaving a vacuum at the health facility.

The meeting agreed that a visit be made to the facility and a report on the state of affairs be compiled. This will be forwarded to the duty bearers for immediate Action.

Farewell Miriam



Last Friday, ActionAid staff bid farewell to Miriam Niehaus, the Coordinator of the Civic Charter at the international Civil Society secretariat.

Miriam was in Uganda for three weeks to support the operationalization of the Civic Charter.

“There were several wow moments for me. ActionAid Uganda should continue working in partnerships with other actors. That will win the organization more funding”, she tipped.

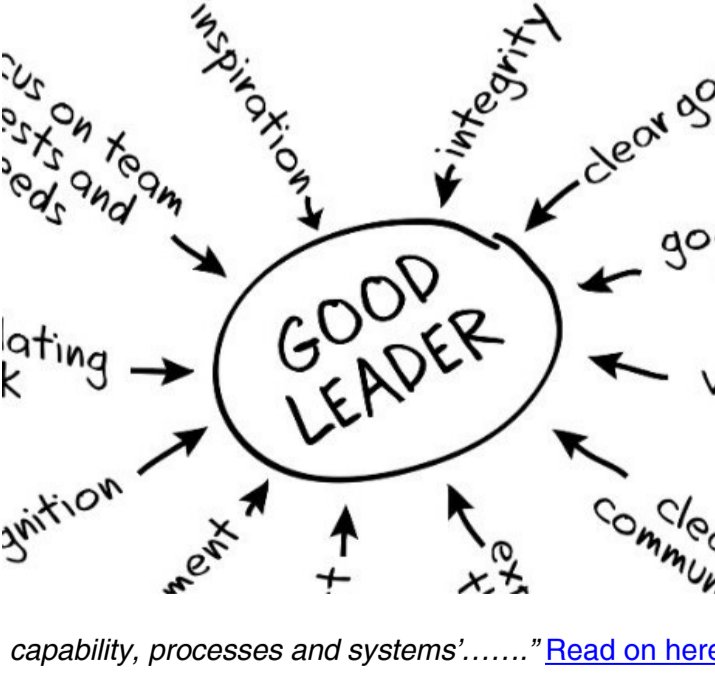
Miriam also added that she was amazed at the way the organization has strengthened its partnership with the Police force and this is something she will recommend to other countries with shrinking political space just like Uganda

The ActionAid team thanked Miriam for her support to the Organization for the past three weeks .

“Thank you for adjusting very fast to the Ugandan environment and thank you for choosing to come to Uganda”, stated AAU's Harriet Gimbo.

ActionAid cut cake in honor of Miriam, but also dressed her in Ugandan scandals, necklace and lesu to keep her Ugandan memories alive.

Reflections from Washington



This week, Arthur writes about the Civil Society's crisis of leadership and its implications for social justice struggles.

He writes:

“... I reflect on the important question of leadership. The pretext to the section on ‘our people, culture and structure’ in the 5th Strategy Paper states:

‘People will continue to be at the centre of the change that this strategy intends to achieve, individually or collectively. This will be done by aligning our goal with effective leadership, a conducive organisational culture, structure,

capability, processes and systems’.....” [Read on here](#)

WEEK AHEAD:

- ActionAid will hold an inception meeting for a land Grabs research. This is intended to inform advocacy and campaigns on land Governance and administration.
- ActionAid is today standing in solidarity with the Palestine people, demanding for an end to Israel occupation.
- In the next weekly, look out for the story of the Teso quality service delivery awards that took place last weekend.
- ActionAid will hold a Project Management committee meeting this Tuesday.