

ISSUE NO.29: HRCU WEEKLY UPDATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND KEY EMERGING ISSUES (19TH - 25TH OCTOBER 2020)

[October 27, 2020](#)



THE HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE UGANDA (HRCU)

WEEKLY UPDATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND KEY EMERGING ISSUES WITHIN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN UGANDA DURING THE PREVALENCE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Week of Monday 19th – Sunday 25th October 2020

Issue No. 29

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your continued effort in working towards contributing to a favourable or conducive environment for the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Uganda. Without you, it would be very difficult to have a voice to speak out against human rights abuses and violations.

The pressure continues to mount within the environment in which we operate as human rights defenders especially as the road towards 2021 gets clearly paved. We can only continue to sensitise the masses about the importance of staying calm and focusing on taking individual steps to do the right thing at all times. No one should be found to derail another or sway another in a direction that will leave them deprived of their naturally granted rights and liberties such as the right to vote leaders of their choice and to participate in the affairs of their country.

Please receive and read through the updates as shared below:

THE COVID-19 SITUATION IN UGANDA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

As at Saturday 24th October 2020, 2,105 samples had been tested and of these, there were 141 confirmed cases of Covid-19. There were 70 new recoveries and 2 new deaths. Overall, there is a cumulative total of 11,443 Ugandans affected by

COVID-19, 101 cumulative deaths, 7,351 cumulative recoveries and 536,177 COVID-19 samples tested.

Globally, as of 2:09pm CET, 25 October 2020, there have been 42,512,186 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1,147,301 deaths, reported to World Health Organisation.

Follow the link: <https://covid19.who.int/>

EAST AFRICAN TRUCKERS PAY BRIBES FOR NEGATIVE CORONAVIRUS TESTS, OFFICIAL SAYS

Long-distance truck drivers are paying bribes to evade corona virus testing at the Uganda-Kenya border, the head of Uganda's Professional Drivers Network said. Omongo Ndugu, who is also the vice chairperson of the Uganda Long Distance and Heavy Truck Drivers Association, said drivers and their associates pay bribes of between \$14 and \$40 to get a certificate indicating negative status, or to cross the border without being tested.

Drivers are required to be designated as COVID-19-free before they can cross the border into any east African country. COVID-19 is the disease caused by the corona virus. In an interview with VOA, Ndugu said drivers sometimes pay the bribes to bypass endless backups caused by tough restrictions at the two main crossing points, Busia and Malaba.



FILE - Trucks wait in a line on the road to enter Uganda in Malaba, a city bordering with Uganda, western Kenya, April 29, 2020. (AFP)

More information available at: <https://www.voanews.com/africa/east-african-truckers-pay-bribes-negative-coronavirus-tests-official-says>

<https://nilepost.co.ug/2020/10/20/official-east-african-truckers-paying-bribes-for-negative-coronavirus-tests/>

23 ARRESTED AT ENTEBBE AIRPORT WITH FORGED COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

Aviation police officers arrested 23 travelers who turned up at Entebbe International airport with forged PCR COVID-19 test certificates. The suspects include 13 men and 10 women who have been detained at Aviation police station at the airport. Patrick Onyango, the Kampala Metropolitan spokesperson says the suspects will be charged with forgery and uttering forged documents.

According to Onyango, travelers with forged COVID-19 negative certificates have been giving the country a negative image and police are now on a hunt for those behind the forgeries.

All travelers going through Entebbe airport are required to present a negative PCR COVID-19 test certificate issued within 120 hours before their departure time while incoming passengers must have a negative PCR COVID-19 test certificate issued within 72 hours before their flight.

The new guidelines came into effect October 1 when the government reopened the airport for commercial flights after a six-month lock down. Information obtained from the airport shows that more than 50 departing passengers have missed their flights because of failure to present valid PCR COVID-19 test certificates.



Some of the suspects at Entebbe Airport police

Details at: <https://observer.ug/news/headlines/67019-23-arrested-at-entebbe-airport-with-forged-covid-19-test-results>

<https://nilepost.co.ug/2020/10/19/23-arrested-at-entebbe-airport-with-forged-covid-19-test-certificates/>

RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS: UNEB WARNS SCHOOLS ON HIKING REGISTRATION FEES

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) has warned school administrators across the country that they risk losing their centre numbers if they charge registration fees contrary to what the government announced.

Releasing the programme for registration of candidates for the forthcoming national examinations yesterday at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala, the UNED executive secretary, Mr Daniel Odongo, said they have received complaints from parents and whistle-blowers that some schools have asked parents to pay exorbitant registration fees.



Senior 4 students attend class at St Noa Mawaggali S.S.S in Njeru, Buikwe District, on October 14 . Uneb has warned schools against increasing registration fees for finalists. PHOTO/ DENIS EDEMA

Details at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/uneb-warns-schools-on-hiking-registration-fees-2720034>

DEFENDING AND PROTECTING THE GIRL CHILD:

UGANDA'S EXAMS BODY URGES SCHOOLS TO REGISTER PREGNANT GIRLS FOR EXAMS

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) on Thursday appealed to schools across the country to register pregnant girls and allow them sit for their final examinations. Ugandan authorities have over the recent past reported an increase in teenage pregnancies since the onset of the corona virus pandemic which forced schools to close for several months.

UNEB Executive Secretary Dan Odongo said excluding the girls from sitting their exams would be a "double jeopardy" and further disrupt their futures as they were already traumatized by their experiences.

Details at: <https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/10/23/ugandas-exams-body-urges-schools-to-register-pregnant-girls-for-exams/>

CURBING POLICE BRUTALITY

MBOGO INCIDENT: SENIOR OFFICERS TRANSFERRED

Two senior officers accused of leading security personnel who used teargas to disperse members of Buganda Kingdom's Mbogo Clan were transferred.

On Saturday, police in Mityana district fired tear gas to disperse members of the Mbogo clan who had convened at their ancestral site at Mugulu, Ziggoti town council to attend thanksgiving prayers for their elder leader, Gajuule Kayiira Kasibante.

Bob Kagarura, the commander for Wamala regional police was on Thursday evening transferred to Bukedi North while the Mityana Divisional Police Commander Alex Mwine, was transferred to Hoima. The two were transferred following a directive from President Yoweri Museveni who ordered the Inspector General of Police to take action. It also follows a request from Buganda Premier Charles Peter Mayiga on Wednesday that the officers involved be prosecuted.

It remains unclear whether the officer would also be charged in the police disciplinary courts



Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga (centre, front row) with senior Police leaders and Buganda kingdom officials at Bulange on Wednesday. The Police has apologised to Buganda Kingdom over an incident where officers fired teargas to disperse members of the Mbogo (buffalo) clan. (File photo)

Details at: <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1530089/mbogo-incident-senior-officers-transferred>

<https://observer.ug/news/headlines/67023-police-apologize-to-uganda-catholic-church-over-mbogo-clan-fracas>

<https://nilepost.co.ug/2020/10/22/senior-police-commanders-transferred-over-mityana-teargas-incident/>

THE ROAD TO 2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS

POLICE TO RECRUIT 50,000 SPECIAL CONSTABLES FOR 2021 POLLS

The Police have finalised arrangements to recruit 50,000 election special Police constables (ESPCs) ahead of next year's elections. The personnel will boost the current Police force numbers to maintain law and order as Ugandans gear up for next year's polls, the Police said on Monday. The recruitment exercise will kick off soon.

"The recruitment of ESPCs is to ensure effective policing for election and post-election period," Fred Enanga, the Police spokesperson, said. The development comes after Police announced recruitment of another 5,000 special Police constables to boost its personnel, meaning the force will have 55,000 constables on their payroll by the time next year's elections are held.

Enanga, however, said the ESPCs will be disbanded soon after the elections as they are a temporary stop-gap measure to beef up the Police.

Details at: <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1529949/police-recruit-constables-2021-polls>

<https://nilepost.co.ug/2020/10/20/police-to-recruit-50000-special-constables-for-2021-polls/>

CSOS DEMAND EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT CASH FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Civil society organizations fighting for democracy in Uganda have protested the yardstick on which government intends to distribute the just released financial support among political parties saying that it is against the political parties and organizations' (Amendment act) 2010.

Last week the ministry of finance released over Uganda Shillings 15bn to the EC and according to the EC, the money has been shared on the basis of numerical strength of political parties represented in parliament. This gives advantage to the ruling National Resistance Movement- NRM to pocket over 83% of the allocation.

The Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) together with the democratic governance facility- DGF today held a press conference in Kampala and aired the misgivings on behalf of political parties.



Details at: <https://www.independent.co.ug/csos-demand-equal-distribution-of-govt-cash-for-political-parties/>

COURT VERDICT IN NUP PARTY OWNERSHIP CASE EXCITES BOBI WINE

The dismissal of the case against the transmission of the National Unity and Reconciliation and Development Party (NURP) into National Unity Platform (NUP) party has caused excitement from Kyadondo East MP Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu also known as Bobi Wine and his supporters.

Two founders of NURP Difas Basile and Hassan Twala claimed that Moses Nkonge Kibalama, the founding president of the party changed its name and transferred its

leadership to Bobi Wine without their knowledge and consent.

Civil Court deputy head Musa Ssekaana, Wednesday 21st October 2020 dismissed the case on grounds that it was filed out time in which courts can entertain judicial review matters.



The visibly jovial Bobi Wine said although the judgment is historical, the case was bogus, aimed at antagonising them.

Details at: <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1529981/court-verdict-nup-party-ownership-case-excites-bobi-wine>

14 PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANTS RETURN SIGNATURES TO EC FOR VERIFICATION

At least 14 presidential aspirants have returned forms to the Electoral Commission (EC), including signatures seconding them for verification ahead of nomination early next month for the 2021 presidential polls.

Mr. Paul Bukenya, the EC acting spokesperson, told Daily Monitor yesterday that they are considering only 100 signatures from at least 98 districts presented and it does not matter how many endorsements one presents for verification.

“It is good that some people are presenting more signatures than the ones required but that plays to their advantage because when one presents only 100 signatures and we find that three do not qualify, then you have to go back to the district to

look for them. That can be tedious than collecting signatures at once,” Mr Bukenya said.



President Museveni, Lt Gen Henry Tumukunde and Robert Kyagulanyi

Details at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/elections/14-presidential-aspirants-return-signatures-to-ec-for-verification--2485066>

GOVERNANCE:

PARLIAMENT PASSES UGX3.7 TRILLION SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET

Parliament on Tuesday 20th October 2020 approved a supplementary budget worth Shillings 3.729 trillion for the 2020/2021 financial year to cater for critical areas that are not covered for in the budget and an increase in the budgetary pressures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The supplementary comes just a month into the second quarter of the financial year. In June, parliament passed a budget of Shillings 45.49 trillion for the 2020/2021 financial year. According to the approved supplementary budget, Shillings 1.357 trillion has already been spent within the 3% legal limit, while an extra Shillings 1.982 trillion has been allocated for classified expenditure and the 223km road project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ministry of Finance among other items.

Details at: <https://www.independent.co.ug/parliament-passes-ugx-3-7-trillion-supplementary-budget/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTI0WF8WZpA>

CONCLUSION

We can only get better at all we do. Each of us is a human rights defender and therefore have a high calling to continue promoting and striving for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Uganda. In doing this, we shall continue to observe all the guidelines and directives in place to stay safe and healthy against the tides of the rising cases of COVID-19.