



Freedom of speech

By Ali Mambule
Posted by Musa

THE Police in Masaka have arrested Kibinge sub-county speaker Muhammad Kigongo on allegations that he accused President Yoweri Museveni of being responsible for the Kasubi tombs fire. He was arrested yesterday afternoon after a five-hour interrogation. Kigongo, a Democratic Party supporter, had responded to summons by the officer in charge of criminal investigations, Patrick Bamanyindo.

While conversing with a group of people at Vienna hotel in Masaka town, Kigongo allegedly accused Museveni of pretending to be touched by the fire when he was behind it. The President last week warned that anybody spreading rumours that the Government was responsible for the burning of the tombs would be arrested.

“I am infuriated by those who have been carrying out a slanderous, whispering campaign that it is the Government which burnt the Kasubi tombs. What incredibly wicked elements we have in Uganda! If anybody was still in doubt of their evil and wickedness, a slander like this is part of the proof,” he told a press conference on March 21.

I am waiting for someone to say so publicly. My fingers are itching to get such a person and I deal with him. I have instructed the security forces to scan all the tapes, radios and media because this is incredible.” The tombs, which housed the remains of four of Buganda’s kings, were destroyed by fire on March 16. The palace, built in 1882, was listed as a world heritage in 2001 by UNESCO.

The Police in Masaka said one of the people who Kigongo talked to reported him. But Kigongo told The New Vision that it was his right as a religious leader to speak his mind. He wondered what wrong he had committed to be summoned by the Police. I am a religious leader who is free to preach whatever I want to my people,” he said moments before entering the CID office. Kigongo is a local Muslim preacher in Kibinge and is referred to as a Sheik.

CID officer Bamanyindo said Kigongo would be charged with a number of offences, which he did not specify.

Masaka DP leaders rushed to Masaka Police Station where Kigongo was being interrogated only to learn that he had been detained. You can also read the article online at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=8&newsCategoryId=12&newsId=714580>