

Ugandans to the rescue



June 17, 2010

In an environment like this for one to think of a fair and balanced election, come February 2011 Uganda general election is a dream come true. Dictator Museveni is determined to use all brutal tactics at his disposal to stop and eliminate true/ real opposition. What happened to Besigye is sneak preview to all opposition participants of what to expect.



BATTLE: The scuffle in which Dr Besigye (L) was caned by members of the Kiboko Squad (Kiboko squad is the notorious civilian brutal force directly commanded by Museveni to terrorize Ugandans.) PHOTOS BY ISAAC KASAMANI & YUSUF MUZIRANSA

Posted by Musa

Dr Kizza Besigye, the Forum for Democratic Change president, was yesterday flogged by policemen and members of the Kiboko Squad vigilante group as he led a demonstration against the Electoral Commission in Kampala.

The incident occurred at Clock Tower Playground where his supporters had gathered for a second rally after the first one failed when the police cordoned off the Railway ground where it was scheduled to take place.

At about 11 a.m. Dr Besigye arrived at the Clock Tower in the company of JEEMA party president Asuman Basalirwa and other FDC officials. He asked the police why they were blocking his rallies in Kampala.

Help is on the way

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Kampala Metropolitan Police Commander Andrew Sorowen and Mr Moses Kafero, the police commander in charge of Kampala South, who oversaw yesterday's operation, told Dr Besigye that his rallies were being blocked because he never sought police permission.

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For about 40 minutes, Dr Besigye and Mr Basalirwa kept up a bitter exchange of words with the police. A short distance away, were Kiboko elements locked in running battles with opposition supporters along Entebbe highway, paralysing traffic.

As the commotion unfolded, JEEMA's Secretary for Youth, Fred Kasaijja, who was carrying about 10 anti-EC posters, caught police off-guard and jumped over a nearby short wire fence, running towards Dr Besigye. About 30 police officers armed with AK-47 rifles and backed by a posse of Kiboko men pursued him.

Within seconds, Mr Kasaijja had wrapped himself around Dr Besigye. The pursuing police and Kiboko group then set upon the two.

They unsuccessfully tried to pull Mr Kasaijja from Dr Besigye's embrace before resorting to clubbing him. Dr Besigye says he took blows to the hip, shoulders and chest.

It took about five minutes for FDC youth league members; Michael Kabaziguruka, Francis Mwijukye, Frank Atukunda and Sam Mugumya to rescue Dr Besigye. He would later say that Inspector General of Police, Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura, issued the order for him to be beaten.

"Beating me means nothing because I am ready to die if that is the only way of saving this country," Dr Besigye said. "We shall die rather than live under a terrorist regime."

Anticipating more chaos, the FDC leader, in the company of his supporters left Clock Tower and marched through Kibuye to a playground in Katwe-Kisuule Zone. Here, a mammoth crowd gathered to listen to him but before he could start speaking, three police patrol trucks carrying anti-riot police arrived, dispersing his supporters.

They were immediately reinforced by four police motorcycles carrying armed personnel. As the crowd dispersed, Dr Besigye demanded for a microphone and went ahead with his speech as some supporters who had ducked into the nearby small houses of Katwe could be heard cheering him on.

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Dr Besigye then drove towards Parliament where he was scheduled to address a press conference but was stopped from accessing the venue by the police who said they could not allow him in as they were not informed of his visit.

At Parliament, Dr Besigye said the Inter-Party Cooperation, a grouping of five opposition parties, will not take part in the 2011 elections unless Dr Badru Kiggundu's-led EC is disbanded to give way for an independent commission.

“Any blood that shall be shed in an attempt to dislodge the Electoral Commission is blood on the hands of Kiggundu and his team. They have the court judgement that clearly shows that they are incapable. They should question their own mind and values,” he said. “We shall continue to reject them until Ugandans regain power to take charge of the leadership of their country.”

Police spokeswoman Judith Nabakooba said the Force would investigate officers who were deployed at Clock Tower to establish why they beat Dr Besigye.

“It's hard for me to say anything now because we are hearing many stories about what happened,” Ms Nabakooba said. “We shall investigate officers who were deployed in the area to find out if they beat him or not.”

Nationwide protest

Yesterday's demonstration follows a decision by the IPC last week to stage nationwide protests against the embattled electoral commissioners who were reappointed last year despite widespread irregularities in the 2006 election which they oversaw.

The IPC vehemently rejected their reappointment. The Supreme Court ruled in 2006 that the current EC was incompetent to preside over the country's general elections.

Dr Besigye is no stranger to altercations with the security services. He has had as many run-ins with the State before he fled into self-imposed exile shortly after the disputed 2001 elections in which he unsuccessfully attempted to unseat President Museveni. The story has largely not changed since his return in 2005, including a rape charge that was dismissed by court.