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## **Otunnu spokesperson arrested**

### **Embassies warn citizens of possible violence**

### *Opposition leader considering next move*

Posted by Musa

The situation remains tense country wide in Uganda after the Uganda electoral authority postponed mayoral and local elections in the capital Kampala, and other parts of the country on Wednesday after the electoral commission said violence had marred voting and that it had found evidence of ballot stuffing. **Now this makes you wonder! If they can steal the mayoral elections, then what did they do with the general presidential election?**

On Thursday morning bullets locked the industrial town of Jinja where the UPC candidate for Jinja District and spokesperson for UPC presidential candidate Robert Kanusu was arrested and **beaten by the police**, for demanding immediate counting and announcement of results.

Before his arrest Kanusu alleged that the Returning Officer, Ms Flavia Mujulisi was delaying declaration of the LCV results deliberately in order to rig in favor of the National Resistance Movement Candidate, Fredrick Ngobi Gume. His arrest sparked off running battles between the police and Kanusu's supporters. He was later taken to Jinja's Central Police Station, where he remains held.

When his supporters stormed Jinja CPS, this prompted the army to surround the police station premises, before the police started shooting in the air and scattering people using teargas canisters. Jinja police station is surrounded by the army that has been called in to ensure that the irate people do not breach it to rescue their candidate. Do democratic elections have to be run and resolved this way?

In Kampala the situation remains tense. Opposition sources say that the combined force of the police and army has arrested about 200 opposition supporters. However the police spokesperson has said that only over 80

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people have been arrested between Tuesday and Wednesday on charges, ranging from inciting violence to acting as militias on the polling day.

The Opposition DP candidate for Kampala business district said the police was arresting opposition agents who complained about the malpractices, while looking the other way when it came to the real criminals who were stuffing ballots and beating up people. He said that a group of Kiboko squad beat up people in Lubaga division in the presence of the police. "After they had retreated to Dembe FM (Dembe FM is a radio station owned by the NRM candidate) the police moved in and started arresting anybody with a fresh would for engaging in election violence. This is a sin, here on earth and in heaven" ***And this is one of the numerous reasons why we advised innocent Ugandans against participating in these sham elections! You get beaten up, arrested, wounded and even lose your life, but for what?***

In an earlier interview, Mr Elias Lukwago, one of the Mayoral candidates said those arrested were his polling agents. The opposition said the mayoral election was a repeat of Friday's flawed presidential election, when Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, one of Africa's longest serving leaders, allegedly won a fourth term in office!

"The electoral commission hereby informs candidates, their agents, voters that the polling process has been postponed," deputy chairman of the electoral commission Joseph Biribonwa told reporters.

He said there was violence, evidence of ballot-stuffing and that presiding officers were flouting poll procedures. Local television showed voters and officials displaying pre-ticked ballots and stuffed boxes in several polling stations, all marked in favor of ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) mayoral candidate, Peter Sematimba. ***As a Ugandan and some one who cares, please take my advice, refrain from these sham elections, stay home because help is on the way***

NRM officials were not immediately available for comment.

Several foreign embassies in Kampala sent messages to their citizens to warn them that the collapse of the mayoral and local elections made violent protests more likely. Analysts had expected a tight race between Sematimba

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and opposition candidate Erias Lukwago and some said Lukwago was pulling ahead.

The Uganda Law Society and the Democracy Monitoring Group (DemGroup) and other observers also called for disqualification of mayoral candidates implicated in the ballot stuffing. However, the EC said any action will be taken only after an investigation.

"If you have been adjudged an election thief, why should you (be allowed to) run again," ULS president Bruce Kyerere said.

"This is exactly what went across the country during the presidential and parliamentary race," said Margaret Wokuri, spokeswoman for the opposition Inter-Party Cooperation coalition.

"They are postponing the problem unless they go back to the drawing board and follow proper procedures. People are really getting angry now."

A report by the Independent *Daily Monitor* says that an elaborate though disjointed rigging machinery was for several days locked in consultative meetings aimed at ensuring that National Resistance Movement (NRM) mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba sailed through yesterday's botched elections.

According to a source with intimate access into the workings of the ruling party, who preferred anonymity, the consultations largely came to the conclusion that Mr. Sematimba could not win if subjected to a fair vote. According to the source, outgoing Kampala mayor Nasser Ntege Sebbagala suggested during one of these meetings that a second and more failsafe plan be hatched to deliver a result.

The movement of electoral materials prior to yesterday's fiasco would therefore, be largely known by the Sematimba camp. The ballot papers would be dispatched from the Electoral Commission to the various police stations around Kampala. They would be kept for safe custody for the night. On polling day, the materials would be transported to the various polling stations under the supervision of electoral officials under the watchful eye of the police.

With this in mind, a final meeting was held at a Kampala hotel on Tuesday night. Reportedly attended by, among others, Mr. Sematimba himself, Mr.

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Sebbagala and a very senior and long-serving leader in the NRM, it was decided that Sebbagala's plan of action would be most appropriate. A third plan of action, which is still unclear, was also agreed, the monitor report adds

By yesterday opposition parties were involved in meetings planning the next action