

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, April 18th, 2011 (covering April 11th 2011 to April 17th 2011)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

1) State-owned media

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. April 11, 2011, in English "Besigye detained over demo" by Eddie Sejjoba

- Forum for Democratic Change leader, Kizza Besigye, has been detained at Kasangati Police post for leading a demonstration against high commodity prices.
- Besigye, who was seated along the road at Lutete on Gayaza road, was arrested with seven other people who had joined him in a demonstration called by the opposition. Although the police insisted that Besigye was misleading the public into a demonstration, the opposition leader said it was his right to demonstrate.
- Drama ensued upon reaching the police post when Besigye refused to disembark from a police patrol until policemen used reasonable force to lift him into the building.
- Our reporter at Kasangati police post says journalists and other people have been blocked from accessing the venue. Police fired tear gas to disperse a people who had started gathering at the police post.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. April 12, 2011, in English "Maj-Gen Kayihura defends arrests" by Steven Candia

- Police boss Maj-Gen Kale Kayihura yesterday defended the arrest of opposition politicians in connection with a demonstration against the rising cost of living and accused them of trying to imitate the riots that overthrew Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.
- Addressing the press at the Media Centre later in the day, Kayihura said they had information that the opposition leaders had planned to converge at Christ the King Church before marching to the Constitutional Square to hold a demonstration. Kayihura hailed the public for shunning the call.
- Two opposition party leaders, Dr Kizza Besigye (FDC) Nibert Mao (DP) and over 10 other opposition politicians, were yesterday arrested and charged in court after they attempted to hold the demonstration over rising commodity prices. Asked what law the organizers had breached, Kayihura said they had flouted procedure, defied lawful orders, blocked traffic and incited violence.

2) Privately owned media

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 11, 2011, in English

"Besigye charged with inciting violence, bailed out" [Author unknown]

- Forum for Democratic Change Party President Dr Kizza Besigye has been taken to court and charged with inciting violence and failure to comply with lawful orders. The opposition leader has, however, been released on non-cash bail of 10m shillings [approximately 4200 US dollars].
- In court, Magistrate Mawanda Jumire, says he granted Dr Besigye bail owing to his good conduct in previous cases. Dr Besigye was arraigned after nearly six hours detention.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 12, 2011, in English

“Ugandan police accused of ‘bidding for a rogue regime’ ” [Author unknown]

- Opposition politician Kizza Besigye last night said he is ready to die if that will bring sanity in the governance of Uganda, including affording all citizens full enjoyment of civil liberties.
- In an interview with this newspaper at his home in Kasangati, Wakiso District, Dr Besigye said the police under Maj-Gen Kale Kayihura has "lost direction" because they are "bidding for a rogue regime".
- The opposition politician, who lost a third presidential election to Mr Museveni on 18 February, ruled out returning to exile irrespective of harassment by the government.
- Asked how he would solve the problem of rising cost of living if he were president, Dr Besigye said the solution lies in forward planning and investing in food storage facilities as well as national oil reserves so that intermediate scarcities do not immediately trigger price hikes.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 12, 2011, in English

"Illegal killings in Uganda worry US government" by Tabu Butagira

- A new US report on Human Rights violations has indicted Ugandan police and army for indiscriminately killing civilians, including inmates, and highlighted failure to punish perpetrators.
- Released on Friday by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices chapter on Uganda says "security forces killed suspects while in custody or during questioning".
- "Serious human rights problems in the country included arbitrary killings; vigilante killings; mob and ethnic violence; torture and abuse of detainees; official impunity; politically-motivated arrest and detention..." it notes.
- Washington has previously faulted Uganda government's human rights record, and this present report, while chronicling findings of local human rights organizations, speaks of victims' being stabbed, caned, raped or their genitals being squeezed.
- Ms Judith Nabakooba, the spokesperson for police, the institution accused of orchestrating many of the alleged extra-judicial killings, said the report is biased.
- The report does not spare the Uganda People's Defense Forces either. It states that in Karamoja, 90 civilians died, many were victims of indiscriminate bombing during the disarmament exercise last year alone. The report also accused the army of torturing civilian there.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 13, 2011, in English

"Cabinet wants gays Bill dropped" by Sheila Naturinda

- A cabinet sub-committee formed to study the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2010 and report back to cabinet, yesterday added a spin into the bill and called for its withdrawal. In a closed-door meeting with Mr David Bahati, the mover of the bill, the sub-committee said some of the penalties proposed in the bill could be catered for by the Penal Code Act and the yet-to-come Sexual Offences Bill.
- He added that he was willing to amend the proposed law but "without putting the values of the country at risk". The sub-committee was set up by President Museveni after pressure from the USA and other countries in Europe to drop the bill.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 13, 2011, in English

"Donors attack government over walk campaign" by Philippa Croome

- Members of the international community have denounced police handling of the walk-to-work campaign on Monday [11 April] as an affront to Ugandans' civil and human rights. Forum for Democratic Change leader Kizza Besigye and Democratic Party leader Norbert Mao were violently arrested along with several other opposition politicians and charged with inciting violence after participating in the walk-to-work effort against the rising fuel prices and cost of living in the country.
- Peaceful walkers, along with primary school children caught in the fracas, were also tear-gassed by police. Yesterday, the US government issued a statement voicing concern over the matter.
- Amnesty International commented that Uganda's "unjust ban on public rallies" is part of an unlawful "blanket ban against all forms of public assemblies" that has been in place since the conclusion of the February general elections, on the grounds of ensuring public security.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 14, 2011, in English

"Commonwealth faults election" by Tabu Butagira

- The 18 February election that incumbent President Museveni won with 68 per cent "did not fully meet national, regional and international standards for democratic elections", the Commonwealth Observer Group has declared.
- In its final report, the team headed by Ms Dame Billie Miller, the former Barbados deputy prime minister, singles out "overwhelming" abuse of incumbency, lack of a level playing field and commercialization of politics as having spoilt the ballot. "The NRM, the ruling party in Uganda, is by far the largest and best-resourced and, after many years in power, elements of the state structure are synonymous with the party," the report reads in part.
- The Commonwealth team report indicts the Eng Badru Kiggundu-led Electoral Commission for mismanaging the election exercise by employing ill-trained polling officials, disenfranchising thousands of voters and carving exclusive polling stations for soldiers, contrary to the law.
- The team named the Daily Monitor as the newspaper that provided the most "balanced" coverage while the New Vision election reporting was more comprehensive while Nation Television (NTV) Uganda and Wavamuno Broadcasting Services (WBS) were judged to have given Mr. Museveni and IPC flag bearer Kizza Besigye more publicity.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 14, 2011, in English

"Walk to work campaign: Besigye shot, Kampala Hospital besieged" [Author unknown]

- Dr Besigye has been shot in the right hand after soldiers, who have taken over from police, opened fire. The retired UPDF colonel was allegedly shot in the right arm by soldiers. He is now being taken to Kampala Hospital.
- Military police are shooting live bullets, scattering opposition supporters who were accompanying Dr Besigye on the walk-to-work demonstration.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 14, 2011, in English

"Gulu in flames, under heavy gunfire as Mao is arrested" [Author unknown]

- Residents of Gulu town [northern Uganda] protesting the arrest of District Chairman Norbert Mao over the "walk-to-work" demonstration have come under heavy gunfire and tear-gassing by both soldiers and police.
- The police are reported to be rounding the town with Mao in their hold, unsure where to take him into safe custody as crowd pursues them to have him released.
- Fuel stations and shops are hurriedly closed with owners, and or operators, fearing probable damage by infuriated dwellers. Our Northern Uganda Bureau Chief James Eriku says soldiers summoned from the nearby UPDF 4th Division Headquarters are driving in armored cars, shooting randomly.
- Residents are fighting back by pelting the security operatives with stones, and are burning car tires and any combustible material on the roads to halt the military's advance.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 15, 2011, in English

"Government bans live broadcast of events" by Richard Wanambwa

- The government last evening moved to curtail major broadcasting houses when it banned live broadcast of news events around the walk-to-work campaign. BBC's Joshua Mali told Daily Monitor that a senior source at one of the TV stations affected spoke to him on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. The Uganda Communication Commission reportedly directed radio and television stations to stop running live coverage of the events.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 15, 2011, in English

"220 people arrested over walk-to-work" by Andrew Bagala

- At least 220 people have been arrested countrywide in yesterday's clashes between security forces and Ugandans who participated in the walk-to-work campaign in protest against rising food and fuel prices.
- Around 47 people were injured.