

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, April 25th, 2011 (covering April 18th 2011 to April 24th 2011)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

1) State-owned media

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. April 18, 2011, in English
"Cabinet speaks out on Besigye demos" by Henry Mukasa

- The government has warned against illegal demonstrations, saying the perpetrators will be held legally responsible.
- In a statement issued by the cabinet yesterday evening, the government warned that it would not tolerate "negative elements" that want to exploit the economic crunch to portray it as being insensitive to problems facing the citizens.
- The government said the "walk-to-work" demonstrations were politically motivated to undermine its authority and take over government illegally. "It has come to the knowledge of the government that this group plans to provoke confrontation with the police in order to portray the government as brutal in its actions. In mobilizing masses for demonstrations, the group has been inducing potential rioters with money."
- The statement said the government recognizes the constitutional right for Ugandans to demonstrate freely and peacefully but the police needed to be informed to maintain law and order. The inspector-general of police, Maj- Gen Kale Kayihura, said the force was ready to block the walk to work demonstrations. He insisted that the campaign is illegal because the organizers did not inform the police about it.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. April 18, 2011, in English

- Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) President Kizza Besigye is detained at Kasangati Police Station following his arrest Monday morning [18 April] for attempting for the third time to walk to work in protest of high fuel and commodities prices.
- Unlike last week, where the opposition leader, was left to walk for a few meters before police intercepted him, this time round, police arrested Besigye at his home Kasangati before trekking to his party headquarters at Najjanakumbi a Kampala suburb.

2) Privately owned media

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 19, 2011, in English

"Death toll rises to 4 as army steps in" [Author unknown]

- Army and police units yesterday used tear gas, bullets and truncheons to break up protests against rising food and fuel prices around the country, leaving at least one person dead in Kampala, and bringing the death toll to four in three days.
- One person died yesterday in Kampala. Witnesses reported that the man "was first beaten by the military and when the police came, they fired tear gas at him, he collapsed and was picked up by the Uganda Red Cross volunteers and later died on his way to Kasangati Hospital."

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 19, 2011, in English

"UCC orders 24-hour shutdown of Facebook" by Sheila Naturinda

- The Uganda Communications Commission quietly asked Internet service providers to block communication on Facebook and Twitter messaging platforms for 24 hours during the Walk-to-Work campaign on Thursday last week [14 April]. However, Internet services carried on without a glitch that day save for subscribers on one network who experienced intermittent interruptions.
- A 14 April letter signed by Mr Quinto Ojok, who signed in acting capacity for UCC's Executive Director Godfrey Mutabazi, said social networking fora like Twitter and Facebook should be shut-down for security reasons.
- When contacted yesterday, UCC top boss Mr Mutabazi told Daily Monitor that there was a miscommunication and that the letter wasn't necessary. He nonetheless didn't deny his office had sent out the letter [in his absence].

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 19, 2011, in English

"Five MPs, Otunnu charged over walk-to-work protest" [Author unknown]

- UPC party president and five law makers were among 50 people arrested yesterday and lined up in different courts across the city over their involvement in the walk-to-work protests that continued for the third time in barely two weeks.
- The suspects were charged with offences ranging from inciting violence, disobedience of lawful orders to obstructing traffic before being released on bail. At Nakawa Chief Magistrates court, UPC president Olara Otuunu, Busiro East MP elect Ssemujju Nganda, and Budadiri East MP-elect Nandala Mafabi, appeared before Chief Magistrate Charles Serubuga who released them unconditionally.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 20, 2011, in English

"Uganda Broadcasting Council warns on walk-to-work coverage" by John Njoroge

- The Uganda Broadcasting Council has warned broadcasters it would take "appropriate action" against any media house that airs material deemed to promote the culture of violence, ethnic prejudice and public insecurity, emerging details show.
- Under the 'Minimum Broadcasting Standards' of the Electronic Media Act, broadcasters or video operators are required to ensure that programs they air do not promote violence, are not distorted and are in compliance with "the existing law".
- Quoting that law, UBC interim board chairman Godfrey Mutabazi told broadcasters last week that several complaints had been received about the manner in which some of them were reporting the walk-to-work demonstrations, especially in Kampala.
- Several radio and television broadcasters this newspaper spoke to yesterday said while Mr Mutabazi quoted the law correctly, they were, however, anxious that it can be interpreted selectively. "It is a bad law," a director of one broadcaster told this newspaper. "We were instructed not to air footage in real time. Unless the current law is changed, the regulator can stop us," he added.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 20, 2011, in English

"Negotiate with opposition, UN tells Uganda government" by Risdell Kasasira

- The office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Uganda and a democracy pressure group yesterday called on the government, political opposition and civil society to find a negotiated end to the ongoing unrest over the increased cost of living. Both organizations, in different statements, said all players should find a

way to talk to end the confrontations which have so far led to four deaths, left scores seriously injured and hundreds arrested and dumped in prison.

- Calling for a stop to the use of "disproportionate and excessive force," the UN commissioner for human rights urged the government to conduct thorough, prompt and impartial investigations into the "human rights violations" allegedly perpetrated by the security forces.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 21, 2011, in English

"Walk to work campaign day 4: Live updates" [Author unknown]

- Two policemen have been lynched by protesters in Masaka [southern Uganda]. One police officer was surrounded and attacked at Kitaka in Nyendo just outside the town. The other was killed at a place popularly referred to as Total.
- Masaka town has gone into lock-down with all roads into and within the town closed off. Any motorist or motorcyclist is being stopped, the police and army are shooting in the air and lobbing teargas. Shops have been shut and business has come to a stand-still.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 21, 2011, in English

"Dr Besigye jailed" [Author unknown]

- A Nabweru Court magistrate has sent Dr Kizza Besigye on remand to an as yet unknown prison after he was charged with unlawful assembly.
- He will be returned to court next week on 27 April. The magistrate refused to entertain a bail application saying there were "other pending matters". Dr Besigye is still being held in the court cells.
- The Forum for Democratic Change leader joins Democratic Party leader Norbert Mao who has now been in detention for three days over the walk-to-work protests.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 21, 2011, in English

"Walk to work campaign day 4: Live updates" [Author unknown]

- A child estimated to be about 4-years-old has been shot dead in Nyendo, Masaka [southern Uganda], as security forces battled to control protesters. Eye witnesses say the child was hit when police opened fire with live rounds into a crowd of unarmed civilians. The child was shot in the head and in the ribs.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 22, 2011, in English

"MPs ask government to cut taxes on fuel" by Yasiin Mugerwa

- As public protests over high food and fuel prices entered the third week, and the death toll jumped to five in four days, lawmakers have added their voice to calls for government to stop what they described as arrogance and reduce taxes on fuel.
- MPs on the natural resources committee yesterday asked that the government uses part of the 400m dollars (about 920bn shillings) paid to Uganda in respect of a capital tax gains from Tullow-Heritage Oil deal to mitigate the current crisis.
- While President Museveni has rejected proposals to subsidize the cost of fuel, claiming that the move would unsettle the economy, on Monday, Kenya announced a 20 per cent or 108 shillings per litre reduction in excise tax on diesel and a 30 per cent or 140 shillings cut in excise tax on paraffin.