

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, March 22nd, 2010 (covering March 15th to March 21st 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 15, 2010, in English

"FDC party buys two radio stations" by Gerald Bareebe

- The Forum for Democratic Change has announced that it has bought two existing radio stations following a government decision to deny the party a license to set up its own. The decision to buy the radio stations was taken by FDC National Executive Committee, the highest decision-making organ of the party. The announcement was made by FDC president, Dr. Kizza Besigye.
- He added he cannot reveal the identities of the radio stations because he does not want them to suffer what he called the "CBS fate" The government took CBS, a largely Buganda kingdom-owned radio, off the airwaves on September 10 last year, accusing it of inciting riots in and around Kampala during which at least some 27 people died.
- The Uganda Broadcasting Council Chairman, Mr. Godfrey Mutabazi, told Daily Monitor yesterday that FDC will not be allowed to own radio stations, adding that if the council identifies the two radio stations, they will be switched-off.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 16, 2010, in English

"Otunnu: Investigate Luweero massacres" by Isaac Khisa & Mercy Nalugo

- Mr. Otunnu, elected UPC party president on Saturday night, called for an independent inquiry into the killings in Luweero, which saw the fiercest fighting between President Museveni's National Resistance Army and Obote's UPC government between 1981 and 1985.
- President Museveni, whose fighters ousted the Tito Okello regime in 1986, a year after Obote had been overthrown in a coup, has always blamed the Uganda National Liberation Army under the UPC of having committed atrocities and killed many of the 250,000 people believed to have died in the five-year war, most of them civilians.
- Mr. Otunnu served as ambassador to the UN under Obote and as Foreign Affairs Minister under Tito Okello. He was also involved in the failed peace talks in Nairobi between the late Okello and Mr Museveni before leaving for exile and a long diplomatic career in the United Nations.
- Yesterday's comments seem to indicate that Otunnu, who has previously accused the Museveni government of genocide in northern Uganda during the two-decade war against the Lord's Resistance Army rebels, will use his time as UPC leader to question the NRM government's record on governance and human rights.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 17, 2010, in English

"Fire destroys Kasubi tombs" by Tabu Butagira and Katherine Haywood

- The historic Kasubi Tombs last night went up in flames, engulfing the main building housing the mausoleums of four former Buganda kings (Kabakas). Hundreds of Kingdom subjects, some prostrating, crying and screaming, gathered in front of the embers. The grass-thatched hut was completely destroyed within minutes, leaving the skeletal brick wall. The burial grounds, revered by the Baganda, are 128 years old.

- Witnesses said the blaze started around 8.30 p.m. One woman said she heard "a loud explosion" behind the tombs, just before the fire began. A white numberless pick-up truck reportedly emerged from the tombs shortly after the fire broke out.
- The Kasubi tombs, some four kilometres west of Kampala city, are a UNESCO-certified World Heritage site that brings in millions of shillings to Buganda kingdom through tourism.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 17, 2010, in English

“Probe Uganda leader Museveni over war crimes, opposition chief urges world court” [Author unknown]

- Democratic Party President Norbert Mao has asked the International Criminal Court to investigate President Museveni over the northern Uganda war killings.
- The Youth Right, a human rights assembly under the Inter Party Cooperation, also last month petitioned the ICC to investigate the September 2009 riots that left at least 27 people dead.
- Mr. Mao said: "The ICC should investigate President Museveni over the two-decade war and its atrocities. It's not enough to investigate the Lord's Resistance Army when Mr. Museveni is the man who has been giving orders as the commander-in-chief."
- But the senior presidential advisor on media, Mr. John Nagenda, criticized Mr. Mao's demands saying that he should realize that the president was protecting Ugandans to fight the rebels in northern Uganda, and that he could not put Mr. Museveni on the same level as LRA leader Kony.

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Radio Kampala, 0400 GMT. March 17, 2010, in English

- The administration of Makerere University has suspended the Students' Guild campaigns and the pending Guild elections following the riots that rocked the campus due to the death of two Kenyan students that got into a fight with a private security guard. The Police says continuing with the campaigns will breach security.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 17, 2010, in English

"Kabaka, Museveni, Besigye visit burnt Kasubi tombs" [Author unknown]

- The Kabaka [king] of Buganda Ronald Muwenda Mutebi has visited Kasubi Tombs, several minutes after president Yoweri Museveni toured what remains of the cultural site that was burnt to ashes on Tuesday night.
- Earlier, the military opened fire after a crowd of people tried to stop the president's convoy from accessing the historical site. The five minutes gunfire that later dispersed the crowd also left three people injured. It is not yet clear whether there were any deaths. Also, a man, whose identity has not yet been revealed, has been arrested at the tombs with a pistol. The man in civilian clothes was led away by the military.
- Mr. Museveni who later arrived at the site, called for calm and ordered that a special investigation be carried out to establish the cause of the fire. He has promised to work together with the Mengo establishment to reconstruct the tombs.
- Reports indicate that Peter Sematimba, the Rubaga Chairman division [allied to President Museveni's ruling National Resistance Movement party], was beaten up and denied access to the site in the morning.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. March 19, 2010, in English

"Otunnu stoned at Kasubi tombs" by Brian Mayanja and Henry Mukasa

- Angry Buganda loyalists yesterday pelted Uganda People's Congress president Olara Otunnu with stones before chasing him away from the burnt Kasubi tombs. Otunnu was leading a team of party officials on a tour of the world famous tombs which were burnt to ashes on Monday night.
- A group of people calling themselves The Ganda Group, accused the officials of politicking around the grave of Sir Edward Muteesa whose death, they said, was caused by the UPC government. Former UPC leader Apolo Obote in 1966 ordered the then army commander, Idi Amin, to attack Muteesa's palace at Lubiri-Mengo, forcing the monarch to flee into exile in the UK. Obote was the executive prime minister.
- His first stop was Mengo, the seat of the Buganda kingdom, where he sought to meet Katikkiro JB Walusimbi. Speaking to journalists, Otunnu condemned the fire which he described as a brutal act. He said the tombs were both a national and global heritage and that the entire country had suffered loss.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 20, 2010, in English

"Kasubi Tombs fire: Government agrees with Mengo" by Robert Mwanje

- The government and Buganda kingdom have agreed to form a joint committee to ensure immediate restoration of the destroyed royal tombs at Kasubi.
- The visit was also intended to convey government greetings and sympathies from President Museveni over the destruction of the tombs, pledge the government's support and to assure the kingdom that investigations into the cause of the fire and shooting of seven people, resulting in the death of three of them, will be carried out promptly.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. March 20, 2010, in English

"Fighting in Kabale ahead of key by-election" by Gerald Bareebe & Joseph Mazige

- [The opposition] Forum for Democratic Change Women's League chairperson Ingrid Turinawe has been hospitalized after she was allegedly beaten into coma by police in Kabale [southwestern Uganda] as campaigns for the Rukiga [Constituency] by-election heats up. The by-election that will be held on Tuesday has been a powder keg waiting to explode with stakes raised a notch higher after the ruling National Resistance Movement lost another critical by-election in Mbale Municipality [eastern Uganda] to the FDC over a month ago.
- The Thursday fracas began after the police arrested a group of FDC youth on fears that they were plotting to disrupt the by-election. The regional police commander, Ms Olive Wabwiire, told Saturday Monitor, "We suspected that they wanted to cause chaos and that's why we detained them. Most of these youth are not from Kabale. They have just been ferried here." But according to the Kabale Municipality Mayor, Mr Pius Ruhemurana, from whose home the youth were arrested, the "boys" had been brought in to sensitize the electorate ahead of the election day.
- According to sources, Ms Turinawe then led a group of FDC supporters to Kabale police station to demand the release of the detained youth. The group had also brought the detainees food. However, the police denied them access to the held youth, forcing Ms Turinawe to make a phone call to the police's deputy director of operations, Mr Grace Turyagumanawe. He reportedly ordered the Kabale police to let the FDC group

see their colleagues - and when they got into the cells, they discovered one of the detainees was sick. "Turinawe left to go buy some medicine for the boy," the source, who preferred anonymity, said. "But when returning, she met the District Police Commander, Mr Charles Sembambulidde, who began kicking her." Mr. Sembambulidde was then manhandled.

- Earlier, the official vehicle of Agriculture Minister Hope Mwesigye was pelted with stones and crushed in similar violence involving the rivaling political factions. The violence in Rukiga will raise concerns on the country's preparedness for the 2011 elections and the role of security agencies in the exercise.