

Journalist assaulted at campaign rally

UGANDA: Supporters of Peter Claver Mutuluza, an aspiring member of parliament for the Mawokota North constituency, allegedly roughed up and beat journalist Drake Kizito at a campaign rally. Kizito, a journalist with the Ink Media Agency, had gone to cover Mutuluza's 17 December 2010 rally at the Jjeza parish, in Muduuma sub-county, Mawokota North, in the Mpigi district. Mutuluza is an incumbent member of parliament for Mawokota North who won the seat in 2006 on the National Resistance Movement ticket.



The Mawokota North seat has attracted five candidates, including Ameria Kyambadde, a former private secretary to President Museveni from the ruling National Resistance Movement party, Mutuluza as an independent, Tebusweke Mayinja from the Democratic Party, Buwembo Shafik from Forum for Democratic Change and Kaweesa Ahmed of the Justice Forum ticket.

An eyewitness told HRNJ-Uganda that attendance at the rally was lower than expected and Mutuluza was accusing police of blocking his supporters. Kizito said that Mutuluza was hurling accusation when he saw the journalist join the rally with a camera. "He accused me of spying for Ameria Kyambadde. His supporters immediately rounded me up and started beating me until the police came to my rescue," Kizito said. The journalist received injuries to his legs. When HRNJ-Uganda contacted Mutuluza he neither admitted to nor denied what had happened.

This is the first assault case at a rally to be registered by HRNJ-Uganda since campaigning began on 16 December. "It indicates that the campaign for members of parliament is likely to be more violent than the presidential and local government campaigns," HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulii Ssebagala said.

As of 20 December, nobody had been summoned for questioning or arrested for the assault on Kizito, despite the fact that the journalist reported the incident and recorded a statement at the Jjeza police station. HRNJ-Uganda demands that Mutuluza be arrested for inciting violence and assaulting a journalist.

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