

Police halt Mak students assembly

Justification. Police say they stopped the meeting because some students were planning to turn it into a demonstration.

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The fate of Makerere university students demonstration over the 15 per cent tuition increment is unknown after police yesterday foiled the general assembly that was called by the students' leadership.

The students, led by their Guild president, Mr Julius Kateregga, were slated to hold a general assembly at the university's Freedom Square to decide the next step regarding the tuition increment.

However, the meeting did not see the light of day after police that was deployed at the venue blocked students from meeting and fired teargas to disperse those who insisted on holding the meeting.

"There was supposed to be an assembly for us the student leaders to inform the students about the parliamentary directives and those of the university's management and debate these things. We wanted to give these views to the students because they are asking us what is happening, what is the way forward? but the police blocked us," one of the student leaders at the School of Languages, Literature and Communication, who did not want to be identified, said.

Kampala Metropolitan police spokesperson Patrick Onyango said after learning that some students



Demonstration. Makerere University students protest the 15 per cent tuition policy increment last week. The fate of the strike lies in balance after police yesterday foiled the general assembly that was called by the student's leaders. PHOTO BY ALEX ESAGALA

POLICE DEPLOYMENT

Resolution. Last week, Makerere University management resolved to deploy 2,000 police officers to secure its 1,000 lecture rooms for students and lecturers eager to resume studies despite the strike.

However, one of the student leaders said the heavy deployment of police around their lecture rooms yesterday morning sparked off protests as students demanded they be taken away. Student leaders say this saw police disperse the students with teargas.

Yesterday, the strike that

started at about 12 pm according to most students, lasted for about two hours.

Tension

"At first, we thought they were allegations that 2,000 police men were to be deployed but it came to be true, the policemen could not tell students anything but they just stood with their guns. Makerere University is a student's institution, some people are intimidated by a mere look at the police having guns and in their attires, why is police everywhere?" a third year student of community psychology, said.

were planning to hijack the assembly for other motives, they ensured that it [meeting] did not take place.

"There were students who were planning to turn the assembly into a demonstration," Mr Onyango said.

He said Kateregga was arrested because he tried to force himself into the Freedom Square.

"Kateregga wanted to use force to the venue. Though we arrested him, we have released him without any charge since he was slated to meet the Parliamentary Committee on Education," he added.

Since October 22, students have been protesting the policy on grounds that it was unfair and making education service expensive.

However, some students mainly those in first year and studying accounting, said they had lectures in the morning before the strike.