

# Makerere disciplinary committee clears Magara

By Andante Okanya

The Makerere University disciplinary committee has dismissed a case of misconduct against Makerere Administrative Staff Association (MASA) chairperson Bennet Magara and general secretary Joseph Kalema.

In the verdict dated May 6, the committee, chaired by Kiryowa Kiwanuka, exonerated the duo on grounds that prosecution evidence was inconsequential.

They purportedly breached provisions of the university's human resource manual by committing acts detrimental to the performance of their duties.

Prosecution had purported that last year on December 20, the duo mobilised staff to camp at the Main Building and to disrupt an inaugural council meeting.

It was also alleged that the duo

engaged in a fight with security personnel at the entrance to the vice chancellor's office and later mobilised journalists to cover the fracas to portray the institution in negative light.

In defence, Magara and his colleague dismissed the claims as baseless. They maintained that their sole mission was to peacefully deliver a letter to the vice-chancellor, university secretary, and other officials.

"It is our view that in this case, prosecution relied on mere allegations, hearsay, as well as unsubstantiated facts and failed to prove the guilt of the respondents," the verdict states.

"The evidence is so weak that it does not prove the ingredients of the offence with which the respondents are charged."

Other members are Jude Mbabaali, Sarah Ssali, Winston Ireeta and Jolly Uzamukunda.

The committee noted that Section

## ON THE GROUND

■ The Makerere administrative staff association chairperson, Bennet Magara and general secretary, Joseph Kalema, were exonerated on grounds that prosecution evidence was inconsequential. This was revealed in the verdict on Monday, during a committee, chaired by Kiryowa Kiwanuka.

103 of the Evidence Act places burden on a person levelling an allegation to produce irrefutable evidence.

### Witness testimonies

Prosecution produced three witnesses: Vincent Abigaba, Gordon

Murangira and Isaac Anyaku.

Acting MASA chairperson Abigaba, alleged that the duo rallied members through social media to escort the Senior Registrar in the ICT unit of the Academic Registrar, Ruth Iteu Eyuko, to the council meeting.

Murangira, who is the personal assistant to VC, purported that on the day of the alleged crime, he saw the duo, together with six others, as they headed to the Main Building and proceeded to the vice-chancellor's office.

He claimed that he overheard Magara rallying a television journalist to dash and cover what was anticipated to be an action-packed event.

Murangira said the administration was compelled to close the council room and evacuate council members to another room to shield them from the ensuing scuffle in the corridor.

He added that on February 26, one

of the heads of department informed the vice-chancellor that her best student could not secure a placement at Bristol University because of the bad publicity generated by the altercation.

Security guard Anyaku stated that he had been given strict instructions to grant only council members access to the premises.

But the duo were the only defence witnesses. Magara (employed at the Internal Audit directorate) stated that the letter he intended to deliver, was protesting why MASA had not been invited to the meeting. He said he did not intend to enter the meeting venue.

Kalema (employed at the HR directorate) testified that he had initially headed to Jinja but when he received a call from Magara, he drove back to Kampala and wrote the letter they intended to deliver to the authorities.