

MPS PASSED A RESOLUTION TO HAVE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF NAWANGWE STEP ASIDE, TO ALLOW INVESTIGATION

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# Parliament suspends 15% MAK fees increment

After a protracted debate that took more than three hours, Parliament yesterday resolved that the 15% tuition increment at Makerere University, which sparked off a students' strike, should be halted.

Legislators from across the political divide supported the proposal for suspension, which was contained in the petition from the Makerere University students, which was read by Jinja East MP Paul Mwiru and Manjiya County MP John Baptist Nambeshe.

The legislators also called for the cancellation of suspension and expulsion of some students involved in the strike.

Yesterday's debate in Parliament was a continuation of the debate they had started the previous day, during which they passed a resolution to condemn the brutality of the army and Police officers against the students of Makerere University.

The Opposition Chief Whip, Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda, said the 15% increment would result into sh4.6b for the university, which is a small amount of money that government can provide.

"Let government increase the budget for Makerere University because it is underfunded. If the budget for State House could be increased from sh200b to sh450b, how can you fail to provide sh4.6b?" Ssemujju wondered.

Bukooli Central MP Solomon Silwany, who is also the deputy chairperson for the NRM



Chief Government Whip Ruth Nankabirwa consults with a Kadaga during a plenary discussion on the ongoing strike at Makerere University, yesterday.

Photo by Miriam Namutebi.

caucus, said: "I condemn the violence against students. Makerere University is a public university which should be the cheapest. There are many individuals in public offices that put pressure on government. You cannot brutalise students and expect me to come here and defend you."

The shadow minister for

education, Mathias Mpuuga, wondered why government wants tuition to be higher at Makerere University other than other public universities.

"For example, a bachelor of medicine in a semester is at sh1.8m at Makerere University yet in Mbarara University, it is at sh1.3m and they are both public universities. Why don't they apply the

same 15% increment to other universities?" Mpuuga asked.

Mpuuga also suggested that whoever deployed the soldiers who brutalised the students must be held accountable.

National Female Youth MP Anna Adeke, accused the vice-chancellor of Makerere University, Barnabas Nawangwe, of using imprudent methods to handle strikes,

including expelling students who express their opinions on social media platforms.

Blaming him as the major cause of the problems the university is facing, West Budama MP Richard Othieno suggested that Parliament takes a decision to call for the resignation.

"Nawangwe has turned Makerere University into a primary school. You cannot arrest or suspend a student for expressing his opinion. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right. The suppression of students' right to expression is unacceptable," Othieno said.

The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, said she wanted an assurance before the debate could end that the army had pulled out of the university.

She also demanded that the commander who deployed the soldiers who brutalised the students be named and held accountable.

Bugiri Municipality MP and a former guild president of Makerere University Asuman Basalirwa said the major problem arises from government's failure to adequately fund the government sponsored

- Direct the university management to rescind all suspensions.
- Unconditionally lift the suspension of all students.
- Immediate and unconditional release of all students, including the guild president.
- Direct the ministers of defence and internal affairs to withdraw military and the Police from university and hostels.
- Direct university to halt the 15% and any other fees increment, until a sustainable solution is reached.
- Investigate allegations of sexual violence on female and male students
- Government presents a supplementary budget to fund the gap.
- Conduct a forensic audit in the management of Makerere University.
- Have the vice-chancellor Prof Nawangwe step aside to allow investigation
- Education committee investigates university unrest and report by November 13, 2019

**RESOLUTIONS**

students; which prompts the university managers to put a higher charge on the private students to fill the deficit created by government.