

Makerere student leaders split over strike halt

By Nelson Kiva
and Taddeo Bwambale

Makerere University student leaders are expected to hold a meeting today, to determine whether to call off their strike, which has paralysed business on campus for the last two weeks.

However, *New Vision* has learnt that the student leaders are split into two factions over the matter.

The students are protesting the implementation of a 15% tuition increment policy, which applies to first-year students.

Following violent clashes between protesting students and security operatives last week, the University Council made concessions regarding the policy and said the increment will not apply to functional fees. The council appealed to students to end the strike.

The situation on campus has since Friday been calm and the security presence has been scaled down.

However, the strike appears to have left cracks in the student leadership. The confusion among student leaders has been aggravated by the apparent absence of the guild president, Julius Kateregga, since last week.

The guild on Friday announced that it had suspended guild prime minister Emmanuel Johnson Obbo, for allegedly misrepresenting the views, opinions and position of the students' demands. This was reportedly after Obbo circulated a statement announcing that the strike



Students waiting for lecturers at Makerere University on Friday. Photo by Ivan Kabuye

had been called off, which was refuted by Judith Nalukwago, the acting guild president.

According to a statement signed by Judith Nalukwago and Mariam Kyomugisha, the acting prime minister, the student guild will hold an assembly today, to decide on the way forward.

According to the guild, a total of 26 students have been warned by the university over the strike, while 11 have been suspended.

Another statement posted on the university website indicates that nine students are on suspension.

They are Frank Bwambale, Siperia Saasiraabo, Rogers Mbajjo Ssebiraalo, Derrick Ojambo Wabwire, David Musiri, Ivan Kyeyune, Seiz Mutatina, Job Dhabona and Simon Ssenoga.

The 26 students who have been served with warning letters, include one post-graduate student, while the rest are undergraduate students.

While the University Council

announced a halt to the 15% increment on functional fees last week, students are insisting that the increment should be halted altogether.

They also want suspended students to be unconditionally reinstated and the warning letters rescinded.

Makerere University's communications manager, Dr Muhammad Kiggundu, told *New Vision* that the suspended students will face the disciplinary committee in

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE CASES



Makerere University communications manager Dr Muhammad Kiggundu (pictured) said the suspended students will face the disciplinary committee in two weeks.

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Makerere University vice-chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, on Thursday ordered students and lecturers back to class, saying the examination timetable will not change. Exams are expected to kick off on November 28.

Experts have called for a deeper examination of the long-standing challenges in the administration at Makerere University.

In November 2016, President Yoweri Museveni appointed a nine-member committee to probe the affairs of Makerere, following weeks of a sit-down strike by lecturers.

The visitation committee was report to have found several faults in the administration and proposed the decongestion of Makerere and creation of a National Public University System, among others.