

Journalists petition police over torture

By [Andrew Bagala](#)

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KAMPALA, UGANDA: A local journalists' organisation has petitioned the Police Professional Standards Unit to take action against Lira police officers who beat up a *Daily Monitor* journalist during the protests in Lira over continued load shedding.

Human Rights Network for Journalists Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) is seeking the investigations of officers who allegedly beat Emmanuel Opio before confiscating his camera and deleting photographs he had taken of the protesters.

According to HRNJ statement, "the commandant of PSU, commissioner Samuel Kyomukama, should carry out investigations and ensure that Mr Opio opens a case file against the officers, and take action against those who [may have] violated the law".

Opio has since then, lodged a case of intimidation, harassment and denial of his right to information to the Human Rights Commission, which has commenced its investigations.

Investigations

HRNJ-Uganda Programme co-ordinator, Wokulira Ssebaggala said they are investigating the matter as well. It is alleged that deputy regional police commander, Alfred Tumure with the aid of two other police officers roughed up and slapped Opio before deleting all materials from his camera.

The officers also arrested and detained him for two hours. But local police officers declined to register a criminal case from Opio against the officers.

Ssebaggala said, "If proved, these allegations constitute a violation of the complainant's right to freedom of information and media freedoms under Article 29 and freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment contrary to Article 24 and 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda".

In Pader District, another journalist, who is the bureau chief for the Uganda Radio Network, Frank Ezaruk, was also allegedly beaten by police officers.

Ezaruk was covering a scuffle between the police and locals who wanted to reoccupy a piece of land they were evicted from decades ago in Pader District. He told HRNJ that as the scuffle ensued, he took photographs which reportedly did not please the officers.

"The operations officer, Romeo Onok, arrested and took me to his commander Ambrose Sabiti on allegations that I had taken photographs without his permission. They ordered me to sit down but when I asked for the crime I had committed, two policemen kicked me," he said.

Source: allAfrica.com.

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