



FIDA UGANDA
The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers



September 13, 2016

The Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda
Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda
Postal Building, Yusuf Lule Road
P.O Box 341
Kampala
UGANDA

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister,

RE: INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE CONDUCT OF MR. RONALD KIBUULE, STATE MINISTER FOR WATER.

Reference is made to the above.

We are aware you announced an investigation into the conduct of Mr. Kibuule Ronald, the State Minister for Water, following a widely reported altercation with Ms. Hellen Obuk, a female security guard at the Stanbic Bank Branch in Mukono District on August 13, 2016.

We commend your prompt action and commitment to undertake an investigation into the conduct of the Minister and trust that you are doing so with a view of establishing the facts and taking appropriate administrative, political and other measures.

Our lawyers, working with other human rights organizations, have investigated this matter extensively. They have interviewed eyewitnesses, medical practitioners and Ms. Obuk and her family members. We have also obtained police records in regard to this matter.

It is our firm belief that the conduct of the Minister on this particular occasion and in the past; are unbecoming of a holder of public office, bring disrepute to public service, and warrant immediate administrative, political and other sanctions. The actions violate the dignity of women.

Here below are the brief facts, as we know them,

1. On August 13, 2016, the Minister went to Stanbic Bank, Mukono Branch. When he approached the entrance to the banking hall, Ms. Obuk, in line with security guidelines and practice for all entering the bank, sought to frisk him using a handheld metal detector.
2. The Minister refused to be frisked. Ms. Obuk stood her ground. The minister, according to eyewitnesses and Ms. Obuk, erupted into a torrent of verbal insults calling her a stupid fool, hopeless, useless and many other things. The Minister continued repeatedly asking if Ms. Obuk did not know that he was a minister and a big person.
3. The Minister held Ms. Obuk's left hand tightly, squeezing it; shoved and pushed Ms. Obuk. He launched a clenched fist at Ms. Obuk missing her narrowly. The minister busted into the banking hall, unchecked.
4. According to the Police, the Minister called and instructed ASP Fred Ahimbisibwe, the District Police Commander for Mukono District, to arrest, charge and prosecute Ms. Obuk. He threatened that he would call the Inspector General of Police, personally, if his instructions were not heeded.
5. Shortly thereafter, six police officers on two police patrol pickups turned up at the bank, arrested Ms. Obuk and later charged her with the offence of 'being libel' vide SD Ref: 62/13/08/2016, and later released her on police bond (a copy of the bond release form indicating her charge is attached hereto for your reference).
6. Before the arrest of Ms. Obuk, the Police put her under extreme stress and pressure by subjecting her to a volley of verbal insults and threats. She was asked to kneel down and apologise to the Minister. She refused. She later collapsed and was taken to Mukono Health Centre IV for treatment, where the Police stood guard. The Police held their beat on her hospital bedside, until her sister processed a bond release form.
7. Medical forms from Mukono Health Centre IV signed by a medical doctor show that Ms. Obuk suffered bruises on the infrascapular area (below the shoulder blade) and the cubital fossa (the elbow pit) each measuring 4 by 4 centimeters, caused by a blunt object (a copy of the medical form is attached hereto for your reference).

8. The Medical Report is consistent with the claim of assault of Ms. Obuk occasioned by the Minister.
9. Ms. Obuk filed a case of assault against the Minister at the Mukono Police Station. The Minister never attended to the case to record a statement. The Police registered the case under SD Ref: 54/24/08/016 and declined to record the statement of the complainant, fearing the repercussions from the Minister.

Subsequent events indicate that the criminal case against the Minister has been dropped after a mediation meeting with the family of Ms. Obuk. We respect the decision of Ms. Obuk and her family. However, hope that this will not absolve the Minister from culpability for his unbecoming conduct.

Moreover, it is not the first time the Minister has shown disrespect for the rights of women. In 2013, while holding the Office of Minister of State for Youth, Mr. Kibuule encouraged the Police to turn away victims of rape on account of having dressed in miniskirts and therefore invited their perpetrators. To quote verbatim, he said,

“Me I have told even the police chief; you shouldn’t listen to a person who comes to report a rape case putting on a mini skirt. The intention was; ‘Please, why don’t you rape me?’ Because, in the first place, am not even sure that your intention was not to be raped”¹

This reveals a pattern of unbecoming conduct on the part of the Minister that should not escape your attention. On this occasion, no stern action was taken against the Minister.

We implore your good and esteem office to carry out the reported investigation in a transparent, fair and public manner to demonstrate your commitment to the protection of the rights of the underprivileged.

We are prepared to lead a delegation of human rights activists to your office to share with you our concerns on the conduct of the said minister and to further, collaborate with you to advance protection of human rights of all, including the most vulnerable.

Please find enclosed our statement, *what you need to know about Ms. Hellen Obuk’s case*, for further details.

¹ Daily Monitor Ug, “Exclusive: Minister Kibuule audio recording,” published on September 25, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_3ppFuZ8KE. Last accessed September 7, 2016.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

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For and on behalf of:

Chapter Four Uganda

The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA – Uganda)

Uganda Women’s Network – Uganda (UWONET)

CC:

Minister of Ethics and Integrity