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***Thursday, 21 September 2017***

*Parliament met at 2.013 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

*(The Speaker, Jacob Oulanyah, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this sitting which looks like a very special one. I am seeing Members that I have not seen in a long time. (*Laughter*) I should always engage the services of those who mobilised you to do the same always because today is really special. (*Laughter*) I am even surprised my register is showing 214; it looks like there are more than 214 Members. That means probably the Members who have not been attending do not know that they have to press a button to register. (*Laughter*) They may want to go back and put their finger print so that we can have the total number of Members properly recorded.

Honourable members, you have seen the Order Paper. I had a meeting with the Speaker today late morning because she had an engagement in Mukono. Therefore, we could not meet earlier in the morning to discuss what I told you we would discuss and advise the House on how to proceed specifically on two matters. I communicated on Tuesday and yesterday on those two matters - notices of motions that had been presented by Members of this House - one notice had been accompanied by a motion but the second notice of motion has not yet been accompanied by a motion up to now.

Therefore, in our discussion, we looked at the two notices and the one motion that was before us. The Speaker, after my brief, said she needed to understand the full extent of this because there are also piles of petitions from other people on various matters. We needed to study this and have sufficient time to handle it properly. Probably, in the course of next week, a communication will come to alert the Members of what to do. (*Applause*) Honourable members, the rules of the House are clear about how you applause and the honourable member for Mukono Municipality knows it very well.

**MS NAMBOOZE:** You do it like this.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, you do not do it like that. However, that is what will happen. At an appropriate time, there will be communication to inform you whether both motions will come or which one of them will come; communication will come later.

However, honourable members, let me say this that to an extent that Members of this House have been responsible for certain things, but that is only to a certain extent. As to whether the responsibility of Members of this House has caused what we have seen today, I am not so sure. What we have seen today is exceptional and I do not know what necessitated the blockade. In my opinion, it has gone way beyond what should have been. (*Applause*) We need to demonstrate that what they fear is not in this House. We need to demonstrate to all that whatever everybody else fears is not in this House. It cannot be the Members of this House to create chaos. Are we together on this? We need to demonstrate that it cannot be the Members of this House to light fire, throw stones and probably begin removing shoes from their feet and tossing them around. That it cannot also be a presiding officer of this House to smuggle in things that have not gone through processes; so that the whole House can predict and prepare to engage in a debate on any matter.

Just like our prayer says, and just like Article 78 of the Constitution says, we should be given ample time to sufficiently prepare to debate but not the kind of preparations I have seen whereupon some Members were talking about on television - going to the gym. *(Laughter)*

If you declare that we are coming to fight here, it means all Members are allowed to come with whatever can be used to fight. And in my case, I will be required to come with my pair of gloves because in my training, I am not allowed to punch anybody with a bare feast. *(Laughter)*

In my training, they say, “If you have to throw a punch, you must be wearing gloves.” So, I would have to carry and wear them and then preside, just in case*. (Laughter)* I do not know what hon. Pecos Kutesa will show up with.

Anyway, honourable members, all I would like to say is: let us not do things that would make other people excited about things they desire to do against some of us. Let us not excite people or tickle those who have not laughed for years by creating the opportunity for them to laugh. If we do our things the way we should do them, other people will continue doing their things the way they should do them, where they should do them. Otherwise, if we make statements that make it look like this House is going to be a warfare place, then we attract people who should not be here; we do.

Therefore, as a House, let us demonstrate that we are able and capable. If something is not right and we feel it is not, we have ways of expressing ourselves here and the rules accommodate and protect everybody.

Our immunity is about what you said and not what you do *–* yes -you can now see. I do not even see my law books here. I could read for you what you are protected from. The immunities and privileges you have are against what you say. However, if you start throwing stones here, you will commit a crime and you will be prosecuted for it. That is the fact.

What is guaranteed in this House is the immunity to protect your freedom of speech to be able to say things the best way you can, and that applies to my honourable colleagues on my left who are now beginning to – let us be together on this.

Before I came here, I talked to the Sergeant-at-Arms; I instructed him to do the necessary review and adjustments to allow the Members free access to this building without any inhibitions. I am saying that from the time I was coming here, I communicated to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Honourable members, I plead with you to maintain calm and process what we need to do and complete what we need to – (*Interjections*)- honourable members, please let us maintain calm in this Parliament. If other people are going to exceed their powers, that is up to them. For us, let us do our things the best way we can.

Honourable member, could you desist from talking from across, especially when the Speaker is talking?

Today we have a very short Order Paper and I would like us to finish with the statement on Namanve Industrial Park and the one on Kyenjojo and see if we can pose because we will not sit for long today.

2.30

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Winifred Kiiza):** Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak to an August House, which is full to capacity. I would like to join you in welcoming the Members who have for some time not been attending but have today found it necessary to be in the House.

As I stand here, I am a victim of what is happening in the countryside today. I will start from your communication of yesterday where you fully guided the House and the entire country that we should remain calm. Indeed we remained calm.

We deliberated and went on with our business normally until you adjourned the House. We went to our houses thinking that there would be sanity and that the country would remain calm. We would like to thank you for that very good communication that you made yesterday*. (Applause)*

Today, we want to continue thanking you for steering this House amidst the circumstances. What happened today is something we should condemn in the strongest terms possibl*e. (Applause)* For Members of Parliament to wake up from their homes with a view of deliberating on issues that affect Ugandans in a space where every Ugandan should be considered free; in a space that should be regarded as free Space for purposes of formulation policies and laws that may guide this country; to find it occupied by the military to the extent that Members of Parliament cannot even have free access to come and represent their people is something that must be condemned in the strongest terms possible and never again should it happen.

Mr Speaker, we may accept that it could have been possibly - let me just be the devil’s advocate - for purposes of the security of Members of Parliament. I would imagine that it would have been very necessary that the administration of Parliament communicates to Members of Parliament early enough and say:

“Honourable colleagues, stay home there is something we think is not good for your security. Tell your voters to remain in their homes calmly because there is something unacceptable that is likely to happen.”

Mr Speaker, we would have taken it in good faith. I was almost dropping dead when I heard that the Speaker of Parliament and owner of this House could not be allowed access in the main entrance of Parliament. This is something we need to take seriously and as Members of Parliament, it is our duty and responsibility to ensure that we defend the freedom of Parliament. (*Applause*)

Anything else can be touched, Mr Speaker, but a free space like Parliament and court is something that we should guard. I would, therefore, like to ask that Government comes up with an explanation as to why there was a siege and a coup in Parliament. Some Members of Parliament who are present here, their homes were surrounded and that is why I am speaking as a victim. My children could not go to school because their car was arrested. Members of Parliament –(*Interjections*)- it did not come to you, I am speaking from my experience and so allow me speak.

When we came to Parliament, hon. Arinaitwe, who is a Parliamentary Commissioner, could not be allowed to drive into the building. Hon. Centenary and hon. Kamateeka, plus all other Members had to walk in here. The issue is that for purposes of security and because security thinks that Members’ cars can be burnt, therefore, they could not allow them to be parked in Parliament. That someone has a plan to burn Parliament; I do not know whether our security is more concerned about the cars than the human beings. If there was information that someone wanted to attack Parliament, sincerely, could they not have said, “Honourable members, just go back home”? Instead of saying, “Park your car somewhere and go to the House to meet the fire in Parliament”? We may not also be sure, depending on the atmosphere from the population in anticipation of what they thought was coming to Parliament and they are mostly against us as Members of Parliament. We are not sure whether our cars are safe, where we have parked them.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, it is quite unfortunate and shaming to this nation. Sometimes, when a situation like this comes up, I sit down and look back to the National Anthem of this country; especially the first stanza;

*“Oh* Uganda*! May God uphold thee,*

*We lay our future in thy hand;*

*United free, for liberty...”*

Are we still free, united and liberated?

Honourable members, we sit in this House at a critical moment in time that we have accepted and looked on as someone over-throws you and you clap hands. Colleagues, it is not about us and them; but this is about the sovereignty of Parliament, the liberty of this country and freedoms of Ugandans.

It is about your workplace and if you find it uneasy to go to your workplace – (*Interjections*)- I am not only talking about Members of Parliament, but the students of Makerere could not find space; not only at the university, but also in their hostels where they reside. I have been told that one is already killed. The students of Kyambogo, councillors of KCCA and the Lord Mayor were put in a police van that carries dogs. Why all this tension - it is not about Parliament, but Ugandans.

Mr Speaker, you have guided very well, that you know you did not expect to come to a situation where even Members would say, “We are warming up.” If I may come to a lighter note, Parliament has a gym and this gym is supposed to keep us fit mentally, physically, and even in terms of health. However, when a Member rises up to say “We have ‘*majje’* on our side” and you support it, then I should use the gym tactics to prepare for the *“majje”*.

However, that is not the goal of my coming here. The issue I would like to explain, Mr Speaker, is about the violation of human rights, the occupation of Parliament at the expense of people’s representatives and dehumanisation of Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker when we see our Speaker being treated the way she was treated, we have every reason to fight, because we know that our own House is on fire and we need to put it in order. May I, therefore, request the Government representatives – (*Interruption*)

**MR KARUHANGA:** Thank you, honourable Leader of the Opposition for giving way. Mr Speaker, this afternoon, I was moving from my office to come here and I had the privilege of seeing the left side of Parliament. I got concerned when I saw many men about 30 dressed and armed for fire extinguishing.

Mr Speaker, this morning, the Members of Parliament could not access their parking, the Speaker had to pass through an unusual place to access Parliament and all this was because of its insecurity because they think that this place is not safe.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Did you rise on information?

**MR KARUHANGA:** Yes, and that is the information I am coming to. Mr Speaker, the further information that I thought is critical to share - I am certain that most of the Members here have got smartphones. If you see the pictures of the students that they have shot in Makerere today - the ones that were being shown on live television being picked from their hostel rooms - simply because you want to bring a Bill in Parliament! Is this really how we would like to run our country and live?

Therefore, the information I would like to give is that as Members of Parliament, we must acknowledge that Ugandans are speaking. As we deliberate, debate and legislate, let us listen to their spirits. Thank you, Leader of the Opposition.

**MS WINFRED KIIZA:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. We believe that the sanctity of this House lies in your hands. We may accept to be humiliated, but we cannot just sit and watch our Speaker being humiliated in the circumstances. We cannot also sit to see Ugandans dying in the hands of the cruel police, combined with the army officers and we keep quiet. We also cannot see Ugandans’ homes taken over by the police and the army, and you think it will be business as usual.

I know, Mr Speaker, that the Members before you here are not sitting comfortably because they are not sure whether they will find their cars in good condition. They are not sure whether their families are secure - whether their people are okay; many of our representatives, such as the councillors, the Lord Mayor, our children in Makerere and Kyambogo as well as other Ugandans in this country are on running battles.

Mr Speaker, I would request sincerely from the bottom of my heart that you find it within your powers to adjourn the House to give Members time to go and reflect on what has happened today. Give us that working environment that is secure and is free of intimidation.

The Rt Hon. Prime Minister should bear with us; what is happening in this country is not a matter that we should take lightly. Therefore, I would like to conclude by asking the Prime Minister to sincerely accept that we are here, but our minds are not here. Even if there is a statement to be made in this House, Members may not debate it the way they would have debated. We are not safe and we shall accept that. Our hearts are not here. Parliament is not at ease and it is not business as usual.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I would like to pray that you use your powers and read the mood in the House and adjourn. We can continue with the business of the House any other day. I want to thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please, can I hear from the Rt Hon. Prime Minister at that level?

2.46

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Dr Ruhakana Rugunda):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Colleagues are aware that over the last week or so *-* if hon. Nambooze can listen, I will proceed.

Mr Speaker, colleagues are aware that there has been some degree of tension and excitement in Kampala and some areas of the country because of the political exchanges that are taking place.

Secondly, this has caused some violence and tension in some areas. I have even seen in the media that there has been some *–(Interruption)*

**MR KASIBANTE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. In your communication, you guided very well and said that there is no violence in and around Parliament. What the Leader of the Opposition has talked about is a matter of lives of Ugandans and us, their representatives.

However, the Prime Minister is here misleading us and the public that there has been violence in the country. There is even exchange of words “*sijui*” here.

Mr Speaker, I seek your protection from Gen. Otafiire. What he has said is typically misleading the House and the country. As you said, there is no violence both here and outside. Is he in order to mislead the House and the country at large?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, what I said was what was within my knowledge. I know that there has been no violence inside this House and neither within the precincts of Parliament. I also did not witness any violence from my home on the way coming to Parliament; but the Prime Minister’s experience might be different. As the Leader of Government Business, he has ears larger than mine. Can he communicate what he has heard so that we listen?

**DR RUGUNDA:** Mr Speaker, thank you for your wise ruling as usual. As I was saying, because of the environment that has created some bit of political excitement, which could easily get out of hand, it is absolutely necessary that the security organs and forces be on alert. (*Interjections*) Also -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, even if we are to raise points of order, it is not the strength of the voice that will determine what kind of order you are going to raise. You can still get up with a smile. I can see hon. Ssemujju trying not to smile at all. With a smile, you can still raise a point of order. Would you like to raise the point of order now?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has raised very substantive issues of our own security inside this Chamber. My colleague, hon. Nankabirwa is now adding that even Abiriga’s security.

However, Mr Speaker, the prayers were very specific requesting you to adjourn Parliament so that we sort out the issue of our security.

I have respect for hon. Rugunda, but we could not access Parliament easily and yet he has casually said that there was tension. However, the Speaker has said that there was no tension at Parliament. Is hon. Rugunda in order to justify the humiliation that the Speaker and Members of Parliament have gone through today, and the chaos that the military and police have caused around Parliament? Is he in order to justify that without giving an apology? He should allow you to adjourn Parliament so that we can deal with the issue of security.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, from Saturday to Wednesday, there have been calls on the media; on television, radio and even in print media, that there is going to be war in Parliament today afternoon. There have been those calls, honourable members. I think we need to be honest about what we find ourselves in.

This morning, all of us have been victim of what many of us have not been part of. When the Speaker of the House cannot come through the main entrance of the House! What I am saying is, let us be honest as Members of Parliament. We have all heard and seen the calls. When the Rt Hon. Prime Minister is responding, let us give him a chance and see how to proceed. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, we listened. Let the Prime Minister also speak as we listen. We will then see how to proceed. Let the Rt Hon. Prime Minister speak. Let us listen to each other, please.

**DR RUGUNDA:** Mr Speaker, because of the security environment that has been created, it is absolutely necessary for security organs, in particular the police, to ensure that the necessary and effective preventive measures are taken so that the security of Parliament and the country is under control.

By the way, the police have more information. Incidents have been reported by colleagues like hon. Karuhanga and others and they are going to be investigated and necessary measures will be taken in case the findings illustrate that something wrong has been done – (*Interjections*) - I must say that we are sitting here comfortably-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can we have some order, Members? Honourable members, can we all resume our seats? Honourable member, can you sit down? *[Several Members rose and sang the National Anthem]* Honourable members, please - Honourable members, could you please sit down? Hon. Ssemujju, please sit down. Honourable members, please -

I communicated the other day that there is nothing that will come to the Floor of this Parliament that Parliament cannot discuss. We have the authority under Article 79 of our Constitution to do anything with the Constitution, with the laws that will facilitate good governance, peace and security in this country - yes, that is what the Constitution says. I am surprised you are repeating it as if you did not know. (*Laughter)*

It is as if I am announcing some news. That is what the Constitution says and we have all taken oath to the Constitution. If indeed we do not sit today, we still have to sit next week. You see, it is only – there is a certain definition I would not like to use that says the – let me leave it. I will need to maintain the dignity of the House.

Honourable members, please let me tell you something. As leaders of this House, there are things we do to maintain the dignity of the House. There are things we do not have to say but we know them, some of them embarrassing. And if I mention some of them here, you will be embarrassed.

Really, you will be embarrassed about some of the things that are done in this House. Last Parliament, pigs were brought to this House. Did anybody bother to find out who brought the pigs? (*Laughter*). There are things that we do, sometimes they embarrass us and they force the leaders of the House to keep quiet about certain things that are not right.

Yesterday evening, something bad happened. Some of the things we do not want to say because we will embarrass the House. And that is the fact. So, honourable members, that is why you keep saying let us exercise restraint in what we do as Members of Parliament. *(Applause*) I am forced by respect for this House, I need Members not to say some of these things here.

So, please, let us blame people but some of our own cause problems to us. Please. So, we should use moments like this for reflection; this country is for all of us. Nobody claims a bigger share in this country than another one. We all have equal shares in this country. And that is what it is supposed to be by virtue of the Constitution. So, let us treat ourselves with respect, let us treat each other with respect.

The hallmark of a Parliament is courtesy among and between its Members. So, please, let us not do things that will cause unnecessary anxiety in the House. That is my plea to you. We have information as leadership of this House. Please, let us leave it at that. The Commission will handle it appropriately, like we handled the issue of the pigs, without embarrassing the House.

So, whoever is going to handle what happened in the evening last night here in Parliament – (*Interjections*) - yes, from a Member of Parliament. So, please, let us not be drawn to discuss some of these things here.

**MR ODONGA-OTTO:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and thank you for the manner in which you are calling for calm in this House. Of course, we came charged and we are still monitoring what is going on. (*Laughter*)

I rise on a point of procedure under rule 163 of the Rules of Procedure, where I seek your indulgence that hon. Evelyne Anite be taken to the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline of this Parliament. She got the list of attendance of committee meetings, displayed it in the media that that is the list of MPs who signed and supported lifting age limits; and this afternoon, a woman was attacked in town because people were thinking she was the Woman Member of Parliament for Rakai. So, the Members of Parliament whose names were displayed in the media their lives are in danger.

So, I am rising under rule 163 that hon. Anite be taken to the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline. [Ms Anite: “Order.”] Order for what?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You do not have to shout.

**MS ANITE:** Order.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Calm down.

**MS ANITE:** Order.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have already said it, please.

**MS ANITE:** Order.

**MR ODONGA-OTTO:** Mr Speaker, those of us who have stayed in this House long enough know that procedure takes precedence over order. I insist under rule 163 that the same Anite went scaring Ugandans that they have soldiers to deal with the Members who are not in support of lifting the age limit. (A*pplause*) So, in the circumstances, I beg to move that hon. Anite be taken to the disciplinary Committee of Parliament, be asked to apologise to all Members of Parliament whose names she paraded and be suspended from Parliament for eight years. *(Applause*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, can we have some order?

Honourable members, a motion has been proposed under rule 163 of our Rules of Procedure. The procedure, motion and the points raised were okay except for one of the prayers stated; that the Member be suspended for eight years. *(Laughter)*

Therefore, if the prayers cannot be sustained, then the motion cannot stand. The term of this Parliament left is less than four years. We have no capacity to suspend a Member for eight years.

However, you have another opportunity to raise this matter properly and then it can be dealt with. Let us pause it for now and see whether it can be raised properly another day.

Honourable members, it looks like there are two big problems here. The first problem is Members are not ready to sit. The second problem is that the Speaker is not ready to chair a Parliament that does not want to sit. *(Laughter)*

Let me just say this. This matter bringing tension is not here today. A proper process will handle it and a determination of what will happen to it will be made by the appropriate organ of this House. Therefore, that matter is not for today.

However, its implications have been there. Since there are two big problems which I have just enumerated, this House is adjourned to Tuesday, 26 September 2017 at 2 O’clock.

*(The House rose at 3.17 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 26 September 2017 at 2.00 p.m.)*