

Besigye goes to pray, towed back by police

Contention. After the church service, Dr Besigye disagreed with the police on which route to use. He was briefly detained at Kira Road Police Station from where police escorted him back to his home.

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KAMPALA. A priest yesterday told his congregation during Dr Kizza Besigye's first church service since the results of the February 18, presidential election were released, that Uganda is "sick" and has been "treating symptoms" for a long time, calling on all actors to unite and ensure healing.

The Rev Medard Birungibayesu, while preaching during the 11.30am service at All Saints Church Nakasero, referred to the situation in the country after the elections, which has seen Dr Besigye spending virtually all his time between police cells and his home, with the police not allowing him to move anywhere.

The police had even blocked Dr Besigye from attending the service, and it took one of the clerics from All Saints Church to drive to his Kasangati home to pick him up for the prayers.

"We have been treating symptoms for a long time," Rev Birungibayesu said, "If you want to get rid of a tree, you do not cut it; you need to uproot it. Beating people who are rioting is treating symptoms."

He told the congregation, which also included notables like former presidential candidate Maj Gen Benon Biraaro and Principal Judge Dr Yorokamu Bamwine, to always consult Jesus in case of problems because Jesus never lets them down; "Jesus' delay is not a denial. Jesus' timing is always the best."

Dr Besigye and his Forum for Democratic Change party, which sponsored his candidature, have rejected the results declared by the Electoral Commission on Feb 20, which showed that President Museveni won the

election with almost 61 per cent of the total votes cast, with Dr Besigye coming in second with almost 36 per cent. Former prime minister Amama Mbabazi, who scored less than 2 per cent of the votes, has also rejected the results and has indicated that he could challenge the results in the Supreme Court.

Drawing from the tension that has engulfed the country, especially with fears that Dr Besigye could lead mass protests which has led to his confinement, the priest drew from the story of Lazarus in the Bible. Rev Birungibayesu said God wants to make everyone's home his resting place, adding, "I also believe that God wants Kampala to be His resting place."

"Lazarus was sick; I don't know how your Lazarus is. Today we are in a very sick country; sick political system, sick financial system; sick judicial system, sick education sys-

tem, everywhere you see in fact some systems are not only sick they are in a comma, others are not in a comma, but on oxygen, others not only sick and in coma, they are in the intensive care unit. This nation needs God," he said.

"...Our nation should be one Uganda, One people; moving forward with steady progress," the priest said, "And that is what God desires and once we work together, we will have Uganda as a resting place for Jesus," he said. 'One Uganda; One People' is the slogan of FDC while 'Go Forward' was the campaign catch word for former prime minister Amama Mbabazi and a promise of 'Stead Progress' has been the campaign message of President Museveni in the past election.

Rev Birungibayesu added: "...Electoral Commission...let me stop there. There so many other areas where we are sick. We need an intervention of

Jesus Christ coming into our system." "Then you go to a polling station they vote and they announce people and on TV they announce a different person. It is very important to know that it is only Jesus who can resurrect this country."

After the service, Dr Besigye was handed a petition by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) pleading for peaceful resolution of the impasse between him and Mr Museveni. He in response said: "Just like the preacher has told us, we must pray, fight and work for justice and peace. The injustice is not only political, but also economic, social, cultural as well as religious and we have to sacrifice to get out of this situation." He added: "We are committed to work and fight for justice in this country."

Dr Besigye has been held at his home since Friday last week. Inspector General of Police Gen Kale Kayi-

hura justified police presence at the former FDC president's home, saying it is to monitor his movements and activities as his (Besigye's) earlier public utterances could cause a spill-over effect.

Even at the Church, Dr Besigye was trailed by various uniformed and non-uniformed security personnel under the command of Mr Stephen Tanui, the deputy commander of Kampala Metropolitan Police. Mr Tanui declined to speak to *Daily Monitor* after the service.

On his way back to Kasangati, Dr Besigye disagreed with the police. At the junction between Kyaggwe and Nakasero roads, he was diverted from driving through the Central Business District and forced to drive in the direction of Kamwokya through Nakasero Road. He was briefly held at Kira Road Police Station before being driven back to his home.



Right: Dr Kizza Besigye (2nd R) listens attentively during prayers at All Saints Cathedral in Nakasero yesterday. Left: After disagreeing with the police on which route to take after the service, Dr Kizza Besigye was arrested and police towed his vehicle to Kira Road Police Station. PHOTOS BY ABUBAKER LUSOWA

tory in 2011 presidential elections in that it was unlawful for the police to