

MPS NOW WANT TO PASS THE SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL, 2015 TO DEAL WITH ERRANT TEACHERS

By Nicholas Wassajja and Henry Sekanjako

MPS to investigate sex exploitation in schools

Parliament is to conduct a special investigation into allegations that teachers use their positions to sexually exploit their students.

The House on Thursday evening nodded to a proposal by the female national youth representative, Anna Adeke, for a select committee to inquire into allegations of sexual exploitation in schools across the country.

Recently, the media has been awash with claims that teachers molest children, while at universities there have been cases of lecturers manipulating girls to have sex in exchange for marks.

The latest case saw the education ministry send the Kibuli Secondary School headmaster, Ali Muggaga, on forced leave for allegedly sexually abusing a number of female students. Dr Swizen Kyomuhendo, a senior social science lecturer at Makerere University, is also said to have been suspended over sexual harassment.

After the death of educationist Prof. Lawrence Mukibi last year, several girls from St. Lawrence schools went public that he had sired children with them.

"Education is everyone's fundamental right which must be delivered in a safe environment, but this can be frustrated once young people are subjected to sexual violence. It not only undermines their security, but also threatens Uganda's path to development," Adeke said.

Adeke said in the Kibuli case, two girls confided in her that they were forced to abort.

She said even if a student was above the consent age (18), her bargaining power for at least safe sex is impaired because the predator stands in a dominating position, which exposes the student to risks like HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies.

Describing sex as an



Female pupils having lunch. A survey has shown that up to 77% of primary school pupils and 82% of secondary school students are sexually harassed

Speaker Rebecca Kadaga wants a name-and-shame list of accused teachers to be presented in Parliament for blacklisting

expression of love and for procreation, Kaberamaido County MP Veronica Eragu implored fellow lawmakers to fast-track the Sexual Offences Bill, 2015.

Beyond combating sexual abuse through stern punishment of perpetrators, the Bill will also consolidate laws on sexual offences

and provide procedural requirements during the trial of sexual abuse cases.

Eragu was backed by Koboko Woman MP Margaret Baba Diri who said: "The Legislature cannot just stand by while teachers entrusted with protecting our future leaders exploit them. Let us deal with these perpetrators

first by bringing them to book and then have a tough law in place."

Speaker Rebecca Kadaga said the Bill must be enacted before the close of the current Parliament session.

She said a name-and-shame list of the accused teachers should be brought on the floor of Parliament for blacklisting.

In 2015, the education ministry conducted a survey in which it established that 82% of secondary school students and 77% of primary school pupils were subjected to sexual abuse either by their teachers, guardians or people well known to them.

The staggering statistics that imply that thousands of school

children are molested are largely responsible for the high school dropout rates.

To curtail future incidences, Budadiri East MP Vincent Woboya proposed that responsible authorities should consider recruiting spies to report sexual offenders in schools.

The junior education minister, Rosemary Seninde, said they were aware of the offences, including that of the Kibuli headteacher, which is currently being investigated by the Police.

She said the local governments, which are charged with recruiting and disciplining teachers, had let them down.

Police grilled human rights

By Nelson Kiv...

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