

US deports diplomat over domestic violence

By Cecilia Okoth

Ambassador Dickson Ogwang's stay in the US has been cut short after US authorities cited him in a wife battering incident.

Ogwang, who assumed the office of Minister Counsellor at Uganda's Embassy in Washington D.C ten months ago, will no longer serve in that capacity following allegations of domestic violence.

Ogwang acted as the ambassador for six months.

Confirming the incident yesterday, the state minister for foreign affairs, Okello Oryem, said it was a "very unfortunate situation".

"We think both Ambassador Ogwang and his wife need help in this difficult time they are going through. We shall counsel both parties to help them handle their matters better in future," Oryem told *New Vision* in a telephone interview yesterday.

Noting that the scenario was regrettable, the minister said: "We shall ensure that we assist the couple through giving them advice."

Sources *New Vision* spoke to on condition of anonymity said Ogwang was given up to Wednesday this week to exit the US, having been sent back to the foreign affairs ministry.

The source narrated that the US Police had in December last year received an emergency call from Ogwang's residence in Washington. Upon arriving at his residence, the Ambassador's wife was found nursing bruises sustained from severe battering, allegedly inflicted by the diplomat.

Although Police would have immediately detained Ogwang,



Ogwang is said to have brutally beaten his wife

diplomatic immunity having earlier served as the acting ambassador for six months.

"The State Department asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to either recall him or waive his diplomatic immunity so that he can be prosecuted," the source added.

After the incident, Ogwang's wife was rushed to hospital, where she was admitted for close to a week.

On whether his office will remain vacant or have a replacement, Oryem said: "Until he (Ogwang) is back in Uganda and is briefed and engaged by our counsellors, nothing will take place."

Efforts to get Ogwang's contact details to speak to him over the

was reportedly yet to return.

A highly placed source said Ambassador Ogwang was expected to return to Uganda this weekend.

Background

Uganda revised its family law in 2000 and its criminal law and Constitution in 2005 to protect and guarantee the rights of women and children and to promote gender equality and equity, but cases of domestic violence continue to occur, both in rural and urban settings.

However, according to a 2017 report on Family Justice in Uganda done by The Hague Institute for the Internationalisation of Law, more

Ogwang is an experienced professional with a demonstrated history of working in the government relations sector for over 20 years.

Experienced in matters of law, non-profit organisations, conflict management, peace and reconciliation practices, the diplomat attained a law degree at Makerere University and a master's degree in administrative science with concentration on diplomacy and international relations from Farleigh Dickinson University in the US.

He is also skilled in foreign affairs, politics and global economy.

He is often described by other professionals as being keen to detail, a results-oriented team builder and a highly organised person who is able to work under challenging environment.

"He is a peace builder, consistent and passionate about the vulnerable and under privileged and a great lobbyist and advocate," reads a recommendation on his LinkedIn profile.

WHO IS OGWANG?

justice problems occur in Uganda annually, most of which are domestic violence and separation related.

The survey shows high impact of family problems on people's lives: stress-related illness (64%), problems with relationships (47%), and loss of time (35%) as the most widespread consequences.

The report also highlights abandonment of children, lack of education, HIV, loss of work and opportunities to maintain the