Students want copies of Constitution

BUSHENYI

By Vision Reporters

A total of 350 students of Uganda Technical College-Bushenyi have completed a patriotism course, with a call on the Government to avail institutions with copies of the Uganda Constitution.

The students were passed out last week at Nyakabirizi playgrounds in Bushenyi district after a one-week training.

In their memorandum, which they submitted to the officials of the patriotism secretariat, the students said much as they would like to understand and internalise the Constitution, they do not have access to it.

"During the training, the trainers taught us about the Constitution, but we lacked personal copies, which made it hard for us to understand," Brian Agaba, who presented the memorandum on behalf of the students, said.

He said some copies should be provided to institutions and schools, so that students can easily access it.

The Bushenyi district chairperson, Jaffari Bassajjabalaba, who officiated at the pass-out ceremony, said the country is currently facing challenges of *Gikwateko* (change the Constitution) Vs *Togikwatako* (do not change the Constitution), which he attributed to people's failure to read and understand it.

"The Constitution can be changed through the right procedures of the law," Bassajjabalaba argued. He encouraged the management of the institutions to budget for some copies of the Constitution.

The students further called for the promotion of Kiswahili language. "Many students did not know Kiswahili yet the trainers were using it frequently and this may have affected the training," Agaba added.

Bassajjabalaba said since the region is for the East African Community integration, government needs to see how best Kiswahili can be promoted as a language.

The college principal, Silver Mukwatsibwe, thanked the Government for introducing patriotism trainings.

"They make us appreciate our country," he said.

Col. Patrick Mwesigye, the commissioner for patriotism, said the negative perception that patriotism trainings are a political tool to benefit a political party and the sitting government is a setback.



Uganda Technical College - Bushenyi students assembling guns during the training

"All countries that have developed and those still developing have embraced patriotism trainings," Mwesigye said.

Masindi

Cadres also urged the Government and relevant authorities to consider conducting cadre trainings in English and not in Kiswahili.

The call was made by cadres of Uganda Technical College (UTC) Kyema in a memorandum of students presented by Brenda Nabiryo during their pass-out over the weekend. "There was language barrier as we trained because instructors, most of whom are from the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), were using Kiswahili, which majority of the students do not understand," the memorandum read.

In response, the Masindi district National Resistance Movement (NRM) chairperson, Kabakumba Masiko, who presided over the pass-out ceremony at the college's playgrounds, advised students to consider learning the Kiswahili language instead of opting for translation.

Of the 420 students enrolled, 348 underwent a one-week patriotism training course in political economy, constitutionalism and the rule of law and self-engineering. Other subject areas were patriotic discipline and its methods of work, military science, health issues and Uganda's resources.

Lira

The Lira district chairperson, Alex Oremo Alot, has called on the patriotism secretariat in the Office of the President to embark on the training of civil servants in patriotism as it was being done some years ago.

Oremo said civil servants who have trained in patriotism are more responsible than those who have not been trained.

Presiding over the passing out of 288 students of Lira Technical College, Alot commended the Government for organising the training and the students for accepting to be trained. He said patriotism was wrongly perceived as only National Resistance Movement (NRM)-based programme.

Lira resident district commissioner Robert Abak commended the students for their exemplary performances despite taking only one week to train. He said the students are now going out to be agents of change.

The college's principal, Buchan Talwana, expressed reservation on the timing of the programme.

He said the secretariat did not consider the timing of the programme, hence interfering with the school programme, which resulted in making low participation of the students.

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