

My attack will not stop doctors' struggle - Obuku

Undeterred. The medical doctor says he will continue pushing for improvement of his colleagues' welfare.

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KAMPALA. The president of the Uganda Medical Association, Dr Anthony Ekwaro Obuku, has said his attack last week will not intimidate him to stop the struggle of advocating for doctors' welfare.

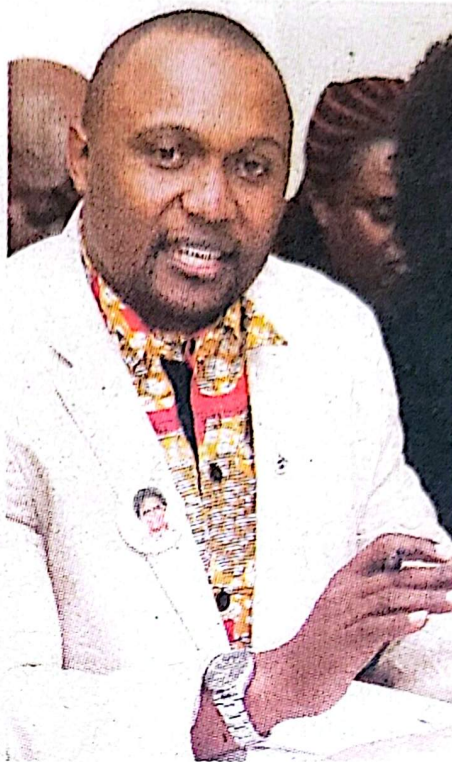
"I am not in any way influenced by this attack that maybe we should change tactic [in expressing our displeasure about the doctors' welfare] or call it [the strike] off all together," Dr Obuku told *Daily Monitor* in a telephone interview on Wednesday.

Dr Obuku, who led medical doctors across the country to lay down their tools in November, demanding improvement of their welfare, was attacked by suspected thugs at his gate in Kitikifumba, Kira Municipality, last Wednesday.

The thugs, who vanished with his wristwatch, wallet and mobile phone after smashing his car windows, also inflicted injuries on his face. He was taken to Case Hospital in Kampala.

Dr Obuku said he did not want to agree with earlier suspicions that it was a political witch-hunt, but wondered how ordinary thugs could dress up so smartly and speak fluent English like his tormentors.

"They were well dressed ...So one wonders whether they were either robbers or state agents ...and how they knew that I could not speak Luganda...that I knew English,"



Determined. Dr Ekwaro Obuku

he said. The doctor is currently recuperating at his home.

"Investigations by the doctors indicate that I got fractures to my facial bones [any of the bones surrounding the mouth and nose and contributing to the eye sockets, including the upper jawbones] and the nose bridge; affecting the alignment of the teeth that I cannot chew meat now," he said.

Narrates ordeal

On the fateful day, Dr Obuku took long to leave his office at Makerere University Medical School at Mulago hospital because his supervisor was

concerned he was lagging behind to complete his PhD final paper.

"I got home and had not yet hooted when...around five [people] surrounded me. They hit the car from the sides with a huge stone on all the three windows. I think as I turned to see who was at the window, it [the stone] hit my face because I saw somebody on my right [window]," he narrates the incident, before thugs demanded his watch.

Realising they could turn to his family members who had intervened after hearing the scuffle, he told them to call for help by telephone until police from Kira Police post arrived.

He then asked police to protect the rest of the members as one of his neighbours took him to hospital.

Due to the insecurity in the area, Dr Obuku said residents have since formed a group of crime preventers whom they pay through collective fund-raising.

The group was occupied at another scene of crime where his other relatives had been attacked hours earlier.

Although police say investigations into the incident are on-going, Dr Obuku is doubtful, accusing them of failing to help him the first time he was robbed of property worth Shs15m when he had just moved to the house.

"I have not heard anything from them but also don't expect much because their role has been reduced to quelling political riots," he said.

Dr Obuku urged government to get a durable solution to fight crime and youth unemployment.