

Journalists shy away from suing the army - HRN

 By [Walter Wafula](#)

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Ugandan journalists, who were tortured for covering protests against the high commodity prices last month, are shying away from suing officials of the Uganda People's Defense Forces, according to the Human Rights Network for Journalists (HRN). G.W. Ssebaggala programmes coordinator HRNJ-Uganda says most of the journalists who were allegedly tortured by the army and police in Masaka district are not interested in pursuing legal action against the security forces due to fear.



"We have had disappointments with victim journalists who are timid but we are moving with only one case in Masaka where the lawyers are finalising with paper work," Ssebaggala said in an interview on Tuesday, 10 May 2011. He said more details of the single case would be shared at a later date.

The journalists who were allegedly tortured during the protests include; Francis Mukasa, a camera man reporting Wavah Broadcasting Station (WBS) TV; Ronald Muyinda, a Radio One journalist; Stuart Iga of the *Red Pepper* newspaper; Yunusu Ntale, a journalist with Central Broadcasting Service (CBS FM), Ali Mabule and Dismus Buregyeya both with the *New Vision*; Isa Aliga a correspondent of NTV in Masaka; Norman Kabugu, a journalist with a daily tabloid *Kamunye*, and four others.

Under attack while covering demonstrations

The journalists came under attack from the army in various parts of the country as they covered outcomes of the demonstrations that turned violent on 18 April 2011.

Following their complaints, Robert Ssempala, the HRNJ-Uganda board chairman announced that the organisation would sue the army over the violation of journalists' rights. "We are dragging individual commanders to court for these violations, amongst them are Col. David Muhoozi the commandant of Armored Brigade in Masaka and the military police commandant among others," he said in a press statement in April.

Ssebaggala said HRNJ-Uganda is now investigating the use of money by the army to compromise the journalists to deter them from considering legal action against its officers. He said the investigations would specifically target the affected press in Masaka.

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

Walter Wafula is a seasoned journalist who has reported for the *Daily Monitor* newspaper in Kampala-Uganda. He is also a contributor on Bizcommunity.com website. Email Walter at wafwalt@yahoo.com and connect on LinkedIn.

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