

Uganda Peoples Congress

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PRESS STATEMENT

UPC SPEAKS OUT ON MISINFORMATION

1. UPC would like to welcome Pope Francis to Uganda and wish him the best on his visit. He is the third Pope to visit Uganda, the first being Pope Paul VI, who was received by the then President of Uganda, Milton Obote also the UPC President at the time. We thank the government for all the efforts to ensure the Pope's visit is a successful one.
2. The stories circulating in the media at present can only be described as speculation. The Party President Hon J Akena has been hosted on various media last week, in which questions pertaining to the supposed alliance were put to him. He has stated categorically on countless occasions that UPC has been approached by **FDC, Mbabazi** and **NRM**, and that talks have been held with **ALL THREE** parties. He went on to add that if there is any merit or compelling case for an alliance, then the matter would be referred to the National Council of UPC as it is the body mandated to discuss party policies and programmes. Should the National Council, conclude that an alliance is indeed worth pursuing with any of the **THREE** that have approached UPC, they will vote on the matter and pass a resolution(s) that will guide the party's ultimate decision.

UPC has its own pressing matters to deal with in preparation for the forthcoming elections in 2016, as we are fielding more candidates than we ever had at all levels since 2006. Olara Otunnu and his now departed team are capitalising on this by continually insisting that they are still in office, even though their recent case seeking an Interim Injunction stopping Jimmy Akena from being recognised as UPC President and carrying out any duties, was dismissed by the judge. To be clear, Otunnu's term of office expired on the 13th March 2015, he clearly stated that he would not be seeking re-election.

Mission: A social democratic party that seeks to safe guard national independence and promote national unity, equality, equity and human rights for all.

Vision: An independent, united, democratic, just, peaceful and prosperous nation, where all its citizens have equal opportunities and equitable access to national resources.

3. Olara Otunnu had a whole year in which to prepare for elections for either another term in office, or for a new President. He chose not to call the National Council, as provided for in the Party Constitution, to sit and draw up a roadmap that would guide this process, for reasons beyond just the elections. Most of you are aware that certain funds from a Danish donor were misappropriated earlier on in his term of office, and the National Council, which is responsible for budgeting and auditing party expenditure, was not called to look into this theft of funds and other financial matters. Justice Musota ruled that Otunnu could remain as *de facto* President to see out the roadmap he presented in court as evidence, which was time-constrained to the date he set for a Delegates' Conference, 12th June 2015. We all know that he then postponed the Conference "indefinitely".

The Party therefore finds it bizarre that reports alleging that it has two factions are constantly being reinforced by sections of the media, are devoid of any mention of the latest court case dismissing Otunnu's application to remain recognised as Party President. No journalists attended the court sessions, but this does not stop any referral to court records when compiling news articles on the matter. In the same vein, the UPC Constitution is available online and by request. There are no two factions in UPC, the Party is one and it is led by Jimmy Akena. Those who do not agree have no choice but wait for 2020 when they will be constitutionally allowed to claim leadership if they succeed in getting elected. Claiming that there are two factions is no different to claiming that Uganda Cranes has two teams because those not selected have refused to recognise Micho as the coach and are going to insist on taking the field at the same time whenever a match is taking place. Really???

4. On the issue of the allegations made by the former Vice-President of the Party, headlined by the Daily Monitor last week, that Jimmy Akena received a UGX 1 billion bribe from NRM, has been on NRM's payroll for a number of years. Mr. Bossa was evidently not asked by the journalist who wrote the story to adduce evidence supporting these allegations. We recognise that it is not the duty of the journalist to do so as there are courts that deal with these sorts of matters, but to headline the allegations in that manner, suggests that the Monitor either found them

credible, or was guided more by profit and less by seeking the truth and informing the public in a manner consistent with that expected of a flagship publication.

Allegations in politics are commonplace and part and parcel of the game. But they also have far-reaching consequences, and so should be handled responsibly. Let me draw attention to this excerpt from Prof. Akiiki Mujaju's paper titled "The Gold allegations Motion and Political Development in Uganda", which touches on an equally trying time for the Party, and the country and has similarities that are pertinent to the current situation:

"Obviously Ocheng knew that, in the event of such an inquiry, he would have to be a major witness. At the time the Commission was to start its investigations and was appealing to people to come forward and give evidence, Ocheng left Kampala for London via Nairobi. He had gone for eye treatment, he said. The commission had to issue a summons for Ocheng, and when he finally appeared before the commission he was in the embarrassing position of telling it that he had no firm, indisputable evidence to support his charges; the Amin bank account was the only tangible evidence he could produce. He had pointed out as much in a statement he made to the police.⁵⁴ Many people had come to his house to report these allegations, but he really did not know them and could not identify them on sight."

5. Now that the nomination exercise for Local Councils has been completed and the Parliamentary ones scheduled for the 2nd and 3rd of December 2015 are to be held next, the Party would like to thank those that have offered themselves, and wishes them well. The Party expects that leaders at all levels will exert their greatest efforts in building effective campaign machines that will bring success at all levels. The Party also calls on those members still holding onto the prospect that some miracle will return Otunnu to the Presidency and are actively trying to demobilise support, that their time would be best spent desisting from doing so, or working hard to ensure that Olara Otunnu's new found

home, the TDA or Go Forward, succeeds in its endeavours. We are all part of the opposition and therefore in an election campaign period, it is the incumbent that is the opponent.

6. Finally, the Party sends its condolences to the Malian people and extends a hand of friendship in these tragic times and calls upon the International Community to find better means to put an end to the bloodshed ongoing. It also calls upon those who seek to fulfil political aims through the barrels of guns, and bombs, to choose democratic and peaceful means to attain their goals!

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY



EDWARD SEGGANYI

SECRETARY GENERAL