

Uganda parliament bars seasoned reporters

KAMPALA: Uganda's parliament on Wednesday angered the media by ordering the replacement of all reporters who have been covering the institution for more than five years.



Image via [123RF](#)

In a letter to Ugandan media organisations, a parliamentary official argued the decision to bar seasoned reporters was "in the interests of balanced media coverage".

"This is therefore to request that you arrange for a replacement for all parliamentary reporters from your organisation who have been covering parliament since 2009," the letter from parliament said.

The chairperson of the Ugandan Parliamentary Press Association, Agnes Nanduttu, said the move was "a bad development for the media in Uganda."

"Five years covering a key institution like parliament is such a short time... if they are giving limits, that means we are going to lose experienced journalists," she said, adding the directive would be challenged in court.

Several journalists alleged the directive has been prompted by negative reporting on issues such as bribery, inefficiency, absenteeism and wasteful expenditure -- including controversial moves by deputies to vote themselves a significant pay rise.

Last year Uganda's finance ministry rejected their demands for a pay hike, concluding that the existing salary for an MP -- about 15 million shillings (about \$6,100) a month, sixty times more than most state employees -- was enough.

Uganda newspapers have also exposed reports of millions of dollars of unaccounted expense claims by deputies.

Source: AFP

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