

Kabale residents task Museveni not to back track on taxing MPs



Kabale citizens raising hands to task President Yoweri Museveni to stick to his stand on MPs paying taxes on their allowances at Hill Top Hotel in Kabale on Monday Dec 12, 2012.

People in Kabale have tasked the President Yoweri Museveni not to betray them by allowing MPs' tax exemption on their allowances and emoluments. Led by Fr. Gaetano Batanyenda, The clerics, Councillors, Kabale Mayor requested Museveni to maintain his ground that the lawmakers should pay taxes.

"I want to thank President Museveni for categorically stating that MPs shouldn't be exempted from paying taxes," Batanyenda said drawing applause from Kabale citizens who turned up to sign signatures petitioning Museveni to stick to his stand. This was at Hill Top Hotel in Kabale on Monday 12th December 2016 where different leaders from Kigezi region converged to support the President that MPs shouldn't be exempted from paying taxes.

The Kabale residents' move comes after the countrywide national campaign to bloc MPs tax exemption was launched in Kampala last week and is to spread across every district. In attendance were lecturers, farmers, traders, councillors, youth and religious leaders among others. The event was organized by Kick Corruption out of Uganda.

"MPs are so canning, let them allow us not to tax their salaries but let's tax their allowances," Batanyenda said in reference to MPs' argument that they pay taxes on their salaries. The outspoken clergy criticized MPs' rhetoric that because of so many demands from the constituencies such as attending burials and weddings they need the exemption. Fr. Batanyenda read article 17 and 79 of the Constitution which stipulates citizen's obligation to pay taxes and the functions of MPs to make laws respectively.

Rev. Dr. Emphraim Mbabazi from Kisoro urged citizens to support Government so that enough tax revenue is generated from MPs' allowances so as to improve service delivery in the country.

The Executive Director of Kick Corruption out of Uganda Robert Byamugisha encouraged citizens to sign open letters to President Museveni not to back down on MPs quest for tax exemption. "It's an obligation of every citizen to pay taxes for development. It's a bloodstream network that connects us to other countries and without it, it cuts us



Fr. Gaetano Batanyenda (left) joins hands with Robert Kakuru of Kick Corruption Out of Uganda to in support of campaign to Tax MPs allowances at Hill Top Hotel in Kabale on Monday Dec 12, 2012

way from development agenda," Byamugisha said.

The Secretary to Religious Council Uganda Muslim Supreme Council Abdulhasiib Ssekalema urged MPs to pay taxes on their allowances and emoluments. Maurice Kaitaka a lecturer at Kabale University described the MPs' refusal to pay taxes as corruption at the highest level and robbery at noon. He called upon the District Councils to debate the matter during their plenary sittings.

Israel Kwesiga a trader reasoned that if he pays taxes then who are MPs to be exempted. "Let's all pay taxes regardless of the position you hold in this country," Kwesiga stated. The District Councillors present at the meeting added their voices urging the legislators to pay their taxes. Pius Rwakamari the Kabale Councillor pledged to take the matter to the District Council for debate. The Mayor of Kabale Municipality, Sentaro Byamugisha urged the residents not to give up on the campaign. He promised to

mobilize them to hold a peaceful demonstration in Kabale town.

The tax collectors from URA also stressed the importance of paying taxes as it boosts revenue collection. Arnold Mulindwa noted that it would be a setback if MPs don't pay their taxes. "None paying of taxes will result to reduced tax revenue," Mulindwa said.

The Kabale citizens made recommendations among them signing signatures to petition the President to maintain his stand, the District Councils in Kigezi region should deliberate on issue during the council meetings, continue creating awareness among citizens on the dangers of not paying taxes. At the end of it about 700 citizens signed on the letters to petition the President.



URA official sensitizing Kabale resident on taxation at Hilton Hotel in Kabale on 12/12/16