

Katakwi residents insist **MPs must pay taxes on allowances**



Paul Okiring of Teso Anti-Corruption Coalition addressing the congregation with other #TAXMPs supports today 15th December 2016 at Katakwi District Headquarters

The people of Katakwi have also added their voices to reject MPs' decision to exempt themselves from paying income tax on their allowances. The Katakwi residents were led by the District Leaders, Councillors together with Amuria Chairperson and Teachers opposing the lawmakers' tax exemption demand.

Leading the onslaught against MPs was the Amuria LC5 boss Okitoi Erisat who said legislators must pay taxes on their allowances like any other citizen. "There is no way MPs can run away from paying taxes when other citizens are paying," Erisat said. Erisat told hundreds of people who turned up and signed petition letters to President Yoweri Museveni urging him not to bow down to the pressures of lawmakers.

This was at Katakwi District Headquarters on Thursday December 15, 2016 where civil society organisations converged to raise their anger against the MPs move. The CSOs present included Action Aid Uganda, Teso Anti-Corruption Coalition, Food Rights Alliance and Public Affairs Centre of Uganda among others.

In response, the Soroti Woman MP Angeline Osege told the gathering that there is a misconception that MPs don't pay taxes. "There is lack of understanding that we don't pay taxes," said Osege who is also the chairperson of the Parliament Accounts Committee. She was however challenged by the various speakers "We are not satisfied by the reason given by Parliament of exempting MPs from paying taxes. The local people require to be consulted first because they are the ones who voted the MPs," Erisat responded to her. He pointed out that there are so many Bills which are supposed to be passed but MPs prioritized the one that exempts them from paying taxes. He criticized the lawmakers for not considering the citizens plight who are enduring poor service delivery across the country, yet if their allowances were taxed, more revenue would be generated.

The Speaker of Amuria district, Ketty Akol urged the people of Teso to reject the MPs' move by putting these legislators n pressure to pay tax on their allowances. "We must put pressure on those honourables until they pay tax on their emoluments," Akol said. The Secretary of Planning and Administration of Katakwi, Bosco Okiror poured his anger to the lawmakers saying if Councillors are taxed 30% of sh250, 000 they earn then who are MPs not to pay. Councillor Patrick Elungat also insisted that legislators should pay taxes.

The teachers also demanded that if MPs are let scot free then other citizens will also demand to be exempted. Grace Apio a teacher of Apuuton Primary School argued that if the civil servants who are paid the least pay their taxes then who are MPs to be exempted.

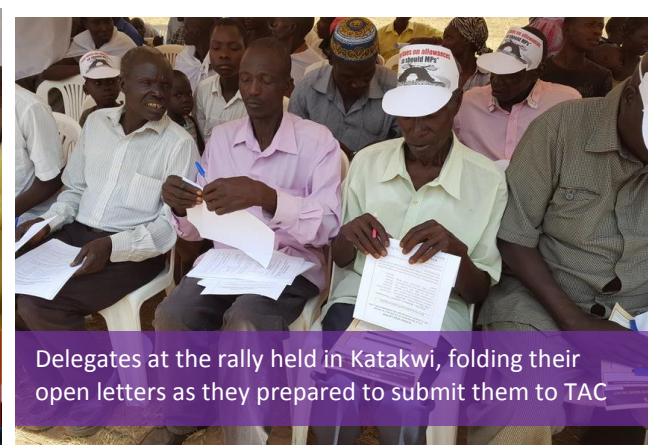
"The commoners who are least paid are paying taxes what about the MPs who earn big allowances," Apio said. "If they don't pay it will affect government's programmes and that is the reason why we don't have drugs in the hospitals," she stated. Christine Amongin also a teacher insisted that the MPs must pay so as to improve on service delivery in health, education, agriculture and road and transport sectors.



Amuru Chairperson, PAC Chairperson during the rally held today in Katakwi



Women were not left behind- this picture highlights women's involvement in the #TaxMPs campaign



Delegates at the rally held in Katakwi, folding their open letters as they prepared to submit them to TAC