

BY BUSEIN SAMILU

KAMPALA. The leadership of the Uganda Law Society (ULS) has written to Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr Abbas Byakagaba, demanding explanations on why police officers participated in what they described as the forceful eviction of Muwema & Co Advocates from their offices on Plot 50 Windsor Crescent Road in Kololo, Kampala, despite an ongoing case.

Mr Anthony Asiiimwe, the ULS vice president, yesterday told reporters in Kampala that the Force must explain why it acted outside the law by assisting court bailiffs from Downtown Investments Ltd in evicting their member.

"The police did this blatantly. This is an attack on the legal profession. We feel we are not protected as lawyers and members of the public. Even RDCs [resident district commissioners] didn't approve. We have formal-

ULS petitions IGP over Muwema law firm eviction

ly written to the Inspector General of Police to know who the Commanding Officer of the eviction was, and whether he approved this activity... without a verified and lawful warrant from a court which is valid."

Mr Asiiimwe added: "We also seek to know if any steps were taken to bring the culprits to the book and if the police were involved in removing confidential and sensitive documents? What if clients come and demand them? What will Muwema answer? Where's the custody for these documents after the eviction? We need all these answers. Who's liable? We need to know the names of these people who conducted this!"

Court bailiffs from Downtown Investments Ltd, backed by police, enforced a High Court order on March 6, evicting city lawyer Fred Muwema and his firm from the Kololo premises.



Mr Anthony Asiiimwe, the vice President of Uganda Law Society.
PHOTO/ BUSEIN SAMILU

The eviction followed a February ruling by Justice Patricia Mutesi of the Commercial Division, which found the firm had overstayed despite piling up rent arrears. The court ordered the firm

to vacate and settle financial claims exceeding Shs1.4 billion, including rent arrears, profits, and damages.

Video clips circulating on social media showed bailiffs hauling out office furniture, documents, and other items. The dispute traces back to a five-year lease signed in December 2014, initially pegged at \$5,000 (Shs18,600,850) per month plus VAT, later revised to \$10,000 (Shs37,201,700). Though the lease expired in December 2019, the firm remained in occupation.

Mr Asiiimwe described the eviction as "malicious" and a blatant violation of due process.

"We are shocked and disturbed by the video that went viral, evicting one of our members M/s Muwema and Company Advocates. As members of the Law Society, we have the mandate to protect our members and all lawyers

under Section 3(c) of the Uganda Law Society Act," he said.

He added: "Law firms handle sensitive client data, property and affairs such as title deeds, wills and exhibits, which are legally protected from harm. Any disputes between advocates and landlords (or creditors) should not put clients at risk. The right of appeal is a fundamental aspect of due process; all parties must respect this process and allow courts to determine disputes conclusively"

In its statement, the Society said: "ULS, therefore, calls upon Downtown Investments Ltd and the Inspector General of Police to reverse their actions and apologise to M/s Muwema & Co. Advocates, immediately cease all unlawful actions, and respect the pending appellate process."

The police had not commented on the issue by press time as our repeated calls and messages to the spokesperson were not answered.