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## Uganda: Govt to Reconsider Appointees for IUIU

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The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has opposed government's recent appointment of Prof Mukwanason Hyuha and Mahiri Balunywa to the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) council, The Observer has learnt. And a government minister yesterday revealed that a process was underway that could lead to the names being withdrawn for consultations. Sources in the ministry of Education and Sports say that the NCHE has written to Minister Jessica Alupo, urging her to use her office to block the appointments.

Among other functions, NCHE is legally mandated to advise the government on matters relating to institutions of higher learning. This development comes after government last month named Mukwanason, Balunywa and Nusura Tiperu as its representatives on the IUIU council. They replaced former Ali Kirunda Kivejinja, former Butambala MP Lubega Kaddunabi and Aleru Huda, whose tenure expired last July.

The appointment has attracted criticism from sections of the Muslim community (See 'Muslims reject gov't's IUIU appointees', The Observer, April 16, 2012). Mukwanason was dismissed from his position as Makerere University academic registrar in 2002. Balunywa, a former student and lecturer at IUIU, also left the institution under unclear circumstances.

Our sources say that the NCHE Executive Director, Prof Abdu Kasozi, this week wrote to Alupo, questioning about the integrity and general suitability of Mukwanason and Balunywa. We have been told that because the IUIU representatives were appointed by the ministry of Foreign Affairs, NCHE could not intervene in the matter directly. Instead, Kasozi wrote to his line minister, Alupo, asking her to plead with Foreign Affairs to drop the two men.

Kasozi is understood to have made reference to Mukwanason's controversial departure from Makerere University, where he was accused of admitting a student with forged results, among other faults. Balunywa, we have been told, was described as being antagonistic and, therefore, unlikely to work well with the administration. Alupo yesterday admitted getting Kasozi's letter, which, she said, raised important issues that would need to be addressed systematically.

"I have written to the minister for Foreign Affairs for a meeting, and we are going to request him to withdraw the names so that we consult widely even if it means meeting the people involved to explain what is happening," Alupo said by telephone.

Asuman Kiyingi, the minister of state for Foreign Affairs in charge of Regional Cooperation, recently told The Observer that he would not revisit the matter unless IUIU formally wrote to him objecting to the names. This latest development, however, suggests that Kiyingi should have consulted the Education ministry before announcing the names.

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