Uganda opposition members ask ICC to investigate killings

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By Risdel Kasasira, AP

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A group of opposition members in Uganda's parliament has petitioned the International Criminal Court to investigate the killing of dozens of people in clashes between a traditional king's guards and security forces in November.

The petition asks the ICC to investigate President Yoweri Museveni as the leader of Uganda's armed forces, as well as officials who commanded the army and police to attack the palace of King Charles Wesley Mumbere of the Kingdom of Rwenzururu.

The government says the attack came after royal guards killed 14 police officers in the mountainous district of Kasese, a stronghold of the political opposition near the border with Congo. The king has been accused of harboring rebels there.

The government has said 62 were killed in the clashes, including 46 supporters of the king and 16 police officers. The actual death toll may be higher, as many clashes happened deep in the villages and may not have been reported.

The king has since been arrested and faces murder charges.

Winnie Kiiza, the opposition leader in Uganda's parliament who is from the area where the clashes took place, said the killing of the civilian royal guards constitutes possible war crimes.

The ICC wrote to the parliament members this week acknowledging the receipt of the petition.

The clashes underscore tensions between Museveni and influential tribal rulers who are constitutionally recognized but have no real authority or armies of their own. Ahead of presidential polls in February, which Museveni won, Mumbere came out in support of the opposition, a move that appeared to violate the traditional leaders' code of conduct.