

A heated scene unfolded in Uganda's Parliament on Wednesday morning, forcing Speaker Anita Among to suspend the plenary session for 30 minutes after a physical altercation between two lawmakers and an alleged security scare.

The disturbance began when Mitanya Municipality MP, Francis Zaake, raised alarm, claiming that a man carrying a gun had entered the parliamentary chambers, which are typically restricted to members. Zaake expressed concern about the presence of the alleged weapon, saying, "Madam Speaker, there is a gun in the house. There is a gun here to intimidate us, and I am concerned as a victim of gun violence in this house."

In response, Speaker Among instructed the Sergeant-at-Arms to conduct a security check. After the inspection, it was confirmed that no gun was found. However, Zaake remained unconvinced by the result and took matters into his own hands, attempting to carry out a search himself.

This decision led to a heated confrontation between Zaake and Amuru South MP, Anthony Akol. The disagreement quickly escalated into a physical fistfight, sending the House into chaos. As tensions mounted, Speaker Among was forced to suspend the sitting for 30 minutes to restore order.

The altercation occurred against the backdrop of rising tensions over the controversial Coffee Amendment Bill, which was scheduled for a vote. The Bill, which seeks to mainstream the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, has faced fierce opposition, particularly from the opposition parties and the Buganda Caucus. Critics argue that the bill will centralize control over the coffee industry and diminish the role of UCDA, while the government defends the measure as part of its broader plan to streamline government agencies and reduce wasteful spending.

As the House reconvenes later today, the volatile atmosphere is expected to continue, with the opposition vowing to resist the Bill and NRM ruling party MPs pushing for its passage.