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# World Report 2025 - Uganda

Uganda's human rights environment remains restrictive, with the government clamping down on free expression, peaceful assembly, and dissent. Authorities have arrested and charged individuals for criticizing officials online. Protests against corruption have been met with mass arrests. Environmental activists face ongoing harassment and arbitrary arrests for opposing large-scale oil projects like the East African Crude Oil Pipeline.

There have been some positive, albeit limited, developments, including the Constitutional Court striking down parts of the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act that restricted healthcare access and criminalized lease of properties to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The court however upheld provisions of the Act that reinforce discrimination and impose legal penalties against LGBT people.

Immediate challenges include addressing lack of accountability for serious crimes. Courts have convicted some former Lord's Resistance Army commanders, but the government has not pursued independent investigations into grave crimes committed by the military during that war or for the 2016 [Kasese massacre](#). The authorities' went ahead with plans to implement real-time vehicle tracking raise concerns about privacy rights.

## Freedoms of Expression and Assembly

The authorities clamped down on free expression online, arresting and charging individuals for criticizing government officials online.

On February 23, prosecutors [charged](#) Ibrahim Musana, known on TikTok as Pressure 24/7, with promoting hate speech and spreading malicious information. They claimed Musana used his social media accounts to share content "likely to degrade and to promote hostility" against prominent Ugandan figures, including President Yoweri Museveni, speaker of parliament, Anita Among, the king of Buganda Ronald Mutebi, and State Minister for Information Communication Technology and National Guidance Joyce Ssebugwawo. A court released Musana on bail on April 29 after spending the constitutional 60 days on remand pending trial.

On July 10, a magistrate [sentenced](#) 24-year-old Edward Awebwa to six years in prison for insulting the president and his family on TikTok. Authorities charged Awebwa with hate speech and spreading "misleading and malicious" information about President Museveni, his wife, and his son, Muhoozi Kainerugaba who heads the military.

The police in Kampala [detained](#), in July, at least 100 anti-corruption protesters and charged them with the colonial-era "common nuisance" offense.

## Environment and Human Rights

Environmental defenders and anti-fossil fuel activists have routinely faced [threats and arbitrary arrests](#) for raising concerns over the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) and other fossil fuel projects.

Since May, authorities [arrested](#) at least 81 environmental rights defenders who protested against large-scale oil projects in the country. On June 4, plainclothes Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) officers reportedly [detained](#) Steven Kwikiriza, an environmental rights defender, in an unknown location. Five days later, his captors [abandoned](#) him by the roadside 250 kilometers from Kampala, having beaten him severely.

# Attacks and Harassment of Opposition Leaders and Supporters

On July 23, Kenyan and Ugandan security officials in Kisumu, Kenya, conducted an [extraordinary rendition](#) of 36 members of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), a Ugandan opposition party. The Ugandan police [claimed](#) the FDC members had traveled to Kenya for terrorist training. The group was charged on July 29 before a Kampala court on terrorism charges and were remanded to prison pending trial. On October 31, a High Court judge [released](#) them on bail.

On September 3, security agents in Kampala [shot](#) Robert Kyagulanyi, popularly known as Bobi Wine, of the National Unity Platform opposition party in the leg. Police [said](#) officers tried to block Kyagulanyi and his team from marching down a road, leading to an altercation during which he was injured.

## Women's and Girls' Rights

Uganda's maternal mortality rate [improved](#) from 336 to 189 deaths per 100,000 live births since 2016, according to a government report launched in 2024. However, most maternal mortality continues to be [preventable](#). Violence against women and girls in Uganda continues to be prevalent.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

On April 3, Uganda's Constitutional Court [upheld](#) key provisions of the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act, further entrenching discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The court struck down sections that restricted healthcare access for LGBT people, criminalized renting property to them, and mandated reporting of alleged homosexual acts. However, the judges ruled that the law did not violate fundamental rights to equality, privacy, freedom of expression, or the right to work.

In March, the Court of Appeal [rejected](#) a petition brought by Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a leading group advocating for LGBT rights, to compel the government to register the group's name. The court held that the organization's name is against "public interest." Without registration of its name, SMUG, which was [shut down](#) in August 2022 by the authorities, cannot register to operate as a non-governmental organization.

LGBT people have continued to [face](#) arrests, evictions, violence, and threats of violence.

## Accountability for Serious Crimes

On February 28, International Criminal Court (ICC) judges [ordered payment](#) of over €52 million of reparations for victims in the case against Dominic Ongwen. Ongwen, a former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commander, was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity in 2021. Joseph Kony, the LRA's founding leader and the only individual in Uganda against whom an ICC arrest warrant remains pending, is still at-large.

On August 13, the High Court's International Crimes Division convicted Thomas Kwoyelo, a former LRA commander, of crimes against humanity in Uganda's first domestic war crimes trial. On October 25, he was [sentenced](#) to 40 years' imprisonment. In 2018, the [African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights](#) [ordered](#) the Ugandan government to compensate Kwoyelo – who has been in detention since 200 – for failure to try him within a reasonable time. The government has yet to comply.

On May 30, the United States government imposed [travel sanctions](#) on five Ugandan officials, including Peter Elwelu, the former UPDF deputy chief, for “extrajudicial killings” committed by UPDF members under his command. In November 2016, Elwelu led a military raid in Kasese district, killing at least 55 people, which the government has failed to independently investigate or hold anyone accountable for.

## Right to Education

A joint [report](#) by Human Rights Watch and the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights found that Uganda’s lack of government-funded pre-primary education worsens wealth inequality and has lifelong negative consequences. Only 1 in 10 children aged 3 to 5 are enrolled in licensed pre-primary schools, while 60 percent attend no pre-primary school. Private preschool fees hinder access for low-income families, leading to poorer primary school performance and increased dropout rates for those who miss pre-primary education.

## Government Surveillance

In July, the Ugandan government [announced](#) the full rollout of digital number plates for real-time vehicle tracking, starting November 1, with complete implementation by 2025. The Intelligent Transport Monitoring System (ITMS) [purportedly aims at enhancing national security](#) through a network of surveillance cameras and mandatory cellular-network-connected tracking devices in vehicles.

Since 2018, the Ugandan government has expanded its surveillance efforts , including through a \$126 million CCTV system in 2019 to monitor public spaces and a partnership with Russia’s Joint Stock Global Security Company to establish the ITMS.