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Uganda's President Museveni Declared Winner in Elections Amid Repression

Authorities Hinder Rights to Free Expression and Peaceful Assembly



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President Yoweri Museveni speaks during a news conference in Entebbe, Uganda, July 26, 2022. © 2022 Hajarah Nalwadda/AP Photo

Uganda's electoral commission has declared President Yoweri Museveni as [the winner](#) of the January 15 elections, securing his seventh term in office with 71 percent of the vote.

The weeks leading up to the elections were [marred](#) by rights abuses. Security officers [reportedly](#) beat and arrested hundreds of people during opposition rallies, indiscriminately fired teargas, and kicked and slapped [journalists](#) trying to cover the events.

On November 28, 2025, security officers [allegedly shot and killed](#) Mesach Okello, an opposition supporter, in Iganga in Eastern Uganda. The police [claimed](#) they were responding to “stone throwing” and “hooliganism.” On December 8, Presidential candidate, Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine, claims soldiers [beat him](#) and his supporters with sticks during a rally in the northern city of Gulu.

In the weeks immediately leading up to the elections, the government ramped up the repression again.

On December 30, [Sarah Bireete](#), a prominent human rights activist was arrested, and on January 12, the government ordered at least 10 [nongovernmental organizations](#) to cease their operations indefinitely on vague and unsubstantiated grounds. The exact number of groups that were suspended is unclear.

The government also ordered a [blanket internet shutdown](#) two days before the election, severely restricting access to critical information about the elections for Ugandans. Five days later, although internet access was [partially restored](#) by the government, access to messaging and social media applications, such as WhatsApp and X, was still being restricted.

Following the election result, Kyagulanyi [posted on X](#) that security officials had surrounded his home on the outskirts of Kampala, switched off electricity and CCTV cameras, and were blocking access to and from the premises. Despite the restrictions, Kyagulanyi was able to escape and is [currently hiding](#) in an undisclosed location. His colleagues were not so lucky. His party, the National Unity Platform, [reported](#) that two of its senior members were abducted by security forces and remain missing.

Uganda is obligated to promote and protect the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and access to information for all, regardless of their political affiliation. The international community should press Museveni's government to ensure that the human rights violations end, that abuses associated with the elections are promptly investigated, and that those responsible are held to account.

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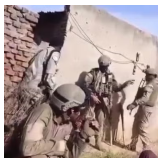
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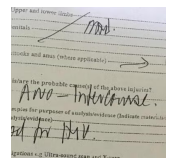
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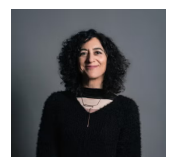
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