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# Uganda: Post Election Assault on Political Opposition

## End harassment, Hold Those Responsible to Account



Musician and opposition candidate Robert Kyagulanyi aka Bobi Wine during a press conference in Kampala, Uganda, October 1, 2019. © 2019 Sipa via AP Images

(Nairobi) – [Ugandan](#) authorities have intensified attacks on the country’s main opposition party since presidential elections took place on January 15, 2026, Human Rights Watch said today.

Authorities have conducted [mass arrests](#) of National Unity Platform supporters and forcibly disappeared two senior leaders, who remain missing. Since January 15, the military has laid siege to the home of the

party president, Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine, restricting access to and from the premises, assaulting his wife and staff, and destroying property. Kyagulanyi is the closest rival to President Yoweri Museveni, who was [declared the winner](#) for a seventh presidential term in the recent elections.

“Uganda’s longstanding pattern of abuse against opposition has risen to alarming levels,” said [Ashwanee Budoo-Scholtz](#), deputy Africa director at Human Rights Watch. “The Ugandan government needs to stop cracking down on dissent and ensure that people with opposing views are safe.”

On January 16, Kyagulanyi [posted online](#) that he had managed to escape his home after soldiers raided his compound and switched off electricity and CCTV cameras. He has since been in hiding.

Just over a week later, on January 23, Kyagulanyi said in [an X post](#) that armed men once again raided his home in his absence; he posted four photographs of the alleged damage. His wife, Barbara Kyagulanyi, had [recorded a video](#) of the moment the men arrived. It shows at least six uniformed men carrying weapons inside her grounds and approaching her house. She later [told the media](#) that the men grabbed her by her hair, tore her clothing, sat on her, and demanded that she open her phone, which she refused.

President Museveni’s son, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the head of the Ugandan military, had threatened to kill Kyagulanyi. [Boasting](#) on X on January 19 that the government had already killed 22 NUP “terrorists,” he said that he was “praying the 23rd is Kabobi [Bobi Wine].” However, he [denied](#) that his soldiers assaulted Kyagulanyi’s wife.

At around 11:30 p.m. on January 14, soldiers detained Jolly Jackline Tukamushaba, the opposition party’s deputy president for Western Uganda, at a hotel in Muhanga. Tukamushaba was running for a position in parliament. At the time of her detention, she, her daughter, and two other supporters were working in a hotel room to finalize documents needed for her participation in the elections the next day.

Patricia Ashaba, Tukamushaba’s daughter, told Human Rights Watch that seven armed men in military uniforms raided the hotel room that night and held them all at gunpoint. “They told all of us, ‘Kneel down, and hands up, put your phones in front,’ and pointed guns at us,” Ashaba said.

The soldiers confiscated the election-related documents as well as money and ordered Tukamushaba to go with them, put her in a waiting van, commonly referred to in Uganda as a “Drone”, and drove off with her. Ashaba has not heard from her mother since. Tukamushaba was unable to participate in elections the following day.

Kyagulanyi [posted a video](#) on Facebook on January 18 that apparently shows Tukamushaba being taken. In the video, filmed at night from a balcony, a woman climbs into an unmarked white van closely followed by a man carrying a rifle and another wearing uniform. Several other men wait nearby and then enter the van.

David Lewis Rubongoya, National Unity Platform’s secretary general, [reported](#) the second [enforced disappearance](#) the following day, on January 15. In a post on X, the party’s secretary general said that a group of armed men had taken the party’s deputy president for Northern Uganda, Lina Zedriga Waru, from her home on the outskirts of Kampala.

Her son, Frank John Bosco Lemi, told Human Rights Watch that around 6 p.m. on January 15, neighbors alerted him that something was wrong and that Zedriga had been taken away by soldiers in two vehicles belonging to the military. He said he reviewed security footage, which Human Rights Watch has not seen, that showed eight soldiers in two vehicles taking her away. Lemi also said that the following day, the soldiers came back to their home, without his mother. He escaped when they entered the house.

At a January 23 court hearing, which was held after Lemi petitioned the High Court in Kampala on his mother's behalf, the military [denied](#) holding her. The matter was adjourned to January 28, pending a response from the police.

An [enforced disappearance](#) occurs when authorities, or those acting on their behalf, deprive someone of their liberty and then refuse to acknowledge it, or to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the person concerned. International law strictly prohibits enforced disappearances in any circumstance and states have an obligation to investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible.

Uganda has an [appalling record](#) of conducting enforced disappearances, particularly of political opposition, and the authorities should urgently investigate the latest apparent enforced disappearances of opposition leaders, Human Rights Watch said.

The 2026 elections were [marred by rights abuses](#). Security officers reportedly beat and arrested hundreds of people during opposition rallies, including journalists, arrested a prominent human rights activist, and indefinitely suspended at least 10 nongovernmental organizations on vague and unsubstantiated grounds. The government ordered a blanket internet shutdown two days before the election, severely restricting access to critical information about the elections for Ugandans.

[Media reports](#) indicate that at least 118 supporters of National Unity Platform members were charged in court on January 19 with "election-related offences", including unlawful assembly and conspiracy.

The enforced disappearances of opposition figures in the aftermath of the repressive elections is reminiscent of similar abusive practices after [the 2021 elections](#).

In 2022, President Museveni [pledged](#) to send strong messages to Uganda's security agencies that unlawful detention, torture, and other abuses of detainees are unacceptable, and to ensure that those responsible for rights violations within the security forces are prosecuted. There are no public records of any such accountability processes.

Both Ugandan and international law prohibit, in absolute terms, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, and guarantee the right to freedoms of expression, association, and assembly, as well as non-discrimination based on political opinion. The Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act of 2012, and the Human Rights (Enforcement) Act of 2019, further criminalize torture and provide for personal liability for public officers who commit human rights violations.


"Opposing Museveni is not a crime," said Budoo-Scholtz. "Uganda's international partners should raise concerns publicly and privately and urge Museveni's government to end this crackdown and hold those

responsible for abuses to account.”

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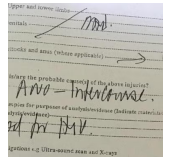
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