



## **BUKEDI RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (BRUCI)**

### **CIVIC SPACE IN UGANDA**

**Reporting Period: January to March 2023.**

#### **1. The current political context in Uganda.**

In Uganda, the political landscape has not changed over years plus the government too. Politics of Uganda. Uganda is a presidential republic, in which the President of Uganda is the head of state and the prime minister is the head of government business.

The policies regarding the three freedoms have not changed. In Uganda, yes there are the non-state entities like terrorists for example the Lord's Resistance Army, and Allied Democratic Forces, and the ADF rebels in Congo. These have affected the work of the civic space because the areas affected cannot be accessed.

The political context in Uganda is narrowed since the control of all high-level governmental oppositions and decision-making position are all occupied by the ruling party officials who suppress the opposition leaders

#### **2. Incident of human rights violations.**

##### **1. Ugandan Parliament Passes Extreme Anti-LGBT Bill;**

The 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Bill confirms an already existing punishment of life imprisonment for same-sex conduct, while also increasing to 10 years the prison sentence for an attempt at same-sex conduct. But one of the most egregious provisions – the bill calls it “aggravated homosexuality” – calls for the death penalty in certain circumstances, including for “serial offenders,” or for anyone having same-sex relations with a person with a disability, thereby automatically denying persons with disabilities the capacity to consent to sex.

The bill also outlaws the “promotion of homosexuality,” effectively instituting a system of complete censorship on LGBT issues. Anyone advocating for the rights of LGBT people, or providing financial support to organizations that do so, could face up to 20 years’ imprisonment. LGBT rights groups could also be deemed unable to legally operate. In addition, anyone who “advertises, publishes, prints, broadcasts, distributes” material, including digitally, is regarded as “promoting or encouraging homosexuality” and would face criminal sanction.



Figure1: Ugandan Gay protestors in USA

## 2. Iron sheets (Mabati) Scandal

The government of Uganda procured the iron sheets through a supplementary vote for distribution to vulnerable Karimojong and youthful warriors, locally called Karachunas. These iron sheets were bought with a US\$30bn (\$8m) supplementary budget last year (2022), the iron sheets and other items, such as goats, were meant to be distributed to the poor in the cattle-rustling Karamoja region. This was after the government intensified plans to pacify the region through a carrot-and-stick approach: offer goodies to the poor to get them out of the rustling business and have them settle in the community or fight them with the army but the greedy Ugandan government top officials like prime minister, speaker of parliament, minister of finance and other cabinet officials diverted the iron sheets to satisfy their personal selfish interests denying the rightful people a right to live in well roofed shelters and this led to arrest of some of government officials to answer questions concerning that.

Beneficiaries of Karamoja iron sheets			
Date (2023)	Beneficiary	Quantity	Voucher No.
January 5	Moriku Kaducu	200	8518
January 25	Rebecca Kadaga	500	8519
January 30	Jacob Oboth Oboth	300	8520
January 30	Rukia Nakadaama	300	8521
January 30	Matia Kasaija	300	8522
February 1	Kitutu Mary Goretti	3,000	8524/8525
February 1	Obua Dennis Hanson	300	8526
February 1	Lugoloobi Amos	300	8527
February 2	Bwiino Kyakulaga	300	8528
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,500</b>	

Figure2: A list of top government cabinet officials and the amount of iron sheets each was to receive



Figure: Iron sheets meant for Karamoja people used to roof an animals' shelter

**3. KAMPALA, April 27 (Reuters) - Police in Uganda detained 11 female members of parliament on Thursday who they accused of staging of an unlawful protest, with some of the lawmakers sustaining injuries during their arrest.**

The lawmakers were arrested and detained just outside the parliament buildings in the capital Kampala as they prepared to march to the Ministry of Internal Affairs where they intended to handover protest note to the minister.



Figure4: A photo showing one of the women members of parliament being arrested in Kampala

- 4. Gen Kainerugaba, who is also Mr Museveni's senior presidential advisor on special operations, has already declared his intentions to one day become President, but his political strategy has been difficult to understand.**

He continues to make big public gatherings and rallies throughout the countries without any hinderances which is not the same with the opposition parties. In case any other opposition party holds such, then they are forcefully stopped, plus adapting supporters of opposition party supporter. This denies rights to Ugandan and brands Uganda a non-democratic dictatorial country



Figure5: Muhoozi campaigning throughout the country.

- 5. The NGO Bureau is currently investigating operations of 22 NGOs suspected to be involved in promotion of LGBTIQ activities.**

The government should “comprehensively criminalise” activities that promote homosexuality in the country and lay down stringent requirements for registration of civil society organisations

By Monitor, February, 2023

- 6. Motives for killings of journalists included "reprisals for reporting on organised crime, armed conflict or the rise of extremism, and covering sensitive subjects such as corruption, environmental crimes, abuse of power and protests. Killings of journalists and media workers surged 50 percent in 2022 to reach 86 worldwide, marking one death every four days, UN cultural body Unesco said Monday.**

By Monitor, January, 2023



Figure6: One of the journalists being arrested

## 7. Uganda Threatens to Close UN Human Rights Office

The then-UN Commission on Human Rights established the UN human rights office with government backing in Uganda in 2005 to focus on human rights in conflict-affected northern and northeastern Uganda. In 2009, its mandate was extended to cover the entire country and all human rights issues.

The decision to shut down the OHCHR country office was made after it asked the Ugandan Government’s approval for the renewal of its mandate in late December 2022.

“This is a very concerning sign for human rights in Uganda. OHCHR in Uganda has been very instrumental in providing human rights training to the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) and the Uganda Police Force (UPF) among other agencies. It also supports NGOs with training on UN Mechanisms, Human Rights Defenders protection, human rights monitoring and documentation, notably during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process”, said Jean-Claude Katende, Vice-President of FIDH.



Figure7: People at the UN Human Rights head office

### **3. Suggestions for addressing these violations.**

Below are our recommendations and suggestions;

- Grant the citizens a fair democracy process that does not involve threats to the opposition leaders
- Sensitize the security groups for example the police, the army on how to handle the protestors by avoiding brutal handling
- Follow the rule of law and apply justice to those convicted and charged with violence other kid napping and applying torturing them.
- Grant the journalists their freedom to operate and do their work because they are the eyes and ears of the public
- Volunteer or donate to a global organization
- Use the national and regional courts of law to enforce human rights and hold the State accountable
- Make relevant linkages with regional and international human rights mechanisms and processes
- Build alliances and bring all relevant stakeholders to the table
- Communicate with and keep influential decision makers informed about progress made, challenges and opportunities for further advancing the advocacy objective