



BUKEDI RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITY INNITIATIVES (BRUCI)

CIVIC SPACE IN UGANDA

Reporting Period: October to December 2023.

1. The current political context in your country.

In Uganda, the political landscape has not changed over years plus the government too. The politics of 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. The non-state entities like terrorists for example the Lord's Resistance Army, and Allied Democratic Forces, and the ADF rebels in Congo have affected the work of the civic space in that area.

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.

Rights Concerns Over License Plate Tracking

On November 1, 2023, the government initiated the “Intelligent Transport Monitoring System,” allegedly to address national security issues. The authorities say it will build on the country’s existing traffic surveillance system with a network of surveillance cameras and



mandatory cellular-network-connected tracking devices on all vehicles in the country. “Uganda’s new transport surveillance system amounts to unchecked mass surveillance of all vehicles at all times, undermining the right to privacy for millions of Ugandans,” said

Oryem Nyeko, Uganda researcher at Human Rights Watch, “The government should focus on protecting its citizens’ rights instead of abusing them.”

Killing of two tourists and a tour guide in Queen Elizabeth National Park in Kasese

In mid-November 2023, two tourists one of the British nationality and a South African national together with their tour guide were attacked and killed and the travel car burnt down in Queen Elizabeth National Park in Kasese District, Uganda. The Ugandan army spoke’s person reported that the attack was suspected to be by the ADF rebels from DRC.

This put a dark cloud onto Uganda’s tourism industry and at the biggest percentage the Human rights in Uganda.



Photo: The car the tourists and guide were using burning

Arrest of Human Rights Activist, Bobi Wine at Entebbe Airport

Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine was arrested at Entebbe International Airport near the capital Kampala on Thursday as he returned to the country, according to his party the National Unity Platform.

The National Unity Platform (NUP) said in a social media post that Wine was “violently arrested upon his return to Uganda. We are yet to establish his whereabouts.”



Photo: Bobi Wine being taken to the police car straight from the areophane

The party released video showing several men grabbing Wine on the tarmac, while one of his associates repeatedly yells, “Where are you taking him?” He said he was dragged into the car from the tarmac and the “goons” twisted his arms.

“It was very humiliating, very uncomfortable, but I am glad I reached here,” he said.

The arrest appears to be an attempt to stop a planned procession outside the airport by Wine’s supporters as police issued a warning ahead of his arrival urging them to cancel the march.

Leader of opposition in the Parliament Demanded for accountability of the missing persons.

Mathias Mpuuga, the Leader of Opposition in Parliament (LOP) has demanded for a response from government to have clear explanations on accountability of missing persons and other violations they listed in their demands.



Photo: Leader of opposition Hon: Mathias Mpuuga during the committee of accountability meeting at the parliament of Uganda.

Mpuuga made the remarks while addressing the media at Parliament on November 14, 2023, saying that the NRM regime shouldn't divert the opposition from the fight to end killings, human rights violations and missing persons in Uganda.

“So currently, we want to inform the world that we are still out of these

plenary meetings until such a time that we have received a satisfactory response on the issues we raised,” Mpuuga stated.

He said that although plenary sitting was set to resume on November 14, 2023, if there are no plans to respond to the issues raised, the opposition will stay away from the proceedings until government officially communicates on how the issues raised will be addressed.

Anti – Homosexuality Law heavily affecting the LGBTQI community in Uganda

While the Anti Homosexuality Act, 2023 has only been in force for 7 months, it is worth noting that, throughout the year 2023, discussion and debate around homosexuality, LGBTQ rights, transgenderism and intersexuality have taken center stage in the national psyche, and therefore significantly affected the lives of LGBTQI persons across all spheres of life.

The public debate and political rhetoric around LGBTQI rights, which started with statements made by the Deputy Speaker on the floor of Parliament in January 2023, sparked a public hysteria and moral panic that resulted in the enactment of the AHA. The impact on the rights of LGBTQ persons that this entire year has had is clearly visible at a glance: a total of 875 cases involving LGBTQI persons were handled across all our networks in 2023, in which 949 persons were affected, as compared to 2022, during which 599 cases affecting 733 individuals were handled.

The cases which involved actions that directly targeted persons on the basis of their real or presumed SOGIE increased from 132 cases affecting 153 persons in 2022 to 416 cases affecting 522 persons in 2023.

The cases of violence and threats of violence on the basis of SOGIE increased from 45 in 2022 to 175 in 2023; cases of evictions increased from 43 in 2022 to 181 in 2023, and arrests on sexuality related charges also increased from 34 cases in 2022 to 52 cases in 2023.

The increase in the number of cases, as has been noted from the monthly report series, is directly attributable to the increase in homophobic hate and violence during the year just concluded, a situation that grows ever more difficult for LGBTIQ persons to source.

Demanding Uganda's Parliament to pass the Human Rights Defenders bill

Uganda's Women HRDs affiliated to the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders – Uganda (NCHRD-U) have called on Uganda's Parliament to pass the Human Rights Defenders bill to protect particularly women HRDs, who they say continue to face threats and abuses by virtue of their gender and work. A draft human rights defender's bill has been pending debate in the Parliament for years now, and HRDs say passing it into law would be a fitting gesture on the anniversary of 75 years of the UDHR and 25 years of the UN Declaration on HRDs.

3. Suggestions for addressing these violations.

- Enhance the security of the tourist centers with especially more Uganda's People's Defense Forces enforcements.
- Make relevant linkages with regional and international human rights mechanisms and processes
- Reprehend and amend the punishment approved in the anti LGBTIQ+ act.
- 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
- Grant the citizens a fair democracy process that does not involve threats to the opposition leaders
- Volunteer or donate to a global organization
- 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.
- Use the national and regional courts of law to enforce human rights and hold the State accountable.