



**OFFICE OF THE
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**



STATEMENT ON UNABATED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES & THE SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE

By

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Leader of the Opposition

October, 2023

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Rt. Hon Speaker and Hon. Colleagues,

We have mentioned here before that our Country ranks among the worst performers in as far as respecting, protecting and promoting of human rights is concerned. On paper this ranking may not ring a bell, to the extent that we can make statements, one after another without unsettling the tranquillity of the perpetrators! On the other hand, any step taken to expose and detail the scorecard leading to that ranking has always proved discomfoting to the perpetrators and faced a lot of resistance from the upper echelons of the State.

Nonetheless, we shall not relent from exposing the systematic human rights abuses and to plead for the full intervention of Parliament in enlisting this problem and finding a durable solution.

We should recall that we, as legislators, take oath of allegiance to the constitution. We derive our authority from the relevant provisions and the spirit of the constitution, and it is to the provisions of the constitution that we owe allegiance. To put this in context, since the Constitution guarantees and mandates institutions of Government to respect, protect and promote human rights, Parliament ought to be the fort in the defence of the rights and freedoms of the people.

Now, on 17th October 2023 I listened to and read the statement by the Minister of Internal Affairs on the arrival and illegal arrest of the Hon Kyagulanyi and hundreds of NUP supporters, thwarted NUP prayers and the dispersion of peaceful demonstration in Bbale Constituency. I submit that the Minister's Statement is superficial, shallow, tainted with material falsehoods, misconstruction of the law and an attempt to justify repression and clamp-down on political dissent in this country.

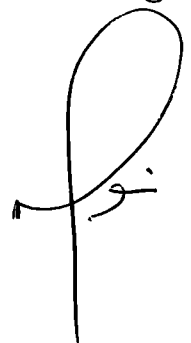
I do not find the Minister's statement tenable since it has fallen short of addressing the wanton abuse of human rights, the growing state of impunity, general breakdown of the rule of law and the shrinking civic space, for that I invite this August House to reject that statement.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, the Minister's statement has further depicted the Government's reluctance to address and remedy human rights violations. I must state here that the Minister's statement remains rejected, and I invite this honorable house to consider it as such.

It should be recalled that as a result of the infamous November 2020 shootings many people lost their lives whereas scores were maimed.

The government committed to have the matter investigated and audited, however, all that has been achieved was the categorization of the victims into a cluster of **20 persons who were shot and killed by stray bullets** whereas **34 others were shot and killed for allegedly participating in riots**. The details of the report remain a top secret only known to the State despite the President's promise to make the same public. It will be exactly 3 years next month since the angel of death was paracuted on to our streets by the very people charged with a duty to protect.

Our memories are yet to lose the well documented evil work of Police **Patrol 999\17** on the streets of Kampala for 2 solid days, and the legacy of its occupants. Ugandans demand to know whether the occupants of that Police vehicle were aliens without a trace, or their evil acts a living testimony to the jungle law in which we are entrapped.

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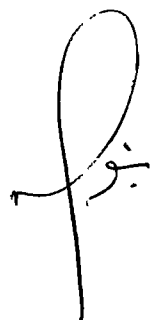
Ssenteza Frank the body guard of Hon Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu was intentionally knocked down by a military Police vehicle **H4DF-2382 at Busega** round-about. There was no follow-up with the family by any state agency, 3 years after his killing or atleast an excuse of an investigation report, confirming that the murder was premeditated

Nabukenya Ritah was knocked dead off a walk-way by a police police vehicle **Reg No. UP 4841**. No report was given, no follow-up with the family, instead the family was being warned not to waste time by trying to follow-up.

- ***Were these government vehicles auto-piloted that no driver or commander is available to face charges of pre-meditated murder of these innocent Ugandans!***
- ***Is the House of Representatives too timid and cowed to demand from the relevant authority to make a proper account of both the happenings on the fateful days, as well as demanding justice to the victims' families!***

We have a good recollection of the many innocent Ugandans who were murdered, whereas others were grievously injured while on the campaign trail for Hon. Kyagulanyi Robert Sentamu during the 2021 General elections. Those who were murdered in cold blood include;

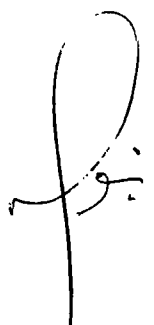
1. Ssenteza Frank Kalibbala
2. Micheal Kalinda aka. Ziggy Wine,
3. Ritah Nabukenya
4. Daniel Kyeyune
5. Ibrahim Mutaasa
6. Willy Kayondo of Kubbiri Roundabout
7. Sophie Kusasira of Kalerwe B Market



8. Baker Kato Lubwama shot from namulanda
9. Martin Owekikye
10. Tusubira Elijah
11. Elijah Mukibi Kaate of Luweero
12. Umaru Ssemakula of Entebbe/Gomba
13. Katwere Kimuli of Seeta
14. Musisi Allan Kitete Mukono
15. Peter Mwanje of Nansana
16. Mugerwa William of Wankulukuku
17. Baatio Sofi of Obongi
18. Alionji Nobert of Obongi
19. Fungaroo Moro of Obongi
20. Shaaba Saraf of Obongi
21. Akim Abile of Obongi – deliberately drowned by UPF and UPDF on 15th Jan. 2021
22. Bukere Nuhu abducted from Mukono Municipality, murdered and dumped in Kalangala.

The relatives of the deceased are still reeling in bereavement with no hope of ever receiving justice for the death of their loved ones.

Is the people's Parliament complicit in these wanton murders, and therefore unable to demand accountability and justice.



The Fate of Missing Ugandans

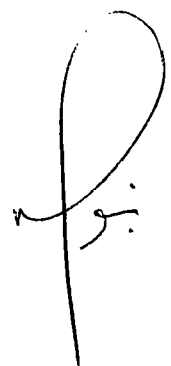
On more than one occasion, I have tabled to this Honorable House a list of Ugandans missing over the last 2-4 years. These persons were picked from their workplaces and homes by state security agencies. Detailed accounts of their arrest and eventual disappearance have been provided by families and friends to whoever cared to listen. only the state can account for their whereabouts.

Is parliament so frightened, complicit or disinterested in demanding the government to prioritise human rights guarantees before anything else for the sake of building a durable human rights record and entrenching the rule of law!

Did Parliament buy into the most flimsy and derogatory reasoning of the government and its agencies that the addresses and next of kin of the missing persons are not known!

For the benefit of those, who might for one reason or another missed out on the record of missing persons for whom the government has ignored accountability and justice, the following Ugandans matter.

1. Moses Mbabazi
2. Dennis Zzimula
3. Shafik Wangolo
4. Martin Lukwago
5. Peter Kirya
6. John Ddamulira
7. Michael Semuddu
8. Muhammad Kanatta
9. John Bosco Kibalama
10. Vincent Nalumonso
11. Yuda Sempija
12. Musisi Mbowa

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- 13, Musitafa Luwemba
- 14. Hassan Mubiru
- 15. Isma Ssesaazi
- 16. Godfrey Kitembo
- 17, George Kasumba
- 18, Joseph Baguma

The victimisation and targeted murder of Moslems

It has become fashionable in Uganda today that for any attack or murder committed, the State targets moslems whom they then indiscriminately kill and imprison without trial. For instance following the twin bombings of Kampala on the 16th of November, 2021, **a one Musa Mudasir alias Moze** was shot dead at Bwaise, Kawempe Division. On the same day, another suspect, **Muhammad Kiryowa alias Musa Kiryowa** was also shot dead in cold blood. On 17/11/2021, **Sheikh Muhammad Abbas Kirevu** was also shot dead while on handcuffs by security agencies. This has been the case in many other high profile cases.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, by law, any arresting officer is allowed reasonable or necessary force in effecting the arrest. The force employed should be proportional to the circumstances. The use of fire arms during arrests amounts to excessive force if the suspect is unarmed. Even if some of the suspects were purportedly evading arrest, the fire arm should only be used to incapacitate the suspect and deter evasion but not to kill.

Rt. Hon. Speaker reports indicate that most of the victims who have been killed were already handcuffed and in essence posed no threat warranting use of a firearm.

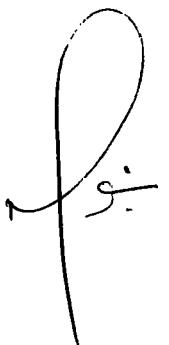
I would like to throw a quick challenge to this Honorable Parliament to make a random check accross any police cell or government prison, the shocking discovery will be that you have more moslems in detention without trial.

- ***Does Parliament consider every moslem guilty of terrorism at birth!***
- ***Why isn't Parliament not keenly following and investigating the witch-hunt of moslems, using the fact of information available in so many government prisons and other illegal detention centers!***
- ***What happened to the men in uniform who carried out these cold-blood murders in broad daylight. Are they bound by the laws of the land!***

Detention without trial

Rt Hon Speaker and colleagues, those of us who have not sat in any history class at least have read some literature on Uganda's political history. Detention of people without trial was a common phenomenon in immediate post-colonial regimes, to deter citizens from agitation for freedoms and to contain and keep political opponents at bay.

The 1995 Constitution despite its current mutilated state has maintained and sustained the 48 hrs rule under custody before one is produced before a competent court or released. The essence of this is to ensure speedy and fair trial and the avoidance of keeping innocent persons in detention without just cause.



Over the last 3 years, the arrest and detention of several Ugandans without trial represents one of the worst abuses of human rights. In the worst case scenario, where the state desired to hold on to detainees without probable cause, trumped-up charges have been raised against them.

These charges cannot be sustained in any court, for they lack premise. Many such victims, including civilians, have ended up in military courts in total violation of the constitution.

In 2021, over 500 NUP supporters were arrested in different parts of the Country on various flimsy charges. Most of them were released after one year without trial, some had to pay a ransom to gain their freedom from various military and civilian detention centers.

In the group of 2021, over 50 are still languishing in Kitulya and Luzira prisons without trial. 28 of these have been produced in the army court-martial but their trial has never taken shape more than 3 years after arrest, including a one Olivia Lutaaya a mother of 3 little children who was arrested on 8th May 2021.

- **Is the people's Parliament dosing on duty, complicit or timid to demand of the military to account for their actions and conduct in the court-martial where hundreds of Ugandans are casually produced as a show without consequence!**
- **Is the UPDF subordinate to the laws of the land or the country was long captured by a subtle military junta without an official proclamation of rule by decree!**

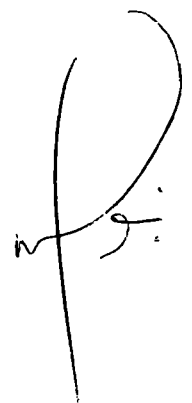
Torture in Detention Facilities

Rt. Hon. Speaker, the growing culture by the state security apparatus to torture suspects while in detention, the case of *Samuel Masereka*, the Registrar of the National Unity Platform (NUP) in Kasese district and *Kakwenza Rukirabashaija* are classical examples for people who have ever been abducted by security personnel, subjected to despicable torturous treatment.

Other similar incidents occurred in the recent past for instance when *Hon. Kyagulanyi* was arrested from Arua and tortured while in detention, *Hon. Francis Zaake* has on several occasions faced it rough to the extent of almost losing his sight, and many other incidents.

We cannot say that these are isolated incidents. I sense danger on muzzling dissenting voices and delimiting space for holding accountable those in power. If this happened to them today, and no statement or remedial action has been taken by the government how shall we all here be spared if our turn comes.

In the recent past this August House has condemned such violations, but same old habits have continued to manifest mainly through enforced disappearances, arbitrary illegal arrest and detention, torture in detention, detention without trial, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, property grabbing, political persecution, assaulting journalists and other professionals in the course of duty among others.

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HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN FISHING COMMUNITIES

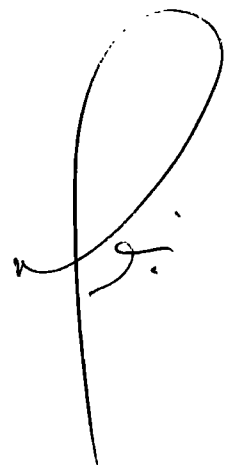
Rt. Hon Speaker, in 2017, the President of Uganda directed that the UPDF be deployed at major lakes in Uganda following reported depletion of fish stocks due to over and illegal fishing.

Following that deployment, the fishing communities have on numerous occasions cried out on gross violation of their rights by the men and women in uniform. Reports of rape, defilement, destruction of properties, murders, unjustified arrests, and illegal closure of many landing sites have been reported.

Part of the response to these cries by Parliament was the enactment of the Fisheries & Aquaculture Act, 2013. The continued presence of the UPDF and their selective actions against citizens must arouse the curiosity of any serious House of Parliament.

Entire communities have been displaced, rendered homeless and jobless, many persons have been killed, maimed and dishonoured.

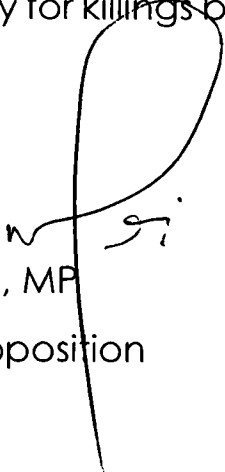
Do the victims of these illegal actions have representatives in parliament!

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Rt. Hon Speaker, in the circumstances and absurd as described above; we have the following demands for the government to meet without excuse.

1. Full accountability for the November 2020 murders in Kampala and beyond; including the actions taken on Police 999 Patrol 17, and others listed above whose occupants were well captured by different media houses and vigilant citizens, shooting live ammunition towards unarmed citizens and intentional killing of opposition supporters in questionable accidents.
2. Accountability for all arrested Moslem clerics and ordinary moslems throughout the country! A minority faith having majority prisoners.
3. Accountability for all the reported 18 disappeared Ugandans (as confirmed by the Uganda Human Rights Commission).
4. Accountability for all political prisoners rotting in numerous jails without trial
5. Release of all political prisoners in the Court martial
6. Demand that the Minister of Justice appears before Parliament to detail the House on detention without trial.
7. Accountability for killings by the Military in various fishing communities.

I so pray.


Mathias Mpuuga, MP
Leader of the Opposition