

# PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

TO THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA



GVA-UN/TECH/50

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honor to convey the Government of Uganda responses to the joint communication from special procedures about human rights defenders and the independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, the assurances of its highest consideration.

**GENEVA**

**19 February 2026**

Secretariate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
**GENEVA**





**REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**RESPONSES  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM THE UN SPECIAL  
RAPORTEURS ON ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN  
UGANDA**

**11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Government of the Republic of Uganda acknowledges receipt of the Joint Communication of Reference No. AL UGA 6/2025 and dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 from the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders and Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 59/4, 54/14, 52/9, 52/4 and 59/5.

The Government of Uganda takes note of the issues raised in the communication regarding the state of human rights and electoral processes in Uganda during the 2026 elections. The Government reaffirms its continued commitment to upholding the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of Uganda and other instruments to which it is a party.

The electoral process in Uganda is governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995, as amended), the Electoral Commission Act (Cap. 176), the Presidential Elections Act (Cap. 179), the Political Parties and Organisations Act, 2005 and the Parliamentary Elections Act (Cap. 177) among others. These laws regulate the composition, mandate, and powers of the Electoral Commission, as well as voter registration, polling, counting, tallying, declaration of results, and the accreditation of observers, party agents, and the media to ensure a free and fair electoral process. Indeed, during the election period, all the presidential candidates were provided security by the Electoral Commission and Uganda Police Force.

Uganda continues to consolidate its democracy with regular elections every five years since the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution. The recent general elections held in January 2026 were the seventh and Government is pleased to affirm that the 2026 elections were generally free, fair and conducted in accordance with the law.

This assessment is supported by reports from a range of international, regional, and national election observation missions, including the African Union (AU), East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the European Union (EU), which all noted the

overall calm environment in which voting and related activities took place, notwithstanding isolated incidents that were promptly addressed by the relevant authorities.

The Government of Uganda has considered the specific issues and allegations raised in the Joint Communication and would like to provide information and clarification as follows:

**Use of disproportionate and unnecessary force by security forces during electoral campaigns and enforced disappearances**

Uganda Police Force is mandated to secure the elections, maintain law and order and preserve the life of all citizens before, during and after elections. In accordance with the electoral laws, the Uganda Police Force also protects all candidates throughout the electoral process, including bodyguards, home guards, and escorts to secure candidates on the road, at home, and at the office during the campaign period. Through the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), the Police investigates all criminal offences related to elections, including during the election period.

During the 2026 election period, the intervention of security forces was prompted by blatant breaches of the law, including incitement to violence, disorderly conduct, non-compliance with lawful directives, or credible criminal complaints. It was carried out strictly within the established public order management and criminal procedure frameworks. Police records, custody registers, medical reports, and court proceedings do not affirm the allegations of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, excessive use of force, or targeted intimidation of journalists as indicated in the Joint Communication.

On the contrary, the findings demonstrate that the Uganda Police Force acted to protect life, maintain public order, safeguard electoral integrity, and facilitate lawful political activity, while ensuring accountability through independent investigations and the judicial process. The Government of Uganda, therefore, finds no substantiation for the alleged human rights violations and reaffirms its commitment to professional, impartial, and human rights-compliant policing in the conduct of electoral security operations. Below are specific responses, actions taken, and the status of investigations for the incidents highlighted.

The Joint Communication refers to the alleged stampede in Kayunga District – 27th November 2025, the Shooting Incident during a Political

rally in Iganga – 28th November 2025, and the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2025 incident. The Government of Uganda would like to state that the incidents on 27th November 2025, 28th November 2025, and 6th December 2025 were premeditated, riotous, and violent assemblies that law enforcement quelled to enforce law and order and ensure the security and stability of the country and its citizens.

The above-cited rallies had the potential to cause breach of peace through violent rhetoric characterised by incitement of violence towards security forces by the NUP presidential candidate. Hateful speech and incitement of violence are criminal acts under the Penal Code Act of Uganda.

The crowds turned violent towards the security forces, who were left with no other choice but to employ lawful public order management measures to disperse the crowd and restore order. During the political rally held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 in Iganga District, it is reported by the Uganda Police Force that 7 security personnel were injured and 3 motor vehicles were damaged by the crowd upon incitement by their candidate. The Government did not in any way inspire nor instigate these unfortunate events that resulted in casualties of both the rioting crowd and security men and women who were tasked with quelling the disorder that broke out during the campaign rallies.

### **Implementation of the Supreme Court decision concerning military court files**

The Government of Uganda reaffirms its commitment to upholding the rule of law and has taken several steps to implement the decision in Attorney General V Kabaziguruka Constitutional Appeal No. 2/2021. Following the Supreme Court's findings in the above decision, the Office of the Attorney General of Uganda engaged various stakeholders (the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Uganda Police) to ensure that a systematic approach is adopted to implement the court's decision. In one case, Uganda v. Dr Kizza Besigye, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Uganda formally applied to the civilian court to have the files transferred and the charges sanctioned.

Further, the Parliament of Uganda has since enacted the Uganda People's Defence Forces (Amendment) Act, 2025, which remedied the shortcomings in the law governing the trial of Civilians in the Court Martial, thus negating the need to transfer the case files to the ODPP, which has no mandate to take over any ongoing court case from the Court Martial. The

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) in Uganda confirms receipt of some files from the Uganda police, and these are under review.

### **Restrictions on press freedom across Uganda in the past year and ahead of the general elections**

The Joint Communication mentions the alleged arrest of TikTokers and the use of the Computer Misuse Act to stifle dissent. The Government would like to clarify that the Computer Misuse Act (Amendment) Act, 2022, provides for the safety and security of electronic transactions and information systems, prevents unlawful access, abuse or misuse of information systems, including computers and makes provision for securing the conduct of electronic transactions in a trustworthy electronic environment, as well as other related matters.

The freedom of expression and Access to information are provided for under the Constitution of Uganda and are guaranteed to every citizen of Uganda. These rights are not non-derogable and may be limited if in the public interest and considered fair in a free and democratic society.

### **Suspension of access to the internet**

The Government wishes to clarify that the measures to temporarily suspend internet access and selected mobile communication services were adopted under exceptional circumstances and were guided solely by considerations of national security, public order, and the preservation of the integrity of the electoral process. In the period immediately preceding polling, credible security assessments pointed to heightened risks of coordinated disinformation, incitement to violence, and potential external interference through digital platforms, all of which posed a tangible threat to public safety and national stability. It is important to note that essential communication services remained operational throughout this period, including voice calls, SMS, and mobile money services.

### **Restrictions on Civil Society Organisations**

The Government of Uganda recognises and values the vital contribution of civil society organisations, journalists, and human rights defenders to national development, good governance, and accountability. Indeed, more than 50 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were accredited to provide voter education and election observation.

Regarding the suspension of the operating permits of specific civil society organisations, the Government wishes to clarify that these actions were undertaken pursuant to existing national legislation, specifically the Non-Governmental Organisations Act. The measures were informed by regulatory and security reports alleging activities that were inconsistent with the legal and regulatory framework governing civil society operations in Uganda. These actions were administrative and interim, intended to enable competent authorities to investigate the allegations raised.

### **Registration of CSOs working on sexual orientation and administrative harassment of organisations working with LGBTQ people**

In the year 2023, the Government of Uganda enacted the Homosexuality Act (AHA) of 2023, which introduces the offence of promotion of homosexuality. This offence includes the operations of CSOs that offer support to LGBTQ individuals. Further, homosexuality remains a criminal offence under the Penal Code Act of Uganda (specifically the “unnatural offences” clause). Therefore, Uganda, cannot legitimise or facilitate the registration of entities whose primary purpose is to advocate for the rights of persons engaged in criminalised conduct.

### **Alleged arrest of 32 journalists and media workers, including three women, during the Kawempe North by-elections.**

Uganda enjoys media pluralism and a total of 259 media entities, including 90 foreign media, 340 online journalists, 70 online platforms, and 61 television stations, were accredited to cover the 2026 General Elections. In addition, the Electoral Commission trained journalists in objective and impartial election reporting.

Regarding the alleged arrests of journalists, a review of Police custody records, station diaries, and operational reports from Kawempe North from March 2025 to date reveals that no journalist or media staff was arrested or detained by Police during the said by-elections.

In conclusion, the Government is committed to upholding the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of Uganda and continues to put in place the requisite institutional, legal, and policy measures to consolidate the human rights achievements registered.