

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 UN special procedures on the situation of human rights defenders; the working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

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 **10 March 2026**

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





REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**RESPONSE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

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

4TH MARCH 2026

Introduction

The Government of the Republic of Uganda acknowledges receipt of the Joint Communication of Reference No. AL UGA 1/2026 and dated 16th January 2026 from the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/4, 60/8 and 52/9.

The Government of the Republic of Uganda takes note of the issues and allegations raised in the joint communication regarding the arrest of Ms. Sarah Bireete on 30th December 2025 in Mukono District and her ongoing arbitrary detention in Kampala.

Response

In response to the issues and allegations, the Government of Uganda wishes to reaffirm its continued commitment to upholding the rights and freedoms enshrined in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, as amended as well as its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international and regional human rights instruments that Uganda is a party to.

The Government of Uganda wishes to state that the arrest of Dr. Sarah Bireete on 30 December 2025 was based on allegations of unlawful obtaining and disclosure of personal data contrary to Section 35(1) and (2) of the Data Protection and Privacy Act, Cap 97. Investigations by the Uganda Police Force established that Dr. Bireete accessed and disseminated personal voter information without authorization.

Dr. Bireete was informed of the reasons for her arrest, detained at Natete Police Station, and produced before the Chief Magistrate's Court at Buganda Road within the constitutionally prescribed timeframe. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) reviewed and sanctioned the charges and the prosecution is based strictly on evidence relating to violations of privacy law and is not in any way connected to her human rights advocacy. Dr. Bireete was remanded by a competent court and later granted bail on 28 January 2026. The grant of bail demonstrates the functioning of judicial oversight and due process.

The Government affirms that Dr. Bireete's arrest was lawful and not arbitrary in accordance with Articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR. She was informed of the charges, granted access to counsel, produced promptly before a court, and afforded the opportunity to apply for bail. These safeguards align with international standards on liberty and fair trial rights.

Regarding the temporary shutdown of internet, the Government would like to state that the freedom of expression and access to information are provided for under the Constitution of Uganda and are guaranteed to every citizen of Uganda. However, these rights are not non-derogable and may be limited if in the public interest and considered fair in a free and democratic society. As such, any regulatory measures were undertaken pursuant to domestic law and for legitimate aims such as national security and public order, as permitted under Article 19(3) of the ICCPR.

Regarding human rights defenders and other civil society actors, the Government of Uganda recognizes 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.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Government of Uganda affirms that the arrest and prosecution of Dr. Sarah Bireete was consistent with both its domestic legislation and international human rights obligations. Therefore, the allegations of arbitrary detention, politically motivated prosecution, and systematic suppression of civil society are not substantiated by official records and remain inconsistent with the documented facts. The Government of Uganda remains committed to upholding the rights and freedoms enshrined in the 1995 Constitution (as amended) and other international and regional human rights instruments that Uganda is a party to.