

**PETITION OF THE CITIZENS COALITION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RULE OF
LAW IN UGANDA**

17th June 2026

H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda
State House

Received
[Signature]
18 Jun 2026
044243320

**RE: Breach of the Presidential Oath, the Constitution, and Uganda's Regional
and International Human Rights Obligations**

Your Excellency,

Your petitioners are a coalition of Ugandan citizens from all walks of life and citizens organizations committed to the ideals of democracy, rule of law, constitutionalism and a Uganda where there are equal opportunity and shared prosperity. For purposes of correspondence, our address is at the bottom of this petition.

With humility and in good faith, we, members of the Citizens Coalition for the Protection of the Rule of Law in Uganda, write to formally register our grave concern over the continued breakdown of the rule of law in Uganda, manifested through enforced disappearances, abductions, illegal detentions, torture, police and military brutality, attacks on media freedoms and the unlawful suspension of civil society organizations in Uganda. These practices constitute not only violations of the letter and spirit of the Constitution, but a direct breach of the Presidential Oath and Uganda's binding regional and international commitments.

Conscious of the heavy historical price Ugandans, including yourself, have paid fighting against abuse of state power, rule by the gun, arbitrary arrests, mass violations of human rights, and the collapse of the rule of law that characterized Uganda's post-independence history under past regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote, these continued abuses take us to the dark days of our past. By even your own account, Your Excellency, these periods were characterized by state-inspired enforced disappearances, detention

without trial, torture, extra-judicial killings, and the systematic subordination of civilian authority to military forces. The social, political, and moral devastation of those eras remain etched in the collective memory of the Ugandan people.

On June 15, 2026, Ugandans were yet again subjected to the deeply distressing and reprehensible abduction of former Lord Mayor and Senior Counsel, Hon. Erias Lukwago from his home to an unknown destination. Subsequent images of him were displayed on a verified X handle of General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the Chief of Defense Forces (CDF). By General Kainerugaba's own account, Hon. Lukwago was subjected to humiliating

abuse and torture. This gross abuse of power follows several similar attacks by the CDF on Ugandans and puts us all in danger. Some outstanding examples in the past include, the torture of exiled poet and writer, Kakwenza Rukirabashaija, the torture of Edward Sebuwufu (Eddy Mutwe), the abduction of Kenyan citizens Nicholas Oyo, and Bob Njagi, the disappearance for over five years now of John Bosco Kibalama, John Damulira, Sam Mugumya, Amos Turinawe Rwangomani, to mention but a few, all attributed to Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba. This is not only a bad example to the younger generations (your Bazukulu) but also gives a blank cheque to other men and women in uniform to abuse the law, a practice that breeds lawlessness. This surely cannot be allowed to continue. In a lawless society where there is breakdown in law and order and state inspired by violence against unarmed and peaceful citizens, everybody, no matter how law abiding one may be, is a potential victim.

It was precisely in opposition to these abuses that you and many Ugandans took up arms, arguing that regimes which govern through instilling fear, lawlessness, and violence against their own citizens forfeit legitimacy. The struggle against Amin and Obote was justified before the nation and the world as a fight to restore human dignity, constitutionalism, popular citizen sovereignty, and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. When you, Your Excellency, signed the 1995 Constitution, you and the men and women of the Constituency Assembly signaled the end of those "dark" years and promised the present and future generations of Ugandans a future that is better than the past and the present.

Upon assuming power, you made solemn declarations that Uganda would never again be governed through arbitrary arrests, torture, abductions, or the silencing of dissent. Your early pronouncements emphasized that human rights violations were not merely policy failures but symptoms of illegitimate rule; that the gun must never again replace the law; and that the state exists to serve, not terrorize, its citizens. In fact, you have variously described the use of violence by state agents and operatives against citizens as the highest manifestation of cowardice. And we can't agree with you more. The 1995 Constitution was promulgated as a break from Uganda's violent past; a supreme legal covenant intended to restrain power, protect non-derogable rights, and ensure that never again would executive authority be exercised without accountability to the people. It is against this historical backdrop, and in fidelity to the very principles that justified the struggle against past tyrannies, that we petition you, Your Excellency.

On 12th May 2026, you took your 7th oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and to govern according to its laws. That oath is neither symbolic nor discretionary; it imposes a continuous and personal obligation to ensure that all exercise of executive authority conforms strictly to constitutional limits.

Article 1 of the Constitution vests all power in the people of Uganda and requires that such power be exercised only in accordance with the Constitution. The ongoing practice of enforced disappearances, abductions, detention in ungazetted facilities, and repression of dissent represents an unlawful seizure of that sovereign power by force and fear rather than by constitutional authority.

Article 23 guarantees the right to personal liberty and expressly prohibits arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, and detention without trial. Article 28 guarantees the right to a fair, speedy, and public hearing before an independent and impartial court. The abduction and unlawful detention of Erias Lukwago and others, alongside the routine targeting of opposition leaders, supporters, and activists, negates these guarantees entirely and replaces judicial processes with executive overreach that has mutated into state-inspired violence against citizens over the years.

Most critically, Article 44 of the Constitution declares freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to habeas corpus as non-derogable rights. These rights admit no exception, no suspension, and no justification—whether grounded in public order, national security, or political expediency. The persistence of torture, illegal or ungazetted detention facilities, and enforced disappearances therefore amounts to a categorical constitutional breach.

Articles 98 and 99 vest executive authority in the President and require that such authority be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of Uganda. The continued operation of security agencies beyond legal control, in defiance of court orders and constitutional safeguards, engages presidential command responsibility and places the Executive in direct conflict with its constitutional mandate.

Beyond domestic law, Uganda is bound by regional and international instruments that reinforce these same obligations, including your own brainchild, Treaty Establishing the East African Community and other important instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention Against Torture. These instruments prohibit torture, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearances and require effective remedies, accountability, and judicial oversight. Uganda's current practices place it in persistent violation of these binding commitments.

Equally unconstitutional is the illegal suspension and restriction of non-governmental organizations through administrative action devoid of due process or judicial sanction. This conduct violates constitutional protections of freedom of association and expression and undermines civic oversight, a core pillar of democratic governance.

Taken cumulatively, these actions signify a transition from constitutional rule to governance by coercion, enforced through militarization rather than law. This trajectory threatens national stability, de-legitimizes state institutions, and erodes Uganda's credibility within the region and the international community.

Your Excellency, as President and principal bearer of executive authority, the responsibility for halting and reversing this constitutional degeneration rests squarely with your office. Continued silence or inaction constitutes acquiescence and deepens institutionalized impunity. **We are cognizant of your eminent roles as current chairperson of the East African Community (EAC) summit, and chairperson of the African peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Forum of Heads of State and Government. We vouch for your success in these regional leadership roles because when you succeed, Uganda shines. We therefore implore you to lead these organs, by example, by ensuring constitutionalism and respect for rule of law in our country.**

WE therefore petition you, Your Excellence, in fidelity to your oath and constitutional duty, too:

1. Immediately halt all enforced disappearances, abductions and illegal detentions by the military and affiliated actors.
2. Order the immediate release of Hon. Erias Lukwago and other abductees from the CDF's "basement"; and any other illegal detention facilities under his guard and prevail upon him to conduct himself in accordance with the Constitution of Uganda, the UPDF Act, and respect all other laws of Uganda.
3. You take deliberate actions to reverse the weaponization of key institutions of state, particularly the judiciary, the Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP) and the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA) against the citizens. Rather than acting as citizens' shield against excesses by security agencies, these institutions have become the enablers of these excesses.
4. Order the immediate production before civilian courts of all persons held in unlawful custody.
5. Order immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.
6. Ensure independent investigations and accountability for acts of torture, enforced disappearances, and state inspired violence and brutality against citizens.

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- Reverse all unlawful suspensions of NGOs and restore due process in the regulation of civil society organizations and their activities.
 - 8. Publicly and practically reaffirm the supremacy of the Constitution over the military, all security, and intelligence agencies.
 - 9. Address the country on the current state of rule of law and reassure Ugandans of your commitment to addressing the teething constitutionalism and rule of law challenges.

Finally, your excellency, we would be happy to meet with you for further clarification on these matters, as well as chart a way forward on a collective and citizen centered agenda towards consolidation of rule of law and constitutionalism in our beloved country.

Your Excellency, your contribution to Uganda's transformation and regional integration over the last 40 years is indisputable. Yet, history will not judge your leadership by proclamations of stability, but by the strength and posterity of institutions of state that respect and protect the laws of our country and dignity of every citizen. The preservation of Uganda's peace, unity, and democratic future demands an immediate return to the rule of lawful and accountable governance. It is never possible to build posterity and prosperity on a mountain of injustice.

Signed,

CITIZENS COALITION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RULE OF LAW IN UGANDA

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