

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Uganda Monthly Briefing January 2025

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#### Uganda Summary 8 January 2025

*Uganda's army chief General Muhoozi Kainerugaba causes tension in the country after he calls for the beheading of opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi (also known as Bobi Wine) on social media. The public and legal experts condemn President Yoweri Museveni's (1986-present) decision to ban police from granting criminal suspects bonds when required. Government on 6 January rolls out the 3rd phase of the Intelligent Transport Monitoring System (ITMS) project being implemented by Russia's M/S Joint Stock Company Global Security.*

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#### Museveni's son calls for the beheading of the leader of the main opposition party

Uganda's army chief and President Yoweri Museveni's (1986-present) son General Muhoozi Kainerugaba has caused tension in the country after calling for the beheading of Robert Kyagulanyi (also known as Bobi Wine), the leader of the main opposition National Unity Platform (NUP). Muhoozi on 5 January posted derogatory messages on his official X (formerly Twitter), one of which called for the beheading of Wine for allegedly talking ill of Museveni's family:

*"Kabobi (Bobi Wine) knows that the only person protecting him from me is my father (President Museveni in power since 1986). If Mzee (the old man) was not there, I would cut off his head today!"<sup>1</sup>*

Muhoozi in a follow-up post ordered the police to arrest and bring him Wine, accusing him of being a rebel. Muhoozi further claimed that he and other army generals gave Wine money to help him to overshadow Dr. Kiiza Besigye, who at the time in 2016, was the leading opposition figure in the country.<sup>2</sup> Wine described the general's posts as cowardly and an attempt to intimidate him:

*"The threat by Museveni's son who also heads Uganda's military to behead me is not something I take lightly, given that many have been killed by him and his father and considering their several attempts at my life. I refuse to be intimidated by the cowardly regime".<sup>3</sup>*

Muhoozi has been at the centre of controversy several times, often due to his inflammatory tweets. On 17 December he sparked outrage both locally and internationally when he threatened to invade Sudan with the support of the United States (US). The Sudanese government called on the African Union (AU), regional and international organisations, and the entire international community to condemn Muhoozi's statements, which it said posed a threat to regional and international peace and security.<sup>4</sup>

On 20 December, Muhoozi threatened to wipeout all 'white mercenaries' operating in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), prompting the Congolese government to summon Uganda's acting Chargé d'Affaires, Matata Twaha Magara to get clarification on the official position of Uganda's government on the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> X (formerly Twitter), 5 Jan 2025

<sup>2</sup> X (formerly Twitter), 5 Jan 2025

<sup>3</sup> Facebook, 6 Jan 2025

<sup>4</sup> Independent, 19 Dec 2024

<sup>5</sup> Ingihe, 17 Dec 2024

Although Muhoozi did not single out a mercenary group, it is widely believed that he was referring to foreign operatives associated with **Bulgaria's Agemira** and **Romania's Asociatia RALF**, which have been assisting the Congolese national army in its fight against **M23** rebels since 2022.<sup>6</sup>

Between the above incidents, Muhoozi also stirred internal unrest by targeting his fellow military officers, including Lieutenant General **Peter Elweru**, whom he publicly called a “buffoon” while accusing him of incompetence.<sup>7</sup>

Muhoozi's erratic online behaviour could be a sign of unease in the corridors of power as competing forces jostle to position themselves in case of a transition in the event Museveni, who is currently 80 years, becomes incapacitated.<sup>8</sup> While the ruling **National Resistance Movement (NRM)** is likely to still endorse Museveni to run in the January 2026 presidential elections, Muhoozi the purported eventual successor to Museveni. However, his attacks on other army generals could indicate that he is not feeling 100% secure in the succession plan. His erratic behaviour will also have sparked concern among the NRM, which may be leaning towards endorsing another candidate eventually.

### Legal experts criticise Museveni for banning bonds

The public and legal experts have condemned Museveni's announcement in his New Year's address that police will no longer be allowed to grant criminal suspects bonds, citing need for stricter measures against petty crimes, including livestock and coffee theft in rural areas. Under Ugandan law, the commander of a police station or police post can grant a police bond to a suspect, especially for petty crimes, due to resource constraints such as shortage of food for detainees or anticipated delays in investigations.<sup>9</sup>

The directive banning police bonds has sparked intense debate among citizens, legal experts, and political leaders, who argue that it undermines constitutional principles and threatens the rule of law. **Kampala** Lord Mayor **Erias Lukwago**, who is also a lawyer, accused Museveni of dismantling legal safeguards to consolidate power:

*“By proclamation, Museveni has overthrown the constitutional order that guarantees the right to bail, while his son vows to crush all critics of the family rule. This signals aggravated repression in what is poised to be a volatile election year.”<sup>10</sup>*

A local councillor in **Kawempe Division** (Kampala) told **ARC Briefing** that the directive to ban police bonds is aimed at suppressing dissenting voices among political opponents as the country heads to the 2026 general elections.<sup>11</sup> The councillor added that the police will use the directive to deny bonds to supporters of the opposition who may be arrested during the electioneering period.<sup>12</sup>

**Uganda Law Society** president **Isaac Ssemakadde** also posted his opinion, noting that the ban violates Articles 23, 28(3)(a), and 99 of the Constitution which grants suspects a right to police bonds.<sup>13</sup> Ssemakadde argued that the move is a stark reminder of the colonial legacy of repression and mass incarceration that continues to plague Uganda.

Uganda is heading to a highly charged political period and opposition supporters are expressing fear that the directive to ban police bonds is aimed at incarcerating young people who may take to the streets to demonstrate or those arrested during the electioneering period.

### Digital number plates project begins third phase

<sup>6</sup> ARC Uganda writer, 6 Jan 2025

<sup>7</sup> Daily Express Uganda, 19 Dec 2024

<sup>8</sup> ARC Source, 6 Jan 2025

<sup>9</sup> Daily Monitor, 2 Jan 2025

<sup>10</sup> Facebook, 1 Jan 2025

<sup>11</sup> Source, local councillor, Kampala

<sup>12</sup> X (formerly Twitter), 6 Jan 2025

<sup>13</sup> Facebook, 1 Jan 2025

The government on 6 January rolled out the third phase of the much-delayed **Intelligent Transport Monitoring System (ITMS)** project being implemented by **Russia's M/S Joint Stock Company Global Security**.<sup>14</sup> The project will see digital number plates installed on the vehicles and motorcycles entering Uganda for first-time registration.<sup>15</sup>

The security ministry and works and transport ministry signed an agreement with the Russian company in March 2023 to set up the ITMS. The first phase commenced on 1 November 2023, with the issuance of digital registration plates for government vehicles, followed by the second phase on 1 November 2024, with the issuance of digital registration plates for motorcycles.<sup>16</sup> Security minister **Jim Muhwezi** blamed the projects delay on the logistical challenges caused by the **Ukraine-Russia** war.<sup>17</sup>

The **Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)** has warned that the rollout of the digital plates will enable the government through its security agencies, such as the police, to swiftly identify vehicles and their owners.<sup>18</sup> This instantaneous data exchanges poses major challenges to data privacy, especially in cases where there are calculated targets such as civil society organizations (CSOs), human rights defenders (HRDs), activists, political opponents, government critics, or dissidents.<sup>19</sup>

### Planner

Jan 2025 (**Uganda**) National Voters' Register update  
 Feb 2025 (**Uganda**) Bank of Uganda (central bank) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting  
 12 Jan – 9 Feb 2026 (**Uganda**) General election  
 May 2025 (**Uganda**) Bank of Uganda (central bank) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting  
 Aug 2025 (**Uganda**) Bank of Uganda (central bank) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting  
 20 – 25 Sep 2025 **Kampala (Uganda)** Uganda International Oil & Gas Summit  
 Nov 2025 (**Uganda**) Bank of Uganda (central bank) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting

### Chronology

6 Jan 2025 **Kampala (Uganda)** *CNBC Africa*. **Bank of Uganda (BoU)** (central bank) says it will change the release of its benchmark policy rate from every two months to quarterly going forward;  
 4 Jan 2025 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Nile Post*. The **2024 National Population and Housing Census** reveals that environmental sustainability in Uganda faces critical challenges as 64.5% of households continue to rely on wood as their primary cooking fuel, threatening forest resources and worsening environmental degradation, prompting a nationwide discussion on sustainable energy alternatives;  
 4 Jan 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. **Bank of Uganda (BoU)** (central bank) forecasts economic growth of 7% over the next three to five years if public infrastructure investment remains high;  
 3 Jan 2025 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. Energy and mineral development minister **Ruth Nankabirwa** says the construction of the **East African Crude Oil Pipe Line (EACOP)** is on schedule;  
 2 Jan 2025 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Parliament Watch*. The **Bank of Uganda (BoU)** introduces stringent guidelines for purchasing gold from the local market, aiming to safeguard the integrity of its gold

<sup>14</sup> URN, 6 Jan 2025

<sup>15</sup> URN, 6 Jan 2025

<sup>16</sup> URN, 6 Jan 2025

<sup>17</sup> Public lens, 5 Jul 2025

<sup>18</sup> CIPESA 12 Aug 2024

<sup>19</sup> CIPESA 12 Aug 2024

acquisition programme, part of its broader strategy to boost foreign reserves, diversify risks, and reduce reliance on traditional foreign currency reserves;

1 Jan 2025 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. President **Yoweri Museveni** directs the police to stop giving police bond to petty criminals, saying it is abetting insecurity in the country;

31 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Chimpreports*. Government grants **Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL)** a licence to distribute and sell electricity in Uganda, taking over **Umeme Limited**, which has been doing the job for over two decades;

29 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. Nongovernmental organisations report that the conflict in **Sudan** has caused a steady increase in the number of refugees arriving in Uganda with the pace of new arrivals increasing sharply in 2024 and Uganda now housing 65,000 registered Sudanese refugees;

25 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Parliament Watch*. Finance ministry reveals in the 2025/2025 **National Budget Framework Paper** that Uganda has accumulated over US\$ 43 trillion (\$11.6 billion) in borrowed funds over the past 11 years, with US\$ 16.4 trillion (\$4.4 billion) remaining un-disbursed. The paper also highlights that US\$ 12.72 trillion (\$3.4 billion) is earmarked for debt servicing, to be drawn from the US\$ 31.98 trillion (\$8.6 billion) projected tax revenue for the 2024/25 financial year;

22 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. Energy and mineral development ministry announces new measures to regulate the exportation and sale of gold amid growing concerns about discrepancies between gold mined in Uganda and that exported mainly to the **United Arab Emirates**. The measures include that trading in gold should be conducted between parties that hold valid mineral dealer's license for precious minerals, mining licenses for gold, or refining licenses for gold;

21 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Observer*. **One Nature Hotels and Resorts**, a subsidiary of Dubai-based **Haliburg Group**, is set to invest \$11 million in Uganda's hotel and hospitality industry following the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the tourism minister;

20 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *URN*. **SwissAid** notes that Uganda remains one of the hotbeds for smuggling in **Africa**, reporting that apart of the gold smuggled from neighbouring countries through Uganda, most of the gold produced by artisan miners in the country tends to be under declared or not to be declared;

19 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)** reports the value of Uganda's mineral production has jumped from US\$ 19.92 billion (\$5.4m) in 2020/2021 to US\$ 202 billion (\$55m) in 2021/22;

18 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *WHO*. Uganda has so far registered 1,126 confirmed cases of Mpox and six deaths across 60 districts;

18 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Sudan Tribune*. **Sudan** demands an official apology from Uganda over the "offensive and dangerous" comments made by Uganda's chief of army staff and President **Yoweri Museveni**'s son, General **Muhoozi Kainerugaba**, who threatened to invade Sudan in an X post;

17 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Nile Post*. After nearly eight months, the **Bank of Uganda** (central bank) lifts the suspension of the **Payment Service Provider (PSP)** and **Electronic Money Issuer (EMI)** licenses of **Pivot Payments Limited**, which has registered over 100,000 customers and cumulatively traded over US\$ 70 billion (\$18m) with more than 1.4 million transactions before its closure in February 2024;

16 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Africanews*. A court orders the government to pay \$2,740 in compensation to each victim of **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)** rebel group commander **Thomas Kwoyelo**, who was sentenced to 40 years in prison in October;

16 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. President **Yoweri Museveni** says that government might take a keen interest in pastors or religious leaders healing the sick to ensure public safety and maintain legal and ethical standards;

15 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Parliament Watch*. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** is pursuing new business opportunities in Uganda with at least 20 **Dubai** based companies seeking investment deals in manufacturing, real estate, healthcare, technology, textile, oil and gas and agricultural sectors despite concerns of competitiveness of Uganda's logistics value chain;

13 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *EAIF*. **Mauritius**-registered **Emerging Africa & Asia Infrastructure Fund (EAAIF)** confirms its \$18m investment in a planned 20 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) plant in north-western Uganda;

11 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. President **Yoweri Museveni** pens a letter in support of the trial of civilians in military courts, arguing that court martials have brought peace to the country by taking quick action against criminals, especially in the **Karamoja Region**;

10 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Relief News*. Uganda has so far registered 953 confirmed mpox cases and 6 deaths in 56 districts;

10 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Africanews*. A military court orders that opposition leader **Kizza Besigye** will remain in prison until January 2025;

7 Dec 2024 **Kampala (Uganda)** *New Vision*. Opposition leader **Kizza Besigye** petitions the **East Africa Court of Justice (EACJ)**, claiming that Uganda's military, aided by **Kenyan** security agencies, illegally arrested him in **Nairobi** (Kenya);

4 Dec 2024 **Cairo (Egypt)** *Egypt Today*. Foreign affairs minister **Badr Abdelatty** meets with his **Ugandan** counterpart, **Henry Okello**, to host a second round of bilateral political consultations;

### About Africa Risk Consulting:

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