

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Uganda Summary 9 September 2021

President Yoweri Museveni (1986-present) publicly reprimands Uganda's security forces for using excessive violence, as the opposition alleges hundreds of its supporters disappeared or died following the presidential election in January. Despite this, the government has cracked down on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the country and ordered 54 organisations to suspend operations. Unrefined gold imports from Tanzania and Zimbabwe have resulted in the two countries becoming two of Uganda's largest trade partners. Museveni directs prime minister Robinah Nabbanja to lead a team from the ministries of education and health and the national Covid-19 taskforce to establish dates and proposals for the safe reopening of learning institutions.

Museveni rebukes security forces for excessive use of force ...

President **Yoweri Museveni** (1986-present) has publicly scolded **Uganda's** security forces for using excessive violence, as the opposition alleges hundreds of its supporters disappeared or died following the presidential election held on 14 January.¹ Museveni won a sixth term in the election, with 58.6% of the vote, while main opposition candidate **Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu**, also known by his stage name of **Bobbi Wine**, polled 34.8% of total votes cast (see *ARC Briefing Uganda February 2021*).² Security forces killed at least 54 people in November in the run-up to the election as Kyagulanyi's supporters protested his arrest.³

In a televised address on 14 August, Museveni reprimanded the country's army and police for heavy-handedness for the first time since he was returned to office following one of the bloodiest election cycles in Uganda's recent history:

"There should be no killing of any Ugandan for any reason other than in war or when condemned by a court."⁴

Opposition political parties dismissed Museveni's remarks as "empty talk" aimed at deceiving the international community into believing he is against the use of torture by security forces.⁵ Kyagulanyi said pressure from within the country had made Museveni "speak blatant lies with a straight face", describing Museveni's speech as "an act of hypocrisy":

*"He spoke like an opposition leader against his own regime because of the pressure that Ugandans are mounting against his murderous regime. He also knows what awaits him seeing his friend, former **Sudanese** President **Omar Bashir** [1989-2019] in **ICC [International Criminal Court]** lounge."⁶*

Former **Internal Security Organization** operative **Charles Rwomushana** claimed in a television talkshow aired on 24 August that President Museveni's warning to security agencies not to torture suspects could be an attempt to avoid facing prosecution at the ICC like former **Liberian** president **Charles Taylor** (1997-2003) and **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** warlord **Jean Pierre**

¹ Daily Monitor, 15 Aug 2021

² www.ec.or.ug/2021-general-elections, 9 Feb 2021

³ Source, Uganda analyst

⁴ Daily Monitor, 15 Aug 2021

⁵ Source, Uganda analyst

⁶ Source, Uganda analyst

Bemba.⁷ Rwomushana cited an example of a video recording where Museveni is heard praising at length the torture that security forces inflicted on Kyagulanyi in 2018 in the north-western Ugandan district of **Arua** as “a good and proper beating, in fact an exemplary one for every soldier to emulate”.⁸ **Kampala**-based **Radio One** producer **Keneth Lukwago Anderson** told **Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)** that for President Museveni to be taken seriously, he must “bring to book” all those who tortured and incarcerated hundreds of opposition supporters during the 14 January presidential elections.

Uganda has ratified both the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** and the **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)**. It has not, however, made a declaration under Article 22 of the CAT allowing the **Committee Against Torture**, the **United Nations (UN)** body that monitors compliance with the CAT, to consider complaints by Ugandan individuals. Nor has Uganda ratified the new **Optional Protocol** to the CAT allowing visits to Uganda by the Committee against Torture’s Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.⁹

... as government cracks down on NGOs

The government has cracked down on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the country and ordered 54 organisations to suspend operations.¹⁰ The **National NGO Bureau**, in a statement issued on 20 August, said the affected organisations were to shut down “with immediate effect”.¹¹ The NGO Bureau said the groups had failed to comply with legislation covering their activities, including operating with expired permits, failing to file accounts or failing to register with the authorities.

The groups affected include the country’s most prominent rights organisation, **Chapter Four**, as well as religious, environmental and electoral democracy groups.¹² Some of the organisations ordered to close had taken part in an election monitoring operation on polling day in January, which was raided by security forces who arrested several of their leaders.¹³ Chapter Four executive director **Nicholas Opiyo** confirmed to **France 24** television that his group had received the government’s order to close and described the situation as “serious”.¹⁴

The **Africa** chapter of the **International Commission of Jurists** said it was “deeply concerned” by the suspension of Chapter Four. In a post on social media platform **Twitter**, it encouraged Ugandan authorities to resolve the situation urgently, “to allow Chapter Four to resume operations”.

Local human rights group **Lubaga Social Justice Centre** executive director **Habib Buwembo** told ARC that the move to close down the 54 NGOs is part of a scheme to stifle civic space in Uganda. Buwembo noted that Opiyo was documenting cases of people killed by the security forces during the November 2020 Kampala riots that preceded Kyagulanyi’s arrest (see above).

Unrefined gold imports make Tanzania & Zimbabwe Uganda’s largest trade partners

Unrefined gold imports from **Tanzania** and **Zimbabwe** have pushed the two countries into becoming two of Uganda’s largest trade partners, according to data from the **Bank of Uganda (BoU)** (central bank).¹⁵ The recent surge has elevated Tanzania to become the leading source of Uganda’s imports within **East Africa**, overtaking **Kenya**, which held the position for more than four decades.¹⁶

⁷ Source, Uganda analyst

⁸ Source, Uganda analyst

⁹ HRW, accessed 8 Sep 2021

¹⁰ France 24, 20 Aug 2021

¹¹ NGO Bureau, 20 Aug 2021

¹² France 24, 20 Aug 2021

¹³ Africanews, 21 Aug 2021

¹⁴ France 24, 20 Aug 2021

¹⁵ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

¹⁶ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

Trade relations between Uganda and Zimbabwe have also improved after being lukewarm for several decades. BoU data indicates that Zimbabwe was Uganda's leading single source of imports in June, beating **China** and **India**.¹⁷ Imports from Zimbabwe surged to \$170.8m (US\$ 606 billion), compared to \$122m and \$100m spent respectively on goods imported from China and India.¹⁸ Although the report does not provide details of what was imported during the period, local newspaper **Daily Monitor** quotes BoU communications director **Charity Mugumya** saying the surge was a result of increased demand for unprocessed gold from Zimbabwe.¹⁹

According to the **United Nations International Trade Statistics Database**, Uganda imported \$203.57m worth of gold in unwrought, semi-manufactured and powder form in 2020.²⁰ Uganda also imports pearls, metals, raw tobacco, ferroalloys, nickel ore, diamonds and precious stones from Zimbabwe.²¹

BoU data also indicate that gold imports caused trade between Uganda and Tanzania to double between April and June.²² BoU executive director of research **Adam Mugume** attributed the surge to gold imports, noting that Tanzania was one of the main sources of Uganda's gold re-exports.²³ Regional economic analyst **Alykhan Satchu** said the increase was an important signal to the administration of Tanzania's President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** (2021-present) of accelerating reciprocal trade between the two countries.²⁴

According to the **Uganda Bureau of Statistics**, gold comprises the largest share of imports from Tanzania.²⁵ Currently, gold is outperforming other export sectors with cumulative earnings hitting \$1.7 billion (US\$ 6.3 trillion) for the period between December 2019 and November 2020.²⁶

Covid update

President Museveni has directed prime minister **Robinah Nabanjja** to lead a team from the ministries of education and health and the national **Covid-19** taskforce to establish dates and proposals for the safe reopening of learning institutions in October.²⁷ The proposals presented at a meeting on 7 September include the reopening of schools in a phased manner; Covid-19 vaccination for the population that interacts with children in schools, including teachers; shortening of holidays and extension of school days to include Saturday, prioritising learners who have had less time in school; strengthening the continuity of learning, reviewing the school curriculum to concentrate on core competence and strengthening the Covid-19 surveillance system in schools.²⁸

Education ministry spokesperson **Denis Mugimba** told the local **Independent Magazine** that President Museveni was mostly concerned with vaccinating those above the age of 50, as well as teachers, support staff and learners over the age of 18.²⁹ Health ministry records indicate that 209,000 (38%) of teachers out of the targeted 550,000 have been vaccinated against Covid-19, and 401,000 (12%) of elderly persons (aged 50 and older) out of the targeted 3.3 million.³⁰ The **United States** on 6 September delivered a donation of 647,080 doses of the **Moderna** Covid-19 vaccine to Uganda as part of global efforts to fight the pandemic.³¹ As of 7 September, the health ministry had

¹⁷ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

¹⁸ Bank of Uganda report

¹⁹ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

²⁰ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

²¹ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

²² Bank of Uganda report

²³ Citizen, 17 Jun 2021

²⁴ Citizen, 17 Jun 2021

²⁵ UBOSS report

²⁶ Daily Monitor, 20 Aug 2021

²⁷ URN, 9 Sep 2021

²⁸ URN, 9 Sep 2021

²⁹ Independent, 9 Sep 2021

³⁰ Ministry of Health, 9 Sep 2021

³¹ US Embassy Kampala, 7 Sep 2021

administered a total of 1,476,526 doses of Covid-19 vaccine and recorded 120,990 confirmed cases of Covid-19, with cumulative recoveries of 95,697 and 3,074 Covid-19-related deaths.

Uganda continues to grapple with the devastating effects of the pandemic on all sectors of the economy.³² This has prompted parliament, on 9 September, to adopt a raft of recommendations to revive the economy, key among which is the implementation of a tourism development levy.³³ MP **Mwine Mpaka** said a \$10 levy will be charged on each ticket for every person departing from Uganda by air transport.

Parliament also requested the government to suspend the 50% property rate for the current financial year, on condition that landlords forfeit lockdown rent, which landlords continue to demand, driving arcade workers, bars and restaurant owners out of business.³⁴ If implemented, taxi drivers and boda-boda riders will have some reprieve on proposals to extend the renewal of recently expired permits by six months.³⁵

MPs have also targeted monopolies on trade, with proposals to open all trade to fair competition.³⁶

Planner

20 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** International Conference on Human Rights and Human Dignity;
 21 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** World Congress on Soil and Water Sciences;
 22 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** International Conference on Applied Mathematics and Science;
 Oct 2021 **(Uganda)** Telecom company **Africell Uganda Limited** to exit Ugandan market

Chronology

9 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. President **Yoweri Museveni** dismisses rumours that he is grooming his eldest son, Lt Gen **Muhoozi Kainerugaba**, to be his immediate successor when he retires;

8 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Observer*. Uganda receives a donation of 647,080 **Moderna Covid-19** vaccine doses from the **United States** government, adding to the 2,153,140 doses of **AstraZeneca** vaccine and 300,000 doses of **China**-manufactured **Sinovac** vaccine doses already received;

7 Sep 2021 **Kigali (Rwanda)** *Daily Monitor*. Rwanda's President **Paul Kagame** again urges Rwandans not to travel to Uganda, stating in a televised interview on state agency **Rwanda Broadcasting Agency** that Rwandans fear travelling to Uganda due to the risk of alleged illegal arrests and torture;

7 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Nile Post*. Telecom company **Africell Uganda Limited** announces it will exit the Ugandan market in October after seven years in operation;

6 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *KFM Radio*. Police say they have intelligence that two opposition **National Unity Platform (NUP)** party members of parliament, **Allan Sewanyana** and **Muhammed Segirinya**, allegedly commanded the gruesome murders of 29 people in the greater **Masaka** region;

5 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. **Coca-Cola Beverages Africa** in Uganda has reinforced its commitment to the **Buy Uganda Build Uganda (BUBU)** agenda with the launch of a new product, **Ades Nutri-Bushera**, whose main raw material, millet, will be sourced locally;

4 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent Magazine*. **Uganda Railways Corporation (URC)** receives four fully refurbished locomotives from **South Africa**-based **Grindrod Rail** as part of its efforts to revamp railway transport and reduce pressure on the road system;

³² Uganda analyst, 9 Sep 2021

³³ Independent, 9 Sep 2021

³⁴ Parliament of Uganda, 9 Sep 2021

³⁵ Parliament of Uganda, 9 Sep 2021

³⁶ Parliament of Uganda, 9 Sep 2021

3 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) KFM Radio**. The government has suspended mandatory testing for **Covid-19** for inbound travellers which was to commence 3 September;

3 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Nile Post**. Eye witnesses say three plain-clothed men abducted **Victoria University** vice chancellor **Dr. Lawrence Muganga** from his Kampala office and drove him away in a waiting vehicle;

2 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Observer**. The education and sports ministry gives permission for international schools to re-open for finalists to sit their exams, with schools in Uganda closed since June following the onset of the second wave of the **Covid-19** pandemic;

1 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Independent**. Electricity distribution company **Umeme** says lack of clarity on renewal of its operating licence in 2025 is limiting its ability to raise more capital and make capital investments in the electricity distribution network;

31 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Nile Post**. Former prime minister **Ruhakana Rugunda** has distanced himself from suggestions that he should run for presidency in 2026;

30 Sep 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) KFM**. Opposition **National Unity Platform (NUP)** party leader **Robert Kyagulanyi** (also known as **Bobi Wine**) calls for more public vigilance amongst residents in **Masaka** amid rampant murders by machete-wielding men;

29 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Kampala) KFM Radio**. Operators of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have asked **Bank of Uganda** (central bank) to reverse its decision of increasing the paid up capital requirement for commercial banks from the current US\$ 25 billion (\$7m) to US\$150 billion (\$44.4m);

28 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) HRW**. **United States**-based non-governmental organisation **Human Rights Watch** says Ugandan authorities announced on 20 August that they had halted the activities of 54 civil society groups, including human rights and election monitoring organisations;

27 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Economic Policy Research Centre**. **Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)** senior fellow **Swaibu Mbowe** says Uganda has seen a jump in sugarcane production as a result of more land being tilled;

26 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Parliament**. **Kween County** member of parliament **Abdi Fadhil Chemaswet** requests the health ministry to review the \$65 cost of mandatory **Covid-19 PCR** tests conducted at **Entebbe International Airport**, saying the test costs only benefits private laboratories stationed at the airport's immediate outskirts;

25 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Economist**. The first plane carrying 51 of an expected 2,000 **Afghan** refugees arrives at **Entebbe International Airport** ;

23 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Daily Monitor**. Attorney general **Kiryowa Kiwanuka** advises that the works and transport minister has no powers to punish the board of directors and management staff of national flag carrier **Uganda Airlines**;

22 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Independent**. City traders under the **Kampala Arcades Advocacy Forum** have partnered with **Mild May** testing laboratory to carry out extensive **COVID-19** screening at a subsidised cost in order to control the spread of COVID-19 among the business community;

21 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Independent**. Health minister Dr. **Jane Ruth Aceng** announces that the health ministry has lifted the travel ban on travellers from India;

20 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Nile Post**. The **Uganda Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)** has granted air operator's certificates (AOC) to **Uganda Airline's** two new A330-800Neo Airbuses, which have been grounded since their arrival in December and January pending CAA's approval;

17 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda) Daily Monitor**. State minister for relief, disaster preparedness and refugees **Esther Anyakun** says Uganda is set to temporarily host 2,000 refugees from **Afghanistan**

following the **Taliban** takeover;

16 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *VOA*. Ugandan human rights activists welcome President **Yoweri Museveni**'s condemnation of torture allegedly committed by police and the armed forces but express scepticism that Museveni will prosecute security forces accused of abuse;

16 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. The **Constitutional Court** has declared four sections of the **Anti-Pornography Act 2014** unconstitutional for being vague and uncertain, meaning that no person can be indicted for the offence of pornography in Uganda under the Act;

15 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *KFM*. Five **Supreme Court** justices unanimously dismiss **Bank of Uganda** (central bank) application to amend its appeal in which it challenges a ruling by the appellant court in favour of former **Crane Bank** and **Meera Investments Ltd** owner **Sudhir Ruparelia**;

14 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. Bank of Uganda says borrowers in sectors that are still experiencing heavy effects of **COVID-19** and containment measures against the pandemic, will have credit relief measures extended by another 12 months;

13 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *KFM*. Government states that to reopen schools for all learners across the country, 357,500 (65%) of teachers must be vaccinated against **Covid-19**;

12 Aug 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Independent*. Inspector-General of Police **Martin Okoth Ochola** dissolves the **Flying Squad**, which has been serving as the police force's violent crime crack unit;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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