

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Uganda Summary 8 February 2021

President Yoweri Tubuhaburwa Museveni (1986-present) wins a sixth term as Uganda's president, defeating his closest opponent, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, also known by his stage name of Bobi Wine, with 58.6% of the vote. Museveni has ordered the immediate suspension of the activities of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), the largest pool of donor funding to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Uganda, over allegations of financing subversive activities. Uganda drops five positions and one point in Germany-based NGO Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index. Telecom regulator Uganda Communication Commission blocks access to social media, dealing a blow to companies and individuals that rely on social media to sell their products and services.

Museveni wins a sixth term ...

President **Yoweri Museveni** (1986-present) has won a sixth term as president. Museveni won 5.85 million votes – 58.6% – in **Uganda's** 14 January elections while main opposition candidate **Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu**, also known by his stage name of **Bobi Wine**, polled 3.48 million votes, representing 34.8% of total votes cast.¹ Kyagulanyi, a 38-year-old pop star-turned politician who had rallied young Ugandans behind his call for political change, called the results a "complete fraud" and a "mockery of democracy".² Kyagulanyi had campaigned to end what he called "widespread corruption".

*"It's an election that was taken over by the military and the police. It further exposes how dictatorial the Museveni regime is."*³

Soldiers surrounded Kyagulanyi's home outside the capital, **Kampala**, after the election and barred him from leaving, effectively placing him under house arrest.⁴ Security forces also blocked **United States (US)** ambassador to Uganda **Natalie E Brown** from visiting Kyagulanyi at his home.⁵

The **US State Department** and African election-monitoring group **Africa Elections Watch Coalition** complained of election irregularities. Through its embassy in Kampala, the US government issued a statement on 17 January warning that there will be consequences for those who undermine democracy in Uganda.⁶ In response, Ugandan government spokesman **Ofwono Opondo** accused the US government and Ambassador Brown of meddling in Uganda's politics:

*"What she has been trying to do blatantly is to meddle in Uganda's internal politics, particularly elections, to subvert our elections and the will of the people."*⁷

The Africa Elections Watch Coalition, which deployed 2,000 observers in 146 districts, said in a statement that it had observed irregularities, including the late opening of most polling stations, missing ballot papers and illegally opened ballot boxes.⁸

In the parliamentary election, held simultaneously with the presidential election, candidates from

¹ www.ec.or.ug/2021-general-elections, 9 Feb 2021

² France 24, 16 Jan 2021

³ France 24, 16 Jan 2021

⁴ France 24, 16 Jan 2021

⁵ Quartz, 16 Jan 2021

⁶ Quartz, 17 Feb 2021

⁷ Ofwono Opondo quoted in Reuters, 18 Feb 2021

⁸ Africa Election Watch Coalition, 16 Jan 2021

Kyagulanyi's **National Unity Platform (NUP)** won 56 of 539 seats.⁹ Uganda's vice president, **Edward Ssekandi**, is among 24 senior ruling party lawmakers who lost their seats.¹⁰

Museveni orders suspension of donor funding facility ...

President Museveni has directed the immediate suspension of activities of the **European Union's (EU) Democratic Governance Facility (DGF)**, the largest pool of donor funding to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Uganda, over alleged financing of subversive activities.¹¹ The suspension of the DGF has sent shock waves across Uganda, as both state and non-state actors depend on it to fund their activities.¹² In a 2 February letter to finance minister **Matia Kasaija**, Museveni demanded to know how and why the finance ministry authorised a US\$500.8 billion (\$136.5 m) fund to operate illegally in the country without his involvement or that of the cabinet.¹³ The contents of Museveni's letter became public when it was leaked from the finance ministry. Museveni claimed to have learned that a large percentage of the fund went into financing activities and organisations intended to subvert government:

*"Was this a result of subversion, corruption or criminal negligence or all of these? Why wasn't the Cabinet and I consulted?"*¹⁴

Museveni suspended the funding and instructed the **Inspector General of Government (IGG)** and the police to investigate finance ministry officials for allegedly allowing a foreign mission to illegally operate a \$136.5m fund in Uganda without government representatives on the board.¹⁵ The DGF board of directors is comprised of EU ambassadors while its steering committee is made up of technical experts from the contributing embassies, as well as three Ugandan government representatives and one civil society representative.¹⁶

The DGF states on its website that the fund was established in July 2011 by eight development partners including **Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom** and the EU.¹⁷ The DGF creates a pool of funds from participating countries so that grants have a larger impact, and to reduce the effort and expense of accounting to several different donors, sometimes over similar projects.¹⁸ The DGF is currently implementing its second five-year phase (January 2018-December 2022) with support from Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the EU, to build on the achievements of the first phase, addressing continuing democratic deficits, and consolidating peace and stability in Uganda,

*"... a Uganda where citizens are empowered to engage in democratic governance and the state to uphold citizens' rights".*¹⁹

A former project officer who worked with DGF from 2011 to 2017, told **Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)** that, like its predecessor, the second five-year phase was negotiated between the Uganda government, represented by the prime minister's office, and the finance ministry on the one hand, and the contributing **European** bilateral donors on the other hand.²⁰ Prime minister **Ruhakana Rugunda**, leader of government business, approved the plan while treasury secretary **Keith Muhakanizi** signed off on it.²¹ The former DGF official said it was "*disturbing*" that the president feigns ignorance of such

⁹ NTV Uganda, 16 Jan 2021

¹⁰ US Embassy press release, 17 Jan 2021

¹¹ Source, Uganda analyst

¹² Source, Uganda analyst 8 Feb 2021

¹³ Source, leaked letter from finance ministry

¹⁴ Source, leaked letter from finance ministry

¹⁵ Source, leaked letter from finance ministry

¹⁶ Source, DGF employee, 7 Feb 2021

¹⁷ Source, www.dgf.ug, 8 Feb 2021

¹⁸ Source, www.dgf.ug, 8 Feb 2021

¹⁹ Source, www.dgf.ug, 8 Feb 2021

²⁰ Source, Uganda analyst

²¹ Source, former DGF project officer, 8 Feb 2021

an important partnership programme between the government and development partners:²²

*"If the Cabinet did not know about the existence of the DGF, which is in its 10th year of operation in the country, this would be a manifestation of a serious malfunctioning of our government, which calls for some serious re-examination."*²³

However, a State House official says Museveni is fully aware of the role the DGF plays:

*"To the best of my knowledge, the president is 101% aware of the DGF presence and what it does. Who authorised formation of **Institute of Parliamentary Studies** that's fully funded by DGF and under stewardship of the Speaker?"*²⁴

The editor of a **Kampala** radio station warns that Museveni's action in unilaterally suspending the DGF has far-reaching implications.²⁵

*"First of all, 90% of all NGOs that employ hundreds of Ugandans on top of giving contracts to experts, get funding from DGF, the NGOs and the employees invest and buy from our local markets and also pay taxes, the NGOs give business to media houses which in turn pay taxes."*²⁶

NGOs also support the government in delivering services. Some support government departments directly; most institutions in the justice, law and order sector receive funds from DGF and NGOs.²⁷

*"So now you understand how an action by one man will impact many lives? A government that cannot create enough jobs or deliver services should think carefully about such an action."*²⁸

However, a senior government official working with the president's office told ARC that he supports the suspension of DGF's activities and investigations into its operations. The official claims he has information that some finance ministry officials who are attached to the fund are beneficiaries of the fund because they own some of the beneficiary NGOs themselves.²⁹

*"I spoke to one of the directors of a prominent NGO. He said this investigation is the best thing to happen because a lot of money is looted by the people who are in charge of the fund."*³⁰

The suspension has affected 60 state and non-state actors. These include **Makerere University School of Women and Gender Studies (SWGS)**, the ministry of lands, housing and urban development, the **Muslim Centre for Justice & Law (MCJL)**, the **Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy Uganda (NIMD)**, the **Parliament Commission-Parliament of Uganda (POU)**, **Public Interest Law Clinic (Makerere University) (PILAC)**, and **Radio News Network Limited / Uganda Radio Network**.³¹

... as Uganda drops in global corruption rankings

Uganda has failed to make progress in the fight against corruption, according to the latest **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)** of **Germany-based NGO Transparency International**.³² Uganda dropped five places to 142nd out of 180 countries in the 2020 CPI from 137th position in 2019. The CPI scores countries and territories according to their perceived levels of public sector corruption and rates them against each on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).³³ Uganda scored 27 points, below the **sub-Saharan Africa** average of 32, and a point lower than its score in the 2019 CPI.

²² Source, Uganda analyst

²³ Source, former project officer DGF, 8 Feb 2021

²⁴ Source, senior State House official, 6 Feb 2021

²⁵ Source, Uganda analyst

²⁶ Source, Kampala Radio Station editor, 8 Feb 2021

²⁷ Source, Uganda analyst

²⁸ Source, Kampala Radio Station editor, 8 Feb 2021

²⁹ Source, senior State House official, 6 Feb 2021

³⁰ Source, senior State House official, 6 Feb 2021

³¹ Source, www.dgf.ug, 6 Feb 2021

³² Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, 2021.

³³ Transparency International's 2020 CPI Report

TI 2020 CPI Rankings for Uganda

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Ranking	142/180	137/180	149/180	151/180	151/176
Score	27	28	26	26	25

The CPI report, released on 28 January, paints a grim picture of sub-Saharan African corruption, underscoring a need for urgent action.³⁴ **Rwanda** emerged once again as the least corrupt country in **East Africa**, scoring 54 points, followed by **Tanzania** with 38 points, and **Kenya** 31.³⁵

TI CPI Rankings 2020: Regional comparison (EAC)

	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda
Ranking	165/180	124/180	49/180	94/180	142/180
Score	19	31	54	38	27

Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda chair **Cissy Kagaba** tells ARC that Uganda's poor score is no surprise given that the country has just been through a heavily monetised electoral process.³⁶ Kagaba attributes Uganda's poor performance to failure by Ugandan authorities to enforce anti-corruption laws and policies.³⁷ Kagaba says the auditor general produces reports on corrupt individuals and companies every year, but the government takes no action against them:

"Uganda's fight against corruption is characterised only by rhetoric."³⁸

A newly elected Member of Parliament (MP) from eastern Uganda says corruption is so entrenched in Uganda that people willingly give bribes as a form of offering thanks for a service.³⁹

"I have just come from a police station where I paid bribes to get a police bond for my supporters who were arrested during the elections."⁴⁰

The MP says during the election campaign, voters asked political candidates to give them bribes in exchange for votes because voters believe MPs will receive even greater bribes once they get into parliament.⁴¹

Social media blackout hits e-commerce firms

The **Uganda Communication Commission's (UCC)** move to block access to social media has left companies that rely on social media to sell their products and services counting their losses.⁴² The social media shutdown is an escalation of restrictions that the government, through the UCC, imposed on 12 January shortly before the 14 January general election.⁴³ The telecommunications sector regulator ordered a countrywide shutdown of the Internet on the eve of the 14 January general election.⁴⁴ Although the Internet was partially reopened on 18 January, social media remains blocked at time of writing. State-owned media outlet **New Vision** reported on 18 January that the government would maintain its shutdown of **Facebook**, **Twitter** and other social-media platforms until it deems

³⁴ Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2021.

³⁵ Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, 2021.

³⁶ Source, Uganda analyst, 8 Feb 2021

³⁷ Source, Uganda analyst, 8 Feb 2021

³⁸ Source, Cissy Kagaba Anti-corruption Coalition Uganda, 8 Feb 2021.

³⁹ Source, newly elected MP from eastern Uganda, 8 Feb 2021.

⁴⁰ Source, newly elected MP from eastern Uganda, 8 Feb 2021.

⁴¹ Source, newly elected MP from eastern Uganda, 8 Feb 2021.

⁴² Source, Uganda analyst

⁴³ Source, Uganda analyst, 8 Feb 2021.

⁴⁴ The East African, 18 Jan 2021.

them “safe” from being used to inflame tensions.⁴⁵ Information, communication and technology and national guidance state minister **Peter Ogwang** said:

“The government is analysing the situation and sites will be restored on a case-by-case basis.”⁴⁶

The social media blackout has hit companies and individuals that rely on Internet connectivity to do business.⁴⁷ **Grace Bwogi**, a farmer from **Rakai (Central Region)** who sells her goats online, is among online business community members hard hit by the social media blackout in Uganda:

“A very big percentage of my farm sales are initiated and concluded on social media.”

Bwogi told ARC she is literally “out of business” because a number of would-be customers not on a Virtual Private Network (VPN) are unable to access social media.⁴⁸

Sozo Property Consultants’ representative **David Okello** says the social media shutdown has negatively impacted the real estate business. Real estate agents and owners post photos of property for sale and connect with potential buyers through social media apps such as Facebook and **WhatsApp**.⁴⁹ **James Mukasa**, a real estate dealer from **Ntinda** in Kampala, told ARC he is “out of business” because he is now unable to connect with potential customers on Facebook to sell and rent houses.

Planner

- 13 Feb 2021 **Entebbe (Uganda)** International Conference on Sustainable Water Management
- 1 Mar 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** International Conference on Future Cities
- 13 Mar 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** International Conference on Environment and Life Science

Chronology

- 8 Feb 2021 **Mogadishu (Somalia)** *Observer*. The **African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)** has launched investigations into circumstances under which its helicopter crashed on 5 February in southern Somalia, injuring four **Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF)** soldiers;
- 6 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Observer*. **China’s** President **Xi Jinping** congratulates President **Yoweri Museveni** on his sixth successive term in office;
- 5 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *The Independent Magazine*. The **United States** government has maintained a reward of up to \$5m for information leading to the arrest, transfer, or conviction of **Lord’s Resistance Army** leader **Joseph Kony**;
- 4 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *The Independent Magazine*. **MTV Base** postpones the 2021 **MTV Africa Music Awards** that were set to be held on 20 February;
- 4 Feb 2021 **Amsterdam (Netherlands)** *UN news*. **International Criminal Court** finds former **Ugandan** warlord whose forces attacked camps for internally displaced people across Uganda guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity in a judgement that **United Nations** head **António Guterres** describes as a “significant milestone”;
- 3 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. Cabinet allows schools to reopen for sub-candidate classes nearly a year after they were closed following the **coronavirus** outbreak;
- 3 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Pearl News*. President **Yoweri Museveni** orders finance minister **Matia Kasaija** to suspend operations of the **Democratic Governance Facility (DGF)** which funds most NGOs, including in the human rights, democracy, and women empowerment arenas;

⁴⁵ New Vision 18 Jan 2021.

⁴⁶ New Vision 18 Jan 2021.

⁴⁷ The East African, 18 Jan 2021.

⁴⁸ Source, Grace Bwogi, 7 Feb 2021.

⁴⁹ Source, real estate dealer, 6 Feb 2021.

3 Feb 2021 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Nation*. Ugandan lawyer **George Luchiri Wajackoyah** confirms that his client, Ugandan academic and political activist **Stella Nyanzi**, has fled to Nairobi to escape political persecution by President **Yoweri Museveni's** government;

2 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. Minister of ICT and national guidance **Judith Nabakooba** says government has received information that “*some people*” are planning to shut down the country between February 3 and 7;

1 Feb 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. Lawyers for Ugandan opposition leader **Robert Kyagulanyi** (also known as **Bobi Wine**) file a challenge in the **Supreme Court** against President **Yoweri Museveni's** victory in Uganda's 14 January election, claiming the poll was rigged;

31 Feb **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. **United States** ambassador to Uganda **Natalie E. Brown** holds an introductory meeting with **National Unity Platform (NUP)** leader **Robert Kyagulanyi** (also known as **Bobi Wine**) days after police blocked her from visiting his home where security forces had confined him since 14 January;

29 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. President **Yoweri Museveni** rejects suggestions of mediation between him and the opposition, describing the calls for dialogue as an insult;

28 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. Internal affairs minister Gen **Jeje Odongo** and inspector general of police **Martins Okoth Ochola** fail to divulge the location of Ugandans who are missing since armed personnel picked them up during the general election;

27 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Anadolu*. Police say they have arrested three suspected rebels who were allegedly plotting subversive activities in Uganda;

26 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Aljazeera*. Ugandan troops have withdrawn their surveillance of the home of opposition leader and pop star **Robert Kyagulanyi** (also known as **Bobi Wine**), ending his house arrest since the 14 January election;

25 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *DW*. Ugandan high court judge Justice **Michael Elubu** rules that Uganda's security forces may not continue to keep presidential challenger **Robert Kyagulanyi** (also known as **Bobi Wine**) under *de facto* house arrest;

24 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *APO*. **COVID-19** tests confirm 39 new cases bringing cumulative confirmed cases to 39,188, with 318 **COVID-19** deaths in total;

Jan 23 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Africa press organization*. **COVID-19** tests confirm 109 new cases, bringing cumulative confirmed cases to 39,044;

22 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *HRW*. **United States**-based NGO **Human Rights Watch** reports widespread violence and human rights abuses characterised the weeks leading up to Uganda's elections, including killings by security forces, arrests and beatings of opposition supporters and journalists, disruption of opposition rallies, and a shutdown of the internet;

21 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Bloomberg*. Opposition leader **Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu**, also known by his stage name of **Bobi Wine**, says citizens should “*use non-violent and legal means*” to protest the results of the 14 January presidential election, which he claims was rigged;

20 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *DW*. The international community is tightening its scrutiny of **Yoweri Museveni** less than a week after he won his sixth presidential term in Uganda;

19 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Daily Monitor*. At least 24 ministers, including vice president **Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi** lost their parliamentary seats in the 14 January general election;

19 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Business Day*. Government spokesperson **Ofwono Opondo** accuses the **United States** of seeking to subvert Uganda's presidential election by trying to visit the main opposition candidate at his home;

17 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *The Guardian*. Police place pop star turned politician **Robert**

Kyagulanyi Ssentamu (also known as **Bobi Wine**) under house arrest after losing the presidential election;

16 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Aljazeera*. The **Electoral Commission of Uganda** declares incumbent **Yoweri Museveni** the winner of the country's presidential election, extending his 35-year rule as his main rival, **Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu** (also known as **Bobi Wine**), alleges fraud and urges citizens to reject the result;

15 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *The Guardian*. Opposition leader **Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu** (also known as **Bobi Wine**) says soldiers stormed his home as votes continued to be counted in Uganda's elections;

14 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Aljazeera*. Ugandans vote in the country's presidential election that pits long-time President **Yoweri Museveni** against pop star turned politician **Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu** (also known as **Bobi Wine**);

13 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. **South Africa**-based telecoms company **MTN Group** says **Uganda Communications Commission** has ordered Ugandan telecoms operators to suspend all internet gateways from evening until further notice;

12 Jan 2021 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Business & Human Rights Resource Centre*. **MTN Uganda** informs its customers and other stakeholders that the **Uganda Communications Commission (UCC)** has directed national telecommunication operators to immediately suspend access and use of all social media platforms and online messaging applications over the network until further notice;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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