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**UGANDA JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION**  
**“THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD”**

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**A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STATE OF JOURNALISTS RIGHTS  
VIOLATION AS OF 2020-2021-2022 TO PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS**



## **2021 Scientific Elections: The Worst Experience for Journalists**

### **About UJA**

Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) an umbrella body of journalists in Uganda was established in 1963 by a group of human rights minded journalists who developed a sense of activism amidst a deteriorating context and glaring abuses targeting the media.

Uganda Journalists Association works towards advocating for better welfare of journalists, providing members with network advocacy and information services through fostering grass root growth and encouraging regional and chapter activity, stimulating high standards and ethical behavior in the practice of journalism and further partnering with other journalism, advocacy or professional development organizations who share similar goals and beliefs.

The leadership of the Association changes every two years through a democratic process (elections).

### **Legal Status**

UJA is a nonprofit organization registered as a company limited by guarantee under the laws of Uganda with capacity to sue and or to be sued in its own name. The Association may take on other legal form like savings and credit society, legal business entities, press clubs or any other as the General Assembly may determine.

### **Headquarters**

The head quarter of this Association are located at Plot No. 1506, Keti Falao Zone, Kawempe Division, Kampala.

### **Executive Summary**

The report highlights the state of media freedom in Uganda with focus on 2021 general elections, post electoral period and the impact of covid 19 to the media freedom.

- It contains analysis of hostilities towards journalists and the media at large. The findings disclose deliberate attacks against journalists by security agencies to frustrate their work.
- Unlike the previous elections, most of the cases in 2021, were physical in nature and left several journalists nursing huge injuries as security agencies engaged in a deliberate

campaign of denying them access to campaign venues or instill fear among them particularly those covering opposition candidates. A survey conducted by UJA recorded violations of rights for over 50 journalists in form of physical attacks (beating, clobbering, harassment, torture, mishandling), confiscation of work tools, vandalism, tear gas and pepper sprays, arrests with detentions and intimidation by the security forces and some ordinary members of the public and internet shut down by the state. during and after 2021 elections: The Cases were recorded between 2nd November 2020 (presidential nominations) up to May 12th 2021(during and postelection period).

- The report also reveals exploitation of journalists by their employers during the Covid 19 pandemic lock down and its impact to individual journalists and the entire media fraternity in Uganda.
- The report further points out the total internet shutdown by the state before, during and after the polling activity
- It finally points out the draconian regulatory measures and legislations applied against professional journalistic practices by the state agencies.

## **What is Journalism**

Journalism is a function shared by a wide range of actors, professional fulltime reporters and analysts, bloggers and a system of registration or licensing or accreditation that is restrictive and incompatible with media freedom. States are required to respect the right and freedom of expression that embraces the limited journalistic privilege not to disclose information sources.

## **Introduction and Background.**

In a liberal democratic state, the media plays a pivotal role in building an informed society.

Citizens need credible information from the media that can set an agenda, moderate debate and provoke meaningful conversations that can lead to societal transformation.

The media has a more critical role through its traditional function to inform, educate and entertain the public.

Though considered as the fourth estate, the media and government in many neo-liberal African countries including Uganda are at loggerheads. Government and media are two sides of the same coin and when they fight, they destroy the coin.

While government brings policies, the media should bring information about those policies to enrich the ideas and improve their implementation for public good.

To enable the media function effectively as such, journalists need to be guaranteed with the constitutional rights to freedom of speech and expression.

The right to freedom of opinion and expression is provided for in Article 29 (1) (a) of the Constitution of Uganda, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 9 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), Article 19 and Article 25 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The obligation to respect freedoms of opinion and expression is binding on every state and its organs (executive, legislative and judiciary) and other public or governmental authorities at national, regional or local level.

The right to freedom of expression including the media recognizes a free, uncensored and unhindered press or other media as a cornerstone of a democratic society.

The freedom of the media to free communication of information and ideas about public and political issues between citizens, candidates and elected representatives for the effective exercise of the right to vote is recognized. The right requires a free press and other media to comment on public issues without censorship or restraint and to inform public opinion.

The right to freedom of expression including the media recognizes the emergence of new communication technologies such as, internet and mobile based electronic communication and encourages states parties to take steps to foster the independence and access to this new media.

The right to freedom of expression (paragraph 3) carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It permits restrictions of the right in respect to the rights or reputations of others or protection of national security or public order, health or morals. However, when a state party

imposes restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression, such restriction should not put the right in jeopardy; the right and restriction, and norm and exception must not be reversed.

And where restrictions are imposed, the restrictions must be provided by the law and such restrictions must conform to the strict tests of necessity and proportionality. Such restrictions must be applied for the purposes for which they were prescribed and must be directly related to the specific need on which they were predicated.

Even where restrictions are provided by law, such laws must not confer unfettered discretion to the concerned party to restrict freedom of expression. Laws must provide sufficient guidance to ascertain what sorts of expression are restricted; laws must not provide for penalties that are inconsistent with the right such as corporal punishment; while restrictions against acts that constitute intimidation or coercion to protect the right to vote is permissible, such restrictions must not impede political debate, including calls for boycott of non-compulsory vote.

Laws that seek to suppress or withhold information from the public of legitimate public interest that does not harm national security or to prosecute journalists, researchers, human rights defenders are not permissible.

### **Media and Elections**

The media plays a critical role during elections by informing the public and performing a watch dog, but in several instances, it has been accused of fueling election-related violence through its reporting.

Uganda has held six General, Parliamentary and Local Council Elections (1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021) since the adoption of the 1995 Constitution. Each of these elections in varying degrees, experienced politically motivated violence and human rights abuses by political party candidates, members, and supporters as well as human rights violations, including excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel.

It however follows that the 2021 general elections turned out to be the worst experience not only for journalists but also human rights defenders and the citizens.

Dubbed the Scientific Elections, it meant the media would largely play a more pivotal role in an electioneering process, following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which occasioned a ban on public gatherings including political campaign rallies and the guidelines by the Electoral Commission restricting candidates on virtual campaigns using Radio stations, Tv's and other mediums of communication to seek votes from the electors.

The media thought this would be its opportunity for the entire country to realize that it is indeed the fourth estate. This however turned out to be false as many of them that covered opposition candidates experienced unprecedented violence against them.

Media became the ultimate target by security forces and many journalists who covered the campaign trail particularly for the opposition candidates such as Robert Kyagulanyi Sentamu Bobi Wine and Patrick Amuriat Obboi are yet to recover, while others are permanently disabled. *A survey conducted by UJA recorded violations of rights for over 50 journalists in form of physical attacks (beating, clobbering, harassment, torture, mishandling), confiscation of work tools, vandalism, tear gas and pepper sprays, arrests with detentions and intimidation by the security forces and some ordinary members of the public and internet shut down by the state, during and after 2021 elections. 2nd November 2020 to May 12th 2021.*

### **Cases of Violations of Journalists and other Citizen's Rights**

**I I)** On November 3rd, 2020, Vision Group journalist, Ronald Kakooza was brutally arrested while covering events at the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) headquarters in Najjanakumbi.

**II).** On the same day, a group of more than 30 journalists who were covering presidential nominations at Kyambogo University were tear gassed and pepper-sprayed by the security personnel.

**III).** On November 5th, Moses Bwayo, a freelance journalist was reportedly shot at with a rubber bullet and sustained facial injuries while covering candidate Robert Kyagulanyi's journey from Kibuli mosque to his party headquarters in Kamwokya.

**IV).** On November 12th 2020, the NBS TV crew covering Kyagulanyi's campaign in Northern Uganda was attacked by unknown assailants who vandalized their car and stole their property including a laptop and phones. These journalists included Daniel Lutaaya and Thomas **Kitimbo**.

**V).** On November 18th 2020, Ashraf Kasirye, a journalist with Ghetto Media was brutally arrested and sustained injuries that left him hospitalized.

**VI).** On the same day, Sam Balikowa, a journalist with City FM and Nile TV, who like Ashraf, was covering Kyagulanyi's campaigns in Luuka district, was brutally arrested.

**VII).** Arthur Wadero of Daily Monitor was also attacked on his way home from covering the same event.

**VIII).** On December 12th 2020, David Tamale of Bukedde TV, Ssessanga Batte of BBS TV, John Cliff Wamala of NTV, Moses Waiswa of Busoga One FM, Ronald Mugenyi of Ghetto Media and Jonan Atusingwize of Pearl FM were assaulted by the security personnel as they covered Kyagulanyi's campaigns in Alebtong District.

**IX).** On December 27th 2020, Ali Mivule of NTV, Daniel Lutaaya and Ashraf Kasirye were hit with suspected explosives by the police which seriously left them injured as they covered Kyagulanyi's campaigns at Kyabakuza in Masaka district. Kasirye went out of conscious for a very long time as a result of severity from an explosive that was fired at his head.

**X).** On the same day, David Musisi Kalyankolo of Bukedde TV was arrested by the Mukono DPC. He was later released after intervention by the UJA team led by the president Mathias Rukundo.

**XI).** On December 30th, several journalists including Derrick Wandera of Daily Monitor and Culton Scovia Nakamya of BBS TV were arrested as they took pictures of Kyagulanyi's arrest in Kalangala. They were both released with no charges but Wandera's phone was impounded and damaged.

**XII).** On the same day, journalists in Masaka under SOBUJA accused the Masaka RPC Enock Baine of persistent violation of their rights in form of harassment- issuance of threats and vowed to suspend coverage of police activities if it did not stop.

**XIII).** On the same day, (December 30th, 2020), then the Deputy IGP Maj. Gen Paul Lokech issued a statement in which he vowed to command the police enforce the heretical Media Council restrictive orders against journalists that had not been accredited by the Council to cover election, setting as ultimatum 31st December 2020 for them to have the said clearance.

**XIV).** On January 5th 2021, Bruno Aliga, a journalist based in West Nile was abducted on connection to the political campaign related issues in the country.

**X).** Journalists Timothy Murungi (NewVision), Henry Sekanjako (New Vision) , Joseph Sabiiti (then NBS TV), Thomas Kitimbo (NBS TV), Geoffrey Twesigye (NTV), John Cliff Wamala (NTV), Irene Abalo(Daily Monitor) , Shamim Nabakooza (Record TV), Rashida Nakaayi (Galaxy FM) and Josephine Namakumbi (NBS TV),were on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February,2021,badly beaten by the military police as they covered the NuP president Robert Kyagulanyi Sentamu who was delivering his petition to the UN Human Rights office in Kololo-Kampala.

**XI).** NTV's Mityana- based correspondent Enock Matovu was on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April,2021, battered by soldiers. A group of soldiers at Busimbi - Gombolola in Mityana accused him of moving during curfew hours despite being an essential worker, when they attacked him and left him helpless after barbaric beating.

Some of the journalist's tormentors were just subjected to the military disciplinary tribunal where reporters were not present to independently assess and report stories, which rendered the process a suspect. During the 2006 and 2016 elections, there were reported clashes between supporters of NRM and FDC during the pre-election period and numerous cases of intimidation by security forces were reported by the media. The media was faulted for reporting poorly and amplifying hate speech. Major Tv stations which broadcast provisional results that were unconfirmed faced pressure from the state officials.

The issue of media coverage during elections remains a thorn in the flesh of Uganda's democracy. Despite explicit provisions on broadcasting standards specifically under the Electronic Media Act, which in the First Schedule requires that in elections for public office, the electronic media- whether privately or publicly owned- must afford equal coverage to all candidates, key opposition leaders have had their media coverage of their campaigns, in particular radio talk shows, arbitrarily blocked or stopped by the state agents (Army, Police and RDC's).

The continued beating of journalists by security agencies (Army and Police) denies the public independent and un doctored information as many senior journalists prefer to practice 'safe journalism' thereby avoiding critical and political stories. Whereas there could be several weaknesses among journalists, it does not necessitate any kind of torture onto them and any other human being (citizens).

**Media actors were also disappointed by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Martins Okoth Ochola's reckless and outlandish statements agitating for the beating of journalists by his led police officers, which justified impunity by himself and his commanded force whose mandate is to observe law and order.**

## **2. Draconian Regulatory Laws.**

It is very important that media operations are regulated. In 1997, Parliament enacted the Uganda Communications Act, establishing the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to regulate the national communications sector. The UCC has broad powers over licensing and regulating but the same is under abuse.

Using this power, UCC has on several occasions issued directives to the media houses that undermine the freedom of the media. Prior to the 2021 elections, ex-UCC executive director, Mr. George Mutabazi threatened them with sanctions if they did not suspend their staff it accused of airing or approving 'undesirable' broadcast content. The said undesirable content was in respect to the political activities by the opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi Sentamu- Bobi Wine.

The suspended journalists were 37 from 13 media houses including NBS TV, BBS TV, NTV, Bukedde TV, Kingdom TV and Salt TV, Akaboozi Radio, Beat FM, Capital FM, Pearl FM,

Sapientia FM and Radio Simba. Their suspension was however later reversed by Court following a petition filled by the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) against the Commission (UCC).

### **3. Internet Shutdown**

Internet shutdown was another violation of the media freedom and yet it is the main tool in execution of media operations today. It does not only aid in cost cutting for the media but also key in media operations.

It was totally shut down on the eve of the election (January 13 2021) until when results for presidential and parliamentary candidates had been tallied and announced. This significantly impacted the free flow of the information to the public. It also tremendously affected the transmission of the provisional electoral results by the media houses and journalists, hence disabling media operations. Journalists alternatively used SMS direct phone calls which was not effective.

### **How COVID 19 Pandemic Affected Journalists in Uganda**

Covid-19 is yet another devil that greatly crippled the media. Some media houses folded their operations, while others were forced to lay off the workers. This posed a significant impact on to the economic rights of many journalists.

UJA carried out a study on the effects of Covid 19 Pandemic to the Media Freedoms in Uganda to find out how journalists and media houses fared during the lock down of the first wave from 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The study was carried out between May and August 2020 capturing the views of **300** journalists as a sample from **40** media houses/organizations in Central Region using Kampala as case study, Eastern (Mbale, Sebei and Tororo), Northern Region (Gulu, Lira, Omoro and Oyam), West Nile (Arua and Moyo) and Western Region (Ntungamo, Mbarara and Kasese).

Views of the journalists attached to Television Stations (Tvs), Radio Stations, News Papers and Online News Websites were captured, in respect to the questions that were put to them. Methodology used was interviews with the UJA research team.

## *Questions*

### *1. How has covid 19 pandemic affected journalists in Uganda*

*(a) In terms of their payments? (b) In terms of safety?*

### *2. How have they applied their digital skills?*

#### *(a) In terms of their payment?*

- Some media houses wound down their operations in the Country. For example, Record Tv which had spent over a decade in the media industry was declared closed with all journalists there told to look for jobs elsewhere or try other alternatives, since the company had adversely been affected by the effects of Covid 19. Vision Group's bureau in Lira attached to Rupiny was closed down and staff there heavily suffered. The same company was forced to suspend its local conglomerates including among others, Rupiny, Orumuri and Etop, as a result of the same.
- Journalists' wages and salaries were cut by 10 to 50% as a result of the declined business returns through adverts to some stations. This significantly impacted their survival with families through the lock down.
- Facilitation for the journalist's field news operations was withdrawn which aggravated their field news operations.
- More of journalists were pushed into forced leaves by their employing media organizations/ houses.
- There was downsizing of staff between 9 and 10%.
- A few staff that remained at work were occupied by the heavy work load meant for the majority that had been sent home.
- Freelancer journalists' services were frozen by the companies that consume their news story products which largely affected their income.
- Some journalists had been permanently laid off work which rendered them jobless up to now.
- Payment of some journalists' wages would be delayed by some media organizations and others completely not paid throughout the lock down.
- Revenue for some media houses was tremendously affected due to fluctuated business.

- There was starvation of some journalists in homes arising out of their financial incapacitation, although later UJA administration managed to rescue some of them with relief food aid.
- Some journalists bowed out of the profession, opting for rural agrarian economy since urban life style had become very costly for them. (Some radio stations in Gulu town)

***(b) In terms of Safety?***

- While it was the duty of media houses to provide their working staff with the Personal Protective gears (PPE's) including face masks, hand sanitizers, gloves, etc, large number of them could not. This would expose the staff life at higher risk of contracting the virus.

- A few of the PPE's (disposable face masks) that would be used were procured by the staff themselves. In some districts in West Nile like Moyo, politicians helped journalists with the PPE's.

- Journalists who moved during curfew hours were blatantly tortured, harassed and brutalized by the Police and the UPDF officers, despite classification of the media by the president among essential services that must remain open to service. Mr. David Musisi Kalyankolo, a Correspondent with Vision Group in Kisoga- Mukono District was badly beaten by the LDU operatives on orders of a Police officer who commanded their operation one Noah Mukosi during curfew hours. Following severe injuries caused on him, he was admitted at Helona Hospital in Kisoga for medical attention. Mr. Perez Rumanzi, a Correspondent with the Nation Media Group from Ntungamo District was not spared either. Rumanzi whose back head was hit and split leading to severe bleeding, accused the UPDF officers of beating him, despite explaining himself to them. He was left hospitalized at the Municipal Health Center in Ntungamo, given severe injuries that he had sustained. Crooze FM Mbarara- based radio journalist Khoi Khoi was roughed off by the LDU's. That blatant violation of press rights and freedoms by the security forces was widely condemned by international and continental journalists' bodies with calls for restraint by the perpetrators and punitive actions against them. These included the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA), Uganda Journalists Union (UJU), Federation of African Journalists (FAJ), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Press Union of Liberia (PUL), KUJ, ZUJ, Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)

- Journalist's movements in some up-Country districts were very difficult due to the presidential directives that locked their borders. For example, journalistic activities in West Nile were tremendously negatively impacted by restriction of movements in Arua district, Moyo, among others.
- Although some media organizations failed to provide their staff with PPE's, they availed water and soap for hand washing to them.
- Journalists were assaulted by the police in some areas especially during the curfew hours. Case in point were the 3 reporters of Hot FM in Moyo-West Nile who were assaulted by the police personnel and 2 reporters of Favor and Choice FM stations in Gulu town.
- Some journalists were arrested by the LDU's, Police, Soldiers and detained during the curfew hours. For example, journalist with Signal Fm Radio in Mbale and Delta Tv journalists in Kampala, were apprehended. They tried to display their identification with explanations but all in vain.
- Some journalists were not interrupted by the security personnel on grounds that their stations had received stickers for essential workers, and therefore they were able to freely execute their duties.
- Some journalists who were retained at the work places were instructed to live and sleep there for an specified period of time while in poor conditions, which would expose their life to high risk of contracting other infections which they never had.
- Some journalists walked to the news venues, while others that could afford used their own personal transport means in execution of their noble duties. (Cars, Motorcycles and Bicycles). Although some had been retained at work, they would not be transported back home and forth by their company Vans. One Salt Tv journalist (names withheld) was badly beaten up by the security personnel as he travelled back home during the June-July 2021 second imposed lock down curfew hours. Delta TV journalist (names withheld) was also arrested during the March-June 2020 first imposed lock down curfew hours when he returned back home.

- Except very few, majority of journalists in Gulu abandoned covering the Covid 19 admitted patients' story at Gulu Referral Hospital fearing for their life since their area was just recording the first Corona Virus case.

## ***2. How they applied their digital skills?***

- Our research team found out that journalists used social media platforms mainly the face book messenger and WhatsApp to deliver their work. This was achieved by journalists sending guiding questions to their news sources, asking them to record themselves and share back the content with them since covid rules could not allow them to freely interact.

- They also used largely depended on internet services using email addresses to send news stories to their news rooms.

- Direct phone call interviews with news sources were carried out by especially the radio, online publication and print media journalists that were indefinitely sent home or compelled to work from there.

-It was also found out that the application of digital platforms was not so common with some rural -based up Country journalists given their sophistication. In so doing, stations there largely depended on a few field-based personnel that retained in service. Sebei and West Nile regions are good examples.

- Some journalists from the West Nile region informed the research team that application of the digital platforms had become very costly to them since they required data to operate and yet they would not earn fairly to invest in them.

- Digital-virtual platforms such as zoom and skype for tele radio and video conferencing widely became adopted. Some media organizations started using the zoom in coordinating their staff and editorial assignments as well general meetings. Journalists too used them to attend press discourses and conferences with their news sources.

-Some journalists in Gulu informed the research team that they did not have laptops and smart phones and therefore, they could hardly apply their digital skills effectively.

## **Many Journalists Lack Contracts**

It was found out during our survey that many journalists do not have formal contracts with their employers which has given the employers an opportunity to take advantage over them by exploiting and silencing them.

UJA commends all good Samaritans that heeded to its campaign call of mobilizing support in form of cash, solid food and other items which were used to relieve some journalists from adverse effects of the Covid 19 lock down.

## **A SUMMARY UPDATE ABOUT THE STATE OF JOURNALISTS RIGHTS VIOLATION AS OF 2022**

Following the barbaric attack on journalists by the Military on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) with its members Mr. Henry Sekanjako and Timothy Murungi moved to sue the CDF, Attorney General, commander Lt Col Namanya Napoleone and seven individual Military officers for violating journalists' rights, but also seeking declarations against continued violations by the same actors.

The petition was filed on Tuesday 21 February 2022 in the High Court civil division through UJA lawyers; of M/S Ocheng Associated Advocates and M/S Kaganzi and Co. Advocates.

Notable among the declaration is that the respondent violated the journalists' rights to press and other media, under Article 29(1)(a) of the Constitution, the right to dignity and freedom from torture, in humane and degrading treatment under Article 24 and 44 (a) of the Constitution, the right to freedom of movement, speech, expression, conscience, opinion, assembly and association under Article 29 (1) and (2) of the Constitution and right to practice a profession and carry out their lawful occupation, trade or business under Article 40(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

The seven individual accused Military officers include; Lt. Col Namanya Napoleone, Capt Jessy Odwenyi, L/CP Zirimenya Kassim, CPL Nimusiima Justine, Pte Wasswa Peter, Pte Tsame Imran, Pte Kisakye Victoria and Pte Opiyo Isaac.

Hearing of that case will come up in June 2022.

## **Cases of Violations of Journalists Rights Between December 2021 and April 2022.**

In summary, violations for rights of 13 Journalists were recorded by the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) Human Rights Desk between December 2021 and April 2022. These violations were in form of arrests, detentions, abduction, assault and physical monitoring/surveillance.

Cases in details;

1. Three (03) journalists were violently arrested from Kayunga and detained at Naggalama Police Station on the eve of the hotly contested Kayunga district by election on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2021. The trio included Michael Kakumirizi of Daily Monitor, David Byansi of Heart Fm and Joy Lule of Mboona Fm. They were later released. We feel that such unfettered acts by the security operatives violate the economic right of a person to practice a profession and earn a living as enshrined in Article 40(2) of the Constitution. It also violates the provisions of Article 41 which provides for access to information which doesn't prejudice national security.
2. On March 10, eight journalists (08) for an online Television; the Alternative Digi Talk were arrested in a joint operation by the Police and Army. The arrests occurred when the security forces besieged the media house in Lukuli- Makindye claiming that the suspects were engaged in offensive communication. During that operation, journalists work tools such as cameras, mobile phones, some publications and the station van were confiscated and taken to the Police Special Investigative Division at Kireka, where the eight were also kept in the facility without being produced before Court for trial within the time set by the law, access to their lawyers, colleagues or relatives. They were after a week long released unconditionally following a strong statement that we issued with demands for their unconditional release, but also their filed petition with Court through our lawyer Eron Kiiza, seeking their unconditional release since they had been kept in cells against the 48-hour rule.

The eight journalists included; Mukose Arnold, Faridah Bikobere, Jeremiah Mukiibi, Tumusiime Kato, Turyahebwa Roger, Nabukeera Teddy Teagle, Lilian Luwedde,

Wabyona Jeje. They were arrested together with the media house owner Mr. Norman Tumuhimbise.

3. On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, Mr. Lawrence Kitata, journalist with Bukedde Paper- Vision Group was attacked by two security guards attached to the Presidential Protection Guard, guarding the speaker's residence in Nakasero as he covered a group of youth who had staged there a demonstration, protesting censure of the honorable Francis Zaake from Commissioner of parliament. One of the guards kicked down Kitata who narrowly survived to be knocked by a speeding car.
4. The same colleague as of now fled the Country following growing threats against his life. We were informed that at one time before his departure, he survived capture by a group of men in plain cloths who camped outside Vision Group, waiting to move away with him. We came to learn that the men in question were attached to security agencies. He was protected by his employer and workmates until when they left eventually.
5. Mr. Eric James Sawani, journalist with Sabiny FM in Bukwo District, was on April 7 2022 kidnapped, beaten and abandoned along a river where he was found lying unconscious. The attack on him resulted from his critical Radio shows against corruption.

## **Recommendations**

- Laws relating to journalistic practices such as the Press and Journalists Act 1995, UCC ACT 2013, Computer Mis Use Act, Interception of Communication Act, etc, should amended to realize free media.
- Parliament should review cumbersome taxes levied on media houses by the UCC with an aim of waiving them to enable media houses properly pay journalists since operation costs will have gone down.
- UJA recommends that journalists be given appointment letters or formal contracts on employment to avoid exploitation by the employers.
- Invoking the current legal regime, Parliament should move Government through its oversight mandate to withdrawal licenses from the media house owners that aren't capable to fulfill the obligation of paying their workers. Entrepreneurs that cannot

satisfactorily maintain the welfare standards of their media staff should equally be denied license to open up a media house to prevent the media practitioners' resort to extortion for survival, which is un ethical.

- Media fund for journalist's body be set up to cushion journalists from the effects of the rights violations. It is a common practice in Kenya and some Scandinavian nations such as Norway. Uganda government is also supporting Political parties under Political Parties and Organizations Act.
- Government should desist from internet shutdown or provides an alternative for the media if need arise.
- Journalists should stick to the professional conduct throughout their operations.

# 2021 Scientific Elections:



**Mr. Siraj Kiberu a Journalist being roughed by members of security forces**



UJA President Mr. Mathias Rukundo giving a key note address during National celebrations of the May 3 2021 World Press Freedom Day in Kampala.



Right-Left is Ms. Rose Agoyi UNESCO's representative, former acting UHRC Chairperson Dr. Amooti Katebarirwe, UN Human Rights Representative Mr. Robert Kotchan and former UN Resident representative Ms Rosa Malango during the National World Press Freedom Day in Kampala which had been led by UJA.



UJA lawyers led by Mr. Erias Nalukoola with Executive Committee members and journalists protesting outrageous statements by the IGP Ochola agitating for beating of journalists by the Police officers.



Some of UJA Executive Committee members with UPPA president Mr. Moses Mulondo after being arrested during journalists protest against harassment and torture in Kampala.



Mr. Henry Sekanjako, journalist with the New Vision running away after being whipped by the UPDF officers at the UN Human Rights offices in Kololo.



Mr. Akena, correspondent with Reuters being beaten by Army officers as he covered protests at Kisekka market in Kampala.



Camera by Mr. Timothy Murungi, journalist by the New Vision following the military attack on journalists at UN Human Rights offices in Kololo.



Journalist Akena following military attack on him at Kisekka market in Kampala.



Mr. Enock Matovu of NTV in serious pain following torture by the UPDF officers.



Mr. Ashraf Kasirye, journalist with Ghetto Media following his brutal attack by the members of security forces in Luuka and Masaka districts.



**“We've been beating journalists to restrain them from going where there's danger. Police beat journalists to help them...for their own safety. When a police officer tells you to stop, you must stop for your own safety. I won't apologise for police actions”**

January 08, 2021

**Martin Okoth Ochola**

*Inspector General of Police, Uganda*

**NATION**

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UJA president Mr. Mathias Rukundo, Secretary General Mr. Emmanuel Kirunda with other UJA members protesting the Police statement justifying further beating of journalists.



Male Military Police officers beating up one of the female journalists at the UN Human Rights offices in Kololo as Police officers looking on.



Mr. Timothy Murungi, journalist with the New Vision following attack on him by the Military Police officers at the UN Human Rights offices in Kololo.



Mr. Jeff, journalist with NTV Uganda receiving medical attention in one of health facilities following attack on him by members of security forces.



UJA Secretary General Mr. Emmanuel Kirunda on Left with UJA's Head of Communication Mr. Ronald Kabuye in the Middle receiving relief food for affected journalists at UJA's Home in Kawempe from Mr. Samuel Mushabe of MADUFABA.



Mr. Julius Kitone, journalist with Next Media and Ms. Sharita Nayiga, journalist with Salt Media after tasting the wrath of tear gas spray.



Mr. Edward Luyimbazi, journalist with Bukedde Paper, Mr. Isaac Kyanjo, journalist with Spark Tv and others after tasting the tear gas sprays.

**SIGNED BY**

**RUKUNDO MATHIAS**

**UJA PRESIDENT**