



The New You

National Election
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NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH-UGANDA

**Statement on the raid of
National Unity Platform
(NUP) offices in Kampala by
joint security forces**

October 15, 2020

Under national, regional, and international laws, Uganda is obligated to respect the right to freedom of association, assembly, and expression of all persons. Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, guarantees protection of these freedoms—which include freedom of the press and other media, freedom of association which includes freedom to form and join political or civic organizations. The State is mandated under Article 20 (2) and Article 21(2) of the Constitution to promote and protect these rights and freedoms regardless of among others one’s political opinion.

On October 14, 2020, a joint security team including Police and the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) stormed offices of the National Unity Platform (NUP) in Kamwokya, Kampala in an operation purportedly aimed at seizing banned ‘army fatigue’. The manner in which the raid was executed prompted chaotic scenes as NUP party members scampered for safety in nearby houses while others climbed onto the rooftop of the party headquarters’ building. According to a statement on the raid issued by the NUP spokesperson on October 14 2020 at their party office which statement can be accessed on <https://www.facebook.com/GhettoTvUg/videos/679057199382785/?t=2>, At the time of the raid, the NUP Executive Board had just finished a meeting with the party youth leaders from Nakawa. According to the statement, the Uganda Police Force and the UPDF confiscated NUP property including CCTV, PVR, documents including signatures backing the party presidential candidate for nomination, party regalia, 23 Million Uganda Shillings, among others.

The incursion on NUP can be interpreted as an ill-political motive that is aimed at intimidating and disorganizing NUP election preparations one day to nominations for Members of Parliament and two weeks to nominations for presidential candidates. The action equally erodes voter confidence in the electoral process ahead of the 2021 general elections.

As NEW-U, we find the security raid on the NUP offices an encroachment on the right to freedom of assembly, association, and expression and an assault on the multiparty system of governance which Uganda adopted following a referendum in 2005. Such attacks further erode public confidence in the mandate of the police to protect the life and property of all Ugandans as enshrined in Article 211 and 212 of the Constitution regardless of political affiliation; and most especially during elections when candidates and their supporters are involved in partisan electoral activities.

As we head into a busy electoral period, we call upon:

- 1** All departments and agencies of government to respect the Constitution and electoral laws and guidelines as well as people’s rights to freely associate, assemble and participate in elections;





2. Government to issue a clear public statement to all security agencies condemning the attack on NUP and prohibiting security forces from interfering with the work of political parties during and after elections;
3. Electoral Commission to issue a public statement on the rights of candidates and political parties during an election and to call upon the relevant duty bearers to adhere to their roles in an election.
4. Electoral Commission to educate the security agencies and the public on the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of all political parties in the 2021 elections and to continuously engage security agencies on their roles and duties to all candidates and political parties during an election.
5. Government to issue a clear public statement to all security agencies condemning and calling on them not to commit any acts of intimidation, obstruction, threats, beatings, arbitrary arrests, harassment, or prosecution of journalists, activists, citizens, representatives of NGOs, and political party members;
6. Regional groupings (African Union) and International Community to publicly speak out, both bilaterally and in international fora, and in close coordination with like-minded countries on the need for the Ugandan government to respect regional and international legal instruments on elections and rights and freedoms in its Constitution and to amend or repeal all abusive legislation;

In conclusion, NEW-U will continue to engage all stakeholders including the Electoral Commission, the Uganda Police Force, Political Parties, during the elections to ensure that elections in Uganda are held according to acceptable standards for credible, free, and fair elections. The acceptable standards for free and fair elections as provided for in the international and regional legal instruments which Uganda is a party to and the Constitution of Uganda and relevant electoral laws and guidelines provide the basis upon which Uganda should hold its elections and should be upheld to provide legitimacy to the elections and the party that will form government in 2021-2026.

About the NEW-U

The NEW-U is a consortium of 60 Ugandan civil society organizations desirous of collectively engaging in Uganda's electoral processes. It was established as a citizens' centered vehicle for civic engagement that focuses on developing viable solutions to the existing challenges in Uganda's electoral democracy.

For more details contact the NEW-U secretariat at

- 📍 Uganda National NGO Forum
- 📍 Plot 25 Muyenga Road, Kabalagala
- ☎ Tel: +256-393-260-373
- ✉ info@ngoforum.or.ug
- 🌐 <https://new.ug>