

# Puzzle of Bobi Wine's escape from

National Unity Platform (NUP) party officials say Bobi Wine escape details are a sensitive information to share because it would hinder other people who would like to use the same channel to escape.

BY DERRICK WANDERA

"Desperate times require desperate measures," National Unity Platform (NUP) party presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine, said in Washington, DC, while addressing Ugandans in the diaspora at the weekend.

The remarks came exactly one week after he posted a video on his social media platforms, saying he had slipped outside the country.

"Today, I am announcing my brief exit from the country to handle important work. Over the next few weeks, I will engage with our friends and allies all over the world before returning to Uganda to continue the push for freedom and democracy. For now, let's remain focused and united," Bobi Wine announced.

But Bobi Wine's remarks in Washington that came after a two-month cat-and-mouse game with the security agencies and slipping through their dragnet undetected remains a puzzle and topic of conjecture.

Nevertheless, his revelation drew a quick contradiction from the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, who posted on X, saying Mr Kyagulanyi had left the country on January 26, some 11 days after the January 15 presidential election.

Gen Muhoozi, who is also President Museveni's son, on Sunday posted: "Kabobi (Bobi Wine) should stop telling the world lies. He fled the country on January 26 this year, 11 days after the elections. He has spent 2 months in the United States eating Big Macs while his followers are in jail. Some leader."

But at the time Bobi Wine announced his exit, military and other security agencies had mounted checkpoints on all roads leading to Kampala City in what political observers said were meant to hunt the run-away politician.

Security forces, however, countered the claims, saying the crackdown targeted motorists and was in no way related to the search for Mr Kyagulanyi.



Bobi Wine had spent more than two months on the run, occasionally releasing videos and pictures claiming he was roaming Kampala's streets and the countryside, thanks to Ugandans who shielded him from the prowling security personnel.

Bobi Wine announced his exit from the country to handle important work at the weekend. ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS OGON

## How did he escape?

Corroborated information from security circles and those close to the popstar-turned-politician paints a fuzzy picture of how he may have slipped through.

Multiple sources indicate that Bobi Wine travelled by road through the Gata border point into Rwanda, then boarded a plane from Uganda's neighbour to the south, first landing in the

Middle East before proceeding to the United Kingdom and eventually to New Jersey in the United States.

The Daily Monitor could not independently verify this information, nor establish which airline Bobi Wine used or the exact day he flew out, though sources suggest he slipped away at the tail end of January.

However, before his escape, this publication learnt that intelligence sub-



A military patrol pick-up truck drives past a road block mounted on Freedom Drive, a road that leads to the home of NUP leader Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine, in Magere, Wakiso District last month. PHOTO: FILE

mitted pieces of information on Bobi Wine's whereabouts, indicating that on January 17, he joined a group of boda boda riders but with the help of highly placed officials who had his back all through his movements within the country.

Security sources profiled three places in Kampala, Bwaise and Makindye, all in Kampala City, where he was rumoured to be spending his nights.

When he planned to leave the country, a high-ranking official at the Internal Security Organisation reportedly briefed the President about the plot.

But that the President reportedly directed that the security personnel only monitors his movements, asking "which crime did he commit?"

Daily Monitor could not independently verify this narrative.

## NUP response

Mr Benjamin Katana, the NUP party treasurer, said: "It is sensitive information because it would hinder other people who would like to use the same channel to escape."

A trail through Bobi Wine's social media platforms around the time in question suggests he could have been in the country, contrary to Gen Muhoozi's claims.

On January 26, Gen Muhoozi posted on X that he wanted Bobi Wine "dead or alive."

"We stopped our search for Kabobi for 24 hours on the instructions of the Commander in Chief. Apparently, according to some sources he wanted to surrender peacefully. He hasn't surrendered anywhere. Now our troops have orders to bring him in dead or alive," Gen Muhoozi posted. The post has since been deleted.

Bobi Wine has repeatedly chronicled the ordeal his family has endured since the January 15 presidential elections.

Justice Simon Byakukama, the Electoral Commission chairman, under a total Internet blackout, declared Museveni, 81, winner with 71.65 percent of the vote. His main challenger, 43-year-old

The big motive: "What keeps us going is because we want to see a better Uganda. We know that it is possible to make Uganda better just like Kenya where the late Raila Odinga fought for the little freedoms they have. As we speak now, Dr Kizza Besigye is in prison and all our bodyguards. Is that the kind of Uganda we want? Certainly not," NUP party presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine

Bobi Wine received 24.72 percent, while Nandala Mafabi of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) got 1.88 percent, coming third in a lineup of eight presidential candidates.

A report by Daily Monitor last month detailed the security setup within Magere, Bobi Wine's home environs. From the first turn off on Gayaza Kampala Road, CCTV cameras and armed personnel were stationed at multiple points, with at least six soldiers on either side of key intersections.

## Army raid

On January 17, the army raided Bobi Wine's home, sealing it off, but the musician-turned-politician managed to escape, a classic cat-and-mouse game.

On January 23, the military from the elite Special Forces Command broke into his house after reportedly detecting a ping from his phone within the precincts of his home.

"They thought he was inside and that is why they forced their way in. They searched and couldn't find him, they only found his phone," a source said.

Last week, after arriving in Washington, DC, Bobi Wine said he had embarked on international engagements with meetings on Capitol Hill.

Capitol Hill is the seat of the United States government in the Washington, DC.

He later indicated he had highlighted human rights violations and killings before, during, and after the elections, calling on the international community to sanction President Museveni and Gen Muhoozi.

## Government response

Mr Adonia Ayebare, the Uganda's Ambassador to the UN, dismissed the meet-

ing as a "publicity stunt," saying: "If the Uganda government was interested in blocking your travels, they would have issued an Interpol red notice. You're free to return home as you have yourself stated publicly and address whatever grievances you have."

While meeting Ugandans in the diaspora, Bobi Wine said: "I am desperate and we are all desperate but we try. So that when we win, we say *Allahu-lillah* [All praises to Allah] and when we lose we say at least we tried to do everything that we could. There is nothing as shameful and painful as failing to try."

A report by Daily Monitor last month detailed the security setup within Magere, Bobi Wine's home environs. From the first turn off on Gayaza Kampala Road, CCTV cameras and armed personnel were stationed at multiple points, with at least six soldiers on either side of key intersections.

Closer to Bobi Wine's residence, cameras were mounted at Freedom Drive, the Magere police post, and just outside his gate, while drones hovered above the village between 10am and 10pm. Local leaders said soldiers and police officers, including counter-terrorism units, occupied neighbouring compounds and pitched tents for operations.

## Incarceration

In April, Gen Muhoozi claimed on X that the authorities had detained 2,000 Opposition supporters, killed 30, and were hunting for more. NUP insists more than 3,000 of their members remain incarcerated, with others still on the run. For instance, Mr Awali Migadda, on the run since 2021, was arrested in 2022 and bailed, while colleagues such as Yasin Seskitoleko, alias "Macchete," and 27 others remain in prison five years after their arrest.

Mr Kyagulanyi has since appointed Dr Lina Zedgira as interim party president in his absence.

Additional reporting by Benson Tumulima

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

**Nsambya Hospital.** Barbara Itungo, Bobi's wife narrates an ordeal. She reported a violent military raid on her Magere home by masked, armed men, resulting in her hospitalisation.

**Army response.** Gen Muhoozi says there are orders to produce Bobi Wine to him dead or alive. But UPDF spokespersons indicated that they were not actively pursuing the Opposition leader.

**Unknown.** Bobi Wine releases a picture of him reading a book and said Uganda's security operatives had failed to trace him.

**Switzerland.** Bobi Wine calls for sanctions against Gen Museveni, his son and other senior government officials over alleged human rights violations.

Jan 23, 2026 Jan 24, 2026 Jan 24, 2026 Jan 26, 2026 Jan 26, 2026 Feb 10, 2026 Feb 18, 2026 Feb 19, 2026

**Magere.** Security breaks into Bobi Wine's house in Magere Village, Kasangati Town Council, Wakiso District.

**Around Kampala.** Bobi Wine releases first video while in hiding. He said he was in hiding after he managed to escape from his home in Magere, following a night raid by the military and police.

**Gomba.** Bobi Wine releases second video while he in ancestry home in Gomba. He visited his mother's grave, criticised state security forces and thanked residents for their support.

**Unknown.** Bobi Wine releases video to wish the Muslim fraternity happy Ramadan. The messages were shared via social media platforms, including Facebook and TikTok, and featured him addressing Muslim brothers and sisters with messages of peace and prosperity.