'3,000 NUP supporters in jail over unknown charges'

BY DERRICK WANDERA

KAMPALA: The National Unity Platform (NUP) leadership has claimed that more than 3,000 of its members and supporters have been arrested and detained across the country on what it describes as unknown charges.

Speaking at a media briefing, NUP Secretary General David Lewis Rubongoya said the party has so far been able to trace only 616 of those arrested, while the whereabouts of the rest remain unknown. He said different security agencies have denied holding the missing supporters in their custody.

"By yesterday, we had a list of over 800 supporters, but the numbers keep changing depending on those who are granted bail or dumped without charges," Mr Rubongoya said.

He further alleged that among those missing are the party's deputy presidents for Northern Uganda, Dr Lina Zedriga Waru, and Western Uganda, Ms Jackline Jolly Tukamushaba, whom he said were abducted by the military days earlier.

The claims come days after Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the Chief of Defence Forces and President Museveni's son, stated on his X (formerly Twitter) account that authorities had detained 2,000 Opposition supporters, killed 30 people and were pursuing more following the recently concluded elections, in which President Museveni secured a seventh term.

NUP lawyer and Kira Municipality MP-elect, Mr George Musisi, said many of the missing supporters are allegedly being held in safe houses, adding that efforts to secure their release through habeas corpus applications have yielded no results.

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At the briefing, the party presented Mr Raymond Eden Asiku, a music promoter, who said he was abducted at gunpoint from Shell Makindye on December 17, 2025, and detained for a month. Mr Asiku claimed he saw several missing NUP supporters in detention, including Sam Mugumya, who he said had fallen seriously ill while incarcerated, Tumushaba and Zedriga, plus Mbarara City NUP coordinator Bright Muhumuza.

By press time, both the army and police spokespersons had not responded to calls or messages seeking comment.

Ms Shamim Malende, another NUP lawyer and Kampala Woman MP, said: "As lawyers, we have no choice but to keep knocking on the doors of those mandated with Ugandans' protection. Every Ugandan deserves representation and they deserve their day in court to fight for justice. We are doing our best and know our success may be slow, but Ugandans will certainly win."

The wanton arrests and abductions of people intensified in 2020 during the last election campaign after Bobi Wine was arrested in Luuka District.

In 2021 April, after the Presidential Elections, the Internal Affairs minister, Gen Jeje Odongo, released a list of over 1,300 supporters of NUP, whom he said were in different government incarceration centres. These include some who have never been seen since the time they were picked, about five years ago.

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