Wife of detained Bobi Wine guard speaks out

The mother of four young children said the family's repeated pleas for assistance have been ignored by authorities. She is seeking justice for her husband and other affected police officers.

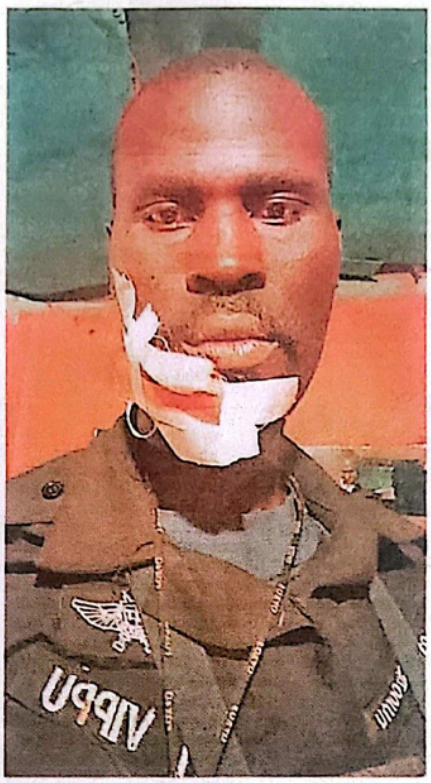
BY DAVID WALUGEMBE

When 16 officers were selected to guard each of the eight presidential candidates in the run-up to the January 15 polls, they did not know the call of duty would turn into a life-altering ordeal.

Today, two of the officers from the Very Important Persons Protection Unit (VIPPU) have been detained, with another five released on police bond, and nine others dismissed from the Uganda Police Force.

The 16 officers had dutifully served as guards to the Opposition National Unity Platform (NUP) party presidential candidate, Mr Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, alias Bobi Wine.

After the January 15 polls, the officers, including Sura Sizoomu, were summoned for interrogation over disobedience of lawful orders and withdrawal from work. Today, Mr Sizoomu is one of the two officers languishing in detention.



Mr Sura Sizoomu is one of the police officers who guarded then NUP presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi in the 2026 polls. He sustained injuries on the campaign trail on January 9 in Mukono District and is currently in detention. PHOTO/COURTESY

16

The number of police officers selected to guard each of the 2026 presidential candidates, including NUP's Robert Kyagulanyi, alias Bobi Wine.

STATUS OF BOBI'S 2026 POLL GUARDS

Dismissed from Police

1. Jonan Abangire
2. Simon Osike
3. John Okodan
4. Moses Mave
5. Syrus Munyifa
6. Ambrose Obonyo
7. Lowless Tumwijukye
8. Leus Masereka
9. Patrick Ozire

Released on police bond

1. Moses Obedi
2. Iddi Sentende
3. Issa Nyende
4. Asuman Nsubuga
5. Onyangi Eriabu

Detained

1. Joshua Kyigenyi
2. Sizoomu Sura (sick)

Injured and detained

Mr Sizoomu's wife, draped in black and with head and face covered, not out of custom but out of deep fear for her life, carried a storm of both anxiety and sorrow.

Throughout the interview at the weekend, she struggled to hold herself together, with her words interrupted by subdued sobs that underlined the weight of her grief.

In a trembling voice, she recounts how her husband was arrested and detained despite battling serious injuries sustained from a tear gas canister in the line of duty on January 9.

The tear gas canister, thrown by fellow officers managing a crowd, struck Mr Sizoomu's lower jaw, almost leaving him for dead.

"He was injured in Mukono during the campaigns and was given first aid by the NUP party medical team. Later, we requested assistance from the police but we were not helped," she said as she fought back the tears streaming down her cheeks.

She said since the incident, her husband did not return to the campaign trail as he nursed the injuries. The mother of four young children said the family's repeated pleas for assistance have been ignored by authorities.

She said her husband has been receiving medical attention from a nearby private medical facility until he was arrested despite his fragile condition.

The officer's wife protested the arrest and detention of her husband in what she termed as 'unclear circumstances'.

She said three weeks before the arrest, her husband received a call from the authorities directing him to appear at the police headquarters for a meeting with an unspecified agenda.

"We were all happy thinking that he was going to get paid, but the sad news of his arrest followed," she said.

She has been left puzzled. "Up to now, I am still wondering about the kind of hearts those officers have. How could they detain a person who was not even on duty on Election Day? How could they arrest the person in a critical health condition?"

Violent arrest

She said Mr Sizoomu was arrested violently, handcuffed, and his home searched, his mobile phone and police uniforms confiscated before being taken away.

The wife now demands a clear explanation for the arrest, stating that the voting day found the officer in a hospital, being treated for the wounds resulting from injuries by tear gas canisters.

She said when she last visited the detained officer on Idd-ul Fitr Day [last Friday] at the Railway Police Station in Kampala, his situation was deteriorating, with no proper medication and poor feeding.

The story of Mr Sizoomu casts the spotlight on the untold struggles of officers caught up in the political crossfire—those tasked with protecting leaders during volatile moments, only to later find themselves abandoned when they, too, become victims.

Detained father, family struggles

Mr Sizoomu's wife said without the family breadwinner, her burdens have become unbearable, leaving her with four children, including a candidate in Primary Seven, struggling with rent, school fees and the cost of medication since she is also battling an illness.

"We don't know what tomorrow holds; we are about to be thrown out of the house, and we are demanding answers from the government.

"The children are no longer studying, the landlord is about to evict us from the house, and we even sometimes lack what to eat," she cried out.

She said her husband was arrested before being paid his dues and the family now depends on friends to get what to eat.

"My husband did not receive any assistance; he was not paid for his service, yet he remains in detention. We demand the government to come out and explain to us this gross torture the officers are being subjected to," she stated.

She now appeals to the authorities to release the detained officers or prosecute them before courts of law to enable them get justice and return to their struggling families.

"We have been patient enough and the situation is getting out of hand. We want them to tell us what is going on," she pleaded.

Opposition criticises arrests

The arrest, detention, and dismissal of the officers has been highly criticised by human rights defenders and Opposition politicians.

Mr Kyagulanyi condemned the maltreatment of the dutiful officers, terming it a 'criminal decision'. He said some officers assigned to his campaign during the 2021 elections faced the same wrath.

"Choosing to act professionally has landed very many civil servants in trouble; the regime cannot live with the embarrassment; it is in its evening," he said.

The NUP party leader called on the government to protect its own officers who undertake their duties professionally.

Rights activist weighs in

Ms Sarah Birete, a human rights advocate and executive director of the Centre for Constitutional Governance, and chairperson of the East and Horn of Africa Elections Observers Network, urged the police to pay the officers amid ongoing investigations.

She asked the officer's wife to run to the Uganda Human Rights Commission to get justice.

"The wife should not suffer because the husband is being investigated; the police should pay his salary to enable officers' families to strive," she recommended.

Our efforts to get a clarification from the police spokesperson, Mr Kituuma Rusoke, were futile by press time. But Ms Diana Nandawula, the police deputy spokesperson, said she needed time to first verify the several claims made.

"Let me first verify this with the responsible officers to find out all the details because right now, I cannot just give speculative information," she said.

I'll not negotiate for my freedom — Bobi Wine attacks from security forces and that

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