

Bobi set to return, vows to intensify struggle

BY DAVID WALUGEMBE

KAMPALA. Mr Robert Kyagulanyi, the leader of Uganda's largest Opposition party, the National Unity Platform (NUP), has said he is set to return to Uganda following completion of a segment of his international engagements.

Mr Kyagulanyi, better known by his stage name of Bobi Wine, reportedly exited Uganda after the January 15 presidential election, through Rwanda, and onto the United States of America (USA) after about two months of being on the run.

Mr Kyagulanyi fled his residence in Magera, Wakiso District, on January 17, the day of the declaration of presidential election results, citing threats to his life.

He slipped through a cordon set up by police and soldiers around his home.

Shortly after, soldiers stormed his home, ransacked it and reportedly assaulted his wife and other residents.

The security forces only left the residence and the vicinity on March 24, after nearly two months of surveillance and occupation.

Mr Kyagulanyi, who addressed his supporters during a meeting in New York last week, asserted he will soon return to Uganda to continue with the fight for democracy.

He reiterated claims that he was robbed of victory in the presidential election.

In the January 15 election, President Museveni was declared winner with 7,946,772 of the total valid votes cast, representing 71.65 percent. Mr Kyagulanyi came second with 2,741,238 votes, representing 24.72 percent.

Although the musician-turned-politician publicly rejected the results, describing them as "fake" and "fabricated", President Museveni will be sworn in for a seventh-elective term in October.



Mr Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine) during a campaign rally in Nateete on the outskirts of Kampala on September 24, 2025. PHOTO/FILE

office on May 12 at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds. The new term will stretch Museveni's hold onto power to beyond four decades.

The NUP leader said he is in the US, not as a refugee, but paving the way for a better future for Uganda where democracy and constitutionalism will prevail without the exploitation of the common Ugandan.

"My fight is in Uganda, and I will go back. I'm on the move, and in this move, the final stop; it may not be the next stop, but the final stop will be Kampala, Uganda," he said during the meeting in New York last week.

"If I have to do it again [contest for Uganda's president], I will do it even more stubbornly. Let us keep fighting;

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Uganda is going to be free," he added.

In a pre-recorded video before he left Uganda last month, the NUP party president said he had left for diaspora engagements, not limited to pursuing tar-

geted sanctions against President Museveni's regime, where he has held different engagements.

A month after his departure, Bobi Wine has been engaging with dignitaries and supporters on the international scene. On Saturday, Mr Kyagulanyi won the Hero of Democracy award from Renew Democracy Initiative (RDI) in New York City, a non-partisan, non-profit organisation aimed at promoting and defending democracy globally.

He was awarded together with three others: Mr John Bolton, the former US National Security Advisor (2018-2019) and US Ambassador to the UN (2005-2006); Ms Chrystia Freeland, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada (2020-2024); and Mr Mark Kelly, the

United States Senator for Arizona.

Preparations underway

In regard to his return, the NUP spokesperson, who doubles as the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament (LoP), Mr Joel Ssenyonyi, said the party is in final preparations to receive Bobi Wine and will soon unveil the plans to the public.

Mr Ssenyonyi said the party will announce all the activities to be conducted and all necessary arrangements, citing that everything will be done boldly without hiding.

"As soon as he [Bobi Wine] is done with those engagements, he will be back home... and all the other excited people of the regime can do whatever it is that they want," the NUP party spokesperson said.

"He [Bobi Wine] is not going to come back quietly like a thief, because he is not. He is not a criminal; he is not an offender of the law; he is coming back like a leader," he emphasised.

Mr Ssenyonyi said despite the party president's absence, they have been jointly engaging in different meetings online, like the party retreat on March 25, as Bobi Wine virtually addressed NUP-elected members of Parliament, district chairpersons, and mayors at a retreat held at One Love Beach, Busabala, on the outskirts of Kampala, among other engagements.

The engagements

Mr Kyagulanyi, through his microblogging account X, formerly Twitter, posted that he commenced his international engagements on Capitol Hill, in Washington, DC, on March 18.

On March 28, he engaged with Gregory Meeks, a member of the US Foreign Relations Committee and a senior member of the House Committee on Financial Services, who shared the vision of advancing democratic principles and upholding human rights.

On April 16, Mr Kyagulanyi engaged young leaders at the University of California, Berkeley and discussed the subject of good governance.