

# Order on the streets, danger in your pocket

Uganda's ongoing urban enforcement operations, marked by the removal of street vendors and roadside kiosks, signal a decisive shift toward restoring order, compliance, and structured city management. To many, cleaner streets and regulated spaces reflect progress. But beneath this visible transformation lies a less discussed, yet critical concern. The evolving landscape of public safety.

As enforcement intensifies, thousands of informal traders, many of whom relied on daily street income for survival, are suddenly displaced. For these individuals, the street was not just a place of business; it was their economic lifeline. Its removal, without immediate and practical alternatives, creates a vacuum one that is both economic and social.

History and security patterns consistently show that when livelihoods are abruptly disrupted, vulnerability rises. Not out of choice, but out of necessity, some affected individuals may be pushed toward survival-driven behaviours that can include petty theft, opportunistic crime, or informal underground activities. This is not a justification of crime but a recognition of a risk reality that must be addressed proactively.

At the same time, the general public faces a new, subtle threat. With increased enforcement comes more structured movement but also a delicate exposure. Citizens moving through urban areas, especially those carrying visible cash for transactions, may unknowingly become targets in an environment where desperation is quietly growing.

This is where personal security awareness becomes critical.

In the current climate, carry-



ing large sums of money in public spaces is no longer just a financial decision, it is a security risk. Individuals must begin to consciously plan their "expenditure posture", by minimising cash movement where possible, using secure, traceable payment alternatives, staying alert in crowded or transitional urban zones, avoiding predictable routines that expose financial behaviour.

Urban safety is no longer solely the responsibility of enforcement agencies, it is becoming a shared responsibility between the State and the citizen.

For policymakers, the lesson

is equally urgent. Enforcement without social cushioning risks shifting disorder from visible streets into invisible threats. Sustainable urban order must integrate economic inclusion, transitional support systems, and security risk assessments. Otherwise, today's solution may unintentionally become tomorrow's problem.

For security professionals, this moment calls for heightened vigilance, adaptive deployment strategies, and community intelligence gathering. The threat is no longer just organised, it is situational, fluid, and driven by socio-economic pressure.

Uganda stands at a defining moment in its urban transformation journey. The streets may be clearing, but the real question remains?

Are we securing the people as effectively as we are organising the space?

Because in today's reality, order on the streets must not come at the cost of danger in your pocket.

---

**Mathias Rukuba,**  
Security Management Advisor  
& Security Consultant