

The LC1 of the area says there is now relief because initially, residents had been living in fear because many people were being abducted or beaten.

BY DERRICK WANDERA

This is Magere. This is Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine's home. Or, for the past two months, a home shared uneasily with security personnel.

The compound looked green, deserted, and quiet, but that calm belied the storm that had raged here before, during, and after the January 15 General Election. For weeks, the place was crawling with a cocktail of armed men, every corner dotted with uniforms and watchful eyes.

The last time I had been here, in late January, the scene was a different kettle of fish. Military trucks lined the road, security personnel lurked at junctions, and operatives at roadblocks stopped motorists and pedestrians alike.

This time, it was a straight ride to the gate. I knocked twice, waited, but no one came.

I had taken a boda boda through the drizzle, bouncing along soggy roads in Magere Village, Kasangati Ward, Wakiso District, to the mansion that sits on seven acres. I arrived at 12:14 pm, stood at the gate, and scanned for security personnel. None.

While waiting for colleagues deployed from the newsroom to join me, I paced, wary of shadows and suspicious of every passer-by. The tension that had hung thick in the air seemed to have lifted. Sources had tipped us off; the joint security operation had been withdrawn.

When my colleagues arrived, I retreated to what I thought was a safe spot, half expecting to be accosted by unseen security personnel. But instead of hostility, I found relief. Residents smiled as they recounted their encounters with the men who had besieged Bobi Wine's home for 69 long days.

Neighbours said the first batch of fatigued soldiers left on Sunday afternoon, while the last group, members of the Joint Anti-Terrorist Task Force (JATT), departed yesterday morning.

After hours of calls to Bobi Wine's inner circle, a caretaker finally peeped through the gate. He told us his boss had not cleared our entry. Bobi Wine, after all, had fled the country and was last seen in the United States.

Around the neighbourhood, traces of occupation were evident. Security cameras and lights mounted on the houses of the neighbours had been twisted inward, and lights dismantled or disconnected from the power lines.

Home owners, who didn't want to be named in this story because of its sensitivity, whispered that operatives, more than 60 in number, had forced them to redirect or remove surveillance equipment, citing "special operations."

According to the accounts of different residents, the security operatives took over different unfinished houses in strategic positions, which enabled them to get a clear view of Mr Kyagulanyi's house and the compound.



Locals stand near the main gate of Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine's home in Magere, Wakiso District, yesterday. PHOTOS / ABUBAKER LUBOWA

Magere: Bobi's home looks deserted and free again



A journalist takes photos and videos at the main gate of former presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi after security personnel vacated his home yesterday.

from the police or army officials hit a brick wall as calls and messages to their known phone numbers went unanswered by press time.

On January 15, Justice Simon Byabakama, the Electoral Commission chairman, under a total internet blackout, declared Museveni, 81, winner of the 2026 presidential election with 72 percent of the vote; his main challenger, 43-year-old Bobi Wine, received 24 percent of the vote.

On January 17, the army raided Bobi's house, sealing it off from any access, but the musician-cum-politician was not found in the house.

On January 23, the military and the Special Forces Command (SFC), an elite force whose cardinal role is to protect the president, broke into Bobi's house as they followed the Global Positioning System (GPS) on the pop star's phone.

"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.

The government has maintained that the military presence at Bobi Wine's home has been to watch the security of the former presidential candidate.

The siege forced the Uganda Law Society (ULS) to petition the Chief Magistrate's Court in Kasangati, accusing the government of mounting an unlawful, military style siege on the Opposition leader's home.

In its March 16 filing, the lawyers' body listed the Attorney General as respondent and demanded the immediate withdrawal of armed personnel, a halt to surveillance, and a permanent injunction against interference with the family's liberty.

ULS president Isaac Ssemakadde last week condemned the deployment as "blatant constitutional violations." He argued: "The deployment, encirclement, blockade, surveillance, and continued presence of armed personnel at the Kyagulanyi residence constitute an unlawful restriction of personal liberty."

A report by the *Daily Monitor* last month detailed the security setup in Magere. From the first turn-off on Gayaza-Kampala Road, CCTV cameras and deployed security personnel were stationed at multiple points, with at least six soldiers on either side of key intersections.

The LC1 of the area and residents at the time said they were living in fear as many people were being abducted and beaten in the night, forcing normal business to close by 8pm, yet they had been working until after midnight.

A stroll yesterday revealed patches of dry grass under trees, where tents, commonly referred to as 'mama ingia pole pole' once stood. Unfinished houses had been commandeered for vantage points. Towards the eastern approach to the main gate lay a section of the plantation, fenced off with dry banana leaves. Beneath the makeshift shelter, fragments of blue and white soap were scattered like breadcrumbs, while the ground remained soggy, indicating that the place had been pressed into service

as a bathing spot for security personnel.

On the eastern side, a storied building with a red tiled roof gave soldiers an eagle's eye view into the compound of the former presidential candidate.

"When they took over the house, the owner of the site put a gate on the main entrance of the perimeter wall with a view to stopping the operatives from occupying the building under construction. But they forced their way in as they jumped over the fence," a resident said.

To the south, a 24/7 roadblock had stood guard. But close to it was another unfinished house, which was reportedly rented out to officers for rest and storage. The owner of the house declined to comment on how much he was paid. On a closer look at the environment, evidence of security personnel occupation littered the area; there were empty bottles of NEC Uzima mineral water, disposable silver plates dumped in ditches and pieces of other personal belongings.

A quick search on the Uzima website says: "Article 209 (d) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda man-

DIPLOMATICS TALKS

This publication established that the decision to vacate the residence was as a result of efforts by an ad hoc committee comprising religious leaders and top diplomats from the US and European Union.

dates the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) to engage in productive activities for the development of Uganda. It is upon this background that the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs (MOD-VA)/UPDF incorporated a water bottling Company in the name of NEC Uzima Limited on July 30 2015."

On the northern side, another unfinished building had been turned into a watchtower. Residents said up to a dozen armed operatives manned the balcony day and night with gun barrels trained on Bobi Wine's home.

Multiple attempts to get a comment

24%
PERCENTAGE OF
BOBI'S 2026
VOTES