Bobi, Besigye deserve streets in Kampala

It has been one month and a few days since Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, popularly known as Bobi Wine, fled his home fearing house arrest.

Security forces have continued to lay siege to his home. His relatives are not allowed in.

Officials of the National Unity Platform, the party he leads, have been denied access. The whole place looks like a crime scene.

Mr Kyagulanyi, who was Mr Museveni's main challenger in the January 15 election, remains in hiding. Poor man!

The Electoral Commission, which Mr Museveni appoints, said he polled just 24.72 percent against the President's 71.65 percent.

The question Ugandans are asking is: How can it be that a candidate who lost the election and only rejected the results while urging his supporters to do the same, using constitutional means, is in trouble?

Mr Kyagulanyi's fellow sufferer is Dr Kizza Besigye. He has been in prison since November 2024, after he and Obeid Lutale, his aide, were abducted in Nairobi and brought back to Kampala.

The State alleges they are facing treason charges. I do not know much about their case. Maybe they have a case to answer. Maybe they are innocent. But if the State has irrefutable evidence, why has it not convicted them?

And how does the State expect Ugandans to believe the charges are real when Dr Besigye has previously faced trumped-up charges?

The inescapable conclusion I am inclined to make, given the circumstances, is that Dr Besigye and Mr Kyagulanyi are paying a stiff price for opposing Mr Museveni's 40-year rule.



The State has made it extremely risky, even deadly, to challenge Mr Museveni. Dr Besigye had been to prison many times before his current incarceration.

In August 2001, after the first election he contested, he fled Uganda and lived in exile, in South Africa, for four years. He returned in 2005 to face bogus rape charges.

Mr Kyagulanyi's supporters have been killed and jailed. Dozens have been on remand in Kitalya Prison since 2021. His wife, Barbie, gave a harrowing account of how security forces raided their home, ransacked it, pulled her hair and undressed her.

It is all too easy to dismiss what I have written here as "this newspaper's incessant criticism of the government". But doing so means you are ignoring reality.

As things stand, even the most charitable supporters of the government can see that rights abuse, repression, corruption, incompetence and nepotism have reached worrying proportions.

The problem is not individuals writing opinion articles in *Daily Monitor*; the problem is leaders.

And while many fear to talk about what has gone wrong because of the consequences, Dr Besigye and Mr Kyagulanyi have done all that is humanly possible to wrest Uganda from the fangs of political vampires but with no success.

For all that they have been through, the suffering they have endured, sometimes coming dangerously close to losing their lives, Dr Besigye and Mr Kyagulanyi should have streets in Kampala named after them. The next government after the NRM should make this a priority.

At least future generations will know that these men played a key role in fighting for constitutional rule. It is the least we can do to honour their courage and bravery.

There is nothing selfish or opportunistic in fighting for good governance. You cannot compare it to clinging to power.

Voters should be the bosses of politicians and hold them accountable, but this is impossible under the current administration.

Today, we see taxpayers' money being shamelessly wasted, and we just have to look on.

An unarmed civil society activist, like Dr Sarah Bireete, is arrested for speaking out — and the State deploys several vehicles to her home.

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ace will be given to insightful articles rather than generalised polemic observations. Attach a portrait and send to editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

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