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| AFR 59/8779/2024 - Uganda - Date: 26 November 2024 | | |
| URGENT ACTION |  | UA 100/24 |
| Opposition politician charged after abduction | | |
| UGANDA | | |

On 16 November, Dr Kizza Besigye, Ugandan opposition politician and former presidential candidate for the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) political party, was abducted in Nairobi, Kenya. He resurfaced on 20 November when he was arraigned in a military court in Kampala, Uganda, where he was charged alongside FDC member Haji Obeid Lutale with offences relating to security and unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition. He was remanded to Luzira Maximum Security Prison in Kampala, Uganda, where he continues to be detained as investigations into these allegations continue. Dr Besigye must be immediately released due to the nature of his abduction, which was in clear violation of both international human rights law and the process of extradition with its requisite fair trial protections.

Dr Kizza Besigye is a Ugandan physician, opposition politician and a former presidential candidate for the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) who unsuccessfully ran against President Museveni in the 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016 presidential elections.

According to Dr Kizza Besigye’s lawyers, he was last seen at around 4.30pm on 16 November in an apartment complex in Nairobi, Kenya, and was subsequently unreachable until family members confirmed that he was being held at a military jail in Kampala with no access to his family or lawyers. Dr Besigye’s lawyers claim that the abduction is the result of collusion between Kenyan and Ugandan authorities, but the Kenyan government has denied involvement.

Dr Besigye was arraigned alongside FDC member Haji Obeid Lutale at Makindye General Court Martial despite being a civilian and charged with offences relating to security and the unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition. According to a 2006 ruling by the Constitutional Court of Uganda, military courts have no jurisdiction to try cases of terrorism and unlawful possession of firearms. Similarly, Amnesty International does not consider trials by military courts of civilians to be fair.

The Ugandan Government has a history of wrongfully charging political opponents including from the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and the National Unity Platform (NUP). This is a tool of repression that has been used to clamp down on members of the opposition. This is despite 2 rulings by the Constitutional Court of Uganda prohibiting the misuse of military courts to try civilians under the Uganda People Defence Forces (UPDF) Act in 2021 and the 2006 ruling on military related charges.

TAKE ACTION

* Write an appeal in your own words or use the **model letter** on **page 2**.
* Please take action before **25 May** 2025.
* Preferred language: **English**. You can also write in your own language.
* **INFO POSTAGE**: Post delivery is possible to almost all countries. Please check at the Swiss Post whether letters are currently being delivered to the destination country.   
  If not, please send by email, fax or social media and/or via the embassy with the request for forwarding to the named person. Thank you !

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| APPEALS TO | COPIES TO |
| President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Parliament of Uganda Parliament Avenue Kampala Uganda  **Email:** [**info@statehouse.go.ug**](mailto:info@statehouse.go.ug) **Copies to:** [**press@statehouse.go.ug**](mailto:press@statehouse.go.ug) **Twitter/X: @kagutamuseveni**  ⮡ The best way to reach the target via Email and Twitter/X  **Additional targets:**  1) AIGP Tom Magambo Rwabudongo Directorate of Criminal Investigations The Uganda Police Force Kampala, Uganda Email: [info@upf.go.ug](mailto:info@upf.go.ug)  2) Hon. Jacob Marksons Oboth Minister of Defence, Ministry of Defence Kampala, Uganda Email: [mod.ps@defence.go.ug](mailto:mod.ps@defence.go.ug) | Ambassade de la République de l'Ouganda Rue Vermont 37, 3ème étage 1202 Genève  Fax: 022 340 70 30 E-mail: [chancery@ugandamission.ch](mailto:chancery@ugandamission.ch) Twitter/X: twitter.com/geneva\_uganda Facebook: facebook.com/uganda.geneva/ |
| ⭢ **Social media guidance** and **additional targets** see online: [amnesty.ch](https://www.amnesty.ch) 🔍**UA 100/24** | |

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President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni  
Parliament of Uganda  
Parliament Avenue  
Kampala  
Uganda

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Dear President Museveni,

**I am writing to express grave concern about the abduction of Ugandan opposition politician and former presidential candidate for the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Dr Kizza Besigye from Nairobi, Kenya, on 16 November 2024 and his rendition to Uganda**. His whereabouts were unknown and he was unreachable until he was arraigned in a military court in Kampala, Uganda, on 20 November, despite being a civilian. He was charged alongside FDC member Haji Obeid Lutale with offences relating to security and unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition.

This is not the first time that Dr Besigye has been unlawfully arrested and detained. In November 2005, he was unlawfully arrested and detained on military charges of terrorism-related offences and illegal possession of weapons in the run up to the 2006 presidential elections. In February 2016, he was arbitrarily arrested and detained under powers of «preventive arrest» for «utterances and activities that amount to incitement to violence and defiance of the law» when he said that he would challenge the outcome of the 2016 presidential election in the Uganda Supreme Court.

Dr Besigye’s abduction is clearly part of a wider pattern of increasing widespread repression. Based on the frequency by which Ugandan authorities wrongly bring charges against political opponents, there is also reason to be concerned that the charges against him may be politically motivated.

**In light of the above, I urge your government to:**

* **Immediately release Dr Besigye due to the nature of his abduction, which was in clear violation of both international human rights law and the process of extradition with its requisite fair trial protections;**
* **Ensure a prompt, impartial and effective investigation is carried out into Dr Besigye’s abduction, and to bring those suspected of responsibility to account in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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