

**UGANDAN OPPOSITION LEADERS**  
**APPEAL TO**  
**UN SECRETARY GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES:**  
**COVID-19 IS NO EXCUSE FOR TORTURE, REPRESSION AND STARVATION!**

We opposition leaders from the East African nation of Uganda call upon UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to raise the alarm about the dire COVID-19 situation in our country. A nationwide lockdown has resulted in [extreme and widespread hunger](#). Many of our constituents are begging for help and we long to offer assistance, but [the regime of Yoweri Museveni is brutally preventing us from doing so](#). On April 19, opposition MP Francis Zaake was [arrested while distributing relief food](#) to hungry neighbors. [He was held incommunicado, tortured in detention and delivered to a hospital four days later, unable to see, stand or even sit up](#).

Meanwhile, officers of the Local Defense Unit—a [hastily trained, heavily armed group under military command with “shoot to kill orders”](#) have been caught on video assaulting and beating citizens whom they claim are violating Covid-19 stay-at-home orders.

The government has a food distribution program, but [it's riddled](#) with corruption, highly politicized and has failed to reach the vast majority of those in need. We note that some of our ruling party colleagues are free to distribute food without molestation. With an election scheduled for early 2021, this sends a chilling message to voters: support the regime, or starve.

Throughout his 34 year reign, General Museveni has received praise from the international community, but, as the attached note details, the true story of our country under his rule is dark. When people think of Uganda, they often recall Idi Amin's eight-year reign of terror in the 1970s. But Museveni's army has been responsible for far greater carnage even than his.

We are appealing to Secretary General Guterres because our own efforts to solve our problems are thwarted at every turn by the extreme violence of Museveni's regime, which is in part kept in power with the over \$1 billion in foreign aid annually from the international community.

In the interest of human rights, peace and security in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, we therefore urge Secretary General Guterres to:

1. Share these concerns with the Security Council and ask members what they are doing about the assault on democracy and human rights in Uganda.
2. Urge all donor nations to withhold military aid to Museveni's government.
3. Urge all UN members to place travel bans and asset freezes on Ugandan officials [responsible for human rights violations](#).

**Bobi Wine/Robert Kyagulanyi – People Power Uganda**  
**Kizza Besigye – People's Government**  
**Norbert Mao – The Democratic Party**  
**Asuman Basalirwa – JEEMA Party**  
**Walubiri Peter Mukidi – Uganda People's Congress**

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