



CALIFORNIA, 30TH DISTRICT

CONGRESSMAN BRAD SHERMAN

August 23, 2018

H.E. Ambassador Mull Ssebujja Katende  
Mission of the Republic of Uganda to the United States  
5911 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20011

Re: False Imprisonment and Torture of Robert Kyagulanyi

Your Excellency:

I write to call for the immediate release of Member of Parliament Robert Kyagulanyi, more commonly known as Bobi Wine, and five other politicians who have recently been imprisoned and tortured under false pretenses. I condemn the violence that took place on August 13<sup>th</sup> as Mr. Kyagulanyi was taken into custody, which led to the death of Yasin Kawuma, Mr. Kyagulanyi's driver, along with six civilians in Arua Municipality. I call for the release of those detained around the country who demonstrated for Mr. Kyagulanyi to be discharged from custody.

The events began directly before a hotly contested special election planned to replace the Arua Municipality parliamentary seat. In support of rival candidates, President Yoweri Museveni and Kyagulanyi traveled to the region. On the day of the election the convoy of President Museveni was pelted with stones. That evening the President's security forces arrived at the hotel of Mr. Kyagulanyi, who was under suspicion for organizing the youth who pelted the presidential convoy. The exchange led to the death of Mr. Kawuma and the arrest of Members of Parliament Kygulanyi, Kassiano Ezati Wadri, Gerald Karuhanga, Paul Mwiru, Michael Mabikke and Francis Zaake. These other Members of Parliament have been held under similar circumstances. Francis Zaake is currently hospitalized and in critical condition after reportedly being beaten by state security forces. Kygulanyi, his colleagues, and dozens of others have been charged with treason and illegal possession of firearms in connection to the stoning of the President's convoy.<sup>1</sup>

Since his arrest the few individuals who have been allowed to meet with Mr. Kyagulanyi have commented on his extensive injuries sustained while in custody. After a meeting with Kyagulanyi Eddy Yawe, his brother, said that his "head [had] a

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<sup>1</sup> "Special Forces cordon off Arua's Hotel Pacific," the Daily Monitor, August 14, 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Special-Forces-cordon-off-Arua-Hotel-Pacific/688334-4711552-fgb0u7z/index.html>

big cut and several other small ones. His ears were bruised too. He sat leaning backwards and he could not support himself [...]. His left leg [had] a big black spot around the hip and the leg looked weaker. His face and lips were swollen with only one eye open.”<sup>2</sup>

Demonstrations calling for Kyagulanyi’s release have erupted around the country. They have been met with violence from state police and security forces, who fired tear gas and used live ammunition on demonstrators.<sup>3</sup> Reports have surfaced that 68 protestors have been arrested during the demonstrations as President Museveni has said, in order to “send a warning to those who are in the habit of miscalculating.”

I am aware that tensions have run high in the country since a bill was passed in December 2017 allowing for a constitutional amendment to eliminate the presidential age limit, essentially granting President Museveni the ability to hold his position for the remainder of his lifetime. Kyagulanyi has stood as one of the most vocal opponents to the constitutional amendment.

I urge the government of Uganda to immediately release Mr. Kyagulanyi and his colleagues, who are being held and tortured under false charges. I call for a thorough investigation into the death of Mr. Kawuma and beating of Hon. Francis Zaake. I call for the release of those demonstrators that exercised the basic human right of assembly and freedom of expression. I call on the government of Uganda and President Museveni to resolve such matters within the bounds of democracy and uphold those principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Brad Sherman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress

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<sup>2</sup> “Blow-by-blow account of Bobi Wine’s arrest,” the Daily Monitor, August 21, 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-account-Bobi-Wine-arrest-Makindye-Military-Eddy-Yawe/688334-4721664-6pjirk/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> “One dead and dozen arrested as Uganda police battle protesters over detained pop star MP,” the Telegraph, August 21, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/21/one-dead-dozens-arrested-uganda-police-battle-protesters-detained/>