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UGANDA LAW SOCIETY

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THE JUDICIARY MUST UNEQUIVOCALLY CONDEMN PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS ON BESIGYE AND BAIL

Kampala, Uganda – 4 July 2026: The Uganda Law Society (ULS) strongly condemns President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's public comments today on the pending trial of Dr. Kizza Besigye and his stated intention to abolish bail. We call upon the Chief Justice, the Judiciary Top Management, and all judicial associations to unequivocally denounce this executive interference.

President Museveni's address constitutes clear **sub judice** contempt of court. By publicly speculating on Dr. Besigye's motives, conduct, and the merits of an ongoing case, he has prejudiced the accused's right to a fair trial. These remarks further aggravate existing contempt **allegations involving the President's son**, which are central to the human rights violations forming the basis for the current stay of proceedings.

Beyond this matter, the President's renewed attack on bail is an unconstitutional assault on **Articles 23 and 28(3)(a)** of the 1995 Constitution, which guarantee personal liberty and the presumption of innocence. Bail is a judicial function, not subject to executive directive.

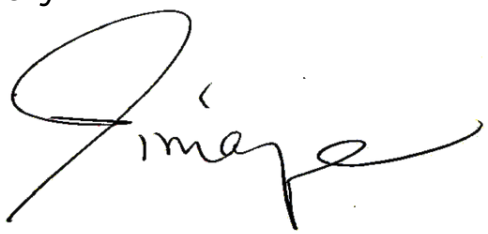
A blanket policy abolishing bail violates the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (Tokyo Rules, 1990)** and the **African Commission's Luanda Guidelines (2014)**, both of which mandate that pre-trial detention be an exceptional measure of last resort. It also breaches the **UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary (1985)**, particularly Principles 1, 2 and 4, which prohibit governmental interference with judicial functions.

The President's continued commentary on active trials and judicial processes undermines judicial independence and public confidence in the courts. **Banning bail will not protect witnesses.** It will instead punish the innocent and shield systemic failures from scrutiny.

Our Demands:

1. **To President Museveni:** Immediately cease all public commentary on active court cases, including Dr. Besigye's trial, and refrain from directing judicial outcomes on bail. Such statements violate the sub judice rule and the Constitution.
2. **To the Judiciary:** Publicly condemn this interference without delay, consistent with the principled stand taken by Magistrate Sheilla Gloria Atim in ***Uganda v. Miria Matembe*** (Luzira Criminal Case 132 of 2026). Judicial officers have a duty under the UN Basic Principles to defend their independence.
3. **To Government:** Stop undermining fundamental rights. Confront the real crisis in the administration of justice, i.e. systemic judicial decay, political persecution, corruption, weak witness protection, and military/executive interference.

The ULS remains resolute in defending the rule of law, constitutionalism, and the independence of the Judiciary.



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