



STATEMENT ON ASSAULT AND ARBITRARY ARRESTS OF JOURNALISTS IN KAWEMPE NORTH BY-ELECTION

End Crimes Against Journalists, Investigate Conduct of Security Forces and Ensure Accountability

(Kampala, Uganda / March 13, 2025) – Today's targeted attack on journalists and media workers covering the Kawempe North By-Election in Kampala by officers of the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) undermines press freedom and a violation of human dignity of the affected journalists, Chapter Four Uganda said today.

In a coordinated manner, the military officers indiscriminately targeted and rounded up journalists for covering the elections. At least eight journalists from the Nation Media Group (NTV Uganda, Spark TV and Daily Monitor) and NBS TV were brutally beaten. Three of them were arbitrarily arrested and unlawfully detained at Kawempe Police Station.

"We strongly condemn the brutal assault on journalists for simply doing their work. The government authorities should take immediate action to end impunity for crimes against journalists, especially during electoral processes," said Anthony Masake, Executive Director of Chapter Four, "Paying lip service to previous crimes against journalists emboldens perpetrators to continue to unleash terror on the press."

Chapter Four stands with Hakim Wampamba, Hassan Wasswa, Francis Isano, Hanifa Nanvuma, Abubaker Lubowa, David Ijjo, Dennis Kabugo, Raymond Tamale and other journalists who have been targeted for their work and urges them to seek accountability for the injuries suffered, compensation for damaged equipment, and immediate unconditional return of confiscated items.

The violence that has been witnessed in this by-election portrays a worrying trend ahead of the 2026 General Elections. On February 26, 2025, Miracle Ibrahim of Top TV, Steven Kibwiika of Spark TV, and Stephen Mbidde of NTV Uganda were assaulted by the Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force (JATT) for covering the by-election's nomination process.

There is an urgent need to ensure accountability for past violations and abuses. We will work diligently with other human rights groups to identify individuals involved in these unlawful actions with a view to seeking accountability. We call upon the authorities to cooperate in seeking redress for those affected. We further call upon the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) to institute investigations into reported incidents and take appropriate action.

For media inquiries, please contact: info@chapterfouruganda.org