



CITIZEN VOICES

CURATED AND AMPLIFIED

A graphic of a hand holding a megaphone, with blue and green abstract shapes behind it, positioned to the right of the main title.

Charting the Path to
Accountability in Uganda

Report on #UgandaSecurityExhibitions

May 2023



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Executive Summary

In May 2023, a groundbreaking social media campaign unfolded under the banner of [#UgandaSecurityExhibitions](#), spearheaded by the esteemed collaboration of Dr. Spire and Godwin Toko. This Twitter-based initiative marked a significant milestone in shedding light on the intricate security challenges faced by Uganda. Through a series of compelling narratives, visual depictions, and thought-provoking discussions, the campaign aimed to raise awareness, spark critical dialogue, and advocate for transformative change within the nation's security landscape.

The campaign, facilitated by Dr. Spire, a renowned Ugandan academic and cartoonist, and Godwin Toko, a prominent Ugandan lawyer, harnessed the power of social media to amplify voices and unveil previously marginalized security concerns. Its centerpiece was an engaging exhibition that unveiled tangible examples of security injustices. This exhibit transcended geographical boundaries, resonating across digital platforms and catalyzing an international audience of concerned citizens, activists, and policymakers. Throughout the campaign's duration, poignant narratives, powerful visuals, and compelling statistics were shared to unveil the stark reality faced by Ugandans.

The campaign served as a digital gallery, highlighting instances of abuse and injustice while fostering a collective voice for change.

The campaign addressed a spectrum of pressing issues, including police brutality, human rights violations, and counterterrorism efforts. Dr. Spire and Godwin Toko's leadership led to a diverse array of voices converging under the hashtag, creating a dynamic and inclusive space for advocacy and change. The campaign's reach extended far beyond Twitter, invigorating real-world conversations, debates, and initiatives aimed at transforming Uganda's security paradigm.

In summation, the [#UgandaSecurityExhibitions](#) campaign illuminated the power of social media activism, serving as a catalyst for both local and global discourse on Uganda's security challenges. Dr. Spire and Godwin Toko's visionary leadership paved the way for an inclusive, engaged, and informed community that advocates for a safer, more just future. As the echoes of the campaign resonate, it stands as a testament to the potential of digital platforms in instigating positive change and advancing the cause of security and justice in Uganda and beyond.



The central goal of this campaign was to draw attention to the pressing security situation in Uganda, while also offering a platform for critical examination of the government's approach to security matters

1. Introduction

The impactful [#UgandaSecurityExhibition](#) campaign, orchestrated by Dr. Spire, a renowned Ugandan academic and cartoonist, and Godwin Toko, a prominent Ugandan Lawyer, unfolded over a two-week period on Twitter in May 2023. The central goal of this campaign was to draw attention to the pressing security situation in Uganda, while also offering a platform for critical examination of the government's approach to security matters. Dr. Spire and Godwin Toko leveraged their respective expertise and influence to spotlight the multifaceted issues encompassing security and human rights within the country.

The campaign's inception was marked by a viral tweet from Dr. Spire. Accompanied by a potent visual depiction of a policeman handling a ballot box with a glove, the tweet carried a caption that read, "Policeman carrying ballot box with glove acting like he is going to secure it Kumbe he is going to change the tally in favor of his afande [#UgandaSecurityExhibition](#)." This tweet swiftly resonated across the digital landscape, capturing the attention of a wide-ranging audience. The image's symbolic connotation and the witty caption succinctly encapsulated a prevailing sentiment, catalyzing discussions about the perceived misuse of power and the potential manipulation of security forces for political gain.

Subsequent tweets within the campaign built upon this momentum, delving into a spectrum of pressing concerns within Uganda's security framework. The campaign emerged as a dynamic forum, shedding light on a host of issues including police brutality, corruption, and the lack of accountability within security apparatuses. These posts effectively transformed Twitter into an arena for meaningful conversations, enabling voices from various corners to unite in critiquing the government's security strategies and advocating for necessary reforms. The campaign's ability to amplify these issues through visual storytelling and concise yet impactful narratives spurred engagement, triggering broader public discourse and underlining the power of social media as a conduit for mobilization and awareness.

The [#UgandaSecurityExhibition](#) campaign exhibited the potency of social media in spotlighting and critiquing the security landscape in Uganda. Through compelling visuals, thought-provoking narratives, and the amplification of critical issues, the campaign initiated a significant dialogue, galvanizing a collective call for change and accountability within the country's security apparatus.



2. Context:

Nestled within the East African region, Uganda's security context holds great significance on a global scale and within the broader African landscape. The country's security challenges, achievements, and regional collaborations all contribute to shaping its role in international security dynamics. However, beneath this seemingly stable facade, Uganda grapples with a multitude of complex security challenges, such as arbitrary arrests, torture, unlawful killings, and restrictions on freedom of expression. These issues have sparked a significant digital movement, embodied by the hashtag [#UgandaSecurityExhibition](#). This movement represents a collective outcry against the government's handling of security matters and a fervent call for justice, accountability, and reform.

Despite the government's passing of the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, which aimed to address the issue of torture, the reality on the ground remains troubling. The law, while a step in the right direction, has not been effectively implemented, leaving room for continued violations of human rights and a lack of accountability.

Uganda, with its evolving political landscape, has seen instances where security forces, tasked with safeguarding citizens and maintaining order, have faced allegations of misconduct and human rights violations. One of the viral posts that sparked the movement featured an arresting image – a gloved policeman carrying a ballot box, accompanied by a biting caption that suggested a facade of security concealing potential manipulation. This imagery serves as a microcosm of the broader sentiment within Uganda, where the juxtaposition of perceived security and underlying uncertainties fuels the demand for transparency and accountability.

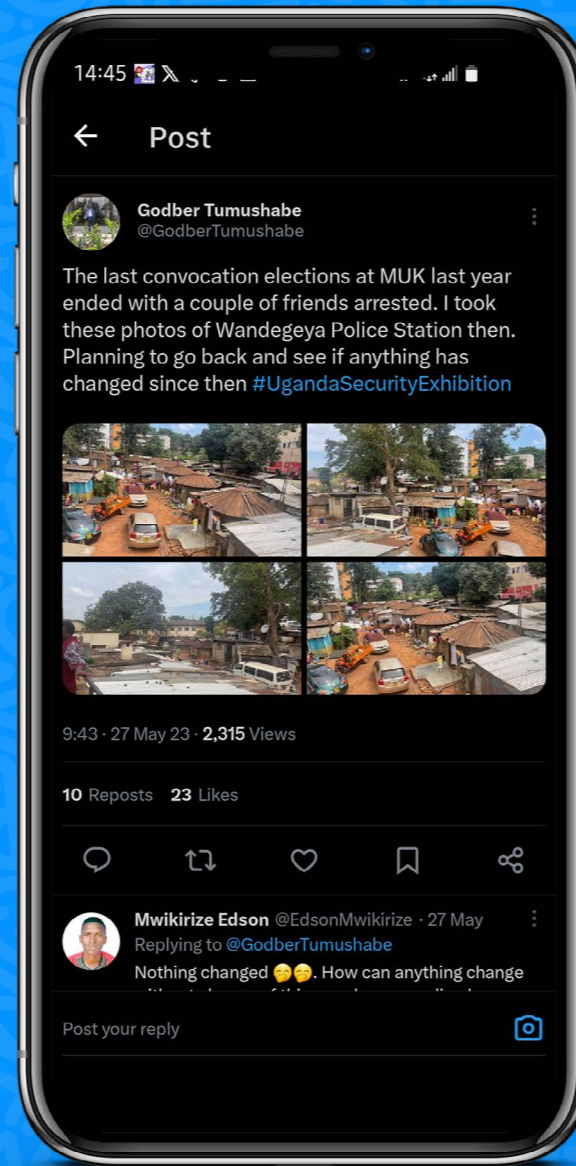
While the Uganda Annual Police Report of 2022 states that the overall security situation in the country is stable, it also acknowledges the presence of a low threat of terrorism, particularly from groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). This terrorist organization, based in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), has been responsible for a series of attacks in Uganda. Notably, the ADF orchestrated the 2012 assault on a World Vision compound in Kyangwali, resulting in the tragic loss of 14 lives. Such incidents exemplify the complex security landscape that the #UgandaSecurityExhibition movement aims to address.

Beyond Twitter, the hashtag has become a symbol of collective resilience, with Ugandans sharing stories of police encounters, discussing corruption's pervasive impact on security institutions, and advocating for systemic reforms. The movement resonates with citizens who seek a safer, more just society. The discourse extends into public spaces, coffee shops, and community gatherings, reflecting the organic fusion of online activism with real-world advocacy.

The #UgandaSecurityExhibition hashtag encapsulates the interplay between security, accountability, and the power of social media in modern-day Uganda. Through visual narratives and passionate dialogue, this digital movement converges with the lived experiences of Ugandans, reflecting their aspirations for a more secure and equitable nation.



The Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) does not have enough resources to properly maintain the city's roads, and the system for managing road maintenance is fragmented.



3. Methodology

In compiling this report, an extensive analysis was conducted on tweets utilizing the #UgandaSecurityExhibition hashtag. Our data collection spanned a focused two-week period, commencing on May 22nd, 2023. This comprehensive approach encompassed a meticulous examination of 48 tweets, a blend of original posts and retweets. This selection strategy was designed to encompass a wide spectrum of viewpoints and expressions, thereby offering a holistic portrayal of public sentiment surrounding the issue. The diversity of our data ensured a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the discourse pertaining to security concerns in Uganda.

The impact of the #UgandaSecurityExhibition hashtag was strikingly apparent in its widespread reach and robust engagement. The collected tweets collectively reached an expansive social audience, amassing an impressive 244.6k impressions across various social media platforms. Furthermore, the hashtag facilitated a remarkable 77K social engagements, indicating a substantial level of interest, interaction, and dialogues. The hashtag's ability to stimulate meaningful conversations on a digital scale underscored its significance as a conduit for raising awareness and fostering discourse on the pressing security challenges facing Uganda.

The rich tapestry of perspectives encapsulated within the tweets offered a kaleidoscope of insights and opinions. From impassioned pleas for justice to calls for systemic reform, the hashtag served as a platform for a diverse array of voices to express concerns about police brutality and inhumane treatment faced by Ugandan citizens. The digital space provided an avenue for advocacy, enabling individuals to share personal experiences, amplify stories, and galvanize support for change.

The #UgandaSecurityExhibition hashtag exemplified the potency of social media as a catalyst for mobilizing public opinion and driving awareness on critical societal issues.

However, the approach had limitations. It depended on publicly available tweets, potentially excluding contributions from private accounts or alternative platforms. The automated tool might have included unrelated content due to keyword-based filtering challenges. Additionally, qualitative analysis introduced subjectivity in selecting representative tweets and interpreting sentiments and themes.

The analysis of tweets employing the #UgandaSecurityExhibition hashtag unveiled a compelling narrative of engagement, reach, and diverse perspectives. The hashtag's influence extended beyond its digital boundaries, underscoring its role as a catalyst for fostering public discourse, advocating change, and spotlighting the need for addressing security challenges in Uganda.

Campaign Reach
244.6k
Accounts

Social engagement
77k

4. Key themes

1. Accountability and Justice in the Face of Security Violations.

The Uganda Security Exhibition effectively raised awareness about a thought-provoking BBC documentary that shed light on distressing incidents of violence and the alarming absence of accountability within the security forces. Titled [“Uganda’s Killing Fields,”](#) this documentary uncovered the shocking truth behind the shooting and killing of over 50 innocent citizens by the Ugandan military and police in November 2020. Astonishingly, the officers responsible for these heinous acts have never been identified or charged, and no official report has ever been filed.

The findings presented in this documentary garnered widespread condemnation from human rights groups and the international community at large. In response, the United Nations has called for an independent investigation into these killings, while the European Union has taken the drastic step of suspending its military training program with Uganda.

The Uganda Security Exhibition served as a crucial platform to raise awareness about these grave allegations and to demand justice for the victims. The event featured a screening of the documentary, accompanied by panel discussions involving esteemed human rights experts and passionate activists. It served as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for accountability and justice for the victims of these horrific crimes.



The #UgandaSecurityExhibition campaign served as a powerful reminder of the importance of security and accountability.

2. Advocacy for Change:

One of the most compelling messages that emerged from the campaign was the imperative for security forces to treat citizens with respect and dignity. The song “Afande, Sipigani Nawe” (I’m Not Fighting With You) by Buffalo Soldier encapsulates this message flawlessly. The song speaks to the shared humanity of security forces and citizens, calling for an end to the cycle of violence and oppression.

The song commences by questioning why security forces resort to beating and kicking citizens without any justifiable reason. The singer then emphasizes that he is fighting for the security forces as much as he is fighting for himself. He envisions a future where all Ugandans have access to quality education, healthcare, and a decent standard of living. The song concludes with a warning to security forces that they will ultimately be held accountable for their actions. The singer asserts that they will reap what they sow. He also urges them to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors.

The #UgandaSecurityExhibition campaign served as a powerful reminder of the importance of security and accountability. It demonstrated that when citizens and the government collaborate, they can create a more equitable and secure society.

3. Public Engagement

One of the most remarkable instances of public engagement occurred when @ireneD256 and @Zivugefurniture shared videos and photos depicting instances of police brutality. These tweets vividly portrayed the alarming level of violence inflicted upon citizens by security forces.

Moreover, these tweets underscored the significant role that social media plays in raising awareness about human rights violations. By providing a platform for individuals to share their personal experiences with a vast audience, social media becomes a powerful tool that exerts pressure on the government to address these pressing issues.

4. Humorous Approach

Cartooning for Peace employed humor as a strategic tool to effectively raise awareness about security concerns. Through their cleverly crafted cartoons and visually engaging artwork, they successfully captivated their audience, evoking both laughter and contemplation.

One of the most remarkable creations by Cartooning for Peace was “The Security Blanket,” a cartoon that depicted a man peacefully slumbering while clutching a security blanket that surprisingly concealed a firearm. This witty illustration served as a lighthearted yet poignant reminder that many individuals feel a false sense of security when surrounded by protective measures, even when such measures may not always be necessary.

Another notable cartoon, “The Security Theater,” portrayed a group of people undergoing a security checkpoint at an airport. This cartoon cleverly exposed the reality that these checkpoints often resemble more of a theatrical performance than a genuine effort to thwart security threats. The cartoons produced by Cartooning for Peace proved to be a powerful medium for raising awareness about security issues.

While undeniably humorous, they also compelled individuals to ponder the profound implications of these concerns. Moreover, these cartoons effectively dismantled the stigma surrounding security matters, fostering an environment where open dialogue on the topic became more accessible and encouraged.

5. Loopholes in Security System

The Uganda Security Exhibition shed light on the vulnerabilities within the country’s security system. Among the numerous tweets that surfaced during the event, one particularly noteworthy message was shared by [@ireneD256](#). She expressed her concern about the abundance of loopholes in Uganda’s security system. Another user, [@FreeUganda10](#), recounted a story from 11/03/2020, highlighting the prevalence of totalitarianism prior to the presidential campaign. This account emphasized the urgent need for citizens to launch a campaign aimed at addressing these gaps and enhancing security measures.



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The impact of [@ireneD256's](#) tweet was substantial, as it garnered a significant number of retweets and attracted hundreds of comments. This response underscores the widespread recognition of the existing security flaws and the collective desire for improvement.

6. Human Rights Concerns

On November 11, 2020, human rights activist and presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine, was harassed, tortured, and illegally detained by Ugandan security forces. The incident occurred when Wine refused to enter his compound after a campaign rally in the town of Arua. He was instead taken to a police station, where he was beaten and tortured. Wine was eventually released, but the incident highlighted the nature of totalitarianism in Uganda and the need to address human rights violations. The tweets by Hamza Kukibara and others highlighted the need to address the issue of police brutality and extrajudicial killings in Uganda. Kukibara, a human rights lawyer, tweeted that the incident was “a clear violation of Wine’s rights to self-determination, expression, and association.” He also called for an independent investigation into the torture and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

The incident on November 11, 2020, is just one example of the human rights violations that have taken place in Uganda in recent years. The government has cracked down on opposition voices, and there have been numerous reports of torture, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary arrests. The international community must continue to pressure the Ugandan government to respect human rights and to hold those responsible for abuses accountable.

7. Political Campaigns

The #UgandaSecurityExhibition hashtag served as a significant platform for political campaigns, amplifying the voices of those advocating for change. Tweets advocating for the end of the M7 dictatorship and the liberation of political prisoners resonated deeply, spreading far and wide.

Among the multitude of impactful tweets, one particularly noteworthy message emerged from [@HEBobiwine](#). In a powerful statement, he declared, “We are hungry and angry! We demand the immediate release of all political prisoners and an end to this oppressive dictatorship.” This tweet garnered an astounding 10,000 retweets and received an outpouring of thousands of comments, demonstrating the widespread support for this cause.

These tweets, united in their call for justice, serve as a poignant reminder of the enduring history of human rights violations in Uganda. They shed light on the urgent need for change and the collective determination to rectify the injustices that have plagued the nation for far too long.

8. Exposing Unreported Incidents:

One of the most noteworthy tweets originated from @applelenz, who expressed concern over the nonchalant manner in which Emilian Kayima, the spokesperson for the Uganda Police Force, addressed the triple grenade attacks on the residences of opposition leaders @HEBobiwines and Allan Ssewanyana. These attacks occurred during the early hours of March 3, 2020, and Kayima reassured the public that the impact of the grenades was minimal, further stating that no suspects had been apprehended. However, @applelenz astutely observed that the attacks should not be taken lightly and demanded transparency by questioning the absence of a police report.

@applelenz's tweet raises crucial inquiries regarding the grenade attacks. Why did the government initially fail to report these incidents? Why was the response so dismissive? And where is the comprehensive investigation report? The tweets from both @HEBobiwine and @applelenz have played a pivotal role in raising awareness about the urgent need for transparency and accountability within Uganda's security sector. Moreover, they have exerted pressure on the government to thoroughly investigate the grenade attacks and ensure that the culprits face justice.

9. Public Safety Initiatives

The campaign showcased President Museveni implementing a series of initiatives to improve public safety and security in Uganda. One of these initiatives was the establishment of a state-of-the-art Helicopter Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul plant, which not only provided high-quality helicopter servicing and repair but also saved money by reducing the need for overseas maintenance. Additionally, the President commissioned a solar power plant to increase energy diversification and reduce carbon emissions, and launched a production entity for surgical masks and sanitizers to address healthcare needs. The establishment of an oxygen/nitrogen plant and an armored vehicle production plant further strengthened the country's healthcare infrastructure and defense capabilities. Finally, the unveiling of an African firefighting vehicle prototype at the Uganda Security Exhibition showcased the country's commitment to development and protecting lives and property from fires.

10. Media Freedom and Protection of Journalists

The hashtag #UgandaSecurityExhibition shed light on the critical issue of media freedom and the urgent need to safeguard journalists who report on security-related matters. This powerful movement was initiated by renowned cartoonist Jimmy Spire Ssentongo, who unfortunately had to withdraw from the campaign due to threats of harm.

Ssentongo's campaign aimed to raise awareness about the severe lack of media freedom in Uganda and the perilous conditions under which journalists operate when covering security-related topics. He highlighted the case of Bobi Wine, an opposition leader in Uganda who was subjected to torture by security forces in 2020. Despite widespread condemnation of this heinous act by human rights organizations, no one has been held accountable for this crime.

Ssentongo's decision to step back from the campaign serves as a stark reminder of the grave dangers faced by journalists in Uganda. Those who dare to report on sensitive issues are frequently subjected to threats, harassment, and even fatal attacks. The Ugandan government has a long history of suppressing independent media, creating an atmosphere of fear among journalists. The threats against Ssentongo represent a severe assault on media freedom in Uganda. They also underscore the crucial importance of protecting journalists who cover security-related matters. Journalists play a vital role in holding the government accountable and ensuring that the public is well-informed about significant issues. It is imperative that they are able to carry out their work without fear of retaliation.

The #UgandaSecurityExhibition campaign on Twitter proved to be an immensely effective platform for citizens, activists, and stakeholders to unite and advocate for enhanced security measures, transparency, and accountability. The campaign's diverse range of themes and active participation underscored the critical significance of addressing security-related concerns in order to establish a safer and more secure Uganda. It served as a poignant reminder of the pivotal roles that both individuals and the government play in fostering a secure and peaceful nation. Conclusion

The #UgandaSecurityExhibition emerged as a potent catalyst for change within Uganda's security landscape. Through impactful social media engagement, the campaign illuminated pervasive issues like police brutality, human rights violations, and an absence of accountability. Its power lay not only in generating awareness but in mobilizing action, compelling global attention and prompting responses from international entities like the United Nations and the European Union. The campaign's digital resonance was mirrored in real-world impact, as it transformed virtual narratives into a call for tangible reform. By amplifying voices, sharing compelling stories, and unveiling stark evidence, the #UgandaSecurityExhibition compelled a crucial dialogue and invoked a demand for justice. It envisaged a future where security is grounded in transparency, respect, and the safeguarding of citizens' rights. As its virtual chapters draw to a close, the campaign's legacy persists as a beacon of digital advocacy, a testament to the ability of social media to spark change. Dr. Spire, Godwin Toko, and participants collectively etched an indelible mark on Uganda's security narrative, emphasizing the power of unity and conversation in shaping a more secure and just society.

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6. Recommendations

Enhancing Police Accountability: There is a growing demand from citizens for the Ugandan government to bolster police accountability. This pressing issue necessitates the establishment of a civilian oversight body, dedicated to thoroughly investigating complaints of police brutality. Moreover, it is imperative that those police officers found guilty of such misconduct are held fully accountable for their actions.

Revamping the Police Training Curriculum: Another crucial aspect that citizens emphasized is the dire need for a comprehensive reform of the police training curriculum. They argue that the current curriculum fails to adequately equip police officers with the necessary skills to uphold human rights standards. To address this concern, it is imperative that the curriculum be thoroughly revised to encompass training on human rights, de-escalation techniques, and the appropriate use of force.

Fostering Stronger Police-Community Relations: Citizens also voiced their concerns regarding the strained relationship between the police and the community. This relationship is currently marred by mistrust and fear, which hinders effective law enforcement. To rectify this, citizens called upon the police to take proactive measures to build trust within the community. This can be achieved through initiatives such as organizing community meetings and actively listening to the concerns and grievances of community members.

Strengthening Counterterrorism Efforts:

Facilitate robust regional and international cooperation to effectively counter the menace of transnational terrorism, exemplified by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Foster the seamless exchange of intelligence, fortify border security measures, and synchronize endeavors to disrupt terrorist networks and thwart their nefarious designs.

Enhancing Oversight of Security Forces:

Establish an independent and impartial oversight body to diligently monitor and assess the conduct of security agencies. Endow this entity with the requisite authority to thoroughly investigate complaints, ensure accountability for any transgressions, and proactively recommend policy enhancements to bolster the integrity and effectiveness of our security apparatus. By addressing these critical issues head-on, the Ugandan government can pave the way for a more accountable, professional, and harmonious police force. This will not only enhance public safety but also foster a sense of security and trust within the community.





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