

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Please provide information about the group Reform Agenda in Uganda.
2. What was the situation during 2001/2002 for members of Reform Agenda in Uganda?
3. What is the current situation for members of Reform Agenda in Uganda?
4. Which political parties were in power and in opposition in Uganda during 2001/2002 and who were their leaders?
5. Which political party won the 2001 election in Uganda and who was its leader?
6. Were opposition parties subjected to violence / harassment by the government in Uganda during 2001/2002?
7. Which political party is currently in power in Uganda and who is its leader?
8. What are the names of the main opposition political parties currently in Uganda and who are their leaders?
9. Are opposition parties currently subjected to violence / harassment by the government in Uganda?

RESPONSE

1. Please provide information about the group Reform Agenda in Uganda.

A RRT research response dated 20 July 2004 provides a political history of the Reform Agenda group in Uganda up to that date and lists the group's office holders in 2002 and 2004 (RRT Country Research 2004, *Research Response UGA16861*, 20 July – Attachment 1).

A UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note on Uganda dated 19 June 2006 indicates that the Reform Agenda organisation was one of a number of parties that "formally announced the formation of a new party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)" in August 2004. It is stated in the Operational Guidance Note that:

The political organisation The Reform Agenda (RA) originated from the Elect Kizza Besigye Task Force, a group which backed Col. Dr. Kizza Besigye in the 2001 Presidential Elections.

On 12 July 2002, The Reform Agenda was launched in Kampala, with the election of a National Steering Committee and Col. Dr. Kizza Besigye was elected first Chairman of the RA in absentia... In August 2004, a number of parties including the Reform Agenda, the Parliamentary Advocacy Forum (PAFO) and the National Democrats Forum formally announced the formation of a new party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) (UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note: Uganda*, 19 June, p. 9 – Attachment 2).

2. What was the situation during 2001/2002 for members of Reform Agenda in Uganda?

The RRT research response dated 20 July 2004 includes information on the government's treatment of Reform Agenda members up to that date (RRT Country Research 2004, *Research Response UGA16861*, 20 July – Attachment 1).

3. What is the current situation for members of Reform Agenda in Uganda?

As previously mentioned, the UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note on Uganda dated 19 June 2006 indicates that Reform Agenda was one of a number of parties that "formally announced the formation of a new party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)" in August 2004. The Operational Guidance Note also mentions that on 28 July 2005, Uganda's "citizens voted in a national referendum to adopt a multi-party system of government." The leader of the FDC, Kizza Besigye, returned to Uganda "from self-imposed exile" on 26 October 2005 and was elected as the FDC's presidential candidate on 29 October 2005. On 14 November 2005, he was arrested. It is stated in the Operational Guidance Note that:

3.8.3 On 28 July 2005, citizens voted in a national referendum to adopt a multi-party system of government. On 24 October 2005, the parliament amended the electoral laws to formally include opposition party participation in elections and in government. There were approximately 25 opposition parties registered by the end of 2005. However, before the multi-party system was formally adopted the government restricted non-Movement political gatherings and dispersed numerous political meetings not sanctioned by the Movement...

3.8.4 On 26 October 2005, FDC leader Kizza Besigye returned from self-imposed exile and on the 29 October 2005 was elected as the party's presidential candidate. On 14 November 2005, police arrested Besigye and the next day he and 22 other individuals were charged with treason for allegedly organising the rebel group PRA. Besigye was also charged the same day with rape that reportedly occurred in 1997 (UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note: Uganda*, 19 June, pp 9-10 – Attachment 2).

The Inter-Parliamentary Union website notes that "At the 2006 elections, the principal opposition to President Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) came from the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), lead by Dr. Kizza Besigye. In November 2005 Dr. Besigye was charged with treason, terrorism and rape, although a February 2006 court decision to adjourn trial proceedings enabled him to participate in the elections." The website indicates that "During the election campaign, two FDC supporters were reportedly killed by armed men on 15 February." The website also notes that "On 25 February 2006, the Electoral Commission announced that President Museveni had been re-elected with 59 per cent of the vote, while his main rival, Dr. Besigye, obtained 37 per cent. Dr. Besigye challenged the election results, claiming irregularities and electoral fraud. On 6 April 2006, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition, judging that the irregularities had not substantially affected the election results" ('Uganda' 2006, Inter-Parliamentary Union website <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2329.htm> – Accessed 24 October 2006 – Attachment 3).

A BBC News article dated 6 April 2006 indicates that Kizza Besigye had been “cleared of a rape charge” and had pleaded not guilty to treason. The army was appealing against the dismissal of terrorism and weapons offences charges (‘Uganda court rejects poll protest’ 2006, BBC News, 6 April <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4882594.stm> – Accessed 24 October 2006 – Attachment 4). A further article dated 29 August 2006 in *The Monitor* refers to comments by the FDC’s Chief Publicist, who revealed “that Besigye had formally notified his lawyers to take steps to sue the government.” The move was “perceived as an attempt to repair his reputation tainted during his rape trial.” The article also indicates that the State had “said it was appealing against the ruling” in Besigye’s favour on the charge of rape. The Court had “not yet fixed a hearing date” (Gyezaho, Emmanuel 2006, ‘Besigye to Sue Govt Over Rape’, *The Monitor*, 29 August – Attachment 5).

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request dated 23 February 2006 provides information on the treatment of FDC members and supporters by the authorities. It is stated in the response that:

International human rights and news sources reported in 2005 on various incidents of state-sponsored harassment (HRW 19 Dec. 2005) and intimidation (ibid.; ibid. 23 Nov. 2005; ibid. 27 Apr. 2005), including arrests, of FDC members and supporters (ibid.; AI 16 Nov. 2005), in particular the arrest of FDC leader Kizza Besigye (ibid.; HRW 14 Nov. 2005; ibid. 23 Nov. 2005; ibid. 12 Dec. 2005; ibid. 19 Dec. 2005; BBC 9 Dec. 2005; ibid. 25 Nov. 2005).

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), in April 2005, police arrested two FDC MPs for what seemed to be “politically motivated charges” designed to hinder opposition campaigning for the 2006 elections (HRW 27 Apr. 2005). In addition, HRW pointed out that the two FDC MPs had previously encountered intimidation by members of the military in Pader district, northern Uganda in November 2004, when the army barred opposition members and supporters from attending a planned meeting and allegedly “beat several members of the group” (ibid.). Moreover, HRW stated that Rukungiri district FDC chairman was among the many political opponents being detained by state security forces in early 2005 (ibid.).

In May 2005, responding to allegations made by HRW and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, the Ugandan government declared that, among other things, the allegation of mistreatment of political opposition, including the FDC, was “unfounded” (HRW 17 May 2005).

In November 2005, Kizza Besigye, FDC leader and presidential candidate was arrested by authorities on charges of treason and rape when he returned to Uganda after more than four years of self-imposed exile (HRW 14 Nov. 2005; AI 16 Nov. 2005; BBC 9 Dec. 2005). Amnesty International (AI) reported that the arrest triggered mass demonstrations in various cities and towns, including Kampala, where protestors were met by riot police with live ammunition, tear gas and water cannons, resulting in one fatality and “dozens” of arrests (AI 16 Nov. 2005; see also HRW 23 Nov. 2005). Subsequently, both HRW and AI called upon all sides to show restraint, and requested authorities to observe prompt and proper legal procedures in addressing Besigye’s charges (AI 16 Nov. 2005; HRW 14 Nov. 2005). A follow-up report by HRW reproached the Ugandan government for its decision to ban demonstrations and to use commandos to intimidate members of the judiciary connected to Besigye’s trial (23 Nov. 2005).

In a 25 November 2005 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) article, President Museveni defended his government’s decision to arrest Besigye, stating that the FDC leader needed to answer for his alleged crimes. In the same article, the BBC noted that Besigye denied the

allegations brought against him, and his supporters declared that the charges were politically motivated (25 Nov. 2005). Additionally, in December 2005, HRW stated that it was also concerned that Besigye was arrested in an attempt to disqualify him as a presidential candidate in the upcoming 2006 elections (HRW 12 Dec. 2005). HRW then urged the country's Electoral Commission to "uphold the presumption of innocence" in making its decision on whether to allow Besigye to run as a presidential candidate (ibid.). Conversely, Uganda's attorney general and minister of justice, Khiddu Makubuya, reportedly notified the Electoral Commission to disallow Besigye's candidacy because it was "tainted with illegalities" (BBC 9 Dec. 2005; HRW 12 Dec. 2005).

HRW also reported in December 2005 that the government was using Besigye's trial to silence the FDC's political campaign efforts for the 2006 elections (HRW 19 Dec. 2005). According to HRW, state "security forces have intimidated, harassed and physically assaulted [FDC] supporters since Besigye's return to Uganda in late October [2005]" (ibid.).

In early January 2006, various sources reported that Besigye was released from prison on bail (EIU 4 Jan. 2006; *New Vision* 3 Jan. 2006; BBC 2 Jan. 2006), although he was reportedly to return to court on 20 January 2006 to face the treason charges against him (IWPR 9 Jan. 2006). In the meantime, Kampala-based news source *New Vision* noted that Besigye continued his electoral campaign, and in addition to stating that "false allegations" were being made against him, Besigye noted that FDC supporters were facing increasing "political harassment" which included arbitrary arrests (20 Jan. 2006). Additionally, *Sunday Times of Johannesburg* reported that Besigye's wife, Winnie Byanyima and another FDC supporter "were charged with libel after Museveni complained that they had falsely accused him of bribing judges handling her husband's trial" (20 Jan. 2006) (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2006, UGA100952.E – *Uganda: The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC); its structure, platform, leadership and executive members; and treatment of its members by authorities (2005 – January 2006)*, 23 February – Attachment 6).

4. Which political parties were in power and in opposition in Uganda during 2001/2002 and who were their leaders?

5. Which political party won the 2001 election in Uganda and who was its leader?

A Human Rights Watch report dated March 2004, which provides background information on the Ugandan political system at the time of the 2001 presidential elections, indicates that at that time, political parties were allowed "to exist in name", but "all the activities normally associated with political parties" were outlawed or restricted. The report notes that Uganda's President Museveni, when he came to power in 1986, had "introduced the "movement" system of government as an alternative to a multiparty system, to which he attributed the past violence and sectarianism of Uganda's politics." According to the report:

Under the movement system, all candidates and citizens would belong to the system and candidates would run for elections based on their personal merit rather than party affiliation.

A pyramid of five levels of councils (LC-1 to LC-5), from the village to the national level, was designed to ensure grassroots participation at all levels of society, up to the position of resident district commissioner, which is appointed by the president. In practice, the "no-party" system has significantly curtailed civil and political rights of those who are in political opposition to Museveni's government... The 1995 constitution currently in force allows political parties to exist in name, but outlaws or restricts all the activities normally associated with political parties (Human Rights Watch 2004, *State of Pain: Torture in Uganda*, Vol. 16, No. 4(A), March, p.13 – Attachment 7).

The US State Department report on human rights practices in Uganda for 2001 indicates that President Yoweri Museveni was re-elected in the presidential elections held on 12 March 2001 “to a second 5-year term under the Constitution and continued to dominate the Government. He has ruled since 1986 through the National Resistance Movement, legislatively reorganized and renamed as “The Movement” in 1995.” The report also indicates that in parliamentary elections held in June 2001, “Movement supporters remained in control of the legislative branch; however, the number of M.P.’s openly belonging to opposition parties increased to 35 from 12, although the actual number probably is higher since the affiliations of several M.P.’s are unclear.” It is stated in the report that:

On March 12, President Yoweri Museveni was reelected to a second 5-year term under the Constitution and continued to dominate the Government. He has ruled since 1986 through the National Resistance Movement, legislatively reorganized and renamed as “The Movement” in 1995. The Constitution provides for a 295-member unicameral parliament and an autonomous, independently elected president. The number of Members of Parliament (M.P.’s) increased following the implementation of a new law, which increased the number of districts, and an amendment to the Parliamentary Elections Statute, which increased the number of seats reserved for women and labor. On March 12, six candidates competed in the presidential elections, including President Museveni and Kizza Besigye, a former member of the army and presidential advisor. President Museveni won with 69.3 percent of the total votes cast, with 27.3 percent of the votes cast for Besigye. The four other candidates received less than 4 percent of the vote. The institution of Parliament is weak compared with the Executive. The Parliament acted with continued independence and assertiveness during the year; however, this decreased significantly prior to the June parliamentary elections. In June parliamentary elections were held separately for the reserved and directly elected seats; M.P.’s were elected to 5-year terms, and more than 50 percent of those elected were new legislators. Movement supporters remained in control of the legislative branch; however, the number of M.P.’s openly belonging to opposition parties increased to 35 from 12, although the actual number probably is higher since the affiliations of several M.P.’s are unclear. Observers believed that the March presidential and June parliamentary elections generally reflected the will of the population; however, both were marred seriously, particularly in the period leading up to the elections, by restrictions on political party activities, incidents of violence, intimidation, fraud, and electoral irregularities that led to a flawed election process. A 2000 national referendum, on the role of political parties formally extended the Movement form of government indefinitely and severely restricted political activities; it was under review at year’s end. The referendum process was flawed by restrictions on political party activities and unequal funding.

The report notes that the opposition MP’s in parliament included “9 UPC (former President Milton Obote’s party) M.P.’s and at least 6 M.P.’s from the Democratic Party (DP). Others are affiliated loosely with the DP, and the affiliations of several other M.P.’s are unclear” (US Department of State 2002, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2001 – Uganda*, March, Introduction & Section 3 – Attachment 8).

In relation to the presidential elections held in Uganda on 12 March 2001, the Human Rights Watch report dated March 2004 indicates that “The incumbent president Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power since 1986, won the election with 69.3 percent of the votes, according to the tally of the electoral commission on March 14, 2001. The runner-up, Dr. and Col. (Ret.) Kizza Besigye, received 27.8 percent of the votes” (Human Rights Watch 2004, *State of Pain: Torture in Uganda*, Vol. 16, No. 4(A), March, p.13 – Attachment 7).

6. Were opposition parties subjected to violence / harassment by the government in Uganda during 2001/2002?

A Human Rights Watch report dated February 2006 indicates that the 2001 presidential election in Uganda was seriously “marred by violence”. The September 2002 report of a Select Committee on Election Violence, which “was established by Parliament to investigate violence and intimidation during the 2001 presidential election”, was “never tabled in Parliament”. The report “documented violence, intimidation, and vote rigging primarily by the government” (Human Rights Watch 2006, *In Hope and Fear: Uganda’s Presidential and Parliamentary Polls*, Number 1, February, p. 6 – Attachment 9).

The RRT research response dated 20 July 2004 includes information on the government’s treatment of Reform Agenda members up to that date (RRT Country Research 2004, *Research Response UGA16861*, 20 July – Attachment 1). The response refers to the previously mentioned Human Rights Watch report dated March 2004, which includes information on the torture of prisoners in Uganda who were “picked up for their actual or alleged political activities”. According to the report, “Many of the political cases concern supporters or alleged supporters of 2001 opposition presidential candidate Kizza Besigye, the coalition that supported him known after the election as Reform Agenda, or the alleged rebel group some of his supporters are supposed to have formed, the People’s Redemption Army.” The report also indicates that “The March 12, 2001 presidential elections in Uganda were conducted against a background of abuses of civilian opposition campaigners by government military and security organs” (Human Rights Watch 2004, *State of Pain: Torture in Uganda*, Vol. 16, No. 4(A), March, pp 13, 23 & 24 – Attachment 7).

The US Department of State report on human rights practices in Uganda for 2002 indicates that “The Government’s human rights record remained poor, and there continued to be numerous, serious problems. Movement domination of the political process limited the right of citizens to change their government.” According to the report, “There was no action taken against persons responsible for the following killings prior to the March 2001 presidential election: The January killing of a Museveni campaign task force member; the January killing of two men who were putting up posters of opposition leader Kizza Besigye in Tororo District; the February killing of four Besigye supporters during a campaign rally; and the March killing of one person during clashes between supporters of Museveni and Besigye in Rukungiri District.” The report notes that “Members of the security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained civilians, including opposition politicians and their supporters” and that “Police and security forces at times harassed and detained opposition activists and journalists”. It is also stated in the report that “Police denied permission to hold public rallies to several non-Movement groups during the year; however, in practice many groups held rallies and large gatherings, only some of which were declared illegal or disrupted by authorities.” There were also “credible reports that security personnel, including UPDF soldiers, intimidated members of the opposition and disrupted their rallies and political events” during the year (US Department of State 2003, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002 – Uganda*, March, Introduction, Sections 1(a) & (c) & 2(b) – Attachment 10).

The US Department of State report on human rights practices in Uganda for 2001 indicates that “Observers believed that the March presidential and June parliamentary elections generally reflected the will of the population; however, both were marred seriously, particularly in the period leading up the elections, by restrictions on political party activities, incidents of violence, intimidation, fraud, and electoral irregularities that led to a flawed

election process.” The report notes that “Police and security forces at times harassed and detained opposition activists (see Sections 1.d., 2.b., and 3). There were reports of police and security force intimidation of opposition supporters and at opposition rallies in the period prior to the presidential election” (US Department of State 2002, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2001 – Uganda*, March, Introduction, Sections 1(c) & 3 – Attachment 8).

A Human Rights Watch report released on 5 March 2001 includes information on attacks on the political opposition in the lead up to Uganda’s presidential elections held on 12 March 2001 (Human Rights Watch 2001, *Uganda: Not a Level Playing Field – Government Violations in the Lead-Up to the Election*, 5 March – Attachment 11).

7. Which political party is currently in power in Uganda and who is its leader?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union website notes that “On 23 February 2006, multi-party parliamentary elections were held in parallel with presidential elections” in Uganda. According to the website:

The final results gave the NRM [National Resistance Movement] a total of 206 seats, followed by the FDC with 37 seats. The UPC [Uganda People’s Congress] and the DP [Democratic Party] won nine and eight seats respectively. Independent candidates also secured 37 seats. Some 80 sitting members of parliament, including 17 ministers, lost their seats.

The Conservative Party [CP] and the Justice Forum of Uganda [JEEMA] each won a single parliamentary seat in the election. It is also stated on the website that:

On 25 February 2006, the Electoral Commission announced that President Museveni had been re-elected with 59 per cent of the vote, while his main rival, Dr. Besigye, obtained 37 per cent. Dr. Besigye challenged the election results, claiming irregularities and electoral fraud. On 6 April 2006, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition, judging that the irregularities had not substantially affected the election results. On 12 May 2006, Mr. Museveni was sworn in as President for a third term (‘Uganda’ 2006, Inter-Parliamentary Union website <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2329.htm> – Accessed 24 October 2006 – Attachment 3).

The Ugandan electoral commission website indicates that Yoweri Kaguta Museveni won the 2006 presidential elections with 59.28% of the vote. Kizza Besigye was runner-up with 37.36% of the vote. Three other candidates also stood in the election. The electoral commission website did not provide details of the results of the 2006 parliamentary elections (‘Full Results for 2006 Presidential Elections’ 2006, The Electoral Commission, The Republic of Uganda website <http://www.ec.or.ug/detail.php?p=14> – Accessed 23 October 2006 – Attachment 12).

A recent article dated 13 September 2006 indicates that with the swearing in of 11 district women MPs, the number of MPs in Uganda’s parliament would total 333. “Of these, 213 are NRM, 40 are independents and FDC has 37. UPC has nine, DP has eight and the Conservative Party and Jeema have one each” (Mutumba, Richard 2006, ‘333 MPs in House’, *The Monitor*, 13 September – Attachment 13).

The UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note on Uganda dated 19 June 2006 indicates that in 2003, the ruling Movement had “registered the National Resistance Movement-

Organisation, a political party that generally operated without restriction.” The Operational Guidance Note refers to Yoweri Museveni as “the candidate of the National Resistance Movement (NRM)” in the February 2006 presidential election (UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note: Uganda*, 19 June, pp 1, 2 & 10 – Attachment 2).

8. What are the names of the main opposition political parties currently in Uganda and who are their leaders?

The UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note on Uganda dated 19 June 2006 indicates that “On 28 July 2005, citizens voted in a national referendum to adopt a multi-party system of government. On 24 October 2005, the parliament amended the electoral laws to formally include opposition party participation in elections and in government. There were approximately 25 opposition parties registered by the end of 2005” (UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note: Uganda*, 19 June, p. 9 – Attachment 2).

The Inter-Parliamentary Union website notes that “At the 2006 elections, the principal opposition to President Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM) came from the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), lead by Dr. Kizza Besigye... Other parties contesting the poll included the Democratic Party (DP), led by Mr. John Ssebaana Kizito, and the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC), led by Mr. Miria Obote” (‘Uganda’ 2006, Inter-Parliamentary Union website <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2329.htm> – Accessed 24 October 2006 – Attachment 3). An article dated 27 July 2006 refers to “Ms Miria Obote” as “the President of the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC)” and Mr Ssebaana Kizito as “the President General of the Democratic Party (DP)” (‘Uganda: Uncertainty over Museveni meeting as opposition parties differ’ 2006, *BBC Monitoring Africa*, source: Daily Monitor website, Kampala, 27 July – Attachment 14).

A recent article dated 19 October 2006 indicates that “The NRM has forged a working forum with two of the oldest parties, Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and the Democratic Party (DP) under the Inter Party Forum.” According to the article, “the latest efforts at forging a united front between the NRM and some opposition parties can only bolster the ruling party” (‘Mpagi, Charles Mwanguhya 2006, ‘Pluralism Still a Two Horse Race, Survey Shows’, *All Africa*, 19 October – Attachment 15).

9. Are opposition parties currently subjected to violence / harassment by the government in Uganda?

The UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note on Uganda dated 19 June 2006 indicates that “Despite the relaxation on the rules governing political parties and the move towards multi-party politics, opposition political parties continued to face restrictions on their ability to assemble and organise and their supporters were subject to harassment and sometimes ill-treatment by the authorities. Some opposition supporters were detained by the security forces and some face charges of treason. However, others who were similarly detained were released without charge.” It is further stated in the Operational Guidance Note that:

3.8.5 The ruling Movement regularly held rallies, conducted political activities, and in 2003 registered the National Resistance Movement-Organisation, a political party that generally operated without restriction. Opposition parties have been able to open offices and register new members during 2005. After the 28 July 2005 referendum, opposition parties conducted elections among registered members at the grassroots level for delegates to attend the party conference to select a presidential candidate...

3.8.7 The law restricts freedom of assembly, particularly for political groups, although some restrictions were lifted in October 2005 when parliament amended relevant laws to open the political system to multiple political parties. For groups legally authorised to operate, permits were not required for public meetings; however, groups were required to notify the police prior to such gatherings...

3.8.8 The constitution provides for freedom of association; however, the government restricted this right in practice during 2005, particularly for opposition political parties and organisations. On 23 January 2005, the army blocked opposition party leaders Major General Mugisha Muntu of the FDC and MP Cecilia Ogwal of the UPC from attending a fundraising function at Aromo IDP camp in Lira District...

3.8.9 Police and security forces harassed and detained opposition activists... and there were reports of intimidation and assault of opposition supporters and independent candidates by the ruling party during 2005... On 15 November 2005, police arrested 44 supporters of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) for 'causing chaos' during protests over the jailing of opposition leader Kizza Besigye. However, on 13 December 2005, a Kampala court dismissed the charges against them...

3.8.10 There were reports of political detainees, and the government continued to arrest persons for treason. Opposition parties claimed that approximately 60 supporters were arrested during 2005 for political reasons. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) registered approximately 200 detainees held for offences against the security of the state. The government permitted access to political detainees by international humanitarian organizations. Treason suspects were subject to numerous abuses, such as detention without charge, detention in unregistered and unofficial locations, and mistreatment, including torture...

3.8.11 Opposition candidates have often found it almost impossible to campaign via state-controlled television. Besigye was turned away from several radio stations or had his broadcasts cancelled, President Museveni, as a candidate, has never been turned away. State-owned television meanwhile has devoted six times more airtime to the incumbent president's party than to all the opposition parties put together...

3.8.12 On 24 March 2005 more than 1,000 opposition supporters staged a rare demonstration in the Ugandan capital, Kampala... There were no reports that government agents seized passports of opposition party members or blocked their travel during 2005 (UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note: Uganda*, 19 June, pp 10-11 – Attachment 2).

The US Department of State report on human rights practices in Uganda for 2005 indicates that "The government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained." Human rights problems reported included "restrictions on opposition party activity". The report also notes that "The government took significant steps to improve human and workers' rights during the year. In October the parliament passed a series of reforms that allow political parties to participate in government and compete in elections. These reforms followed the July referendum in which citizens voted to adopt a multiparty system of government." The report notes that "Police and security forces harassed and detained opposition activists", that "Security forces arbitrarily arrested political activists during the year", and refers to "reports of political detainees". The report also indicates that "The law restricts freedom of assembly, particularly for political groups, although some restrictions were lifted in October when parliament amended relevant laws to open the political system to multiple political parties." The report also indicates that

“Police denied permission to hold public rallies to several opposition political groups during the year, blocked public meetings organized by opposition parties, and, on several occasions, disrupted or forcibly dispersed opposition meetings and other events.” The government also restricted freedom of association, “particularly for opposition political parties and organizations” (US Department of State 2006, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005 – Uganda*, March, Introduction, Sections 1(c) & (d), 2(b) & 3 – Attachment 16).

The previously mentioned Human Rights Watch report dated February 2006 indicates that in relation to the 2006 election campaign in Uganda, “The majority of allegations about election-related violence and intimidation heard by Human Rights Watch were levelled against the ruling party and state officials.” There were also allegations against opposition supporters. The report includes information on the criminal charges brought against Dr Kizza Besigye of the FDC, violence and intimidation against opposition supporters and independent candidates, and the state acting against journalists who had criticised it or disagreed with government policy (Human Rights Watch 2006, *In Hope and Fear: Uganda’s Presidential and Parliamentary Polls*, Number 1, February – Attachment 9).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Inter-Parliamentary Union website <http://www.ipu.org/>

Government Information & Reports

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/>

UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

United Nations (UN)

Non-Government Organisations

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Region Specific Links

The Electoral Commission, The Republic of Uganda website <http://www.ec.or.ug>

Search Engines

Copernic <http://www.copernic.com/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. RRT Country Research 2004, *Research Response UGA16861*, 20 July.
2. UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note: Uganda*, 19 June.
3. ‘Uganda’ 2006, Inter-Parliamentary Union website

<http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2329.htm> – Accessed 24 October 2006.

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7. Human Rights Watch 2004, *State of Pain: Torture in Uganda*, Vol. 16, No. 4(A), March.
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13. Mutumba, Richard 2006, '333 MPs in House', *The Monitor*, 13 September. (FACTIVA)
14. 'Uganda: Uncertainty over Museveni meeting as opposition parties differ' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Africa*, source: Daily Monitor website, Kampala, 27 July. (FACTIVA)
15. 'Mpagi, Charles Mwanguhya 2006, 'Pluralism Still a Two Horse Race, Survey Shows', *All Africa*, 19 October. (FACTIVA)
16. US Department of State 2006, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005 – Uganda*, March.