



— THE MULUNGI PLAN ARTICLE SERIES

Who gave the regime the authority?

The question Dr. Besigye proved from inside.

By George W. Magera · April 26, 2026 · The Mulungi Plan Article Series

A NOTE FROM THE ARCHITECT

Civilian leaders asked who gave the regime its authority before Dr. Kizza Besigye did. His contribution was different. Others warned from outside the house. He proved it from inside the foundation. This article reads his 1999 dossier as a primary source, names the four gaps it could not close, and shows how the Mulungi Plan answers the work he could not, in his moment, finish.

Who gave the regime the authority?

Civilian leaders asked before Dr. Kizza Besigye did. Paul Ssemogerere asked. Cecilia Ogwal asked. DP asked. UPC asked. Multiparty activists asked when the Movement system was still presenting itself as broad based democracy.

Besigye's contribution was different.

Others warned from outside the house. Besigye proved it from inside the foundation.

In 1999, he placed the regime's own documents on the table and showed how a liberation movement had turned itself into a political monopoly. He was not writing as a stranger. He had been politically active since the late 1970s, joined the Third Force, and entered the Uganda Patriotic Movement before the 1980 election. He helped form the Popular Resistance Army after Paulo Muwanga seized the Electoral Commission's powers, signed the June 1981 merger that produced the NRM, and helped shape the Ten Point Programme.

The dossier was not opposition noise. It was an internal audit.

The regime's answer has always been elections. It points to 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021, and 2026, then says the people gave the mandate. In January 2026, the Electoral Commission declared Museveni the winner with 71.65 percent and Bobi Wine second with 24.72 percent, with the opposition rejecting the result amid documented irregularities, an internet shutdown, and the detention of Besigye himself who could not run.

The paper trail tells a harder story.

The 1995 Constitution created the Movement political system before the first presidential election under that constitutional order. Article 269 then restricted political organizations from opening branch offices, holding delegates' conferences, holding public rallies, campaigning for candidates, or carrying out activities deemed to interfere with the Movement system. The Movement Act of 1997 later gave the Movement statutory form under Article 70.

The monopoly was authored before the vote, the vote did not create it, and the vote was held inside it.

That was not clean mandate. It was trauma converted into procedure.

Uganda in the 1990s was not debating democracy from comfort. The country was coming out of Amin, Obote, the 1980 election rupture, the bush war, northern insurgency, insecurity, and institutional collapse. Many Ugandans genuinely feared that multiparty politics would reopen sectarian violence. The regime did not invent all the fear. It organized that fear into constitutional advantage.

The consent was real, but it was born inside fear, harvested through controlled institutions, and later hardened into a monopoly that outlived the trauma used to justify it.

That was the original transaction.

Peace first.

Pluralism later.

But later never came clean.

The Receipts

Besigye's dossier turns on records, not slogans.

On August 11, 1992, the National Resistance Council extended Movement rule and pushed the country toward a constitutional process that later hardened into controlled politics. By 1994, the National Executive Committee, supposedly the supreme organ of the Movement, had become weak and irregular, while real decision making moved closer to the presidency.

On August 25, 1994, a meeting took place at Kisozi. Sixteen people sat with the President. Eriya Kategaya, Bidandi Ssali, George Kanyeihamba, Miria Matembe, and Lt. Noble Mayombo were among them. Only six of the sixteen had been directly elected to the Constituent Assembly. One was not even a delegate.

Yet that small group took positions on major constitutional questions while Ugandans were being told that the Constituent Assembly was the sovereign forum. The people were being consulted in public while power was being organized in private.

The Odoki Commission, using public submissions and Resistance Council level statistics, recommended one restriction in draft Article 98. During the Movement period, political parties would not endorse, sponsor, offer a platform to, or campaign for or against a candidate.

One restriction became five bars.

Article 269 banned branch offices, delegates' conferences, public rallies, campaigning, and activities deemed to interfere with the Movement system. Consultation became control.

THE RECEIPTS**AUGUST 11, 1992**

The National Resistance Council resolution extended Movement rule and narrowed the open political environment that had existed since 1986.

NEC DORMANCY

The supreme organ of the Movement, required to meet at least once every three months, had not met for more than three years before the 1995 Constitution was promulgated.

AUGUST 25, 1994 · KISOZI

Sixteen people sat with the President to take positions on the draft Constitution. Only six had been directly elected to the Constituent Assembly. One was not a delegate.

RC1 TO RCV

Movement support stood at 63.2 percent at the village level and declined to 38.9 percent at District Council level, where multiparty supporters were 52.8 percent. The Constitutional Commission's own statistics, gathered before any campaign pressure existed.

INDIVIDUAL MEMORANDA

43.9 percent supported multiparty. 42.1 percent supported Movement.

GROUP MEMORANDA

45.1 percent supported multiparty. 41.4 percent supported Movement.

ARTICLE 98 → ARTICLE 269

The Odoki Commission recommended one restriction on party activity. The Constituent Assembly enacted five.

JUNE 21, 1995

Museveni's letter to the CA NRM caucus, in which the chairman wrote that the NRM is not a state but a political organization, and that loyalty to it was voluntary.

The most surgical evidence came from Museveni himself. In a June 21, 1995 letter to the CA NRM caucus, he wrote that “the NRM is not a state but a political organization” and that loyalty to it was voluntary.

That line should have ended the monopoly argument.

If NRM was not the State, who gave it State monopoly?

If loyalty to NRM was voluntary, why were other political organizations blocked from normal operation?

If the Movement was only a political organization, why did the law make it the only political system allowed to function?

That is the fraud Besigye proved.



The real problem, he wrote, is dishonest, opportunistic and undemocratic leadership operating in a weak institutional framework and a weak civil society which cannot control them.



Multipartyism Without a Multiparty State

The regime's next defense is 2005. It says multiparty politics returned, parties now exist, and the old argument is dead.

The clause changed. The architecture did not.

Uganda got multiparty elections without getting a clean multiparty State.

Before 2005, NRM monopoly was legal and ideological. After 2005, it became administrative, financial, security based, and institutional. The presidency remained at the apex. The appointment culture remained. The Electoral Commission remained inside presidential influence. The security structure remained. Local government patronage remained. Public money remained close to party survival.

A man cannot fence the field, appoint the referee, control the police, fund his own team from public money, weaken every rival club, and then say the final score proves consent.

Besigye's question survived the return of parties.

If NRM is not the State, who gave it monopoly power?

After 2005, the question became sharper.

If NRM is only one party among many, who allowed it to keep using the State as political infrastructure?



What Besigye Left Unfinished

Besigye named the disease. He did not fully design the cure.

Near the end of the dossier, he wrote that he had personal views on raising standards of living that he hoped to share at another time. That line defined the limit of the document. The diagnosis was complete. The architecture was not.

Four gaps remained.

First, the framework gap. Besigye wanted Articles 69 and 74 amended through referendum to equalize political organizations. That happened in 2005, but multipartyism was placed on top of a State already shaped by Movement monopoly.

Second, the economic gap. Uganda's opposition has produced courage, sacrifice, prisoners, martyrs, moral clarity, and democratic memory. But courage is not a revenue model. Anger at corruption is not a fiscal system. Voters still ask who pays salaries, funds roads, keeps power running, protects the shilling, services debt, and keeps hospitals supplied.

Third, the land gap. Uganda's politics is land all the way down. Mailo tenure, customary tenure, the 1998 Land Act, the Registration of Titles Act of 1924, Article 274 continuity, eviction, inheritance, credit, housing, urban expansion, and patronage sit inside the same wound. A country that does not solve land cannot solve poverty, credit, housing, local government, or succession.

Fourth, the military commercial gap. Besigye treated armed rebellion as evidence of failed politics. True, but incomplete. The deeper issue is that the gun, contract, procurement file, security budget, road project, land decision, and presidential directive increasingly sit inside one governing habit.

NEC shows the military commercial side. UDC shows the State investment side. Together, they reveal how public capital, security power, and regime survival reinforce each other.

Remove Museveni is not enough as doctrine. The man is the face. The fusion is the machine.

IV

How Power Is Forced to Negotiate

Architecture alone does not move power.

A regime that controls the army, treasury, land administration, procurement, courts, police, local government, and public fear will not negotiate because a better design exists. It negotiates when refusal becomes more expensive than transition.

The pressure must be lawful, cumulative, and disciplined. Public language must teach citizens to name the machinery, not only the man. Diaspora pressure must move through legal, financial, diplomatic, and institutional channels. Budget exposure must make theft visible to the taxpayer. Local proof pilots must show that alternative governance can work. Civil service assurances must separate public servants from regime collapse. Security guarantees must tell professional soldiers that reform is not abandonment. Asset disclosure pathways must give elites a route out of panic. Donor pressure must shift from stability rhetoric to transition benchmarks. Citizen audit systems must make public money visible from village to treasury.

The goal is not to beg the regime into reform. The goal is to make the cost of refusing reform higher than the cost of negotiating transition.

The military commercial economy is where this matters most.

Military commercial fusion is not a mistake. It is the regime's survival engine. It buys loyalty, feeds command networks, protects procurement, rewards silence, and turns public money into political insurance.

No serious person should pretend generals will surrender economic power because democracy asks nicely.

Reform must offer professional soldiers an iron clad security compact. Lawful service records, rank dignity, pensions, family welfare, housing rights, medical care, and institutional continuity must be protected. Criminal liability must focus on proven torture, illegal detention, killings, theft, corruption, and command responsibility. The army must keep its constitutional role and lose its commercial privilege.

The settlement is straightforward: protect the professional soldier and his pension, prosecute the political criminal where evidence proves the crime, preserve the institution, and dismantle the commercial capture that was never the army's to hold.

A transition that threatens every soldier, every civil servant, every contractor, every landholder, and every local official at once is not a transition. It is a panic machine. The goal is not to collapse the State. The goal is to separate the State from the party while giving lawful professionals a safer future outside capture than inside it.

The sequence must be clear.

-
- 01 Freeze new military commercial expansion.

 - 02 Audit existing military linked commercial activity.

 - 03 Classify entities by security necessity, commercial function, and public value.

 - 04 Move non security commercial activity into civilian public corporations, treasury supervised enterprises, or competitive concessions.

 - 05 Protect pensions and lawful benefits.

 - 06 Prosecute criminal extraction separately from institutional reform.

Men with power move when their future outside capture becomes safer than their future inside capture.

That is transition realism.

V

The Fiscal Test

Economic credibility is the next test.

A country does not eat constitutional theory. Teachers need salaries. Nurses need supplies. Roads need maintenance. Electricity needs payment. Debt needs management. Contractors need predictability. Investors need confidence. Households need relief.

The Mulungi Plan must therefore be read with a fiscal and growth compact, not only a governance map.

THE 15/15 STRUCTURE

INCOME TAX

15%

VAT

15%

• CURRENT • INVESTMENT • RETIREMENT

Three citizen accounts, funded by a transaction cashback that returns a portion of every sale to the citizen who generated it. The taxpayer stops being a tax mule whose contribution disappears into a thin budget eaten by debt service, governance overhead, corruption, and procurement before any service is delivered. Every transaction routes value back to the household that produced it.

That structure must then be wrapped in five operational commitments.

The first commitment is salary continuity. Public workers must know that transition will not punish them for serving the State.

The second is debt discipline. Uganda must honor lawful obligations while auditing illegitimate leakage, inflated procurement, and politically protected waste.

The third is service protection. Health, education, water, agriculture, and local administration need ring fenced floors before political spending eats the budget.

The fourth is revenue reform. The taxpayer must see the receipt. Tax must stop feeling like punishment for being visible while politically connected actors escape obligation.

The fifth is local productivity. Districts must become production units, not vote banks. Agriculture, processing, logistics, skills, credit, and market access must sit inside the same local growth model.

The public question is simple.

Can the alternative pay salaries, fund roads, keep power on, stabilize money, and grow household income?

If the answer is not numeric, the answer is not ready.

VI

Land Without Panic

Land reform must be sold as security, not confiscation.

Landowners fear loss. Tenants fear eviction. Investors fear uncertainty. Families fear inheritance fights. Cultural institutions fear political attack. Banks fear bad collateral. Local leaders fear unrest.

So the land question must be framed with five words.

Security
•
Clarity
•
Compensation
•
Productivity
•
Settlement

No economy can grow where land is emotionally owned, legally contested, politically manipulated, and financially unusable.

Land reform cannot be a slogan. It must be a national settlement framework that protects lawful ownership, clarifies occupancy, speeds dispute resolution, enables credit, prevents forced dispossession, and turns land from a political weapon into a productive asset.

VII

From Question to Architecture

Dr. Besigye gave Uganda the internal constitutional indictment. The task now is to extend that indictment into architecture backed by leverage, security guarantees, fiscal credibility, and land settlement.

The Mulungi Plan enters that unfinished space as one answer. It does not replace Besigye's work. It continues the question he forced Uganda to face.

The Plan is not built around one man leaving office. That is too small. It is built around separating power from possession.

A serious transition must answer five questions.

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- 01** *Who certifies transfer of power?*
→ **THE PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION AUTHORITY**

 - 02** *Who keeps the budget honest during and after the change?*
→ **THE FISCAL COMPACT**

 - 03** *Who protects lawful citizens and lawful soldiers from revenge and panic?*
→ **THE SECURITY COMPACT**

 - 04** *Who breaks the geography of central capture?*
→ **ZONES OF INTEGRATED PROSPERITY**

 - 05** *Who settles the land that every Ugandan political fight eventually returns to?*
→ **LAND SETTLEMENT**
-

The unfinished work sits across these fronts: lawful pressure, constitutional design, fiscal discipline, territorial restructuring, security reform, land settlement, and productive local power.

Anything less leaves the machine intact.

VIII

What We Owe Him

Dr. Besigye is sixty nine years old. He has been held in Luzira since November 20, 2024, after a detention path that began in military proceedings. On January 31, 2025, Uganda's Supreme Court ruled that military courts lack jurisdiction to try civilians and ordered ongoing civilian military trials halted and transferred to civilian courts. The ruling has not produced his release.

The State he helped bring into being, and later told the truth about, answered his telling with a prison cell.

But prison does not erase the record.

In 1999, he showed that the Movement monopoly was not born from clean consent, that public views were filtered and overwritten, that a political organization had dressed itself in the clothes of the State, and that Museveni himself had admitted NRM was not the State.

Civilian leaders warned before him. Besigye proved it from inside.

The diagnosis is finished. The unfinished work is architecture with leverage.

The regime has never answered the core question because the ballot cannot answer for a monopoly built before the ballot, the Constitution cannot defend what was inserted against the people's expressed preference, and the return of multiparty politics cannot cleanse a State that never separated party from power.

THE DEEPER INDICTMENT

Uganda's problem is no longer only that one man overstayed. Uganda's problem is that one organization entered the State, fused itself with public machinery, survived multiparty politics, turned trauma into consent, consent into monopoly, monopoly into survival economics, and learned to call that democracy.

The question remains.

If NRM is not the State, who gave it monopoly power?

Dr. Besigye proved the question from inside.

The answer must now be built.

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