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Uganda: Abduction, repeated raids and ongoing surveillance of woman human rights defender Dr. Sarah Bireete

On 28 June 2026, **Dr. Sarah Bireete** was abducted for approximately three hours and subsequently released without explanation. This abduction was preceded by two separate military raids on her home, first on 28 December 2025, and then again on 25 June 2026. Front Line Defenders believes these acts are directly linked to her legitimate and peaceful human rights work, and is gravely concerned about the repeated targeting of the women human rights defender.

[Dr. Sarah Bireete](#) is a lawyer, human rights defender, and the Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Governance (CCG), a Ugandan NGO working as a constitutional watchdog on issues of constitutionalism, civic space, electoral democracy, land rights, public interest litigation and conflict transformation. She chairs the national coalition on civic space in Uganda and serves as the focal point for Uganda within Vuka Allies, an international network of human rights defenders. She is a well-known commentator on governance and human rights, appearing regularly on national and digital media, including on UBC Behind the Headlines and Civic Space TV.

On 28 June 2026, Dr. Sarah Bireete was abducted for approximately three hours by individuals who transported her in a military vehicle commonly known as a 'drone'. She was subsequently released without explanation. This abduction was preceded by two separate military raids on her home, first on 28 December 2025, and then again on 25 June 2026, only three days before her abduction. Since January 2026 Dr. Sarah Bireete has been subjected to heavy surveillance, in addition her passport is currently being held by a court in Kampala, and a hearing is allegedly scheduled on 9 July 2026.

These incidents are not isolated, the abduction of Dr. Sarah Bireete on 28 June 2026 forms part of a broader wave of targeting of human rights defenders, lawyers and civil society activists in Uganda in recent days, which Front Line Defenders is closely monitoring. Within that same week, a civil society organisations in Uganda [addressed a letter](#) to the Inspector General of Police, describing fellow human rights defenders being forcibly taken and later released, while others were subjected to active investigations and legal harassment, ultimately demanding accountability. In addition, the organisations publicly declared that the constitutional era in Uganda has come to an end, and called on all pro-democracy forces to organise a collective response.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the abduction, repeated home raids and surveillance targeting Dr. Sarah Bireete, which it believes constitute a deliberate and sustained campaign of harassment and intimidation directly resulting from her work defending constitutional governance, civic space and human rights in Uganda.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the physical safety, psychological integrity and freedom of movement of Dr. Sarah Bireete, and urges immediate action to ensure her protection.

Front Line Defenders calls on the authorities in Uganda to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally cease all forms of surveillance, harassment, and intimidation against Dr. Sarah Bireete and all other human rights defenders in Uganda;
2. Return Dr. Sarah Bireete's passport and ensure her freedom of movement without restriction or condition;
3. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the circumstances of her abduction on 28 June 2026 and the military raids on her home on 28 December 2025 and 25 June 2026, with a view to identifying and bringing to justice all those responsible;
4. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Dr. Sarah Bireete, and ensure that she is able to carry out her legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions;
5. Comply fully with Uganda's obligations under international human rights law, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which recognises the right of all persons to promote and protect human rights.

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