



PLATFORM FOR LABOUR ACTION

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STATEMENT ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF TRADE ORDER AND EVICTION OF STREET AND INFORMAL TRADERS

BY

THE PLATFORM FOR LABOUR ACTION (PLA)

Date: 20th April 2026

The Platform for Labour Action (PLA) has taken note of the directive issued by the Ministry of Local Government instructing all Chief Administrative Officers and Urban Authorities to enforce trade licensing laws and restore “trade order” across Uganda.

While we recognize the government’s mandate to regulate trade, ensure urban order, and enforce existing laws, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing nationwide evictions of street vendors and informal traders, many of whom are women, youth, and low-income earners operating at the margins of survival.

Uganda’s informal sector employs over 80% of the working population (UBOS, 2023), with a significant proportion engaged in street and market-based trade. Vending remains one of the most significant livelihoods, particularly for women providing flexible and accessible income generation in both urban and peri-urban areas and plays a vital role in sustaining local trade and household resilience. Women dominate this sector across the country. For many, informal trading is not a choice, but a response to limited formal employment opportunities, rising cost of living, and barriers to capital access. Therefore Uganda’s economic progress depends not only on order, **but on inclusion, fairness, and protection of all workers especially those in the informal economy.**

The current enforcement approach, characterised in many areas by abrupt evictions, confiscation of goods, and limited notice, risks:

- Violating the right to work and livelihood as guaranteed under Article 40 and 45 the Constitution of Uganda;
- Undermining women’s economic participation, given their overrepresentation in informal trade and particularly in petty trading.
- Exacerbating urban poverty and inequality, particularly among youth and women
- Displacing workers without providing viable alternatives or transition pathways.

PLA emphasizes that urban order must not come at the expense of human dignity and economic survival. We therefore call upon the Government of Uganda and all local authorities to adopt a **rights-based and inclusive approach to regulating informal trade**, guided by the following principles:

1. **Due Process and Humane Enforcement:** All enforcement actions must be preceded by adequate notice, consultation, and conducted without violence, harassment, or arbitrary confiscation of goods.
2. **Provision of Alternative Trading Spaces:** Local governments must ensure the availability of accessible, affordable, and safe market spaces before evictions are carried out.
3. **Inclusive Urban Planning:** Informal traders must be recognised as legitimate economic actors and included in urban planning and policy processes.
4. **Simplification of Licensing Regimes:** Licensing procedures and fees should be affordable, transparent, and tailored to the realities of small-scale traders.
5. **Social Protection Measures:** Immediate measures should be introduced to support affected workers, including access to microcredit, skills development, and social safety nets.
6. **Gender-Responsive Interventions:** Policies must address the disproportionate impact on women traders, including ensuring safe trading environments and protection from harassment.

PLA stands ready to engage with the Ministry of Local Government, district, municipality and divisional authorities and other stakeholders to support the development of balanced, lawful, and people-centred approaches to urban trade management.

Grace Mukwaya-Lule
Executive Director

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