

**EFFECTS OF GOVERNMENT COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN UGANDA: A CASE OF UGANDA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (UHRC)**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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## DECLARATION

I, Atim Robinah hereby declare that this dissertation submitted to the school of social sciences, Uganda Christian University for award of degree of Governance and international relations is my original work and has not been previously submitted to any other institution for any award.

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## APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation was done under my supervision and is now ready for submission for examination as a requirement for the award of Degree of Bachelor of Governance and International Relations at Uganda Christian University

Signature.....

Date.....17 / 03 / 2026

MR. BUKENYA LIINO

(Supervisor)

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents who advised, supported and mentored me throughout my education up to university level. Above all, I thank God for guidance and provision towards completion of this dissertation.

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I am greatly indebted to Mr. Bukenya Liino my supervisor for his effective supervision, dedication, availability and professional advice.

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## ABSTRACT

The research examined the effects of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda with a specific focus on Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC). The study was guided by objectives which included; identifying the key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda, evaluating the effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda, investigating the challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda, and assessing the role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda.

Qualitative descriptive case study design was used in the study where purposive and easy random sampling were applied to select ten respondents consisting of high-level and lower-level workers for interviewing them in-depth and using key informant interviews to collect the data that was analyzed thematically to assess the compliance of the Ugandan government to international human rights instruments and how this compliance impacts on freedom of expression in accordance with ethical considerations.

It was concluded in the research results that the UHRC appreciates significantly the application of the international human rights instruments as the basis for protecting the freedom of expression in Uganda in terms of aligning the policy, dealing with complaints, investigations, monitoring, reporting, and advocacy. As the implementation of the international human rights instruments enhances considerably

the capacity of UHRC and offers clear guidelines for measuring the compliance of the government with international human rights, the practical impact of them depends much on weak enforcement, insufficient collaboration with other institutions, and political pressures.

Finally, the study recommended the need for strengthening political will and institutional support, enhancing capacity building for government officials, improving UHRC's monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, expanding public education and advocacy on freedom of expression, and fostering inter-agency collaboration to ensure effective implementation and compliance with international human rights instruments in Uganda.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

The research examines “the effects of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda: a case of Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC).” This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study and significant of the study.

#### 1.2 Background of the study

Freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of democratic governance and enshrined in international human rights instruments that oblige states to respect, protect, and fulfill communicative rights (Yusoff & Nordin, 2021). At the same time, however, it is not absolute and must be balanced against national security, public order, and protection against hate speech, generating tensions in enforcement (Ngoc et al., 2025). The advent of digital technologies and algorithms has placed more obstacles in the path of states in complying with international human rights law (Leslie et al., 2021). Automated technologies are also likely to result in discriminatory outcomes unless human rights assessment is carried out (Yam & Skorburg, 2021). Effectiveness of compliance depends on State traditions, political will, and capacity (Khan & Usman, 2023).

Disinformation and manipulation of the discussion issues have led regional and international players to scrutinize freedom of expression guarantees closely (Colomina et al., 2021). The framework of human rights itself evolved through successive instruments and interpretations (Rotaru, 2023). Regulation and due diligence are essential, scholars contend, to prevent abuses of the market of communication (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021). Effective translation of foreign norms into local policy is required for their implementation (Al-Tarawneh et al., 2024). Mechanisms of

monitoring and treaty compliance are the basis on which compliance can be gauged (Moeckli et al., 2022).

Globally, international instruments guide domestic protections, but practices differ across countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Malaysia, and Japan (Alfredsson & Eide, 2023). The level of protection for expression in the United States is exceptionally high because of the constitution, unlike in Europe where hate speech and data protection are heavily monitored (Ishay, 2022). The German and French legal systems feature clear criminal boundaries with an advisory role in the nearby courts (De Varennes, 2021). The Malaysian legal system was evaluated for adherence to international criteria, whereas countries such as Japan maintain a balance between rights and security measures (Svensson-McCarthy, 2021).

Throughout Africa, the regional contraptions and mechanisms of the African charter and the African fee on Human and Peoples' Rights outline a framework of freedom of expression, even though enforcement and compliance continue to be dire in the general public of states (Antai et al., 2024). Murray et al. (2024) examine that surveillance techniques, media repression and political pressure may have chilling effects on journalists, ordinary residents and activists, with Uganda and Zimbabwe presenting an example approximately those procedures (Murray et al., 2024).

Comparative regional country studies offer that Kenya and South Africa have comparatively stronger constitutions and autonomous institutions that guarantee expression, whereas the other jurisdictions have challenges of weak oversight, emergency powers, and under-resourced national human rights institutions (Mubangizi, 2020). Scholars have therefore argued that regional follow-up mechanisms must be strengthened and civil society capacity must be developed as crucial steps towards improving state compliance with international human rights commitments to expression in sub-Saharan Africa (Etuvoata, 2020).

In Uganda, the legal and institutional framework of freedom of expression is marked by a mix of constitutional protection, statutory limitation and nested system of international obligations to which the State has become a signatory, creating

opportunities and challenges to effective compliance (Beinomugisha, 2024). The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) is the country's national human rights institution and is leading in monitoring compliance, awareness-raising and recommending, although critics have had concerns about limitations through insufficient resources and political influence (Mujuzi, 2021). Empirical assessment using comparative global baselines like the Paris Principles reports that despite considerable effort by the UHRC, there is still scope for work in enforcement capacity, implementation of recommendations and public trust in remedy mechanisms (Balarabe et al. 2022). Local legislation has sometimes limited the media and civic freedoms, raising questions about alignment with international expectations (Byegimu, 2019). Strengthening the independence of UHRC and harmonizing laws with human rights standards is crucial for conformity (Gwama, 2019). Therefore this study sought to examine the effects of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Ideally, compliance with international human rights instruments should guarantee Ugandans freedom of civic participation, digital expression, media freedom, and protection from repression (Moeckli et al., 2022). In practice, these freedoms have declined, with the 2022 Afrobarometer survey showing that only 40% of citizens felt free to express political views, down from 56% in 2017 (UHRC, 2022). Digital expression has been restricted, especially during the 2021 election internet shutdown which cost the economy over USD 10 million per day and cut off millions of users (Uganda Communications Commission, 2021). UHRC also reported over 500 complaints of unlawful arrests, torture, and harassment of journalists and activists between 2019 and 2022 (UHRC, 2022). Media freedom continues to deteriorate, with Uganda ranked 132 out of 180 in the 2023 Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders, 2023). If this persists, civic area will shrink further, weakening democratic governance no matter efforts by using UHRC, civil society, and worldwide partners through advocacy, legal reforms, and tracking (Mujuzi, 2021).

moreover, preceding research have tested Uganda's freedom of expression mainly from prison and political views, specializing in restrictive laws, government surveillance, and civic space barriers (Mubangizi, 2020; Murray et al., 2024). Even as these highlight systemic challenges, they supply constrained interest to how authorities compliance with international human rights contraptions directly affects freedom of expression in exercise. Furthermore, the position of the UHRC as a national human rights organization in bridging global obligations with home realities has not been correctly studied (Beinomugisha, 2024). In summary, this provided a window of opportunity for conducting a study aimed at analyzing the impact of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda, particularly with regard to Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC).

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The main objective of the study was to analyze the impacts of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda, focusing particularly on Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC).

#### **1.5 Specific objectives of the study**

This study was guided by the following specific research objectives:

- i. To identify the key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda.
- ii. To evaluate the effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda.
- iii. To investigate the challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda.
- iv. To assess the role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda.

## **1.6 Research questions**

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. What are the key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda?
- ii. How effective are these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda?
- iii. What challenges are faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda?
- iv. What is the role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda?

## **1.7 Scope of the study**

### **1.7.1 Content Scope**

The study focused on; identifying the key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda, evaluating the effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda, investigating the challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda, and assessing the role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda.

### **1.7.2 Time scope**

Data for this study was collected over a period of four months from September to December 2025. The review of reports, policies, and documents focused on the period from 2021 to 2025, as this timeframe reflects recent developments in government compliance with international human rights instruments and the state of freedom of

expression in Uganda, including key events such as internet shutdowns, media restrictions, and UHRC interventions.

### **1.7.3 Geographical scope**

This study was carried out in the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) located on Plot 19, Lumumba Avenue, Rume Building P.O Box 4929, Kampala, Uganda. UHRC was selected because it's miles the primary national group responsible for monitoring, selling, and imposing human rights in Uganda, making it a central site for inspecting authorities compliance with global human rights instruments and their effect on freedom of expression.

### **1.8 Justification of the study**

The justification for this study became embedded in the want to apprehend the diploma to which government compliance with global human rights devices impacts freedom of expression in Uganda, a crucial democratic proper that has an increasing number of been limited via censorship, shutdowns of the net, and intimidation of activists and journalists (Murray et al., 2024; UHRC, 2022). while previous studies have examined felony restrictions, surveillance, and restrictions on civic space (Mubangizi, 2020; Byegimu, 2019), none have considered the direct impact of the government's respect for international human rights obligations on the implementation of freedom of expression in reality, particularly through the Uganda Human Rights Commission (Beinomugisha, 2024). This current study hoped to fill the gap by providing compliance evidence, challenges, and enforcement measures, thus providing informative recommendations to policymakers, human rights institutions, and future research.

### **1.9 Significance of the study**

The study will be significant to the UHRC as it presents a backdrop of the effectiveness of its monitoring and enforcement bodies with regard to government compliance with international human rights agreements. The findings will help the

Commission identify gaps, sharpen strategies, and advance its role in protecting and advancing freedom of expression in Uganda.

The study will be significant to the Government of Uganda and policymakers because it points out areas in which the observance of international human rights treaties is weak and how this affects citizens' freedom of expression. This research could facilitate the reforms in the policy framework, legislation, and greater alignment with international human rights standards.

This research may be fundamental for civil society organizations interested in promoting human rights because it offers empirical data regarding the state of freedom of speech in Uganda. This statistics can provide a basis for advocacy campaigns, manual interventions, and help CSOs to maintain government answerable for human rights compliance.

The survey could be full-size to media practitioners as it brings to the fore concerns of press freedom and expression on-line in Uganda. The findings will help journalists, editors, and media houses provide you with strategies to shield themselves, recommend for freedom of expression, and promote moral reporting in a repressive environment.

The survey can be treasured to academic researchers and future researchers as it fills the information hole at the effect of compliance with global human rights devices by the government on freedom of expression in Uganda. It paves the way for comparative studies, coverage studies, and similarly research at the enforcement of human rights and civic freedoms.

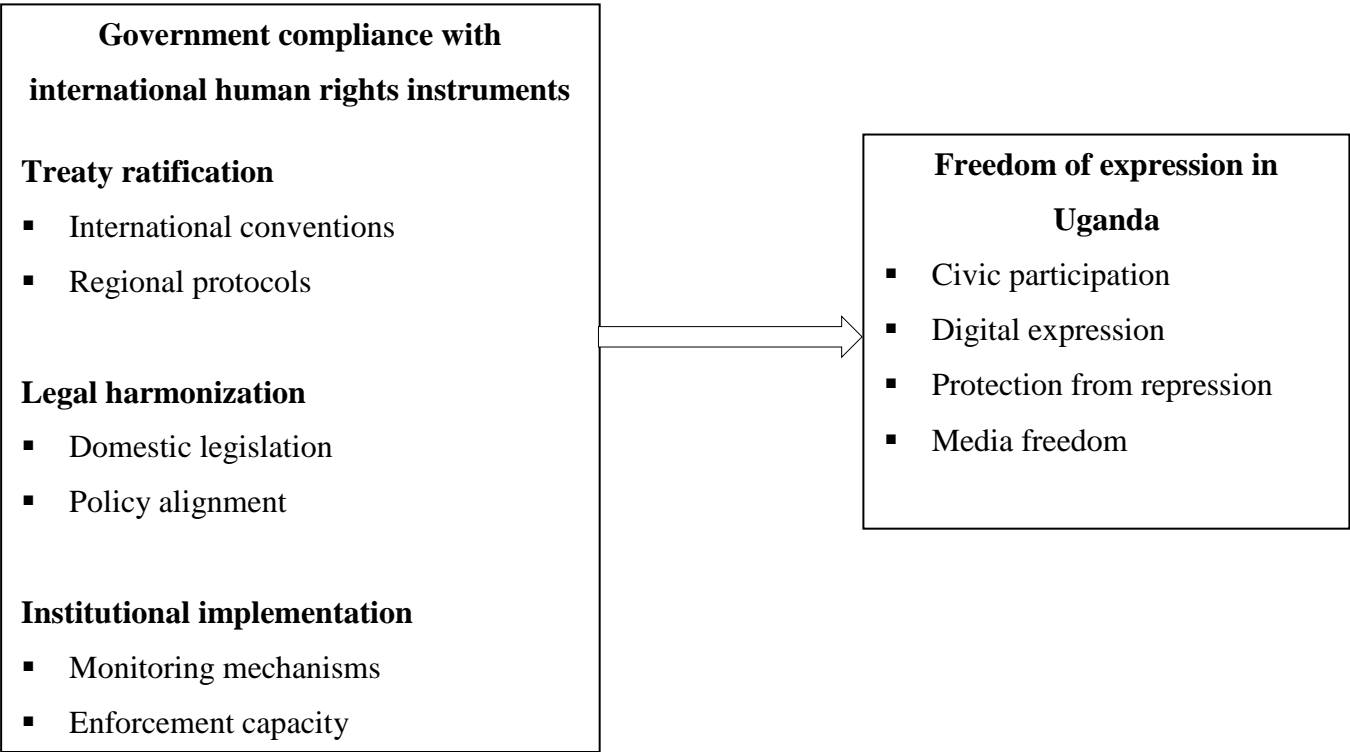
The study could be relevant to international human rights corporations, which includes the United international locations Human Rights Council and African commission on Human and People's Rights, knowing that it will provide evidence on the adherence of Uganda to international standards. The research will help to generate recommendations, supervision, and support to national human rights organizations.

1.10 Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent variable  
variable

Dependent



Source: Adapted from and modified by the researcher (2025)

The conceptual framework for this study investigates the link between compliance by the authorities with international instruments on human rights and the right to free speech in Uganda. Compliance with regard to three main aspects is assessed, namely treaty ratification (international covenants and regional protocols), crime harmonization (domestic legislation), and institutional implementation (enforcement and monitoring processes). These factors establish the extent to which freedom of expression is guarded, measurable in terms of civic participation, internet expression, freedom from oppression, and media freedom. Strong compliance sustains an

atmosphere that facilitates expression, while weak compliance undermines such freedoms and makes the credibility of Uganda's mechanisms critical in realizing rights.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers other works from other literatures. It is important that a closer look is taken at similar works done on the effects of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression and review some of the literatures pertinent to the study, for comparison, confirmation and differences to be laid bare. Due to this, this chapter was meant to contain the review of various literatures considered to be relevant to the study.

#### 2.2 Conceptual review

##### 2.2.1 International human rights instruments

International human rights instruments have traditionally been understood as treaties, declarations, and protocols specifying normative norms binding states to respect, protect, and realize fundamental rights like freedom of expression, and are approached by scholars both as legal texts and ethical standards for state conduct (Moeckli et al., 2022). Critics highlight different interpretative approaches: some view such tools as global legal requirements demanding automatic application, while others highlight cultural and constitutional uniqueness making direct application difficult, making the instruments legal translation texts rather than direct enforcement (Donnelly & Whelan, 2020). Traditionally, commentators also point to the corpus' development starting from general statements to regime-based treaties and technical monitoring agencies so that meaning is contested and constructed through judicial interpretation, treaty practice and political negotiation (Rotaru, 2023).

Debates on the usefulness of international human rights mechanisms highlight their normative reach compared with their actual impact: proponents point to the UDHR and core treaties setting authoritative norms that shape national law and policy (Alfredsson & Eide, 2023), while skeptics question implementation and show that

treaty language in a vacuum does not guarantee compliance in the absence of national adoption, political will, and institutional ability (Khan & Usman, 2023). Others point to the ways in which exceptional circumstances states of necessity, national security exceptions or general derogation provisions heightens the limitation of the contraptions' shielding scope, generating seams between treaty obligations and actual conditions which require cautious doctrinal and empirical examination (Svensson-McCarthy, 2021).

Researchers who quantify or operationalize international human rights units tend to use multidimensional signs along with legal transposition, institutional frameworks, compliance regimes and remedial effects, particularly due-diligence strategies in which private actors intersect with state law (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021). Measurement frameworks additionally underscore civil society tracking, reporting systems and comply with-up techniques as key signs of true implementation and compliance (Etuvoata, 2020). Nationally, analysts quantify conformity with standards inclusive of the Paris principles for countrywide human rights institutions in line with independence, approach, grievance managing and enforcement capacity as concrete parameters thru which units deliver (or fail to deliver) rights-protective impacts (Balarabe et al., 2022).

### **2.2.2 Freedom of expression**

Freedom of expression is widely diagnosed as a pillar of democratic international locations but is disputed in its definition throughout contexts. Students have characterised it as a man or woman's right to harbor and bring evaluations free of interference, emphasizing alignment with worldwide human rights files which include the ICCPR (Yussoff & Nordin, 2021). Others location emphasized on its political element, freedom of expression being vital to counter authoritarianism however frequently being restrained with the aid of laws, surveillance, and repression (Ngoc et al., 2025). In greater current discussions, the improvement of synthetic intelligence has brought nuance, with researchers noting that emerging technology have the

capacity each to facilitate expression and to enact unseen boundaries through algorithmic governance (Leslie et al., 2021).

Moreover, the extent of the freedom of expression differs as well, depending on how some researchers focus on this particular freedom of expression as an aspect of its communication function for ensuring democratic debate and responsibility, whereas others highlight its manipulative potential within the context of misinformation and politics (Colomina et al., 2021). Even though the felicity theory of this freedom highlights its normative basis as a universal human right (Ishay, 2022), at the same time, other experts argue that in reality, the power and interests of the state will outweigh any theoretical claims leading to the closing off of the civic space. In addition, the emergence of the Internet era has introduced new opportunities for everyone to be heard but also brought about new problems like cyber-harassment, surveillance, and algorithms censoring people (Yam & Skorburg, 2021).

In measurement expressions, the students have utilized distinctive measurements to gauge the degree of freedom of speech. Literature in Uganda, and in similar situations, looks at the independence of the press, civic freedom, and freedom from persecution as key measures, particularly where the kingdom is managed by the monarchs (Gwama, 2019). The historical debts illustrate how the law has been employed not only to protect but also to restrain freedom of expression, and legal principles are central in measurement (Byegimu, 2019). Greater recent literature additionally introduces the chilling effects of surveillance, and the way the expectancy of monitoring and retaliation limits the real workout of expression, even under the presence of formal ensures (Murray et al., 2024). Collectively, these perspectives suggest that freedom of expression is best described through multidimensional measures that encompass legal, civic, technological, and protective aspects.

## 2.3 Empirical review of the study objectives

### 2.3.1 Key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Universal human rights documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are source documents that define the normative framework for freedom of expression as a universal right (Alfredsson & Eide, 2023). Scholars note that the UDHR is more of a political and moral standard that motivated the creation of treaties than a legally binding tool in the strict sense (Ishay, 2022). Past appraisals assign prominent value to the influence of the UDHR on later treaty law and monitoring procedure, and note the manner in which its broad language permits incongruent domestic interpretations (Rotaru, 2023). The UDHR is therefore regarded as indispensable to norm-setting in instances where practical execution hinges on later treaties and institutions (Donnelly & Whelan, 2020).

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is often simply known as the flagship treaty that enforces the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 and binding obligations to state parties (Moeckli et al., 2022). Legal scholars argue that the ICCPR obtains its normative value from its status as a treaty and the Human Rights Committee's interpretive activity to elucidate permissible limitations and proportionality tests (Svensson-McCarthy, 2021). Respectable ratification with the aid of comparison analysts, however, does no longer robotically translate to domestic protection without incorporation, institutional capacity, and political will (Khan & Usman, 2023). Country practice case studies also show that states apply broad public-order exceptions to limit expression despite ICCPR standards, pointing out the implementation gap scholars often talk about (Yussoff & Nordin, 2021).

**African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR):** The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and regional soft law (i.e., the declarations of the African Commission) form the continental norm for freedom of expression, as it is written in Africa's special legal and political context (Etuvoata, 2020). Authors stress that the protection of the Charter (e.g., Article 9) is supplemented by regional jurisprudence but remains unequally observed and implemented among member states (Antai et al., 2024). Empirical studies assessing national human rights institutions determine capacity and independence as the most important mediators of the Charter's effectiveness to protect speech (Balarabe et al., 2022). Therefore, scholars call for stronger civil society engagement and better enforcement mechanisms to realize the Charter standards into real protections on the ground (Beinomugisha, 2024).

**Emerging soft law and sectoral guidelines:** Beyond central treaties, there is growing scholarship that highlights the role of soft-law instruments, monitoring bodies, and sectoral guidelines (e.g., on online speech and disinformation) in advancing contemporary protections for freedom of expression (Colomina et al., 2021). Business and technology regulation analysis emphasizes applying human-rights due diligence and regulatory systems to render private platforms accountable for harms related to speech (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021). Any other institution of students acknowledges that implementation fulfillment relies upon on translating global norms into domestic clear policies and company practices, together with thru manner of smooth reporting and coverage translation (Al-Tarawneh et al., 2024). Eventually, technology and rights authors warn that algorithmic structures and synthetic intelligence require reinterpretive steering to be up to date so nascent tools do not undermine expression inside the actual world (Leslie et al., 2021).

### **2.3.2 Effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression**

Ngoc et al. (2025) of their study determined that worldwide human rights contraptions will be inclined to create clear standards for making sure freedom of

expression however that implementation in large part depends on home political will and institutional exams. The identical paintings discovered that where states apply emergency powers or expansive safety legislation, treaty commitments are normally relegated to kingdom interests, undermining the devices' practical effectiveness.

According to McCorquodale and Nolan (2021), global gadgets turn out to be legally certain as long as there are effective obligations on nations and organizations for doing due diligence. They also showed that in cases where there are no such additional obligations, violations happen despite treaty participation of states. The law coverage evidence above is corroborated via the work of Al-Tarawneh et al. (2024), which points out the significance of realizing how worldwide norms can be translated into real domestic reporting, institutional exercise, and business policy to have an understanding of the protection of rights. Both texts, accordingly, reveal that implementation and translation gaps are key reasons why global devices lag behind when it comes to guaranteeing effective freedom of expression.

Khan and Usman (2023) adopted the comparative technique to show that states having extra institutional ability, treaty integration under home law, and solid civil society supervision are higher positioned to enforce worldwide norms on expression successfully. In comparison, Colomina et al. (2021) show how the global disinformation environment complicates enforcement by way of setting strain on states and platforms to impose content material controls that chance effortlessly turning into censorship if no longer regulated cautiously. These analyses taken collectively indicate that institutional capability and the statistics environment surrounding it determine together whether or not worldwide devices will prove to be powerful protections for public debate.

Leslie et al. (2021) particularly identifies the new technology venture, arguing that AI moderation and algorithmic amplification can undermine freedom of expression until norms internationally are up to date and operationalized to cover platform governance. Yam and Skorburg (2021) in addition spotlight that impact tests and human-rights-based totally algorithmic governance are important complements to

compliance with treaties if rights to speech are to be covered inside the virtual era. Such technology-centered examine as a consequence proves that the strength of world equipment inside the present times relies upon on regimes aiming at personal-region action and technical systems mediating public utterance.

Antai et al. (2024) tested local enforcement mechanisms and determined that even though in locations where there are nearby or continental units, lack of steady follow-up, scarce sources and vulnerable sanctions reduce their actual effect on protecting expression. Balarabe et al. (2022) also suggest that autonomy and impact of country wide human rights establishments make all the difference: wherein Paris principles requirements are met by NHRIs, treaty protections are extra efficaciously applied domestically. collectively, such empirical studies concludes that even as global human rights techniques provide compelling normative direction, their effectiveness in guaranteeing freedom of expression relies on neighborhood integration, institutional independence, civil society oversight, and recalibrated governance of the digital surroundings.

### **2.3.3 Challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression**

**State sovereignty and non-compliance:** State sovereignty is typically the greatest hindrance to the implementation of international human rights instruments since it allows governments to place national agendas over international obligations (Moeckli et al., 2022). Scholars argue that states use sovereignty as a shield to circumvent adherence to binding international treaties protecting freedom of expression (Alfredsson & Eide, 2023). Historical accounts also show that states tend to reinterpret human rights treaty obligations in ways that minimize their legal obligations (Ishay, 2022). Issues of sovereignty thus limit de facto enforcement of international human rights norms despite the existence of strong international regimes (Rotaru, 2023).

**Constraining legal frameworks:** Constitutions and restrictive legislations in most states constrain harmonization of domestic laws with international obligations on

freedom of expression (Gwama, 2019). In Uganda, laws such as those regulating the media and public assemblies have been charged with expressly contradicting international treaties (Byegimu, 2019). National legislatures, according to foreign scholars, have a propensity to pass ambiguous provisions granting states the leeway to suppress expression in the interest of maintaining order (Svensson-McCarthy, 2021). These conflicting legislations create a gap within the law that undermines the effectiveness of instruments such as the ICCPR and UDHR in guaranteeing freedom of expression (De Varennes, 2021).

**Lack of effective enforcement mechanisms:** Even where states ratify human rights treaties, lack of robust enforcement mechanisms undermines implementation (Antai et al., 2024). In practice, national courts and commissions lack the independence and capacity to hold governments accountable for violating international standards (Beinomugisha, 2024). Comparative analysis also indicates that weak institutional frameworks enable governments in ignoring recommendations from monitoring agencies such as the UN Human Rights Committee (Etuvoata, 2020). This finite enforcement capacity progressively erodes the domestic authority of international human rights law (Donnelly & Whelan, 2020).

**Political interference and corruption:** Political interference is equally a fundamental challenge in advancing adherence to international freedom of expression norms (Mubangizi, 2020). In Uganda, like elsewhere in African nations, corruption undermines institutional independence, and leads to selective enforcement of rights (Mujuzi, 2021). Scholars emphasize that government elites have a propensity to use power to stifle the media and civil society without accountability for violation of international norms (Balarabe et al., 2022). This kind of politicization of enforcement apparatus erodes public confidence in domestic and international mechanisms for the protection of human rights (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021).

**Surveillance and intimidation:** The rise in state surveillance has also had a chilling effect on freedom of expression, making international instruments less effective (Murray et al., 2024). There is proof that Uganda and Zimbabwe citizens exercise self-

ensorship due to fear of being under surveillance by the state, wearing down the right to free speech under international conventions (Colomina et al., 2021). Technology tools such as artificial intelligence have been commandeered by authoritarian regimes to suppress dissent rather than promote accountability (Leslie et al., 2021). Consequently, international mechanisms fail to keep pace with such modern techniques of repression that stifle expression (Yam & Skorburg, 2021).

#### **2.4 Research/ Literature Gap**

From the above literature review, despite the existence of international human rights treaties dedicated to the protection of freedom of expression, practical application is largely thwarted by political interference, weak enforcement measures, state sovereignty, corruption, selective application of rights, restrictive laws, and monitoring, which tend to limit the fulfillment of international norms in practice. While these instruments constitute the normative framework, there is a considerable gap in context-specific literature regarding how they operate within Uganda's political, legal, and institutional environment. Moreover, little has been given to the effectiveness of country wide tracking structures, the impact of emerging digital afflictions which includes surveillance and disinformation, and empirical research that seize the actual-life stories of citizens, leaving a vacuum within the information of the sensible software of freedom of expression in global human rights frameworks.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research method that turned into applied. It mentioned how these studies turned into carried out. The sample length, examine populace, and study design had been all covered. Moreover, it covers the description of variables, the sampling manner, research tools, statistics administration and evaluation, ethical problems, and survey constraints.

#### 3.2 Research design

This researcher applied a descriptive case examine design, which allows for an in-depth exploration of government compliance with worldwide human rights devices and its impact on freedom of expression inside the Uganda Human Rights fee (UHRC) (Maier et al., 2023). This layout is suitable as it allows the researcher to observe UHRC's organizational systems, regulations, practices, and demanding situations thoroughly, and to apprehend in element how global norms are implemented and the ensuing effects on freedom of expression (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). Through focusing on the single un-married institution, the study will be able to provide rich and contextualized documentation to show the practicality of human rights treaties.

For data collection, only one method was used in the research, which is the qualitative approach in interviewing the key informants in UHRC, including the Chairperson, Commissioners, directors, and some lower-level officials of the UHRC to understand in-depth implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of international human rights instruments (Fischer et al., 2023). The interviews explored perceptions, studies, challenges, and quality practices in promoting freedom of expression, permitting the researcher to become aware of key factors that affect compliance effectiveness. This method facilitated a complete understanding of organizational and contextual elements affecting the safety and merchandising of freedom of expression inside the Ugandan human rights landscape (Wieland et al., 2024).

### **3.3 Study area**

This study was accomplished inside the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) located on Plot 19, Lumumba street, Rumeeta constructing P.O box 4929, Kampala, Uganda. UHRC was decided on because it's far the primary national organization responsible for tracking, promoting, and implementing human rights in Uganda, making it a primary website for analyzing government compliance with global human rights units and their effect on freedom of expression.

### **3.4 Study population**

A population refers to all people or items with the characteristic one wish to understand which may be tangible or intangible (Ahuja, 2009). According to UHRC HRM records (2025), there are approximately 100 employees working with UHRC under five Directorates which include; the Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services, the Directorate of Finance and Administration, the Directorate of Research, Education and Documentation, the Directorate of Monitoring and Inspections, and the Directorate of Regional Service and these were included in the study as the target population. Furthermore, the study also included the top management of UHRC who were; the chairperson, commissioners and directors totaling to 6 and these participated in this study as the key informants.

### **3.5 Sample size determination**

A sample refers to a subset of the larger population that participated in the survey (Althubaiti, 2023). For this research study, a cross section of individuals was selected to draw research responses that gave a true picture of the research phenomena. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) state that in order to arrive at a reasonable, reliable and valid sample size, take 10% of the accessible population if the population is large and 30% if the population is small. Based on these authorities, sample size for this study was 10 respondents from UHRC which was constituted as follows; by getting 10% (100) of total population of selected top management and employees of UHRC;  $(10/100 \times 100 = 10)$ . This gave a sample size of 10 top management and lower-level

employees of UHRC who are; the Chairperson, Commissioners, and Directors of UHRC, as well as selected lower-level employees across the five directorates. This sample size was further divided in the table below.

**Table 1: Population, sample size and sampling methods**

| Categories of respondents                   | Sample size | Sampling method        |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Lower-level employees from the directorates | 5           | Simple random sampling |
| Chairperson                                 | 1           | Purposive sampling     |
| Commissioners                               | 2           | Purposive sampling     |
| Ditectors                                   | 2           | Purposive sampling     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>10</b>   |                        |

Source: UHRC (2025)

**3.6 Sampling methods**

This study employed a combination of purposive sampling and simple random sampling to select participants who can provide relevant and reliable qualitative data. Purposive sampling was used to select the Chairperson, Commissioners, and Directors of UHRC because they possess expert knowledge, strategic oversight, and direct involvement in the institutional processes related to government compliance with international human rights instruments and freedom of expression (Campbell et al., 2020).

In contrast, simple random sampling was used to select lower-level employees across the five directorates of UHRC. A master list of all eligible lower-level employees was obtained from the Human Resource Department, and participants were randomly selected using computer-generated random numbers. This strategy guaranteed that all employees had an equal probability of receiving protection, reduced selection bias, and enabled the researcher to adopt various management viewpoints concerning the effects of adherence to international human rights mechanisms on freedom of expression protection and marketing within the organization.

### **3.7 Data sources**

Facts were hired via the researcher through primary and secondary sources in the course of undertaking the research problem.

**Primary source:** Information obtained in primary facts became directly collected from the participants through key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. Such direct information depicted the views of the chosen upper management and employees of UHRC on the theme under investigation. Data collection was performed directly by the researcher in form of interview.

**Secondary source:** Information obtained in secondary facts was collected from previously published literature such as articles, journals, books, reports, and policies that pertain to the study.

### **3.8 Data collection methods**

#### **3.8.1 In-depth interviews**

For gathering qualitative data from the targeted low-level employees of the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), the researcher employed in-depth interviewing as a foremost method of inquiry. With the help of this technique, it was made possible for the researcher to learn about the manner in which compliance with the international human rights instruments by the government influences freedom of expression in reality. The interviews were conducted keeping the focus of the discussion on the perception of the staff regarding enforcement, reporting, monitoring, and difficulties in respecting freedom of expression.

#### **3.8.2 Key informant interviews**

This research method also involved conducting interviews of key informants such as top management control of the UHRC; namely, Chairperson, Commissioners, and directors. These research methods become ideal in soliciting professional viewpoints and strategic insights regarding institutional approaches in ensuring that international human rights instruments are enforced effectively. Interviews were conducted

concerning critical issues such as approaches used in ensuring compliance with the human rights instruments, the challenges encountered in implementing them, and their general impact in protecting the freedom of expression.

### **3.9 Data collection tools**

#### **3.9.1 In-depth interview guide**

Qualitative information became collected through the use of an extensive interview manual from the sampled workers at decrease-degree jobs within the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC). The guide became constructed of open-ended questions intended to discover the extent to which governments comply with international human rights gadgets and its impact on the freedom of expression. Questions emphasized the views of the staff members regarding the compliance mechanisms of their company, including enforcing procedures, reporting, surveillance techniques, and obstacles that may come to exist when trying to respect freedom of expression.

#### **3.9.2 Informant interview guide**

To gather information from the top controls, namely the Chairperson, Commissioners, and administrative personnel of the UHRC, the use of key informant interviews was done by the researcher. The interview questions focused on open-ended inquiries related to institutional approaches to ensuring compliance with international human rights tools, monitoring mechanisms, difficulties in implementing the tools, and their impact on protecting freedom of expression. Interviews provided expert opinions and management perspectives, which allowed for a better appreciation of organizational compliance approaches and the factors that affect freedom of expression in UHRC (Taherdoost, 2021).

### **3.10 Validity and reliability for qualitative research**

The authenticity of the qualitative data gathered in this analysis was made possible through note-taking during the in-depth interviews conducted with low-level employees and key informant interviews with UHRC top management, as well as

through the direct review of the records for accurate insight (Coleman, 2022). Individuals have been given an opportunity to study the findings to verify that the researcher's interpretations reflect their perspectives appropriately, and remarks turned into sought from the studies supervisor to enhance credibility. despite the fact that replicating the study to test reliability changed into now not viable because of time constraints, consistency become maintained by means of cautiously documenting all interview methods, participant responses, and the thematic coding technique for analysis, ensuring dependable and systematic qualitative exam of presidency compliance and its outcomes on freedom of expression (Hayashi et al., 2019).

### **3.11 Procedure for data collection**

The researcher initially obtained the introductory letter from the school of Social Sciences in Uganda Christian university upon approval of the studies thought and records series equipment. The letter changed into taken to the Uganda Human Rights fee (UHRC) management for the formal request to conduct the study. On approval, the researcher disbursed structured questionnaires to the inclined UHRC employees. Facts series become conducted best after buying knowledgeable consent from all of the members with an warranty of confidentiality, ethical compliance, and voluntarism inside the technique.

### **3.12 Data analysis**

#### **3.12.3 Analysis of qualitative data**

Qualitative information obtained from in-intensity interviews with lower-stage personnel and key informant interviews with the pinnacle control of UHRC became analyzed thematically, following Creswell's (2007) approach, and organized in line with the have a look at's unique goals. For the primary objective, information became coded and analyzed underneath the theme of key global human rights units, exploring contributors' knowledge and perspectives on treaties, covenants, and charters that guard freedom of expression in Uganda (Jackson et al., 2019).

For the 1/3 objective, facts become coded under the theme of demanding situations in implementing international human rights instruments, figuring out boundaries together with felony, institutional, political, and technological factors that restriction the belief of freedom of expression. For the fourth objective, evaluation turned into conducted underneath the subject matter of the position of UHRC in selling compliance, assessing how the fee allows adherence to worldwide standards, engages in tracking and reporting, and contributes to safeguarding freedom of expression in Uganda. decided on verbatim quotations have been used to illustrate key findings, supplying a rich and distinct knowledge of control and worker perspectives on the operationalization, successes, and gaps in selling freedom of expression via global human rights gadgets (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019).

### **3.13 Ethical consideration**

Ethical considerations had been carefully upheld throughout the examine by using making sure that each one non-public statistics is securely stored and used exclusively for studies functions, in strict adherence to privacy legal guidelines (Chervenak & McCullough, 2021). knowledgeable consent become obtained from all members thru distinct reasons of the have a look at's motive, methods, and potential dangers, with every participant signing a consent form to confirm voluntary participation (Skinner, 2020). Anonymity became maintained by using disposing of or coding any figuring out statistics so that man or woman identities stay undisclosed within the very last report (Pietilä et al., 2020).

Furthermore, confidentiality turned into ensured through restricting records get right of entry to access the studies crew and using aggregated or anonymized records for any disclosures. Plagiarism turned into prevented through rigorously mentioning all sources and truly attributing any direct quotations to their unique authors (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019). Eventually, the complete research procedure adhered to institutional ethical guidelines, thereby upholding concepts of respect, equity, and the protection of participants' rights.

### **3.14 Limitations and delimitations of the study**

First of all, some respondents were not willing to provide information because of being suspicious of where the information would be taken. This was solved through the nice remarkable reputation in the study context as a learning institution and also obtaining an introductory letter from the university.

Second, the researcher was limited by funds that were needed to facilitate the research such as motivating the respondents, printing fees and even daily transport to the organization to collect data. However the researcher used self-initiatives and strategies to mobilize financial assistance from family.

Third, some respondents delayed in participating in the interviews, which affected the researcher's planned data collection schedule. This was mitigated by scheduling interviews in advance, sending reminders to participants, and allowing flexible interview times to ensure timely completion of data collection.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presented the analysis of the findings, presentation, interpretation, and discussion of the findings. The report was generated from the in-depth interviews conducted with the lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC and key informant interviews with the top management of UHRC who are; the Chairperson, Commissioners, and Directors. The analysis of data in this chapter started with the demographic profile of the respondents and then afterwards followed the thematic analysis. The analysis revealed several perceptions which were organized into themes.

## 4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the general background information about the respondents who are lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC plus the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners, and Directors in relation to their gender, age, level of education and period spent working with UHRC as shown in the table below;

**Table 2: Background Information about the respondents**

| Item                           | Description        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender                         | Male               | 6         | 60.0           |
|                                | Female             | 4         | 40.0           |
|                                | <b>Total</b>       | <b>10</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |
| Age                            | 21-30 years        | 3         | 30.0           |
|                                | 31-40 years        | 4         | 40.0           |
|                                | 41-50 years        | 2         | 20.0           |
|                                | Above 50 years     | 1         | 10.0           |
|                                | <b>Total</b>       | <b>10</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |
| Level of education             | Bachelor's degree  | 5         | 50.0           |
|                                | Master's degree    | 3         | 30.0           |
|                                | Others             | 2         | 20.0           |
|                                | <b>Total</b>       | <b>10</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |
| Period spent working with UHRC | 1-5 years          | 3         | 30.0           |
|                                | 6-10 years         | 4         | 40.0           |
|                                | More than 10 years | 3         | 30.0           |
|                                | <b>Total</b>       | <b>10</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |

**Source:** *Primary data*

The findings indicated that 60.0% of the respondents were male, while 40.0% were female. This shows that the study was dominated by male respondents, suggesting that men constitute a larger proportion of employees involved in matters related to

compliance with international human rights instruments and freedom of expression at UHRC. However, the 40.0% female representation also indicates a reasonable level of gender inclusiveness, allowing the study to capture perspectives from both genders.

The results also revealed that 40.0% of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years, followed by 30.0% who were between 21-30 years. This indicates that the general respondents population falls within the economically dynamic and productively active age groups. Also, 20.0% of the respondents fall within the age group 41-50 years, while 10.0% are above the age of 50 years. This means that there is representation of experienced individuals having knowledge of the institution in addition to the young people offering new insights.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the results of the study confirmed that 50.0% of the participants had attained Bachelor's degree levels, which denotes the highest level, implying that the majority of the respondents have adequate qualifications required in instruction in connection with human rights mechanisms and freedom of expression issues. This was followed by 30.0% of respondents who had acquired a Master's degree, which denotes higher knowledge and professional expertise of a considerable proportion of the respondents. On the other hand, 20.0% had attained other qualifications besides being diverse in their education background.

Finally, it can be mentioned that the study also revealed that 40.0% of the participants had worked with UHRC for six-ten years, denoting the highest percentage. This was followed by 30.0% of the respondents who had worked in UHRC for more than ten years. In addition, 30.0% of the respondents had labored for 1-five years, displaying that more recent employees had been additionally included, thus presenting fresh and modern views on the observe troubles.

### 4.3 The key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda

#### 4.3.1 International human rights instruments safeguarding freedom of expression

From the interviews conducted with the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and Directors plus the selected lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC, they were asked for their views on the international human rights instruments they are aware of that guide Uganda in protecting freedom of expression and their responses were as follows;

**Universal Recognition of Freedom of Expression:** Key informants often noted that Uganda's preservation of freedom of expression is mostly guided by universally accepted international human rights standards. They made it clear that these tools offer the moral framework upon which institutional norms and national legislation are grounded. The respondents say that these tools show that freedom of speech is a basic human right and that the Ugandan government is expected to follow at least minimum standards. Key informants observed UHRC uses these frameworks to analyze complaints, advise government agencies, and advocate for freedom of expression issues. This perspective was shared by lower-level personnel, who said Uganda has committed itself to internationally recognized human rights norms that mostly drive their awareness of freedom of speech. Even if personnel might not always remember the instruments in technical depth, they said that these tools affect everyday activities including reporting, paperwork, and public interaction.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** The most important tool directing Uganda on freedom of speech, according to the key informants, is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). They clarified that, because it so clearly defines the limits of freedom of expression and allowable restrictions, Article 19 of the ICCPR is especially crucial. Key informants observed UHRC frequently uses the ICCPR in evaluating whether policies, laws, or government activities conform with global duties. The ICCPR was also noted as among the tools staff at lower levels are most familiar with, particularly through internal trainings,

publications, and case reviews taken on by the Commission. Even if they interact with it indirectly via institutional policies, many said that the ICCPR acts as a yardstick against which purported breaches of freedom of expression are judged.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** The key informants underlined the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a basic tool influencing Uganda's degree of freedom of expression. Though the UDHR is not legally enforceable, it has great moral and persuasive power and has shaped Uganda's Constitution and human rights laws, they said. Key informants said that UHRC's awareness campaigns, civic education, and public conversation supported by Article 19 of the UDHR are regularly referred to. Lower-level staff also noted the UDHR as a well-known source of freedom of expression. They said that since the UDHR is frequently presented in orientation sessions and community outreach events, it is among the most readily available worldwide tools for both the general public and employees.

**African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:** Key informants said the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is especially pertinent since it captures regional facts and duties. They said that as Uganda is a member of the African Union, the Charter binds it; UHRC then interprets freedom of speech inside African social, political, and cultural environment using it. According to the respondents, the Charter improves regional responsibility and matches international instruments. Lower-level staff members also noted the African Charter is frequently mentioned in situations including political expression, media freedom, and civic participation. They said the Charter is very important for the UHRC's work because it connects global standards with local ways to enforce them.

**Other supporting international and regional instruments:** According to the key informants, Uganda's approach is also guided by other tools including the African Commission's Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. They stated these tools provide greater specific commands on the way to use them, mainly in new fields like virtual expression and get admission to access facts. Decrease-degree workforce said they won't keep in mind the appropriate

names of these equipment, but they come across their principles via coverage commands, schooling manuals, and working tactics. They underlined that together such tools have an impact on the way UHRC sees and promotes freedom of expression. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....I won't constantly point out the gadgets by way of name, however files like the UDHR and ICCPR manual how we understand and protect freedom of expression in our everyday paintings on the commission.....”* **Lower-level employee**

*“.....worldwide contraptions just like the ICCPR and the African constitution give us a clean trendy. Whenever we assess a complaint on freedom of expression, we always ask whether government actions align with these obligations.....”* **Key informant**

#### **4.3.2 Integration of international human rights instruments into UHRC operations**

From the interviews conducted with the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and Directors plus the selected lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC, they were asked for their views on how UHRC integrates these instruments into its daily operations and their responses were as follows;

**Policy and legal framework alignment:** Key informants said UHRC mostly uses international human rights treaties into its everyday activities by matching its internal rules, policies, and legal interpretations with global norms like those safeguarding freedom of expression. They observed that international agreements and conventions help to shape decision-making, complaint management, investigations, and advisory support given to government organizations. Senior authorities underlined that when evaluating breaches and making recommendations these tools serve as references. Lower-level employees stated that once managing complaints, creating reports, and helping inquiries, they use rights-based norms to reveal this alignment of their everyday work. They found that concepts drawn from worldwide human rights

standards on freedom of expression influence their work even though they might not usually mention specific gear.

**Complaint managing and investigative methods:** Key informants stated that UHRC activities encompass criticism intake and investigation methods integrate worldwide human rights equipment. They clarified that says approximately freedom of speech are evaluated towards worldwide standards to envision if state guidelines in shape Uganda's commitments below international regulation. Those gear help with comparing proof, expertise rules, and drawing conclusions. Decrease-degree group of workers individuals stated their obligations in initial assessment, documentation, and criticism registration help to directly guide enforcement of these gears. They said they follow demonstrated methods guided by using international norms to make certain that proceedings approximately freedom of expression are dealt with fairly and uniformly.

**Monitoring, reporting, and advisory functions:** Key informants emphasized UHRC's inclusion of international standards via tracking state adherence and creation of reports given to governmental agencies and global forums. They observed that recommendations on freedom of expression are designed with international standards to boost responsibility and encourage adherence. Lower-level personnel clarified that they help in these procedures by gathering information, writing monitoring reports, and supporting documentation reflecting ideas of international human rights. Their work, they said, guarantees that institutional publications follow globally accepted standards on freedom of expression.

**Capacity building and institutional training:** Key informants said UHRC incorporates worldwide human rights instruments by planning courses, seminars, and internal awareness campaigns meant to improve staff knowledge of freedom of expression criteria. They underlined that capacity building facilitates the transformation of global commitments into real institutional activity. Training sessions, according to lower-level personnel, enable them to grasp how daily responsibilities connect to worldwide instruments. They observed that these kind of capacity-building projects

increase their faith in using human rights concepts when interacting with government agencies, stakeholders, and complainants.

**Public engagement and awareness promotion:** Key informants noted UHRC implements international instruments by means of public education, outreach activities, and advocacy campaigns meant to raise knowledge of freedom of expression rights. They emphasized that UHRC's public events and policy debates gain legitimacy and power from worldwide norms. Lower-level staff said that by converting international norms into easily understandable information for the public and duty bearers, their participation in community outreach, documentation, and stakeholder engagement helps to enforce these instruments. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....International human rights instruments guide our policies, investigations, and recommendations, especially when dealing with complaints related to freedom of expression.....”* Key informant

*“.....Even at my level, the procedures we follow are based on international human rights principles, which shape how we handle and document freedom of expression cases.....”* Lower-level employee

#### **4.4 The effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda**

##### **4.4.1 Effectiveness of international human rights instruments in promoting freedom of expression**

From the interviews conducted with the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and Directors plus the selected lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC, they were asked for their views on how effective these instruments are in influencing government policies on freedom of expression and their responses were as follows;

**Normative guidance on government policy:** Key informants underlined that strong normative framework that directs government policy development on freedom of speech comes from international human rights instruments like the ICCPR and the African Charter. They underlined that these tools are routinely mentioned in UHRC reports, advisory opinions, and presentations to Parliament and other state officials, hence influencing policy discussions and fostering alignment with global norms. However, they underlined that although the tools are effective at the policy level, their influence mostly relies on political will and government institutions' dedication. This view was shared by lower-level staff members, who said that in their daily work, these tools act as reference points for evaluating complaints, carrying out investigations, and writing recommendations. Although policy changes are sometimes slow and inconsistent, they pointed out that the tools support UHRC's interaction with governmental entities by way of legitimation.

**Legal and institutional enforcement power:** Key informants emphasized that international human rights standards give UHRC more legal and institutional power to interact with the government on matters of freedom of expression. They clarified that by offering globally accepted benchmarks against which government policies and laws may be judged, the instruments help to further UHRC's goal. They did note, though, that since many of these tools depend on local incorporation and compliance systems that are not always strong, enforcement is still limited. According to lower-level workers, these tools' operational effectiveness varies. Although they offer a solid legal foundation for inquiries and recommendations, staff members noted that enforcement outcomes typically rely on cooperation from other state agencies, which is not always forthcoming.

**Protection of freedom of expression in practice:** Generally, key informants concurred that by defining obvious standards for appropriate government behavior, international instruments have helped favorably to safeguard freedom of expression. They gave examples of times UHRC initiatives based on global norms resulted in the examination of limiting policies or administrative decisions. They admitted, though, that breaches still exist, particularly in politically sensitive situations. Lower-degree

people determined that these tools allow them to identify infractions and direct remedial measures in their jobs. They noted, though, that worry among complainants, gradual response from officers and poor comply with-through on UHRC suggestions restrict realistic safety at times.

**Cognizance and capability to use the units:** Senior officials underlined that among responsibility bearers, expertise and potential are directly related to the achievement of international human rights mechanisms. They said that compliance generally improves in cases while government representatives are nicely-versed in international responsibilities. UHRC therefore supports public education, education, and sensitizing campaigns to enhance the actual-international have an effect on of those equipment. Decrease-stage team of workers members said that more training has boosted their self-assurance in the usage of international norms of their each day process. They did, however, note that a few authorities' officers lack adequate expertise of those tools, which impairs their capacity to guarantee freedom of expression.

**Gaps between international commitments and reality:** Key informants admitted there was continually a mismatch between Uganda's worldwide duties and what it in reality does. They determined that political strain, safety issues, and a loss of enforcement skills limit their real have an effect on governmental conduct even supposing the equipment theoretically paintings. Lower-level workers also noted that although the tools work well as guides, occasionally their significance is more symbolic than revolutionary. They underlined that stronger responsibility measures are necessary to realize the full potential of these tools in preserving freedom of speech. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....International human rights instruments give us a strong foundation to engage government on freedom of expression, but their effectiveness ultimately depends on how willing state institutions are to comply with them.....”* Key informant

*“.....In our daily work, these instruments guide how we handle cases and assess violations, but enforcing freedom of expression is still challenging when other institutions do not fully cooperate.....”* Lower level employee

#### **4.4.2 Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms**

From the interviews conducted with the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and Directors plus the selected lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC, they were asked for their views on the mechanisms that UHRC uses to monitor compliance with these instruments and their responses were as follows;

**Compliance monitoring frameworks:** Key informants said UHRC uses official organizational structures included in its charter to track adherence to international human rights treaties. Top control said that everyday evaluations of presidency guidelines in opposition to international norms on freedom of expression, investigations, and inspections assist to screen compliance. Commissioners underlined that UHRC tests compliance by searching at kingdom actors' legal guidelines, guidelines, and actions to ensure they're in step with treaties like the ICCPR and the African charter. Employees at lower tiers subsidized this viewpoint, noting that their every day jobs together with managing court cases, recording infractions, and compiling reviews without delay assist to tune compliance. They pointed out that within the Commission these structures help to guide the evaluation and resolution of freedom of speech-related matters.

**Complaints handling and investigations:** Key informants stressed that UHRC checks and guarantees compliance mostly by means of complaints handling. People and media workers file complaints regarding violations of free speech, which are looked at using international human rights standards. Administrators said that suggestions to authorities corporations are informed with the aid of the effects of studies. Lower-level employees affirmed that they put this procedure into movement by means of compiling proof, managing complaints, and helping investigations. They pointed out

that having worldwide gear help to make enforcement sensible when you consider that they provide unambiguous hints for comparing if violations have taken place.

**Reporting and documentation structures:** Key informants stated that UHRC relies upon totally on normal reporting to track compliance. According to the respondents, Parliament, government ministries, and international treaty institutions obtain routine reports on how Uganda is performing regarding its commitments on freedom of expression. The commissioners claimed that such studies assist with advocacy and responsibility. According to lower-level bureaucrats, they record violations, contribute articles for news reports, and collect data. It was made clear that these reporting mechanisms convert theoretical international devices into practical routine equipment.

**Engagement with government agencies:** Some key informants mentioned that the UHRC monitors its performance through routine engagement with various ministries, law enforcement agencies, and regulatory institutions. Via conversations, consultative evaluations, and observe-u.s.on recommendations, UHRC evaluates whether authorities officials are upholding international norms on freedom of expression. Administrators underlined that this interplay allows UHRC to affect compliance above mere investigations. Employees on lower stages stated the identical element: normal duties include inter-employer communication, seminars, and comply with-up letters, consequently enforcement tools are apparent and beneficial in reality.

**Public schooling and cognizance activities:** Top management harassed that public education serves as a way of enforcement and monitoring. They stated that by means of measuring focus and responsiveness to freedom of expression requirements, schooling programs, sensitization efforts, and civic schooling tasks help compare government compliance. Commissioners observed that input from those events publications the tracking approach of UHRC. Decrease-degree employees reported that their participation in outreach activities facilitates monitor discrepancies between coverage pledges and real exercise, therefore helping the usefulness of

global contraptions in each day operations. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....Our monitoring role is exercised through investigations, inspections, and reporting, all of which are guided by international human rights instruments on freedom of expression.....”* **Key informant**

*“.....In our daily work, these instruments are not abstract; they guide how we receive complaints, assess violations, and make recommendations.....”* **Lower level employee**

#### **4.5 Challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda**

##### **4.5.1 Challenges in enforcement of human rights instruments**

From the interviews conducted with the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and Directors plus the selected lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC, they were asked for their views on the main obstacles UHRC faces in enforcing these human rights instruments and their responses were as follows;

**Limited institutional resources:** Key informants indicated that UHRC’s lack of institutional resources is among the main challenges in implementing human rights conventions. They observed that inadequate staffing, negative logistical assistance, and financial barriers every now and then impede the efficient monitoring and enforcement of compliance with world human rights norms. This drawback limits the fee's potential to follow up on pronounced lawsuits, carry out field inquiries, and run focus initiatives. This changed into supported by means of lower-degree employees, who said that useful resource constraints commonly either postpone or complicate using those tools in their everyday work, specifically whilst dealing with complaints or doing community outreach.

Political interference: the important thing informants agree with political meddling is a first-rate obstacle to implementing human rights tools. They pointed out instances whilst political gamers or authorities rules affect case priority or the translation of specific rights, which includes freedom of expression. Employees at some stage in the directorates shared this concern, adding that political influences can now and again have an impact on decisions in their divisions; consequently its miles challenging to absolutely use the equipment without observed bias or reluctance.

**Legal and regulatory gaps:** The important thing informants made clean that enforcement is hampered in Uganda by slow domestication of global human rights instruments and loopholes in country wide law. These gaps imply that sure equipment either lack felony assist for sensible use or are not completely operationalized. personnel at lower stages referred to that this adds uncertainty to their job since a few procedures or activities wanted under the gadgets couldn't be truly justified by country wide law, which causes delays or cautious remedy of instances.

**Public cognizance and cooperation:** The primary impediment the key informants emphasized changed into the minimum degree of public information about human rights gadgets. They argued that many infractions pass unnoticed without informed citizens; hence, the implementation strategy becomes reactive instead of proactive. Contributing members from the lower level group of employees argued that people in the community are unaware of how to file cases and the number of rights that they possess, making their everyday work more difficult and requiring additional effort in educating them.

**Technological and surveillance constraints:** Key informants made it very clear that the ability of the commission to monitor its performance effectively is limited due to technological constraints. Maintaining current databases, tracking media retailers, and decoding patterns related to freedom of expression violations have been a number of the problems they brought up. Employees agreed that antiquated systems and a paucity of digital resources impede every day tracking due to the fact that they

make it more difficult to at once cope with growing troubles or routinely tune compliance.

Bureaucratic methods: the key informants found that lengthy administrative approaches within the fee obstruct the implementation of human rights treaties. Administrative rules, reporting guidelines, and approval chains frequently slow down activate response. Employees talked about that those administrative limitations make it difficult to react hastily to court cases or efficaciously carry out enforcement measures, therefore influencing the general impact of the gear in ordinary operations. Some of the chosen respondents suggested that;

*“.....restricted sources and political pressures are regular hurdles; even when we’ve got the mandate, realistic enforcement is hard.....”* **Key informant**

*“.....occasionally we recognize what need to be executed under these contraptions, however loss of clean tactics and sources makes it hard to act without delay.....”* **Lower level employee**

#### **4.5.2 Strategies to overcome implementation challenges**

From the interviews conducted with the top management of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and Directors plus the selected lower-level employees across the five directorates in UHRC, they were asked for their views on the strategies that have been attempted to overcome these implementation challenges and their responses were as follows;

**Capacity building initiatives:** The key informants stressed that UHRC has run a number of training courses and seminars to help employees better understand and apply international human rights standards. normal capability-building sessions, they talked about, are intended to provide people the understanding and gear they want to correctly uphold freedom of speech and recognize difficult criminal structures. Whilst acknowledging those applications, decrease-stage team of workers contributors said that more every day and practical education periods could assist them to constantly

use the equipment in daily operations. They underlined that refresher guides and sensible sports would assist students to boom their understanding of and self-warranty in handling cases.

**Strengthening monitoring and reporting systems:** Key informants said UHRC has created sturdy monitoring and reporting structures to follow adherence to human rights norms via which compliance with human rights contraptions is tracked. Ordinary inspections, reporting paperwork, and records amassing methods allowing the fee to spot gaps and react fast are amongst these structures. Although they favored the organized reporting systems, lower-stage team of workers participants said that better commands and remarks loops would help them to use the equipment effectively. They underlined that managers' spark off response on submitted concerns could aid the real-international implementation of compliance regulations.

**Collaboration with stakeholders:** Top management stated UHRC has worked with foreign entities, authorities agencies, and civil society corporations to tackle implementation troubles by means of alliances with stakeholders. Those projects purpose to disseminate quality practices, offer technical assistance, and support institutional modifications improving freedom of speech. employees on lower tiers emphasised the need of those alliances, pronouncing that outside assistance would possibly assist to cope with institutional issues like bureaucratic delays and useful resource constraints that impede day by day enforcement of human rights gadgets.

**Policy reforms and institutional changes:** Key informants noted that UHRC has changed a few internal regulations and running methods to do away with bottlenecks stopping right implementation of human rights gadgets. They pointed to changes in workflow, delegation of power, and clarifications in institutional mandates as ways to improve obligation and responsibility. Lower-level employees found that streamlining internal techniques and reducing down on office work would substantially beautify their potential to apply the gear continually. They confused that simplified tactics will reduce uncertainty and guarantee prompt response on stated court cases.

**Consciousness and sensitization campaigns:** Key informants said UHRC has run public attention occasions to tell stakeholders and those about their rights below international human rights treaties. By inspiring human beings to record abuses and sell duty, those packages gently support the implementation of freedom of expression. Normal sensitizing in the corporation itself might assist team of workers individuals at lower degrees higher apprehend and help the tools, which would simplify their use during each day duties.

**Useful resource mobilization:** To permit the green enforcement of human rights units, the senior management harassed efforts to get greater financial, technological, and human sources. They underlined that tracking compliance, doing investigations, and presenting training packages rely upon having sufficient sources. Lower-degree group of workers participants underlined that more assets, such as get right of entry to access updated criminal substances, generation, and operational assistance, might help them to meet their obligations greater effectively and guarantee compliance with international human rights norms.

**Feedback and continuous improvement:** Key informants stated that UHRC has installed region comments structures like overview meetings and assessment reports to find out if the implementation plans are operating and in which matters might be higher. They emphasized that regular evaluation permits the fee to adapt and enhance techniques for progressed compliance outcomes. on the operational degree, lower-level people advised that greater organized inner comments channels where team of workers members should correctly express issues and ideas might substantially beautify the software of human rights units. a number of the selected respondents suggested that;

*“.....Regular training and collaboration with partners have been crucial in bridging knowledge gaps and improving enforcement of freedom of expression.....”* Key informant

*“.....Having clear guidelines, feedback from supervisors, and proper resources would make applying these instruments in daily work much easier.....”* Lower level employee

#### **4.6 The role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda**

##### **4.6.1 UHRC’s Role in Promoting Government Compliance**

From the interviews performed with the top control of UHRC like the Chairperson, Commissioners and administrators plus the chosen decrease-level personnel across the 5 directorates in UHRC, they had been requested for his or her views on how UHRC helps the authorities in complying with international human rights contraptions related to freedom of expression and their responses had been as follows;

**Policy advisory and steerage:** Key informants said that via offering policy recommendation and official route on matching countrywide laws, rules, and administrative processes with global human rights instruments protecting freedom of expression, UHRC aids authorities compliance. They found that UHRC analyzes payments, gives advisory critiques, and interacts with ministries and Parliament to guarantee that authorities selections reflect freedom of speech suggestions. Lower-level staff also supported this by saying that their daily job usually involves converting these policy guidelines into operational activities like drafting briefs, papers, and internal reports citing foreign standards and guiding government officials on acceptable behaviors.

**Monitoring and reporting on state compliance:** Key informants pointed out that UHRC is essential for tracking government behavior and noting Uganda's adherence to international human rights commitments concerning freedom of speech. Key mechanisms of responsibility they underlined were regular inspections, thematic reports, and contributions to regional and global reporting processes. Lesser-level personnel backed this perspective by stating that since they help with data gathering,

case documentation, and follow-up actions feeding into monitoring reports, world instruments are useful tools for gauging government performance.

**Handling complaints and investigations:** Key informants emphasized that UHRC directly encourages government obedience by looking into claims involving breaches of freedom of speech. They clarified that studies point to recommendations aimed at state institutions urging remedial measures in line with world standards. Lower-level workers said that their involvement in handling complaints, doing initial evaluations, and assisting investigations helps operationalize international human rights tools at institutional and local levels.

**Human rights schooling and education:** Top management talked about that thru human rights training and capacity-constructing initiatives aimed at public officials, security corporations, and nearby government leaders, UHRC helps to improve government compliance. They underlined that training publications enable authorities gamers grasp international responsibilities on freedom of expression and decrease unintentional breaches. Lesser-degree personnel stated they help via arranging workshops, growing training substances, and running seminars, all of which they think lightly will increase knowledge and appreciation of freedom of expression for the duration of government organizations.

**Engagement with country institutions and stakeholders:** Key informants stated that UHRC encourages compliance with worldwide human rights instruments with the aid of dialogues, consultative periods, and joint initiatives with government departments, ministries, groups, and other events. They saw this interaction as bridging nearby software and worldwide standards. Lesser-degree group of workers participants said that their ordinary sports such as arranging conferences, following up on commitments made with the aid of nation actors, and keeping conversation channels that sell compliance expectations mirror such interactions.

**Advocacy and public attention:** Key informants said that UHRC promotes authorities compliance by selling regard of freedom of expression thru public statements, media interplay, and attention initiatives based totally on international human rights

criteria. Public visibility and demands, they pointed out, inspire authorities officers to healthy international obligations. Lesser-level workers noted that their efforts in documentation, media support, and community outreach help spread these ideas and reinforce the idea that under international law, freedom of expression is a protected right.

**Follow-up and recommendations:** Key informants highlighted that a major UHRC contribution in encouraging government adherence is making recommendations and following up on their execution. They said that consistent follow-up promotes incremental institutional transformation and conformity with world norms. Employees at lower levels stated that they help this process by monitoring government agency responses, creating follow-up reports, and reminding duty bearers of their obligations under international human rights instruments. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....UHRC acts as a bridge between international human rights standards and government practice by advising, monitoring, and reminding state institutions of their obligations on freedom of expression.....”* **Key informant**

*“.....In our daily work, we see how international human rights instruments guide what we do, especially when documenting cases and engaging government officials on freedom of expression.....”* **Lower level employee**

## **4.7 Discussion of findings**

### **4.7.1 The key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda**

The results of the research showed that both lower-level workers at UHRC and important informants generally regard international human rights instruments as the main basis for preserving freedom of speech and directing institutional practice. Moeckli et al. (2022) and Donnelly and Whelan (2020) concur with the literature in arguing that international human rights law offers normative standards that shape

state obligations and the operation of national human rights bodies. Likewise, Alfredsson and Eide (2023) and Ishay (2022) highlight that instruments like the UDHR and ICCPR set minimum standards that impact domestic legal and policy frameworks. Yussoff and Nordin (2021), whose research shows how worldwide norms act as benchmarks for judging country adherence with freedom of expression standards, likewise find resonance with the data. In the Ugandan context, this confirms earlier findings by Gwama (2019) and Byegimu (2019) that international human rights instruments strongly guide constitutional and institutional attitudes toward freedom of expression.

The findings further revealed that UHRC operationalizes these instruments through internal policy alignment, complaint handling, investigations, monitoring, reporting, and capacity building, which is consistent with existing scholarship. Similarly, according to Antai et al. (2024), as well as Khan and Usman (2023), the effectiveness of international human rights law depends on how well the global norms are implemented in the domestic rules. The findings from Balarabe et al. (2022) help support the present study's results since they demonstrate that the systems of UHRC largely comply with the Paris standards particularly regarding monitoring, reporting, and advisory functions. But some literature offers a different and more important point of view. According to Ngoc et al. (2025), as well as Svensson-McCarthy (2021), the underperformance of international human rights treaties and the political restrictions make these tools merely symbolic in many political regimes. It is partially contrary to the present findings since they show that despite the difficulties, UHRC's daily operations involve considerable incorporation of international norms.

In the end, the research findings revealed that although low-level employees might not be able to recognize some of the tools by name, their activities are guided by the theories derived from international frameworks, thus indicating high levels of institutionalization of human rights standards. The theory of Rotaru (2023), which posits that theories of human rights evolve from abstract theories to become practical means of governance, is thereby corroborated by this. In a similar vein, Mubangizi (2020) notes that a human rights approach proves effective where the guidelines are

deeply entrenched within routine bureaucratic practices. On the contrary, Murray et al. (2024) present counter-arguments, asserting that, in the case of Uganda, the structure itself becomes an obstacle to the practicality of international human rights standards, especially freedom of speech. This divergence factors to the truth that, although UHRC has efficiently incorporated international standards at policy and operational ranges, wider political and institutional factors may want to but limit their complete implementation in exercise, therefore supporting the literature criticizing the discrepancy between professional compliance and real realities.

#### **4.7.2 Challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda**

The have a look at consequences confirmed that worldwide human rights devices are very crucial for steering the enforcement of freedom of expression through UHRC. That is due to the fact they deliver benchmarks for reviewing rules, looking at complaints, and operating with the government. These effects aid the claims made with the aid of Donnelly and Whelan (2020) and Moeckli et al. (2022) that global human rights laws serve as authoritative standards that affect nation conduct and allow national human rights agencies. Likewise, Ishay (2022) and Alfredsson and Eide (2023) pressure that contraptions just like the UDHR and ICCPR set minimal requirements that justify nearby human rights enforcement. Consistent with the modern-day studies, Yussoff and Nordin (2021) found that although domestic enforcement varies, international norms significantly affect country wide attitudes to freedom of expression through guiding prison interpretation and policy alignment. Those researches aid the belief that worldwide equipment supply UHRC institutional electricity and provide a dependable foundation for interacting with the authorities on freedom of expression.

The look at findings in addition discovered that UHRC operationalizes international human rights gadgets thru dependent mechanisms along with proceedings dealing with, investigations, tracking, reporting, and sustained engagement with authorities institutions, although with mixed effectiveness. these outcomes hook up with the

studies by Antai et al. (2024) and Khan and Usman (2023), who argue that the efficiency of global regulation by and large is predicated at the ability of enforcement corporations and domestic implementation mechanisms. regular with the locating of the present day studies the ones international instruments are ingrained interior UHRC's operational sports; Balarabe et al. (2022) also cited that UHRC in most cases adheres to the Paris concepts in its advisory and tracking capacities. But the effects relatively contradict Rotaru's (2023) extra effective outlook, in keeping with whom the institutionalization of human rights standards commonly results in better safety consequences. The modern studies, on the other hand, demonstrate that without associated political and institutional backing, operational integration by me does not make sure a hit implementation.

The examine consequences ultimately indicated that the sensible impact of international human rights contraptions on guarding freedom of expression in Uganda is conditional and limited by inadequate enforcement capability, little inter-enterprise cooperation, political pressures, and discrepancies between worldwide obligations and actual conduct. Those results help Ngoc et al. (2025), who show that international human rights gadgets normally continue to be aspirational in preference to transformative below disturbing or politically touchy situations. Murray et al. (2024) further support this argument by demonstrating how political factors and surveillance methods in Uganda have a chilling effect that inhibits freedom of expression notwithstanding official human rights pledges. Likewise, Mujuzi (2021) and Beinomugisha (2024) observe that, rather than legal absence, enforcement difficulties provide the major impediment to the fulfillment of human rights in Uganda. This stands in opposition to works that see international instruments as intrinsically good enforcement tools, hence supporting the study's finding that political will, institutional collaboration, and improved accountability measures largely determine their actual-world influence.

### **4.7.3 The role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda**

The results of the research confirmed that selling authorities compliance with international human rights contraptions on freedom of speech relies upon mostly on UHRC's coverage-oriented and advising feature. This end result relates with the frame of labor by means of Moeckli et al. (2022) and Donnelly and Whelan (2020), who contend that country wide human rights establishments are the main mediators in transforming international human rights norms into local policy and legislative frameworks. Likewise, Alfredsson and Eide (2023) underline that through advisory interaction rather than direct enforcement, international norms like the UDHR act as guiding principles shaping national policies. In the Ugandan context, Balarabe et al. (2022) also discovered that UHRC mostly satisfies its Paris Principles mandate by advising government bodies and Parliament, therefore supporting the present study's conclusion that policy review and guidance are among UHRC's most effective weapons for encouraging adherence with freedom of expression duties.

The study results also showed that UHRC encourages compliance by means of monitoring, reporting, complaints processing, and inquiries rooted in international human rights standards. These results fit the studies by Khan and Usman (2023) and Antai et al. (2024), who highlight how domestic monitoring systems, reporting systems, and institutional follow-up help international human rights law to be effective. Mujuzi (2021) notes similarly that, despite ongoing obstacles, Uganda's human rights enforcement framework gives UHRC investigative and recommendatory powers. However, the findings somewhat conflict with Rotaru (2023), who argued that the development and institutionalization of human rights standards inherently result in better compliance. Contrary to earlier research, the current study reveals that although UHRC's enforcement tools are available and routinely employed their effectiveness is usually limited by poor follow-through on recommendations and scant cooperation from state bodies.

The results of the research ultimately showed that public support, stakeholder involvement, human rights education, follow-up on recommendations, and public advocacy are the main ways UHRC progressively affects government policies on freedom of speech. Etuvoata (2020) supports this conclusion by claiming that improving adherence to human rights decisions, especially within African human rights systems, depends on ongoing participation, awareness-raising, and accountability devices. Murray et al. (2024) support this argument even more by demonstrating that in places like Uganda, political and structural forces might weaken freedom of expression, therefore advocacy and ongoing follow-up are absolutely necessary. On the other hand, Ngoc et al. (2025) contend that such tactics have little effect under autocratic or restrictive settings and might not noticeably change state behavior. This divergence makes it clear that despite the fact that UHRC's various methods substantially enable to boom compliance, its effectiveness is sluggish and very reliant on greater political will and institutional reaction.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the summary of all of the findings said in chapter four in line with questions of the examine, attracts conclusions, indicates tips and additionally proposes some regions for in addition examine.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

The effects discovered that, as the premise for safeguarding freedom of expression in Uganda and as essential to the everyday sports of the fee, each important informants and decrease-stage workforce at UHRC evidently perceive international human rights instruments. Respondents identified globally and regionally identified instruments as placing minimal requirements that manual Uganda's responsibilities, with those instruments serving as reference points for assessing complaints, advising government institutions, and promoting accountability. The research additionally demonstrates that UHRC uses these tools by means of coordinating internal regulations and prison interpretations, incorporating them into complaint control and investigative structures, tracking and reporting on kingdom compliance, growing team of workers ability, and attractive in public education and advocacy. Even if less senior staff members may not always remember particular tools by name, the ideas taken from these frameworks nonetheless influence their everyday work, therefore revealing that international human rights standards are entrenched both at policy and operational levels inside UHRC's work on freedom of expression.

Furthermore, the study established that, by means of UHRC, international human rights laws are somewhat but conditionally vital in upholding freedom of speech in Uganda. Respondents concurred that these tools give government policy development a solid legal and normative framework, boost UHRC's institutional power, and provide clear criteria for evaluating rules, policies, and claimed violations of freedom of

speech. UHRC uses these tools by means of organized monitoring systems that include policy and legal reviews, complaints handling and investigations, reporting to Parliament and international treaty bodies, continuous interaction with government institutions, and public education and awareness campaigns. But both higher-level and lower-level workers observed that differences between global promises and actual implementation, weak enforcement ability, little collaboration from some state agencies, political pressures, and inadequate knowledge among duty bearers constrain the practical utility of these tools. Consequently, although international human rights instruments clearly validate UHRC's actions and direct its monitoring and enforcement procedures, their influence on guarding freedom of expression in practice mostly relies on institutional cooperation, political will, and improved accountability measures.

Lastly, the results showed that UHRC is quite important in encouraging the Ugandan government to adhere to worldwide human rights laws on freedom of expression. Reviewing laws, providing direction, and involving Parliament and ministries to match national frameworks with international norms, UHRC gives policy advice, respondents remarked. Supported by staff members in charge of data gathering and documentation, the Commission also tracks compliance using inspections, reports, and involvement in regional and worldwide reporting. Moreover, the UHRC ensures compliance with the standards through monitoring judicial proceedings and conducting research leading to guidelines mainly founded on the generic nature of the international. Equally weighed is the need for human rights training, advocacy, stakeholder involvement, and follow-up on recommendations, among others, as vital tools for raising awareness, promoting responsibility, and aligning government policies with international commitments to free speech.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

In conclusion, although it is true that despite familiarity and incorporation of international human rights tools in the operation of UHRC, the application of these tools in protecting the freedom of expression in Uganda is heavily dependent on

political will and institutional support. Though these tools are used by UHRC as benchmarks for prisons and morals, political considerations and lack of cooperation from some kingdom stakeholders make full implementation of these tools difficult. It means that respect for human rights standards is more of an issue of symbolism than reality unless there is continued political will and support from institutions.

Another important conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that lack of knowledge and understanding about international human rights standards by some government officers and duty bearers adversely affects the manner in which freedom of expression is upheld. While top government officials demonstrate proficiency with the use of these tools, lack of sufficient knowledge makes decision making inconsistent.

Moreover, it is observed in the study that despite the establishment by UHRC of a system of monitoring and enforcement comprising of complaint handling, investigations, inspections, and reporting, such measures have certain operational and resource limitations. Resource limitations, delays, and poor enforcement capacity affect UHRC's ability to translate the international human rights principles into tangible freedom of expression security. Therefore, enforcement is inconsistent, thus affecting the practical implications of international apparatus.

Additionally, it is concluded that the public knowledge of freedom of expression and international human rights principles is lacking, thus having implications on compliance and accountability. Despite the work done by UHRC through public education and advocacy, the organization is failing to ensure full enjoyment of the rights or to hold duty-bearers accountable. The poor participation of the public leads to inadequate general support of freedom of expression and limits the pressure put on governmental agencies to fulfill international obligations.

At last, the study demonstrates that poor cooperation between UHRC, governmental agencies, and other interested events prevents an effective compliance with international human rights requirements. Poor cooperation, poor information exchange, and the absence of adequate preparedness systems reduce the

effectiveness and consistency of all enforcement activities. In this regard, protecting the right of freedom of expression demands more collaboration.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Considering the findings from the examine, the next recommendations have been considered significant in terms of the effects of government adherence to international human rights agreements on freedom of expression within Uganda with specific consideration of Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC);

**Political will and institutional support:** The research suggests the need for increased political will and institutional support in ensuring compliance with international human rights treaties. The operations of UHRC can often be constrained by political influence and inconsistent collaboration. Government must actively support the recommendations made by UHRC, incorporate human rights principles within the laws, and institute accountability mechanisms that create a gap between international commitments and actions.

**Capacity building of government officials:** The study suggests the need for capacity building of government officials and other duty bearers in terms of international human rights instruments. Lack of knowledge among some officials prevents the enforcement of freedom of expression. Routine workshops and sensitization programs will assist in raising awareness, promoting compliance, and allowing officials to apply human rights principles in decision-making.

**Enhancement of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms of UHRC:** The review suggests the need to enhance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms by UHRC. While UHRC monitors the degree of compliance through investigation of complaints, the enforcement process is not always possible. Improved structure, provision of information and sources to enable monitoring and follow-up actions, and enforcing the corrective actions would assist in translating international principles into reality.

**Raising awareness among public via education and advocacy campaigns:** The review suggests the need to raise awareness and increase public education and advocacy in respect to freedom of expression. Greater awareness among the people increases accountability of institutions in ensuring compliance. UHRC should collaborate with other agencies and media to conduct educational and advocacy campaigns aimed at enlightening citizens on how to act.

**Improved cooperation and coordination between organizations:** The review suggests the need for improving cooperation and coordination between organizations such as UHRC and other government institutions. This will enhance the overall effectiveness of the organization. Better coordination frameworks should be established to facilitate information exchange and consistent enforcement of international human rights laws.

### **5.5 Areas for further research**

The role that various national human rights institutions play in Africa with regard to influencing compliance with international human rights treaties and its influence on freedom of expression should be considered in future studies.

Likewise, other scholars may wish to study the influence of political will, capability of institutions, and cooperation between organizations when it comes to enforcing international human rights norms, in particular, freedom of expression.

Other researchers may wish to examine the impact of public awareness, the media, and civil society involvement in ensuring governmental compliance with international human rights standards, especially concerning freedom of expression.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Informant Interview Guide

#### For the Key Informants (Chairperson, Commissioners, and Directors of UHRC)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Atim Robinah a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a degree of bachelor of governance and international relations. I am conducting a study on, “the effects of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda: a case of Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)”. This should not take much of your time, and you can choose to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions if you like. Your responses are confidential, and your name will not be written down. I will use the information that you provide specifically for study purposes.

## **Section A: Introductions**

1. Gender (*don't ask, just observe*)
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. Position you hold in UHRC
5. Period spent working with UHRC

## **Section B: The key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda**

6. Which international human rights instruments guide Uganda in protecting freedom of expression?
7. How does UHRC integrate these instruments into its daily operations?
8. Are there specific treaties or declarations you prioritize in promoting freedom of expression?

## **Section C: The effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda**

9. How effective are these instruments in influencing government policies on freedom of expression?
10. What mechanisms does UHRC use to monitor compliance with these instruments?
11. Can you provide examples where these instruments successfully protected freedom of expression in Uganda?

## **Section D: The challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda**

12. What are the main obstacles UHRC faces in enforcing these human rights instruments?

13. How do political or institutional factors limit the protection of freedom of expression?
14. What strategies have been attempted to overcome these implementation challenges?

**Section D: The role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda**

15. How does UHRC support the government in complying with international human rights instruments related to freedom of expression?
16. What specific mechanisms or activities does UHRC use to monitor and promote adherence to these instruments?
17. What challenges does UHRC face in ensuring that international human rights standards on freedom of expression are effectively implemented?

**Thank you for your cooperation**

**Appendix 2: In-depth Interview Guide**

**For the lower-level employees from the different directorates in UHRC**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Atim Robinah , a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a degree of bachelor of governance and international relations. I am conducting a study on, “the effects of government compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda: a case of Uganda Human Rights

Commission (UHRC)”. This should not take much of your time, and you can choose to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions if you like. Your responses are confidential, and your name will not be written down. I will use the information that you provide specifically for study purposes.

### **Section A: Introductions**

1. Gender (*don't ask, just observe*)
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. Directorate you work under in UHRC
5. Period spent working with UHRC

### **Section B: The key international human rights instruments that safeguard freedom of expression applicable to Uganda**

6. Which international human rights instruments are you aware of that protect freedom of expression?
7. How does your work relate to the enforcement of these instruments?
8. Are there specific treaties or guidelines you use when handling freedom of expression issues?

### **Section C: The effectiveness of these international human rights instruments in enforcing freedom of expression in Uganda**

9. How effective do you think these instruments are in ensuring freedom of expression in your work?
10. Can you describe any cases where these instruments helped protect someone's right to free speech?
11. Do you think UHRC's enforcement mechanisms make these instruments practical in daily operations?

### **Section D: The challenges faced in implementing these international human rights instruments aimed at ensuring freedom of expression in Uganda**

12. What difficulties do you face in applying these human rights instruments in your daily work?

13. Are there organizational or external factors that limit your ability to enforce freedom of expression?

14. What support or changes would help you better implement these instruments?

**Section D: The role of UHRC in promoting compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to freedom of expression in Uganda**

15. How do you think UHRC contributes to promoting government compliance with international human rights standards on freedom of expression?

16. What activities or practices within your directorate help support compliance with these international instruments?

17. What challenges does UHRC face in carrying out its role of promoting compliance with international human rights instruments on freedom of expression?

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## APPENDIX 3 INTRODUCTORY LETTER



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This is to introduce to you ATIM ROBINAH Registration number M23B56/064, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree in Governance and International Relation. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above mentioned award.

Topic: "Effects of Government compliance with International Human Rights instruments on freedom of expression in Uganda."

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,



Doreen Kukugiza  
Coordinator, Research & Fieldwork Programmes  
Tel: 0773395349  
Email: dkukugiza@ucu.ac.ug