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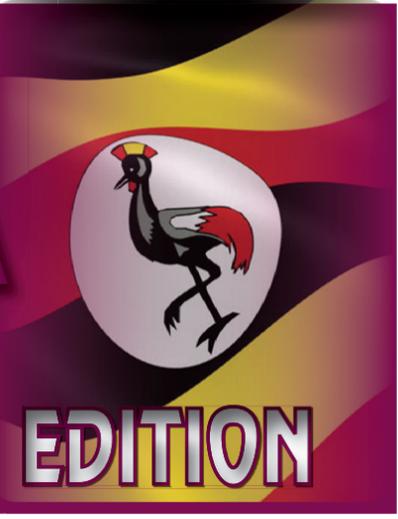
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# UGANDA TODAY

**Analysing Issues**



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# MUSEVENI, UGANDA'S UNBROKEN LEADER

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BVKKs machines reportedly failed to authenticate voters during the presidential

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## NEWS

# Museveni, Uganda's Unbroken Leader

## Museveni's rise followed a brutal civil war that began in 1981, as his NRA fought to overthrow the government of Apollo Milton Obote

By Chris Kato  
Uganda Today

On January 26, 1986, history turned a new page when Yoweri Kaguta Museveni marched into Kampala with his National Resistance Army (NRA), toppling the short-lived Tito Okello regime and ending years of political turbulence. Four decades later, Museveni stands as Uganda's longest-serving head of state—his National Resistance Movement (NRM) celebrating an unprecedented 40 years in power.

**1986–1995:  
Guerrilla Commander to  
National President**

(1986–1995)

Museveni's rise followed a brutal civil war that began in 1981, as his NRA fought to overthrow the government of Apollo Milton Obote and later the military junta of Tito Okello. On January 29, 1986, Museveni was sworn in as President, ushering in what he termed a "broad-based government" focused on national reconciliation after years of factional violence and sectarian rule under Idi Amin and Obote.

Early priorities included rehabilitating state institutions, restoring order, and stabilizing the economy. Museveni also laid the foundations for Uganda's recovery from economic collapse, promoting fiscal discipline and liberalization after decades of mismanagement.

**1995 Constitution and  
Political Reform**

(1995–2005)

A hallmark of Museveni's first decade was the adoption of the 1995 Constitution, which did away with the institutionalized the Movement System—a unique non-partisan political structure that dominated Ugandan governance until 2005. Though presented as promoting unity, critics argued it effectively suppressed party politics and consolidated executive control. In 1996, Museveni won the country's first direct presidential election with a commanding majority, affirming his grip on power and setting a precedent for subsequent electoral victories.

**Multiparty Era and  
Constitutional Reforms  
(2005–2017)**

In 2005, a national referendum restored multiparty politics, a



President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni - 1986



President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni - 2021

watershed in Uganda's political landscape. Yet, Museveni's leadership remained central. Two constitutional amendments were critical: (1) the removal of presidential term limits in 2005 and (2) the abolition of age limits in 2017—legislative changes that enabled his continued candidacy well into his eighth decade.

While Uganda enjoyed relative peace compared with the chaos of the 1970s and early 1980s, evolving governance practices attracted concern. Opposition figures like Kizza Besigye and later Bobi Wine faced legal battles, arrests, and restrictions that many critics say reflect a narrowing civic space.

**2017–2026:  
Consolidation, Controversy,  
and Continued Rule**

The 2020s have seen inclusive economic ambitions mixed with deepening political tensions. Museveni pledged a bold vision for Uganda's socio-economic transformation, including goals to boost GDP and attract investment. However, the 2026 general election, held on January 15, 2026, was fraught with delays, an internet blackout, and allegations of irregularities. Official results declared Museveni the winner with over 70% support, securing his seventh term—a feat unmatched in Uganda's history.

Opposition leader Bobi Wine rejected the outcome, citing widespread fraud and repression. Museveni vs. Uganda's Former Leaders: A Contrast in Leadership Unlike Idi Amin's brutal dictatorship and Milton Obote's turbulent two terms, Museveni has led Uganda through an era of comparative stability. Amin's regime (1971–1979) was marked by widespread violence, economic collapse, and pariah status internationally; Obote's leadership (1966–1971, 1980–1985) saw economic decline, internal conflict, and human rights abuses.

Museveni's leadership—initially credited with national

reconciliation, relative security, and economic reform—evolved over time into a hybrid of political dominance and controlled liberalization. While he restored relative calm after years of civil unrest and positioned Uganda as a key regional actor, his era has been criticized for weakening democratic checks and consolidating power within the executive and the ruling party. His political acumen can be seen in institutional adaptability: modifying constitutional frameworks, strategically managing party structures, and leveraging the military and administrative apparatus to maintain continuity. Yet, this same adaptability has drawn scrutiny from civil society and international observers concerned about constrained civic space and electoral fairness.

**The Legacy Debate:  
Stability vs. Democratic Depth**

As Uganda marks this 40-year chapter, debate persists over Museveni's legacy. Supporters praise enduring peace, infrastructure growth, and regional leadership. Detractors argue that long tenure has stifled competition and entrenched patronage. Regardless of perspective, Museveni's record stands as one of the most consequential in Uganda's post-independence history—a complex blend of liberation heroism, state building, and contentious political consolidation.



January 26, 1986 — Museveni and NRA commanders entering Kampala.

# 15 Years After, Erias Lukwago Forced Out of Kampala city's Mayor's Palour

The 15 years that saw Mr. Erias Lukwago take up the seat to steer Kampala Capital City Authority as its Lord Mayor came to the surprise end on January 22, 2026 local government and City Mayoral elections in which former National Unity Platform (NUP's) Nakawa Division East MP Ronald Balimwezo beat him on the polls together with seven other contestants.

Kampala Returning Officer Jennifer Kyobutungi declared Balimwezo the "duly elected mayor" after he polled 141,220 votes, defeating seven other candidates. Mr Moses Kizito Nsubuga of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party came second with 43,615 votes, while the incumbent Lord Mayor, Lukwago of the People's Front for Freedom (PFF) came third with 41,915 votes, DP's Beatrice Mao polled 2,162, Ibrahim Biribwa Ssozi of FDC got 1,427. Other Independent candidates Nabilar Nagayi Ssempera garnered 1,854 while Eddie Bazira Kibalama got 188 votes and Jonathan Yamureebire trailed with 119 votes.

Lukwago's Moving Statement As He Concedes 2026 Mayoral Race Defeat.

Outgoing Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago has formally accepted the outcome of the 2026 Kampala City Lord Mayorship polls, notwithstanding what he described as flaws that characterised the broader 2026 General Elections.

"Notwithstanding the flaws that have marred this process as an integral part of the entire 2026 General Elections, I do hereby accept the outcome of the Kampala Lord Mayorship polls." Lukwago expressed profound gratitude to the people of

Kampala for entrusting him with leadership, describing his tenure as a historic opportunity to serve the city and its most vulnerable residents.

"I owe a great debt of gratitude to the People of Kampala who accorded me a golden opportunity and platform to offer steadfast leadership that has had tremendous impact on the transformation journey of our beloved City and touched many lives, especially the urban poor and the indigent."

He said he exits the Lord Mayor's Parlour with pride, having offered what he termed immaculate city stewardship, anchored on integrity, resilience and fidelity to the people's mandate.

"I will sign out of the Lord Mayor's Parlour with a great sense of pride and elation having offered an indisputably immaculate city stewardship defined by: a proven track record of impeccable and unassailable integrity; clarity of purpose and ironclad commitment to serve the people of Kampala with impartiality and principled resolve; grit, resilience, consistency and perseverance in the face of apparently insurmountable adversity; and an indomitable spirit and firm fidelity to the mandate, will and aspirations of the people."

Invoking faith, Lukwago said he neither betrayed the cause nor breached the trust placed in him by the electorate.

"Thy name be glorified that I have neither betrayed the cause nor breached the trust of the electorate who entrusted me with their sacred mandate. I cannot thank the Lord enough for the countless blessings and guidance in this calling."



Out going Kampala Mayor Erias Lukwago

**"I will sign out of the Lord Mayor's Parlour with a great sense of pride and elation having offered an indisputably immaculate city stewardship defined by: a proven track record of impeccable and unassailable integrity;**

He said history would remember him as a City Lord Mayor who defied formidable odds to execute a social contract and leave office with a clean record in a political environment often tainted by indecency.

"Indeed, it is gratifying to note that the annals of this great City will reckon the persona of Erias Lukwago as an indefatigable City Lord Mayor who defied what appeared to be insurmountable odds to execute a social contract and

left the Lord Mayor's Parlour with a clean sheet, stainless steel, in a country bedeviled by political indecency."

Lukwago outlined what he described as defining moments of his leadership:

- "When the City demanded principled and accountable leadership, I delivered."
- "When the urban poor and indigent cried out for solace, justice and protection, I lived up to the

billing."

- "When our beloved City needed genuine, equitable and sustainable transformation as opposed to quick fixes and posturing, I offered the requisite policy guidance and agenda."
- "When the situation called for a charismatic leader who would not capitulate to nefarious interests even in the face of heavy storms and tides, I answered the clarion call."
- "When our treasured assets and heritage faced a real threat of alienation and extinction at the hands of marauding cartels and mafias, I offered my life as spear and shield."

He said he will eternally treasure the bond, trust and love shared with the people of Kampala and wished the incoming leadership well.

"I will eternally treasure the strong social bond, trust and love that I have shared with the People of Kampala and beyond over the years, and I wish the best of luck to the newly constituted leadership."

Looking ahead, Lukwago said his struggle continues beyond elective office.

"Going forward, my energy and resources will remain focused on the protracted struggle for social justice, the rule of law and a non-violent transition from family and gun rule to a constitutional and political order that guarantees the sovereignty of the People." He concluded with a patriotic sign-off:

**For God and My Country.  
ERIAS LUKWAGO  
Lord Mayor  
Dated: 24th January 2026**

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NEWS

# BVVK Machines: From Election Day Failure to a Contested Pillar of Uganda's 2026 Polls

As Uganda went to the polls on January 15, 2026, to elect a president and members of Parliament, the Biometric Voter Verification Kits (BVVKs) — touted as the technological backbone of electoral integrity — faced their most serious test yet. That test, by many accounts, began with widespread malfunction.

By Uganda Today Reporter

Across several polling stations countrywide, BVVKs reportedly failed to authenticate voters during the presidential and parliamentary elections, forcing election officials to revert to manual voter verification. The breakdown sparked concern among voters, party agents, and election observers, who questioned the reliability of the technology and its impact on the credibility of the polls.

However, in a turn that has continued to fuel debate, the same BVVK machines were later deployed with relative success during subsequent local government elections, reopening national discussion about preparedness, accountability, and the role of technology in Uganda's democratic process. A Technology Meant to Safeguard Democracy

The BVVK was first introduced by the Electoral Commission (EC) in 2016 to curb electoral malpractices such as voter impersonation, multiple voting, and ballot stuffing. For the 2026 General Elections, the EC procured and deployed 109,142 upgraded BVVKs, each embedded with enhanced security features, including fingerprint and facial recognition capabilities.

According to the EC, every BVVK is uniquely assigned to a polling station through QR code activation from the Voters Register, ensuring that no device can be used outside its designated location.

Before polling begins, Presiding Officers and BVVK operators are required to authenticate themselves using National Identity Cards, voter location slips, fingerprints, or facial recognition — a safeguard intended to prevent unauthorized handling of the voting process.

**Election Day Breakdown**  
Despite these safeguards, election day told a different story. Multiple polling stations experienced delays or total failure of BVVK verification during the presidential and parliamentary vote. In many cases, biometric authentication failed to recognize registered voters, compelling officials to proceed manually — a

move permitted under electoral law but one that weakened public confidence in the system.

Critics argued that the failure undermined the very purpose for which the BVVKs were procured at significant public cost, while opposition figures questioned whether the breakdown disproportionately affected certain regions or voter demographics.

How the BVVK Is Designed to Work

Under normal operation, the BVVK is central to nearly every stage of polling. Ballot papers are scanned into the device before voting begins, enabling the system to recognize only officially issued ballots for that polling station. Voting cannot commence until at least ten verified voters witness the opening of polls, a legal requirement logged through the BVVK.

Each voter is then biometrically verified before receiving a ballot — reinforcing the principle of "one person, one vote." Ballots are scanned again before being issued, and polling assistants guide voters through the process. The EC maintains that the BVVK does not link a voter's identity to their ballot choice, preserving the secrecy of the vote as required by law.

**Post-Voting Accountability**  
At the close of polls at 4:00 p.m., the Presiding Officer formally ends voting on the device. All ballot papers are rescanned to confirm authenticity. Any ballot that cannot be verified is isolated and recorded in the Official Report Book in the presence of party agents, observers, and members of the public. Declaration of Results forms and accountability records are scanned and photographed using the BVVK, creating a digital audit trail intended to enhance transparency and reduce post-election disputes.

**A Partial Recovery in Local Government Polls**  
When local government elections followed, the same BVVK machines reportedly functioned with fewer disruptions, a development that raised fresh questions. While the EC cited system stabilization and improved operational handling, critics asked why such stability was

absent during the high-stakes presidential and parliamentary vote.

Trust, Technology, and the Road Ahead

The BVVK remains a central — and controversial — feature of Uganda's electoral architecture. While its design

promises credible, transparent, and verifiable elections, its performance during the January 15, 2026 polls exposed critical gaps between theory and practice.

As Uganda reflects on the 2026 electoral cycle, the debate is no longer just about technology, but about institutional readiness,

accountability, and public trust. Whether the BVVK ultimately strengthens or undermines confidence in future elections will depend less on its features, and more on how — and when — it works.

Credit: Electoral Commission Public Relations Office, December 2025



## BVVK Machine Usage on Election Day:

### 10 Simple Facts for Voting



- 1. The BVVK machine belongs to one polling station**

In the morning, the machine is locked to that polling station only. It cannot work in another place.


- 2. Election officials must identify themselves**

The person using the machine first scans their ID and fingerprint.

✓ This shows who is responsible. For the machine.


- 3. Ballot papers are registered on the machine**

Presidential, MP, and Woman MP ballots are scanned first.

✓ Only those ballots can be used there.


- 4. Voting starts with the first 10 witnesses**

Their names are checked in the register.

✓ Their fingerprints or faces are scanned


- 5. Every voter must be verified**

  - A voter is checked using fingerprint or face.
  - If you are not verified, you do not vote.


- 6. Even without ID, you can vote if you are registered**

Officials check your details in the register.

✓ Then your biometrics are used to confirm you.


- 7. Every ballot paper given out is scanned**

  - Before a ballot is given to a voter, it is scanned first.

✓ This stops fake or extra ballots.


- 8. Spoilt ballots are cancelled properly**

  - If you spoil a ballot, it is scanned and cancelled.
  - A new one is scanned and given to you.


- 9. After voting, all ballots are checked again**

  - Ballots are poured out and each one is scanned.
  - This prevents ballot stuffing.


- 10. Results are recorded, signed, scanned, and sent**

  - Results forms are filled & signed by agents.
  - The photos stay in machine as evidence.



**“The BVVK machine checks the place, the people, the ballots, and the results, from morning to evening, so that cheating is reduced.”**

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17th January 2026

PRESS RELEASE

**Polling Date for Chairpersons and Councillors for Municipalities and City Divisions, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Polling Date for Sub County/Town/Municipal Division Elections, 2026**

The Electoral Commission informs candidates, voters and the general public that elections for Chairpersons and Councillors for the Municipalities and City Divisions will be held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**During these elections, voters will cast ballots for Municipality/City Division Chairpersons; Directly-elected Councillors, and Women Councillors.**

Polling shall take place at all polling stations within all Municipalities and City Divisions in Uganda, starting at 7:00am and closing at 4:00pm. Thereafter, the counting of votes and declaration of results shall take place.

**Voters are urged to carefully note the following:**

1. The ballot paper for use during these elections will have four columns: a column for the candidates' names; a column for the candidates' photos; a column for the candidates' symbol; and an empty box where the voter will put a tick or thumbprint to indicate a choice;
2. The voter is required to mark the ballot paper using the authorised mark of choice — either a tick or a thumbprint, in the space provided for the candidate. Please don't use any other mark!
3. The voter should be careful that his/her tick or thumbprint is not outside the box or crossing into another candidate's box. If it does, the vote will be invalid and will not be counted for your candidate.
4. However, a ballot paper that has the authorised mark of choice (a tick or a thumbprint) placed in the candidate's name, candidate's photo, or candidate's symbol, is still valid because the intention and the choice of the voter is clear.

**The Commission urges voters to turn up in large numbers to vote and to follow the guidelines that have been issued for this election, in order to ensure a peaceful process.**

Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon  
Chairperson, Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission appointed Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 as the polling day for elections of Chairpersons, Directly-elected Councillors and Women Councillors for Sub County/Town/Municipal Division.

Voting shall be by universal adult suffrage, and shall take place at all polling stations in all the Sub Counties, Town Councils and Municipal Divisions, across the country, beginning at 7:00am till 4:00pm. Thereafter, counting of votes and declaration of results shall take place.

**The Commission wishes to guide voters as follows:**

1. **The ballot paper for use during election of the Chairperson for Sub county/Town Council/ Municipal Division will bear the following features:**
  - a) The first column will have the full names of candidates, in alphabetical order;
  - β) The second column will have a colour photograph of the candidate for Chairperson;
  - γ) The third column will have the name of the party and symbol, or independent candidates' symbol;
  - δ) The fourth column will have space where the voter will tick or place a thumbprint as a mark of choice.
2. The ballot paper for the Directly-elected Councillors and Women Councillors to the Sub county/Town Council/Municipal Division will have the full

names of the candidate, the symbol for the political party or independent candidate and the name of the party for party flag bearers **but will not bear the photograph of the candidates:**

3. The voter is required to mark the ballot paper using the authorised mark of choice — either a tick or a thumbprint, in the space provided for the candidate. Please don't use any other mark!
4. The voter should be careful that his/her tick or thumbprint is not outside the box or crossing into another candidate's box. If it does, the vote will be invalid and will not be counted for your candidate;
5. However, a ballot paper that has the authorised mark of choice (a tick or a thumbprint) placed in the candidate's name, candidate's photo, or candidate's symbol, is still valid because the intention and the choice of the voter is clear.

The Commission urges voters to turn up in large numbers to vote and to follow the guidelines that have been issued for this election, in order to ensure a peaceful process.

Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon  
Chairperson, Electoral Commission

for a regular free and fair elections and referenda

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17th January 2026

PRESS RELEASE

**Elections of Directly-Elected Member of Parliament in Constituencies Where Elections Were Suspended, Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Polling Dates and Venues for Election of Representatives of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to Parliament, January - February 2026**

The Electoral Commission informs political parties, candidates, voters and the general public that Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026, has been appointed as the polling date for elections of Directly-Elected Member of Parliament in the constituencies listed below where the elections were suspended.

No	District	Electoral Area	Elective Position
1.	Kiryandongo	Kibanda North Constituency	Directly-elected Member of Parliament
2.	Ibanda	Ibanda Municipality	Directly-elected Member of Parliament
3.	Alebtong	Ajuri County Constituency (18 polling Stations in Awori; Acede; Ojul, and Owalo parishes)	Directly-elected Member of Parliament

Polling shall take place at all polling stations within Ibanda North Constituency and Ibanda Municipality and in the affected polling stations in the above electoral areas in Ajuri County Constituency, Alebtong District, starting at 7:00am and closing at 4:00pm.

Thereafter, counting of votes and declaration of results shall take place.

Political Parties and independent candidates are encouraged to deploy a maximum of two agents at each polling station in the above constituencies/electoral areas.

Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon  
Chairperson, Electoral Commission

In line with Article 61(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Electoral Commission appointed the dates and venues below for the elections of Members of Parliament representing Special Interest Groups (SIGs), namely; Workers; Youths; Older Persons; Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF); and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), January-February 2026:

No	Category Of Election	Area/Region of Representation	Venue	Polling Date
1.	National Conference for Election of Workers Representatives to Parliament	National	Kibuli Secondary School - Kampala City	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
2.	Regional Conference for Election of Regional Youths Representatives to Parliament	Eastern Region	Civil Service College, Jinja City	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
3.	Regional Conference for Election of Regional Youths Representatives to Parliament	Central Region	Masaka Sports Arena - Kitovu-Masaka City	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
4.	Regional Conference for Election of Regional Youths Representatives to Parliament	Northern Region	Mvara Secondary School, Arua City	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
5.	Regional Conference for Election of Regional Youths Representatives to Parliament	Western Region	Kyebambe Girls Senior Secondary School - Fort Portal City	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
6.	Army Council Meeting for Election of UPDF Representatives to Parliament	National	Bombo Barracks	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
7.	Regional Conference for Election of Regional Older Persons Representatives to Parliament	Central Region	Wakissha Resource Centre - Wakiso District	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2026
8.	National Conference for Election of PWDs Representatives to Parliament	National	Nsambya Gardens-Kevina - Kampala City	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026
9.	National Conference for Election of National Female Youth Representative to Parliament	National	Kyambogo College School - Kampala City	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2026

All candidates, their agents and supporters, election observers and the general public are reminded to observe the respective dates and participate in accordance with the guidelines for polling for the respective election.

Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon  
Chairperson, Electoral Commission

for a regular free and fair elections and referenda

## NEWS

# Kawempe Residents Cry Foul as Gaboggola Road Works Render Homes Inaccessible

By Uganda Today Reporter

## A Road Project Born of "Mutual Understanding"

Residents of Kawempe 1 Parish, Kakungulu Village in Kawempe Division are raising alarm over the ongoing construction of the Gaboggola Road, a slightly over one-kilometre stretch linking Kanyanya Gaz Petrol Station on Gayaza Road through the swampy Kiyanja Valley to Ttula Road. What was initially welcomed as long-overdue infrastructure development has, one year on, turned into a source of anguish, with several households claiming their homes have been rendered uninhabitable.

The road project commenced last year under what local leaders describe as a "mutual understanding" between land-owning residents, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), and Kakungulu Village LC1 leadership. Under this arrangement, residents were to surrender portions of their land to allow for expansion of the road into a modern carriageway.

The road surface level is now half way this building to the extent that occupants can no longer open the doors to the building due to the tight proximity of the road and the building. Rachael Nambalirwa's perimeter wall was destroyed

yet even its reconstruction seems to be a tall order as far as the prevailing circumstances are concerned.

## LC1 Clarifies the Scope of the Agreement

According to the LC1 Chairperson, Mr. Abbas Ssekanjako, the agreement was clear and limited in scope. "What was agreed upon was compensation in kind," Mr. Ssekanjako told Uganda Today. "Where perimeter walls were affected by the expansion, they would be reconstructed. There was no agreement for cash compensation for land."

## Low-Lying Residents Trapped by Raised Road Levels

However, residents—particularly those living in the low-lying sections of Kiyanja



Some of the sunken houses caused by road level upliftment

Valley—say the reality on the ground has gone far beyond that understanding. The leveling of the road using murrum soil has raised the road surface significantly, leaving several homes sunken below road level. In some cases, access points to houses have been completely blocked, while others are now prone to flooding, effectively rendering the buildings unusable, as seen in the accompanying photograph. "We can no longer enter or use our houses," one resident lamented. "The road was raised, but our homes were left like pits. This is no longer about walls; our entire buildings are useless."

## Residents Demand Compensation from KCCA

The affected residents are now demanding formal compensation from KCCA, arguing that the project has deprived them of the use and value of their properties. They contend that road expansion budgets routinely provide for land acquisition and compensation, making the current situation both unjust and exploitative. Local administrators and residents alike believe KCCA is leveraging community goodwill to acquire land at no cost, despite budgetary provisions meant to cushion such losses.

## KCCA Silent as Pressure Mounts

Efforts by Uganda Today to obtain a response from KCCA were unsuccessful. Repeated attempts to contact the Director of Engineering and Technical Services—whose docket includes valuation and compensation for affected properties—proved futile, as day-long phone inquiries went unanswered.

## A Repeating Pattern in Kawempe

Residents further point to a precedent in the same area during the construction of Lumansi Road, which connects Kyebando-Gayaza Road to Ttula Road.

They say a similar arrangement was executed then, and the adverse consequences are now repeating themselves.

"This model must stop," said a community leader. "Development should not mean pushing citizens into loss and misery."

## Development Versus Displacement

As sentiments continue to run high in Kakungulu Village, pressure is mounting on KCCA to explain its approach, reassess the social and economic impact of the Gaboggola Road works, and address residents' compensation demands before the standoff escalates further.

## Who Bears the Cost? Lady Juicy Questions Accountability for Uganda's Election Internet Shutdown

By Uganda Today Reporter

As Ugandans headed into the tense final days of the January general elections, millions invested in internet data bundles—24-hour packages, weekly subscriptions, and Wi-Fi plans—anticipating uninterrupted access for work, business, learning, communication, and civic engagement. Instead, an abrupt, state-ordered internet shutdown left the country digitally paralyzed. Paid-for data expired unused.

Online livelihoods stalled. Communication collapsed. Now, activist and commentator Nabuzaale Barbra, popularly known as Lady Juicy, is asking a question many Ugandans are still grappling with: who is responsible for compensating citizens for the losses incurred during the uncalled-for shutdown?

## Paid for Connectivity, Forced into Silence

In her widely shared opinion piece, Lady Juicy recounts the collective frustration of ordinary citizens who had legitimately purchased gigabytes of data only to watch them expire while the nation was forcibly taken offline. "Like we who had bought our GB and found when all had expired," she notes, capturing a grievance echoed across households, small businesses, students, mobile money agents, and online workers. For many, the shutdown translated into lost income, missed deadlines, interrupted studies, severed family communication, and

stalled businesses—costs that were neither refunded nor acknowledged. Contradictory statements from UCC prior to the shutdown have fueled public calls for accountability.[/caption]

## The Constitutional Question: Rights Suspended Without Redress?

Lady Juicy's critique goes beyond inconvenience. She anchors her argument firmly in Uganda's 1995 Constitution, specifically Article 29(1)(e), which guarantees every citizen freedom of association, alongside freedoms of expression, assembly, and access to information. Legal scholars and digital rights advocates have long argued that



internet access has become a critical enabler of these freedoms in a modern democracy. By shutting down the internet without judicial oversight or compensatory safeguards, the state effectively suspended constitutionally protected rights, disproportionately burdening citizens. Any limitation of fundamental freedoms, Lady Juicy argues, must meet the tests of legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability—standards many believe were absent in this case.

## UCC's Contradictory Signals Before the Blackout

Adding to public anger were contradictory statements issued by the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) in the days preceding the shutdown. While earlier communications suggested there would be no blanket disruption of internet services, the country was nevertheless plunged into a near-total digital blackout just two days before polling. This inconsistency, critics say, denied citizens and businesses the opportunity to plan, mitigate losses, or seek clarification—raising further questions about transparency and regulatory responsibility.

## Security vs. Citizens' Livelihoods

Authorities have repeatedly justified election-period shutdowns on grounds of national security and public order. However, Lady Juicy insists that the economic and social

costs were almost entirely transferred to the public, with no compensation framework, apology, or post-election accountability.

## Small traders lost customers.

Online freelancers missed payments. Students were cut off from research and learning platforms. Mobile money agents—critical to Uganda's cash-light economy—were rendered idle. "Responsibility cannot be ignored or passed silently," she asserts. "Any decision that disconnects a nation must come with clear accountability, transparency, and mechanisms to protect citizens."

## Conclusion: Democracy Cannot Thrive in the Dark

In her conclusion, Lady Juicy warns that while internet shutdowns may be framed as temporary security measures, their consequences are lasting and deeply personal. The loss of data, income, time, and public trust, she argues, should never be treated as acceptable collateral damage in a democratic process. If elections are meant to serve the people, then safeguarding citizens' rights—both offline and online—must remain paramount. Going forward, she calls for transparency, public dialogue, legal justification, and alternative security measures that protect both national stability and citizens' livelihoods—without disconnecting the very population democracy is meant to empower.

# Masked Soldiers Raid Bobi Wine's Home as International Pressure Mounts on Uganda

Kampala, Uganda — Former presidential contender and National Unity Platform (NUP) leader Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, popularly known as Bobi Wine, has reported yet another violent military raid on his residence, raising renewed alarm over the safety of opposition figures and their families in post-election Uganda.

In a statement posted on his official X (formerly Twitter) account on Friday night, Kyagulanyi said a group of masked and heavily armed soldiers forcibly broke into his home, assaulted family members, and isolated his wife, Barbie Kyagulanyi, under circumstances he described as deeply troubling and unclear.

Barbie Kyagulanyi, wife to opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi, was reportedly isolated during the latest raid, sparking widespread public concern.

"A group of masked, armed soldiers has just broken into our house and beat up my family members. They have currently isolated my wife, Barbie Kyagulanyi, alone. Their intentions are unclear!" — Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu (@HEBobiwine) <https://t.co/wAcKRdfSI>

The incident is the latest in a series of intermittent security raids and surveillance operations targeting Kyagulanyi's residence, particularly heightened during and after Uganda's recently concluded presidential election. His home in Magere has, over the years, frequently been surrounded by armed personnel, with family members and visitors often restricted or assaulted.

## Pattern of Intimidation

Human rights observers and opposition leaders have consistently described the raids as part of a broader campaign of intimidation and repression aimed at silencing dissenting political voices.

Kyagulanyi, who emerged runner-up in the presidential race, has repeatedly accused state security agencies of operating outside the law and subjecting his family to collective punishment.

As of publication, Uganda's security agencies had not issued an official statement explaining the purpose of the raid or addressing the allegations of assault and isolation of Kyagulanyi's wife.



Presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu with his wife Barbie



Presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu addressing the press at his residence.

## Growing International Concern

The reported attack has coincided with renewed international scrutiny of Uganda's human rights record, particularly from senior United States lawmakers. In a strongly worded statement circulating on X, U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, joined by Senator Cory Booker, called for concrete action against Ugandan officials accused of undermining democratic norms.

"The Trump Administration and U.S. State Department must use all tools available, including a review of U.S. security assistance, to hold individuals in Uganda

accountable for undermining democratic principles." — @SenatorShaheen, @SenatorBooker

The statement adds to mounting diplomatic pressure on Kampala, following repeated reports of election-related violence, arbitrary arrests, and military involvement in civilian political affairs. Armed security personnel pictured during a previous deployment at Robert Kyagulanyi's Magere residence. The latest raid was reported on Tuesday via his official X account.

## Unanswered Questions

For Kyagulanyi and his supporters, the latest raid reinforces concerns about lawlessness within security operations and the continued militarisation of politics.

The isolation of his wife during the raid has particularly drawn outrage online, with many Ugandans and international observers demanding accountability and guarantees for the safety of political families.

UgandaToday will continue to monitor developments surrounding the incident and seek official responses from the relevant authorities.

## Democracy Under Strain — A Moment for National Reflection

By Juma Manzi

Uganda stands at a crossroads. The just-concluded 2026 general election, instead of uniting citizens behind a shared future, has exposed deep fractures in our democratic process and core institutions. Reports of delayed polling, restricted access to information, and allegations of irregularities have cast a long shadow over the credibility of the exercise.

But perhaps more worrying than procedural hiccups is the heavy-handed response that followed. The detention of thousands of opposition supporters and reports of fatalities risk normalising repression as a default political tool. When civic spaces shrink and voices of dissent are silenced, the essence of democracy — fundamental freedoms and trust in governance — is imperilled.

It is not merely about who holds office but about how they come to serve and whether they uphold the principles that bind us as a nation. True stability does not come from the absence of dissent, but from the confidence that every citizen's voice counts and that the rule of law applies equally to all.

As Uganda looks ahead, we must reflect honestly on lessons from this election: the fragility of public trust, the indispensable value of free and fair expression, and the urgent need for inclusive political reform. Citizens — especially our youth — are watching. How we respond now will shape not only the next five years, but the very character of our republic.

Uganda's democratic journey should be strengthened by participation, not weakened by suppression.

# The New Government Should Resist The Price of Repression

In recent months, Uganda's democratic fabric has been tested by a series of alarming state actions that belie the constitutional guarantees of personal liberty, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The chilling scenes of *abductions, incommunicado detentions, and credible reports of torture* are not only condemnable in human terms — they puncture the very foundations of democratic governance that this nation claims to uphold.

At the heart of this malaise is the case of **Rev. Fr. Deusdedit Ssekabira**, a Catholic priest of Masaka Diocese. Fr. Ssekabira was seized on *December 3, 2025*, by armed operatives in military uniform without a warrant, identification, or initial transparency as to his whereabouts. For days, his family and church community were plunged into fear and uncertainty as information dried up. Only after sustained public outcry did the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) *admit that it was holding him, claiming he was assisting with investigations into alleged "violent subversive activities."* Later he was charged and remanded for money laundering. Yet the *circumstances of his arrest — unmarked vehicles, lack of disclosure, and days of enforced disappearance — violate both Uganda's Constitution and international human-rights norms.*

Not far behind, on *December 30, 2025*, **Dr. Sarah Bireete** — a distinguished human rights activist, governance scholar, and chairperson of international election-monitoring networks — was arrested at her residence in Goma Mukono. Police confirmed her detention but *failed to disclose charges that were preferred at that time. She was produced in court much later after the lapse of the constitutional 48-hour window and charged for unlawfully obtaining or disclosing personal data.*

These cases are not isolated aberrations. They form a pattern that stretches back months, interwoven with the disturbing narrative surrounding **Edward Ssebuufu**, known widely as *Eddie Mutwe*, the personal bodyguard to opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu (Bobi

Wine). Mutwe was *abducted from Mukono in late April 2025* and held in military custody for days, only acknowledged after the Chief of Defence Forces publicly posted images of him under alleged detention.

Upon eventual court appearance, observers noted visible signs consistent with *waterboarding, electrocution, daily beatings, and severe psychological torment*, as recounted by his lawyer and documented by human-rights advocates.

It is impossible to overstate the gravity of these actions. A nation that detains clerics without explanation, holds civil society leaders beyond judicial oversight, and inflicts torture on political actors' associates shouldn't even linger in the new government.

### The Damage to Democratic Tenets

The repercussions of these actions are profound:

#### 1. Erosion of the Rule of Law:

Arrest without warrant, secret detention, and delayed or absent charges are clear contraventions of Articles 23 and 44 of our Constitution, which guarantee personal liberty, prompt court appearances, and protection from inhumane treatment. These are not hyperbolic claims; they are constitutional mandates.

#### 2. Fear as a Tool of Governance:

When religious leaders, activists, and ordinary citizens are whisked away by state security forces with impunity, fear becomes a weapon. The effect is chilling — silencing dissent, stifling civic engagement, and shrinking the democratic space that our forebears fought to expand.

#### 3. Damage to Uganda's International Standing:

The torture allegations surrounding Eddie Mutwe and the arbitrary detention of high-profile civil society figures have drawn *local and international condemnation*, including from the Catholic Church's legal advocates,

women's rights organizations, and constitutional watchdogs. Such pressure tarnishes Uganda's reputation as a democratic actor and undermines foreign policy credibility.

#### 4. A Decline of Electoral Integrity:

With general elections ended, these incidents send a troubling message to Ugandans and observers alike: that political participation was met with repression rather than accountability.

The arrest of Dr. Bireete — a leading election observer — casts a long shadow over the fairness and freedom of the electoral environment.

#### A Call to Action

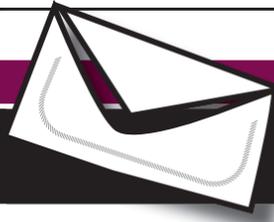
With new government in offing come May 2026, the continued path of repression may lead to distrust, instability, and international isolation. A new government with commitment to democratic governance must *respect due process, uphold constitutional protections, and protect the civic space that is the lifeblood of a functioning democracy.*

Uganda Today calls on the state to consider:

- **Ensure the lawful release or fair trial of all individuals detained for political inclined aspirations.**
- **Conduct independent investigations into allegations of torture and enforced disappearance, with accountability for perpetrators;**
- **Reaffirm constitutional guarantees of personal liberty, freedom from inhumane treatment, and adherence to judicial process.**

Our nation's democratic aspirations cannot be built on intimidation or silence.

The yardstick of a true democracy is not merely the right to vote — it is the right to live, speak, worship, and organise without fear.



DEAR EDITOR

COLUMNISTS / LETTERS

# The Hidden Cost of the Dollar: How Uganda Is Quietly Losing Billions While Zambia Adjusts

By Uganda Today Business Desk

While Uganda's public discourse remains consumed by national symbolism, electoral slogans, and procedural debates around voting logistics, a far more consequential economic issue continues largely unnoticed: **the structural cost of trading with China through the US dollar.**

A comparative look at **Zambia and Uganda** reveals that currency choice alone—specifically whether to settle China trade and debt in **US dollars (USD)** or **Chinese yuan (RMB)**—can determine whether a country saves or bleeds **hundreds of millions of dollars over a decade.** This is not ideology. It is arithmetic.

## The Core Problem: Why the Dollar Is Expensive for China Trade

For African economies whose largest trading partner is China, using the US dollar introduces **built-in inefficiencies** that quietly tax imports and debt payments.

When Uganda trades with China in dollars, it incurs:

- ☐ **Double currency conversion** (Uganda Shilling → USD → RMB)
- ☐ **Foreign-exchange spread losses** (typically 1.5–3%)
- ☐ **Correspondent banking fees**
- ☐ **USD liquidity premiums**, especially during global tightening
- ☐ **Exchange-rate volatility unrelated to Uganda–China trade realities**

Direct **RMB settlement eliminates or sharply reduces all five costs.**

### Conservative Assumptions Used

To avoid exaggeration, the following modest assumptions are applied:

- ☐ Average transaction and FX cost via USD: **2.5%**
- ☐ Average cost via RMB settlement: **0.5%**
- ☐ Net efficiency gain: **~2% annually**
- ☐ Import volumes held constant (no growth assumed)

These assumptions likely **understate**, not overstate, real savings.

### Imports from China: What the Numbers Show Zambia

- ☐ Annual imports from China: **~USD 5.0 billion**
- ☐ **Cost comparison**
- ☐ USD settlement (2.5%): **\$125 million/year**
- ☐ RMB settlement (0.5%): **\$25 million/year**
- ☐ **Annual savings: \$100 million**
- ☐ **Five-year savings: \$500 million**

### Uganda

- ☐ Imports from China (2024): **~USD 2.72 billion**
- ☐ **Cost comparison**
- ☐ USD settlement: **~\$68 million/year**
- ☐ RMB settlement: **~\$13.6 million/year**

**Annual savings forgone: \$54 million**  
**Five-year loss: \$270 million**

### Debt Servicing: The Quiet Drain

Import costs are only half the story. **Debt servicing inefficiencies** are often ignored—yet they are persistent and unavoidable.

#### Zambia

- ☐ Chinese debt stock: **~\$5.7 billion**
- ☐ Estimated annual servicing: **~\$400 million**
- ☐ **Savings from RMB settlement: \$8 million per year**
- ☐ **Total annual Zambia savings (imports + debt): \$108 million**

#### Uganda

- ☐ Chinese debt: **~\$2.55 billion**
- ☐ Estimated annual servicing: **~\$180 million**

**Savings from RMB settlement: \$3.6 million per year**  
**Total annual Uganda loss: \$57–58 million**

### Ten-Year Outlook: The Cost of Delay

Country	Annual Savings	10-Year Potential
Zambia	~\$108 million	~\$1.08 billion
Uganda	~\$58 million	~\$580 million

These figures **exclude trade growth**, infrastructure imports, and currency-stability benefits—meaning **actual savings would be higher.**

### Strategic Implications Beyond the Numbers Zambia's Approach

- ☐ Aligns copper exports, tax revenues, and debt servicing in RMB
- ☐ Creates a **closed monetary loop**
- ☐ Reduces exposure to:
  - Dollar shocks
  - FX reserve depletion
  - IMF dependency

### Uganda's Missed Opportunity

- ☐ Higher costs for:
  - Energy infrastructure
  - Transport systems
  - ICT equipment
  - Agro-industrial machinery
- ☐ **Continuous leakage of national savings through FX markets**
- ☐ Annual losses that compound silently

Every year of delay translates into **foregone public investment capacity.**

### A Critical Insight

The US dollar is **not a neutral medium** for China-centric trade.

It functions as a **recurring structural tax** on developing economies that do not primarily trade with the US.

RMB settlement is **not about geopolitics.**

It is about **cost alignment with trade reality.**

Countries that trade mostly with China but insist on paying through the dollar:

- ☐ Bleed silently
- ☐ Subsidize external financial systems
- ☐ Undermine their own balance-of-payments position

☐ **TABLE 1: Cost of Using USD vs RMB in China Trade (Core Mechanism)**

Cost Element	USD-Based Settlement	RMB Direct Settlement
Currency conversions	Local → USD → RMB (Double)	Local → RMB (Single)
FX spread losses	High (1.5–3%)	Low (~0.5%)
Correspondent banking fees	Yes	Minimal
USD liquidity premiums	High during global tightening	Not applicable
Exchange-rate volatility	Misaligned with China trade	Trade-aligned

### Key takeaway:

**USD settlement embeds hidden structural costs; RMB settlement removes them.**

### ☐ TABLE 2: Assumptions Used for Savings Illustration

Parameter	Value
Average FX & transaction cost (USD)	2.5%
Average FX & transaction cost (RMB)	0.5%
Net efficiency gain	~2.0%
Import growth assumption	0% (conservative)

*Note: Actual savings likely higher due to trade growth.*

### ☐ TABLE 3: Annual Import Cost Comparison – Zambia vs Uganda

Country	Imports from China (USD)	Cost via USD (2.5%)	Cost via RMB (0.5%)	Annual Savings
Zambia	\$5.0 billion	\$125 million	\$25 million	<b>\$100 million</b>
Uganda	\$2.72 billion	\$68 million	\$13.6 million	<b>\$54 million</b>

### ☐ TABLE 4: Debt Servicing Efficiency Gains

Country	Chinese Debt Stock	Annual Debt Service	USD Cost Loss	RMB Cost Loss	Annual Savings
Zambia	~\$5.7 billion	~\$400 million	~\$10 million	~\$2 million	<b>\$8 million</b>
Uganda	~\$2.55 billion	~\$180 million	~\$4.5 million	~\$0.9 million	<b>\$3.6 million</b>

### ☐ TABLE 5: Combined Annual Savings (Imports + Debt)

Country	Import Savings	Debt Savings	Total Annual Savings
Zambia	~\$100 million	~\$8 million	<b>~\$108 million</b>
Uganda	~\$54 million	~\$3.6 million	<b>~\$57–58 million</b>

### ☐ TABLE 6: 10-Year Opportunity Cost of Delayed RMB Adoption

Country	Annual Savings	10-Year Potential
Zambia	~\$108 million	<b>~\$1.08 billion</b>
Uganda	~\$58 million	<b>~\$580 million</b>

### The Bottom Line

- ☐ **Zambia has begun correcting the mismatch**
- ☐ **Uganda continues to absorb avoidable costs**
- ☐ RMB adoption is not radical—it is **accounting realism**

As national attention remains fixed on political symbols and procedural debates, **hundreds of millions of dollars are being lost in plain sight**—resources that could otherwise fund infrastructure, health, education, and industrial growth.

The question is no longer *whether* Uganda can afford to rethink its currency strategy. It is **how long it can afford not to.**

## LETTERS

## DEAR EDITOR



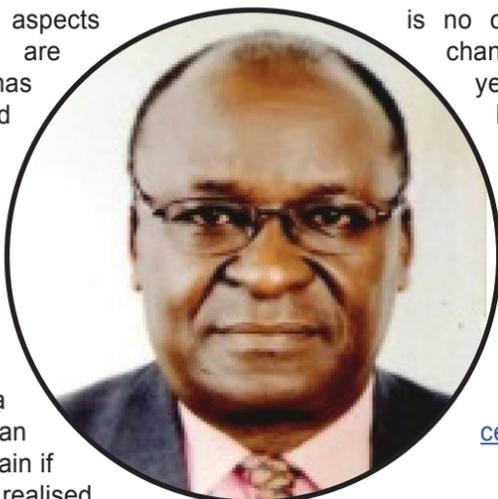
## There is time for everything

The past presidents of Uganda had their time and so much has been documented about their way of governance and the state in which they left the country. What is in common among a number of them is that none wanted to leave power. This is understandable because holding the highest office in the land where you are in charge of everything and your word is law, is perhaps what everyone would yearn for in his or her lifetime and it is the hard hearted or extremely principled persons who will not feel like keeping in power for as long as they can. President Obama, before leaving office said that the job as president is very good and enjoyable and that he was still fit to serve as president of America but he had to abide by the law. This meant that if given an opportunity he would willingly continue to be president. In the recent past, there have been talks of president Trump wanting to return as president after the end of this term. So it is not strange that H.E. Museveni desires to continue ruling Uganda despite so much criticism about the way he is doing it. It is the same for president Bier of Cameroon and President Samia Suluhu of Tanzania. Late President Gadafi was in the same situation.

However, nature or Gods creation has it its way. The calendar is set and in most cases it is unchangeable. There is time for everything and even the Holy books like the Quran and the Bible say so. I cannot agree more with this bible verse from Ecclesiastes Chapter 3:1-8 which is spot on when it says that "there is time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens". It goes on to say that there is a time to plant and a time to uproot, there is a time to kill and a time to heal, there a time to tear down and a time to build, there is a time to keep and time to throw away, there is a time to be silent and a time to speak and there is a time to hate and a time to love. The time to uproot the NRM is now, the time heal from the NRM torture is now, the time throw away the NRM is now and the time to love the country that has been hated by the NRM for nearly 40 years is now.

In this context, time for change in Uganda's leadership has come. The change that Ugandans desire and deserve. The current regime has planted everything that has made the people miserable. This regime has planted hate and tortured people. The regime is hostile to some communities and it has done everything to demonise them.

The youth have died, and those who speak out on several aspects of poor governance are silenced. The country has been torn apart and needs reconstruction. The country has been impoverished and with heavy loans currently. Public funds are misused with endless supplementary budgets being passed. Anything that renders a country a failed state can be seen and it is uncertain if anything better can be realised



In view of the current trends, there is no other choice but to let change that Ugandans are yearning for happen. It will be more costly to ignore the voices and desires of the people. Resist and keep in power forcefully at your own peril.

Dr. John Mary Odo (PhD), Senior Citizen, 0782457990, [johnmary.ceon@gmail.com](mailto:johnmary.ceon@gmail.com)

in the next term if the rulers remain the same.

Candidate Museveni vied for another presidential term but there was a clear writing on the wall that the population was tired of his rule. The good thing was that he was aware of it. People are questioning the continued militarisation and monetisation of politics, harassment and arrest of people, interruptions in the enjoyment of freedoms to associate, assemble and belong, and how the public funds are used for individual benefits. The recent statement that buying weapons is more important than the wellbeing of the soldiers was very unfortunate, a clear testimony that the lives of Ugandans don't matter.

Ugandans are tired of what is going on. They cannot hold it anymore. They want change. Change which is deserved by all means. The mammoth rallies seen during the campaigns by some presidential candidates like Robert Kyagulanyi speak volumes. Ugandans have made a statement and I believe that this can be translated into votes. It is myopic for anyone to think that the support seen at the rallies cannot be translated into votes. What is certain is that people want change, regardless what it is and that the agenda is unstoppable. It is time for this to happen.

The election process was interrupted. This action was condemned in the strongest terms. Elections should have gone on smoothly without interference. The beatings, killings, threats, intimidation and incarceration were uncalled for. Freedoms of association, expression and demanding for rights are very clear in the constitution but no freedom for enjoying them. Let the people have them and let the law be observed. Change is inevitable and let it happen peacefully. It may please those concerned to note that no amount of intimidation, torture and imprisonment should have stopped change. Time for change had come. Leadership choice should have been in the hands of the people and remember article on of the constitution "power belongs to the people" Ugandans didn't choose a leader of their choice in peace and with freedom. The perpetrators of these bad and demonic acts should know that continued suppression of voices and denying people their rights is not necessary and there is a price to pay. Many Ugandans are yearning for a secure, peaceful and stabile country.

## Politics Will Always Remain A Dirty Game



Lady Juicy

It is the responsibility of every citizen to vote and elect a leader of his or her own choice. People go to the ballot believing in a candidate for genuine reasons - hope, trust and the promise of a better future. Voting is an act of faith.

However, it is often disappointing that the big hopes voters place in their leaders end in frustration. Many promises made during campaigns are forgotten immediately after elections "swearing in" leaders disappear from the people they sought votes from and only return when another election season arrives.

During elections, ordinary citizens pay the highest price. People are in running, injured, some are imprisoned, families/societies divide, and others even lose their lives. Meanwhile, many politicians and their families remain safe - some protected by heavy security, others living comfortably abroad. The real sufferers are the voters. This really explains why many people lose interest in voting.

Transport costs are high, food prices are rising, the Internet is shutdown, mobile money services are switched off. These disruptions affect ordinary people, not political leaders. While voters struggle to survive, leaders continue smiling and celebrating their victories.

We must also remember that schools are about to reopen. Parents are worried, people who earn their living through the Internet are stuck and helpless. Small businesses are closed. Daily earners cannot work. Winners move on to earn millions, while voters remain leaving in a high economy, alot of taxes, for example, a small business where by house rent demands, power, kcca revenue, and wherever a landlord is told to pay, it's not him who suffers instead he increases the rent and it's the tenant to suffer with debts, hunger, and unanswered questions..

Why do we elect leaders?  
If the economy is too high yet the

industries that manufacture the items are within " do our leaders present such matters?

This forces us to ask a serious question!!!  
Why did more than three million ugandans not vote?

The answer lies in frustration, fear, economic hardship and loss of trust.

Many citizens no longer believe that their vote changes or improves their lives. Politics begins to look like a dirty game because the pain is carried by the people, while the benefits are enjoyed by a few.

If politics is to regain dignity, leaders must remember that powers comes from the people and service should return to the people. Until then, voters will continue to suffer, disengage and ask whether their sacrifice is truly worth it.

### CONCLUSION

Politics will continue to be seen as a dirty game as long as the cost of leadership is paid by ordinary citizens while the benefits are enjoyed by a few. When voters suffer injuries, imprisonment, poverty and loss of life, yet leaders remain protected and wealthy, trust is broken. The silence of millions who did not vote is not ignorance - it is a protest born out of frustration, hardship, lack of trust and disappointment.

If leaders truly want citizens to believe in democracy again, they must move beyond campaign promises and return to serve the people who entrusted them with power. Until then, elections will bring winners and losers but the greatest loss will always belong to the voters.

The problem might not be the political party that a leader belongs too but you as a leader who throws your responsibilities as a leader and mind about your personal gains yet the mott of Uganda says!!! FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY but many leaders are FOR GOD AND MY STOMACH

# I am a Proof That Age Is Not Leadership”

## Inside the Rise of Uganda’s Youngest MP, Robert Maseruka

*NUP brings youngest MP in the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament. Uganda Today sits down with Mukono South MP-elect and National Unity Platform (NUP) rising star Robert Maseruka, 25, whose political journey from village classrooms to the national legislature is redefining Uganda’s generational politics.*

**Uganda Today:**

**Congratulations upon your historic victory. How does it feel to become the youngest Member of Parliament in Uganda’s 12th Parliament?**

**Robert Maseruka:**

Thank you very much. It feels humbling and overwhelming at the same time. I carry this victory as a responsibility, not a personal trophy. Being the youngest MP is not about age; it is about service. I see myself as a messenger of hope for young people who have been told repeatedly that leadership is not for them.

**Uganda Today: Take us back to your roots. Who is Robert Maseruka?**

**Maseruka:**

I was born on February 24, 2000, in Nakisunga village, Mukono District. I am the third born in a family of five children to my parents, Mr. Simon Ssettuba and Ms. Joselyn Nanfuka. I grew up in a modest household where survival depended on hard work. Those early struggles shaped my empathy for ordinary Ugandans.

**Uganda Today: Tell us about your early education.**

**Maseruka:**

I began my primary education at **Kireka Hill Infant School**. From a young age, I was constantly elected class monitor and later class prefect. That is where leadership first found me.

For secondary school, I attended **Bugema Adventist Secondary School** and later **Wellstar Bright Secondary School in Mukono**. I served as head prefect and chapel prefect, roles that sharpened my discipline, public speaking, and organizational skills.

**Uganda Today: You later joined Makerere University. What did you study and why?**

**Maseruka:**

In 2020, I joined **Makerere University**, where I pursued a **Bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Communication**. I chose this course because I believe communication is central to leadership. A leader must understand people’s problems and articulate solutions clearly.

**Uganda Today: Your leadership at Makerere became nationally visible.**



Mukono South MP elect Robert Maseruka

**How did that journey unfold?**

**Maseruka:**

At Makerere, I first served as **class president**, then became a **Guild Representative Councillor**. In 2023, I was elected the **89th Guild President of Makerere University**. That experience was intense but invaluable. Managing thousands of students, negotiating with university management, and handling crises prepared me for national leadership.

**Uganda Today: When did you decide that Parliament was your next step?**

**Maseruka:**

While serving as Guild President, I realized that many student problems originate from national policy failures — unemployment, poor education funding, corruption. After my term, I became **NUP District Secretary for Mukono**, and that exposed me to grassroots politics. I knew then that I had to move from student activism to national representation.

**Uganda Today: Many doubted your**

**chances against seasoned politicians. What kept you going?**

**Maseruka:**

Faith in my people. I had no money to splash around. My campaign was built on walking, listening, and convincing. I slept in villages, ate with residents, and heard their pain. That connection is what carried me through.

**Uganda Today: What key issues did you present to voters in Mukono South?**

**Maseruka:**

Unemployment, especially among the youth.  
Poor health facilities.  
High school dropout rates.  
Bad roads and poor sanitation.

I told voters that development must be people-centered, not elite-centered.

**Uganda Today: You eventually defeated ten other candidates. What was your reaction when victory was announced?**

**Maseruka:**

I cried. Not because I won, but because people believed in me. When you come from nothing and people entrust you with such power, you feel the weight of their hopes.

**Uganda Today: What does your victory say about Uganda’s political direction?**

**Maseruka:**

It says Ugandans are ready for change. It says youth leadership is no longer theoretical. The future has arrived.

**Uganda Today: Some argue that young leaders lack experience. How do you respond?**

**Maseruka:**

Experience is not measured only by age. It is measured by exposure, integrity, and results. Many young people run businesses, households, and communities successfully. Why should politics be different?

**Uganda Today: What legislative priorities will you pursue in your first term?**

**Maseruka:**

- Youth employment and skills development
- Education financing reforms
- Strengthening health service delivery
- Electoral reforms
- Anti-corruption legislation

**Uganda Today: Are you balancing politics with personal life?**

**Maseruka:**

At the moment, my focus is service. Personal matters can wait. Uganda needs my full attention.

**Uganda Today: How would you describe yourself in three words?**

**Maseruka:**

Resilient. Disciplined. Purpose-driven.

**Uganda Today: What message do you have for young Ugandans watching your journey?**

**Maseruka:**

Never accept limitations imposed by society. Start where you are. Use what you have. Your time is now.

**Uganda Today: Finally, how do you want history to remember Robert Maseruka?**

**Maseruka:**

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## SOCIETY

# Meet Rev Golden Kabasiita

## Uganda's First Transgender Anglican Priest

Uganda Today presents a question-and-answer interview with Reverend **Kabasiita Golden**, formerly known as Barongo Charles, tracing a faith journey marked by courage, exile, resilience and renewed acceptance within the Anglican communion abroad. In 2025 November, Rev. Kabasiita Golden, started the journey of hormone transformation to adapt female characteristics she firmly desired. She is happy that her desires are progressively achieved well.

**Q: Who is Reverend Kabasiita Golden, and where does your journey and story begin?**

**A:** My name is Reverend Kabasiita Golden, formerly Barongo Charles. I come from Hoima District, Kitoba Sub-county, in Uganda. I grew up deeply shaped by my community's cultural traditions and a strong Christian faith, which guided me from an early age towards spiritual service.



The then Rev. Charles Barongo of Bunyoro Kitara Diocese in Uganda baptizing a child. He reassigned himself to a female and is now serving as priest in Canada under the name of Rev. Kabasiita Golden

**Q: How did your calling to ministry develop?**

**ANS:** I felt drawn to Christianity as a source of strength and direction. This led me to the Anglican Church. After two years of training at Bishop Ruhindi Theological College, I was commissioned in 2016 to serve in the Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. I committed myself fully to ministry, serving with compassion, humility and resilience.



**Q: What personal challenges did you face while serving in Uganda?**

**ANS:** I served in a society where rigid norms often suppress individuality. For many years, I carried a deeply personal truth about my identity, hidden beneath fear and uncertainty. That truth never left me; it waited to be acknowledged.

**Q: What led you to come out as a trans woman?**

**ANS:** Over time, the need to live authentically became unavoidable. I could no longer live behind an identity that was not mine. With great courage, I came out as a trans woman, knowing the consequences could be severe. I became the first Anglican priest in Uganda to openly identify as a trans woman.



Rev. Charles Barongo of Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. Below is the same person now called Rev. Kabasiita Golden of Anglican Church Ontario Canada. Happily transformed Rev. Kabasiita Golden formerly known as Rev. Charles Barongo

**Q: How did the Church in Uganda respond?**

**ANS:** The decision was both liberating and painful. Acceptance was withheld. The Church I had devoted my life to turned away from me. That rejection forced me to look beyond Uganda for a place where I could live freely and continue my ministry without fear.



Before transformation Lay Reader Charles Barongo now Rev. Kabasiita serving her God in Canada, posing for a photo with the Bishop of Bunyoro Kitara.

**Q: Where did you find acceptance after leaving Uganda?**

**ANS:** While in South Africa, I joined the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which embraced me with compassion and understanding. There, I continued ministering to people struggling to reconcile faith with their authentic selves and advocating for equality grounded in love and justice.

**Q: What are your views on inclusion and marriage within the Church?**

**ANS:** I believe marriage should be a union between two consenting adults, regardless of gender. This belief is rooted in my commitment to love, justice and equality.



Rev. Kabasiita Golden formerly Rev. Charles Barongo is proud of her trans woman dispensation.

**Q: Where are you now, and what is your current status within the Anglican Church?**

**ANS:** I am currently in Canada as a permanent resident. I am happy to say the Anglican Church of Canada has reopened its doors to me. I can attend worship and express myself without judgment, and

I am now serving within the Anglican Church of Canada.

**Q: Can you outline your ministerial journey over the years?**

**ANS:** I served with the Anglican Church of Uganda from childhood until 2019. From 2019 to 2021, I served with the Worldwide Anglican Church. Between 2021 and 2023, I ministered with the Order of Fathers and Brothers of the Poor and the Homeless. I left Uganda in June 2023 and now continue my ministry in Canada.

**Q: What message do you hope your journey sends to others?**

**ANS:** My life challenges deeply entrenched norms of faith and gender, but I hope it offers hope to those who feel alone or misunderstood. My story is one of faith, courage and love. The road to self-acceptance is not easy, but it is always worth taking. I remain committed to working for a more inclusive and compassionate Church that welcomes everyone.



As Uganda and the global Anglican communion continue to grapple with questions of identity, doctrine and inclusion, Reverend Kabasiita Golden's story stands as a rare and deeply personal account of faith tested, faith lost, and faith rediscovered beyond borders.



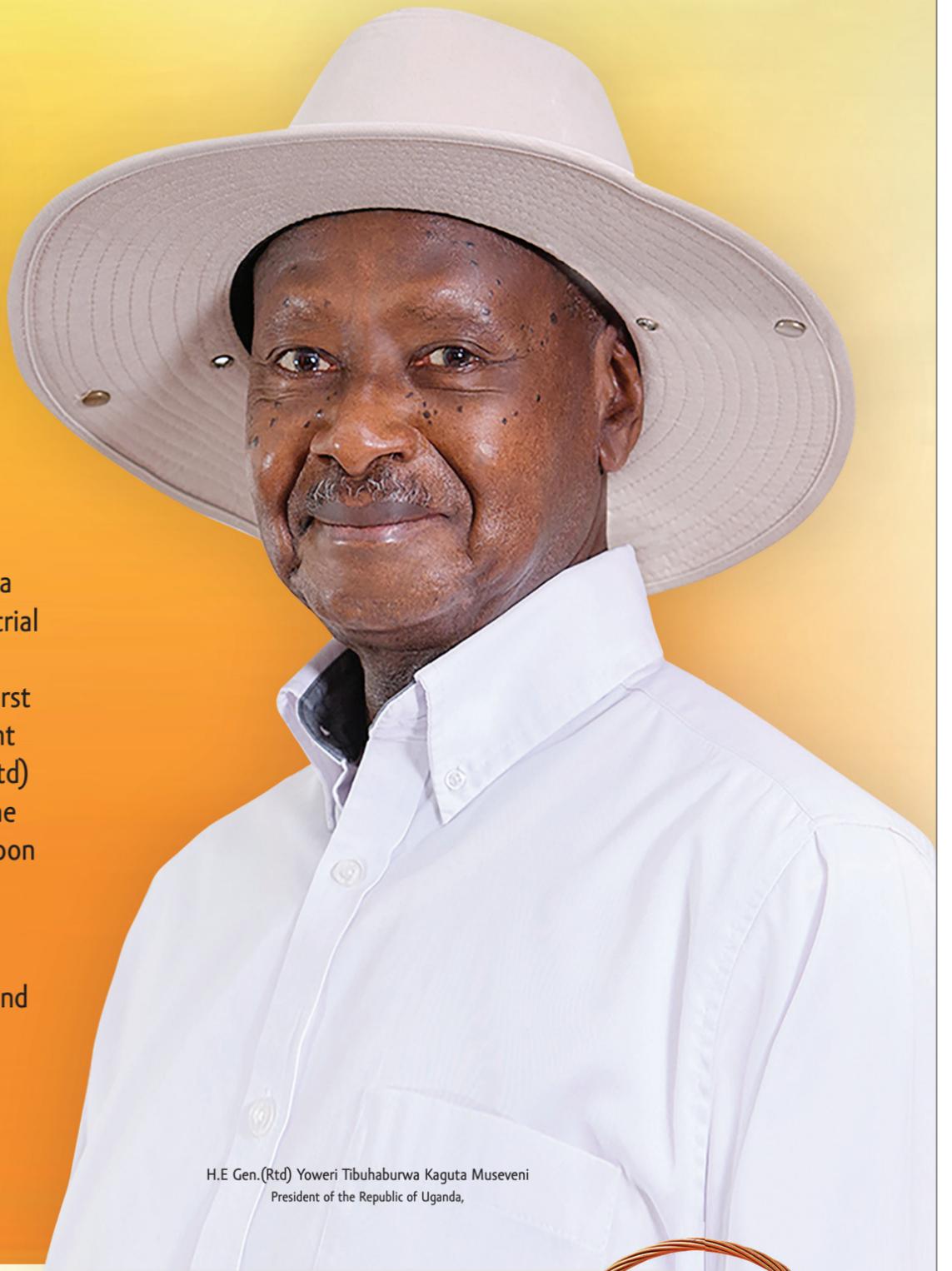


# 40<sup>th</sup> NRM Anniversary

On behalf of the Board, Management and staff of the Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID) and Banana Industrial Research and Development Centre (BIRDC), I extend hearty congratulations and best wishes first and foremost- to the PIBID Patron, also President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Gen (Rtd) Yoweri Tibuhaburwa Kaguta Museveni, and to the government as well as to the people of Uganda upon the 40th NRM anniversary, marked on Liberation Day, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

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Director General, PIBID/BIRDC



H.E Gen.(Rtd) Yoweri Tibuhaburwa Kaguta Museveni  
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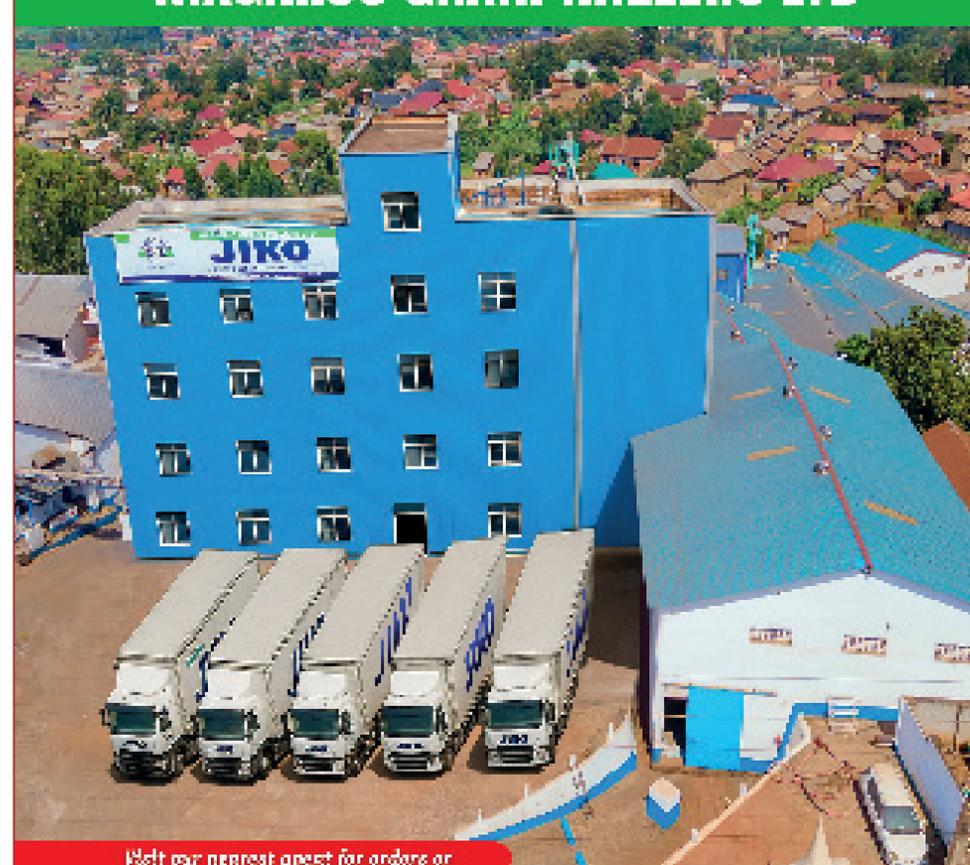
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## ACHIEVER

# Achiever of the week

## Vocalist Mesach Ssemakula - The Golden Voice That Refuses to fade away

In the ever-shifting landscape of Uganda's music industry—where trends rise fast and disappear even faster—**Mesach Ssemakula** stands as a rare constant. For more than three decades, his voice has remained unmistakable, his presence authoritative, and his commitment to band music unwavering.

At a time when many of his contemporaries bowed to commercial pressures or faded into obscurity, Ssemakula chose endurance over expedience, artistry over trend-chasing.

Fondly known to fans as *Golden Papa*, Mesach Ssemakula is not merely a singer; he is a custodian of a musical tradition that once defined Uganda's popular soundscape and still commands deep respect today.

### From Passion to Purpose

Ssemakula's musical journey took shape in the early 1990s, a period when live band music dominated nightclubs, wedding receptions, and national celebrations. Armed with a powerful, emotive voice and an instinctive grasp of melody, he quickly distinguished himself from his peers. His music blended Afro-pop rhythms, kadongo kamu sensibilities, and soul-inflected storytelling—songs that spoke of love, resilience, betrayal, and everyday life.

Tracks such as *Sigwe Onsimila* and *Kankutendereze* became household anthems, not because they followed fashion, but because they spoke truthfully to lived experiences. His delivery—measured yet passionate—earned him cross-generational appeal, making him

one of the few artists whose music resonated equally with young listeners and older audiences.

### Championing Band Music Against the Odds

As the 2000s ushered in digital production and a youth-driven pop revolution, band music steadily lost mainstream prominence. Many band artists either reinvented themselves or quietly exited the scene. Ssemakula did neither. Instead, he doubled down.

Through **Golden Productions Uganda Limited**, he invested not just in his own career, but in sustaining a full band ecosystem—instrumentalists, backing vocalists, sound engineers, and live performance culture.

This commitment came at a cost. Financial pressures, changing consumer tastes, and shrinking performance venues posed real challenges. Yet, even when internal strains forced difficult decisions, Ssemakula's belief in band music as a serious art form never wavered.

To him, band music was not outdated—it was underappreciated.

### Recognition Earned, Not Chased

Perhaps the clearest

validation of Ssemakula's endurance came when he won **Artiste of the Year at the Pearl of Africa Music (PAM) Awards**, a moment that stunned critics and delighted longtime supporters. The award was not just personal recognition; it was a symbolic victory for band music itself—proof that quality and consistency could still triumph in a fast-changing industry.

The accolade cemented his status as one of Uganda's most respected performers, affirming that longevity, when paired with excellence, remains a powerful currency.

### Mentor, Commentator, Cultural Voice

Beyond the stage, Mesach

Ssemakula has

emerged as a thoughtful commentator on the state of Uganda's music industry. He has consistently spoken out on issues ranging from artist welfare and media responsibility to the dangers of sacrificing musical standards for instant fame. More quietly, he has mentored younger musicians—some directly, others simply by example. In an era where fame is often mistaken for achievement, Ssemakula's career offers an alternative blueprint: patience, discipline, and respect for craft.

### A Living Legacy

Today, Mesach Ssemakula occupies a rare space in Uganda's cultural life. He is both active participant and living archive—a reminder of where the industry has come from and a guidepost for where it could go. His music continues to be performed live, his voice still commanding, his name still spoken with reverence.

In honoring Mesach Ssemakula as an **Achiever**, Uganda Today recognizes more than a successful artist. It recognizes resilience over hype, substance over spectacle, and a man who chose to carry his art with dignity across generations.

In a business obsessed with the next big thing, Mesach Ssemakula remains proof that greatness can also endure.



# Cold Winter, War and Diplomacy: Global Pressure Mounts in Ukraine Conflict

By Uganda Today — International Desk

As winter deepens across Europe, the war in Ukraine remains a central focus of international diplomacy and humanitarian concern. Over the past week, Russian military strikes have plunged large parts of Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities into darkness and freezing temperatures, cutting off access to heat, water and electricity for hundreds of thousands of people. Peace negotiations involving Ukraine, Russia and the United States are continuing, but the situation on the ground remains precarious.

## Winter Warfare and Humanitarian Struggles

With temperatures well below freezing in major cities such as Kyiv, the loss of heat and electricity has pushed the Ukrainian civilian population deeper into crisis. Residents are reportedly struggling to keep homes warm and access clean water as essential infrastructure is repeatedly hit. This humanitarian strain is drawing international attention, with global leaders and relief organizations urging increased support for affected civilians.

Analysts say that Russia's strategy of targeting energy infrastructure may be designed to erode morale and pressure Ukraine politically. However, international aid flows continue, and European nations have pledged emergency heating supplies and power generators to support Ukrainian communities.



Residents of Kyiv queue for fuel and warm meals as winter conditions worsen under continued Russian strikes.

## Diplomacy at Crossroads

Despite the brutal winter and unrelenting military pressure, diplomatic engagement has not stalled. Talks involving Ukrainian, Russian and U.S. representatives are underway in a bid to seek pathways to de-escalation, though progress remains slow. Western leaders continue to support Ukraine with defensive

aid, while also calling for guarded negotiations aimed at reducing immediate suffering.

Observers warn that the winter season may complicate diplomatic efforts. As freezing conditions worsen, there is growing urgency to secure safe corridors for civilians and negotiate temporary ceasefires to allow basic supplies to reach those in need.

## Broader Global Impacts

### The conflict's ramifications extend far beyond Europe:

Energy markets across the globe continue to feel volatility as Russia's strikes disrupt supply routes and press nations to diversify energy sources. Food security is strained in parts of Africa and the Middle East, where grain and fertilizer exports from Ukraine have already been disrupted by the war.

Geopolitical alliances are shifting, with NATO and EU member states recalibrating defense and humanitarian aid commitments in response to prolonged conflict.

## Voices from the Frontline

Survivors and aid workers describe the resilience of communities who are enduring the harsh winter and ongoing attacks. "Every night without heat is another risk to lives," one volunteer from a Kyiv relief organization shared. "But people here are determined to hold on."

Ukrainian government officials continue to appeal for increased international support, particularly in bolstering civil infrastructure and medical services during the freezing season.

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## INTERNATIONAL SPORTS NEWS

# AFCON AFTER THE FINAL WHISTLE:



## What the Tournament Revealed About African Football

When the final whistle blew on the recently concluded Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), it did more than crown a champion. It closed yet another chapter in Africa's most compelling football story—one marked by tactical evolution, shifting power centres, raw emotion, and a growing assertion of African football on the global stage. AFCON has always been more than a tournament. It is a mirror of Africa's footballing soul: unpredictable, fiercely competitive, and deeply intertwined with national identity. This edition was no exception.

## Tactical Maturity and the End of "Underdogs"

One of the clearest takeaways from this AFCON was the narrowing gap between traditional heavyweights and so-called "smaller" nations. Teams once dismissed as outsiders arrived tactically organised, physically prepared, and psychologically fearless.

Compact defensive blocks, rapid transitions, and disciplined pressing systems became the norm rather than the exception. Several favourites struggled not because they lacked talent, but because their opponents were better drilled and more adaptable. The age when AFCON surprises were explained away as "African unpredictability" is fading; what we are witnessing instead is **tactical maturity**.

## European Exposure, African Identity

A significant number of players arrived at AFCON as regulars in Europe's top leagues. Their influence was unmistakable—cleaner build-up play, positional awareness, and game management in high-pressure moments. Yet, this AFCON also reminded the world that African football retains its own identity. Flair, improvisation, emotional intensity, and crowd-driven momentum still shaped matches in ways rarely seen in Europe. The tournament struck a delicate balance between global professionalism and local football culture—an encouraging sign for the continent's future.



Uganda's Goal Keeper Onyango during AFCON

## Coaching: The Silent Game-Changer

Another defining feature of the tournament was the impact of coaching.

Whether led by African tacticians or experienced foreign managers, teams with clear footballing philosophies consistently outperformed those relying on individual brilliance alone. Well-prepared sides rotated squads intelligently, managed player fatigue, and adjusted game plans mid-match. AFCON increasingly rewards preparation over reputation—a lesson federations across the continent cannot afford to ignore.

## VAR, Officiating, and the Pursuit of Fairness

Officiating once again attracted debate, but the wider use of VAR signalled progress. While controversies were inevitable, the tournament showed a clear commitment to improving fairness and accountability.

More importantly, referees demonstrated greater authority and fitness, reflecting CAF's ongoing investment in match officials.

Though imperfect, the direction is positive—and credibility remains the currency African football must protect most.

## What AFCON Means for Uganda and the Region

For countries like Uganda, watching AFCON is both inspiration and instruction. The tournament underscores the importance of youth development, domestic league competitiveness, sports science, and administrative stability.

Nations that progressed furthest were not accidental successes; they were products of long-term planning. If Ugandan football is to consistently return to AFCON and compete credibly, lessons from this tournament must translate into policy, investment, and patience at home.

## Beyond the Trophy

As the dust settles, AFCON once again affirmed its place as one of world football's most emotionally charged competitions. It may not always deliver polished perfection, but it delivers something rarer—**authentic football drama rooted in history, struggle, and pride**.

The challenge now is continuity: turning tournament moments into sustainable growth for African football as a whole.

# Premier League Weekend of Shock and Suspense as Title Race Tightens

By Uganda Today Sports Desk  
London, England

The English Premier League delivered another weekend of gripping drama, stunning upsets and high-stakes clashes as the 2025/26 season entered a decisive phase, with the title race, top-four battle and relegation scrap all taking dramatic new turns. From Bournemouth's shock victory over Liverpool, to Manchester City's return to winning ways and the looming blockbuster between Arsenal and Manchester United, Matchday 23 underlined why the Premier League remains the most competitive league in world football.

## Bournemouth Stun Liverpool in Five-Goal Thriller

AFC Bournemouth produced one of the biggest surprises of the season after edging Liverpool 3-2 with a dramatic stoppage-time winner at the Vitality Stadium.

The Reds twice came from behind through goals by Virgil van Dijk and Dominik Szoboszlai, but Bournemouth refused to surrender. Their persistence paid off in the dying moments when Amine Adli fired home to spark wild celebrations among the home supporters.

The defeat compounds Liverpool's inconsistent run and deepens concerns about their ability to sustain a serious challenge for Champions League qualification. For Bournemouth, the victory is a major boost in their quest to secure top-half



Manchester City players celebrating a goal vs Wolves

safety and possibly push toward European contention.

## Manchester City Steady the Ship

Defending champions Manchester City responded to recent setbacks with a composed 2-0 victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers, keeping themselves firmly in the title hunt. City dominated possession and showed their trademark control, with goals from Omar Marmoush and Antoine Semenyo sealing the win.

Pep Guardiola's side now refocuses on chasing league leaders Arsenal, knowing that any further slip-ups could prove costly in what is shaping up to be one of the tightest title races in recent memory.

**Arsenal vs Manchester United: A Defining Clash**  
All eyes now turn to the Emirates Stadium, where Arsenal host Manchester United in a heavyweight encounter with huge implications.

Arsenal enter the match sitting top of the table and chasing their first league title in over two decades, while United are rebuilding momentum and seeking to re-establish themselves among England's elite. Victory for Arsenal would strengthen their grip on the summit, while a United win could dramatically reshape the title and top-four picture.

## January Transfer Window Heats Up

Off the pitch, the January transfer window continues to generate excitement.

Fulham are reported to be pursuing PSV striker Ricardo Pepi, who has enjoyed a prolific season in the Netherlands, while several clubs are exploring late moves to strengthen their squads ahead of the decisive final months. With less than a week remaining before the window closes, fans can expect more twists and surprise deals.

## What This Weekend Tells Us

The title race is far from settled. Traditional giants are under pressure from ambitious mid-table sides.

## Every point now carries enormous weight.

As the Premier League season races toward its climax, drama, controversy and unforgettable moments appear guaranteed.

# Cranes' AFCON 2025 Campaign Ends in Historic and Tumultuous Fashion

Continued from page 20

The substitute keeper received a direct red card, triggering the introduction of a third netminder. The Cranes consequently made history as the first AFCON side this edition to field three different goalkeepers in a single fixture. Head coach Put later acknowledged that the team lacked the experience and depth to navigate the unique challenges they faced and emphasised the need for growth and structure as Uganda prepares to co-host AFCON 2027 alongside Kenya and Tanzania.

## Looking Beyond the Scoreline

For many Ugandan football supporters, the dramatic finale in Fès has laid bare

broader issues within the national football setup — from squad depth to depth in specialist positions such as goalkeeping.

Despite spirited performances and flashes of quality during the tournament, the Cranes were ultimately unable to translate their ambitions into results. The campaign ended in disappointment, but also with valuable lessons as Uganda looks ahead to future competitions.

As preparations begin in earnest for AFCON 2027 — an opportunity to host Africa's elite on home soil — analysts and fans alike are calling for investment in youth development, improved domestic league structures, and more strategic planning for the national team.





# UGANDA TODAY



26<sup>th</sup> January - 2nd February 2026 Vol 1, No. 012 Price: Ug Shs. 2000,

## CRANES' AFCON 2025 CAMPAIGN ENDS IN HISTORIC AND TUMULTUOUS FASHION

By Uganda Today – Sports Desk

Morocco — The 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) proved a challenging and unforgettable tournament for the Uganda Cranes, culminating in a Group C exit that will be remembered as much for an extraordinary goalkeeping anomaly as for the wider lessons it offered Ugandan football.

The Cranes' final match of the group stage, a 3–1 defeat to Nigeria's Super Eagles at the Complexe Sportif de Fès, captured continental headlines after Uganda became the first team in the tournament to deploy three different goalkeepers in a single match — a rare occurrence in elite international football.

### A Match of High Stakes and High Drama

Entering the game needing a win to keep alive their hopes of advancing to the knockout rounds, the Cranes approached the fixture with belief despite a challenging schedule that included a 3–1 loss to Tunisia and mixed results earlier in the group stage. However, what unfolded in Fès will remain one of the more bizarre sequences in recent AFCON history.

Veteran custodian Denis Onyango — one of Uganda's most experienced players — was named in goal at kickoff. Yet after just 23 minutes, Onyango was forced off due to an ankle injury sustained in an aerial



Salim Magoola exits the field in response to the red card (AFCON 2025)

challenge while attempting to prevent a corner kick. With Onyango unable to continue, coach Paul Put turned to his second-choice goalkeeper Salim Magoola, a decision supported by his inclusion in the Cranes' travelling squad.

### The Unfolding Chaos

Magoola's time between the sticks would prove brief and dramatic. Shortly after entering the fray, he was shown a straight red card

for handling the ball outside the penalty area while trying to deny a clear goalscoring opportunity — a rare dismissal that left Uganda down to ten men. With no specialist goalkeeper left on the bench, the Cranes were compelled to introduce third-choice goalkeeper Nafian Alionzi. He completed the goalkeeping trio that day, marking the first time in AFCON 2025 that a side had used three goalkeepers in one match. Despite Alionzi's efforts, Nigeria's attacking quality soon

told: the Super Eagles ran out comfortable 3–1 winners as Raphael Onyedika scored twice to seal Nigeria's perfect group record.

### Why It Will Be Remembered

This match quickly became one of the most talked-about fixtures of the tournament — not just for the result but for its sheer unpredictability. Uganda's first-choice goalkeeper was replaced due to injury early in the first half.

Continued to page 19

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