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# UGANDA WEEKLY FOCUS

*Top highlight*

**PRESIDENT MUSEVENI HAILS UPDF, OTHER  
SECURITY FORCES FOR ENSURING PEACE  
AND STABILITY DURING RECENT GENERAL  
ELECTIONS | Pg. 35**



INFORMING MINDS • INSPIRING CHANGE



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## *The* **EDITOR'S NOTE** .....

Welcome to the 14th Edition of Uganda Weekly Focus. It is truly a beautiful thing to know that you have stayed with us, week after week. Your continued readership inspires us to keep informing minds and inspiring change.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated contributors whose commitment ensures that we bring you timely, accurate, and meaningful updates every single week. Your passion and professionalism make this publication possible.

In the week that has just ended, Uganda marked Tarehe Sita – a moment of reflection on our nation's journey and the role of the Uganda People's Defence Forces in securing peace and stability. We continue to appreciate the Army for its service, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to protecting our country and supporting national development.

Beyond that, it has been a dynamic and eventful week across the country. From governance and health sector milestones to environmental progress, economic updates, regional diplomacy, and inspiring human-interest stories – there is much to reflect on and even more to look forward to.

In this edition, you will find some of the key stories shaping conversations and driving transformation across Uganda.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for engaging. And thank you for being part of this growing community.

Together, let us continue informing minds and inspiring change.

Warm regards,

The Editorial Team

# JUDICIARY

## CJ ZEIJA ORDERS FAST-TRACKING OF ELECTION PETITIONS, SUSPENDS OTHER CASES

By David Serumaga, Uganda Media Centre



**“This is the season for Election Petitions... Let us give them the priority and attention they deserve and dispose of them within the timelines set by law.” – Chief Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija**

Newly appointed Chief Justice, Dr. Flavian Zeija, has directed the judiciary to prioritize all election petitions and related appeals, temporarily suspending other cases on the docket.

The announcement came during the closing ceremony of the 27th Annual Judges' Conference at Speke Resort Munyonyo on

Wednesday, February 4, 2026.

CJ Zeija described the coming period as “the season for Election Petitions,” emphasizing the urgent need for judicial efficiency to safeguard democratic integrity.

“This is the season for Election Petitions, and we shall have the appeals

Chief Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija addresses the judiciary at the 27th Annual Judges' Conference

arising from them. Let us give them the priority and attention they deserve and dispose of them within the timelines set by law,” he stated.

According to CJ Zeija, fast-tracking these cases is crucial for public confidence, ensuring that elected officials truly represent the will of the people—a fundamental pillar for political stability and trust in the electoral process.



The directive was delivered within the framework of the conference's theme, "Judicial Wellness: A Tool for Effective Case Management." CJ Zeija highlighted the link between the well-being of judicial officers and their ability to handle high-stakes, time-sensitive matters effectively.

Organized by the Judicial Training Institute (JTI) in partnership with the International Development Law Organization and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the conference focused on strengthening judges' wellness as a foundation for productivity and timely justice.

**In his remarks, Chief Guest Justice Minister Hon. Norbert Mao applauded the judiciary's efforts to improve efficiency.**

**He emphasized the value of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), noting that excessive reliance on litigation slows down justice, increases costs, and creates unnecessary stress. Hon. Mao also reaffirmed the Ministry of Justice's support for judicial reforms and training aimed at shifting the legal profession away from a litigation-centric mindset.**

JTI Chairperson, Justice Mike Chibita, thanked the Chief Justice for his guidance in shaping the conference, noting the depth of discussions and presentations on judicial wellness.

The call for efficiency comes as the Supreme Court in Kampala commenced the inter-parties hearing of the main petition challenging the election of President-elect Yoweri Kaguta Museveni following the January 15, 2026 presidential election.

Filed by former presidential aspirant Robert Kasibante, Presidential Election Petition No. 1 of 2026 seeks to nullify the results, citing alleged non-compliance with electoral laws and electoral malpractices.

The petition is being heard by a panel of nine Justices led by Chief Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija, alongside Lady Justice Percy Night Tuhaise, Justice Mike Chibita, Lady Justice Elizabeth Musoke, Justice Stephen Musota, Justice Christopher Madrama Izama, Lady Justice Dr. Catherine Bamugemereire, Lady Justice Monica Mugenyi, and Justice Kibeedi Muzamiru Mutangula.

# MINISTRY OF HEALTH LAUNCHES NATIONAL LABORATORY DATA REPOSITORY TO STRENGTHEN DATA-DRIVEN HEALTHCARE

Nanteza Sarah Kyobe,  
Uganda Media Centre

**“Digitisation is only meaningful when data is actively used. The National Laboratory Data Repository strengthens laboratory-clinical linkages and enables a resilient, data-driven health system.” Dr. Charles Olaro, Director General of Health Services**



Dr. Charles Olaro and Dr. Susan Nabadda Ndidde share a light moment at the launch of Uganda's National Laboratory Data Repository

**T**he Ministry of Health officially launched the National Laboratory Data Repository (LDR) on 3rd February, 2026, a major digital milestone aimed at improving the use of laboratory data to strengthen healthcare delivery and public health decision-making across Uganda.

The platform, developed under the Department of National Health Laboratory and

Diagnostic Services (NHLDS), serves as a centralised national hub that connects laboratory information systems from across the country and feeds directly into the Ministry of Health's National Health Information System.

The LDR was launched by the Director General of Health Services, Dr. Charles Olaro, who emphasized that

digitisation must go beyond data collection to meaningful use.

“Digitisation is only meaningful when data is actively used. The National Health Data Warehouse strengthens laboratory-clinical linkages, informs national health decisions, and enables analytics that support a resilient, data-

driven health system,” Dr. Olaro said.

The repository addresses long-standing challenges of fragmented laboratory information systems by providing a unified platform for integrating, analysing, and using laboratory data in real time. According to Dr. Susan Nabadda, the initiative represents a strategic shift toward evidence-based diagnostics and health management.

“The LDR enables timely use of data and faster clinical and public health decisions. This is not just a technical upgrade. It is a strategic investment for evidence-based management and diagnostics,” she noted.

The platform enables real-time monitoring of key laboratory and public health indicators, including laboratory test volumes by facility, disease trends, turnaround times and laboratory performance, surveillance and pandemic preparedness indicators, commodities and human resource utilisation, as well as the



Dr. Charles Olaro, Director General of Health Services with Ministry of Health officials and partners during the launch of the National Laboratory Data Repository in Kampala

reliability and quality of laboratory services.

Developed with technical and financial support from the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the LDR is expected to strengthen reporting, reduce duplication, and improve transparency and accountability across Uganda’s laboratory sector.

Welcoming the launch, Mr. Paul Mbaka from ACHS Health Information Systems underscored the importance of system performance after deployment.

“We need post-deployment monitoring to ensure digital health systems perform as expected. We have had many scattered dashboards in the past, so this unified product is highly commendable. Congratulations to NHLDS,” he said.

By consolidating data from public and partner-supported laboratories into one governed system, the National Laboratory Data Repository provides faster access to trusted information, strengthens laboratory-clinical linkages, and lays a reliable foundation for evidence-based decision-making at facility, district, and national levels.



# GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS ANCHOR UGANDA'S PRODUCTIVITY AND HUMAN CAPITAL GAINS

By Kenson Bugembe, Uganda Media Centre

**U**ganda's December 2025 Microeconomic Indicator Dashboard underscores a clear policy message: sustained government intervention remains central to protecting productivity, strengthening human capital, and stabilizing the economy amid evolving social and health pressures

While the month registered a temporary rise in malaria-related morbidity, broader trends point to the effectiveness of coordinated public action. Over the past year, malaria incidence declined by 22 percent nationwide, while malaria-related deaths fell sharply by 38 percent in FY2024/25. These outcomes reflect deliberate investments in prevention, early treatment, and system-wide health reforms under the National



December 23, 2025: Government, Through National Medical Stores, Flags off 2025/26 National Mosquito Net Distribution Campaign - Courtesy Photo



Development Plan IV (NDP IV), which prioritizes reducing mortality from high-risk communicable diseases to 30 percent by FY2029/30

Central to this progress has been the rollout of Uganda's Malaria Vaccination Initiative in 2025. Targeting children under two years in 107 districts, the programme achieved an impressive 96 percent first-dose coverage by mid-2025, supported through partnerships with GAVI, UNICEF, and government co-financing.

Complementing vaccination efforts, Indoor Residual Spraying campaigns reached over 5.6 million people across Eastern Uganda, West Nile, and Mid-North regions, while insecticide-treated net usage rose to 76 percent nationally by 2024

These health gains directly reinforce economic performance. By reducing preventable illness, government interventions are safeguarding labour productivity in agriculture,

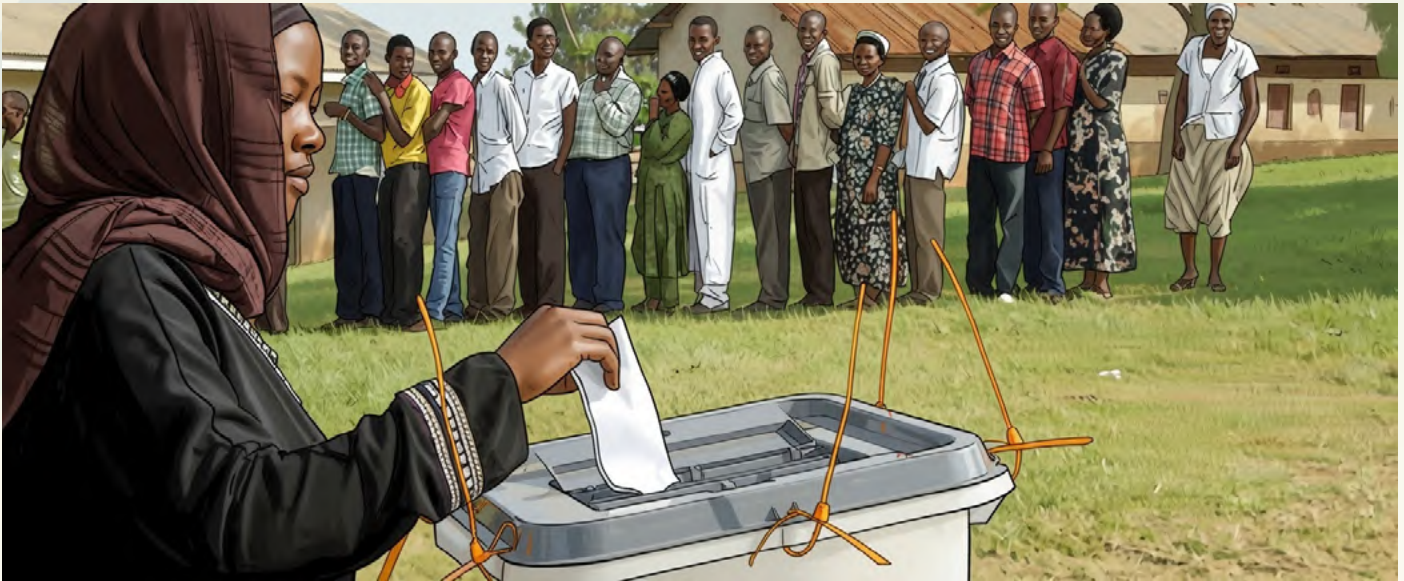
manufacturing, and services. This is particularly important in high-potential but vulnerable sub-regions such as Teso, where malaria deaths declined by 39 percent despite population growth and climatic pressures. The success illustrates that targeted public health action can deliver results even in regions facing poverty and structural constraints

Beyond health, the December update highlights steady progress across key microeconomic pillars. Financial inclusion expanded significantly, with mobile money agents exceeding one million nationwide and agent banking growing by 20 percent year-on-year. Energy price stability, modest declines in liquid fuel inflation, and improvements in air quality further demonstrate the government's role in cushioning households and businesses from cost shocks

The launch of the "24.2 Hours Malaria Initiative"

in April 2025 marks a strategic shift toward rapid treatment and efficiency in service delivery. By committing to treat uncomplicated malaria within 24 hours and severe cases within two hours, government aims to halve malaria deaths and prevent up to 500,000 hospitalizations annually. This initiative aligns health outcomes directly with productivity, competitiveness, and long-term growth

**Uganda's December 2025 microeconomic performance confirms that proactive government policy particularly in health remains a critical foundation for inclusive growth, resilience, and sustained economic transformation.**



## WHEN THE VOTERS SAY, “ENOUGH IS ENOUGH”

Nanteza Sarah Kyobe, Uganda Media Centre

**U**ganda’s just-concluded 2026 general elections marked a historic moment of change, as voters decisively rejected many prominent politicians, including long-serving lawmakers and key cabinet members. Across the country, citizens opted for new faces over familiar figures, signaling a major upheaval in Parliament not seen since the introduction of multiparty politics in 2005.

The results reflected a growing public demand for accountability and fresh leadership. Veteran MPs who had long held office lost their seats, demonstrating that the electorate is increasingly unwilling to tolerate complacency. Citizens

expressed the desire for representatives who are more attuned to pressing issues ranging from economic hardships to the urgent need for improved governance.

Notable parliamentary upsets included Ssegona

of Busiro East, defeated by Emmanuel Magoola, an independent aligned with the NUP; Abed Bwanika Kimanya-Kabonera, unseated by NUP’s Patrick Kuteesa; Abdu Katuntu of Bugweri County, who lost to independent Sadala Wandera Stella Nankwanga; and Barnabas Tinkasimire of Buyaga West, also ousted. Youth-led and grassroots movements energized voters, particularly younger demographics, who are determined to challenge the status quo. In Nyendo–Mukungwe, Mathias Mpuuga lost to NUP’s Lubowa Ssebina Gyaviira, while Lutamaguzi Ssemakula in Nakaseke South was defeated by NRM’s

Charles Nsereko. Even long-standing figures such as Asuman Basalirwa of Bugiri Municipality fell to NRM's Francis Oketcho.

These defeats underscore a shift in voter expectations. Citizens are prioritizing community engagement, responsiveness, and fresh ideas over long-standing political ties. The victories of relatively unknown challengers highlight a desire for grounded, people-focused representation that addresses real concerns on the ground. Other notable losses included Buhweju County MP Francis Twijukye, Theodore Ssekikubo of Lwemiyaga County, Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda in Kira Municipality, and veteran politician Sarah Achieng Opendi, who was unseated by young advocate Akoth Angela.

**Cabinet positions were not spared. Senior ministers,**

**including Hamson Obua, Government Chief Whip and NRM Vice Chairperson for Northern Uganda; David Bahati, State Minister for Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives; Beatrice Anywar, State Minister for Environment; and Henry Okello Oryem, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, lost their parliamentary races. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, State Minister for Primary Education, also fell. These results suggest that voters are willing to reward responsibility,**

**transparency, and active community engagement while punishing absenteeism and self-interest.**

For decades, MPs have been criticized for remaining in Kampala, attending parliamentary duties, and neglecting local needs returning to their districts mainly during campaigns. In 2026, voters expressed their frustration loudly and clearly. The mandate now falls on the new leaders to act differently: to engage meaningfully with citizens, champion transparency, and prioritize community welfare. This is Uganda's moment to reshape its political narrative. If these new representatives rise to the occasion, they will not only honor the electorate's trust but also pave the way for a brighter, more accountable future.



**KAMPALA, MONDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2026**

# NEMA CELEBRATES WETLAND RECOVERY AS UGANDA MARKS WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2026

Jackie Mayega, Uganda Media Centre

**U**ganda has recorded significant progress in wetland protection and restoration, with national wetland coverage increasing from 8.9% in the early 2020s to approximately 13.9% by 2025, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has announced.



Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of Uganda, delivers the keynote address during World Wetlands Day 2026 celebrations in Kampala

The milestone was revealed as the country marked World Wetlands Day 2026 at the former National Forestry Authority Grounds in Bugolobi, Nakawa Division, Kampala. The commemorations were organised by NEMA in partnership with the Wetlands Management Department under the Ministry of Water

and Environment, bringing together government leaders, development partners, conservationists, local communities, and other stakeholders.

World Wetlands Day 2026 was celebrated under the global theme, “Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage,” underscoring the

importance of wetlands not only in maintaining ecological balance, but also in sustaining livelihoods, preserving cultural identity, and supporting indigenous knowledge systems.

The Prime Minister of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, officiated as Chief Guest on behalf



NEMA Executive Director Dr. Akankwasah Barirega shares a light moment with Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja as they exchange ideas on the wetland restoration agenda during World Wetlands Day 2026 commemorations in Kampala

of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. In her address, she commended institutions, communities, and partners for their collective efforts in safeguarding Uganda's wetlands, noting that environmental protection remains central to the country's sustainable development agenda.

**“Protecting wetlands is not only about conserving ecosystems, but also**

**about safeguarding our cultural heritage, identity, and social cohesion,” the Prime Minister said.**

“The progress we are witnessing today demonstrates what can be achieved when government institutions, communities, and partners work together to protect our natural resources for the benefit of both present and

future generations.”

She called upon all Ugandans to take collective responsibility in conserving wetlands through increased awareness, restoration of degraded areas, promotion of sustainable land use practices, and proper waste disposal.

NEMA Executive Director, Dr. Akankwasah Barirega, attributed the recovery in wetland coverage to coordinated enforcement, restoration, and community engagement efforts



Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja launching the National Wetland Strategic plan 2026 - 2036

spearheaded by the Wetlands Management Department, NEMA, and local governments across the country.

“This recovery is the result of deliberate actions, including strengthened enforcement of the National Environment Act, restoration of degraded wetland sites, and continuous public sensitisation,” Dr. Barirega said. He revealed that 8,613 wetland sites have so far been officially gazetted, with ongoing demarcation of major wetland systems including Aswa, Awoja, Enyau, Kibimba, Mayanja, Lumbuye, Mpanga, Musizi, Tochi, and the Ssezibwa-Lwajali system.

Dr. Barirega reaffirmed NEMA’s central regulatory mandate to monitor, supervise, enforce, and coordinate environmental compliance nationwide. He cited recent enforcement operations, including the removal of unlawful structures and backfilling activities in the Nakiyanja Wetland in Mukono District, as evidence of the Authority’s commitment to protecting ecological integrity.

Beyond enforcement, NEMA continues to collaborate with the Ministry of Water and Environment, local governments, civil society organisations,

community groups, and international partners to promote sustainable livelihood alternatives that reduce pressure on wetlands. Education, community sensitisation, and capacity building remain key pillars of these interventions.

As Uganda joined the rest of the world in commemorating World Wetlands Day, NEMA urged citizens to recognise the immense ecological, economic, and cultural value of wetlands and to actively participate in their protection.

**World Wetlands Day is observed annually on 2 February to commemorate the adoption of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1971. The day was first celebrated globally in 1997 and was formally recognised as an international observance by the United Nations General Assembly in 2021.**



# TACKLING THE FOUL SMELL FROM LAKE VICTORIA: WHAT IS BEING DONE AND WHAT MUST CHANGE

By Michael Woira, GCIC – Uganda

In recent weeks, communities around Lake Victoria, particularly the Inner Murchison Bay in Luzira and parts of Entebbe, have experienced a strong and unpleasant smell coming from the lake.

The Ministry of Water and Environment has attributed this problem to increased pollution and algal blooms, a challenge that has been building up over time and now requires urgent and coordinated action.

Lake Victoria is not just a water body. It supports over 45 million people across the region, providing drinking water, transport, hydropower, fisheries, livelihoods, and biodiversity. In Uganda, bays such as Inner Murchison Bay, Kitubulu, Nakiwogo, and Napoleon Gulf are among the most heavily used sections of

the lake. Unfortunately, they are also the most polluted.

The immediate cause of the foul smell is the decomposition of algae. Due to high levels of nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, algae grow rapidly in the shallow bays. When these algae die, they decompose and release gases such as hydrogen sulphide and ammonia, which produce the strong stench being experienced.

This process is worsened during the dry season and periods of high temperature, when water mixing accelerates decomposition. At the same time, oxygen levels in the water drop, putting fish and other aquatic life at risk. The nutrients released during decomposition further fuel new algal growth,

creating a continuous cycle.

The real issue lies upstream. The bays receive heavy pollution loads from untreated municipal wastewater, industrial effluent, surface runoff carrying silt and nutrients, agricultural chemicals, plastic waste, and human waste. Wetlands that once acted as natural filters have been degraded, allowing polluted water to flow directly into the lake.

Recognizing this, the Ministry of Water and Environment has put in place a set of targeted interventions to address both the symptoms and the root causes.

## Key Interventions Currently Underway

Wetlands around Lake Victoria and its catchment are being restored to reclaim their natural role as filters. Healthy wetlands trap nutrients, organic matter, and sediments before they enter the open lake, significantly reducing pollution levels.

The Ministry has

prioritized the enforcement of the 200-metre buffer zone around the lake. This buffer helps intercept pollutants, limits harmful human activities close to the shoreline, and preserves the ecological integrity of the lake.

A dedicated Water Quality Monitoring Network is operational, with 23 stations in Inner Murchison Bay and 10 in Entebbe Bay. Data is collected quarterly and used to guide policy decisions, enforcement actions, and long-term lake management strategies.

Industries within the lake catchment are being mobilized and supported to adopt cleaner production techniques. These include reducing wastewater at source, recycling and reusing water, and minimizing harmful discharges into the environment.

The Ministry has scaled up enforcement of conditions attached to effluent discharge permits issued to industries and municipal wastewater treatment

plants. The goal is to ensure that only treated wastewater that meets national standards enters the lake.

Awareness campaigns are ongoing to engage communities, industries, and institutions around the lake. The focus is on building understanding of how everyday activities contribute to pollution and what each stakeholder can do to protect the lake.

Despite these efforts, the Ministry acknowledges that more must be done, and faster.

Solid waste management around the lake needs urgent improvement to prevent plastics and organic waste from entering the water. Environment-friendly land use and agricultural practices must be promoted to reduce runoff of fertilizers and sediments. All industries in the catchment must fully comply with cleaner production standards, not just a few.

Enforcement by urban authorities must also be strengthened, especially

in rapidly growing urban areas where wastewater and solid waste systems are overstretched.

Finally, public awareness must move beyond information sharing to fostering real ownership and responsibility for Lake Victoria.

The Ministry emphasizes that algal blooms in Lake Victoria's bays are not a new problem, but a symptom of long-standing pressure on the lake. Solving it requires coordination among government ministries, local authorities, industries, communities, and environmental organizations.

Protecting Lake Victoria is not only a government duty. It is a national responsibility. Every Ugandan has a role to play in reducing pollution, supporting sustainable practices, and safeguarding this vital resource for future generations.

Ministry of Water and Environment

3 February 2026

KAMPALA, February 5, 2026

# UGANDA LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE SAFE LABOUR MIGRATION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

By Michael Woira, GCIC -Uganda

**“Safe migration begins with informed choices.” Hon. Esther Anyakun Davinia, Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations**

Speaking at the launch, Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, Hon. Esther Anyakun Davinia, emphasized the



Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, Hon. Esther Anyakun Davinia and Officials from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development pose for a group photo during the official launch of the Safe Labour Migration Awareness Campaign

The Government of Uganda has officially launched a nationwide Safe Labour Migration Awareness Campaign aimed at protecting Ugandans seeking employment abroad from exploitation, illegal recruitment,

and human trafficking. The initiative, themed “Travel Safe. Stay Safe.”, was unveiled at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

risks many Ugandans face when pursuing opportunities abroad. “Every day, many of our sons and daughters make the difficult decision to leave their homes in search of employment opportunities beyond





Hon. Esther Anyakun Davinia, Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, addresses the media during the launch of the Safe Labour Migration Awareness Campaign at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala on February 5, 2026

our borders,” she said. “While labour migration can open doors to opportunity, it can also expose our people to serious risks when undertaken without accurate information and proper guidance.”

The campaign is part of the government’s broader labour externalization programme, introduced in 2005 to create formal and protected pathways for Ugandans seeking work abroad, while addressing unemployment at home. According to Anyakun, between 2016 and 2024, the programme facilitated the creation

of at least 280,000 jobs, with remittances contributing about USD 1.3 billion in 2025 alone. “Our migrant workers are mainly deployed in Middle East countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Iraq,” she said.

Key highlights of the campaign include promoting migration only through licensed recruitment companies, encouraging Ugandans to verify recruiters

via official platforms, and educating prospective migrants on contracts, labour laws, cultural norms in destination countries, emergency reporting, and overall risks and benefits of labour externalisation.

■ This campaign is intended to educate, inform, and protect Ugandans by ensuring that accurate, government-approved information on labour migration reaches the public,” Anyakun added. She further urged citizens to avoid informal or illegal recruitment channels, noting, “Safe migration begins with informed choices.”



The Ministry also highlighted support systems available to migrant workers, including pre-departure training, complaint reporting mechanisms, and embassy-based monitoring. Anyakun called on media, communities, and local leaders to join the fight against illegal recruitment and human trafficking. “The safety and dignity of our migrant workers must concern all of us,” she said.

The Safe Labour Migration Awareness Campaign reflects Uganda’s commitment to balancing economic opportunities with worker protection, ensuring that citizens seeking jobs abroad can do so legally, safely, and with dignity.

For updates, the public is encouraged to follow the Ministry’s X account (@Mglsd\_UG) or consult official government channels.





# PRESIDENT MUSEVENI HOSTS AU–EAC–SADC PANEL OF FACILITATORS FOR DRC PEACE TALKS



**P**resident Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on 3rd February, 2026 hosted leaders of the AU–EAC–SADC panel of facilitators of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Peace Process at State House, Entebbe.

The meeting was part of the ongoing efforts to advance dialogue and stability in Eastern DRC.

The high-level panel of facilitators, which is on a working visit to Uganda, was chaired by H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Republic of Togo, and brings together former African heads of state mandated to support regional dialogue and strengthen collective efforts toward sustainable peace and stability in Eastern DRC.

The panel included H.

E. Olusegun Obasanjo (former President of Nigeria), H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta (former President of Kenya), H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde (former President of Ethiopia), H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi (former President of Botswana), and H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza (former President of the Central African Republic).

During the meeting, President Museveni said the conflict in the DRC is well understood within the region and

President Museveni with former heads of state seeing off the President of Togo after fruitful DR Congo peace talks

should not be allowed to persist, given its long-standing humanitarian and historical impact on neighbouring countries.

“This problem is very well known to us. We currently have more than 500,000 Congolese refugees in Uganda. They are part of nearly two million refugees we host from the region.”

He noted that many of the refugees come from neighbouring countries and share ethnic and cultural ties with communities in Uganda, particularly in western and South-Western parts





President museveni shaking hands with the president of Togo on arrival at State House Entebbe

of the country.

“Many of these people are members of our own tribes, those from Congo are the same as those in western and south-Western Uganda. We know this problem very well,” he said.

President Museveni also expressed concern that despite the long history of the conflict and its clearly identifiable grievances, progress toward a lasting solution has been slow.

“It is a shame that it is taking so long to solve,” he said.

Placing the crisis in its historical context, the President recalled earlier

international debates over Congo’s future, noting that the nature of the conflict has evolved over time.

“In the past, there were even discussions about breaking up Congo, the Katanga Secession and all that but luckily today, nobody is talking about breaking up Congo. What we are dealing with now are grievances,” he highlighted.

He said such grievances can be addressed through sustained dialogue and a clear understanding of the realities on the ground.

President Museveni further welcomed the visiting panel, led by

President Gnassingbé, and thanked its members for engaging on an issue that continues to affect the entire Great Lakes region.

“I thank His Excellency, the President of Togo, for coming with this delegation. We are very happy to welcome you here,” the President said.

On his part, President Gnassingbé thanked President Museveni for hosting the delegation and commended Uganda’s continued commitment to regional peace and stability.

“On behalf of the delegation, I would like to sincerely thank Your Excellency for the warm reception accorded to us,” President Gnassingbé said.

He acknowledged President Museveni’s longstanding role in regional mediation efforts, noting that the panel values his experience and guidance in addressing complex conflicts on the continent.

On the other hand, H.E Obasanjo emphasised

that sustainable peace in Eastern DRC requires solutions that are rooted in Africa's realities, warning against overreliance on externally driven approaches.

■ This crisis is not only about the M23. There are many grievances that have not been adequately addressed. Solutions imported from Washington, Doha, Paris, or elsewhere may be helpful, but they cannot by themselves provide a complete or lasting solution."

He said the panel had deliberately taken responsibility to pursue African-led responses to African challenges, while remaining open to constructive support from international partners.

"As facilitators, we have taken it upon ourselves to find African solutions to African problems. We see President Museveni as uniquely positioned, and we are walking with him to see how these African solutions can be realised," H.E Obasanjo said.

He added that the involvement of partners outside the continent should be complementary, not dominant.

"We are not pushing away those who have shown interest whether from Washington, Qatar, France, or elsewhere because they are helpful in the process we are trying to advance," he said.

He also thanked President Museveni for receiving the delegation at short notice and underscored the importance of correctly diagnosing the root causes of the DRC conflict.

"The issue that has brought us together is one we are all familiar with. It is the challenge of managing or mismanaging diversity within the DRC, and the relationship between the DRC and its neighbours," he said.

"In order to solve the problem, we must diagnose it properly and administer the right medicine."



Former president of Nigeria, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, was also in attendance

H.E Obasanjo welcomed the African Union's leadership in the peace process, including the establishment of a joint headquarters in Addis Ababa, and reiterated the need for Africa to take ownership of its peace and security agenda.

"We have taken it upon ourselves to find African solutions to African problems," he noted.

The high-level meeting was also attended by Uganda's government officials including; Ministers, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations, Adonia Ayebare, and former Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Amama Mbabazi.

Mumbai, India – February 7, 2026

# UGANDA SHOWCASES TOURISM OFFERINGS AT OUTBOUND TRAVEL MART 2026 IN MUMBAI

By Male Solomon Grace,  
GCIC – Uganda

**U**ganda successfully concluded its participation at the Outbound Travel Mart (OTM) 2026, held from February 5–7 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai. The participation is part of Uganda’s strategic push to tap into India’s rapidly growing outbound tourism market, one of the fastest-expanding sources of international travelers worldwide.



The Ugandan delegation, led by the Uganda High Commission in India, included representatives from the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), Uganda Airlines, Uganda Wildlife Authority, and other key stakeholders. Through its coordinated presence, Uganda positioned itself as a premier African destination for wildlife,

adventure, culture, and investment tourism.

At the exhibition, Uganda highlighted its diverse tourism offerings, including gorilla trekking, safaris, adventure tourism, rich cultural heritage, high-end lodges, and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions)

infrastructure. The focus was on nature-led, experience-driven, and sustainable travel options aligned with Indian travelers’ evolving preferences.

Ambassador Prof. Joyce K. Kikafunda emphasized Uganda’s ambitions, saying, “India represents a key growth market for Uganda. Our participation at OTM 2026 allows us to showcase the richness of our wildlife, culture, and adventure offerings, while building strategic





partnerships with Indian travel stakeholders.”

The exhibition built on the momentum of the "Explore Uganda India" roadshow, held from February 1–4 across New Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai. UTB Director of Marketing, Mr. Alex Mugume, said, “The roadshow enabled us to engage directly with Indian travel professionals, providing hands-on knowledge of Uganda’s experiences and opportunities. This prepares the ground for increased travel to our country.”

At Booth No. P.G300, the Ugandan team hosted discussions, networking, and promotional activities, building on the

success of its 2025 OTM debut, which earned the “Most Promising New Destination” award. Ms. Esther Kamya, Head of Tourism Partnerships at UTB, noted, “Our booth was not just about showcasing Uganda; it created meaningful conversations and collaborations, setting the stage for long-term growth in Indian arrivals.”

On the sidelines, Ambassador Kikafunda hosted a networking dinner for Ugandan and Indian tour operators, many of whom had participated in Uganda’s 2024 Familiarisation Trip. “The dinner was an opportunity to deepen connections and explore innovative ways to promote Uganda,” she

said.

With direct flights via Uganda Airlines and growing interest among Indian travelers, India remains Uganda’s top long-haul market outside Africa. UTB’s Mr. Mugume concluded, “With direct flights and strong partnerships, India is poised to become one of our largest international markets. OTM 2026 was a vital platform to make that a reality.”

Uganda’s participation reinforces its commitment to positioning the country as the “Pearl of Africa,” showcasing breathtaking wildlife, landscapes, and cultural heritage to the world.

# WHY WORKPLACE WELLNESS IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL FOR GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATE INSTITUTIONS

Joellah Anshemeza,  
GCIC – Uganda

**U**nhealthy workers, in today's fast-paced work environment where productivity is often measured in outputs, deadlines, and performance indicators, represent one of the most overlooked risks to organisational performance. While many institutions focus heavily on results and targets, the physical and mental wellbeing of employees is frequently neglected. Unhealthy workers do not only struggle personally; they cost organisations heavily through rising medical bills,



On 4th February, 2026, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) resumed its bi-monthly Wellness Run/Walk for staff. The activity, aims at promoting staff wellbeing and teamwork, reflects a growing understanding

that healthy employees are a strategic asset, not a luxury.

The wellness run and walk was organised and spearheaded by the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) at

OPM. Staff members participated in a structured physical activity that began at the OPM premises and culminated at Nakasero Primary School Playground, where participants engaged in aerobics and stretching exercises. The activity was officially flagged off by the Commissioner for the M&E Department, Mr. Lubanga Timothy, signaling leadership commitment to staff wellness.





This initiative should serve as a wake-up call to other government institutions and corporate organisations. Wellness programs are not merely social events or public relations activities; they are a long-term investment in human capital. Studies consistently show that physically active employees experience fewer chronic illnesses, lower stress levels, and improved concentration. For organisations, this translates into reduced healthcare costs, fewer sick days, and improved overall performance.

Leaders who ignore staff wellbeing often

pay the price silently. Medical insurance claims increase, productivity slows, and workplaces become reactive rather than innovative. Conversely, organisations that encourage regular physical activity, team wellness challenges, and healthy lifestyles build resilient, motivated, and high-performing teams.

Bosses and senior managers have a crucial role to play. When leaders actively support wellness initiatives, participate in them, and allocate time and resources, employees are more likely to engage fully. Wellness should be embedded into organisational

culture, not treated as an afterthought.

The OPM wellness run is a practical, scalable model that other institutions can easily adapt. It does not require excessive funding, only commitment and vision.

**Healthy workers are productive workers. Investing in wellness today saves organisations money tomorrow and builds stronger, more sustainable institutions for the future.**



# UGANDA TO CELEBRATE WORLD WILDLIFE DAY 2026, SPOTLIGHTING MEDICINAL AND AROMATIC PLANTS

By Victor Nimusiima, GCIC  
-Uganda

**U**ganda is set to join the global community in celebrating World Wildlife Day 2026 on March 3rd, with national festivities taking place in Entebbe Municipality, Wakiso District. The celebrations will be graced by H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni as Chief Guest, highlighting the government's continued commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. This was confirmed during a press address at Uganda Media Centre on 5th February, 2026.



Hon. Martin Mugarra, The Minister of State for Tourism addressing the press at Uganda Media Centre

World Wildlife Day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013 to honor the planet's rich fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the benefits of conservation to humanity. As an active UN member and one of the world's most

biodiverse countries, Uganda is uniquely positioned to lead by example.

The country is home to:

- ✓ Over 50% of the world's remaining mountain gorillas
- ✓ 11% of global bird species, accounting

for half of Africa's bird diversity

- ✓ 8% of global mammal diversity
- ✓ 19% of Africa's amphibian species richness and 14% of Africa's reptile species richness
- ✓ 1,249 documented butterfly species



Hon. Martin Mugarra and UWA-ED, Dr. James Musinguzi in a group photo after the press conference at Uganda Media Centre

## These figures underscore Uganda's status as a global biodiversity hotspot and the critical importance of protecting its natural heritage.

This year's World Wildlife Day theme, "Aromatic and Medicinal Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage, and Livelihoods", emphasizes

the vital link between biodiversity, human well-being, and sustainable development. Medicinal and aromatic plants are more than botanical specimens—they are the backbone of traditional healthcare systems, custodians of ancestral knowledge, and an economic lifeline for rural communities.

Globally, approximately 80% of people in developing countries rely on plant-based traditional medicine for primary healthcare.

In Uganda, medicinal plants such as *Vernonia amygdalina*, *Albizia coriaria*, *Bidens pilosa*, *Prunus africana*, and *Warburgia ugandensis* not only support health but also empower local economies, particularly benefiting women who dominate harvesting, processing, and trade in these valuable resources.

Despite their significance, medicinal and aromatic plants face threats from overexploitation, habitat loss, climate change, and





UWA-ED, Dr. James Musinguzi, discussing human-wildlife conflict mitigation and this year's edition of the Wildlife Marathon

weak regulation. The government recognizes the need for sustainable cultivation, fair market access, and community-based conservation to secure these resources for future generations.

Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Hon. Tom Butime, emphasized the importance of these plants, saying: "Conserving medicinal and aromatic plants is not a burden but an opportunity to protect biodiversity,

strengthen healthcare, preserve culture, and build resilient, equitable societies. We call upon every Ugandan to actively participate in World Wildlife Day 2026."

Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Doreen Katusiime, added: "Medicinal and aromatic plants are central to Uganda's heritage and the livelihoods of rural communities. Our focus this year is on sustainable harvesting, fair market access, and knowledge preservation, so that

future generations can continue to benefit from these resources."

Uganda's leadership in wildlife conservation continues to demonstrate that sustainable development and economic growth can go hand in hand with environmental stewardship, ensuring that the country's natural treasures remain a source of pride and prosperity for generations to come.



# 2026: A YEAR TO EXPLORE, THRILL, AND LIVE FULLY IN UGANDA

By Male Solomon Grace, GCIC -Uganda

It's just the beginning of the year, yet I can already feel the pulse of adventure calling. Life, after all, is too short to simply move from one day to the next without truly living. This year, I am making a promise to myself: to explore Uganda not as a passerby, not as someone who simply travels through towns, but as a curious soul ready to embrace every thrill, every hidden corner, and every breathtaking view my country has to offer.

And at the top of my 2026 bucket list is bungee jumping in Jinja a daring, exhilarating leap that promises both fear and freedom in equal measure.

For those who, like me, have visited Jinja countless times but only skimmed its surface, this is an invitation to see the town in a way you never have before. The jump takes you 44 meters over the mighty Nile River, giving you an adrenaline-pumping freefall while offering some of the most incredible views in Uganda. Whether you

choose to dip into the river or experience the jump while securely harnessed, every second is a rush you won't forget.

Here's what makes this adventure truly unforgettable:

- ✓ Location: A purpose-built platform over the source of the Nile River.
- ✓ Height: A heart-stopping 44-meter (144 ft) drop.
- ✓ Safety: All jumps are conducted under strict international standards with



certified instructors, ensuring your thrill is matched by your safety.

- ✓ Options: Single or double jumps, day or night experiences.
- ✓ Requirements: Minimum age 13,

minimum weight 35kg, and general health conditions checked.

The experience doesn't end mid-air. After the jump, you're often lowered onto a raft, with the calming river and scenic riverside cafes

waiting for you. For the adventurous, Jinja has more: white-water rafting, kayaking, and other thrilling adventures await.

**This year, I'm inviting you to join me. Let's stop just passing through our own country. Let's explore it, challenge ourselves, and create stories worth telling. Let's make 2026 a year of unforgettable memories, laughter, and leaps both literal and metaphorical.**

**Are you ready to jump into the adventure? Uganda is waiting, and I can't wait to experience it with you.**



PHOTO BY ESEKONKA SERVICE





The President of Uganda and the President of Tanzania exchange a handshake in Dar es Salaam following bilateral talks on energy, trade and regional security

## UGANDA, TANZANIA DEEPEN COOPERATION ON ENERGY, TRADE AND REGIONAL PEACE

**U**ganda and Tanzania have agreed to strengthen cooperation in energy development, trade facilitation, infrastructure and regional peace following high-level talks held on 7th February, 2026 in Dar es Salaam.

The arrangements were announced today during a joint press briefing by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and his host, President Samia Suluhu Hassan, after bilateral discussions between

delegations from the two countries.

President Samia said the two leaders reviewed progress on major energy infrastructure projects, including the construction of oil and

gas pipelines linking Uganda and Tanzania.

She revealed that implementation of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Project is on course, with oil transportation expected to commence in July.

H.E Samia explained that the cooperation includes plans for a gas pipeline from Tanzania to Uganda, as well as a refined oil pipeline from Uganda





President Museveni being welcomed to Tanzania ahead of the talks

to the Tanzanian port of Tanga, positioning Tanzania as a key export corridor for Uganda's petroleum products.

**On trade and logistics, President Samia said discussions focused on improving access for Ugandan traders to Tanzanian ports, particularly Tanga and Dar es Salaam, to ease the transportation of goods.**

She added that Tanzania

had been requested to extend railway connectivity deeper into Uganda to facilitate smoother and more cost-effective movement of cargo.

The Tanzanian leader emphasized the need to eliminate trade barriers between the two countries, noting that while cooperation has been strong, some non-tariff barriers have persisted. She said the two sides agreed to work towards their removal, stressing that reducing barriers boosts economic

growth and strengthens the East African regional market.

President Samia also underscored the commitment of both countries to continue joint energy production projects aimed at meeting domestic needs while also supplying regional and international markets.

On regional peace and security, she revealed that Tanzania and Uganda discussed strategies to promote peace and stability in the Great Lakes Region,



President Museveni delivers remarks

adding that there is a shared plan to initiate dialogue processes aimed at resolving conflicts in the region.

**President Samia also warmly welcomed President Museveni to Tanzania, describing the country as his home.**

She congratulated him and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) on their landslide electoral victory, attributing it to the party's manifesto and ideological clarity, and reaffirmed Tanzania's readiness to continue

working closely with Uganda.

In his remarks, President Museveni said Africa's independence, achieved by earlier generations of leaders, must be protected. He noted that true prosperity in the modern era comes from producing goods and services, selling them competitively and generating income for citizens, which he described as a continuation of Africa's liberation struggle.

**President Museveni also highlighted the importance of**

**strategic security, saying Uganda and Tanzania have addressed several tactical security issues affecting the region during their meeting.**

He added that the two countries discussed industrial specialization, with Tanzania taking the lead in locomotive manufacturing while Uganda focuses on textile production.

The Ugandan leader observed that while powerful countries may exert pressure on African states, the continent's response depends on its internal strength, unity and economic resilience.

The two Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral relations and strengthening cooperation for the benefit of their people and the wider East African region.

# PRESIDENT MUSEVENI HAILS UPDF, OTHER SECURITY FORCES FOR ENSURING PEACE AND STABILITY DURING RECENT GENERAL ELECTIONS



**President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, also the Commander-in-Chief of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), has saluted the army and other security forces for ensuring peace and stability during the recent general elections.**

"I want to salute the UPDF and other security forces for the robust security they gave during the recent elections. They did a very good job," he said.

The President, who was accompanied by the First Lady and Minister of

Education and Sports, Maama Janet Museveni, made the remarks on 6th February, 2026 while officiating at the 45th Tarehe Sita Anniversary commemoration held at NTC grounds, Kabale Municipality.

The event ran under the theme: "Defending the Gains of the Revolution and Honouring the Sacrifices of the Freedom Fighters: A Call for National Unity, Peace and Socio-Economic Transformation".

Tarehe Sita is a memorable day in Uganda's history that marks the 6th day of February 1981 when

Uganda's Liberation War was launched with the attack on Kabamba barracks by the National Resistance Army/ Movement 43 patriots armed with 27 rifles that set the country's revolutionary democratic course.

President Museveni explained that some forces had planned to destabilize the election process, but security forces quickly responded, thus enabling the country to register a successful democratic exercise.

"I salute the UPDF for quickly neutralising those trouble makers," he said.





“I want to thank and congratulate the people of Uganda for the recent elections which we had. I thank you the people of Kigezi and Uganda at large for voting massively for the NRM.”

He also congratulated Ugandans upon reaching the 45th anniversary of Tarehe Sita.

“When you talk of Tarehe Sita, you should not forget that there were earlier struggles before that which actually fed Tarehe Sita because the people who took part in the Tarehe Sita had been trained by the 28 whom we trained in Mozambique and who came and trained a bigger number in Tanzania and then

a bigger number in Uganda. So, the whole struggle of the people of Uganda should be narrated in a connected way,” he urged.

On the other hand, President Museveni highlighted Uganda’s economic progress, explaining that the country now targets to become a high middle-income nation.

“The economy of Uganda is growing very fast. We are now a lower middle-income country, but we target to become a high middle-income country in a few years and we have the capability,” he said.

He also assured the people of Kigezi that the region is likely to develop

more if residents listen to his advice of wealth creation.

“Here in Kigezi you will have a very strong economy around the following activities; tourism, commercial agriculture and manufacturing,” he assured.

**Additionally, the President confirmed expansion of Kisoro airport and plans to establish an additional international airport in Kigezi for tourism operations and another in Mbarara city for trade and business, that he says will be bigger than Entebbe International Airport.**

He further made an urgent call for land acquisition in Rubanda district to establish a massive iron ore factory to expedite extraction and processing of the mineral resource which has a high concentration in Kigezi sub region.



## The Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs, Hon. Jacob Oboth- Oboth, on behalf of the civilian staff at the ministry, congratulated President Museveni upon his re-election as President of Uganda for another term in office.

The Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba

congratulated President Museveni upon his recent landslide victory in the 2026 general elections and pledged UPDF's unwavering loyalty as he embarks on the renewed mandate granted to him by the people of Uganda.

“We shall support you as you continue to uplift the people of Uganda to the upper middle-income status and as you continue to sustain the socio-economic transformation journey and achieve strategic security for the people of East Africa and the continent,” he said.

Gen. Muhoozi also noted

that national unity, peace and socio-economic transformation, among others, are ideals from the beginning which informed and propelled the revolution.

“The firm foundation upon which the country is anchored today was made possible because of the sacrifices of our people. The responsibility now lies in all Ugandans to make sure that the gains of the revolution are secured and further built upon for the progress of Uganda, region and Africa at large,” he noted.

On the matter of the current security in





Uganda, Gen. Muhoozi assured that the whole country is peaceful.

“Contrary to the threats that were peddled by some hostile actors in the lead up to the elections, the country has had the most peaceful and decisive elections since 1996. The electorate largely heeded our advice to vote and then go home without causing any trouble.”

**The UPDF Joint Staff Political Commissariat, Maj. Gen. Henry Masiko informed the**

**President that today was the climax of the most elaborate series of defence forces activities that commenced way back in November last year.**

“This particular anniversary was deliberately conducted in phases to take care of the busy period of the electoral programs,” he said.

During the same event, a section of distinguished army officers including the CDF were awarded

with medals for their contribution to the liberation struggle and development of Uganda.

Lt. Moses Odongo also emerged winner of the inaugural CDF award for the outstanding junior officer for the year 2025 and he was given Shs 10 million as well as a certificate.

The event was also attended by the Vice President, H.E Jessica Alupo, the Chief Justice, His Lordship, Flavian Zeija, the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. Thomas Tayebwa, 3rd Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Lukia Nakadama, Ministers, Visiting Military delegations, among other dignitaries.



# "THE MAFIAS FINISHED ME":

## HOW POLITICAL LOSERS SEEK PUBLIC SYMPATHY

By Obed K. Katureebe



BY OBED K. KATUREEBE,  
UGANDA MEDIA CENTRE

**T**he political season is gradually winding down, and the atmosphere now reflects two clear realities. On one hand are those celebrating victory after securing various political offices. On the other are the losers. Losing a political contest is never easy, especially in Uganda, where the stakes are often extraordinarily high.

There is no doubt that candidates invest heavily in elections. Campaigns are expensive and emotionally draining. However, it is difficult to sympathize with losses that were clearly avoidable. I refer specifically to candidates who lost during party primaries but chose to defy party directives and contest as independents, despite explicit warnings

not to do so.

When you encounter such individuals on the streets of Kampala, they are quick to blame their defeat on "mafias." Very few are willing to admit, honestly and plainly, that they simply lost the election. This category of candidates deserves little sympathy. What is even more surprising is that many of them were senior members of the

NRM, including ministers. The party pleaded with them to respect internal processes, but they chose not to listen. After suffering a second defeat, they now shift blame to so-called invisible mafias.

Tragically, many in this group mortgage what remains of their family wealth to finance campaigns. When they fail, the consequences fall immediately and painfully on their families.

The word mafia is currently one of the most abused terms in Uganda's political vocabulary. It is deployed opportunistically by politicians who find themselves cornered

and in search of public sympathy. They invoke a vague, frightening label built on poorly substantiated claims, heavy innuendo, and a complete lack of nuance.

### **But what does mafia actually mean?**

The Mafia refers to an organized criminal group that originated in Sicily, Italy, and later expanded into the United States. It operated under a ruthless and highly structured code of conduct. The defining characteristic here is organized crime. In the United States, the Mafia was led by a Boss, or Don, with figures such as Al Capone, John Gotti, Frank Costello, and Carlo Gambino becoming notorious examples. Beneath the Boss was the Underboss, followed by Caporegimes, each commanding foot soldiers.

This was a tightly organized system with a clear hierarchy and chain of command. It adhered to a strict code known as Omertà and was governed by binding rules and regulations. It even

had a governing council, the Commission, which made and enforced laws within the organization. This structure clearly qualifies the Mafia as a genuine organized crime syndicate.

The phrase “political mafias” entered Uganda’s political discourse during the tenure of former Vice President Gilbert Bukenya, at a time when he was facing political challenges while still in office. As with all high political offices, incumbents inevitably attract opposition and intrigue. Managing and surviving such pressure is part of the responsibility that comes with leadership.

Since then, whenever politicians face challenges, even those of their own making, they have increasingly resorted to blaming invisible mafias. We have seen this with Hon. Evelyn Anite, Hon. Bakoko Bakoru, and more recently the outgoing Kampala Lord Mayor, Hon. Erias Lukwago, among others.

Ugandans must begin

to interrogate these claims more critically. When politicians allege mafia attacks, they should be asked to explain the structure of this so-called mafia. Who is the Boss? Who is the Underboss? Who are the operatives? Criminals certainly exist in both government and opposition, but for such actors to qualify as a mafia syndicate, they must be organized, identifiable, and structured.

### **More importantly, why do allegations of mafias only emerge when political careers are under threat?**

Seeking public sympathy is a common, though complex, political strategy. It can be used to mobilize support, overcome adversity, or challenge authority. Research and recent experience show that presenting oneself as a victim of unjust circumstances can influence public opinion. However, this approach carries serious risks, especially when it appears calculated or insincere.

When political figures portray themselves as unfairly targeted, humiliated, or isolated by a powerful system, they may attract sympathy, particularly from voters who already feel marginalized. In the recently concluded campaigns, many political actors, with only a few exceptions, resorted to sympathy-seeking tactics as they came to terms with electoral defeat.

Uganda's political contests are becoming more complex with every election cycle. The attrition rate among incumbents continues to rise, while expectations among new entrants remain extremely high. This has fueled the intense and often ugly competition we are witnessing. Perhaps it is time to make



remuneration for political offices more modest, thereby reducing the excessive incentives attached to holding them. Elections would then be less likely to be treated as do-or-die affairs.

To those who lost elections, calm down, accept the outcome, and move on. That was your gamble. If it did not work out, count your losses and move forward. Stop

the blame games.

Accepting loss means acknowledging pain without judgment and gradually adjusting to a new reality. It is not about forgetting, but about surrendering resistance to what cannot be changed, practicing self-care, and finding new meaning. Moving on means adapting to life as it is, while carrying lessons from the past.





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