



Situation Report

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Uganda: analysis of and reflection on the 2011 elections

Introduction

On 18 February 2011, Uganda held its second presidential election since the introduction of a multiparty system in 2005. The incumbent president, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, was re-elected for another five-year term in a hotly contested election. Museveni has led the people of Uganda for the last 25 years, having been in power since 26 January 1986. The election campaign, though generally peaceful, was termed by various observers and the opposition as having been characterised by voter bribery, uneven campaigning opportunities, intimidation through the use of state security forces, unprecedented extravagance on the part of the ruling party and vote rigging. Museveni won a fourth term with more than a two-thirds majority, garnering 68,38 per cent of the vote. His long-time political rival, Dr Kizza Besigye, managed second place with 26,00 per cent of the vote. Museveni's re-election gives him the opportunity to become one of the longest-serving presidents in Africa, provided he completes his term successfully. The elections also attracted a higher number of presidential candidates than previously. The Uganda Electoral Commission (UEC) cleared eight candidates to contest the presidency, compared to five in the 2006 elections.

The elections attracted both regional and international attention, and were closely monitored by a range of electoral observers. One of the most prominent was the East African Community (EAC) electoral observation body, which is part of a joint team of election observers comprising the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy (EISA). Another observer was the European Union (EU), which formed an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) that presented its initial findings soon after the elections. A Commonwealth Observer Group was also deployed to Uganda. Its interim report was submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who forwarded it to the government of Uganda, the UEC, Ugandan political parties and all Commonwealth governments.

This situation report provides an overview of the elections. It reflects on the major concerns of the people of Uganda before, during and after the 2011 elections. It also compares the performance of opposition parties in earlier and the recent elections. The report further explores the national and regional implications of Museveni's re-election and how his new term is likely to influence policy on a national and regional level. It addresses future concerns in the light of the country's political history. Lastly, the report makes policy recommendations for the achievement of a better political future for Uganda.

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Uganda's history is characterised by a relatively long period of colonial rule, self-governance, military regimes, no-party politics and multiparty politics. Rivalry between political factions has driven the country to war, rebellion and bloodshed. Uganda obtained its independence from Britain in 1962. The main actors that have largely shaped Uganda's political scene are the colonial government and presidents Milton Obote, Idi Amin and Yoweri Museveni. The long history of political violence, conflict and insecurity under the regimes of Uganda's presidents, as well as the social, economic and ethnic divisions within Uganda, can be traced back to pre-colonial and colonial times. Divisions among different ethnic groups are based on fears of victimisation, diverse political ambitions and disputes over geographical boundaries, which have compromised peaceful coexistence. Uganda has also suffered from a deep-rooted division between the north and south, caused by uneven developmental mechanisms that resulted in the south focusing on agriculture, while the north was used as a military reservoir.

Uganda is a landlocked country, bordered by Kenya to the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west, Tanzania to the south and Sudan to the north. Because of its geographical position, it has had to depend on Kenya as a conduit for most of its imports and exports, which are shipped through Kenyan ports. Relations with Kenya have thus been the government's most significant regional concern. Following the ousting of Idi Amin there was a paradigm shift in the country's national and regional policy, which ushered in a phase focused on cooperation aimed at capitalising on economic opportunities and avenues for development. Museveni's rule introduced radicalism, which changed the manner in which other countries related to Uganda. Uganda is a member of several regional bodies, namely the African Union (AU), the EAC, IGAD and COMESA. It has remained an important political actor with influence on regional policy.

However, Uganda has at the same time been criticised sharply by states in the region, especially under Museveni's leadership. It is alleged that Uganda was a key player in conflict in the DRC. Uganda's military wing, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), is believed to have been involved in the war in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga and some parts of Kinshasa. A report released by the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), titled 'DRC Mapping Exercise: mapping of the most serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1993 and 2003', alleges that the UPDF provided troops, arms and logistics to the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo. Elsewhere in the region, Uganda is accused of participation in the conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi and southern Sudan.

One of the main aspects of Uganda politics is that, for a long time, there was no political party activity in Uganda. This restriction was imposed on political parties in the 1986. During the period of the ban, only one political organisation, namely the National Resistance Movement (NRM) led by Museveni, was allowed to operate. The no-party period was significant as it enforced a period of reconciliation for the government and the people, and thus enabled the country to go through a healing process. But in a referendum held in 2005 Ugandans voted for the return of a multi-party system. The enlarged democratic space led to the emergence of several political parties. However, in the same year Museveni commissioned a Constitutional Review Commission that culminated in the amendment of a number of articles in the 1995 Constitution. One of these was the removal of the two-term limit on the presidency, thus enabling Museveni to stand again in the 2006 elections. There was harsh reaction to this amendment by national and regional political actors.

Despite a peaceful transition to democracy, the possibility of conflict emerging once again cannot be ruled out. There are a number of underlying tensions and grievances that could form the basis for such violence, namely the tension that

exist between the Buganda region and the central government; the conflict over resources following the discovery of oil in the country; the ethnic rivalry between the communities of Acholi, West Nile and Langi; the discontent among citizens because of the failure by the government to deliver on its promises; the well-documented cases of rampant corruption in public and government institutions; the pattern of succession politics in Uganda characterised by coups d'état and violence; and the wrangles between opposition party leaders.

It is difficult to say whether Museveni will be seeking another presidential term after he completes his fourth term in 2016. Whatever the case, he faces the challenge of delivering on his promises to the people of Uganda to relieve poverty, among other things. He also has to unite the ruling NRM with the opposition, which is already beginning to question the current regime's ability to govern Uganda. The next five years, therefore, will not only determine the political destiny of Uganda, but will also influence its policy within both the region and the international arena.

Uganda's 1996 elections were quite significant for the country. The constitution in existence at that time outlawed all political party activity and members had to be elected on individual merit. The elections in 2001 were marked by violence, intimidation, incitement, state harassment, the killing of several people, others being taken into custody over alleged malpractices, and attempts to rig the elections. Similarly, in the 2006 elections there were cases of election malpractice, intimidation, the use of the media to utter threats, killings and acts of impunity. There was also concern that the government was applying the laws in a selective and discriminatory manner to incite violence, harass opposition candidates and disrupt their campaigning activities. In addition, the UEC was inadequately prepared for handling the elections, as evidenced by various factors. Voters complained of inaccuracies and deficiencies in the voter register, missing voter cards and poor voter education. There were insufficient police to guard the polling stations. The process was militarised heavily by state institutions, with the use of the military to instil fear among the voters. The opposition parties were not granted an equal platform to campaign in terms of freedom of expression and media coverage, and were not given the police protection accorded to the ruling party.

A report published by Akijul Enabling Change (2010)² notes that the areas that experienced violence in past elections were the West Nile regions of Arua, Moyo and Adjumani; the northern regions of Kitgum, Pader and Gulu; the eastern regions of Soroti, Pallisa, Budaka, Tororo, Kamuli, Iganga, Jinja, Mbale, Sironko and Namutumba; the central regions of Kiboga, Masaka, Rakai, Kampala and Mukono; and the western regions of Mbarara, Isingiro, Rukungiri, Kanungu and Kabarole. A significant point to note, as indicated by Table 1, is that between the 1996 and 2006 elections Museveni's popularity was on the decline, while that of his main political opponent, Dr Kizza Besigye, was on a steady rise. The decline in Museveni's popularity can be attributed to, first, the increase in the number of presidential candidates and, second, the growing discontent among the people of Uganda. Museveni's government was widely criticised for failing to tackle corruption, failing to deal with humanitarian crises such as poverty and disease and HIV-AIDS in particular, and unemployment, as well as the excessive use of the military to suppress opposing forces. On the other hand, Besigye's popularity rose mainly because the people of Uganda wanted a change in leadership. They were eager to have new leaders who would address their needs and have grassroots involvement with them.

Table 1 Voting patterns 1996–2006

Election year	Candidate	Percentage of votes
1996	Yoweri Kaguta Museveni	75,5
	Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere	22,3
	Muhammad Kibirige Mayanja	2,2
2001	Yoweri Kaguta Museveni	69,33
	Kizza Besigye	27,82
	Aggrey Awori	1,41
	Muhammad Kibirige Mayanja	1,00
	Francis Bwengye	0,31
	Karuhanga Chapaa	0,14
2006	Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (NRM)	59,26
	Kizza Besigye (FDC)	37,39
	John Ssebaana Kizito (DP)	1,58
	Abed Bwanika	0,95
	Miria Obote (UPC)	0,82

As with previous elections, the 2011 general election in Uganda was conducted by the UEC. The Commission was established in 1995 under Article 60 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. It consists of a chairperson, deputy chairperson and five other members appointed by the president with the approval of parliament, and a secretariat headed by a secretary. The Commission is mandated to ensure that regular, free and fair elections are held; to organise, conduct and supervise elections and referenda in accordance with the constitution; to demarcate constituencies in accordance with the provisions of the constitution; to ascertain, publish and declare in writing under its seal the results of the elections and referenda; to compile, maintain, revise and update the voters' register; to hear and determine election complaints arising before and during polling; to formulate and implement voter education programmes relating to elections; and to perform such other functions as may be prescribed in law by parliament.³

The main activities carried out by the UEC are the organising, conducting and supervising of elections and referenda; the compiling, maintaining, revising and updating, on a continuous basis, of the National Voters' Register; the production and issuing of voters cards; the compiling and updating of the various voters' registers for special interest groups and administrative units; the development of effective civic education programmes related to elections; the review of all electoral laws and the submission of recommendations for amendments; the recruiting of qualified personnel and their training in the management of elections; the hearing and determining of election complaints arising before and during polling; and the demarcation of constituencies and electoral areas.⁴

The political temperature before the 2011 elections was quite high. There was tension and anxiety in the country as the date for the elections drew near. Security in urban areas was tight, as was evident from the heavy deployment of military personnel in major towns and in areas that were considered to have a potential for violence. The day of the presidential election was relatively peaceful, however. Many polling stations opened on time, though there were delays at some because of the factors addressed below. Mayoral elections held on 22 February were characterised by violence in some regions. An attack on seven journalists by men believed to be

NRM supporters, as well as cases of ballot stuffing, resulted in the cancellation of the Kampala mayoral elections, which were postponed to 14 March.

Table 2 Outcome of the presidential election

Candidate	Party	Total votes	% of vote
Yoweri Kaguta Museveni	National Resistance Movement (NRM)	5 428 368	68,38
Dr Kizza Besigye	Forum For Democratic Change (FDC)	2 064 963	26,01
Mr Norbert Mao	Democratic Party (DP)	147 917	1,86
Mr Olara Otunnu	Uganda People's Congress [UPC]	125 059	1,58
Ms Betity Olive Kamya	Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA)	52 782	0,66
Dr Abed Bwanika	People's Development Party (PDP)	51 708	0,65
Mr Jaberu Bidandi Ssali	People's Progressive Party (PPP)	34 688	0 44
Mr Samuel Lubega	Independent	32 762	0,41
	Valid votes	7 938 212	95,96
	Invalid votes	334 548	4,04
	Total votes (turnout: 59,29%)	8 272 760	100,00

Source: Uganda Electoral Commission, 20 February 2011

Table 3 Outcome of parliamentary elections

Party	Number of seats in parliament	% representation in parliament
NRM	364	35,55
FDC	288	28,12
UPC	135	13,18
DP	120	11,72
UFA	66	6,45
PPP	33	3,22
PDP	18	1,76

Source: Uganda Electoral Commission, 20 February 2011

From the tables above it will be clear that the popularity of the NRM and Museveni rose during the 2011 elections, as compared to their performance between the 1996 and 2006 elections, while Besigye's popularity dropped significantly. The other notable aspect is that there was an increase in the number of presidential contestants over the four elections. This is an indication that Uganda's political arena is shifting and that people are starting to take advantage of their democratic space. However, this does not explain the rise in Museveni's popularity. One argument used by Museveni to convince Ugandans to vote for him is the peace and stability he brought to the country, something the opposition could not do. On the other hand, Besigye's declining popularity can be attributed to the splitting of votes among opposition supporters.

Generally, the opposition appears to have performed poorly at a national level this time round. In both 2001 and 2006, Besigye ran a strong campaign and gained enormous popularity that gave the incumbent president genuine cause for

concern. However, Besigye's insistence on running for a third election alienated some FDC voters, while the entry of new candidates like Norbert Mao and Olara Otunnu, both of whom made significant inroads into Besigye's support in northern Uganda, explains why Besigye garnered far fewer votes than in his previous attempts. On the ground, people expressed their disappointment with the opposition for not being organised enough to field a single, strong candidate, and for failing to tackle the real issues in their campaigns, which were often marked by attacks on the incumbent president and each other. Museveni appears to have read the mood of the country far better – appealing to young people with his 'You Want another Rap?' soundtrack and addressing the issues they wanted to hear about, such as employment opportunities, education and poverty. Not to be forgotten is the heavy spend of his party on the campaign.

Reactions from observer groups

The elections in Uganda were closely monitored by several electoral observers, namely the AU, the Commonwealth Secretariat Observer Group,⁵ the EAC-COMESA-IGAD group,⁶ the EU⁷ and EISA. According to the EAC-IGAD-COMESA group, the elections met the minimum standards required. It considered the elections to have been free and fair, but recommended inter alia that extensive training for polling officials should be carried out to avert incidences of voter misinformation, that the process of voter registration and the register should be looked into, and that the UEC should serialise the ballot boxes for authentication of the election process in future.⁸ However, the AU, EU and the Commonwealth Observer groups were of a different opinion. They were strongly critical of the election process, accusing Museveni of widespread abuse of his position as president to obtain unfair advantage, thus making his victory an almost foregone conclusion. Among the common electoral flaws reported were the following.

Heavy police presence: There was a heavy deployment of police in different towns prior to the elections. On the election day itself, and even thereafter, a strong police presence was still evident at many polling stations, especially in regions considered hotspots. It was alleged that the police presence was heaviest in areas where the opposition seemed to have strong support. This could have scared and intimidated many voters, and some people opted not to cast their votes at all. Regions that witnessed a heavy police presence included the Gulu district in the Acholi region, and the Lira and Otuke districts.

Vote buying/voter bribery: Frederic Charles Schaffer has argued that 'Vote buying and vote selling can be understood no longer as an economic transaction between those who sell their freedom and those who buy them in the hope of regaining their investments when they get into power ... From the standpoint of ordinary people ... elections are the times when equality and justice are temporarily achieved as their patrons fulfil their financial obligations to support them in times of need.'⁹ The use of money to influence election processes and outcomes is a reality in Uganda. It was evident in the 2001 and 2006 elections, and occurred again in the 2011 elections. The NRM is said to have spent a huge sum of money during its campaign, some of it on campaign organisation and the balance on bribery to influence voters. This definitely gave the ruling party unfair advantage over the opposition parties, which did not have such resources at their disposal. Voter bribery was common in Lira and Gulu districts. The 2011 elections were the most expensive polls to have been held in the political history of Uganda. The Commonwealth observer group referred to the NRM campaign as the 'commercialisation of politics'¹⁰ in a country where the ruling party dominates almost all public sectors, making it synonymous with the state.

Unequal media coverage of political parties: This was an issue of concern even before the elections. Museveni and the NRM seemed to receive more media attention than other political parties. A survey of ten radio stations, conducted by the Media Monitoring Network, indicated that, compared to their opponents, Museveni and the NRM got more coverage during the campaign. The report showed that from 1 December to 21 December 2010 Museveni had over 1 500

seconds of coverage on various FM radio stations. The DP's Norbert Mao and the UPC's Olara Otunnu got 900 and 800 seconds respectively, while the FDC's Besigye got 700 seconds.¹¹ The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) also abused the rule of impartiality by failing to comply with its obligation to treat each party and candidate equally, and grant them equal coverage.

Delays in the commencement of voting: At some polling stations the voting process began late because of the station opening late for one reason or another. At other stations the voting materials were delivered late, which was blamed on factors such as heavy rains interfering with transportation. Otuke district in the north was one of the voting areas to suffer in this regard.

Poor or inadequate preparedness: In a statement the leader of the AU observer group, Mr Gitobu Imanyara, noted that many voters could not vote owing to the poor management of polling centres, in particular because many names were missing from the voters' register.¹² In Otuke district, for instance, between 50 and 70 voters could not cast their votes for this reason. This problem was reported especially in areas where the opposition had a strong following, which raised concerns about possible NRM involvement. According to the Uganda Electoral Commission, approximately 59,29 per cent of the 13,9 million eligible voters cast their ballot. This means that about 5,69 million people (40,71 per cent) did not cast their votes. In addition, 334 000 votes were rejected as being invalid. The UEC expressed its concern over the increasing incidence of invalid votes.

Ballot stuffing: This was a common concern during the elections. For instance, in Dokolo, 23 ballot papers were rejected after they were allegedly found to be 'stamped' in favour of Otunnu. Ballot stuffing was also evident in other districts and in the mayoral elections, where 32 ballot boxes were seized. These boxes were alleged to contain pre-ticked ballot papers in favour of the NRM candidate, Mr Peter Ssematimba. The observers termed the outcome of the polls as extremely exaggerated. According to their reports, this favoured the ruling party and drew in question the notion of a level playing field for the entire process.

Opposition reaction

The outcome of the 2011 elections comes at a time when Museveni is re-asserting his position in Ugandan politics. His victory also coincides with a period of political unrest on the continent, especially in the Arab states of North Africa, which has seen autocratic leaders who have dominated Africa politics, such as Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivory Coast, being forced out of power. Another leader whose legitimacy is being contested is Muammar Gaddafi of Libya. Museveni's election victory is an indication that the ruling party and the president still enjoy considerable support among the people. The leading question, however, is whether the new government will be able to deliver on its promises and implement its manifesto amid the cries of an opposition that refuses to accept the legitimacy of the new government.

Despite the huge electoral margin, the opposition parties are adamant that the elections were not free and fair. They claim that there were irregularities such as ballot stuffing in favour of NRM candidates, voter bribery and voter intimidation by the army. They also raise the issue of an allegedly partisan electoral commission, whose credibility to conduct an honest and flawless election was questioned by the opposition even before the actual election. Various presidential candidates have also disputed the results, calling Museveni's leadership illegitimate and stating that for this reason they cannot accept his authority. According to a report in Uganda's *The Monitor*, the presidential candidate of the PPP, Mr Jaberu Bidandi Ssali, believes that the NRM government of Museveni is not legitimate since it came into power as a result of unfair elections. In a statement issued by him after the elections, he insisted that the NRM bought voters and intimidated others by deploying heavy military forces, especially in areas that had massive opposition support.

Museveni's victory: what does it mean for the country and the region?

Bidandi is among other candidates, including Besigye, Mao, Otunnu and Samuel Lubega, who have so far discredited the whole election exercise, starting with the day of nominations. Even before election day the opposition declared its intention not to accept the election results if Museveni were to be declared the winner. According to *The Daily Monitor*,¹³ Besigye revealed that his party had confiscated pre-ticked ballot papers believed to have been stocked in preparation for rigging the elections in favour of the NRM. He asserted his desire not to go to court to challenge the electoral outcome, even though Museveni had hatched what he called a 'sophisticated rigging strategy' using a local patronage network. This strategy was, according to him, subsequently applied, mainly in the opposition strongholds. Soon after the election results were released, opposition candidates declared their intention to call for a nationwide protest to challenge the outcome of the polls. The opposition leaders thus want fresh elections under a newly constituted independent electoral body that will clean the voters register and conduct free elections. While Besigye has ruled out the option of contesting the results in court, Bidandi Ssali says the opposition is considering doing just that. But it is unlikely that they can beat the 30-day deadline required by the constitution for the filing of such a petition.

Museveni's re-election for a fourth term makes him the longest serving president in the East African region. He has been credited for championing peace and stability in the region. His active involvement in the Somali crisis, Kenya's post-election violence, the Sudan conflict and the Burundi conflict are just a few of his legacies. Internationally, Museveni is credited for deploying peacekeeping troops in Somalia. Only Uganda and Burundi have contributed troops to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and Uganda has the largest share. This has not been taken kindly by the Al-Shabaab militia group, which has threatened to strike again in Uganda if the government fails to withdraw its troops from Somalia and does not cease its support for the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG).

On the flip side, Uganda has been criticised both regionally and internationally for its alleged involvement in conflict in the DRC, with the UPDF being accused of offering support to the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo. Uganda was also involved in a diplomatic row with Kenya over the ownership of the small Migingo Island, a position that angered Kenyan authorities for some time. The Ugandan government has furthermore come under criticism following the Al-Shabaab terror attack. It was blamed for failing to pre-empt the attack despite the fact that Al-Shabaab had given early warning of its intentions. Other criticism concerns the poor humanitarian situation in the country, especially in northern Uganda, which is yet to recover completely from decades of war waged by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This part of Uganda still suffers from insecurity, poor infrastructure, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and a high mortality rate because of poverty, hunger and disease.

Museveni's decision to seek a fourth term did not come as a surprise to the region. He has plans lined up for the next five years. He considers his contributions to the EAC among his greatest achievements in the region. One objective he intends to accomplish is the establishment of a political federation of East African countries that is to include Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda, and which would greatly boost regional development. The technical issues of an East African Federation are expected to be finalised by 2012 and the region already has a customs union and common market. Museveni has in the past indicated that he will not relinquish power before realising an East African Federation and greater African unity, both goals he considers to be part of the larger mission of the NRM. He has also expressed interest in being the president of the federation once it has come about. The attainment of an East African Federation will therefore determine Museveni's departure from power.¹⁴

Political situation in Uganda

Despite the fact that the recent presidential elections in Uganda attracted a higher number of contestants than in previous elections, all indications pointed to another victory for Museveni. However, the president and the NRM will face serious threats to political stability over the next five years. Among the issues Museveni and the NRM have to deal with are:

1. The Kingdom of Buganda is an area with a constitutional monarchy and a local parliament, and a previous NRM stronghold. Trouble began in September 2009 when the government denied the Kabaka (king) of Buganda, Ronald Mutebi II, a visit to Kayunga district in the Buganda kingdom. This resulted in the outbreak of some of the most serious violence seen in southern Uganda since Museveni took power in 1986. The closure of the kingdom's popular CBS radio station, which was a major source of income for the kingdom, and several other Luganda language radio stations, the arrest and detention of pro-royalist journalists and the burning of the royal Kasubi tombs seemed to mark the end of Buganda's support for the NRM. The kingdom has also long pushed for 'federo' or federalism, and for the return of 23 300 km² the kingdom claims it was allocated in a 1900 colonial agreement.

The fact that neither of these issues have been resolved means that many in the Buganda kingdom feel they are being treated unfairly by the government. The Traditional and Cultural Leaders Act, which has now become law, might further alienate the people of Buganda from the government. According to an article in *The New Vision*, this law provides for the existence of traditional leaders, their privileges and benefits, bars them from participating in or joining partisan politics, and prevents traditional or cultural leaders from dealing with foreign governments without the consent of government. While the election went off peacefully in the kingdom, there is no guarantee that Buganda will remain calm, especially now that the 'King's Act' has been passed. There is an undercurrent of hostility that could erupt in the future. By all indications, any uprising would be quelled as harshly as the Kayunga riots in 2009. Museveni might thus have to appease local sentiment by promising to devolve some powers to the regional level, while maintaining control over the most important portfolios at central government level. Such reforms would appease some of those looking for the devolution of power.

2. There are strong regional concerns about some of Museveni's policies. A recent criticism concerns the lease or purchase of 240 official vehicles for use during the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Uganda. This cost the taxpayer a great deal of money.¹⁵ Museveni has also been criticised for not being keen on a policy of zero tolerance to corruption. These criticisms come on top of the Temangalo land saga involving the misappropriation of funds, and the state of public healthcare as indicated by a strike by patients at Mulago, Uganda's largest medical referral centre, where some patients had not received treatment after seven months. Drug stock-outs, either because of supply chain problems or theft, are very common and there is a desperate shortage of trained healthcare workers. Government will clearly also have to address issues relating to basic needs, for example maternal healthcare.
3. According to the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index from 1990 to 2010, 51,53 per cent of the Ugandan population still live below the poverty line.¹⁶ Much thus needs to be done by the new government in terms of implementing programmes and policies that will stimulate the growth of the economy and at the same time create employment opportunities for the youth, who make up about 55 per cent of the country's population.¹⁷ The Uganda Bureau of Statistics indicates that 1,4 million young people were eligible to vote for the first time in 2011.¹⁸ While the country's economy has grown steadily over the years, statistics from the International Monetary Funds (IMF) indicate that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2010 was 5,77 per cent, compared to 7,18 and 8,71 per cent in 2009 and 2008 respectively.¹⁹

There is a perception in Uganda that the economic development has been skewed regionally, with Buganda and the west being perceived as having benefited more than the east and especially the north, which is considered as having been marginalised for the duration of Museveni's tenure as president. In 2008, the government implemented a rehabilitation plan known as the

Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), which is estimated to cost US\$ 900 million.²⁰ The impact of the PRDP has not yet been fully felt by people on the ground and the government will have to give attention to the implementation of this programme as a top priority.

4. The Museveni government has introduced free primary and secondary school education. However, there has been criticism of the system on the grounds that while it has allowed more children to go to school, it has not been matched by an increase in the number and quality of teachers. As such, the standard of education in public schools has dropped.

Oil as a natural resource conflict

Following the recent discovery of oil in Buliisa district in Western Uganda and Amaru district in northern Uganda, there is a fear that if the resource is not managed properly, resource-based conflict may result. This fear is supported by the Resource Curse Theory developed by renowned economist Paul Collier,²¹ who maintains that the discovery of resources such as oil and minerals has crippled many African nations. Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, just to mention a few countries, have endured hardship brought on by the presence of highly sought-after natural resources. To date, there have been few successful resource-based countries. It would therefore not be a surprise if the discovery of oil in Uganda triggers conflict since the discovery of oil has raised hopes for a better life among many Ugandans, but also brought anxiety as regards its management, distribution and the sharing of revenues. Analysts believe that the transformation of Uganda into an oil economy could strain the polity of Uganda and result in a re-occurrence of civil war.

Threats by Al-Shabaab

Uganda came under a terror attack from the Somali militia group Al-Shabaab in July 2010 during the World Cup season when it bombed Kampala. This attack left 79 people dead and hundreds injured. In December 2010, Al-Shabaab warned of further attacks on the country.²² The militia group also threatened to attack Uganda and Burundi if the two failed to withdraw their troops from Somalia and cease to render support to Somalia's TFG. Uganda provides the largest contingent of troops to AMISOM in Somalia, which is the only barrier to Al-Shabaab insurgents toppling the fragile TFG.

Calls for demonstration by the opposition

Following the elections and the opposition's refusal to accept the legitimacy of Museveni, the opposition has promised its supporters that they will keep up the pressure on the president until he steps down. The opposition has accused Museveni of malpractices during the election campaign. The newly formed Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CAFFE), under the leadership of Olara Otunnu, held two demonstrations in March 2011. The police intervened on both occasions. Such demonstrations are a serious cause for concern as they could trigger clashes with security forces and result in casualties.

The popularity of political parties has been declining in recent years. Comparing the 2006 and 2011 elections, there appears to have been stiffer competition for the ruling party, especially from the FDC. Despite this, opposition candidates seem to have lost popularity. In 2006, Museveni won with 59,26 per cent of the votes, followed by Besigye with an encouraging 37,39 per cent. However, the 2011 elections saw a major decline in support for Besigye, who came second with 26,01 per cent, while Museveni gained an overwhelming majority of 68,38 per cent. Furthermore, the failure by the opposition to win a majority of seats in parliament is of concern as it means that even if the opposition were to win the presidency, the executive would find it difficult to run the government with a parliament dominated by the opposition, in this case the NRM.

A study conducted in June 2010 by the German non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung,²³ predicted that the opposition was likely to perform poorly in the 2011 elections in comparison to previous elections. The study was based on research in seven districts: Arua, Gulu, Kasese, Masaka, Mbarara, Mbale and Soroti, which are representative of all Uganda's regions. The study cited several hindrances that it termed as likely to affect the performance of the opposition, namely lack of funding, unclear programmes, weak organisational structures, weak or even absent structures at the grassroots level, conflict within and among the parties, and oppression by the state.

The 2011 elections did indeed show that opposition parties lacked well-coordinated and organised structures to run their day-to-day affairs. The wrangles between various party leaders were a clear indication of this. This state of affairs could have also have been the cause for the weak structures found at the grassroots level. Opposition leaders seemed more pre-occupied with winning the presidential poll than consolidating popular party support and organising their in-house affairs. The NRM, on the other hand, did a lot of grassroots campaigning. It went around the country registering its members and strengthening its regional structures. The party could also be planning to visit secondary schools in order to register more young people in preparation for the 2016 elections.

The clear funding imbalance in the last elections, with the NRM in a position to spend a lot of money on its campaign, may have given the NRM unfair advantage over the other parties. In addition, the incumbency enjoyed by the NRM gives it a clear advantage, while its dominance of state institutions makes it difficult for people to draw a clear line between the state and the party itself. The poor performance of the opposition is also attributed to external problems, such as the suppression of opposition activities by the police and other state security agencies, and biased and limited media coverage.

If the opposition parties are to regain their popular support, they will have to restructure their political strategies and re-assure their supporters that they can still deliver and represent the will of the people, rather than that of their leaders. They need to concentrate on building strong, organised and credible organisations with a committed country-wide membership before the 2016 elections. Opposition leaders will have to shoulder the bulk of this work, for in order for citizens to identify with an opposition party, they need to identify with the leader of the party in the first instance and have confidence in him or her. It is vital that the opposition connects with the people at grassroots level. Parties like the FDC seem to have been making some efforts in this regard prior to the last elections. An article published by *The New Vision* indicated that the FDC participated in elections for grassroots structures to increase its presence at those levels.²⁴

- All key stakeholders in Uganda's political sphere have a major challenge in the next five years to ensure stability in the country.
- The political parties remain weak internally and the external regulatory framework needs reform. The gains of the NRM need to be consolidated as a matter of priority, particularly as succession to Museveni will likely take centre stage in the next five years. However, the political space and the capacity of key actors need major improvements in order to sustain the country's democratic gains.
- To this end, political parties need to rebuild their internal structures, with particular attention being given to transparency and internal democratic practices. Without proper internal practices the parties will be unable to deliver on the democratic aspirations of the Ugandan people. Parties also need to be more coherent in articulating their interests and better in addressing their agendas, which are significant indicators of whether they are developmental and people-oriented. The political space for civil society also needs to be improved significantly. Those involved will need to ensure that they focus on the promotion of key principles, such as respect for human rights and good

governance. Over the next five years, parliament will also have to be more pro-active and focus on key issues facing the country and less on political manoeuvring. This will create a firmer basis for a building-block approach to the political and economic development of the country.

- Regionally, the long-term stability of Uganda will be a key concern because of the presence of volatile countries in the region, in particular Somalia and the new Southern Sudan.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CAFFE	Campaign for Free and Fair Elections
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DP	Democratic Party
PDP	People's Development Party
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EISA	Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy
EOM	Electoral Observation Mission (of the EU)
EU	European Union
FDC	Forum For Democratic Change
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IMF	International Monetary Funds
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MONUC	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
TFG	Transitional Federal Government of Somalia
UBC	Uganda Broadcasting Corporation
UEC	Uganda Electoral Commission
UFA	Uganda Federal Alliance
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force

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