

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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The ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party concludes its primary elections for parliamentary flag bearers, amid unprecedented incidents of violence and allegations of vote buying and false declarations of results. Uganda and Tanzania sign an agreement to commence construction of a 1,445-kilometre oil pipeline connecting Uganda's oilfields in Hoima to Tanzania's northern port of Tanga. Rights groups ask the government to reverse a move that requires some social media users to get a licence and pay fees, saying the move is aimed at censoring content critical of the government ahead of the next presidential election.

Violence and irregularities mar ruling NRM party primaries

The ruling **National Resistance Movement (NRM)** party concluded its primary elections for parliamentary flag bearers on 4 September,¹ amid unprecedented incidents of violence and allegations of vote buying and false declarations of results.² Constituencies from all parts of **Uganda** reported irregularities, including President **Yoweri Museveni's** (1986-present) home constituency of **Nyabushozi**. A total of 373 petitions were filed with the NRM's electoral commission following the party's elections for district women members of parliament (MPs) and directly elected constituency MPs. The violence and malpractice marring the primaries have not been seen before and raise fears that they may spill over into the upcoming 2021 national elections, an exact date for which has yet to be set.

A **Kampala** MP blamed the violence on 76-year-old Museveni's succession plan and those close to the president.

"The concentration of violence in the western region shows it's linked to the first family. Why was it so much in the president's backyard? Members of the first family are quietly positioning themselves to succeed Museveni, that's why you see his brother contesting against his in-law, and both sides used the army. This violence will get worse as Museveni is aging – the sons, brothers are starting to position themselves but it will reach a point where the army will intervene and take over because there's now no point in elections."

A government spokesperson, speaking anonymously to ARC, condemned the violence:

*"It's regrettable that people close to the president orchestrated violence in **Sembabule** and it's even worse that the president's brother and daughter in-law orchestrated it. I think the flexibility of the president is being taken for granted by people who are close to him. The president must demonstrate by bringing to order those involved for example by sacking [labour] minister **Mwesigwa Rukutana** who is alleged to have shot someone during elections."*

An NRM cabinet member and former youth minister claimed that some unnamed politicians are mobilising Uganda's youth to foment violence and expressed concern that if the violence seen during the NRM primaries is not checked, the country will slip into anarchy:

"I survived being killed during the primaries because I was being protected by the army but the situation was worse. The elections were manned by gangs of youths paid to foment violence."

¹ Monitor, 4 Sep 2020

² Source, ARC Uganda analyst

An MP in eastern Uganda told ARC that the violence experienced during the NRM primary elections, unprecedented in the country's history, may prompt the army to get involved in politics:

"A certain section of the population might now take advantage and resort to use of violence ... the groups that have been hitting people at night using metal bars might now take advantage of the fragile political situation to mobilise and seek forceful change of government. Something needs to be done ... if not, we will go back to post-independence Uganda where the army used to sort out political issues using the gun."

One of the NRM's four vice-chairpersons expressed regret over the primary election violence, blaming the financial benefits of parliamentary service for the lengths that some would go to for the opportunity to be elected:

"I must apologise to the entire country that some areas had bloodshed and loss of blood. This is because some of the leaders take elections as a 'do or die' and as a result they have deprived people [of] their constitutional right to choose a leader. A Member of Parliament is paid between 30-40 million shillings per month (\$8,500) and this makes people kill in order to get to Parliament."

Corruption in Uganda's political system is a long-standing problem. Would-be MPs often bribe voters to vote for them, and then bribe members of the executive to pass bills favourable to them or their constituents.³ A Kampala lawyer suggests that lower salaries for MPs would solve the problem:

*"The way people now perceive elections [is to] fight your way into Parliament, then enjoy the money, so to fight this, reduce the amount of money paid to MPs and you will have few people contesting for political offices. An MP in western Uganda told me that to win an election from there, you need not less than 800 million shillings (\$219,000) to bribe voters."*⁴

Uganda and Tanzania sign oil pipeline agreement ...

Uganda and Tanzania have signed an agreement to commence construction of a 1,445-kilometre oil pipeline from Uganda's oilfields in **Hoima** to Tanzania's northern port of **Tanga**.⁵ The project focuses on oilfields discovered in landlocked Uganda in 2006, and proposes pumping the crude oil to the **East African** coast via a pipeline across Tanzania at an estimated cost of \$3.5 billion. Reserves in the area are conservatively estimated at 1.7 billion barrels.⁶ Ugandan authorities are optimistic that oil revenue will finance ambitious infrastructure projects and launch the country into middle-income status.

The multinational plan is led by **France**-based oil company **Total** in partnership with **China**'s state-owned **China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC)** and **United Kingdom**-headquartered **Tullow Oil**, which is seeking to finalise the sale of its stake in the venture (see *ARC Briefing Uganda May 2020*). Presiding over the signing of the **Host Government Agreement (HGA)** for the **East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)** project between the government and Total on 11 September, President Museveni congratulated Total on concluding the agreement,

*"... which moves us closer to production of crude oil in Uganda. It has taken long but I want to assure Ugandans that this was deliberate. We have gone through every item. Uganda is a rich country, with oil as a small fraction of this wealth. The big part is agriculture, industry, services and human resources."*⁷

Museveni noted that oil could spark transformation in Uganda, bringing revenue to develop infrastructure, science and technology:

³ Source, Uganda analyst

⁴ Kampala-based lawyer on Capital Radio, 12 Sep 2020

⁵ Daily Monitor, 14 Sep 2020

⁶ Daily Monitor, 14 Sep 2020

⁷ The Observer, 12 Sep 2020

“This money will not be used for consumption. We shall use it to enhance our durable capacity.”⁸

However, Ugandans are not unanimous in welcoming the pipeline project agreement, particularly those who will be displaced by the pipeline. **Kakumiro MP Nabbanja Robinah** told ARC that the government must compensate people before the project can start:

“We have so many complaints that have never been addressed. We need fresh evaluation of our land, perennial crops and coffee plantations which are to be destroyed. They undervalued our property during the initial evaluation and never paid us. Also there’s another problem that a majority of people don’t own land titles and are bound to be cheated.”

A Hoima local council official told ARC that the government has not adequately sensitised residents about the project or how they will be compensated:

“They just come and tell people to sign the forms and now we are hearing work is to begin, are they going to evict us without compensating? We have crops and buildings in places they have marked that the pipeline will pass through. To make matters worse they have undervalued our property.”

An official from the **Petroleum Authority of Uganda** says the evaluations are complete and the government will soon pay those who residents affected by the project:

“Compensation rates for crops and structures are determined by the district land boards while land rates are determined based on the market value. All these are based on the prevailing market rates for the financial year when payment is to be made so they will be compensated as per the valuation reports approved by the Chief Government Valuer in the Ministry of Lands in Kampala. They should know that any new development made on the land after the evaluation will not be eligible for compensation.”

Communication commission clamps down on online publications

The **Uganda Communications Commission (UCC)**, in a press release issued on 7 September, has asked all those engaged in providing data online to “regularise” their operations by obtaining UCC authorisation by 5 October. The notice targets entities such as blogs, online television, online radio, online newspapers, audio over IP (AoIP), Internet Protocol TV (IGP TV), Video on Demand (VoD), digital audio radios and televisions, internet/web radio and internet/web television. Uganda has more than 500 online publications, of which only 48 are so far registered with the UCC.

The directive has attracted public outcry. Many see it as an attempt by the UCC to stifle freedom of speech as Uganda heads to the 2021 elections. A Kampala media researcher told ARC that the directives are political rather than policy directives:

*“All these directives are issued with specific targets in mind and once those are dealt with, the rest can continue to live ‘normal lives’. Many radio stations have been operating without renewing their licences. Only when they annoy the president or his friends are they asked questions about permits. As you may know also, the [Buganda Kingdom-owned] **Central Broadcasting Service** radio is operating without a licence. But they were told, should they misbehave, the consequences will be dire. Many of our newspapers (off and online) have never been registered by the [General Post Office] **GPO** or **Media Council**. So, yes, the directives are there, but they were first issued in March 2018. What UCC issued recently is just a reminder.”*

A Uganda-based member of a civil society organisation wants the **Electoral Commission of Uganda** to intervene and stop UCC from implementing the directive.

“Electoral Commission should intervene and reign in on UCC and stop them from implementing this directive, which to me is aimed at ensuring that some presidential candidates who wish to reach voters online don’t get the chance. They said elections are going to be ‘scientific’

⁸ The Observer, 12 Sep 2020

[campaigns done via electronic media due to the risk of spread of corona virus], then why are they coming up with such a directive at this time?"

A prominent Kampala-based online publisher says the UCC's registration requirements will affect most online publishers, as they may not be able to meet the qualifications, which are the same as those for running a print newspaper. According to the **1995 National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (NIJU) Statute**, news publications must register particulars of their editors. Editors must possess a degree in journalism or mass communication. However, most Ugandan publications are run by people without degrees in mass communication:

This is likely to affect freedom of speech and expression if the content I am putting up is what government doesn't want do you think they will approve my application? Besides how many people who run blogs have degrees in mass communication?"

Lawyer **Ivan Bwowe** has filed a suit in the **Civil Division of the High Court in Kampala** against the UCC over the directive.⁹ Bwowe claims that the directive to have all online media registered and authorised to operate is unconstitutional. Bwowe argues that all social media platforms such as **Facebook, Twitter and YouTube** have independent community guidelines and users should not have to seek authorisation from UCC to use the platforms.

Planner

20 - 23 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** International Business Conference (IBC), **Speke Resort**
 23 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** Uganda International Oil and Gas Summit
 24 Sep 2020 **Gulu (Uganda)** International Conference on Sustainable Water Management
 24 Sep 2020 **Gulu (Uganda)** International Conference on Nano science and Nanotechnology
 2020 **(Uganda)** Final Investment Decision on oil and gas sector
 2021 **(Uganda)** Uganda General Election scheduled, now subject to postponement

Chronology

14 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. The Ugandan shilling remains stable as pending mid-month tax payments for firms curb demand for hard currency;

14 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *BBC*. Ugandan police say they have arrested 13 people after at least six **South Sudanese** refugees were killed in their camp in the north west of the country;

13 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Associated Press*. Leaders of Uganda and **Tanzania** sign an agreement for the construction of what they say will be the world's longest heated oil pipeline, linking Uganda's planned oil fields in the west to Tanzania's **Indian Ocean** port of **Tanga**;

12 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Chimpreports*. Two **Kampala Capital City Authority** officials are arrested over a building that collapsed in *Makindye*;

11 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Chimpreports*. The **Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF)** resumes deployment to **African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM)** peace keeping force in **Somalia**;

11 Sep 2020 **Washington (United States)** *World Bank press release*. The **World Bank** board of directors approves a \$130.8m grant from the **International Development Association (IDA)** to ease the movement of goods and people in **Uganda** and improve access to social services and job opportunities in the refugee hosting districts;

⁹ Nile Post, 10 Sep 2020

10 Sep 2020 **East Africa (AA)** AA. International charity organisation **Oxfam** and non-governmental group **International Federation for Human Rights** release separate reports both highlighting major risks of oil projects by **France**-based energy major **Total** in **Uganda** and **Tanzania**;

10 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. Government says it will reopen its sole international airport, **Entebbe International Airport**, to commercial flights on 1 October, more than five months after its closure due to the pandemic.

9 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. Rights groups ask Uganda to reverse a move that requires some social media users to get a licence and pay fees, saying the move is aimed at censoring content critical of the government ahead of a presidential election;

8 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Associated Press*. Health minister *Jane Ruth Aceng* says Uganda has had the 'unique' opportunity to deal with several disease outbreaks, enabling it to identify specific factors that contribute to the successful management of public health emergencies;

7 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. The **Bank of Uganda** (central bank) will limit direct investor participation in the primary market for government securities to boost trading in the secondary market;

6 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *BBC*. Labour minister **Mwesigwa Rukutana** to appear in court on 7 September after he was arrested over allegedly shooting at his opponent's supporters after he lost the primaries;

6 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Africanews*. **Covid-19** tests confirm 109 new cases, bringing Uganda's cumulative confirmed cases to 3,776 and total deaths from Covid-19 to 44;

5 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *New Vision*. Five **Uganda Parliament** staff members returned positive results after random tests were carried out for Covid-19;

4 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Reuters*. The Ugandan shilling trades in stable position due to subdued appetite for hard currency across sectors such as energy, manufacturing and telecoms;

3 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *New Vision*. Trade, industry and cooperatives minister **Amelia Kyambadde** says in the 2020/2021 financial year **Uganda's** fiscal deficit declined 9.8% and public debt is projected to hit 47.5% of GDP;

3 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *US Embassy press release*. **US Mission in Uganda** celebrates the successful conclusion of the **Voucher Plus Activity**, a project of the **US. Agency for International Development (USAID)** to expand and improve access to quality maternal and newborn services in 35 districts in Northern and Eastern Uganda;

2 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *New Vision*. **Somalia** and the **African Union Commission (AUC)** commend President **Yoweri Museveni's** decision to deploy troops in Somalia 10 years ago;

2 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Guardian*. The ministry for relief, disaster preparedness and refugees government suspends operations of three-quarters of refugee aid organisations over non-compliance with operational rules;

2 Sep 2020 **(Africa)** *Bloomberg*. **Coronavirus** procurement scandals rock numerous **African** countries – including **Kenya, South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, Zimbabwe** and **Uganda** – in which contracts are awarded to companies owned by relatives or friends of state officials at inflated prices in exchange for kickbacks due to relaxed tender and procurement rules;

1 Sep 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Kampala Sun*. **Wakiso Chief Magistrates Court** orders aspiring presidential candidate **Robert Kyagulanyi**, also known as **Bobby Wine**, to appear before it on 16 September over charges of giving false information to the electoral commission about his age;

21 Aug 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Kampala Sun*. Minister of capital **Kampala, Betty Amongi**, issues an ultimatum to Kampala residents to comply with lockdown restrictions or tougher regulations will be

re-imposed;

17 Aug 2020 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Kampala Sun*. **United States** government imposes financial sanctions and visa restrictions on four **Ugandan** individuals for their involvement in activities that victimised young children in a corrupt adoption scheme;

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