

ELECTION RELATED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN UGANDA

RESEARCH REPORT

2019



**Women's
International
Peace Centre**
Amplifying Women's Voice and Power

Researchers

Prof. Sabiti Makara (Team Leader)
Ms Catherine Kanabahita Guma
Assoc Professor Apuuli Kasaija

Editor

Elizabeth Kanyogonya

Review Team

The Peace Centre

Helen Kezie-Nwoha: Executive Director
Juliet Were: Deputy Executive Director
Nkinzi Suzan: Research Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

The Eminent Women of Women Situation Room

Ms Elizabeth Lwanga
Prof. Joy Kwesiga

Correspondence

Please address all correspondence to:

Executive Director
Women's International Peace Centre
Plot 1, Martyrs' Garden Road B, Ministers' Village Ntinda
P. O. BOX 4924, Kampala, Uganda
Email program@wipc.org
Website www.wipc.org

ISBN: 978-9970-29-059-8

© Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre) 2019

All Rights Reserved

Requests for permission to reproduce or translate this publication for education and non-commercial purposes should be addressed to The Peace Centre.

ELECTION RELATED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN UGANDA

RESEARCH REPORT

2019



SUPPORTED BY



Embassy of the
Kingdom of Belgium
in **Kampala**

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	D
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	9
1.1.2 EARLY SIGNS OF CONFLICT IN UGANDA AFTER INDEPENDENCE	9
1.1.3 CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN THE POST-AMIN PERIOD	10
1.1.4 REGULAR ELECTIONS UNDER THE NRM	10
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	11
1.3 METHODOLOGY	11
1.3.1 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE	11
1.3.2 TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED	14
1.4 FRAMING THE STUDY: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
1.4.1 HISTORICAL MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN IN UGANDA'S POLITICS	15
1.4.2 ON DOMESTIC AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND MEN	15
1.5 A BROAD PERSPECTIVE ON ELECTIONS IN AFRICA	16
1.5.1 CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS	16
1.5.2 DEFINING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND ITS TRENDS IN AFRICA	17
1.5.3 EXAMINING THE NATURE AND GOALS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA	17
1.5.4 ELECTION VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT IN UGANDA'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT	18
1.5.5 NRM'S COMMITMENT TO ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY	19
1.5.6 TRENDS OF ELECTORAL VOILENCE UNDER THE NRM	20
1.5.7 COMMERCIALIZATION OF ELECTIONS AS A CATALYST OF VIOLENCE	22
2.0 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	23
2.1 VIEWS EXPRESSED ON CAUSES OF ELECTION VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS	23
2.2 TRENDS OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS	24
2.2.1 CONFLICTS IN TESO AND ARUA	26
2.2.2 CONFLICTS IN KAMPALA	26
2.2.3 SEMBABULE DISTRICT: WHERE POWERFUL ACTORS CALL THE SHOTS	27
2.2.4 UNFAIR ELECTION PRACTICES FACILITATE VIOLENCE	28
2.2.5 DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC CULTURE	30
2.2.6 ROLE OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION	31
2.2.7 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS	32
2.2.8 WOMEN STANDING ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TICKET	35
2.2.9 FAMILY RESOURCES FOR CAMPAIGNS AND FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN IN POLITICS	36
2.2.10 VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICAL ACTORS IN MULTI-PARTY DISPENSATION	37
2.2.11 A WOMAN'S SPACE AT HOME AND IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS	37

3.0	TRENDS OF YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VIOLENCE	41
3.1	RURAL AND URBAN PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE	43
4.0	POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	45
5.0	CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR AVERTING ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE	46
5.1	CONCLUSIONS	46
5.2	RECOMMENDATIONS TO AVERT ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE IN UGANDA	47
	APPENDICES	50
APPENDIX 1	NIGHT ASARA EYORU'S STORY	50
APPENDIX 2	STORY BY HON MIRIA MATEMBE	53
APPENDIX 3	ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S VIEWS ON YOUTH AND ELECTION VIOLENCE	54
	REFERENCES	55

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AEVD	African Electoral Violence Database
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
DP	Democratic Party
DPC	District Police Commander
DRCC	Deputy Resident City Commissioner
EC	Electoral Commission
E-VAW	Electoral Violence Against Women
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
GISO	Gombolola Internal Security Officer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGP	Inspector General of Police
ISO	Internal Security Officer
KAP	Kalan gala Action Plan
KY	KabakaYekka
LC	Local Council
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LRA	Lord Resistance Army
LEGCO	Legislative Council
MPs	Members of Parliament
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled People of Uganda
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OC	Officer-in-Charge
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PGB	Presidential Guard Brigade
PWDs	People with Disabilities
RCC	Resident City Commissioner
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation
SC	Supreme Court
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre) and the Eminent Women of the Women's Situation Room (WSR) are indebted to all the participants in this research process. This study was carried out within the framework of UNSCR1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) that calls for increased and strategic participation of women at all levels of peace building, decision making and democracy.

We acknowledge the **Researchers**: Prof. Sabiti Makara (Team Leader), Ms Catherine Kanabahita Guma and Assoc Professor Apuuli Kasaija for the expertise and time put in the analysis of the findings and compilation of this report.

The Think Tank Team: Dr. Zahara Nampewo (Director, Human Rights and Peace Centre [HURIPEC]) - School of Law, Makerere University; Dr. Nansozi K. Suzie Muwanga (Dep't of Political Science and Public Administration) Makerere University; Ms. Susan Alupo -Refugee Law Project (RLP); Ms. Elizabeth King Lwanga - Team Leader, Women's Situation Room (WSR); Dr. Fr. Ngabirano Maximiano (Associate Professor, Dean School of Arts & Social Sciences, Uganda Martyrs University); Prof. Joy C. Kwesiga - Member, Women's Situation Room (WSR); Dr. Kayunga Sallie Simba Executive Director, Centre for Basic Research (CBR) and Dr. Halima Wakabi Akbar (Academic registrar - Islamic University in Uganda). Your participation in the design of the study and ensuring that quality control mechanisms are effected was a key contribution to the success of this research. We thank you.

We are grateful to the community members of Sembabule, Soroti, Kampala and Arua districts; our partners Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) - Soroti, Youth Development Initiative (YDI) - Arua; and the women and youth for the interactive and informative engagements and commitment exhibited during the entire research period.

And to all the key informants, Councilors, Local leaders, Members of Parliament (Current and Former), Police, District Resident Commissioners (RDCs), Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), District Electoral Officers, Cultural and Religious leaders and Leaders of Women NGOs and Civil Society Organisations who spared time to share their experiences, we thank you.

To the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium - Kampala, thank you for being an empowering development partner. We are grateful for the financial investment that enabled us to have a collective reflection, carry out research and generate knowledge in order to understand election related conflicts in Uganda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the study on Election related conflict and violence in Uganda was to examine the relationship between free, fair and legitimate elections and the observance of human rights and freedoms of citizens, before, during and after elections.

The study is underpinned by three assumptions: 1. An election free of violence, intimidation, coercion, bribery, incitement, disinformation, fear and sectarian tendencies is more likely to produce peace, stability, social harmony and prosperity than one bedeviled by these social ills. 2. Election-related conflict and violence affect the whole of society: women, men, youth, children and people with disability. 3. Election violence affects its victims and creates psychological trauma, family instability, physical injury and sometimes loss of life

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To generate knowledge on election-related conflict and violence in Uganda
- To identify causes of election-related conflicts and violence before, during and after elections
- To identify patterns and trends of conflict relating to elections in Uganda
- To identify possible mitigation strategies to address the conflicts and violence

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ELECTIONS IN UGANDA

- Uganda is gradually recovering from decades of political unrest and internal conflict.
- The history of elections in Uganda has been divisive and violent since the colonial period.
- The 1995 Constitution was meant to herald a new chapter in the country's history. "Power belongs to the people and they shall express their consent to be governed through free and fair elections" is the first Article of that Constitution.
- There have been regular elections under the National Resistance Movement (NRM) rule but violence and conflict have been a constant feature.
- Both the ruling party and the opposition have been accused of engaging in malpractices mainly violence.

METHODOLOGY

- The study was largely qualitative with key informant interviews and focus group discussions being the main sources of information.
- Taking a random sample, a questionnaire was administered to 80 people in the four districts i.e. Arua, Kampala, Sembabule and Soroti.
- In the administration of the questionnaire, care was taken to disaggregate rural and urban voters; youth, women, men and people with disabilities.
- The districts were chosen because they have experienced election-related conflict and violence of medium or high intensity; and also, for regional representation.
- Key informant interviews were conducted, using an interview guide. In the four districts and key institutions, 106 key informant interviews were conducted.
- In each district, a minimum of four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to get the views of women, men and youth.
- Research was conducted between April and July 2019.

FRAMING THE STUDY: LITERATURE REVIEW

- Some of the factors undermining credibility and fairness of elections across the African continent are conflicts and violence before, during and after elections (Khabele-Matlosa, Khadiagala and Shale, 2010).
- Violence prevents voters from enjoying the freedom to express their electoral choices.
- Generally, in Africa, the leaders choose voters (Mkandawire, 1992) not the other way round. Leaders also coerce the voters to vote for them by threatening state-sanctioned violence.
- Specifically, on women, gender-based violence in the electoral processes has historically been prevalent in Uganda (Ahikire, 2004)
- During colonialism, women did not have the right to vote, while during the early elections in Uganda (in 1961 and 1962) and later, widespread violence kept women away from the polls.
- The NRM's 'individual merit' elections appeared to open doors for marginalized groups such as women but generally 'men used their financial muscle to influence and edge women out of the electoral races' (Ahikire, 2004).
- Multiparty election in Uganda has resulted in the undermining of women's political potential through psychological intimidation and physical violence (Ahikire, 2007).
- Women standing for district MP seats have to traverse all the constituencies in a district, while men stand in smaller single constituencies.
- Women participation in politics and success in elections is a function of "affinity to prominent men" (Ssali and Atto, 2008).
- Question of 'marital status' of women candidates: children, spouses and private issues come up during women's campaign for election.
- Women's success in electoral politics is dependent on a network of men for their patronage and influence.

DEFINING ELECTION-RELATED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

- Electoral conflict is defined as 'any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process' (Fischer, 2002).
- Electoral violence refers to the use of 'coercive force, directed towards electoral actors and/or objects, occurring in the context of electoral competition' (Laasko, 1997).
- Election-related conflicts and violence remain a pervasive feature of electoral dynamics in many countries in Africa (African Electoral Violence Database, 2014).
- **Goals** of perpetrators of election conflict and violence include:
 - a. leaders keeping power through election manipulation;
 - b. preventing opposition supporters from participating;
 - c. disrupting opponents' campaigns; and
 - d. disrupting the polling process
 - e. humiliation of individuals and political groups e.g. women.
 - f. use of state security forces to frustrate opponents.

TRENDS OF ELECTION CONFLICTS AND VIOLENCE

- In Uganda, violence characterized elections in 1958, 1961, 1962 and 1980.
- The most rigged elections, with some elements of violence in 1980.
- Museveni and his NRM went to fight after the 1980 election violence/rigging of polls.
- Violence in the 1996 presidential elections and general elections.
- Violence in 2001, the second election under the new constitution.
- Physical violence and legal manipulations in 2006.
- Two-way violence during the 2011 elections (walk-to-work by the Opposition and reprisals by security forces).
- 2016 Election: Crime-preventers/ Kiboko Squad/Opposition Gangs in 2016 hurting the ordinary voters.
- Commercialization of the elections (in all elections since 2001, increasing violence).

KEY FINDINGS: ON CAUSES OF ELECTION VIOLENCE

- Elections are a do-or-die affair.
- Politics is a high paying job, compared to other public jobs.
- Lack of employment for youth: "election regarded as employment."
- Nature of politics: of "the politics of ruling, not service."
- Communal conflicts affect people's decision to vote or not to vote.
- Non-physical violence: voting out of fear (Teso and Arua).
- Personality cults e.g. in Sembabule, where powerful personalities 'anoint' other politicians.
- Intense opposition pressure in Kampala (walk to work in 2011).
- Election Commission (EC) Failures: 1. Failure to supply election materials in Kampala and Wakiso in 2016 created a bad image. 2. Failure to manage time for rallies, 3. Failure to manage venues. 4. Failure to restrain candidates using abusive language, 5. Failure to manage complaints. 6. EC local officials accused of corruption, abetting election corruption aided by security officials.
- Militarisation and securitization of electoral processes (Sembabule, Soroti, Arua, Kampala).
- Goons (kifesi) hired by some stakeholders to disrupt the election processes.
- Security forces involved conflict and violence.
- Ethnic divisions and conflict (case of Sembabule).
- Religious divide abets conflicts (case of Arua Municipality.)
- Intra-party divisions and religious divisions (case of Arua Municipality.)
- Violence against women goes from domestic to public space.

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Definition of Electoral Violence Against Women (E-VAW) to mean: "Any act of gender based election violence that is directed primarily at women as a result of their aspirations to seek political office, their link to political activities, or simply their commitment to vote, as well as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, physical assault, forced 'protection', blackmail, destruction of property, or assault".

- The mode of voting by queuing behind candidates, used in the 2018 Local Council (LC) elections perpetuated domestic violence and enmity in the community.
- Culture and religion are blamed for perpetuating patriarchy. These are reflected in the way women are socialized to be submissive to men and leads to low self-esteem.
- Women complained of being treated as property because of bride price and yet they still treasure the practice of men paying it before taking a bride.
- Men hesitate to support their spouses entering politics for fear of turning their home into a 'marketplace' and suspicions of infidelity.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Women suffer because of double standards where personal questions are asked about their marital status, their children, place of birth, parentage etc. Such questions are never put to men.
- At political rallies, people hurl insults at women. Women politicians are labelled prostitutes, witches or 'dry soil' if they have no children, and told to stand where they were born etc.
- There is increased domestic violence during elections where husbands beat up women for supporting or voting a different candidate or accused of neglecting family responsibilities.
- Culture and religion are blamed for perpetuating patriarchy as reflected in the way women are socialized to be submissive to men.

MULTIPARTY POLITICS, POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY OF POLITICAL ACTORS IN OPPOSITION

- Since the re-introduction of multi-party politics in Uganda in 2005, electoral violence has been directed at women in opposition political parties.
- Men and women who do not toe the ruling party line have been deprived of their means of livelihood. Denying public jobs and opportunity to supporters of opposition has caused suffering for some principled opposition leaders, while others have been enticed with jobs or join the ruling party.
- Government shutting down social media and private media houses, interrupting radio programmes, and issuing orders for opposition leaders not to be hosted have all affected those in the opposition and marginalized groups.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN A MULTIPARTY DISPENSATION

On 10th October 2015, the media published the story of Zainab Naigaga, a woman who was dragged on the road and stripped naked by security operatives on the Masaka-Mbarara highway. Night Asara Eyoru, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) member and Woman Councillor in Arua suffered brutal beatings. Her 'crime' was supporting an opposition candidate in Arua municipality bye-election. Since 2018, when she was badly tortured by police, she has become disabled and unable to fend for herself and family.

There were reports of a male police officer accused of squeezing and hurting the breasts of Ingrid Turinawe, a political mobilizer in the opposition party (FDC). These threats are meant to send a clear message to women considering supporting opposition candidates to think twice about such a decision.

Apart from physical harm inflicted on women activists, some women have been denied services simply because they are suspected of being in the opposition.

While women look for political opportunities in the ruling party, it is claimed that the ruling party is simply 'using women.' It also is claimed that opposition parties have not done enough to attract women in their ranks.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION: TRENDS OF VIOLENCE

Given the high youth unemployment rate in Uganda, it is common for them to be used as agents and perpetrators of violence on behalf of their 'political paymasters.' Groups of youth vigilantes and militias have been formed, including: crime preventers, Yellow Youth Brigade, Power10, Solida, Red-Tops, Yellow Pigs and many others. Most of them are urban-based and are formed in the guise of "hunting for votes," or "protecting votes."

In the wake of 2016 election, the Uganda Police formed an unofficial unit known as crime preventers (mainly youth) in every village. These were purportedly formed to augment the security services. However, their actual mission became clear when they started operating as NRM mobilisers. To counter this, the opposition formed their own youth brigades, mostly in urban areas, and they became a headache for the security services.

Why has the behavior of the youth been volatile and seemingly uncontrollable during elections? Most participants reported the following:

- a. The youth have no faith in the electoral process, as a means of impacting positively on their lives.
- b. Electoral fraud has become ubiquitous; it is so easily manipulated that popular will matters little. The youth are used by competing groups to manipulate the electoral processes.
- c. The youth are perpetrators as well as victims of election violence. They are used by the politicians because there are not many alternative means of expressing their desperation.
- d. Many youths are getting politically radicalized, engaging in protests, demonstrations and other anomic behavior.

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST PWDS

Historically, People with Disabilities (PWDs) had no specific political status. They were assumed to participate politically just like other citizens. It is during the NRM era that their rights to political participation have been granted.

The elections of PWDs are dominated by the NRM given their genesis into electoral politics and the reliability of their support in the legislative bodies.

With a few exceptions, the mobilization of PWDs for their election is almost exclusively done by NRM chairpersons. PWDs from other political parties find it difficult to get elected. They fear insecurity since their mobility is restricted and their impairments make their lives hard. They tend to vote for the status quo and for the sake of peace. "I don't have a leg to walk up and down and that is why I am yellow" (a woman with disability in Arua district).

PWDs suffer from discrimination and election-related violence, as these examples show:

- a. There are no interpreters so many PWDs are unable to follow some of the nuances of the electoral process.
- b. Primary elections are conducted by voters lining up behind candidates, a practice that PWDs say discriminates against some of them.
- c. PWD ballot papers do not have candidates' photos or names, making the process easy to manipulate.
- d. Disability committees have not been elected for a long time.
- e. The register for PWDs had not been updated since 2001. It was only updated in October 2019 by the EC.

CONCLUSIONS

- Election conflicts continue to rise as long as there is a do-or-die attitude to politics.
- Fighting for political positions will continue as long as politics is perceived as a better job than any other public service.
- Elections increase violence against women in domestic and public spaces.
- Violence against women has been worsened by multiparty politics.
- PWDs are used for political gain, little is done to change their vulnerability.
- Elections exacerbate the bad conditions of the youth, hence they become perpetrators and victims of election-related violence.
- The Electoral Commission is perceived as having failed to minimise election-related violence. Voters expect the EC to mediate between conflicting parties.

STRATEGIES FOR AVERTING ELECTION CONFLICTS / VIOLENCE

- Creating means of sustainable livelihoods: election-related violence is not just about election but about livelihoods. Government should create opportunities for self-advancement for all citizens.
- EC and Uganda Human Rights Commission need to carry out comprehensive civic and voter education to build a culture of tolerance.
- Restoring confidence in elections as a means of installing or removing leaders. Government and the EC need to perfect election management so that losers concede losing a fair and free election.
- Punishing election cheats heavily to deter election fraud. Parliament should enact strong laws to curtail proven election fraudsters (including those involved in election-related violence) from competing.
- Redefining role of security agencies, police, army and intelligence in the electoral process.
- Preventing corruption and bribery of local EC election officials: EC should pay its officials better and on time.
- Code of conduct for all candidates: The EC should strengthen monitoring of candidates' conduct.
- Women must be protected from domestic and public harassment. Government should make specific laws to protect women from harassment.
- Educating women about their right to political participation. The EC needs to educate men and women about the importance of gender equal participation in politics.
- Restraining public officials from partisan politics.

- Civil Society should have an empowered role in the process of elections to observe elections and report freely on them.
- Eliminating commercialization of politics and elections. Parliament should enact laws to regulate election funding.
- Strengthening inter-party dialogue.
- Empowering PWDs economically and streamlining electoral process for them.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study was motivated by the need to understand the relationship between free, fair and legitimate elections and the observance and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms of citizens, before, during and after every election. A critical examination of stakeholder conduct is essential. An election free of violence, intimidation, coercion, bribery, incitement, disinformation, fear and sectarian tendencies is likely to produce peace, stability, social harmony and prosperity. Election-related conflict and violence affects all people in a society. Although violence has different consequences for each group, it leaves marks on its victims such as physical injury and loss of life, but some effects may not be obvious, such as psychological trauma, family instability or breakdown. Election-related conflict and violence have caused political unrest, partisan hatred, mistrust of political leadership and divisions in society. This undermines social cohesion, national unity, political stability and economic progress.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Uganda is gradually recovering from decades of political unrest and internal conflict. In 1995, the country promulgated a new constitution as a foundation for constitutional governance. Article 1 of the new constitution asserts that power belongs to the people and that the people shall be governed by their consent. This consent is to be realized through free and fair elections but free and fair elections have been rare in Uganda. The colonial power which ruled the country for 68 years did not do much to nurture democratic governance. Only at the end of colonial rule were attempts made to introduce elections. This colonial administration introduced elections in 1958 but they were boycotted in Buganda, the country's power centre. In the 1961 elections Buganda showed its discomfort with the emerging political parties, resulting, in violence in the central region. The April 1962 elections were meant to install the first independence government and the Democratic Party (DP) won but did not assume power because its rival, Uganda People's Congress (UPC), formed an alliance with Kabaka Yekka (KY) which nominated Members of Parliament through the Lukiiko (the legislative assembly of the Buganda Kingdom). During the 1961 and 1962 elections, violence was rife, especially in Buganda. Elsewhere in the country, political sloganeering was intensely sectarian and derogatory, spreading hatred amongst rival political camps. The main political parties were formed based on the Catholic and Protestant religious divides and politicking divided Ugandans along religious and ethnic lines.

Political violence and conflict in the country's history are not necessarily limited to elections. Much of Uganda's post-independence history did not feature any elections. From 1962 to 1980 there were no elections but conflicts and violence were still prevalent.

1.1.2 EARLY SIGNS OF CONFLICT IN UGANDA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

In 1964, two years after Independence, there was a major conflict between the Buganda kingdom and the central government of Uganda over the 'lost counties' of Buyaga and Bugangaizi. A referendum to settle the issue was held as part of the post-colonial settlement¹ and Buganda lost the counties to Bunyoro kingdom. This political crisis precipitated a number of divisive actions,

1. See G.W. Kanyeihamba, Constitutional Law and Government in Uganda, 1975.

ending in 1966 with the deposition and exile of the Kabaka (king) of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa². The Prime Minister Milton Obote ordered a military assault against the Lubiri, the Kabaka's palace. The aftermath of this crisis was a state of emergency declared over the central region of the country. In addition, the other traditional kingdoms were abolished and a hurriedly drafted constitution declared Uganda a republic.

In 1971, the army commander, Idi Amin, took advantage of the political unrest and led a military coup to oust President Obote. Amin suspended both parliament and the constitution. He ruled by decree and acted with impunity until 1979. In the absence of an elected government or a Constitution, the country experienced its worst period. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed by government forces; human rights were openly abused; and violence became a new mode of governing.

1.1.3 CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN THE POST-AMIN PERIOD

While citizens celebrated the overthrow of Idi Amin, the post-Idi Amin period was equally unstable. With competing centres of power the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) which assumed power in 1979 lacked effective control over the country. The first post-independence elections were held in December 1980 but were extensively manipulated by one of the powerful UNLF factions determined to reinstate the UPC and Milton Obote into power. The elections were marred by violence. Opponents of the Obote power scheme faced wrath and danger to their lives. In a repeat of the Amin era, many people simply 'disappeared' at the hands of security operatives. The election management machinery was hijacked by the government in power³. The principles of free and fair election were discarded and winners were decided not by the electoral body but by the government of the day. Some of the political actors at the time, vowed to go to the bush to fight the government if the election were manipulated. Indeed, the mismanagement of this election culminated into a bloody civil conflict that brought the country to its knees. Between 1981 and 1986, a civil war cost thousands of lives in the Luwero Triangle where government forces battled rebels of the National Resistance Army (NRA). Although the rebellion received significant public support, it destroyed the local economy as well as social order and thousands of people were internally displaced. The NRA war was led by Yoweri Museveni, who became president in 1986 and, 34 years later, still holds power.

1.1.4 REGULAR ELECTIONS UNDER THE NRM

The NRM has held regular elections since 1996.⁴ However, they have also been criticized for violence and conflict. Nearly every round of election has been criticized for vote-skewing violence⁵. The electorate vote under a state of fear and lose confidence in the power of the vote a legitimate means of managing power by popular consent. Violence during the electoral process has been cited as the main ground for opposition presidential candidates to challenge the election results. Election-related conflict has been extensive, and the security forces has been blamed for much of it.⁶ Political actors in the opposition parties have also engaged gangs threatening voters with violence.

2. Edward Mutesa, *The Desecration of My Kingdom* 1972

3. See F. W. Bwengye, *The Agony of Uganda: From Amin to Obote*. The Head of State at the time ordered through a decree, that only he would announce the election results. 1985.

4. The first 10 years (1986 to 1996) Museveni held power without subjecting himself to a popular vote.

5. In 1996, there was psychological violence to scare voters when a government newspaper showed the skulls. Luwero war victims, followed by the message: "If you do not vote wisely, this could return."

6. Lilian Muyomba-Tamale (2015), *Mitigating Incidences of Violence and Emergent Conflicts in Uganda's Electoral Process*, Paper for Uganda Situation Room Debating Brief No.7

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To research and generate knowledge on election-related conflict in Uganda.
- To identify causes of election-related conflict and violence before, during and after elections.
- To identify patterns and trends of the conflicts.
- To identify mitigation strategies to address election-related conflict and violence.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The main methodology adopted for this study was largely qualitative, that is key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The other using random sample questionnaires.

1.3.1 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

Data was collected by qualitative and quantitative methods. Most of the data was collected using qualitative techniques including: personal narratives of key informants; corroborated stories; and focus group discussions. Secondary data from published works, newspapers and unpublished reports was corroborated with data from primary sources. For collection of quantitative data, a semi-structured questionnaire was provided to both men and women of various age groups, to capture the trends and perceptions of election-related violence.

For quantitative data collection, efforts were made to ensure gender representation in administration of the questionnaire. The aim was not to make the study extensively quantitative. However, there was no other effective way of gauging perceptions. The questionnaires were administered to randomly identified voters in the four districts of Sembabule, Soroti, Arua and Kampala in order to balance urban and rural voters⁷. These districts were chosen to capture some regional representation and because they have experienced conflict and violence of either medium or high intensity. The data was triangulated based on the themes of the study. The two tables below show the key informants interviewed and the focus group discussions that were held.

7. The Team ensured that every participant in the study was above 18 years of age. In some districts, the study participants live in both urban and rural areas.

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

SEMBABULE	
District Administration (Senior Civil Servants)	1
Political Executive	3
Councilors	1
People with disability (councilors)	4
Police	2
Health Center	2
District EC	2
ARUA	
Police	2
Cultural Leader	1
Councilors	4
NGOs	2
Religious Leaders	2
District EC	1
People with Disability	1
Youth Leaders	2
District Administration (senior civil servants)	2
District Political Executive	3
Key Informants in Institutions at national level	
Members of Parliament (MPs)	6
MPs (representing PWDs)	1
Electoral Commission (national)	2
Human Rights Commission	2
NGOs (Human Rights NGOs)	4
Former MPs	1
Senior Police officers (National headquarters)	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF KEY INFORMANTS	106

SOROTI	
Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	2
District Political Executive	4
Resident District Commissioners (RDC)	1
District Security Officer (DSO)	1
Police	1
District Administration (senior civil servants)	3
Electoral Commission (EC)	1
Councilors	4
Teso Cultural Union	1
People with Disability (councilors)	1
District EC	1
Religious Leaders	1
KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY	
Deputy Resident City Commissioners (D-RCCs)	3
Division Mayors	3
Division Police Commanders	2
Division Town Clerks	2
Religious Leaders	2
Cultural Leaders	2
Division EC (Kampala area)	3
Local Councilors (1 & 2)	4
Youth Leaders	2

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

PARTICIPANTS

ARUA DISTRICT		
Date	Area	FGD Participants
13/6/2019	Mvara Sub-county	Male 11 Female 37
14/6/2019	Ai-vu sub-county	Male 51 Female 19
14/6/2019	Arua Municipality Central Division	Female 23 Male 15
SOROTI DISTRICT		
Date	Area	FGD Participants
10/6/2019	Gweri Sub-county	Female 16 Male 12
10/6/2019	Soroti Sub-county	Female 4 Male 19
KAMPALA (KCCA)		
Date	Area	FGD Participants
5/7/2019	Katwe 1 (Central Division)	Female 9 Male 16
3/7/2019	Kawempe (Katale)	Male 10 Female 15
2/7/2019	Namere Zone (Kawempe division)	Female 17 Male 9
1/7/2019	Makindye	Female 10 Male 19
1/7/2019	Katwe II	Male 12 Female 10
5/7/2019	Kisenyi III	Female 7 Male 13
SEMBABULE DISTRICT		
Date	Area	FGD Participants
24/5/2019	Parish Zone	Female 8 Male 15
24/5/2019	Market Zone	Male 11 Female 6
25/5/2019	Lwebitakuli sub-county	Female 16 Male 9

1.3.2 TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED

The duration of the study was from April to June 2019, covering the four districts of Sembabule, Soroti, Arua and Kampala. Selection of the districts was purposive to ensure there was regional coverage. The plan to cover a fifth district, Rukungiri, was not possible because of administrative difficulties.⁸ The study population was determined by a snow-ball method. Although the research team had a target of key administrative and political leaders, more interviewees emerged out of previous ones as the study progressed. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in each district and were disaggregated according to population categories: youth (female and male separately), women and men (separately), rural and urban. For political leaders, there was an effort to include all political groups. For staff, there was an effort to include key officials relevant to the administration of elections, such as the Chief Administrative Officer, District Registrar and the District Police Commander. Key social groups included women leaders; former candidates (both successful and unsuccessful); youth activists; people with disability; religious leaders; and cultural leaders. Although the team used a snowball method, most key informants had been contacted and pre-visit appointments made through The Peace Centre's partner organisations. These useful contacts made it possible for the research team to gather information quickly. A random sample was utilized for administering the questionnaires (80) to respondents, 20 in each district. The purpose of data from the random sample was to get varied opinions on the issues. The research team was conscious of the need to include both male and female respondents and only persons of 18 years and above were interviewed (insisted on persons who had voted at least once). At the national level, key informants included MPs, Resident City Commissioners (RCCs), Mayors, Municipal Town Clerks (for Kampala), Police Commanders, the Electoral Commission, Civil Society actors and senior citizens.

1.4 FRAMING THE STUDY: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on elections and election-related conflicts in Africa and Uganda is available, and was reviewed for this study. Across Africa, some of the factors undermining credibility and fairness of elections are conflicts and violence before, during and after elections. State-orchestrated violence is commonplace. Violence by unregulated local militias makes the situation worse for ordinary voters. The result is that voters cannot express their electoral choices freely. In the context of state-elite control over voters, Mkandawire (1992)⁹ has asserted that in Africa, the leaders choose voters, when it should be the other way round. The political elites tell the voters that even if they do not vote for them, they will still win. This is intended to discourage voters who would have voted against them. They threaten state and ruling party-sanctioned violence, while opposition parties also create local lawless rival gangs to intimidate and sometimes maim or kill opponents' supporters. The 2007 Kenya election in which more than 1000 people perished in terrible violence is a clear example.

8. The Research Team met the area RDC who was hostile to research, stopped the research activity and sent away the team. Only one interview had been conducted.

9. Thandika Mkandawire, "Crisis Management and the Making of 'Choiceless' Democracies" in Africa, Paper for MIT conference (March 6-9, 1997).

1.4.1 HISTORICAL MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN IN UGANDA'S POLITICS

On gender-based violence in the electoral processes, Ahikire ¹⁰ observes that in Uganda, as in other countries across the world, women were historically denied the right to vote. During the colonial era, possession of property was a requirement for qualification to vote and since most women did not own property, they were disenfranchised. During the 1961 and 1962 elections, widespread violence kept women away from the polls. Although violence was widespread in the 1980 election, there is a data gap regarding the participation of women in that election. Using the Uganda 1996 and 2001 elections as case studies, Ahikire observes that while the 'individual merit' method of elections championed by the NRM Movement system appeared to open doors for marginalized groups such as women, the reverse was actually true. Based on her findings, men use their superior financial power and control over family property to influence and edge women out of electoral races. As such, in Uganda, women remained politically relegated mainly to the political positions reserved for females only.

1.4.2 ON DOMESTIC AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

On domestic-related violence in politics, Ahikire documents cases of domestic and public spaces where women's political potential is undermined by psychological intimidation and physical violence. For example, Ahikire (2007¹¹) observes that even under a multiparty system, matters became worse politically for women than they had been under the Movement system. She cites the practice of male candidates for local council positions who would name themselves on the basis of constituencies they were contesting. This proved to be difficult for women whose constituencies in local elections covered several localities. A similar burden is still carried by women standing for reserved district seats for women MP. While men stand in single (smaller) constituencies, a woman has to traverse all the constituencies that comprise her district.

Reviewing women's political participation under the multiparty dispensation, Ssali and Atto (2008) ¹² observe that some women's predicament in Uganda's politics is that their political success is a function of their "affinity to prominent men." Critical of this concept, they assert that for instance, women who were married to prominent men were more likely to win elections and to attain some political advantage than those whose husbands were less prominent or had no known spouses. The question of marital status is frequently put to female candidates but not to men. Evidence is abundant that women who succeed in Ugandan electoral politics depend on a network of men for their patronage and influence. In short, while the increased chances of women's political participation could be considered a source of empowerment, several challenges continue to confront women at the electoral process, including various forms of violence that could be regarded as "political tokenism." ¹³

10. Josephine Ahikire, "Towards Women's Effective Participation in Electoral Politics in Uganda," *Feminist Africa* Vol.3 (2004).

11. J. Ahikire, *Localised or Localising Democracy: Gender and the Politics of Decentralisation in Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2007.

12. Sarah Ssali and Clare Atto, "Gender and Women's Participation in the 2006 Multiparty Elections in Uganda," in J. Kiiza, Sabiti Makara and L. Rakner, *Electoral Democracy in Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2008.

13. Ahikire (2004) op. cit.

1.5 A BROAD PERSPECTIVE ON ELECTIONS IN AFRICA

Elections are a key ingredient of democratic governance and are the basic mechanism for democracy.¹⁴ The discipline of acquiring power through an election is assumed to make government accountable to citizens, and thereby to confer legitimacy.¹⁵ Elections in Africa have been held regularly in recent years but their quality has remained a subject of serious contention, in large part because of the violence and conflict that precede and follow them. In Africa, elections only evolved as part of the transfer of power from colonization to independence.¹⁶ At Independence, representative democracy was envisaged, including multiparty elections. A political system was conceived in which there would be regular and free elections; political parties competing to form governments; adult suffrage; and guaranteed political and civil rights.¹⁷ Elections are supposed to symbolize the sovereignty of citizens and to be an expression of the 'social pact' between the state and the people, defining political authority, legitimacy and citizens' obligations.¹⁸

1.5.1 CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Elections must be conducted under constitutive and regulatory mechanisms that are free and fair. The constitutive mechanisms entail that the electoral process is managed by a competent, relatively autonomous and non-partisan electoral body.¹⁹ Also, there should be an impartial judiciary to interpret electoral laws and adjudicate electoral matters; and a non-partisan police force to ensure security for all.²⁰ The **regulatory mechanism** entails the processes of elections including the rules, procedures and activities relating to the conduct of elections. Generally, the regulatory mechanisms include agreed electoral laws, the organization of political parties, voter registration, nomination of candidates for elective public offices, balloting, counting of ballots and declaration of results. In much of Africa, these mechanisms are largely deficient in producing credible elections. As Laaska has noted, "whilst elections abound [in Africa] ... all too often they are not signs that democratic concepts, such as freedom to criticize, are taking root. Instead they are merely a price Africa's old autocrats can afford in an effort to ward off foreign criticism and keep the aid flowing. And they have learned that the West is not interested in much more than a façade democracy so long as economic reforms are on track." ²¹

14. Paul Collier and Pedro C. Vicente, Violence, bribery, and fraud: the political economy of elections in Sub-Saharan Africa, *Public Choice* vol. 153, No.1/2, 2012, p. 118.

15. *Ibid.*

16. A. Jinadu, "Electoral Administration in Africa: A Nigerian Case-Study under the Transition to Civil Rule Process" In S. Adejumo and A. Momoh (eds), *The Political Economy of Nigeria Under Military Rule, 1984-1993*, Harare: SAPES, 1995, p. 76.

17. Said Adejumo, "Elections in Africa: A Fading Shadow of Democracy?" *International Political Science Review* Vol. 21, No. 1, 2000, p. 60.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Said Adejumo (b), "Election in Africa: A fading shadow of democracy?" in Okwudibia Nnoli (ed.), *Government and Politics in Africa: A Reader*, Harare: AAPS Publications, 2000, p. 245.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Liisa Laakso, "Why are Elections not Democratic in Africa? Comparisons between the recent multi-party elections in Zimbabwe and Tanzania," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* Vol. 6, No. 1, 1997, p. 19. (pp. 18-34)

1.5.2 DEFINING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND ITS TRENDS IN AFRICA

Electoral violence refers to the use of 'coercive force, directed towards electoral actors and/or objects, occurring in the context of electoral competition.'²² It can occur before, during or after elections and target a variety of actors, including candidates, activists, poll workers, election observers, journalists and voters.²³ Although electoral violence is a global phenomenon, it mostly affects authoritarian or hybrid states, especially in Africa.

Political conflict and violence are a pervasive feature of elections in many countries in Africa.²⁴ According to the African Electoral Violence Database (AEVD), most of the elections held in Africa exhibited various forms and levels of violence.²⁵ Unfortunately, these incidents increase as more African regimes hold elections they are not willing to lose. This is affirmed by, for example, the fact that 800 people were killed and 65,000 were displaced ahead of the 2011 Nigerian elections.²⁶ Political unrest has characterized elections in countries like Kenya, Uganda, Gambia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.²⁷

1.5.3 EXAMINING THE NATURE AND GOALS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

- Desire by leaders to keep power through election manipulation: the main source of violence is the fact that "African leaders generally have a lethargic disdain for open and competitive elections which might threaten the bases of their power and authority."²⁸ They use subtle as well as open violence to threaten voters of the opposition parties and candidates.
- The trick to compel the opposition voters from participation: According to Collier and Vicente, "electoral violence is an effective strategy that can keep those likely to vote for opponents away from the polls."²⁹ Other observers e.g. Emile Hafner-Burton, Susan Hyde and Ryan Jablonski note that electoral violence may compel opposing candidates to boycott elections, thereby improving their competitors' chances.³⁰
- Disruption of opponents' campaigns: this mainly takes place in the pre-election period. It involves intimidation of voters and candidates, political assassinations, kidnappings, beating of voters, issuance of threats etc. These occur primarily during voter registration and campaign process.³¹

22. Ibid. p. 386.

23. Ibid.

24. Hanne Fjelde and Kristine Höglund, "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa," *British Journal of Political Science* vol. 46, 2016, p. 297.

25. Hakeem Onapajo, "Violence and Votes in Nigeria: The Dominance of Incumbents in the Use of Violence to Rig Elections," *Africa Spectrum* vol. 49, no. 2, 2014, p. 28. (27-51).

26. Sarah Birch and David Muchlinski, "Electoral violence prevention: what works?" *Democratization* vol. 25, No. 3, 2018, p. 385.

27. Ashish Chaturvedi, "Rigging Elections with Violence," *Public Choice* vol. 125, No. 1/2, 2005, p. 190.

28. Adejumobi (a), *Elections in Africa*, p. 63

29. Paul Collier and Pedro C. Vicente, *Votes and Violence: Experimental Evidence from a Yield Experiment in Nigeria-HICN Working Paper 50*, Falmer: Households in Conflict Network, 2008, p. 24.

30. Emile Hafner-Burton, Susan Hyde and Ryan Jablonski, *When Governments Use Election Violence to Stay in Power*, San Diego: School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, 2012.

31. Onapajo, *Violence and Votes in Nigeria*, p. 32.

- Disruption of the Polling Process: Election-day violence is perpetrated on the day of voting. This frequently manifests in ballot-snatching, armed attacks on electoral officers and opponents, destruction of electoral facilities and voter intimidation.³²
- Post-election Protests and Civil unrest: Post-election violence usually occurs as a form of protest in the aftermath of elections which sections of the voters perceive as manipulated by their opponents.³³

1.5.4 ELECTION VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT IN UGANDA'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The first elections in Uganda were the direct elections of the Legislative Council (LEGCO) held in October 1958.³⁴ Underlying these elections was the Buganda Kingdom's boycott of the exercise in addition to a lawsuit filed against the Protectorate government in an unsuccessful attempt to stop them.³⁵ While there was not much open violence, the conflicts generated by Buganda's boycott pointed to a contentious future for the country's electoral politics. Subsequently, the pre-independence elections of 1961 in which the Democratic Party (DP) emerged victorious turned violent as the Buganda Kingdom attempted to thwart DP's electoral prospects in the region. So determined was the Kingdom that they campaigned to prevent their subjects from voting. This forced the Protectorate government to pass the Elections 1961 (Prevention of Intimidation) Bill giving the Governor powers to detain any person who intimidated people from registering to vote.³⁶

In the end, DP won with a slim margin. DP once again prevailed in the pre-independence elections of 1962 but was prevented from assuming office by a coalition of UPC and Kabaka Yekka (KY)³⁷. KY refused to participate in direct elections and instead directed the Buganda Lukiiko to nominate its Members of Parliament. The elections of 1961 and 1962 were acrimonious, and so deep-rooted was the rivalry that political opponents burnt one another's farms and property. Ethnic rivalry was also rampant and supporters of UPC in the north of Uganda regarded DP and the Buganda region as enemies. The people were politically divided along religious lines: Catholics for DP and Protestants for UPC and they considered each other as enemies.

In the mid-1960s, Prime Minister Obote abrogated the Independence Constitution and created the 'Pigeonhole' Constitution, and soon afterwards usurped the power of the presidency. Seeking to further consolidate his power, he also abolished traditional kingdoms and chiefdoms. All these unilateral actions heightened an already polarized and poisoned political atmosphere in the country, pitting one tribe against another and religious denominations against each other. A state of emergency was imposed upon the entire country and matters came to a head when there was an assassination attempt against President Obote in 1969. By then, he had obliterated the opposition by buying off opposition MPs, and inducing most of them to join his party.

32. Ibid

33. Ibid

34. Phares Mukasa Mutibwa, *A History of Uganda: The First 100 years 1894-1995*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2016, pp. 161-2; Busingye Kabumba, Dan Ngabirano and Timothy Kyepa, *Militarism and the Dilemma of Post-Colonial Statehood: The Case of Museveni's Uganda*, Kampala: Development Law Publishing, 2017, p. 15.

35. Mutibwa, *A History of Uganda*, p. 161.

36. Kabumba et al., *Militarism and the Dilemma*, p. 21.

37. KY means Kabaka Alone or 'Kabaka decides for us'. KY was not a formally registered political party.

Between 1962 and 1971, the year Obote was overthrown by a military coup, there had been no election. The military regime was initially welcomed because the level of discontent in the country reached a boiling point. From 1971-1979 the reign of terror, exacerbated the internecine political intrigues. Amin's armed forces and intelligence services controlled every aspect of civilian life. With no possibility of elective politics, and political parties banned; violence was the main means of suppressing dissent, and rampant state-sanctioned killings became the norm. Amin was finally overthrown in 1979 by Tanzanian People's Defense Forces and Ugandan fighting forces.

In the ensuing political chaos after the fall of Idi Amin, there were several short-lived regimes under the 'umbrella' of Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF). In 1980, the powerful military wing of the UNLF organized elections, purportedly to create civilian rule, but the reality was they were rigged to bring Obote back to power. Extensive state-orchestrated violence; loss of life; and imprisonment of opposition leaders; all created a state of fear even as Milton Obote was being hyped as the 'saviour' of Uganda.

The post-1980 election period engulfed the country in a five-year civil war in which an estimated 300,000 lives were lost.³⁸ In all these power struggles, the ordinary Ugandan citizen endured state-sponsored terror and insecurity, loss of life and a shattered economy. Such a situation is similar to what psychologists have termed as obligatory violence, a state in which the perpetrators of violence do so repeatedly, and tend to perceive it as a normal means of gaining and sustaining power.

Following the rigged 1980 elections, violence took a new turn. The National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) which became the most formidable force against the Obote regime, came up with a manifesto known as the Ten-Point Programme. Point number 1 was the restoration of democracy in which the electorate's views and opinions about how they were to be governed were to be respected.

1.5.5 NRM'S COMMITMENT TO ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

Soon after capturing power in 1986, the NRM government embarked on making a new Constitution for Uganda. On 21 December 1988, the National Resistance Council (NRC) – the then Ugandan legislature – enacted Statute No.5 of 1988 establishing a Constitutional Commission with the responsibility of developing a new Constitution.³⁹ The Commission's mandate was to consult the people and make proposals for a Constitution based on a national consensus.⁴⁰ The outcome of that comprehensive exercise was the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution. Article 1 of the Constitution states that "power belongs to the people" and that "the people shall express their will and consent on who shall govern them and how they would be governed, through regular, free and fair elections of their representatives ..."⁴¹ The Constitution was designed to eliminate the pitfalls responsible for all the violence that had characterized past regimes, including electoral violence. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that elections after the promulgation of the 1995

38. A 1992 Library of Congress country study on Uganda states that estimates as high as 500,000 people died between 1981 and 1985. See World Peace Foundation, Mass Atrocity Endings-Uganda, 7 August 2015, https://sites.tufts.edu/atrocityendings/2015/08/07/uganda-idi-amin-milton-obote-and-the-national-resistance-movement/#_edn30 (accessed 4 August 2019). See also, F.W. Bwengye, *The Agony of Uganda: from Amin to Obote*, London: Regency Press. 1985.

39. Elijah Dickens Mushemeza, "Issues of Violence in the Democratization Process in Uganda," *Africa Development* Vol. 26, No. 1/2 (2001), p. 66 (pp. 55-72).

40. Ibid.

41. Article 1(4)

Constitution have not been free or fair or free of violence. The most vivid manifestation of this is the routine involvement of nearly every branch of the security forces in the electoral process under the guise of ensuring that the elections are well protected against domestic and foreign foes or other malign activities. The facts do not bear out the government's assertions.

1.5.6 TRENDS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE UNDER THE NRM

Since 1996 when the first presidential elections took place under the NRM, election-related violence has been on the rise, although the elections of that year suffered little violence, compared to subsequent ones.

A. 2001 ELECTIONS

While violence was less pronounced in the 1996 elections, in the 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections, security forces took control of the electoral process, and people in military uniform terrorised those not supporting candidate Museveni.⁴² Para-military groups like the Kalangala Action Plan (KAP) rained terror on opposition supporters, prompting the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Aziz Kasujja, to write to candidate Museveni to restrain the perpetrators. His plea went unheeded.

After the elections, a Parliamentary Select Committee was established to investigate the causes of the violence. The Committee observed that "whereas some of the state agents initiated and executed election violence themselves, many candidates and agents employed state agents, especially the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), Local Defence Units (LDUs), Internal Security Organisations (ISOs), District Internal Security Officer (DISOs), Gombolola Internal Security Officers (GISOs), Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and cadres in RDCs' offices to execute violence on their opponents."⁴³ In Rukungiri town, several people were injured and some were killed when the Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB) opened fire on peaceful supporters of Kiiza Besigye. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Election Observer Team decried the acts of violence and intimidation which had led to loss of life.⁴⁴ The Supreme Court of Uganda, which was petitioned by Kiiza Besigye, condemned the use of security forces in the electoral process, but nonetheless judged that it had not significantly affected the popular will of the electorate and that despite the shortcomings, Museveni had been validly elected.⁴⁵

42. Human Rights Watch (HRW), (2001). Uganda: Not a Level Playing Field-Government Violations in the Lead-Up to the Election, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uganda/>

43. Uganda Parliament, Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Election Violence, Kampala, July 2002, <https://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/uganda/doc/Uganda-Election-Violence-Report.pdf>

44. Cited in the Judgement of Supreme Court Justice Karokora in Kiiza Besigye v. Yoweri Museveni and Electoral Commission, Presidential Election Petition No. 1, 2001, 6 July 2001, p. 148.

45. Col. Dr. Besigye Kiiza v Museveni Yoweri Kaguta, Electoral Commission (Election Petition No.1 of 2001) [2001] UGSC 3 (21 April 2001).

B. 2006 ELECTIONS

Kiiza Besigye returned from exile in South Africa to once again contest for presidential elections with Museveni. Stakes were high for two reasons: First, the Constitution had been changed to scrap presidential term limits, allowing Museveni to stand again. Secondly, the Constitution had been amended to return to a multiparty system of governance. For Museveni, this was time to extend his rule, and for his opponents, especially Besigye, it was time to wrestle power from Museveni, by then in power for 20 years. Determined to stop Besigye from competing effectively, three tactics were employed by Museveni's camp: one, treason and rape charges were brought against him. Tactic two, violence was unleashed on Besigye's supporters, and three, his movements were monitored by security personnel, and many times; he and his supporters were stopped from reaching their campaign rally destinations.⁴⁶

C. 2011 ELECTIONS

In the 2011 general elections various security agencies and militias allied to the police harassed opposition politicians. Violence was perpetrated on the voting public when some women associated with the opposition, demanding electoral reforms, were routinely harassed, caned and roughly bundled on police trucks as if they were common criminals. Allegations of malpractices such as ballot stuffing, voter bribery, pre-ticking of ballot papers, falsification of result declaration forms have led to serious electoral conflict and violence.⁴⁷ Such malpractices have occurred at all levels of the electoral process – presidential, parliamentary and local.

D. 2016 ELECTIONS

Before the 2016 elections, various groups sprung up, including: Crime Preventers, Poor Youth, Unemployed Brotherhood, and Solida. As the election drew closer in 2015, the Inspector General of Police authorized the training of 11 million Crime Preventers throughout the country. Although these were not a gazetted force under the laws of Uganda, the President himself commissioned them. In many cases, the trainees wore yellow T-shirts, the ruling party's colour. On the other hand, opposition people also created their own vigilante groups, making the election process a do-or-die activity.

As the country prepares for the 2021 elections, key informants in Soroti district, for example, reported that senior military officers were already threatening the youth with death if they do not vote in particular ways.⁴⁸ This is a recipe for election violence. Elections have become a high stake battle for state power and are prone to conflict.⁴⁹

46. Kiiza J, Sabiti Makara and Lise Rakner, *Electoral Democracy in Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2008.

47. See The Monitor Team, "EC reaps more blood than ballots," 24 February 2011, <https://mobile.monitor.co.ug/News/TodaysPaper/691252-1113954-format-xhtml-mfx1i0z/index.html>

48. Interview, Soroti, 10 June 2019. Some UPDF generals issuing threats to youth were named by respondents.

49. Kabele-Matlosa, M. Khadiagala and Victor Shale, "Introduction," p. 3.

1.5.7 COMMERCIALIZATION OF ELECTIONS AS A CATALYST OF VIOLENCE

The colossal amounts of money that candidates spend to get themselves elected indicate the high stakes at play. The commercialization of the electoral process is barely disguised and open distribution of vast amounts of money and gifts are a feature rather than an anomaly. For example, it was reported that in the first two months of his campaign in the 2016 presidential election campaign, President Museveni spent the Uganda equivalent of US\$7 million.⁵⁰ This is despite the fact that GDP per capita income in that year was US\$694. The Final Commonwealth Observer Group report observed that “the 2016 elections proved to be even more expensive than others before,”⁵¹ Expenditure by independent candidates was assessed to have increased by an average of 266 per cent.⁵² It is safe to predict that future elections in Uganda will be even more commercialized and the more candidates spend, the more likely it is that elections will not be peaceful. In the past, a candidate who had invested heavily in his election, just died after his opponent was announced as the winner.⁵³

50. Morgan Winsor, ‘Uganda Presidential Election 2016: Museveni Spent \$7M On Campaign In Two Months, Report Says’, *International Business Times*, 22 January 2016, <https://www.ibtimes.com/uganda-presidential-election-2016-museveni-spent-7m-campaign-two-months-report-says-2276699>

51. The Commonwealth, Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group Uganda General Elections 18 February 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/Uganda%20COG%20Report%20-%20Final%20-%20PRINT.pdf>

52. Ibid.

53. It was alleged one former minister in Masaka district died of shock on learning he had lost the election.

2.0 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings presented in this report are a result of the study carried out in the four districts of Sembabule, Soroti, Arua and Kampala. The analysis combines the largely qualitative data (where the stories are told as revealed by the study participants), and the quantitative data collected by questionnaire, representing views and perceptions of the randomly selected participants.

2.1 VIEWS EXPRESSED ON CAUSES OF ELECTION VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS

Data obtained from the study indicates that there is relatively little violence in non-election years. This dramatically changes in the year prior to election day. One of the most common statements made in all areas by key informants is that elections in Uganda are a do-or-die affair. This mindset is the basis of all the conflict. It was further revealed that in elections, no contestant is psychologically prepared to lose and that the typical winning candidate, rather than being gracious in victory, is belligerent, taunting and provocative. This explains why the wounds of the political contest take long to heal. The key question for the study was on the prevalence of civil or communal conflicts. An analysis of the rural-urban divide indicates that while rural areas had experienced more conflict (68.4%) than urban areas (61.2%), rural areas are more disproportionately affected.

One key informant put it this way: "The do-or-die politics has been intensified by commercialization of politics." Another participant complained: "A councillor at the division level in Kampala Capital City Authority is paid a monthly salary of three million shillings, yet a medical doctor who studied medicine for six years earns only one million a month. A councilor has no formal qualification; why then should he/she earn three times more than a medical doctor? It is because politics pays better. Many teachers are leaving their jobs to join politics. Politics is the only job which pays well in this country." He added: "There is a need to get back to the values of obuweleza (politics of service) rather than ebyobufuzi (politics of rulers)". According to this source, violence is rampant during elections because of the greed and selfishness of political actors whose goal is to enrich themselves. The same respondent asserted: "... politics has become like a business where people seek to maximize profits"⁵⁴. Because politics pays better than Public Service jobs, those who compete in politics believe that violence is part of the winning strategy.

In the course of political campaigns, communities experience a lot of violence. One view is that it is caused by undisciplined groups; another is that it is caused by candidates and their agents, and another is that it is caused by security officials, especially the police.

54. Key informant is an administrator officer at Makindye Division

2.2 TRENDS OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS

Regarding trends in election-related violence by election cycle, the data in the table below suggests views of participants by age:

TABLE 1
TRENDS OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS

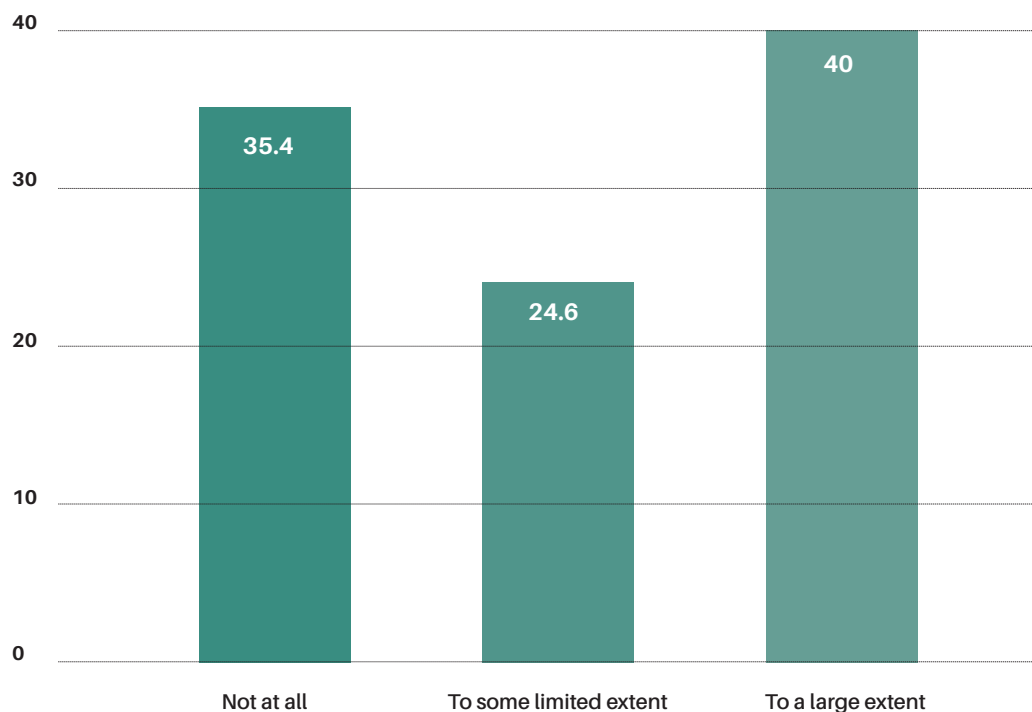
In the past four general elections, which of the elections had the worst form of violence *Age group of respondents cross-tabulation						
		Age of respondents				
		18-30 Years	31-45 Years	46-55 Years	56 Years and above	Total
In the past 4 general elections, which of the elections had the worst form of violence	2001	1	2	1	2	4
	2006	1	0	3	0	6
	2011	9	12	4	0	25
	2016	22	9	3	3	37
	None	1	1	0	0	2
Total		34	24	11	5	74

Field data

As the above table reveals, varying age groups seem to consider different election years as having had the worst form of violence. For example, while the 18-30 (years) age group seem to consider 2016 as having had the worst violence, the majority of 31-45 (years) age group suggest that the elections of 2011 had the worst form of violence. Similarly, those in the 56 years and above age group indicated that 2001 had the worst election violence while those in the 46-55 age group thought that the 2006 elections had the worst violence. The attachment of views to age and the election year of intense violence is influenced by recent events (that they easily recall), for example, the older people tend to remember that 2001 and 2006 were very violent. The youngest cohort only remembers the 2016 elections. There is no way the youngest cohort could score the earlier elections as violent, that they did not witness.

FIGURE 1**EFFECT OF CIVIL OR COMMUNAL CONFLICTS ON THE WAY PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN ELECTION PROCESSES**

Did Civil or Communal conflict affect the way people participated in electoral processes?



From the above figure, it is evident that 64.4% of all respondents indicated that civil or communal conflict in their area affected their participation in electoral processes. The vast number of these respondents are from Teso and Arua, the areas which suffered a lot of civil strife.

2.2.1 CONFLICTS IN TESO AND ARUA

In Arua district and West Nile region in general, there was a prolonged conflict after the fall of Idi Amin in 1979. Then in the 1990s, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of Joseph Kony spilled into the area. In Arua, the older people remember when they fled into exile, to Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. These fear any form of political violence. Teso region, formerly a cattle-rich area, was adversely affected by Karimajong cattle raiders and LRA insurgencies. Some of the people interviewed revealed that these conflicts contributed to high poverty levels.

These localized circumstances have a bearing on the decisions people take to participate in elections, and how they vote. Currently, there is peace in Teso but there was a time when people were displaced from their homes and forced into camps. The older people tell their young ones about it. This explains the clear political divide in Soroti district. In the early 2000s, Teso was largely an opposition political area dominated by the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party. But since 2011 allegiances have shifted and support for the ruling party has increased. Soroti District Council is, for instance, comprised of a slight majority of the ruling party although opposition parties are also well represented. This represents political reality. Older citizens do not want to go back to bad times while young ones argue that it is time for change.

In Teso, in 2003/04, people were displaced by the LRA and had to take refuge in internally displaced camps. "So, our people have lived in fear from many sources. Therefore, anybody promising peace is well received. This is what NRM is doing" key informant reported. "Again, there is this talk by NRM that "we have brought you peace and you are no longer in camps". People vote for NRM in fear, they do not want to go back in camps. They remind us that cattle rustling has been controlled and the people should feel grateful to the NRM," said a female respondent who is a leader of an NGO in Soroti district.

2.2.2 CONFLICTS IN KAMPALA

In the 1980s, the central region (Buganda) where Kampala city is located, suffered the effects of insurgency and reprisals by government soldiers. It was common for soldiers to set up illegal roadblocks and steal from drivers and passengers in broad daylight. It was fruitless for victims to report to the police or any other authority. The army ruled the streets with impunity and city residents knew not to step out of their houses after 5 pm. Another common feature of lawlessness in Kampala were the panda gari raids (Swahili phrase for "Get on the vehicle now!"), a crude operation by government soldiers who picked people off the streets, loaded them on trucks and drove them to ungazetted places where they would be robbed, tortured, raped or killed. These traumatic memories still linger in the minds of older people who lived through those years.

Kampala's complex election-related violence was observed in the 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 elections. When Kiiiza Besigye (an opposition leader) announced his intention to run against Museveni for presidency in 2001, the NRM National Executive Committee met in November 2000 and declared that Museveni had been 'urged' to stand as the sole candidate of the Movement. This was a contravention of principles that the NRM (broad-based Movement) espoused, and it was also in defiance of the Constitution as it was then⁵⁵. Once a top insider in the NRM, Besigye had decided

55. A key principle of the Movement was that any person qualified for a position was free to stand as long as he/she was a Ugandan. At that time, this principle was part of the Constitution.

to vie for power against his former boss in what he said was a principled stand. In the course of his election campaign, the ensuing running battles with the police, army and other security forces, some of his supporters lost their lives.⁵⁶ As the pressure on him grew, Besigye fled to exile in South Africa.

He returned to contest the 2006 elections, the first multiparty election under Museveni's regime, but he was promptly arrested, imprisoned and charged with the capital offences of rape and engaging in subversive activities. When it came to the nomination of candidates for the post of president, the Electoral Commission found itself in uncharted territory. There was no precedent of a candidate being nominated while in custody, yet there was no law that stopped the EC from nominating him. The Attorney General⁵⁷ opined that Besigye could not be nominated while facing treason charges. His opinion was, however, overruled by the Electoral Commission, which argued that there was no law to stopping a person who is not yet convicted by court of law from standing for election. Thereafter, Besigye ran his campaign while still on bail. At the conclusion of the election, many of his agents were detained on several charges.⁵⁸ In 2011, the opposition, once again led by Besigye, refused to take their election grievances to courts of law and instead opted for street protests code-named 'walk to work'. This form of civil disobedience, led by urban youth, destabilized the security situation in Kampala city and other urban areas. The police and the army responded with a lot of force, deliberately ramming Besigye's car and spraying a toxic chemical in his eyes, forcing him to seek medical attention in a hospital in Nairobi, Kenya.

2.2.2 CONTINUING CONFLICTS IN KAMPALA

In Kampala, as in other districts, youth violence is precipitated by candidates giving them money to purchase alcohol and drugs, to make them 'charged' or 'dull' their inhibitions enough to do illegal things against their paymasters' opponents. At Kiti Zone, in the Kisenyi area of Kampala, one of the respondents confessed he belonged to the *kifesi group*⁵⁹ and said that he wished election campaigns were around all the time because it is 'profitable'. According to him, their group is facilitated to do things nobody else can do. For example, when a place is dominated by opposition supporters, they scare voters off by creating mayhem. Their goal is to stop opposition supporters from voting for their candidate. By the time the process is reorganized, corrupt officials will have stuffed ballot boxes with pre-ticked ballots.

2.2.3 SEMBABULE DISTRICT: WHERE POWERFUL ACTORS CALL THE SHOTS

There are areas where individual political actors are considered powerful in influencing elections. These individuals also precipitate violence. In Sembabule, one government official in the central government, who is also an MP from the area, was considered so powerful that other local politicians have to be 'blessed' by him in order to gain a political foothold. The local voters reported thus: *Ayina okukuwandako amalusu, nolyoka oyita mukalulu* which translates as: "You have to get his personal blessing to have a chance of winning an election." For 'blessing people to succeed at polls, he is

56. For detailed accounts, see Report of Parliamentary Select Committee on Election Violence (2002).

57. The Attorney General who gave that opinion was a Law Professor, turned politician.

58. Some of those supporters held on alleged treason charges were given bail, however, they were immediately re-arrested by Black Mamba, a security outfit unknown to the citizens.

59. Kifesi group is a criminal gang in Kampala known its illegal activities.

widely referred to as 'Bishop'.⁶⁰ They said he has a lot of money and during election campaigns, he invites voters to eat at his home on a daily basis. They claimed that "every evening, people line up and receive money from him."⁶¹ They further said that he is constantly at loggerheads with another area MP and this rivalry has sparked off violent clashes between their supporters. The respondents summarized the enmity between the two area MPs as "a war of big egos, each of them seeking to dominate the other."⁶² While this domination battle ensues, it has had negative consequences on local development. For example, the construction of one of the major roads in Sembabule district was delayed. This was because the warring MPs sit on the area's development committee and had to sign off the project before the work could commence. Not surprisingly, both of them had repeatedly failed to show up for meetings.⁶³ When it comes to security matters during elections, the two MPs call the shots. As one senior police officer in Sembabule lamented:

"Some of the senior political actors make the work of police officers difficult because your police work must not touch the supporters of so and so. Some people assume they are above the law. If you try to prevent multiple voting, you are in trouble. They will influence your posting to remote places. When police officers arrest perpetrators of violence, some big person comes and orders them out of the police cells."

Another police officer stated: "Among the police, there are those who have political sides, and they clearly act in a partisan manner; sometimes they appear overzealous in their actions towards certain groups." The effect of political bickering between political actors has spill-over effects on the security of ordinary voters. It was reported in Sembabule that voting has lost meaning. Respondents reported that in some areas, if a particular candidate is dominant, by 10.00 am all ballots will have been cast. So voters who show up later than 10.00 am are told: "Voting is over and we are waiting to count the ballots."

2.2.4 UNFAIR ELECTION PRACTICES FACILITATE VIOLENCE

While most of the respondents' blame violence on the do-or-die attitude to politics, others argue that the manipulation of the voting processes is a major cause of violence. They indicated that some security officials engage in activities to influence elections.

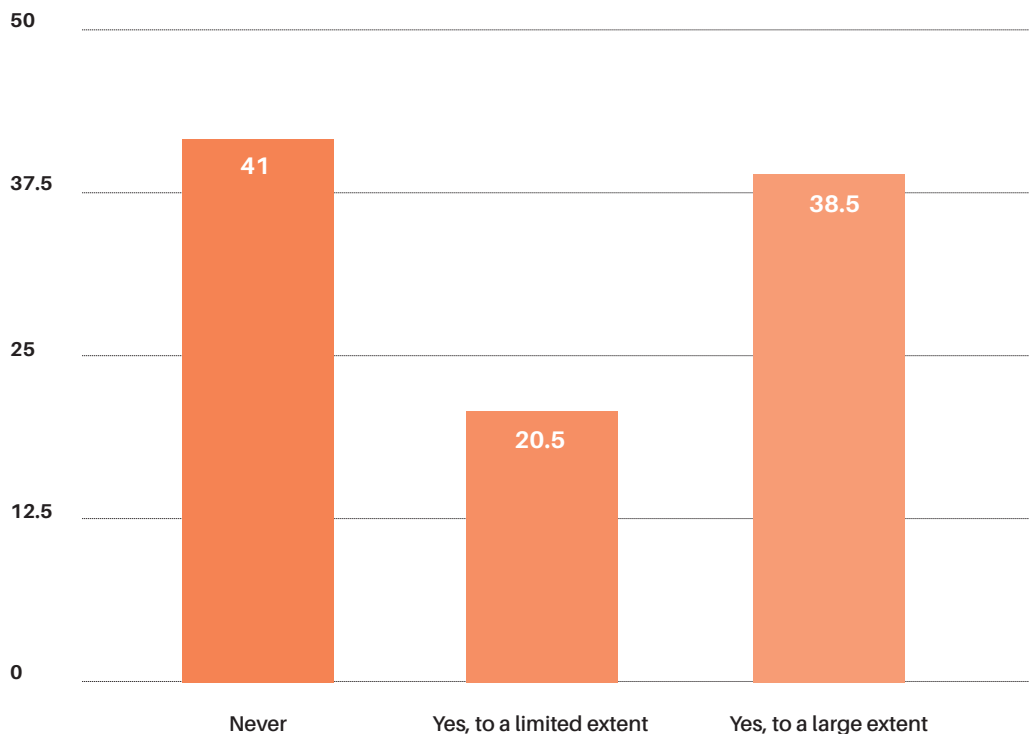
60. This powerful politician is referred to as a 'Bishop' because he is the kingmaker. He has the money to sponsor candidates; political connections; security networks; and all it takes to choose the leaders he wants. It was reported that those who try to resist him, face the wrath of security networks under his influence.

61. It was reported that he sometimes gives out as much as UGX 50000 to each voter.

62. There are frequent clashes between the supporters of two MPs in Sembabule. These are in different electoral areas. The people do not see why they should conflict.

63. This was reported by CAO Sembabule district. He gave consent to be cited.

Have you ever witnessed security personnel trying to influence electoral processes?



Field data

The table above indicates that 59% of the respondents had witnessed security personnel trying to influence the way people participate in the electoral processes but 41% had never seen such occurrences. The role of security forces in the electoral processes is contentious. They are mandated to oversee and secure the electoral process, they are accused of being partisan in favour of the ruling party.

Respondents reported that the police work with 'crime preventers,' some of whom are engaged in harassing opposition supporters. Other respondents claimed that the "police is an institution in decline." They argued that many police actions do not reflect their professional standards. One case was in Arua where a junior police officer reported that he advised on how to handle a volatile matter. Instead of his seniors listening to him, he was charged with being 'insubordinate.' Another issue that came up strongly in the FGDs was the manner in which police went about dispersing political rallies. The argument advanced by FGDs was that "only the opposition is required to seek permission for convening assemblies." Other participants were of the view that the frequent dispersal of rallies by police seems to be intended to popularise the opposition. When the respondent was asked to substantiate his statement, he alleged that "Besigye was bribing some senior police officers to ensure he was harassed and tear-gassed because in that way he would get a sympathy vote." This view was surprising given the kind of harassment that opposition politicians (especially Dr. Besigye) go through in their campaigns. The truth of this is hard to pin down, but conspiracy theories are a constant feature of elections.

2.2.5 DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

During the course of this study, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Arua and the Town Clerk of Kawempe Division ⁶⁴ in Kampala asserted that “although there is a desire for democracy in Uganda, Ugandans are not generally democratic.” Kawempe Town Clerk argued that agents of some candidates sign declaration forms and hand them over to their candidate’s opponent. This was attributed to unprincipled and commercialized politics. Whereas, for example, the ruling party made a budget to facilitate its agents in the 2016 elections, most of the opposition agents had no facilitation. According to the Deputy Resident City Commissioner (Makindye Division), ⁶⁵ there is ample evidence that some candidates bribe the presiding officers to manipulate results in their favour, as well as buying off the agents of their opponents. The challenge is the ordinary voters who engage in post-election violence for a perceived more popular candidate losing unfairly. When the police have to ensure law and order and it disperses protests, the voters abuse them and accuse them of being bribed and taking sides. On the role of other security agencies, the respondents did not directly point a finger at RDCs, except that they talk about the ruling party and their speeches in church, at funerals and weddings. RDC involvement in manipulating elections therefore seems to be done more covertly.

In Sembabule and Arua Municipality, the role of key political personalities in abating or mitigating conflicts was highlighted. The late MP Ibrahim Abiriga was cited as a uniting factor in his area. Respondents gave the example of a longstanding cleavage between Muslims and Christians in Arua. Each side historically voted as a bloc for their preferred candidate. When Abiriga came onto the political scene, these patterns shifted somewhat to voting for candidates based on their performance. Unfortunately, he was killed on 8th June 2018 by unknown people before completing his elective term. People have reverted to voting in the old ways and old political wounds have re-opened since Abiriga’s death. Nusura Tiperu, an NRM stalwart in the area boasts of being the only one who is welcome in State House, and allegedly the only one who can bring the money from Museveni. ⁶⁶ As a sign of her political clout, it was reported that when President Museveni went for the Arua Municipality 2018 by-election campaigns, in which Tiperu was the candidate for the NRM, she handed out money and food parcels to thousands of ululating women lining the entire six kilometer route the President drove through on his way to the campaign site. ⁶⁷ Her efforts notwithstanding, Tiperu lost to the opposition’s Kasiano Wadri. Asked why Tiperu lost, the Deputy Speaker of Arua district replied: “There are those who say they own the NRM. They call themselves the mothers or grandmothers of the NRM; that they are the ones who get the money from State House or from the NRM Secretariat. There is a tendency of some other NRM cadres getting alienated.”

Another strong supporter of the ruling party attributed Tiperu’s loss to a number of factors. First, she promised to give money to some groups but failed to keep her word. Secondly, the local NRM leaders do not agree with one another. ⁶⁸ Thirdly, the genial image of the late Abiriga was still fresh in people’s minds. People were looking for a person with his more liberal brand of politics. Fourthly, Tiperu was accused of being “politically jumpy”. Before standing in Arua Municipality, she stood as Woman MP for Yumbe district, she lost there, and then stood in Koboko and lost again. The respondent asked: “How many districts does she belong to?” ⁶⁹

64. These officers gave consent to be quoted.

65. This officer gave consent to be quoted.

66. This narrative was made by Mrs Susan Ezatia, a prominent woman leader in Arua. Quoted with her permission.

67. Tiperu’s tactic had the effect of making voters believe she had massive support.

68. Eight candidates contested the NRM primaries in the by-election, some decided to stand as independents, taking away some voters from the official NRM candidate.

69. The issues and question were posed by Ms Joyce Dezu, Arua District Councilor for Elderly Women. Cited with her consent.

The above reports and opinions imply that there are quiet elements of discontent within the ruling party. This seems to have played into the hands of independent (opposition) candidate Kassiano Wadri ⁷⁰ who swept the votes in the Arua Municipality in 2018 by-election. He was accused of ferrying voters from other areas (outside the municipality) but this appeared far-fetched as voters can only vote where they are registered. He was also accused of rousing ethnic tensions between the Lugbara and the Nubians. ⁷¹ Other respondents asserted that the ethnic factor was not pronounced because Wadri won in all the divisions of the municipality ⁷². Some respondents claimed that he received a 'sympathy' vote due to the violence that was unleashed on his supporters by security forces during the campaign. ⁷³

2.2.6 ROLE OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

A key informant said that the EC is an incompetent body. ⁷⁴ He alleged that the EC's appointment of local election officials is riddled with corruption and nepotism. He cited an example at Luwafu Parish in Makindye Division where one election official allegedly accepted a bribe from one of the candidates, thus presumably assuring him of victory. When the scheme failed, that candidate's supporters turned on the EC local official and beat him up so badly that he nearly died. Emphasizing the weaknesses of the EC, many respondents pointed out that it had failed in three critical areas that end up precipitating violence: one is the management of time, with some candidates campaigning beyond the time allocated, stretching deep into the night. ⁷⁵ This causes clashes amongst supporters of rival candidates when they meet. The second area was management of venues for election campaigns; that there are many cases where the candidates and their supporters clash over scheduling and booking venues. Thirdly, some candidates use derogatory language, demeaning their opponents. This is not allowed under the election laws, yet the EC has not been seen to act on such candidates. ⁷⁶ They warned that the use of inflammatory and abusive language stirs voters into violence. It was pointed out further that the catalyst for the vicious violence witnessed in Arua Municipality during the 2018 by-election was a hateful lyric, commissioned by one of the candidates and performed by local musicians. Some of the lyrics went thus: 'We don't want yellow, with your red teeth, with rusted teeth, you are too old to rule.' Yellow is the NRM party's color. It is no wonder that supporters of the ruling party candidate felt insulted by the song, and sought revenge by harming supporters of the candidate they suspected had commissioned the song. The EC should have come in to tame the situation.

One of the EC Commissioners interviewed for this study defended the electoral body thus: that when the voters get involved in election violence, they act as a group. It is difficult to prove their criminality in a court of law. For instance, the youth who caused violence at a rally in Ntungamo in 2015 were set free by the court for lack of evidence. The voters sometimes get involved in violence

70. Wadri also emerged an independent candidate after disagreeing with his party FDC, which decided to sponsor another candidate that was less popular.

71. Wadri is Lugbara (dominant nationality) and Tiperu, his main rival, is Nubian.

72. Although Wadri won in all Divisions of Arua Municipality, and ethnicity was discounted, still there was one other candidate who although he grew up in Arua Municipality, he was branded an Acholi. Acholi in Arua is synonymous with the notorious Kony's LRA.

73. Most of the violence took place in Arua Municipality when president Museveni went there to campaign for the NRM candidate. Security forces are believed to have shot and killed Bobi Wine's driver. Bobi had gone to campaign for Wadri.

74. DRCC, Makindye Division, Kampala.

75. Some respondents pointed that President Museveni's campaigns tend to go beyond the stipulated time of 6.00 pm, and the EC has not restrained him.

caused by “rumours.” For example, during the Njeru Municipality MP elections on 27 July 2018, EC thought it best to tally the ballots at Buikwe District Headquarters. This change of tally venue created rumour that EC had planned to rig elections for one of the candidates. Some sections of the electorate became agitated and anxious, but interestingly, the winner was the one who had been inflaming the voters.

2.2.7 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS

This section presents the nature of election-related violence against women, youth and other interest groups in the election process in Uganda. All the personal interviews and focus group discussions conducted in the districts of Sembabule, Soroti, Arua and Kampala decried the increase in electoral violence against marginalized groups. Election-related conflict and violence against women is often referred to as electoral violence against women (E-VAW). The study used the broad definition of E-VAW to mean: *“Any act of gender based election violence that is directed primarily at women as a result of their aspirations to seek political office, their link to political activities, or simply their commitment to vote, as well as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, information, physical assault, forced ‘protection’, blackmail, destruction of property, or assault.”*⁷⁷

A number of stories of supporters barricading a publicly accessed road so that a rival campaign’s team would be prevented from accessing campaign meetings were shared. Acts of hooliganism, such as pelting stones at a rival camp’s entourage, leaking and publicizing aspects of private affairs in the media, telling outright lies and other malign activities to tarnish reputations were reported. In some cases, women candidates received threats aimed at campaign agents and family. Other threats were manifested through sectarian tensions based on tribe, religion and sex. Female candidates are especially susceptible to blackmail and negative publicity when their domestic circumstances are brought to light, such as their spouses and children being used as bait or when infidelities are maliciously alleged. Another tactic is to challenge female candidates with the place-of-birth card; quizzing them whether they have a right to stand in a particular constituency when, in most cases, they are relatively new to the area, but have established roots by virtue of marriage. Such issues have sometimes derailed viable female candidates, but these questions are never put to male candidates

POLITICS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A focus group discussion for women in Sembabule district noted that domestic violence is common during the election period especially when spouses support different candidates. The situation worsens when a woman defies her husband by openly supporting her own candidate. One woman said: “Men force women to support their candidates, especially in open voting, otherwise problems will arise.” Another one told her survival strategy: “But why should women openly declare the candidate of their choice when they know it displeases their husbands? For the sake of peace, I do not tell my husband the person I tick; it is my secret and I will die with it. When the results come out and my candidate has won, I rejoice quietly; when his candidate loses, I commiserate with him.”

76. One of the candidates in the 2016 elections was quoted by respondents as calling his opponents “swine,” “rotten mushrooms” etc.

77. International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics as quoted by Veronica Nakijoba, “Manifestations of Electoral Violence Against Women as a Tool of Political Exclusion” in *Controlling Consent: Uganda’s 2016 Elections*, Edited by: J. Oloka-Onyango and Josephine Ahikire, Africa World Press, New Jersey (page 218)

Gender-based violence in the Teso region is as bad as elsewhere. According to the women interviewed in Soroti, it intensifies during elections. A female respondent who is an executive director of a leading NGO in Soroti district narrated: "Men do not give women the opportunity to vote for candidates of their choice. They force women to vote for their preferred candidates. However, some men say: "Those are Museveni's women, we leave everything to them." This is because the women largely vote for NRM. One negative outcome of this is that some husbands abandon their obligations as home providers, arguing that their wives should be provided for by government since it receives so much support from women. A female religious leader in Arua municipality echoed her views on women in politics. "During elections, some women get excited and join parties; they forget their families and neglect their children. When they come back home, often very late in the night, they end up fighting with their husbands. This causes domestic violence which escalates into separation."

A female focus group discussion in a rural area of Soroti district reinforced the above idea, arguing thus: "Our husbands want us to obey them in everything, even which party we should belong to. We obey them because God told us to obey them and they are the heads of families. You must obey, he is the head of the family, so that you do not get divorced ...besides, he will love you very much." They added: "If you obey him, he will call you honey, sweetheart, baby, mummy. Our husbands pay bride price so we belong to them." However, they were quick to question their own stance: "The problem comes when he tells you that you are ignorant and you cannot make your own political decisions. But we, as women, are not ignorant! That is how fights in homes begin."

A woman in a focus group in Soroti town shared her story of how her husband chased her away from home because she was outgoing and she attended campaign rallies. The husband is a police officer and has since gained sole custody of their children aged twelve, seven and four years. She is not allowed to visit her children because he suspects that she will steal, poison or bewitch them. He told her that she could not report him anywhere because he is a police officer. He said to her: "You still have children in your womb; go and produce your own".

In spite of the electoral violence against women, they constitute the highest number of voters on election days. According to a Member of Parliament from Soroti district, it is mainly the women and the elderly who voted for him. As part of his election campaign strategies, he donated an ambulance to his constituency, much-needed and lifesaving in the community, especially for pregnant women. For women who earn their living from cooking and selling food in trading centres and open-air markets, he donated aprons to them. He recounted that his opponents' agents often pulled the aprons off the women and burnt them. However, the MP noted that women appreciated his practical support and voted for him but he also knew of two women who were beaten for voting for him. Unfortunately, over the years, election-related violence has continued, shifting from the private domain to the public sphere.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PERPETUATED BY PATRIARCHAL CULTURE

A women's FGD held in Sembabule district noted that very few men support their spouses in leadership because their homes are opened up to the public. They observed that most men do not want women to bring people home so that "the home become like a market." The women at the FGD attributed this behaviour to cultural or religious beliefs where they are taught to listen, to be calm, obey and not make independent decisions. And yet leadership requires confidence and assertiveness.

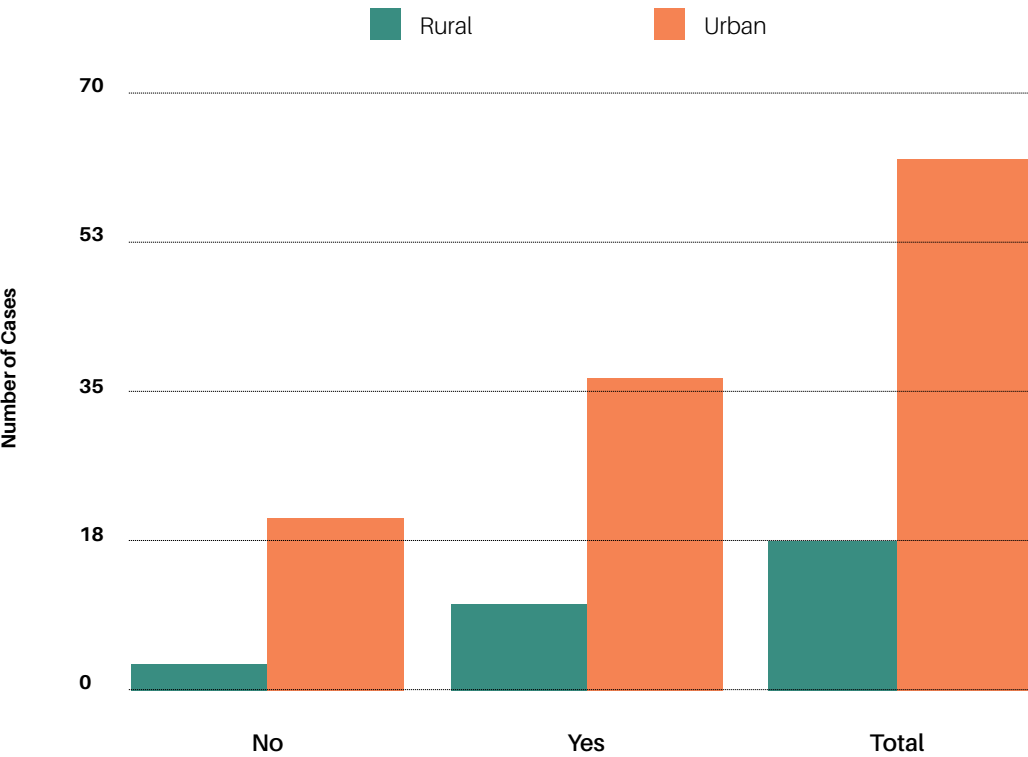
One woman in another FGD held in Sembabule district confessed that it is her dream to stand as a district councilor, but her husband has not yet given her ‘permission.’ She informed her colleagues that for the sake of peace, she had settled down and chosen to look after the family. “But in my heart, I am very angry. I know I can be better than the councilors we have. I will keep trying, and if he gives me permission, I will stand. It is my dream.” By contrast, the female focus group in the urban centre of Soroti noted their concern: “Who will know that you are intelligent and remember you, if you are always in the kitchen?” They placed the blame on their upbringing which stunted their leadership potential.

Some women who decide to pursue leadership positions face hardships. A female councilor in Sembabule narrated how her husband abandoned his role of providing for the family, arguing that she should use her allowances. “His argument was that I was making more money so I should buy the food.” Another constraint to women in politics is time. If a woman comes home by 8.00 pm, she is supposed to explain where she has been. You are asked: “Who married who? Who paid bride price for the other? Men believe they have bought women and are their property.”

WOMEN’S CHALLENGES AS POLITICAL ACTORS

Women who participate in elections endure unique challenges different from men’s, including character-assassination and questions about their marital status. From the table below, 68.4% of respondents in urban areas had witnessed a woman being hurt or assaulted compared to 17% of respondents in rural areas.

Proportion by having witnessed a woman being assaulted or physically hurt during election processes and by area of residence of respondents



Women political aspirants are sometimes verbally assaulted and belittled. Some men say things like “She is just a woman... ..just a woman” and “Even if we elect her, instead of going to office, she will just be in bed with her husband”; “She will be wasting time with makeup.” It was reported that some men believe that women should be in the kitchen, not holding any big office. At political rallies, men hurl insults at women (FGD of women in the rural area of Soroti district).

Such views are corroborated by a former woman MP for Kyenjojo district who narrates her story:

“

My car and entourage were blocked and pelted with stones one night during the campaign. My campaign agents were injured and the windscreens were cracked. I took pictures of the broken windscreens and my agents showed them to voters. Depending on how the story was narrated, this may have created a large enough sympathy vote for me.

”

From these reflections, it appears that some of the gains of affirmative action, democratization, gender sensitive policies, and the right to question authority may have been eroded.

2.2.8 WOMEN STANDING ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TICKET

Concerning women standing on affirmative action for district woman seats, a women’s FGD at Aivu Sub-County, Terego County, Arua district questioned the value of district woman representatives: “Since we voted for Woman MP, Maureen Osoru in 2016, we have never seen her. We are regretting why we voted for a young lady who does not know what her female voters go through. Even on Women’s Day, she was not seen. During campaigns she was teaching us how to make liquid soap, bags and shoes. Since we gave her the vote, she has not followed up or honored her promise to finance our projects. She needs to come back and empower us.”

Similarly, in rural Soroti district, one of the FGDs observed that women competing with men on a constituency seat is strongly resisted. Only Teddy Acham, nicknamed ‘Iron Lady’, stood because she is a no-nonsense woman. She stood for the constituency seat as an NRM candidate but her campaign did not go very far. She was accused of being bribed and she stepped down. They argued that NRM bought her out because a strong male opponent from another party would have beaten her. In 2016 another woman, Animu Agupale, stood against a man known as Agdru Moses for Terego constituency but she lost. Some women claim to have supported a fellow woman but others did not vote for her because she was married to a man from another county. Others rejected her as a ‘town woman,’ not relatable to them as village women. The FGD held in Sembabule district noted that there is a lot of jealousy among women, not wanting other women to be better than them. The biggest hurdles women encounter in electoral politics have patriarchal undertones when they compete against men. Women are frequently told that they do not belong either where they are married or where they are born. However, our interview with a male-only FGD at Aii-vu Sub-county in Arua district gave a different perspective. It was reported that some men give support to their wives during elections and that female candidates depend on their husbands’ social networks. It was noted that some female politicians disappoint their spouses by becoming intimate with their male campaign managers, thus perpetuating the notion that men and women cannot work closely without having an affair. There are claims that some female candidates gave birth to children belonging to other men and the children are nicknamed ‘Campaign’.

2.2.9 FAMILY RESOURCES FOR CAMPAIGNS AND FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

While men can use family property, easily disposing of it, or borrowing against it to fund their campaigns, married women are often denied the same right. The downside of this is that male politicians using family resources for an uncertain outcome has contributed to household poverty. There are women who want to vie for elective positions such as local councilors. But even that relatively lower office requires a lot of money.

“

Men get loans, sell cows, goats without their spouses' consent, if they want to participate in politics. For us as women, we cannot just sell anything. Everything in the home belongs to the man. He will ask you if you came with anything from your home. Everything is his.

(Women's FGD in Soroti Municipality).

”

A women's FGD in Sembabule district noted that women have many needs and, like men, they are susceptible to bribery that forces them to vote for candidates they do not believe in. If it is not hard cash then it is distribution of salt and sugar during campaigns. Such is the level of poverty that even those basic domestic items are enough to induce people to vote for a candidate. A female respondent who is also a leader in a Teso cultural institution disclosed that during elections, “people are given too much booze and some even fail to turn up to vote the next day.” She claimed that in some cases, the voters deliberately overdrink, and do not show up, because they want to avoid having to vote for someone they detest. A women's FGD in a rural area of Soroti district acknowledged that bribes in elections have an impact on voting behaviour. The FGD women noted: “If someone gives you salt, soap or sugar for free, you feel grateful. The only way you can also appreciate them is to give them your vote. But sometimes people fight for these ‘gifts,’ because they are not enough. No election runs without money and that creates violence. The temptation of bribes is a challenge to some people”. One elderly woman in the FGD in Soroti confessed:

A key respondent, a male Youth Councilor in Soroti District Council concluded that the final outcome in elections is about who has the most money.

“

“Politics is about money. It directly affects election outcomes. Empty words don't work here but money talks: pilau, waragi, beer, donations in churches, funeral expenses: it's money that people want.

”

2.2.10 VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICAL ACTORS IN MULTI-PARTY DISPENSATION

Since the re-introduction of multi-party politics in 2005, there has been election-related violence against opposition political actors. Women in opposition political parties have been targeted. Although both men and women in opposition have been deprived of certain rights simply because they do not toe the ruling party line, women have been the most affected. Some unprincipled opposition leaders have been enticed with jobs to join the current government while those who resist face harassment.⁷⁸

Government agents have been unlawfully shutting down social media, media houses, interrupting radio programmes already on air, and issuing orders to owners not to host opposition leaders. Such actions have affected women and other marginalized groups. Miria Matembe, a former Minister of Ethics and Integrity was barred from a popular TV talk show,⁷⁹ because she has been critical of the current regime (see Appendix 2). Other women have suffered extreme physical violence and they have bitter stories to tell. Asara Eyoru is another woman who suffered such violence for supporting an opposition party in Arua (see Appendix 1).

2.2.11 A WOMAN'S SPACE AT HOME AND IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For women, violence starts at home and moves into the public arena. For example, a female key informant in Arua argued thus: "When a woman wants to stand where she is married, they say she is a 'foreigner'. When she wants to stand where she was born, they say she left home long ago and cannot represent them properly."⁸⁰

Asked how she managed to succeed in spite such impediments, she said, "It was not easy." Her detractors said, "Joyce lives in a grass-thatched house; she is poor." However, she succeeded because she identifies well with her constituents, of whom she said, "the majority of them are also poor." On women's political "sins," she listed three: one, they point at the dress of a female candidate, two, they brand a woman politician as a prostitute, and three, they say she is a witch. According to Ms Lekuru in Arua, in politics, a female politician suffers doubly: "When a woman is rich they say, 'let her keep her money,' but when she is poor, they say 'what does she have to lead us?'"

Another female respondent reported that when the current woman MP for Arua district turned up at a Women's Day celebration in a short dress it became the talk of the town. Fellow women began to murmur that she was targeting to snatch their men and her wardrobe became a political issue. In Soroti, a female MP was routinely insulted by 'hired' youth at her political rallies as dry soil, rudely insinuating that she was barren.⁸¹

78. A number of women in opposition parties have been given big jobs in government, including: Ms Beti Kamywa (Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development), Ms Betty Amongi (Minister for Kampala), Ms Nakiwala Kiyingi (Minister of State for Gender and Social Development). There are also men from opposition parties.

79. Miria Matembe in a personal interview. She was a regular panelist on a TV show on NBS TV. She was unceremoniously removed while other fellow panelists remained. She claimed that her removal was due to 'orders from above'.

80. Ms Joyce Lekuru, Deputy Speaker Arua district, Councilor for Manibe/ Aroi electoral area. Quoted with her consent.

81. This was revealed at a FGD at Gwere Sub-county, Soroti district, where the MP come from and has a lot of support.

The Arua Municipality by-election in 2018 and the tense competition between Kassiano Wadri against Nusura Tiperu put gender issues to the test. Tiperu's female supporters suffered the wrath of drunken male youth who pelted her car with stones, labelled her a prostitute, and stripped her supporters naked. The women were humiliated until some female bystanders bravely intervened and covered them with their loose wrappers as they waited for the police to restore order. These forms of violence scare women away from politics. This case was not ruling party versus opposition: it was a classic case of degrading women in public spaces.

People in Teso, especially women, vote under clouds of fear and lies, being told that there are cameras at polling stations showing how people vote, and they believe such lies. There is a strong view in Teso that the NRM 'intentionally' made the people there poor. During insurgencies, the people lost their treasured cattle. The government encouraged them to grow fruits and they did and a fruit processing factory was commissioned by the President. However, the respondents reported that they have been told that this factory does not take local mangoes and oranges and that fruits to feed the factory will be imported. Now the people threaten to reject Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) seedlings if there is no value in planting fruits nobody will buy. The main losers are women who till the soils. According to the FDG in rural Soroti, it is poverty that makes women continue to vote for the NRM. They are given small items like salt and sugar.

By contrast, a group of women in Arua formed a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation (SACCO), at Aroi Sub-County in Ayivu County and they reported that the government has assisted them and they are progressing well. There was criticism that the government's economic initiatives do not emphasize effective production but quick political gains for the ruling party, according to a Soroti district Councilor who is a UPC member. This key informant further asserted that government programmes in Teso have not empowered women and girls in spite of government claims. The government promised to build a technical school per constituency more than ten years ago but they have not done so yet. According to him, technically aware people cannot be manipulated easily, but the ignorant, poor people can be influenced even with something as small as a packet of salt. He claimed that government has stopped the Electoral Commission from enlightening the people (civic education). According to this key informant, civic education is no longer emphasized in the electoral process, and this could explain the escalation of violence.

Soroti is politically divided. It was formerly a UPC stronghold, turned an FDC bastion; but the ruling party has used several strategies to win it back. "For example, the NRM is already on the ground directing people how to vote in 2021. The police do not allow other parties to mobilize there. If they try to do so they are arrested and their supporters are violently dispersed." One district councilor at Soroti municipal council lamented. She added that divisions are also in families:

“

In 2006, my husband was supporting FDC and I was supporting NRM, so we disagreed politically. He would intimidate me and threaten me saying I would be made miserable if I did not support his candidate. But since 2011 when I converted him to NRM, there has been peace at the home.

”

She convinced her husband by telling him that he should stop supporting Besigye because he is a political ‘failure,’ since Besigye has never won any election but Museveni has been winning. This woman is one of the few who managed to politically convince her husband to vote with her, and lessen domestic conflicts. Her family is benefiting from government programmes because of her party affiliation. Through Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), she was given 122 orange seedlings that she planted on an acre of land. She is expecting to get OWC goats as well.

Women in political parties have not enjoyed the multi-party dispensation. There are two contending claims: one is that the majority of women who have supported the ruling party are not benefiting from their support. It is claimed that the ruling party is ‘using women.’ The other view is that opposition parties are not doing enough to attract women in their ranks. On the latter claim, it is reported that fear of being harassed by state machinery keeps women away from the opposition. Although there are fewer women leaders in the opposition than in the ruling party, the women in opposition tend to be very vocal. However, many have suffered at the hands of security agencies. Women have suffered for being in the opposition.

On 10th October 2015, the media published the story of Zainab Naigaga, a woman who was dragged on the road and stripped naked by security operatives on the Masaka-Mbarara highway. She was the Forum for Democracy (FDC) Environment Secretary whose only crime was being part of a convoy of vehicles escorting her candidate, Kiiza Besigye, to a campaign rally in Rukungiri, Western Uganda. The incident was captured by the traditional media and social media and it went viral, aggravating the damage and humiliating Naigaga further. Most importantly, it was a threat to women thinking of supporting opposition candidates. There was also the case of male police officers accused of squeezing and hurting the breasts of Ingrid Turinawe, a key FDC political mobilizer.⁸²

Apart from physical harm inflicted on women activists, some women have been denied public services simply because they are suspected of being in the opposition. One woman at an FGD in a rural setting of Soroti district narrated how a group from Gwere sub-county went to the LC5 Chairman to ask for a truck to carry stones for construction of a church project. After hearing their request, he pulled out a list, checked it, and informed the women that their sub-county was one of those at the bottom of the list in voting for NRM and, based on that, he denied them the truck. “We walked away very disappointed,” she said.

“

We don’t understand why that was introduced! As women, we want to vote by secret ballot, so that nobody knows who we voted for. Imagine! Now I can no longer hide from my husband which candidate I voted for. I have to vote with him to please him

”

woman in FGD in a rural setting of Soroti district.

These women warn that voting by queuing behind candidates during NRM primaries, (it was used in the 2018 LC elections) will perpetuate enmity in the community.

82. These two incidents were widely publicized, and were criticized by the public. The government response was wanting.

Some women expressed fears about open voting, but those who support the NRM appreciate what it has done for them. In 2011, some women in Arua town formed a group called the Yellow Brigade. They meet in the Mayor's garden every Saturday and their aim is to rejuvenate NRM in their area. They formed a SACCO and they each pay UGX10,000 as membership fees. It is a revolving fund and they can save any amount. The women say this:

“

At the end of the day, NRM members should not be failures in life. We have no guns but the mouth. We are all 'yellow' and for women, security is a critical issue. In the 1980s and 1990s, we experienced insecurity in this region. Some of us fled to Sudan with our children on our backs and our men were killed. Now we have decided that all we want is peace. The neighbouring countries are at war. You see in Congo and Sudan; they are sending refugees here. So, if there is a war in Uganda, where shall we go?

”

Although there is freedom to belong to any political party, it is threatened by the high level of intolerance. “In Arua, if you wear yellow in a non-yellow neighborhood, they can tear it off from your body. If you wear blue in a yellow-dominated area, they will disrobe you.” Others in the FGD claimed that violence is rampant because “Museveni has over-stayed in power” and that is the major cause of violence. “If they claim that the wars of the '70s and '80s were because there was no peaceful transfer of power, they need to think of how this should not happen again,” one key informant who heads an NGO in Soroti said. A well informed leader concluded: “Election-related violence comes from different political parties who all perceive political competition as a battle, not a normal contest for a position: it is a do-or-die issue” (a member of staff at the Office the President).

3.0 TRENDS OF YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VIOLENCE

One of the major findings of this study is that election-related violence is inflamed by corruption, poverty and betrayal. Given the high unemployment rate of the youth in Uganda, it has become common for them to be used by politicians as agents and perpetrators of violence. Several groups of youth vigilantes and militias have been formed, including the Yellow Youth Brigade, Power 10, Solida, Red Tops, Yellow Pigs, and many others. Most of them are urban-based formed in the guise of 'hunting for votes' or 'protecting votes'. In the 2016 election, the Uganda Police formed unofficial units of mainly youth 'crime preventers' in every village. They were purportedly formed to augment security service efforts, given their numbers, mobility and local knowledge. However, their actual mission became clear when they started operating as NRM mobilisers. To counter this, opposition politicians also created their own youth brigades, mostly in urban areas, and they became a headache for the security services.

One opposition politician in Kampala revealed that he was making no headway until he formed his own militia. He said:

“

Uganda's politics is highly militarized. NRM is a state party. If you run against the NRM, you are running against the state and its coercive institutions. It is not just the military and police who are protecting the NRM party's interests at the polls; they have other auxiliary forces. Therefore, as a candidate in Kampala since 2006, I have managed to stay politically afloat because I had vigilantes to resist those who want to subvert the will of the people.⁸³

”

This key informant further reported that the number of voters at State House Nakasero and Summit View (with military establishments) in Kampala, both with nearby polling stations, cannot be ascertained because of the high security clearance required for access to such sensitive places. He claimed: those votes can be as many as the ruling party wants them to be. The opposition cannot effectively check them.

83. A key informant belonging to one of the old political parties, who holds an elective top position in Kampala reported.

The role of the youth was pervasive in 2011 in a well-publicized conflict between high-profile political contenders for the Kampala mayoral race for Kampala Central Division. The youth favorite and NRM party candidate was Godfrey Nyakana standing against Serunjogi of the Democratic Party. With the vote count about to be announced, a fight erupted between the candidates. It is alleged that Nyakana stabbed Serunjogi with a knife causing the latter's intestines to pop out. The brazen act witnessed by many was both terrifying and instructive. Nyakana was declared the winner and he served for five years as mayor. A key informant reported: "You cannot put Nyakana in prison unless the affected person dies on the spot. He is a "big man in the NRM." When Sserunjogi filed a complaint in court he could not find any witnesses to corroborate his allegations. People refused or were afraid to testify and he lost the case. This is another way of saying that since Nyakana belongs to the ruling party, he is above the law"⁸⁴

Similarly, an FGD at Namere Church Mpererwe, Kampala District, reported a recent LC1 poll in Kampala where there was a heavy military presence. Results were said to be rigged and polling assistants and presiding officers caused chaos. Because they are bribed to rig, they announced the wrong results.

Voters petitioned; the poll was repeated after three months; and the popular candidate was elected.

A similar story was reported by an FGD at Kiti Zone in Central Division, Kampala. A key informant at the President's Office observed that some youthful opposition contenders are also NRM's paid agents, being used to weaken the genuine opposition.⁸⁵

She revealed that some youth had followed former Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi when he declared his presidential ambitions in 2015. However, after a short while, Museveni "gave them something," and they ran away from Mbabazi. Unemployed poor youth are easy to manipulate and mislead. Government programmes such as re-skilling them and well managed civic education empower them to realise that small election bribes should not compromise their political decisions. (See Appendix 3)

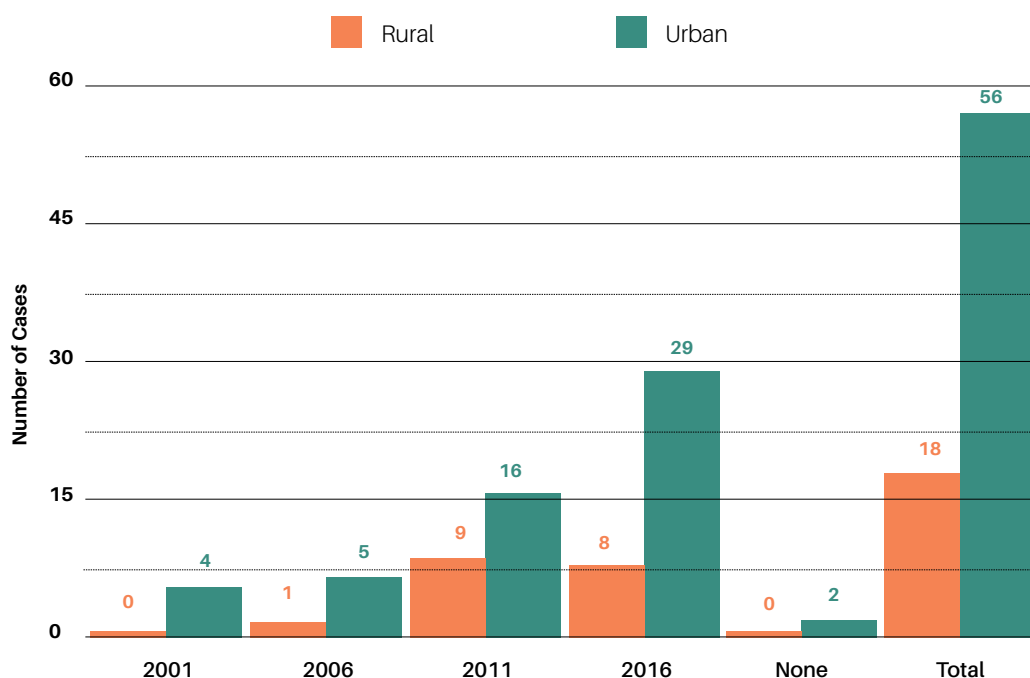
84. A key informant in Kampala revealed during an interview with us.

85. The identity of the respondent will remain undisclosed since the matter is sensitive.

3.1 RURAL AND URBAN PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

The figure below shows the perceptions of citizens (aged 18 years and above) of the status of election-related violence. The figure shows that violence was more reported in urban areas than in rural areas.

Which of the past had 4 general elections had the worst violence according to area of residence?



The figure shows the differences between the rural and urban respondents which of the four election years had the worst violence. The rural participants reported low levels of election violence and urban voters reported higher levels of violence at every election. Urban participants thought 2016 had the worst violence and rural voters reported a slight increase. Two factors emerged from these conclusions. Factor one was the increase in crime preventers whose activities infringed on people's rights. Factor two, respondents considered primaries, especially of the NRM party to be unfair. In the urban areas, violence increased with every election cycle. The data indicates that the main reasons include: a) increase in paramilitary and militia forces supporting the ruling party; b) the increase in vigilantes (bakanyama) supporting opposition candidates, and c) formation of criminal gangs (bakifesi).

Groups composed of young people such as the kiboko squad⁸⁶ escalated the violence; Boda boda 2010, another pseudo-security outfit, was used for mobilizing urban unemployed youth to receive hand-outs (especially motorcycles and fuel) in order for them to support the ruling party and harass its opponents.⁸⁷ In urban areas, especially in Kampala, there is a perceived 'balance of terror', meaning there are youth vigilantes on both sides, and the ordinary voter suffers from their criminal acts. A female member of an FGD in Kampala Central Division who supports the ruling party was a victim. She narrated her ordeal:

“

I was wearing a yellow dress and a 'Mama Janet hat' on the day we nominated the President in 2015. For this, I was attacked, beaten badly by some hooligans, and my lower abdomen, including the uterus was badly affected. I had to be admitted to a hospital. They operated on me and I still have a scar on my stomach.

”

Some key informants analyzed the violent behavior of the youth from different perspectives. There is an opinion that many youths are self-serving double agents who are not interested in any youth mission or youth liberation.

86. Stick-wielding youth used to emerge from the Central Police Station and beat up opposition politicians.

87. Boda boda 2010 leader was sentenced by the Court Martial for possession of illegal guns and ammunition.

4.0 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Historically, PWDs had no specific political status. They were assumed to participate politically just like other citizens. During the NRM era their rights to political participation and representation have been recognised. Through key informant interviews with PWDs their political opportunities and challenges were revealed. The elections of PWDs are dominated by the NRM given their entry into electoral politics and the reliability of their support in the legislature. Mobilization for PWD elections is almost exclusively done by NRM chairpersons. However, some PWDs belong to other political parties.

During elections for PWDs, there are no interpreters and many PWDs cannot follow some details during the electoral process. For the blind, there are no Braille reading gadgets. For the physically disabled, there are no easy means of mobility. Also, primary elections are conducted by voters lining behind candidates, which PWDs say discriminates against them. Ballot papers for the PWDs do not have candidate photos or names, making the process easy to manipulate. The other key challenge is that Disability Committees had not been elected for a long time (this study was done in April 2019). In Sembabule, a key PWD respondent who is a district councilor revealed that each group contesting the 2016 election had concocted its own register. She went to several offices to challenge the 'fake registers' and also went to the Electoral Commission to get the old register. She argued that since there was no updated register, they should use the old one. Many new PWDs were unable to vote but the current EC now has a new register.

On a positive note, Stephen Obele, a PWD Soroti District Speaker, and a UPC member is proud that he won his election on merit and says not even his party played a part. He used his own mobilization skills to win the elections in 2011 and again in 2016⁸⁸. Obele said:

“

Election issues for PWDs revolve around poverty, disease, ignorance, and vulnerability. We are frequently abused, used and dumped by those we trust to help us.

”

Despite being poor, he believes that many PWDs are honest people. A clear demonstration of this was during the 2016 election when the NRM sent two million shillings to 'facilitate' their candidate.⁸⁹ This facilitation was for Soroti councilors to campaign for PWDs. NRM seems to have an erroneous belief that money always 'talks'. They convened a PWD delegates' three-day conference at the Soflvy Hotel in Soroti and were coached on which candidate to back for District Speaker. Although his case is a rare one, Mr. Obele won the race and he credited the secret ballot for his success⁹⁰. Alex Ndezi, MP for PWD, also asserted that these people suffer multiple abuses and manipulations.

88. Mr. Stephen Obele, Soroti District speaker has effective mobilization skills. He speaks Ateso, Kumam, Kiswahili, Akarimajong and Luganda. So he is able to mobilise voters in these languages. In Soroti district, 4 sub-counties speak Kumam. His competitors failed to speak well in this language.

89. Mr. Obele revealed how he defeated the power of money. Quoted with his consent.

90. Hon. Alex Ndezi says that despite manipulations, those with talent can succeed.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR AVERTING ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this study, participants insisted that election-related violence is on the rise at each election cycle. It was widely observed that tolerance of one another's divergent views is declining in society and that the youth behaviour does resonate with a democratic culture. However, no studies so far have been done to understand this behaviour. The findings of this study suggest that a section of the youth have adopted political radicalism. The state's response has been the use of coercive force. There is also a tendency by political actors to manipulate the youth.

Furthermore, there is a view that the increase in election violence is due to the failure of the State to create enough economic opportunities. The respondents point out that election violence is associated with increased inequality in society, where the haves are few, and the have-nots are the majority and lack basic services and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, election-related violence is not only about election events. There is a need to create economic opportunities for all citizens.

Another observation from the findings is that the culture and practice of multi-partyism has not yet taken root in Uganda. People from different political parties regard one another as enemies, not competitors and electoral contests literally become violent political battles. Moreover, the process of conducting elections is perceived as fraudulent. The respondents said that they have less confidence in elections as a means of electing leaders than they did a decade ago. This explains why most people believe that the 2016 election was the most violent (although there had been more violent ones in previous elections).

Elections have become a do-or-die affair due to the high stakes involved, including obstruction of some candidates from campaigning, changing election results, and the heavy-handed securitization of the electoral process. The Electoral Commission receives low ratings as an agency responsible for delivering free and fair elections and is not perceived as being impartial. In particular, lower level EC officials (presiding officers) are perceived to be susceptible to bribery. There is a need for the EC to broaden its supervisory role and pay its local officials better.

Women and other socially marginalized groups continue to suffer from psychological intimidation, political manipulation, social exclusion, domestic harassment, denial of economic means of self-advancement and physical harm. There is a superficial assumption that women have gained political leverage in Uganda. The data collected for this study reveals that women and marginalized groups are still victims of political violence. The key conclusion of this study is that although elections spark violence and conflict, there are other socially constructed factors causing conflict. These need to be tackled systematically.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO AVERT ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE IN UGANDA

In this section, we highlight recommendations and propose strategies for averting political violence.

CONTINUOUS CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION

It was pointed out by the majority of participants that civic education is lacking and voter education is inadequate. While there are unending debates of who should be responsible for civic education, that is between the Uganda Human Rights Commission (doing civic education) and the Electoral Commission (doing voter education), this disparity has not helped Ugandans. Considering that both agencies are perceived as having failed to fulfil their roles in respect to civic education, we recommend that another agency to continuously educate Ugandans on their civic rights, duties and obligations be created. The agency should be well facilitated to effectively deliver this critical assignment. It is further recommended as follows: a) that civic education be done on a continuous basis, and b) it should be incorporated into the school curriculum to teach young people civic responsibility and engagement.

CREATING A RUBRIC TO GUIDE CIVIC EDUCATION

It is recommended that a tailor-made text be designed to include topics on: citizenship, responsibilities and rights of citizens, roles of government, role of social groups and communities in development, roles of the youth, women's political participation, youth development and strategies for development and poverty eradication. The text would be used for both community and school education.

PROTECTING WOMEN FROM POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Women's efforts to participate in political processes are undermined by negative cultural practices, domestic violence, and state-security harassment. It is recommended that women empowerment strategies be adopted to help them push their political participation beyond the space offered by state structures. These strategies include:

- a. The main strategy is to increase their access to quality education, healthcare, and quality employment and ownership of property.
- b. The second strategy is to increase women's participation in decision making processes at domestic and public levels.
- c. The third strategy is to highlight the experiences of successful women as role models for young women to emulate.
- d. The fourth strategy is to groom girls for leadership at home, school, community and policy levels.

REDEFINING THE ROLE OF SECURITY AGENCIES

In several electoral areas security forces scare voters from voting, or coerce them to vote for certain candidates, thus increasing vote rigging and violence. The findings of this study indicate that the population perceive the security forces as being partisan and promoting the interests of the ruling party. This perception increases conflicts. It is recommended that the role of security agencies in managing elections be assigned to the Electoral Commission, with rules agreed upon by all stakeholders.

PREVENTING CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY OF ELECTION OFFICIALS AND POLITICAL AGENTS

It was pointed out by respondents that the EC underpays its presiding officers and other election officials, and their meagre pay is seldom remitted on time. It was further revealed that the EC does not effectively supervise election officials. This makes them easy fodder for compromise and corruption by rich candidates. An electoral process fraught with corruption ceases to be credible and a source of conflicts. It is recommended that the EC must create a strong code of conduct for its officials, to increase transparency.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL CANDIDATES

A uniform standard of behaviour should be established so that errant candidates can be punished in order to deter those who create violence. Punishments should include disqualification at any stage of the electoral process. Errant candidates proved by courts of law to have flouted the rules be denied participation in subsequent elections for specific periods.

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY

Respondents pointed out that the increase in violence is largely due to the radicalisation of the youth. A youthful population without economic opportunities feels it has nothing to lose by destroying property and hurting people they have been hired to harm. It was pointed out that when the youth regard election campaigns as jobs, and the end of an electoral cycle means being laid off from those jobs, there is a danger of conflict. It is recommended that the youth be given skills and opportunities for employment. Strategies to achieve this can be made at two levels: a) civic education in schools from primary school to university; and b) community-based civic engagement. The school-based civic education would help create civically aware citizens. Youth civic engagement should emphasise honesty, respect for neighbours, helping others in the community, tolerance of diverse views and cultures, and focused hard work.

RESTRAINING PUBLIC OFFICIALS FROM PARTICIPATING IN PARTISAN POLITICS

The findings of this study show that public servants such as RDCs openly campaign for the ruling party, contravening the Public Service standing orders. This is a recipe for violence. In case of Mbabazi vs EC and Yoweri Museveni, the Supreme Court ruled that public servants should not be engaged in partisan campaigns. There is yet no indication that this will happen. It is recommended that the EC and Public Service should penalize and punish public servants who engage in partisan politics.

CIVIL SOCIETY SHOULD HAVE AN EMPOWERED ROLE IN ELECTIONS

It was revealed that civil society actors in the electoral process also suffer violence at the hands of security agencies. This undermines their roles as civic educators and election observers. It is recommended that a law be enacted to protect them to monitor the voting, witness ballot counting, and assess the conduct of elections.

STRENGTHENING INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE

Respondents pointed out that political party forums should not only stop in Kampala but should be countrywide. It is recommended that political dialogue forums should decentralize their activities to the whole country. This would amplify the voices of all voters.

ELIMINATING COMMERCIALIZATION OF POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

Respondents pointed out that politics has become the most well-paying job and the do-or-die culture has increased violence. It is recommended that stronger laws regulating the sources, usage, and accountability of election financing be enacted and enforced.

CREATING SPACE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

PWD informants revealed that their electoral process is highly manipulated by those with strong political connections. PWD political actors are largely marginalized, economically and politically. It is recommended PWD registers should be continuously updated. Corruption and bribery associated with the elections of PWDs should be eliminated at all levels. More than that, there is a need for the State to create economic empowerment programmes for PWDs to help reduce their social vulnerability. This would reduce violence against them in forms of voter bribery and manipulation.

DISCOURAGING PERSONALISATION OF POWER

People who want to win by any means and keep themselves in power endanger chances of clean political competition, sparking violence. In order for elections not to be a mockery of democracy, term limits on all elective posts in government should be considered.

REVERSING 'DEPRIVATION TRAP' FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS

This study established that women, PWDs and the youth are victims of election-related violence. Measures such as empowerment programmes for these groups should be taken to improve their socio-economic wellbeing.

PUNISHING LEADERS WHO CREATE VIGILANTE GROUPS

Illegal militias and vigilante groups have aggravated election-related violence. Whether created by opposition or ruling parties, these groups engage in violent and illegal activities. The laws of the land should be enforced to stop them and their political patrons from engaging in criminal activities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

NIGHT ASARA EYORU'S STORY

FDC MEMBER AND WOMAN COUNCILLOR, ARUA MUNICIPALITY

My first husband was killed in 1999 by Kony rebels. He was a businessman. He was kidnapped from a bus traveling from Kampala. We have never seen his body. I am a trained infant teacher, but I stopped teaching in 2009 and became politically active as member of FDC. I chose the opposition because I wanted the freedom and opportunity to talk about what is wrong in my country. As a member of the opposition, you can talk without fear or favour. I am not a happy citizen and I have to speak out, no matter what. We need change. With the pain inflicted on me, I have become more fearless. Even if I am crippled, my mouth still works so it should speak for people.

My personal ordeal happened on 13th August 2018 soon after Kassiano Wadri's⁹¹ rally. We were at Royal Hotel where we used to have daily planning meetings as supporters of Wadri. At around 7.20 pm, while sitting with campaign agents and MPs, planning for the next day, we heard gunshots outside the premises. Bobi Wine⁹² had just left us to go and prepare himself for the radio talk show, so we feared he had been shot. We later learnt it was his driver who was shot and killed.

"I JUST WANT TO SEE DEAD BODIES."

The police stormed into the hotel. I began shouting at MPs telling them to hide. Then I saw the former RPC, Jonathan Musinguzi commanding the security men in civilian clothes, telling them to shoot by saying: "I just want to see dead bodies" while the DPC was telling them not to shoot but to arrest people. I pretended to be a cleaner in the hotel. But when Musinguzi saw me, he ordered my arrest saying: "Arrest this woman, she is not a cleaner...these are the opposition women who are giving us a headache in this town. She is called Asara...she is one of Kassiano's ring-leaders."

The military men came and arrested me. I did not even resist, I simply cooperated. Despite my willingness to abide by their commands, I was dragged outside and badly beaten by Musinguzi. He slapped and kicked me everywhere. He ordered the police to shoot me but the police officer refused saying: "She is our councilor." Musinguzi grabbed the gun from him and continued to beat me, while saying: "You are joking... you think you will overthrow this government!"

I tried to stand up, but being a short woman, he stepped on my chest and I fell back on the ground. He then stepped on my stomach with his boot. I folded myself like a ball, but he continued kicking me all over saying: "I can kill you, I will kill you!" Other military men joined him and kicked me and hit me with their gun butts, until I could not feel any more pain. They dragged me outside and threw me at the roadside.

91. Kassiano Wadri was Arua Municipality candidate for the by-election.

92. Hon Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine) as a MP campaigning for Kassiano Wadri.

"THIS IS OUR LAST DAY."

We were then thrown into a truck like a sack of goods and taken to Arua police station. Then they carried me and dumped me in the cell at the police station. Many more of those arrested were dumped there too. Suddenly, I felt so much pain, especially in my stomach. I had had a cesarean section three years prior, and I feared the wound could have been re-opened by the kicks. I could not turn, I could not stand and I could not walk. I could only talk with difficulty. My chest was very heavy. I felt very scared when I realized I could not move my body.

Then I heard the police calling Members of Parliament, who had been arrested with us, one by one. I whispered in my language, "This is our last day." Then they called out my name but I could not get up. The police thought I was pretending. They shouted out my name but I could not move. Two police women came to carry me outside. A male policeman instructed them: "panda, panda gari" meaning put her in the vehicle."

They dumped me inside a vehicle that was very dark inside. I could not see anybody but I heard people groaning in pain. It was crowded and they were on top of one another. They then drove us off and we had no idea where we were being taken. We drove for so many hours and I thought I would die! We eventually arrived at the Gulu army barracks. I saw other prisoners being offloaded from a lorry. They commanded us to get out but I still could not stand. Again, police women got me out of the car and took me to the cell. The next day, I managed to stand and walk a bit, but with so much pain. That day, when I went for a short call, blood started flowing uncontrollably. I was terrified. It was as if I was having a miscarriage and feared I would die.

I didn't know where the blood was coming from. I continued to bleed and felt faint. My fellow women prisoners gave me toilet paper. Kassiano Wadri's wife visited us and brought me sanitary pads. Other inmates helped me with soap and detergent. They told me to lie down on the bathroom floor and washed me with hot water. They put a warm damp towel on the stomach and this relieved the pain. The next day, a doctor came to examine a number of us and, despite the obvious gravity of my injuries, the nurses just gave me pain killers. Some volunteers in Gulu were bringing us food, clothes and soap. They also brought me crutches. We stayed at Gulu Police for two weeks.

IS BEING AN OPPOSITION ACTIVIST TREASON?

We were then driven to the Gulu High Court as a group but I was still bleeding and struggling to walk. That's when I learnt that I was being charged with treason along with 32 others. What! I was in shock! What treasonable offense had I committed, I kept wondering? Is exercising my right to support a candidate of my choice treason? Is being an activist in the opposition treason? Is being a campaign agent or supporter treason? Up to this day, I have failed to understand the intentions of those persecuting me. We now go to court every month; we are still on bail.

After my release from jail I had an X-ray examination at Arua Hospital where I was told that my bones had been fractured, and that my knee ligaments had been dislodged. I also sustained a crack on the spinal code. And that was not the end of my woes. My arm was also dislocated. I was referred to Mengo Hospital in Kampala, where I was hospitalized for three weeks and that is where I began to get proper medical treatment. They discovered that I had blood pressure, for the first time in my life. I bled for one month and 15 days. Miraculously, none of my internal organs had been damaged. The doctors suspect that it was internal bleeding that had to find a route to come out. I still wear a waist belt to hold my spine together and my leg is bandaged. My stomach swells after eating, and breathing at night is sometimes a problem. I still get nightmares and often lose sleep. I use a walking stick.

MY HUSBAND ABANDONED ME, FOUND ANOTHER WIFE

Although the doctors say that there is a lot of improvement, I have been advised to take bed rest. But I cannot do so because I have to fend for my children. Now I am a single mother. I have six children aged between 23 and three years; and they are still in school. Combined with the extended family, I take care of more than 20 children. When I came back home after the torture, I could not have sex. My body would hurt if I tried and I eventually lost interest. This is very painful to me. I have lost my marriage and my womanhood. I wonder whether I am a human being supposed to have those feelings. It was a big test to my husband, who abandoned me and soon found another wife. This is the price I have paid. But on top of my physical pain he does not help with the children; he has started another life. He has abandoned me. I am useless to him.

Financially, I am doing very badly. I used to plait women's hair and make tablecloths but now I cannot sit for a long time. I am also a wholesaler of produce. But since I was charged for treason, some people see me differently. My wholesale business operates on loans, but I have recently been shunned by banks and micro-finance organizations who have refused to give me loans because they fear that if I am arrested and imprisoned, my loans will not be paid back. I have sold everything in the house: fridge, chairs, I only have the beds, in order to raise school fees for the children and pay for my medical expenses. Good Samaritans are helping out but the needs are still many. On top of all this, I am constantly trailed by state operatives: there are spies everywhere.

APPENDIX 2

STORY BY HON MIRIA MATEMBE
FORMER WOMAN MP FOR MBARARA DISTRICT AND
FORMER MINISTER OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

The first major election violence I witnessed took place in 2001. I actually had a role in curbing it. During the elections between Museveni and Besigye, there was a lot of violence in Rukungiri district. I personally saw a shoe-less James Musinguzi (then a supporter of Besigye), clad in dirty and torn trousers and muddy clothes. He had managed to escape from Rukungiri to Mbarara. I bumped into him at Hotel Classic and I could not believe my eyes. I was in total shock. He looked at me and said: "Miria wareeba ahumwatuhsa?" meaning "Miria, do you see how far your NRM party has brought us?"

One morning, after elections, I got a call from a friend asking: "What are you doing there, when Mbarara is on fire!" I quickly went to police in Mbarara and found people tied kandoya, (with their arms tied behind their backs), in chains, and being savagely beaten. I looked for the Officer in Charge (OC) and he explained his plight to me: "I am suffering and I cannot take it anymore. I have been ordered right and left to beat people and put them in cells, for no good reason." He had been instructed to beat people brought to police in a military truck, because they were arrested for 'insulting' the president. The arrested people were supporters of Hon. Winnie Byanyima and she had called a press conference to declare that she was stepping down from the race against Ngoma Ngime due to the violence meted out to her supporters. The NRM's bulldog, Kakooza Mutale, had brought his Kalangala Action Group to terrorise voters in Mbarara town. I called the Inspector-General of Police, who ordered him to leave. They were ferrying in students and strangers to come and vote.

I tried to in vain to call the President and got his Principal Private Secretary, Amelia Kyambadde. I complained to her about what was happening in Mbarara. I also called the president's highly influential brother, Salim Saleh, and asked him why they were arresting people. He immediately instructed the OC to release those people who were in the cells. A day later, one Permanent Secretary rang me from Kampala and told me that I was not safe. At 5.00pm, I left Mbarara and went to Bushenyi as a precaution. A report was written on election violence in Mbarara and other places but the recommendations were never implemented or followed up. There are politicians who go out to provoke violence, but they forget that violence provokes more violence. These circumstances explain why I exited electoral politics. I will continue speaking out against bad government actions, especially those which hurt the common person. When you are in government you cannot speak freely.

APPENDIX 3

**ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER'S VIEWS
ON YOUTH AND ELECTION VIOLENCE**

An EC Commissioner we interviewed told us that when the youth get involved in election violence, they do so as a group. It is difficult to prove their criminality in a court of law. Some youth who caused violence at a rally in Ntungamo in 2016 were set free for lack of supporting evidence.

MARAUDING YOUTH BREAD AND ATE OPPONENTS' BREAD

Youth sometimes get involved in violence caused by rumours. The EC Commissioner told a story of Njeru Municipality MP elections on 27 July 2018 in which reasons the EC thought it best to tally the ballots at Buikwe district headquarters. This change of venue sent the rumour mill into overdrive that EC had conspired to rig elections. Some voters became agitated and anxious but, ironically, the person who had been inflaming them was the one declared winner. Another incident was in the 2011 Kampala mayoral race. It was rumoured that a candidate had a store full of pre-ticked ballots. His agents ransacked it, only to find the store was full of loaves of bread their candidate's opponent had bought for his agents. The marauding youth looted the bread and ate it themselves.

'FINISH ME NOW' ATTITUDE

The EC Commissioner added that society has lost control in the upbringing of youth. They behave like 'food gatherers' (kagwilawo). This observation is in line with what we learnt was a mantra used by the youth in Soroti. During elections they tell various candidates three words: "finish me now" meaning "give me something now for my vote," with the emphasis being on now. These youth attach as much value to their vote as they do to a bottle of alcohol or a snack.

The EC Commissioner also said that "the misfortunes of the youth are the fortunes of rich politicians" meaning that politicians take advantage of jobless young people, and make them do dirty jobs. After the campaigns the politicians want nothing to do with the youth.

According to the Commissioner, the fabric of society is so frayed that the youth can intimidate EC Commissioners. This behaviour was on full display when they attacked the EC Commissioners during a by-election in Jinja East constituency. The youth were so aggressive that the Commissioners were denied entry into the polling station to supervise junior EC officials.⁹³

The behavior of the youth during elections is volatile and unseemly but what is the cause of this? The answers seem to follow this logic.

- a. First, the youth seem to have lost faith in the electoral process having a positive impact on their lives.
- b. Two, electoral fraud is ubiquitous and the popular will matters little, setting in frustrations
- c. Three, the youth are perpetrators as well as victims of election violence. They are used by politicians and there are not many alternative means of expressing their desperation.
- d. Four, there are negative assumptions about the youth. There are many purpose-driven youth who support a particular party on principle. They may be harassed or assaulted by hooligans, but they want to see genuine change in their lives.
- e. Five, many youths are getting politically radicalized, engaging in protests and demonstrations, so there is a need to understand why this is the case.

93. The by-election in Jinja East took place on 5 February 2012.

REFERENCES

- Adejumobi, Said, "Elections in Africa: A Fading Shadow of Democracy?" *International Political Science Review* Vol. 21, No. 1, 2000, p. 60.
- Ahikire J. *Localised or Localising Democracy: Gender and the Politics of Decentralisation in Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Ahikire, Josephine, "Towards Women's Effective Participation in Electoral Politics in Uganda," *Feminist Africa* Vol.3(2004).
- Birch, Sarah and David Muchlinski, "Electoral violence prevention: what works?" *Democratization* vol. 25, No. 3, 2018, p. 385.
- Busingye Kabumba, Dan Ngabirano and Timothy Kyepa, *Militarism and the Dilemma of Post-Colonial Statehood: The Case of Museveni's Uganda*, Kampala: Development Law Publishing, 2017.
- Bwengye, F. W. (1985) *The Agony of Uganda: From Amin to Obote*, London: Regency Press. 1985ss.
- Chaturvedi, Ashish, "Rigging Elections with Violence," *Public Choice* vol. 125, No. 1/2, 2005, p. 190.
- Col. Dr. Besigye Kiiza v Museveni Yoweri Kaguta, Electoral Commission (Election Petition No.1 of 2001) [2001] UGSC 3 (21 April 2001).
- Mushemeza, Elijah Dickens, "Issues of Violence in the Democratization Process in Uganda," *Africa Development* Vol. 26, No. 1/2 (2001), p. 66 (pp. 55-72).
- Hafner-Burton Emile, Susan Hyde and Ryan Jablonski, *When Governments Use Election Violence to Stay in Power*, San Diego: School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, 2012.
- Hakeem Onapajo, "Violence and Votes in Nigeria: The Dominance of Incumbents in the Use of Violence to Rig Elections," *Africa Spectrum* vol. 49, no. 2, 2014, p. 28. (27-51).
- Hanne Fjelde and Kristine Høglund, "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa," *British Journal of Political Science* vol. 46, 2016, p. 297.A
- Human Rights Watch (HRW), (2001). *Uganda: Not a Level Playing Field-Government Violations in the Lead-Up to the Election*, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uganda/>
- International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics as quoted by Veronica Nakijoba, *Manifestations of Electoral Violence Against Women as a Tool of Political Exclusion* in *Controlling Consent: Uganda's 2016 Elections*, Edited by: J. Oloka-Onyango and Josephine Ahikire, Africa World Press, New Jersey, 2016.
- Jinadu, A. "Electoral Administration in Africa: A Nigerian Case-Study under the Transition to Civil Rule Process" in S. Adejumobi and A. Momoh (eds), *The Political Economy of Nigeria Under Military Rule, 1984-1993*, Harare: SAPES, 1995, p. 76.
- Kanyehamba, G. W. *Constitutional Law and Government in Uganda*, EAPH, 1975.
- Kiiza Besigye v. Yoweri Museveni and Electoral Commission, Presidential Election Petition No. 1, 2001, 6 July 2001, Judgement of Supreme Court Justice Karokora p. 148.
- Kiiza J, Sabiti Makara and Lise Rakner, *Electoral Democracy in Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2008.
- Liisa Laakso, "Why are Elections not Democratic in Africa? Comparisons between the recent multi-party elections in Zimbabwe and Tanzania," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* Vol. 6, No. 1, 1997, p. 19. (pp. 18-34)

Muyomba-Tamale, Mitigating Incidences of Violence and Emergent Conflicts in Uganda's Electoral Process, Paper for Uganda Situation Room Debating Brief No.7, (2015).

Matlosa Khabele, Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Victor Shale, 'Introduction'. In Kabele-Matlosa, Khadiagala and Shale, *When Elephants Fight: Preventing and Resolving Election-related Violence*, EISA, 2010.

Morgan Winsor, "Uganda Presidential Election 2016: Museveni Spent \$7M On Campaign In Two Months, Report Says," *International Business Times*, 22 January 2016, <https://www.ibtimes.com/uganda-presidential-election-2016-museveni-spent-7m-campaign-two-months-report-says-2276699>

Mutesa, Edward, *The Desecration of My Kingdom*, 1972.

Collier, Paul and Pedro C. Vicente (2008), *Votes and Violence: Experimental Evidence from a Yield Experiment in Nigeria*-HiCN Working Paper 50, Falmer: Households in Conflict Network, 2008, p. 24.

Collier, Paul and Pedro C. Vicente, "Violence, bribery, and fraud: the political economy of elections in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Public Choice* vol. 153, No.1/2, 2012, p. 118.

Mukasa Mutibwa Phares, *A History of Uganda: The First 100 years 1894-1995*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2016.

Adejumobi, Said (b), "Election in Africa: A fading shadow of democracy?" in Okwudiba Nnoli (ed.), *Government and Politics in Africa: A Reader*, Harare: AAPS Publications, 2000, p. 245.

Ssali, Sarah and Clare Atto, *Gender and Women's Participation in the 2006 Multiparty Elections in Uganda*, in J. Kiiza, Sabiti Makara and L. Rakner, *Electoral Democracy in Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2008.

Perrot Sandrine, Sabiti Makara, J. Larfague and Marie-Aude Fouere, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime: Revisiting the 2011 Ugandan Elections*, Fountain Publishers, 2014.

Thandika Mkandawire (1997) "Crisis Management and the Making of 'choiceless' Democracies" in *Africa*, Paper for MIT conference (March 6-9, 1997).

The Commonwealth, *Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group General Elections 18 February 2016*, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/Uganda%20COG%20Report%20-%20Final%20-%20PRINT.pdf>

The Monitor Team, "EC reaps more blood than ballots," *Daily Monitor*, 24 February 2011, <https://mobile.monitor.co.ug/News/TodaysPaper/691252-1113954-format-xhtml-mfx1i0z/index.html>

Uganda Parliament, *Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Election Violence*, Kampala, July 2002, <https://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/uganda/doc/Uganda-Election-Violence-Report.pdf>

World Health Organization website.

World Peace Foundation, *Mass Atrocity Endings-Uganda*, 7 August 2015, https://sites.tufts.edu/atrocityendings/2015/08/07/uganda-idi-amin-milton-obote-and-the-national-resistance-movement/#_edn30 (accessed 4 August 2019).



© Women's International Peace Centre, 2020
All Rights Reserved

Please direct all correspondence to:

Executive Director
Women's International Peace Centre
Plot 1, Martyrs' Garden Road B, Ministers' Village Ntinda
P. O. BOX 4924, Kampala, Uganda
Tel +256-414-543953
Email program@wipc.org
Web www.wipc.org

ISBN 978-9970-29-059-8



9 789970 290598