THE ROAD TO 2016:
CITIZENS’ PERCEPTIONS OF
UGANDA’S GENERAL ELECTIONS

Findings of a Survey Conducted in 18 Districts of
Uganda

Commissioned by Human Rights and Peace Centre
(HURIPEC) and Kituo Cha Katiba (KcK)
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General Introduction

This report documents views generated from citizens during a survey conducted in different districts across Uganda. The survey is part of several activities being undertaken under the project, The Road to 2016: Citizens’ Perception of Uganda’s Forthcoming 2016 Elections. The project is implemented by the Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC) of the School of Law, Makerere University and Kituo cha Katiba: Eastern Africa Centre for Constitutional Development (KcK). The project seeks to contribute towards Uganda’s democratic process by providing a critical assessment and evaluation of the pre-election conditions and its potential contribution to the 2016 election. The project had different components but this specific report is from the survey – one of the activities of the project.

The survey aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

i) To provide a forum for Ugandans to air their views on various key issues relating to elections in general and the upcoming 2016 general elections in particular.
ii) To examine the relevance of citizens as bearers of rights in elections in Uganda.
iii) To provide up-to-date analytical information about the pre-electoral process.

The survey team was split into two. Team One comprised: Dr Ronald Mayambala Kakungulu, Ms Anne Kiiza and Ms Isabella Abalo; and Team Two comprised: Mr Peter Magelah Gwayaka and Ms Joyce Freda Apio.

The first part of this report was written by Team One, who visited the districts of Lira, Soroti, Hoima, Luweero, Sembabule, Kampala, Kayunga and Mbale. In each of the districts, 2-3 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with citizens and 4-5 officials were interviewed as key informants (KIs). The officials included the Registrar Electoral Commission, members of the Uganda Police Force (UPF), the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and a Local Council representative to the district. The report is arranged in themes.

The second part of the report was written by Team Two, who visited the districts of Iganga, Busia, Amuru, Nebbi, Ntungamo, Rukungiri, Kanungu, Kasese, Kapchorwa and Nakapiripirit. The KIs they interviewed included district officials (LCV chairpersons, CAOs, district police commanders (DPCs) and district registrars of the Electoral Commission (EC)). FGDs were conducted with representatives of political parties, persons with disabilities, business associations, youth and women groups at urban and local levels. A total of 25 people participated in the FGDs in each district visited.
SURVEY FINDINGS

PART I

Lira, Soroti, Hoima, Luweero, Sembabule, Kampala, Kayunga and Mbale

*Team One members with respondents during the survey*
Citizens’ awareness of importance of elections

In all the districts the team visited, the citizens appreciated the importance of elections. There was a slight difference in the level of understanding between the rural and urban dwellers. Therefore, generally, Ugandans appreciate the meaning of elections. Some of the respondents defined elections as a time when the people are given an opportunity to choose the leaders they want. Others said that they take part in elections to exercise their rights by choosing the leaders they want and to fulfil their responsibility as citizens. Others said an election is about choosing someone who has the capability of being a good leader despite one’s political affiliation.

Almost all the citizens interacted with were eligible to vote and were interested in exercising this right. Unfortunately, some felt that in Uganda voting is a waste of time. They said, for instance, ‘We vote one candidate, and they announce another as the winner’ (Hoima rural girl and man). In the case of Kampala they said: ‘We no longer think voting makes sense. Remember that it is the Electoral Commission which decides who wins not us. When we voted Kasibante, after a week he was removed from Parliament.’ Citizens also wondered why they vote: ‘We voted the Lord Mayor and he too was removed from office’ (Kampala, FGD2).

The respondents asserted that though they vote candidates to represent them in Parliament, the parliamentarians do not attend parliamentary sessions (Hoima village). The sense of resignation was palpable among the respondents. One old, disabled lady in an Arua village said she would not vote. She asserted that she did not see why she should waste her time voting, only to be caught up in violence. This same lady claimed that in the last election, she was picked up by a candidate who took her to vote, but was immediately abandoned after she had cast her vote.

Some citizens, however, think that even when they vote and things do not go the way they should – such as rigging happening and the right candidate not going through – the process of elections sometimes leads to improvements. As one respondent said, ‘You see, when Besigye shouted in 2001, he shook the tree and for us we picked the fruits. Taxes were removed, medicine was provided etc.’ (middle-aged man, Sembabule village). In other words, if the democratic process of elections did not take place, certain things would not change. Another member of the same group revealed that ‘if you want to get something from this government, you oppose it’. In other words, the government can only listen or react to a certain kind of language – that of opposition. It is, therefore, possible that the government fears competition.

Some citizens did not seem to know the role of certain leaders. They expected them to construct and repair roads, ensure that there is medicine in hospitals, and pay school fees
and find jobs for their children. Some citizens also thought that the leaders themselves did not know what they were supposed to be doing. One respondent remarked: ‘How can a MP or councillor aspirant stand in front of people and tell them that they are going to fix roads? Is it the work of a councillor or MP to fix a road?’ One old man in Kampala pointed out that our leaders no longer run for political office to serve all those they are expected to serve, but instead to look after their own interests and serve people selectively. He commented: ‘Institutions have died mainly because we have incompetent leaders. Look at the cooperatives, they used to be vibrant, they are now dead because we have leaders that do not know what they are doing.’

However, some officials and other ordinary people stated that the only way in which candidates can win an election is by telling lies. People want to hear someone talking about service delivery. ‘Voters want to be told what they want to hear and not want they should be told’ (District official, Soroti). Because of lack of social services, they pin the hope for the provision of such services on their representatives. Unfortunately, service delivery is beyond the means of the leaders. Though the leaders can forward the views of the people, they cannot force government to be effective. Actually one leader said, ‘For us who are in opposition are even worse. We cannot get services provided to our constituencies because it is a way of punishing us’ (Kampala).

This has led to the conclusion that elections do not make sense in Uganda. Because the government’s behaviour has made citizens despondent, some have come to vest their hope only in their leaders. As a result, they have ended up listening to and believing lies. Those who are good at telling lies and splashing money at the time of elections win the election. The citizens’ major questions are: ‘What happened to civic education? Why are we leaving citizens to do things they do not understand? Is it intended?’ (Lira town, Soroti town, Kampala).

**Citizens’ views about the link between elections and democracy**

Citizens, both urban and rural, understand what democracy means, but they believe that there is no democracy to talk about in Uganda. Asked whether elections bring democracy in Uganda, the citizens even laughed at the question because they think that there is no democracy in Uganda. Others think that democracy is still in its infancy. The only worry they have is how long this infancy will last. The Kampala group was quick to state that in developed countries, when a candidate loses an election they concede defeat and work with government or their party. In Uganda, if one loses an election, they become enemies of government forever and vice versa. ‘Instead of government learning from the opposition, they fight, and we at the grass roots suffer. Even us the voters we become enemies forever. There is no democracy in Uganda’ (Kampala, Mbale town).
The respondents also argued that there is no democracy because some categories of people have been stopped from engaging in politics. For example, religious leaders are being denied the chance to participate in matters that concern the country. Are they not citizens? On the other hand, some citizens think that there is democracy because they have been given a chance to exercise their right to vote. The bigger percentage said:

Elections would only bring or mean democracy if people had an opportunity to choose the person they want. (Lira, Soroti, Hoima, Kampala)

It would mean democracy if the elections were free and fair. You come to vote and find that someone has already voted for you. We don’t get a chance to vote for ourselves. (Youth, Sembabule; youth, Kampala)

This means that democracy has been hampered by vote buying, intimidation, rigging and violence. Because of this, Ugandans cannot claim that elections necessarily bring democracy. Democracy is also said to be undermined by the commercialisation of politics in Uganda, where those who wish to lead buy their way into office (Luweero, Mbale, Soroti town).

On the question of the key determinant of choice of leaders and whether the FGD felt elections are still necessary, many of the respondents expressed distrust in elections. The most affected group in this category were the youth and persons with disability (PWDs) who felt very strongly that elections do not serve any meaningful purpose in Uganda (Kayunga, Mbale, Sembabule, Luweero town). On the other hand, the elderly seemed to be a little more content with the system, albeit pointing out a few weaknesses in the existing electoral processes (Lira, Soroti, Hoima rural, and Luweero rural).

On the pertinent issue of credibility of leaders, and whether the respondents would re-elect the current leaders, the respondents gave varying answers even within the same FGD. On the whole, most respondents, and especially the elderly and the PWDs, stated that they would re-elect those leaders who had performed quite well in their respective roles (Hoima, Mbale, Kayunga, Soroti). Some elderly people in Luweero rural, Mbale rural and Kayunga still believe that President Museveni is doing well. They cited bringing peace as a major reason to support their opinion. They do not want to get disorganised again. This view was mainly strong in Luweero. However, the youth seemed to always agitate for change in most of the FGDs except for a few that had National Resistance Movement (NRM) mobilisers. The youth maintained that they would not re-elect the current leaders because of corruption and deteriorating service delivery (Kampala, Lira, Mbale, Luweero town). In Soroti town, the two members who were supporting the NRM were put to task and actually ended up failing to defend the regime. In Arua, it was hard to understand who
supported the current regime. All members of the FGD seemed tired of the NRM. They said ‘the system is rotten’ (elderly members).

**Vote buying, intimidation and violence**

Regarding vote buying, the respondents wondered why the team asked the obvious. They said, ‘If you are Ugandans you should know this.’ Vote buying has been institutionalised and is practised by all candidates, starting from the top (Lira, Soroti and Mbale). It is hard to stop it because it starts with the incumbent. For example, the youth in Mbale were given USh. 170 million to abandon Mbabazi and join Museveni (Mbale town). Votes are sold in exchange for money, soap, salt, alcohol etc. It was also revealed that in Erute South constituency, each voter had recently been given USh. 50,000 to influence their vote. In the city, however, it was argued that vote buying takes a relatively different trend. *Boda boda* riders can be bribed with motorcycle tyres and helmets, while the other urban poor may take alcoholic beverages and airtime. Even the polling assistants of ‘poor’ candidates may be bought off (Ntinda, Kampala). ‘A hungry man observes no taboos’ (Soroti town).

Money automatically influences the vote because of the biting poverty in the villages (Lira town). Furthermore, some respondents noted that ‘you can’t take somebody’s money and you don’t vote for him or her; that would be betrayal of the highest order’ (Soroti village).

Citizens expect these items (bribes) to start coming in the run-up to elections. In the coming elections it has been said that this is a time to get rich. You either get rich now or never. This is mainly because 2016 is bringing two giants – Museveni and Mbabazi. ‘We are not happy with police which stops Mbabazi from coming to us. He is bringing money’ (Hoima, Lira). People confess that they also look forward to receiving money or other items. Some argue that those items influence their voting pattern. Some people may think that a person who gives them a bribe is the one who will deliver rather than one who does not (*akuba amalusu*) (Kampala, Soroti rural). Poor people may not lead well and if you have no money you cannot influence anything (Hoima). But the mature Ugandans feel sad when they see what young people are doing. They stated that young people only think about money but not the future. They wondered how one can sell the country for a mere 5,000 Uganda shillings (Soroti, Lira). ‘For us during the 1960s we were the ones contributing money for the candidate rather than expecting from the candidate. That means that voting made sense because you would vote a candidate that is competent as opposed to voting because of money’ (Lira).

On the other hand, others think that they can ‘eat’ the money but vote the candidate they want. The elders highlighted Lango’s gallant leaders, such as Dr Okullu-Epak, who often used to mobilise the masses by saying: ‘You can play with my stomach but not my mind.’ Unfortunately, such people have reduced in number (Lira town). Others said that it depends on someone’s heart and their level of Christianity. Some are good Christians who
may not want to ‘eat’ your money and then fail to vote for you (Lira village). Others are intimidated after receiving money or other items. Sometimes they tell you that there are cameras that will be seeing you. You must vote rightly and because of fear, people vote out of fear for their lives. While there are laws against vote buying, corruption has rendered the laws irrelevant. In Lira they said, ‘Even if you get someone buying votes and you report them, as long as they are NRM nothing is done.’ Citizens justify their need for money at the time of elections with the claim that that is the only time they see their leaders.

If the next time I am going to see this candidate is in the next 4-5 years, why don’t I get my share (money) now? (Hoima town)

While all the respondents, including officials, concurred that there is vote buying, all the respondents from rural Mbale denied knowledge and the existence of vote buying in their community. They noted that the aspirants only attend to social or societal challenges such as the infrastructure but never dish out money or items. They said: ‘We wish they could give us (items) during the campaigns.’ This is quite odd; it is different from the views expressed by the FGD in Mbale town. This, therefore, raises the question of whether the respondents were coached or warned before they were interviewed.

All Ugandans interviewed were unhappy with service delivery in the country. Unfortunately, service delivery has a direct impact on the candidates, whether councillors or MPs. One respondent said, ‘At our health centre here it is a crime to get sick on Saturday. You need to get sick on Monday or other days. But even then, you must fall sick after 11:00 a.m. because that is when you see a nurse.’ Another lamented, ‘My child died at 10:00 a.m. before we could see a doctor at the health centre’ (Hoima). All these assertions came from citizens who thought that if elections were free and fair, they would elect leaders who would work for them (deliver services). Citizens think the reason why some people may sell their country for a packet of salt or a piece of soap is poverty.

The respondents highlighted that intimidation plays a very big role in elections. ‘People are told that if they don’t vote Museveni, there will be war’ (Lira and Soroti). Other respondents feared to talk about the candidate they support for fear of being beaten and imprisoned (Lira, Kayunga and Luweero).

We fear to be agents of other political parties for fear of imprisonment. Even when Mbabazi comes, we shall fear to go there. Why do we die? When we get imprisoned, Mbabazi or Besigye will not get us out. It is me and my family to suffer. (Hoima)
Indeed, some respondents testified that they had registered as NRM party members to receive the NRM party card as a way of getting favours from the government, including services and jobs, for themselves and their children (Kayunga, Mbale and Soroti).

Voters are intimidated to get them to vote for a particular candidate during the elections. There is always massive involvement of the army in elections. In a way, therefore, the voters get scared and threatening language is even used to scare the voters (Soroti rural). Other people support Museveni not because they want him but because they fear the repercussions of joining the opposition. Actually, the campaign language used now is: ‘Olika kke wekoledde’ literally meaning, ‘Do you have any wealth?’ If that is the case, then you should vote President Museveni to safeguard your wealth (Ntinda and Bukoto, Kampala).

Citizens reported that military helicopters normally fly around a day before elections. This intimidates people because they believe that if they do not vote Museveni, there will be war (as happened in Luweero). It should be remembered that Museveni said he can cause insecurity in northern Uganda again (Lira). The threat of insecurity is not only targeted at the wananchi, it is also targeted at candidates who contest against the will of the government. When you aspire to contest, someone concocts a story that you are recruiting rebels and the whole military squad will come after you (Lira). Other people are intimidated in other ways, and yet others are told that they could lose their lives; and murder is sometimes attempted, especially through planned road accidents (Kampala).

However, one of the members of the FGD in Hoima town indicated that intimidation only exists in people’s minds and is not a reality. He remarked, ‘When the opposition wins, it says it worked hard, but when it loses, it says there was intimidation. And moreover the opposition tends to misinterpret the law and that is why they are always in conflict with police.’ This specific member, however, was a bit reticent during the interview. Whenever he was around, members were not free to air their views. Whenever he moved out, however, the members would freely express their views, including those against the government. From the researcher’s observation, this person seemed close to the government in power. He even asked the researchers for an introductory letter.

Apart from intimidation, a lot of violence happens around the campaigns and elections. That is the time for the emergence of kiboko squads. It was reported that there was a kiboko squad in Lira. ‘Kiboko squad’ was an expression used mainly in Lira and Soroti. There is always heavy deployment of soldiers and military equipment on polling day, and people were even ordered to remain indoors after 5:00 p.m. in 2011 (Mbale). It was reported that sometimes there are planned accidents and the people who are normally affected are
members and supporters of the opposition. However, one of the members of the Kampala FGD highlighted that this scenario cuts both ways. Sometimes if there is a gathering of opposition loyalists wearing, say, a T-shirt bearing Besigye’s portrait, and someone wearing one with Museveni’s portrait joins them or passes by, he may be beaten. However, the Kampala group emphasised that even when that happens between the voters, opposition supporters are harassed by the police and the military more than the ruling party supporters. ‘Why do the police take sides?’ the group asked. In Lira, when Besigye was announced winner, four people were killed, and others were beaten by the police. People think that this is intended. In Kayunga district, an official blamed the youth for the military deployment during elections because the youth are stubborn and never take instructions from the police. They normally say: ‘Tetujja kuvaawo okujakko nga militare yezze’, meaning ‘We won’t leave this place until the military (police) come.’

Besides the public, sometimes elections cause chaos in homes. If a wife supports a candidate other than the husband’s, it can bring violence in the home (Sembabule). Some wives do not vote for their (own) husbands when they stand. In a Hoima village, one candidate got only two votes. He confirmed it was his friend who had cast the second vote because the friend had accompanied him to vote. He was sure his wife had not voted for him. And this caused violence at home. While electoral violence occurs in the community, it also does occur in homes because of gender dynamics.

**Rigging**

Rigging compromises democracy, yet in Uganda it is not unusual. People had this to say: ‘The electoral commissioners are selected by the president. What do you expect?’ (Lira, Luweero, Hoima, Sembabule and Soroti). As already hinted, some people turn up to vote only to discover that someone else has already voted on their behalf. Others do not find their names on the register in spite of having previously checked and confirmed that their names were on the register. Others claimed that when they go to vote, they are told to move to another polling centre, which they reach and are told to proceed to yet another one, so they give up. Moreover, this happens in villages where travel is difficult and the distances between polling stations are long. People end up giving up on voting because of the confusion on the register. Some respondents think such anomalies are deliberate while others think it is the responsibility of the voters to check before elections.

The clean-up of the register was also questioned. Names of non-Ugandans (Rwandese) were on the register in the last election (Lira). Even when you report, nothing is done. Below are some confessions:
Eeh, non-Ugandans are many here and they vote. (Hoima)

But I voted twice in the last election. (Hoima rural)

You can see someone voting twice or you can see someone putting five ballot papers in the basin while the police is watching and you just keep quiet...You find dead people on the register and the live ones missing. (Hoima rural)

All these are confessions from Ugandans. It seems rigging has been institutionalised. Sometimes the ballot papers counted exceed the number of votes cast (Hoima, Mbale town).

Citizens were concerned that when the ballot papers are printed, no clear order seems to be followed.

   You find that the bus (NRM) will either be at the top or at the bottom. It becomes easy for someone to see where your hand is going. And once you finish voting, you get intimidated and you may think that there are cameras. If one person tells other voters, then others will vote a candidate against their will because of fear. (Lira town)

It was also revealed that there were ghost polling stations, e.g. Forest Nursery in Mbale had and still has two polling stations yet it has a population of about 20 people only. The citizens argued that elections are meaningless because of such rigging. They argued that elections can only make sense if the EC is independent. In Sembabule in 2011, some of the polling stations closed by 9:00 a.m. Though the polling officials stayed at the polling station, they were not working. They claimed that the voters had voted in one hour and finished. So, most people did not vote because others (not known) had voted in the place of the rightful voters. The citizens were wondering whether this was normal.

The citizens were also concerned about what happens between the time they vote and the time results for presidential elections are announced. Why are presidential results not announced at every district for easy follow-up? (Sembabule). Others revealed that on the polling day, Umeme power is switched off (Lira). The citizens wondered whether this is intended to steal votes, or whether power supplied by Umeme fears votes.

The citizens were concerned about the polling stations within the military barracks. The citizens think that these tend to distort the outcome of the vote. Being restricted areas, the military barracks make it very difficult for the opposition candidates to access them during the campaign period (Lira). It is also questionable whether the military get a chance to vote for the candidates they want. And the citizens suggested that the president should resign
before elections so that he is on the same footing as the other candidates. The president uses state resources to campaign and yet the other candidates do not access the same (Sembabule, Mbale). To the citizens, this is open cheating.

**Citizen’s awareness of the role of different institutions**

- **Police**

  The citizens (except for a few) that the research team talked to had no kind words for the police:

  Police is militarised and we don’t know who the police are and who the army is. We wonder what will happen when NRM leaves power. (Lira town, Hoima rural and urban)

  The army cannot and can never act like the police. The police are supposed to be calm and keep law and order but the army (by the nature of their training) is violent. Unfortunately, the police commander is an army man and so are the police officers. Seventy per cent of DPCs are military officers masquerading as policemen (Lira town, Soroti town).

  The violence we see is not a mistake; it is just how the army behaves. (Kampala, Sembabule)

  We see the army recruiting people when it is close to elections. Like now there are names that have been forwarded for training. (Sembabule)

  It is unfortunate that the military gets involved in elections. They should not even vote. How do you expect military and police to vote objectively? (Lira and Soroti)

  The citizens think that the institution of police does not exist. ‘It is a gone case and just the personal property of Museveni’ (Kampala, Mbale, Lira and Soroti). The Kampala respondents said that instead of the police keeping the civilians safe, it is now a ‘keep NRM safe’ force. ‘The police are like a woman, they work on orders’ (Sembabule). This suggests that the police as an institution is not independent and most citizens do not understand the role of the police in Uganda anymore. The police is believed to be one-sided. ‘Have you seen how police is stopping Mbabazi and Besigye from campaigning? How come Museveni’s supporters are allowed to do anything?’ (Hoima, Lira, Sembabule). ‘There is nothing to do to police because we do not pay it’ (Sembabule village youth). The citizens think that the police needs overhauling. They said that even Primary 7 dropouts are recruited. Such people cannot understand the law. ‘Police officers try to bend the law. Yet you cannot bend the law, you can only break it’ (Lira).
The police are also associated with crime preventers. Crime preventers are supposed to help the police. The citizens think that instead of crime preventers preventing crime, they end up becoming crime creators (Hoima rural). ‘Even the police have put people on bunkenke (tenterhooks). People fear the police’ (Luweero). The police, who are supposed to protect people, are now feared. ‘When we see police, we think of tear gas and beatings. What else can we expect from police?’ (Kampala). In a Kampala FGD (Bukoto), the respondents noted that the police are totally off-track.

• **Electoral Commission (EC)**

The citizens have lost hope in the Electoral Commission (EC). “As long as the EC is still appointed by the president, there cannot be free and fair elections. The EC is dead, it should be buried” (Ntinda, Kampala).

The citizens are crying out for an EC that is not only independent in name. They argue that the institution needs an overhaul. ‘It does no good to just change the name without changing the appointing authority’ (Lira, Mbale and Luweero). The citizens pointed out that the state is a one-man’s show (the president). They asserted that he tends to dictate on what should be done, and sets the terms and conditions for the EC commissioners who usually want to please their appointing authority at all costs.

The citizens reported that the Ugandan EC is performs excellently when it comes to rigging. ‘The Ugandan EC was sent to Kenya to cheat votes’ (Sembabule rural). Corruption at the EC was also pointed out by a youth who cited an incident in the previous elections where money (meant to bribe the EC polling officers) was delivered in a flask disguised as tea (Lira town). An elderly respondent observed that the [EC] registrars at the polling stations are independent and professional but the problem is with Prof. Kiggundu (the EC chair). The citizens made suggestions aimed at improving the EC. Some suggested an elected EC with representation from different parties. Others suggested a body that can come from a different country to carry out the exercise (Sembabule rural). In the same group, however, others disagreed, arguing that if outsiders came to manage elections they would not know who is a Ugandan and who is not. They also argued that it would mean that Ugandans were paying their money to non-Ugandans for a job that can be done by Ugandans themselves. This exemplified a spirit of nationalism exhibited by rural Ugandans.

Another view was that the EC had not played its role when it came to voter education (Mbale, Lira and Soroti). All the respondents from rural sub-counties were of the view that voters are not properly sensitised and most of them are ignorant about issues related to the
register (Mbale). Generally, no or little sensitisation had been done about the clean-up of the voters’ register and mobilisation to get voters to check their names on the voters’ register on display (Soroti rural).

- **The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)**

The UHRC is not very popular among the citizens. Actually, some citizens do not know what it does. For those who knew the UHRC, it was reported that the UHRC ‘comes out’ late and usually merely to ask ‘what happened’ long after the security and kiboko squads have caused mayhem. For example, it was reported that in Katakwi district during the Usuk county by-elections, there was a lot of violence and the UHRC came out to ask what had happened (Soroti rural):

Why does the UHRC come to us when it is too late? What does it help us? And when they come and ask questions, what do they do? We never hear about their intervention.

(Luweero and Soroti village)

**Views from different institutions about elections**

- **The police**

The police was happy with their work during elections. The police argued that they deploy a police officer at every polling station and try to do their best. They asserted that the police have to make sure that no voter puts more than one ballot paper in the box and that no one runs away with the box. They affirmed that their job is to keep law and order. So, if the citizens do not abide by the law, they will be forced to do so. Most of the police officers interviewed had not supervised an election in the areas in which they were located at the time of the research. They had been transferred there after the last elections. The research team managed to talk to members of the police in every district. Some of the police officials were not sure whether they should talk to the researchers. Some avoided the researchers, mainly because of fear for their jobs. However, alternatives were found. Indeed, one asked whether the researchers had talked to the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) and whether the RDC was comfortable with the research agenda.

Most police officers think that elections deliver democracy. They argued that since no one is coerced to vote, people chose the leaders they wanted (Lira, Sembabule). ‘Elections are normally fair because we do not hear complaints’ (Lira). The police also reported that there is transparency during vote counting, and whoever wins an election is the one declared winner (Mbale). Since the police believe that the elections are free and fair, most
of them believe that elections deliver democracy. However, some of the police officers think that democracy needs a lot of improvement.

We have a lot to improve, especially people’s perceptions – because some politicians take politics as a matter of life and death (a job) they don't go with a spirit of serving the people. (Kayunga)

Citizens vote because of the influence of other people but not because they know why they vote. Some leaders themselves do not know what to do. For example the woman MP of Mityana was working on the road. She must have gotten a lot of loans yet that is not her job. (Sembabule)

Since neither people nor their leaders know their role it means that democracy is still far from being achievable in Uganda.

The police are aware of vote buying. However, they police claim that their hands are tied because proving the buying is difficult. Further, the police argue that vote buying influences the choice of candidate because most people vote on the basis of being paid. ‘In these elections, it’s all about money. The voters know how much the MPs earn, and they expect to eat some’ (Lira). The police confessed that even when the police want to arrest those who engage in bribing for votes, coming across evidence of voter bribery is quite difficult because neither the recipient nor the giver of the bribe is willing to testify against the other. Besides, vote buying has been normalised. When Mbabazi was stopped in Jinja on his way to the consultative meetings in Mbale, the wananchi ‘blamed’ the police for having stopped him because Mbabazi was going to give them (the voters) money. The police are, therefore, left in a very serious dilemma.

The research team was interested in understanding the role of crime preventers because the wananchi said a lot about them. The police reported that crime preventers are not members of the police (force). Constitutionally, any person can undergo military training. The skills relating to know how government works and to patriotism are very important. The aim of training crime preventers is to have a crime-free society. Where the police manpower is insufficient and where a crime would (otherwise) go undetected, a crime preventer would report such a crime and that is why the government recruited them. Others pointed out that crime preventers were also recruited to promote government programmes. However, it was reported that these crime preventers were normally given yellow T shirts. This means they were not working for the government but the NRM. Asked about the role of the military during elections, most police officers argued that the reason the army takes part in the elections is because there are few police officers. They affirmed that the police cannot
cover the whole country and that the military come in to beef up the police, and that sometimes they are just on standby.

In Luweero, the police reported violence in the last elections. When the results were announced, it was believed there was rigging. The election was between Democratic Party (DP) and NRM contestants. It was observed that violence normally occurs when groups of people fail to concede defeat and, therefore, violence is incited by the politicians themselves. The police in Luweero think that if the EC invested in electoral education, people might understand why they vote and that in an election there is always a winner and a loser. ‘You cannot behave like Northcote Hall (at Makerere University), insisting that we either win or they lose. That is not proper’ (police officer, Sembabule). The officer added that there is also need to guide the media on what to report. Some people discuss politics when they do not know what they are talking about (ignorance). The official suggested that sometimes the incidents of violence the media reports are not true.

When violence breaks out, the youth and women are usually the most seriously affected. Some women get threats from their husbands regarding who they should and should not vote for on pain of being punished. People fight and when they do, such incidents are reported and the cases taken up, investigated and prosecuted. For example in Bufumbo, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and NRM supporters fought and the police took the one who started the fight to court (Mbale). Violence was reported by the police in some areas but the police claimed it is normally brought under control.

The police reported that the biggest challenge they have is when people and some political parties do not follow the law and guidelines.

When we force them, they misunderstand us. (Luweero)

People are not educated. You tell them one thing, and they do another. Some people come to campaign at the polling station and yet campaigns should stop two days before elections. Candidates are supposed to inform the police about the motive of their gathering and the number of participants when they are carrying out consultations. There are places that are gazetted where candidates may not hold rallies. And because the police are law enforcers, they cannot allow anarchy! For example police was escorting Sejjusa but on the way, he parked cars in the road. It was inconveniencing traffic. When they are tear-gassed, people shout that police is inconsiderate. I know that some officers make mistakes but that does not mean that all police are like that. (Sembabule)

The police are hoping for a peaceful election in 2016.
Once this issue of Museveni and Mbabazi is sorted out, I do not expect any problem. I want to assure you there will be no violence. Even if it means training at night. The good thing we have enough security. (Sembabule)

Whatever this meant, it seems to indicate militarisation of elections and that the president must win the election. While some officers claim that there cannot be violence, some police officers seem to foresee violence emanating from the recent misunderstandings between Mbabazi and Museveni. To this end, the police are trying to encourage people to play mature politics and for all candidates to have equal opportunity to access their voters. While some officers think that those who were stopped from carrying out consultations, such as Amama Mbabazi, did not follow the law, others feared to comment. To the researcher, they feared because they did not believe that what had happened was right or lawful. Some actually confessed that political parties have equal chance but not equal opportunity; in essence, that the ruling party has an upper hand, and will do everything in its power to stay in power.

The need to protect one’s job and cover up wrongdoing was found to exist not only among bureaucrats but the police as well. They think that as long as you ‘are eating’, you should not make noise even when things are going wrong. One police officer said, ‘Look at stupid Lukwago. Instead of working with Musisi and become part of that success, he is making noise and is thrown out of office.’ The message means that leaders need to keep quiet as they eat. ‘Morals are dead, and if leaders have no morals, they cannot offer what they do not have’ (police).

Some members of the police expressed no hope in The Democratic Alliance (TDA). As one officer commented:

I had thought that the alliance would do better but they are now all confused. For example, the Democratic Party have like 50 members only and are still divided thus people are choosing to be with the ‘devil they know’ – the NRM.

**Electoral Commission**

The registrars in the different districts knew that their job is to ensure free and fair elections. They have what they call an election cycle, which starts with the demarcation of electoral areas. If new districts, parishes or villages are created, they are confirmed as new units. The demarcation of electoral areas is then followed by the registration of voters. The registration of voters countrywide was this time based on the mandatory registration for national identity cards (IDs), which was done for all citizens of 16 years and above. The
assumption was that all those citizens who were aged 16 at the time of registration would automatically qualify to vote in 2016. However, one registrar reported that this would not be the case (not all registered for IDs were 18 years by the time of display) since the registration, verification and display of the voters’ register had strict time lines to be observed according to the national election laws. Indeed, the closing date (otherwise known as the ‘cut-off’ date) for verification of voters’ names on the register was 11 May 2015, a year from the date of commencement of the mandatory national registration for the national IDs.

The display of the voters’ register is normally done for 21 days and the clean-up exercise follows. For the 2016 election, this was expected to end by the end of July 2015. It is expected that once the register is displayed, all registered citizens are supposed to check out their names properly. It is they (wananchi) who are supposed to help the EC clean the register. They are supposed to report any deaths, non-Ugandans, ghost voters and the underaged from the voters’ register at each polling station. Voters whose names are reported to have been deleted from the register are given a natural justice period of 10 days to confirm the deaths and non-citizens. The requirement is that one person can only recommend one deletion. A parish tribunal comprised of five members – with one or two women and prominent elders of integrity – sign the form(s) recommending the deletion. It was interesting to note that sometimes it happens that some people may aim at deleting others just because they are opposing their candidate. It is because of this that the tribunal was put in place and the provision for 10 days for natural justice made. Fortunately, it was reported that lately death certificates had been introduced (Luweero). This was expected to be helpful to prove deaths. However, the biggest challenge the EC faces is that most voters do not check their names and end up missing to cast their vote. But it is also true that some people still do not find their names on the register on polling day because of challenges within the EC (Luweero).

Another pivotal role played by the district registrar is nomination and harmonisation of the campaign programme exercise for the various candidates in the contest. Harmonisation of the campaign programme usually involves the candidates themselves through their authorised agents. Campaigns are supposed to stop 48 hours (two days) to polling day to allow for the distribution of polling materials at the respective polling stations. The regulations for campaigns indicate that they must be conducted only between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. for the security of the candidates and their supporters. However, such regulations are never followed by the candidates. They campaign till late. They campaign even on the eve of polling day. Some even campaign on polling day. Decrying this, EC registrars observed, ‘Unfortunately our hands are tied. We cannot do anything. We can only rely on police’ (Lira, Soroti and Sembabule).
It is also the role of the EC to recruit polling officials. And these officials usually reside in the same villages to help the EC identify the residents or non-residents of those particular villages. Applications for these officials are normally open to everyone with Ordinary level certificate. It is a free exercise and has nothing to do with the party one belongs to. When finally the voting kicks off on polling day, the registrar and polling officers have to supervise the election process, do the tallying and serve as returning officer to declare all election results for district/member of Parliament. It is only presidential election results which require tallying at the national level. During the post-polling stage, the registrar, acting as the returning officer, has a duty to publish the election results after declaring a winner and to gazette the candidate in the Uganda Gazette before the eventual swearing-in of such candidate. It is at this stage that any aggrieved candidate (loser) who seeks to challenge the election of a candidate can then come up to challenge the same.

Registrars reported that each polling station should have a police officer. These police officers at polling stations are normally armed and members of the military may come when necessary. But the military do not put on uniform. One registrar confirmed that in 2011, there were armed soldiers in Pallisa. Others state that police officers are normally present at polling stations and that the army only comes in when there is violence, such as happened in Lwemiyaga. Otherwise, the army should not take part in elections. All political parties have a chance to post an agent at each polling station to observe what takes place there. Each agent is given the results from the polling station for verification. It is only political parties that do not have enough money to pay their agents that may not have an agent at every polling station. Political parties that have money may have several agents at one polling station.

The link between democracy and elections has been rendered tenuous by both apathy and voter fatigue in the context of northern Uganda. Also, the people think that politics does not ‘put food on the table’. This belief has been mainly fuelled by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) practice of providing transport refund, soda and other refreshments, etc. People would rather go to their gardens than attend important activities such as voter sensitisation, which offers nothing. Furthermore, the elite shun voting on polling days as they find the idea of lining/queuing up to vote quite cumbersome. People seem to have no interest in voting and voter education. This may mean that elections do not matter to the people of Uganda. We may, therefore, find it difficult to conclude that elections bring democracy. Others think that elections deliver democracy because people are free to decide on the leaders they want through voting. The EC only conducts civic education when there are workshops, radio talk shows, etc. For example, in Kayunga it was reported that civic education was being done on Sauti radio station. But most EC officials think the education offered is not enough. Moreover, even radio shows are scheduled for mornings or for hours that are not convenient for rural people.
The registrars confirmed that vote buying and selling is very widespread. The person who wins the election should be good, but should also have the money. Elections are largely about money changing hands as opposed to a focus on issues. As one respondent commented: ‘It is a cancer. And it is likely to stay with us for some time. The presidency itself promotes this. At each gathering, the president will always give out money in the name of facilitation.’ It is hard to distinguish ‘facilitation’ from vote buying. All the monies distributed during campaign time come in the name of facilitation but its (actual) intended purpose is to influence the vote (outcome). So it all turns out to be vote buying and bribery. The bribery takes the form of goods such as salt, sugar, soap, usually two to three days to polling/election day.

In the night, the voters are told not to close their doors to allow safe passage of those goods. All the footpaths leading to the polling stations are mainly ‘littered’ with people distributing money in the denominations of USh.1,000, 2,000, 5,000 and 10,000, depending on the ‘weight’ of the prospective voter with messages of ‘Vote so and so. He or she is the one who has given us the money.’ (Soroti, Kayunga).

In the end, an unpopular candidate all of a sudden becomes ‘popular’ and wins the election. The vote swings/changes overnight. The vote is swayed by the money. Exchange of gifts automatically influences the outcome of the vote. Otherwise if candidates/aspirants were giving out these goodies and reap nothing, the practice would have long stopped.

Vote buying is illegal but the powers of the EC are limited.

We give guidelines but they are not followed. Intimidation sometimes happens. Even EC officials are intimidated sometimes by candidates. The EC can only rely on the police but sometimes the police do not act. For some, the police are very helpful when needed’ (EC official, Lira).

Another form of rigging was pointed out. It is called the creation of or giving a ‘political corridor’. It is a specialised strategy whereby the security forces – the police and other security agencies – have a well-designed way of leaving a particular candidate or the candidate’s agents to commit illegalities at a polling station with impunity. The security forces are aware of what is going on. The candidate is going to give out bribes but a ‘security vacuum’ will be deliberately created by the members of the security forces deployed at the station claiming that they need to urgently run to place X to ‘save’ an urgent security threat and will be back ‘shortly’. A lot of time goes by before the members of the security forces return; meanwhile the havoc goes on at the polling station or area where they should legitimately be. In some instances, the police may leave behind a
skeleton staff/manpower that cannot do much. They will always tell the EC that they (police) have intelligence information that chaos was likely to erupt at point A or B and that heavy deployment was needed compared to where they are or are supposed to be (which is quite calm). The claim for ‘reinforcement’ is not genuine, nor does the ‘feared’ emergency ever materialise. It is all a gimmick to rig in favour of a particular candidate who has already bought or paid them.

However, one of the registrars noted that, despite the widely talked about vote buying and selling, most of this talk was not true. He gave an incident in which a ‘voter’ called his office ‘complaining’ about massive rigging and vote bribery in the constituency (Hoima). This was the only official who seemed not to have heard of or seen vote buying. Asked whether the giving out of materials such as sugar, salt, etc. in essence affected the vote outcome, the registrar was rather cagey, and simply stated that ‘the practice (vote buying and selling) is not that rampant and in effect since the voting is by secret ballot, it can’t be affected by the exchange of materials.’

Most registrars think that elections have been free and fair. They argue that the fact that the public yearn for elections means they have confidence in and respect for the institutions that conduct elections. Most of the EC officials have no fears about the next elections, except in Sembabule where supporters of Sekikuubo are expected to engage in acts of violence because of past experience. Some officials had experienced violence in areas they had worked but others claimed that they had not. They expected free and fair elections. ‘We shall do our best and we do not expect violence but you never know what may come up. It is in God’s hands’ (Sembabule). On how to avert electoral violence, one registrar noted that the strong collaboration between the police, the EC and other security agencies would help avert any violence. Also, in a bid to avert election-related violence and general lawlessness during the election/campaign period, the EC, with the help of the police, managed to deploy an officer in charge of election-related offences, including violence or threatening violence.

The research team was interested in knowing the role of the military during elections. One respondent asserted:

As long as we have the persons who manage the forces/the commanders of these forces as participants in the elections, with the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, His Excellency the President, still interested in retaining that seat, the armed forces will always interfere, albeit contrary to the law.

As to a solution, one registrar remarked:
We seem to be in a helpless situation but a concerted effort if genuine from all the 
stakeholders can be helpful. The masses also need to reassert their powers and reclaim their 
lost power. The laws are sufficient; the only missing link is that of implementation. The 
court system also needs to be speedy and efficient, not this business of disposing of 
election petitions at the end of the term (five years).

The EC and the accredited institutions provide voter information and because of this, high 
voter turnout is expected in some areas (Kayunga). However, other officials pointed out 
that the information provided is not enough. They claimed that accredited NGOs are not 
doing enough to deliver proper voter education and civic rights awareness. Methods of 
voter education need to be revised because poor voter education has resulted in the 
invalidation of a big number of votes. People do not know if it is their right to ask for 
another ballot paper when the one given is spoilt. This means that citizens do not know 
their rights or what they can or cannot do. It is interesting to note that the EC blames 
NGOs for not giving enough education. The question is: Who is in charge?

The EC did not mention any particular challenges except the need for the remuneration of 
the EC staff to be commensurate with or close to that of the politicians. Good remuneration 
for EC staff will help prevent incidents like the giving of a ‘political corridor’ to certain 
candidates. In other words, the pay of the referee and that of the player should be good. 
Low pay has led to certain polling officers and assistants being compromised to the extent 
that they allow the use of ‘sign language’ such as scratching the head or beard, or 
coughing. Also once polling officers or assistants have been bribed – something to which 
they are vulnerable because of low pay – they will give out of more ballot papers to voters 
to tick a particular candidate.

• **Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and local leaders’ representatives**

Most CAOs indicated that they had not played much of a role as far as elections were 
concerned. They stated that their role in elections had been taken up by the district 
registrar. The CAO’s role now is indirect. However, some CAOs, just like members of the 
police force, feared for their jobs and sometimes contradicted themselves. This 
notwithstanding, some were able to give their views about current developments. Others 
were not willing to speak. Some think that the best thing to do in Uganda is to watch from 
a distance because when you take part you can be misunderstood. If you try to do the right 
thing you could be isolated. Such statements reveal a lot about what that is not said.

CAOs are part of the security committee. They provide or help police with cars and other 
logistics and support the EC. The EC is thin on the ground and, therefore, needs help. In 
Luweero, the CAO believes that no violence occurs during elections and that all political
parties have the same opportunity to participate. He expressed no fears about the 2016 elections because, according to him, the candidates were moving around the country freely. He expected free and fair elections but called upon the candidates to follow the law. Some CAOs reported that people vote but have lost hope. The following remarks bear this out:

When Museveni says that he is the only person with a vision to lead this country, then people leave nature to take its course. The system is not honest. People vote but figures are changed.

The problem we have in Uganda is that we have failed to blend authority with common sense. We have politicians but not leaders.

Human rights are on paper but not actual. We do not see human rights in Uganda. Human rights activists are also constrained. Who can listen to you with human rights if you are not in power?

About democracy, some thought the subject was subjective – depending on the observer. The imperfections notwithstanding, some believed that elections (in Uganda) still bring huge relief. For it is only through elections that the voters can renew the mandate of their leaders. Similarly, with regard to the campaign manifestos, the pressure from the opposition and the ‘alternative solutions’ that they seek to offer to the voters (if elected into office) all help to galvanise the government’s programmes. Others thought that ‘when you see the reason why people vote, it may not be because of what they expect in a leader but what the candidate has offered. People have lost trust in leaders. All categories of Ugandans are paying lip service. Even churches organise fundraisings when it is close to elections’. An example was given of the Bisaka religion in Hoima, where all members are forced to vote a certain candidate. One respondent remarked:

And almost all leaders have visited that place, including the president. The winner takes the heart of the church leader and the rest of the members are forced to comply. Is this democracy?

Others think that elections deliver 50/50 democracy, and others say ‘citizens of Uganda have got a raw deal’. While one of the CAOs supports the current government, he contradicted himself by saying that Uganda’s problems are problems of leadership. He said that 15 years of good leadership are enough to transform Uganda. The question is: How many years has this government been in power? This indicated that people see the problem but have to protect their jobs.
Most CAOs noted that vote buying is the order of the day. There is even a lot of ballot stuffing. An example was given of Nakasongola where the number of people who turned out to vote was more than the actual population. These officials believe that logistics do influence people’s choice of candidate because people are very poor and poor people have no choice. They argued that they cannot do much about vote buying, other than sensitise people. The problem is that it is top-down phenomenon (meaning it starts at the top).

Some CAOs believe that there is no rigging during elections. One said that he did not know anything about it and he referred us to the EC. But others confessed that they had heard complaints from some voters about missing names and others who had not received their national IDs. Some think the EC is attempting to do its work ‘but you sympathize with them. There are many players.’ This literally means that the fact that there are many players means that their work is interfered with. Even the timing of the creation of new constituencies raised questions among Ugandans.

Some of the CAOs empathised with political parties. They believe that opposition parties are competing with the government in power that can access all the services and resources. Yet, the opposition cannot afford to pay agents all over the country. One respondent remarked: ‘The one who has money can easily convert the agent of the one that has no money. There cannot be fairness in this.’ On the other hand, there was concern that political parties are not playing their role. With regard to this, one respondent stated: ‘They act as individuals not parties. The alliance they are creating means nothing. They are greedy. It is rare to find leaders who think about the country. They only think about themselves.’

The CAOs were asked whether they had heard about or witnessed violence and intimidation. They said that ‘violence and intimidation have become part of us and we do not expect anything better in 2016; actually we expect it to be worse. It has already started. Sometimes violence is not physical, it can also be psychological.’ They highlighted overstaying in power as the biggest challenge of Africa. When this happens, the leader has to use all means at his disposal to influence the outcome of an election. One CAO said, ‘We do not understand the role of the military during elections. It is also unfortunate that crime preventers are recruited around the time of elections. Are they part of the police? Are they crime preventers or perpetrators?’ Some revealed that they had heard of incidents of heavy military deployment and intimidation of people. Some pointed out that already there is conflict about what the law actually is, and there are many divisions within NRM. All this seems to be pointing in one direction: the country is heading towards violence. They also raised the issue of the conflict and duplication of work between security organs, for example State House, the police, the military and the President’s Office, which makes differentiating the roles of these different organs complicated in Uganda.
Most of the CAOs interviewed expect free and fair elections. A few fear the possibility of violence, inflation and a lot of deaths, and expect President Museveni to continue in power.

**Local council representatives**

The research team aimed at interviewing the district chairpersons. However, in cases where the chairperson was not available, either the deputy chairperson or the speaker was interviewed. The office of the speaker at the district level is not directly involved in elections. It is only when there is a vacancy in council that the speaker writes to the CAO and the EC notifying them of the vacancy and, hence, the need to organise a by-election (if need be).

On the question of elections and democracy in the country, the local council representatives noted that despite a few challenges, elections had in most cases met the intended objectives, save for the involvement of the coercive state machinery. Some thought that there is democracy since people have the opportunity to decide for themselves. They, however, highlighted some sources of confusion:

For example, Kiggundu has already started displaying the register but the party primaries are not yet finished. This can confuse an ordinary Ugandan. And some even get confused by money. The youth for example are unemployed and anyone can use them. Such confusion and hopelessness may undermine democracy.

The politicians argued that vote buying is common but is hard to identify. It is underground and secretive.

In Uganda if you have no money, you cannot contest. My fellow councillors are not coming back to contest because they have no money. The money we put in the election cannot come back after getting the office. Some people sell their properties. We have nothing to do with vote buying because it comes from the top. (Sembabule)

The issue now is ‘Nfunilawa?’ (meaning, ‘How do I gain from the election?’). They expressed concern that some citizens are compromised and have not used their education well. They claimed the problem is money.

The electorate has failed to understand the role of their leaders, often mistaking them (leaders) to be the government that does everything from building hospitals and schools to constructing roads.
Another ‘fate’ facing politicians is that the electorate want to be told what they want to hear; and not what they should hear: otherwise the candidate/aspirant will not win.

Furthermore, many politicians have fallen ‘prey’ to the excessive demands of the voters to the point of becoming near-bankrupt.

On what should be done to end vote buying and selling, they emphasised the need for civic education. They disclosed that most local council representatives who wish to stand for political office but do not have money to bribe the electorate are sarcastically asked by the voters why they have joined politics, yet they do not have money. In Buganda, (Ssembabule, Kayunga, Luweero and Kampala), the voters would say ‘Atalina manyi taggwa ddalu’ (i.e. he who doesn’t have enough energy shouldn’t run mad). This literally means that since elective politics requires a lot of money to bribe voters, a candidate who does not have money should not bother (contesting).

Some politicians denied ever witnessing or hearing about intimidation. However, others revealed that there is violence and intimidation. One asserted that ‘when you contest against someone that the government wants, you get intimidated.’ Another issue raised by local governments was that they have been left out in terms of facilitation. They said, ‘Parliament only thinks about itself and yet they do nothing. All the work is done by us who are with the people.’ Yet, local leaders claimed that they interact with the people more than the parliamentarians. One of them remarked, ‘It is hard politics when you meet with your voters all the time. Yet parliamentarians are paid quite well and the local leaders are forgotten.’

The leaders argued that if elections and politics are to make sense in Uganda, there is need for improved civic education. But more importantly, if unemployment is not sorted out, violence will not end in Uganda. It was recommended that the government should listen to the youth and sort out the problem of unemployment and poverty.

**Citizens’ views about political parties**

The citizens think that all political parties do not have the same opportunity to compete favorably. ‘We see NRM the ruling party doing anything they want, but other parties are stopped from campaigning, beaten and imprisoned. The NRM does not give a chance to other parties because they do not want them to tell us about the failures of the NRM’ (Hoima rural, Sembabule rural, Arua urban). It was reported that buses and vans are provided to fetch people from their homes. It was also highlighted that you may not be surprised to find a police car also ferrying voters. But if an FDC supporter is caught, he/she is likely to be charged. The citizens asserted that the NRM has more money than the other
political parties and the other parties may not be able to reach all citizens because of financial constraints. ‘The government has decided to block the poor from contesting for political offices, especially in NRM. The amount of money they are charging is quite prohibitive’ (Luweero rural).

The citizens of Uganda think that is no fairness is shown to different political parties before, during and after elections. One respondent confessed, ‘I took part in elections in 2011 as a police constable, but the votes which were not for NRM most times were announced as invalid’ (Sembabule village). This confession indicates that there is ‘daylight’ cheating. Others confessed that, mostly in Kampala, people who were not in the ‘Yellow Book’ (the NRM party register) did not find their names on the national register at their respective polling stations. This suggests that if you are not pro establishment, you are denied the opportunity to vote.

**Citizens’ expectations and fears in the 2016 elections**

All the citizens interviewed were apprehensive about the 2016 elections mainly because of the contest between two bulls (Mbabazi and Museveni). They believe Mbabazi is a threat to Museveni so there was likely to be heavy deployment of the police and military to enable the incumbent regime to maintain itself in power. People think there is likely to be a lot of violence or even war since Museveni has refused to leave power.

We do not see peace ahead. (Luweero rural)

For me I fear to disappear in the next election. They can decide to charge you with any crime and you disappear. (Hoima village)

Some people were afraid of possible bloodshed and said that ‘unfortunately if the president fails to hand over power, all the people in the west will be looked at as one group and we may see genocide’ (Lira town, Soroti town, Luweero rural). Others think it will be the same at it has always been – meaning characterised by intimidation, violence and cheating. They remarked:

Why should we expect anything better? It is the same people coming back and the same EC conducting the elections. There is already some sense of intimidation. They have recruited 3,000 crime preventers in every sub-county. What are they for? How does someone know that another person is about to commit a crime? Why are they given yellow T-shirts if they are not for NRM? (Lira, Soroti).
Other voices:

I am preparing to eat a lot of tear gas and I may not be allowed to attend rallies or campaign. (DP leader, Kampala)

If what we see between Mbabazi and Museveni is not katemba (a game). We hope for the worst. (Kampala)

I don’t expect anything better. Elections now bring more instability than democracy. (Kampala).

It is true that most citizens are living in fear. This is borne out by the comment of one respondent: ‘Our expectation is that the incumbent will not leave power’ (Lira). The disappointment of Ugandans has led them to utter words of disappointment. Some said, ‘We don’t understand whether Museveni is a Ugandan. He has made us enemies with our own children’ (Lira). This also came up because the elderly indicated that those who have children working for the government now face a challenge. The children do not agree with their parents and actually may hate their own parents for opposing the wrong things that the government is doing. The elders’ concern is that the children of today have known only President Museveni. They have never experienced a better system. They have been hoodwinked to the extent of hating their own parents (Lira). The same anger came out in an FGD in Kampala where members were wondering if President Museveni is Ugandan. When they said this, they requested anonymity so as not to be killed. However, one said, ‘I don’t think a Ugandan can do such a disservice to his own people and country.’

Some citizens feared that some people will not be allowed to contest. They can be blocked if the government prefers another candidate. People are also worried about developments within the different political parties. They wonder who to trust. They referred to the chaos within NRM between Mbabazi and Museveni, within the DP between Lukwago and Mao, and within UPC between Akena and Olara Otunu. All this confusion within parties was a puzzle to most Ugandans. Most of the respondents feared for their personal security during and after the elections, and lamented about the likelihood of violence and bloodshed in the aftermath of the elections. They indicated that violence was currently being meted out by the Parish Internal Security Officers (PISOs) and messages were coming mainly from NRM-leaning candidates who threaten thus: ‘If you don’t vote wisely, you will experience war again.’ Such intimidation worried the people and it was reported that some people were thinking of joining a military group (Kayunga).

Another concern among citizens was the anticipated high level of monetisation of elections because of the two giants (Museveni and Mbabazi). They said that both will dish out
money and this may cause inflation (Hoima town). Most of the citizens, mainly those who belong to the NRM, hope for a free and fair election. They argued that security is guaranteed. Most of them ‘expect’ Mzee (President Museveni) to win and that their ‘man’ Eng. Kiggundu would do the ‘needful’ even if the ‘worst’ was to happen. ‘Mzee abewoo, let Amama Mbabazi wait for 2021-2026’ (Mbale rural). One elderly person expressed the fear that the opposition might be bad losers and may cause chaos when they (opposition) eventually lose the 2016 general elections (Mbale rural). However, some of the citizens are planning not to vote, especially for LC1. The system of lining up behind a candidate to elect their leaders has not been welcome by the people. They fear being hated or even killed (Hoima, Luweero village).

Recommendations

These are recommendations from the respondents (citizens of Uganda). The citizens argue that it is a fundamental human right to choose a leader they want. This is not, however, possible with the current arrangement. They recommend that if elections are to make sense, the sitting president should resign so that he can compete favourably with others. He uses state resources and the competitors cannot access the same. This deprives the competitors of the opportunity to win the elections.

The citizens need an independent Electoral Commission. They suggested that if the elections were handled by people from outside Uganda, perhaps they could be impartial. Others suggested that the EC chairperson should not be appointed by the sitting president. They insist that the chairperson should be elected by Ugandans. They also suggested that the EC commissioners should be people from different political parties rather as opposed to the current arrangement where all workers in the EC are NRM.

They suggested that institutions and structures such as the Electoral Commission, the police and others should be working for Uganda rather than for the NRM. The senior citizens also cried out for that sort of civic education that they once had in the country. They wonder why it disappeared and whether the leaders benefit from citizens’ ignorance. They called upon the government to revive civic education in Uganda so that Ugandans can understand why they vote and what happens in their country.

They recommended that the government must change its priorities. It should take the needs of common persons such as teachers seriously. It should provide medicine and pay doctors and nurses better. They remarked: ‘We are suffering. Our Uganda is so funny. A teacher who teaches in a certain school does not take her/his children to the same school. Does it mean that they do not teach well? The leaders we have do not go to government hospitals, yet they are the ones telling us to go there. Why?’ In other words, to make our leaders
accountable, they should use the services that they provide for the public. If this is done, the leaders will make sure that these services are better.

The citizens advise the NRM to stop intimidating others. They assert: ‘It makes us lose hope.’ However, one member indicated that the opposition should also follow the law and keep peace (Luweero).

**Conclusions for the general report**

1. Most Ugandans seem tired of the current government. Those who still support the current government are either those who are directly benefitting from it, those who are intimidated, or those who do not know about any other option.

2. Ugandans have lost hope in Uganda’s institutions such as the police and EC. The institutions are not for Uganda but for the NRM.

3. People with disability, particularly in Hoima, felt left out. They said the system is unfair.

4. Women were generally quiet in meetings where they were mixed with men, except women teachers. However, whenever a separate meeting for women was held, they were active though not as vibrant as men. This suggested that the culturally embedded culture of women giving men a chance to talk manifested itself. Furthermore, politics is culturally a field for men and so women’s participation was minimal. In particular, women in rural Sembabule literally said nothing. Women in Soroti town were also quiet. However, unlike the women in Soroti town who were quiet, the women who were interviewed in Katine sub-county, which is in a rural setting, were very vocal. This presents a sharp contrast between rural-urban/urban women FGDs. The scenario in the Soroti rural women FGD can best be explained by the fact that the women were separated from the male FGD and the two FGDs were conducted simultaneously. Interestingly, however, women local leaders in the villages were more vocal. For example, women in Hoima village and Luweero village were particularly active. Generally, gender issues are determined by exposure and socialisation. As indicated, women who are teachers or leaders were more active than the ordinary ones. But it is also important to note that gender dynamics also come with the kind of people one is interacting with. Generally women/girls in urban FGDs were not as active (except Kampala) because town FGDs had more informed people (men) than rural. Therefore, women in urban settings were outcompeted by men. It is also possible that women have nothing to say because they only follow what their husbands say or do.
5. In regional terms, Luweero seems to fear war a great deal. This fear was especially noticeable among the elderly. They think that supporting Museveni would result in the avoidance of war. They do not want history to repeat itself. At the same time, they think they have not benefitted as much from the government as they should have because of their role in the 1986 liberation war. Mbale had challenges with the then Mbabazi saga (when he was stopped from proceeding to Mbale). And, as indicated in the report, the village FGD seems to have either been intimidated or coached on what to say.

6. Arua and Soroti are totally disappointed in this government, mainly because they think they tested a better system under Obote 1. They also argue that they have been sidelined just because they do not support NRM.

7. Hoima, which has consistently supported NRM 99%, is now a little uncomfortable primarily because of how the compensation for land for oil exploitation has been handled. In addition, there are grievances regarding employment of workers at the oil wells. People in Hoima argued that all those working at the oil wells are not ‘Banyoro’. They wonder how they (Banyoro) are going to benefit from the oil.
SURVEY FINDINGS

PART II

Districts of Iganga, Busia, Amuru, Nebbi, Ntungamo, Rukungiri, Kanungu, Kasese, Kapchorwa and Nakapiripirit
Introduction

This report is structured in sub-themes, namely: background and introduction; understanding elections; election management; election malpractice; independence of the EC and other state agencies; constitutional amendments; alliances and recommendations.

Understanding elections and democracy

Understanding elections

This survey sought to establish from the respondents their understanding of elections, and what election means to them as citizens of Uganda.

A majority of those interviewed understand elections as a process through which they exercise civic rights by voting their desired leaders into office, to represent the voices of the local people at national level and to ensure delivery of services to voters. In addition, many view it as a process where citizens get an opportunity to actively participate in political activities of their country. Specifically, many of the respondents view elections as a process where freedom of expression is realised because people are allowed to express themselves, criticise and hold their leaders accountable. In Iganga, for example, a comparison was made between the current government (NRM) and Obote’s (UPC) government, where people are free to speak their mind, while in Obote’s government, no one would speak ill of the president, lest they faced the wrath of the security forces.

In many places, especially the districts of Kasese, Rukungiri, Ntungamo, Busia and Nebbi, some respondents felt that election time is time to hold leaders accountable and, at the same time, ensure that they ‘pay back’ for the time they have not been around. They noted that it is the time when leaders come to the citizens to explain what they have been doing, what they have failed to do and/or what they plan to do.

In Busia, some respondents argued that conducting regular elections is a sign that the constitution is alive and being implemented.

If the constitution requires that presidential and parliamentary elections are to be organised every five years, and the state has since 1995 complied with this requirement, it is a sign of democracy in Uganda. (FGD, Busia)
Elections were also seen as an opportunity to exercise the constitutional right to vote and other political rights. This is because the Constitution of Uganda grants powers to the people, who must exercise it in accordance with its provisions. Some respondents in Amuru and Nebbi described elections as an opportunity for assessment of both the government in power and other political parties’ performance. This assessment can help improve the performance of leaders. To them, it is, therefore, an opportunity for change, because those vying for elective positions must demonstrate their ability and how they will bring positive change in a particular area. In effect, whether or not an incumbent is re-elected is determined by whether or not he or she has been accountable for his or her time, and his/her strategies. In the event that the incumbent does not impress the populace, a new leader is chosen. Either way, elections are viewed by some as an opportunity for change. In Busia, particularly, elections were defined as the free will to choose a leader.

However, a number of people in the FGDs in the rural areas largely considered election time as the time to make money from candidates vying for different positions. Many thought it was the time to ‘hold their leaders accountable’ by making them pay back. This is because a lot of money circulates in the economy during campaigns. To them, business tends to boom during election time as a result of handouts from candidates. For example, some respondents in Iganga and Busia observed that election time is the only time when contestants give cash and gifts to their people and after elections the elected candidates never return to the community.

Generally, whereas the majority of the respondents and FGDs saw elections as necessary for Uganda, a big number of them saw it as a process that must be undertaken for the sake of following the constitution without necessarily looking at its value. Quite a number of respondents saw it as a time to make money from contestants as opposed to choosing leaders who will represent and plan for them.

**Election as a means to deliver democracy**

The survey sought to assess whether elections in Uganda deliver democracy. There were varying opinions on this question. Some of the respondents in the different districts considered that, even with all the challenges in Uganda’s electoral processes, elections to a large extent deliver democracy. Many noted that at the end of the day the most popular person or the choice of the people wins an election. They observed that, overall, the people’s choice is what reigns and this is in itself democracy. However, some respondents in districts such as Nebbi and Busia were quick to note that whereas elections in Uganda will ensure that the most popular person wins the election, the most popular person may not necessarily be the best person to implement programmes that will bring development to the people. In Busia, for example, FGD discussants noted that sometimes a person is
chosen on the basis of political party affiliation and not his/her manifesto or promise to deliver. This in the end results in poor service delivery and lack of development, which should otherwise have fostered democracy, according to them.

Some respondents and FDGs, especially in Busia, Iganga, Amuru and Nebbi, believe that democracy cannot be achieved in a country where vote buying, intimidation and sometimes fear are prevalent. They noted that vote buying in the name of facilitation such as giving soap, salt or money was common in their districts. Others noted that intimidation was rife and free choice of the people was undermined.

Exchange of materials for votes has become the order of the day, because we voters look at MPs and politicians as people who are going to “eat” and therefore, we demand our share in advance. (FGD, Busia)

Another respondent in Kanungu noted:

You cannot win an election in this area (Kanungu) if you have not paid something. Everyone expects you to give them something and the one who gives most takes the day. People give soap, salt, sugar, boxes of matches, waragi (local brew) or bushera (local porridge) in order to be voted. That has become so normal that everyone is expected to pay something.

Other people blame the lack of democracy in the country on the absence of democratic principles to guide society. In this sense, the government is, therefore, a product of the same society and cannot give what it does not have.

Society shapes the conduct of government; a government cannot be democratic in a society that is not guided by democratic principles. Thus an election is a mere gimmick to show the outside world that Uganda is democratic. (FGD, Iganga urban)

Some respondents viewed lack of education and limited information on elections and its purpose as the main reasons why elections have failed to deliver democracy.

An informed society can use elections to achieve democracy and Ugandan citizens are a long way to get there. (Respondent, Amuru)

In Rukungiri, it was observed by some respondents that electoral democracy cannot exist in a militarised state. It was noted that presidential and parliamentary elections in 2001 and
2006 were characterised by heavy deployment of the police, the military, the Internal Security Organisation (ISO) and private security agencies with guns, which was very intimidating. They equated the situation in 2001 to a state of war. And yet they fear that this may be nothing compared to the upcoming 2016 election. In their view, ‘in 2016, worse is anticipated if Amama Mbabazi is to stand.’

In every election, there is heavy deployment of police and army. Prior to election day people fight, they beat opponents, some are arrested, and others just disappear for days. The people in this area fear arrest, they fear the army. Tell me, after seeing your neighbour’s son being beaten by the police or the army, would you encourage your sons to go vote for your candidate? What we do is you keep quiet and stay home. If you are beaten or feel chaos may result, you do not even go to vote. That’s the only way to be safe and avoid regrets. (Respondent, Rukungiri)

In Rukungiri, Kanungu and Iganga, the respondents pointed to internal political party fights (lack of internal democracy) as the biggest challenge to democracy. For example, party primaries have been defined with blatant voter rigging, intimidation and violence, especially within the NRM. Some respondents accused a certain politician of taking all the NRM ballot materials (‘buckets’) to his home during the 2011 NRM primaries in Mitoma district. They accused him of returning the materials two days later and announcing himself winner of the election. One focus group discussant who contested for LC III under the NRM in Rukungiri testified thus:

During party primaries, you need to win, but party members won’t allow you. I was accused of being an FDC person even when I was contesting in NRM. Police and crime preventers were deployed to support my opponent. When I realised that I could not win in such a situation I got my boys, I trained them and gave them sticks (nkoni) and deployed them in places I knew the other person would cheat. I made sure I am ready for war and if they were to steal my votes my boys would protect them. (FGD, Rukungiri)

There was a view that there is more transparency during elections under the current government compared to past governments. To a large extent, now people have the power and ability to choose their leaders. This is because people are now enlightened, they know how to choose leaders (respondent in Kanungu).
Restoration of term limits for the presidency and re-instatement of term limits for all the elective positions would restore democracy in Uganda (leader in Kanungu).

Views from different institutions about elections and their role

The survey sought to gather from a number of institutions their understanding of and role in elections. The institutions include the Uganda Police, the Electoral Commission (EC) and the District Local Government Authorities (DLGA).

• Uganda Police Force

In most of the districts visited, the police were generally reluctant to participate as respondents and to outline their role in elections. Some of them cited the need to get clearance from the police headquarters in order to speak on election matters, which they regarded as a purely political matter (Iganga and Amuru). While in Busia, the researchers were referred to the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) for all election-related questions because they believe it is a security issue. In Kasese, the RDC first demanded a letter from State House to allow the survey to be conducted in the district.

In Amuru, the researchers faced the stiffest resistance and were threatened with arrest. This happened when the NRM district chairperson, Amuru who, on entering the DPC’s office and found him with the researchers, complained about the focus of the research and the possibility of these researchers being ‘Mbabazi lawyers’.

I cannot allow these to happen here, DPC. Mbabazi said he has 500 lawyers and we have been seeing only a few speaking on TV. That means others are these people pretending to be researchers but spying for Mbabazi. I know lawyers, they are very clever people. I would rather die but cannot allow the survey to continue in Amuru, because I am ready to die for Mzee. These things they are asking people, like the independence of Electoral Commission, are things Mzee does not want! If you cannot arrest them, I will call the Regional Police Commander. (Chairperson NRM, Amuru)

The FDGs had to be stopped midway on the order of the DPC, who also withdrew the attendance list of the participants in the FGD.

In situations where police officers accepted to participate in the survey, the discussion was limited to short responses – for example, ‘police work is to keep law and order’. Further probes produced very little information.
However, in Rukungiri, Kanungu and Kasese, the police officers spoke a little more about their work and the challenges they face. They commended the good collaboration with the EC, which makes their work easy. They also noted that their work has been easy because people know what to do, which resulted in very little violence occurring in their areas. In Kanungu, the police noted that, even with the split within the NRM, they believe there will be no tension and no violence, because Mbabazi’s political interests had not in any way excited the populace in Kanungu.

We also watch the excitement and drama on television as it happens in Kampala, Mbale and other places. It has not reached Kanungu yet. (Respondent, Kanungu)

Police officers in the districts visited complained about the limited number of trained electoral constables, which necessitated the recruitment of crime preventers to play a role, alongside the police, without proper training and qualifications. In some areas, the officers complained of intimidation and orders from above in the course of their work, which sometimes renders them powerless and forces them to serve the interests of individuals. This was highlighted especially in areas from which some current ministers originate. Such ministers have been alleged to have constantly influenced the work of the police.

The researchers established that the police have set up a new department – the Political and Electoral Department – to handle all electoral matters and offences throughout the country. This new development is intended to ease coordination and election management. In Kasese, the head of the unit indicated that they enjoyed a good working relationship with the EC office at the district. Indeed, the researchers got an impression of a good working relationship between the police and the EC in the district when visiting the EC office.

On the other hand, some respondents described crime preventers and election constables as ill-trained and lacking the ability to understand basic civic issues. They observed that the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) lacked a basic training syllabus for the crime preventers and only took them through military drills and then deployed them.

What do they train these crime preventers in other than giving them military skills? What do military skills help in preventing crime? Do these constables even know what a crime is, do they know the processes of crime or investigation? I think these are NRM people trained to protect votes. (Respondent in Ntungamo)
They noted that there are places which are peaceful and rarely experience any electoral violence. Those include the the Sebei region and Ntungamo district, where policing has been easy during the electoral process.

- **Electoral Commission (EC)**

Generally, the EC district registrars claim their work is one way of enabling citizens to exercise their political rights, albeit with challenges. This is because they believe elections have been largely free and fair, which guarantees the choice of citizens’ candidates. They believe elections deliver democracy despite the challenges faced.

> Those elections have entrenched a culture of democracy in the country and that’s why candidates who lose in the elections no longer go to the ‘bush’ to challenge the outcome of the elections. (Respondent, Ntungamo)

They pointed to limited funds to organise elections as their major challenge. This limits the coverage and adequacy of activities such as voter education and sensitisation. They reasoned that voter education should be a continuous process conducted on an annual basis as opposed to the current practice where it is carried out prior to elections, once in five years. This, they argue, would give the EC more time to plan and cover the wider populace and avoid the stampede that comes when elections approach.

The respondents observed that, so far, the pre-election process had been smooth in some areas. For example, in Kapchorwa, the turnout during the verification of the voters’ register was commended as the EC registered 98 per cent success during this exercise. The majority of the voters in Kapchorwa district are well informed and aware of all the electoral processes. They noted that the only confusion had been during the party elections where some voters had come to the EC registrar’s office to vote for their candidate in their party primaries.

Another notable challenge experienced by the EC officers reported during the survey is the ambiguity in the electoral laws. They noted that many times when people are arrested for displaying posters prior to the election period, they are released because it is not clear what they should be charged with.

> Police officers call registrars for advice on what charge should be preferred but I cannot help. I just tell them to release the person. (Respondent, Amuru)
The enactment of the Public Order Management Act (POMA) was also highlighted as a threat to the work of the EC. ‘It is not clear how we should relate with this new law. For me, I will close my eye and only focus on the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections Act’ (respondent Amuru, similar position, in Iganga).

All violence-related cases are referred to the police and when the EC is sued, all support is provided to ensure that justice is secured.

> We are human and any mistake is possible, so candidates can appeal if they are not satisfied with results. (Respondent, Iganga)

The majority of the EC registrars interviewed expect that the 2016 general elections will be peaceful. They have no fear, and believe they will deliver to the public’s expectations. They expressed confidence that should violence occur, the police would be available to intervene. They pointed out holding by-elections as the most challenging task in their work because the whole country’s focus is on one constituency or area. The pressure is always too much and this causes tension. The supporters of many political parties converge to gather support and many times conflict ensues. It was noted that despite the challenges, the EC still does satisfactory work.

Voter bribery was noted by the EC as common but difficult to prove with a view to prosecuting the culprits. The EC reasoned that this practice is occasioned by little or lack of understanding of the roles of leaders by voters, on one hand, and lack of understanding by leaders of their roles, on the other. They emphasised that true democracy should start with the electorate and leaders understanding their roles. This calls for representation and accountability on the part of the leader, but not paying school fees for voters’ children, paying hostel bills, and meeting burial expenses, which have overburdened MPs and other politicians.

> The majority of people who were voted into office, were voted because they gave material things such as salt, sugar, soap and so on. But there are politicians who command respect, like Regan Okumu and Norbert Mao, among others, who even without salt voters are still able to vote for. (Respondent, Amuru)

They acknowledged that different political parties are given equal space and consideration during the campaign programmes, except that the different political parties have different strengths and weaknesses. This determines their performance in the processes and how the EC coordinates with them. For example, some political parties have no offices, structures
or even addresses and operate seasonally, which makes it difficult for the EC to coordinate with them.

The majority of the EC officials whom the research team interviewed were of the view that the emergence of The Democratic Alliance (TDA) was a welcome development as it would give stiff competition to the government in power at all levels if one candidate per post was selected.

On the question of the independence of the EC, most of the registrars affirmed that the EC is independent in doing its work, while some consider the question of ‘independence’ to be complex and not absolute. This is because whether an independent body is set up to appoint commissioners, ‘that same body making appointments get appointed by someone, so it’s a chain, which makes it complex’.

- Some of the EC staff recommend that in order to deliver free and fair elections, there ought to be a multi-sectoral approach because the EC alone cannot deliver free and fair elections. This, therefore, calls for more partnerships.

- They also recommend that the police should step up their work and District Internal Security Officers (DISOs) and RDCs should not be stakeholders in the electoral process, because they are partisan and their intervention always complicates the work of the EC.

• **Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs)**

The CAOs generally noted that they have a limited role to play in elections. This is because the district registrars manage all election matters. The role CAOs play now is mainly the provision of logistical support. They provide cars and other logistics to support the EC. They also offer advice to the security committee of the district, of which they are part, on electoral matters.

In some districts (Busia and Ntungamo) CAOs were reluctant to speak. They considered elections a politically sensitive matter and did not want their voice to come out on the issue of elections because of the neutral role they play as CAOs. One CAO asked: ‘Imagine speaking ill of a candidate and then he turns to be the district chairman. How would you work?’
• **Chairpersons LCV**

The research sought to understand the work of the chairperson LCV and their appreciation of election issues in the respective districts. In some instances during the research, a vice chairperson or members of the council were met in the absence of the chairperson. Overall, the LCV chairpersons noted that their major task around election time is mobilisation and sensitisation of the population generally regarding government programmes. This extends to the electoral period, where voter education becomes part of the sensitisation.

Some LCV chairpersons observed that the biggest challenge faced is the politicisation of the process, where they are viewed as canvassing for votes, yet their cause is genuine for the people. They noted some incidents of violence in previous elections in their areas of jurisdiction. For example, in Busia supporters burnt the houses of political opponents during victory celebrations. Therefore, the LCV chairpersons have not been excluded from this dramatic violence either.

Several LCV chairpersons the research team talked to complained of vote buying, with some describing it as a ‘cancer’ which needs to be dealt with.

It is a burden on candidates at all levels to attend weddings, fundraising meetings, burials and so forth. This can push leaders to steal resources because no one can have such monies to spend everywhere. If you do not appear, you do not get votes, you see the dilemma!

They strongly recommended that a strict ban on demands or soliciting for money or fundraising be levied with a heavy penalty and strict law enforcement. Otherwise, the culture seems to be eating away at Ugandan society. They also recommended that the army should restrain itself from providing security during elections because the voters get intimidated. They strongly recommended that civic education be allocated an adequate budget.

The LCV chairpersons fear that the internal instabilities bedevilling political parties might escalate and pose a risk to the electoral process. Political parties should, therefore, sensitise voters regarding participation and management to calm the voters.
Election management

The survey sought to get perceptions and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the EC in the management of elections. It also aimed at highlighting previous challenges in election management.

- **Electoral Commission**

The respondents indicated that the core mandate of the EC is to organise elections, to ensure that they are free and fair, as well as to secure participation of all eligible voters. This includes the registration of eligible voters, a display of the voters’ register, cleaning of the voters’ register to get rid of wrong or double entries, issuance of voter’s cards, recruitment of election officers, training, and delivery of election materials, counting and tallying of votes and declaring of results. The respondents noted that while the EC has been doing its work, previous elections have witnessed a number of challenges, including the following:

i) Complaints of missing names on the voters’ register on polling day, despite the names having appeared on the register. This disenfranchised some voters in Nebbi and Iganga districts. The respondents registered complaints that the current EC register will not meet the expectations of all stakeholders if it is based on the national ID register which, they claim, is a total mess.

ii) Delays in displaying the voters’ register to enable the voters to check and verify their names. By mid-July 2015, the voters’ register in many of the districts, including Iganga and Busia, had not yet been displayed. This made the rectification of errors on the voters’ register difficult.

iii) The majority of the respondents complained that they had not received voter’s cards from the EC but instead received the national ID and the NRM party cards. It was, therefore, not clear to many respondents what they would use to vote, although they preferred the voter’s card to the national ID. Many of the respondents said that they had previously used the cards and some were not sure if the cards would have been issued by election day. The team noted that the process of distributing national IDs began the day the team was in Ntungamo and it was not possible to ascertain how many people had received the cards. However, many respondents noted that they had registered for the national IDs. The team also noted that in the districts of Ntungamo, Rukungiri, Kanungu, Kasese and Busia the national IDs were being issued through the EC district registrars’ offices. The
issuance of national IDs by the EC, which is not one of its mandated roles, did not seem to confound the public.

iv) Throughout the districts visited, there were concerns about limited voter and civic education to the populace by the EC. The EC officials noted that they had been running radio programmes educating the public on the forthcoming elections. They also noted that the process of voter education is based on the stages of elections, for example registration and update of the voters’ register, nomination, and campaigns, among others. However, the respondents emphasised that voter education was extremely limited. Most of the programme is done on radio as adverts or announcements asking people to take part in a particular event as opposed to explaining why. The respondents also blamed the EC for not doing enough to educate the public about the role of different government agencies and what people should expect. For example, the EC was blamed for not telling the masses that being in opposition is legal and part of the election process.

v) About the use of different media, the respondents noted that radio, newspapers and TV do not reach everyone. This is mainly because many people do not have access to these methods of communication, while a big number who listen to radio only seek out news, announcements and entertainment and switch off during talk shows. They recommended that the EC should gather people under trees, hold open forums and allow people to ask questions and seek clarification.

vi) The research also recorded late delivery of election materials. For example, in Nabitende sub-county, Iganga district, the candidates for district councillor could not be voted for because election materials were not delivered on the scheduled date.

vii) A number of respondents were concerned about the inadequate security during elections, especially on polling day. In the previous elections, most of the polling stations were manned by only two electoral constables, whom, the respondents noted, were inadequate in case violence erupted. There was also concern that most constables were not trained or skilled enough to manage crowds and to manage election-related activities. For example, in Ntungamo one FGD discussant wondered whether these constables could tell the difference between an election-related crime and a normal way of doing things during an election. A case in point is where people solicit votes at polling stations and the election constables are unable to do anything since they do not perceive this as wrong. Another example was given in Kanungu where candidates would bring the local porridge (obushera) and serve it to people returning from voting. The porridge is said to be served
within the premises of the polling station. In another incident a candidate brought a bull to a polling station and informed the voters that it would be slaughtered to celebrate his victory.

In a related incident, it was noted that sometimes there is high deployment of UPDF officers and this instils fear among community members. Notable was the high deployment of soldiers in Rukungiri, Kanungu and Busia where the respondents observed that this gives an impression that it is not safe to vote and some voters stay away as a result. It was recommended that more police constables be trained and deployed. However, it was also recommended that a proper training syllabus for such constables be developed to ease and deal with crowd handling, and the handling of election-related matters.

viii) The absence of proper identification systems was noted by the respondents during the survey as a gap that can lead to election irregularities. The fact that in the last elections there were no voter’s cards and there is a possibility that some people may not have national IDs by the next elections was considered a major factor that may result in multiple voting and other irregularities. The respondents also noted that the constant change of systems by the EC confuses voters. For example, the change from lining up to vote in for LC elections, to using secret ballots and voter’s cards, later to voting without cards and finally the requirement for national IDs may confuse the voters who may not be sure how exactly the are expected to identify themselves.

ix) Some of the respondents noted that sometimes presiding officers are intimidated and suppressed by candidates and their security, especially those from the ruling NRM party. It was disclosed that most of such candidates claim they are very close to the president and, therefore, feel untouchable. On the other hand, some incumbent political leaders have been very chaotic. In Bugweri county, for example, the FGD noted that the Hon. Abdu Katuntu raided a polling station at Bumpingo Primary School and ran away with the ballot box and the police did nothing about it.

x) There was also a concern that the amendments to the laws were coming in late. This, it was feared, could affect the election process, because people, including the police, presiding officers, candidates and voters, would not be able to understand the law and its application, which could result in errors and omissions.
xi) Another concern was the impending creation of new districts, cities and municipalities, which would create new constituencies and, therefore, new electoral units during the coming 2016 elections.

xii) While it was found that parish tribunals were working, it was also noted that the tribunals faced challenges because their decisions were sometimes not respected. The respondents also complained of the provision of limited facilitation to parish tribunals to undertake their work, which made them prone to bribery (FGD, Ntungamo). Some respondents contended that most members of the parish tribunals were NRM-leaning and did not seem to be working in the interests of the people but, instead, had hidden agendas.

**Election malpractices**

The survey sought to gather the respondents’ experiences of election malpractices. These include vote buying, rigging, multiple voting and intimidation. As earlier noted, vote buying defines the electoral process in Uganda. According to many respondents, it is an acceptable norm in politics and no one can go through elections without giving voters salt, sugar, soap and money.

> We get our share because when MPs go to Parliament they become rich and forget about us. Look at this man Katuntu. We only see him during campaigns. We do not know whom they represent because they never consult us (FGD, Iganga)

Rigging has been very common; people vote but sometimes the expected results differ because rigging starts very early. Some respondents accused the EC of aiding rigging, especially for NRM candidates.

The most serious form of election malpractice mentioned was vote buying and facilitation, which many FGD discussants saw as a normal thing that happens all the time. Vote buying takes different forms and methods, including giving soap, sugar, salt, boxes of matches etc. In Rukungiri and Kanungu districts, FGD discussants shared experiences where they were given soap and sugar and would be asked to count match sticks and share them. Another case said to be common was where candidates give out money and material inducements during church and school fundraisings, especially at events held as elections approach.

There was also the issue of voter facilitation. Most respondents, especially from the EC, said the law was not adequate to apprehend those who buy votes in the guise of campaign agent facilitation. This was evident in many testimonies of FGD discussants and the police.
For example, in Ntungamo many discussants testified to having been given USh.20,000 for lunch when the president visited Mbarara. They said buses were sent to town to ferry them to Mbarara after which everyone was given the money. A similar incident was said to have happened in Kasese during the president’s visit. Many citizens, however, saw this as facilitation and nothing to do with electoral malpractices. On the other hand, testimonies were given in Kasese where a candidate was found giving out cash to individuals in a room and he claimed all these individuals were his agents whom he was facilitating to go and look for votes. This happened despite the fact that none of the said agents had an agent appointment letter.

Another common form of malpractice was monitoring voters to ensure that whoever was given money votes for the candidate who paid them. Some voters, especially the elderly, were said to be given persons to guide them during voting. These, they claim, are people who are usually sponsored by different candidates to ensure that the person votes according to their interest and prior agreement.

**Independence of the EC and other state agencies**

- **Independence of the EC**

The independence of the EC came under question during the survey. The majority of the respondents felt it is not independent and leans very heavily towards the ruling NRM party. Most of the citizens the survey team spoke to do not trust the EC. They think it works in the interests of one person – the president. Some did not think the EC is independent because, according to them, it is under the command of the president through the Uganda Police Force. Therefore, the demand for an independent EC is very pertinent if a free and fair election is to be secured in Uganda.

Some of the respondents felt that the EC was independent but working under difficult circumstances. The difficult circumstances considered here were the lack of civic awareness among Ugandans, which makes it easy for the electorate to be manipulated. This was said to be the reason why Ugandans are not able to demand their rights from the leaders they choose and why they are unable to effectively take part in the electoral process.

There are those who felt the EC has always delivered because results are declared immediately after counting and the results are a true reflection of the events that happen.
The EC always declares results and the agents of candidates always sign the forms. We cannot say that they are cheated. (FGD, Kanungu)

I wouldn’t base the independence of the EC on a single event of JPAM. The EC always delivers, even JPAM has never complained of the independence of the EC. (FGD, Kanungu)

As an officer from the EC, I can say we always follow what we get from the field. The results as they are in the declaration forms is the way we present them and send them to headquarters, we have no control over the results (EC official, Rukungiri).

Some respondents felt that the EC has failed to do its work and faces challenges.

How do you expect the EC to effectively work in the face of a strong and overpowering police? The police have taken over all the decisions. (FGD, Ntungamo)

The EC is not well funded, they always depend on districts to deliver materials. That is why polling materials sometimes arrive late. They do not have their own sources of funds. They depend on government to give them money for civic and voter education. If no money is given there will be no voter education. This means we will not have an independent EC. (FGD, Nebbi)

Those who felt that the EC has not been independent gave examples such as the restriction of members of the opposition and letting NRM have its way. Most of the complaints regarding the EC’s lack of independence relate to the way it has treated opposition politicians such as Kiiza Besigye and, more recently, Amama Mbabazi. Many of the respondents felt that the response to former prime minister, Amama Mbabazi’s consultations and his prevention from conducting consultations are a sign of failure by the EC to be independent.

Look at how they have been treating JPAM. They say he cannot consult, they say the party has not allowed him, yet for Museveni, he is free moving throughout the country. (KI, Rukungiri)

The EC has acted itself as if it is under the NRM and the police. I have watched on TV the police quote NRM law over national laws and the EC has failed to come on top of things, they have failed to
call the police, the NRM and even the president to order. How can we say it is independent? (FGD, Ntungamo)

The EC works like it is under police. Imagine how the EC allowed Amama to consult and said he was free to go. Then Kayihura (IGP) said he (Amama) cannot go ahead because he is not authorised by the party. The EC has kept quiet and has done nothing. We cannot say they are independent. (KI, Ntungamo)

Some of the respondents noted that the EC was interpreting the law to favour the incumbent. This was in relation to the recent legal response to consultations by Amama Mbabazi. They noted that initially the EC attempted to follow the law, but following a response from the police claiming the consultations were illegal, the EC backtracked on its previous position which had allowed the consultations to be held. The EC was blamed for failing to prevail over the police and to stand its ground on electoral matters.

Some of the respondents reasoned that the fact that the EC has no independent budget and the fact that it relies heavily on district local governments and other government agencies to do its work is a sign of lack of independence.

- Independence of the police

The majority believe that the police are partisan and selectively apply the law. Some respondents believe that the police are independent and are executing their work professionally. They contend that the police follow the law but it is at times the opposition that provokes them, especially during demonstrations when required procedures are not adhered to, forcing them to intervene.

However, it was noted that police have overstepped their role and decided to interpret the law in ways that favour the incumbent. An example cited is the requirement for notice to the police before holding a procession, which the police have virtually interpreted as a requirement for permission which is illegal. Overall, those who feel the police are executing their role lawfully blamed the opposition for not following the law.

Why don’t Amama and Besigye follow what the police is telling them, are they above the law? They should follow the law as police enforces them. Remember police is enforcing order as it is trying to guide them. (FGD, Kanungu)
The police is independent and forces the law as is, it doesn’t matter whether the law is unfair or not. All they do is…enforcing it to the dot. (FGD, Busia)

Police is neutral when it comes to enforcing other laws. However, when enforcing political-related laws, it tends to protect government.

The police were said to be independent when it comes to fighting crimes that have no political connection. In such cases, it was said that the police respond to most crimes, albeit slowly, and many times police officers ask for facilitation such as fuel, stationary and airtime in order for them to be able to investigate the crimes.

Police will do their best if the crime has nothing to do with politics. They always get to work if you have no politics in it. (FGD, Ntungamo)

Police works on other offences other than politics; however they will ask for money. They ask for money to transport them and money to release suspects on bond. Everything nowadays is done by money. (FGD)

Some of the respondents believed that the police are neither neutral nor independent. They blame the police for always siding with the NRM. The respondents identified a number of incidents where the police did not take a neutral stand. The police were castigated for working with criminal gangs such as the Kiboko Squad and Kalangala Action Plan during elections to beat up members of the opposition and for interfering with free electoral processes. Some respondents noted that some of the police officers and leaders of the police are NRM cadres.

I remember some time back the president told the nation that Kale Kayihura was an NRM cadre. Now if police is led by a political party cadre what do you expect? It definitely follows the party. (FGD)

If you saw a list circulated recently showing the top police commanders, they are all from the west (south-west), all of them are NRM people. (FGD, Busia)

Police rarely follows the law; it actually doesn’t follow any law other than political propaganda. You see they have failed in all crimes. All
political crimes, police has failed. Be it terrorism, butayimba (iron bars), robbers etc. they only deploy to fight Besigye. (FGD, Nebbi)

Police will take its time to come to your rescue, but if what you are dealing with are political issues, they will send a truck full of people, teargas and everything. They will be there on time for as long as you are opposition. For the other crimes, no one really cares. (FGD, Ntungamo)

Some respondents blamed the police for interfering with the work of the EC. They disclosed that the police undermine the work of the EC by claiming they are in charge of security and directing the EC on what to do. This has not only undermined the independence of the EC but has also resulted in abuse of the law by the police.

Here is our experience. During a by-election, there was a claim that we tampered with the results and the NRM candidate lost. The truth is we did not do anything, we followed the law. When Kale Kayihura came around for the elections he ordered that we get arrested. We were arrested and spent two days at the police. Our bosses from the EC all knew we had followed the law to the dot. In fact our chairperson and all commissioners were around during that period. However, when the NRM candidate lost, she looked for an excuse and claimed we had changed the results. The police did not investigate or even inquire to establish the truth. They just blamed us and arrested us. After two days we were released without any charge. We kept reporting to the police but finally the police let us free. We were lucky that the EC and all the bosses had seen what we were doing and were certain we had not tampered with the results. (KI who preferred to remain anonymous)

• *Independence of UHRC*

The majority of the respondents had not heard about the UHRC and many did not know what it does. Those who had heard about the UHRC said it was located too far and hardly reached their area. Others failed to differentiate the UHRC from NGOs, which made securing responses on its independence difficult.

We see those human rights people, for example Save the Children, we’ve seen them in schools and I hear they do good work. (Focus group discussant, Kasese)
Many respondents felt that the reason the UHRC has not had an impact is because it has not reached out to the people and is located far from the communities.

We hear about UHRC but it is located in Fort Portal, they rarely come this side. People in villages cannot access them. It is very difficult to know what they do or even to seek help from them. (FGD, Kasese)

I was told to go to UHRC when government evicted us. But again I asked how I can go to human rights (UHRC) which is a government body to complain about being evicted by government. They are one and the same. Who pays the staff of human rights (UHRC), isn’t it government? Aren’t they the same people that evict us? Maybe they can work if it is for private individuals. (FGD, Kasese)

We hear about human rights people on radio. They run radio programmes but they never come to us. We even cannot reach them. They are in Mbarara, which is very far for an ordinary person. (Respondent, Kanungu)

We cannot separate government from the UHRC; they are the same people. They do government work, they report to government, they are paid by government, they are actually part and parcel of government. (Respondent, Ntungamo)

**Independence of DPP**

Whereas the role of the Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP) was not part of the focus of the research, a number of respondents felt that the DPP plays a major role in elections through selective application of the law and the criminal law process. The DPP was said to be used by the ruling government to curtail the success of the opposition by making it difficult for them to reach out to the community. The most frequently cited example was the role of the DPP in the charges relating to the ‘walk-to-work’ demonstrations. Some respondents noted that despite the several charges brought against opposition leaders, the DPP failed to successfully prosecute a single charge even when it is the duty of this office to advise the police and ensure that the judicial process is not abused. Other examples given were charges brought against Kiiza Besigye of rape and the treason involving the People’s Redemption Army (PRA) rebel group, none of which succeeded in courts of law.
The DPP has not been independent. Look at how it has charged walk-to-work people. They know they commit no offence, they know they can’t succeed, but all they do is draw up charges to achieve political ends. (Respondent, Nebbi)

The DPP has never been independent. You remember all the cases against Besigye, from rape, treason etc. They never have evidence, they only want to disturb him and make him look a bad man. (Respondent, Busia)

The DPP is independent if they are dealing with cases that are not political. There they will work and be effective. (Focus group discussant, Kanungu)

Some believe that the DPP is independent but it is only let down by the police.

To be fair, the DPP is independent. If you know the criminal justice process, you will notice that the DPP depends on evidence from police and what police brings is what he takes to court. (Respondent, Nebbi)

**Constitutional amendments**

The majority of the respondents had not heard about the constitutional amendments and were not certain if the amendments will affect elections. A few doubted the amendments will result in any change, given that they had come too late.

The majority of the EC respondents felt that the amendments had come too late and it would be difficult to carry out adjustments and voter education on the new changes given the short period of time.

**Alliances and prevailing political environment**

Most of the respondents and KIs had not heard about the opposition alliances and, therefore, were not sure of their impact. Many said the alliances were limited to Kampala and, therefore, did not have an impact on the political scene of the country.

Those alliances are Kampala things, we just hear about them. For us in the districts, it is about the party I belong to. (FDC chairman, Busia)
Fears and expectations

On expectations about the forthcoming elections, the majority of the respondents think the NRM will lead. The majority believed that President Museveni was still popular and the NRM the most popular party. The reasons advanced for the popularity of the NRM party is because it has structures across the country, which have also been tested.

The NRM is still the most popular party and despite its failures we have tested it, we know we can improve it and we can engage it to improve. We are not sure of the other opposition parties, we have not seen them perform. (Respondent, Busia)

Look at our district. Yes we have FDC offices, they are the biggest party but they are only at the district, they do not engage people in villages. You cannot expect them to win if they are not reaching the people in the communities.

Some respondents felt that the only reason it may be difficult for other parties to win the next election is because NRM has used the state machinery to make it difficult for the other parties to compete and even win. These cited cases of intimidation and harassment faced mainly by Kiiza Besigye of FDC and the former prime minister, who was stopped from holding consultations in Mbale.

It was also noted that in terms of election results, many people, other than political parties, might win in different constituencies, depending on the strength of the individual candidates. The respondents observed that elections in Uganda are based more on individuals than on political parties, which is why people may vote for president someone from one party and for MP or LC official someone from a different party. This was blamed on the individual merit system that was introduced by the NRM and the lack of proper civic education. People still view candidates as individuals as opposed to as members of certain parties. They are more interested in what the individual will offer and less concerned about the political party.

Overall, the respondents said the NRM will lead in the coming elections at all electoral levels. However, some predicted stiff competition between the NRM and other political parties in individual constituencies at parliamentary and local council levels.

Some of the respondents felt that the upcoming 2016 elections will not be free and fair, given the present developments. The major concerns were around the unfair treatment of
opposition leaders, which the respondents believe does not present a level playing field to ensure free and fair elections. Some feared that, given the present police interference and lack of independence of the EC, opposition leaders and their supporters may resort to violence. Some noted that the ruling NRM was not ready to lose power, whether at presidential or parliamentary level. For this reason, it was thought that if the NRM believes there is an opposition stronghold, it may deploy the army and other groups to cause confusion or to beat up the opposition. Some respondents noted that this was witnessed in the last elections in Jinja, Mbale, Sironko and Sembabule districts and there was fear that it could be witnessed again in the forthcoming 2016 elections.

I personally think the elections won’t be free and fair. Even though I’m an NRM member, I think the way they have treated JPAM shows that there will be attempts to influence the outcome. If really NRM and police think JPAM is not a threat, why don’t they let him consult? Let them give him to us. We will decide whether he is a man enough to lead the nation or whether he can’t manage and we fail him. They should not be choosing for us. (KI, Busia)

I still think what happened in the last NRM primaries will happen again here. I experienced this myself in the last elections, where I lost in NRM primaries and I was never given a hearing. I lodged a complaint within the party commission; to-date they have never given me a response. Around that time, the NRM office was burnt with all the materials, nothing was done to help the situation. I decided to stand as independent after that. I won the elections but NRM was a key challenge. They do not want competition. I suspect the same things are going to happen not only to JPAM but to every person who will lose in primaries and decide to contest as an independent. They will be fought from within like it was for me. That will cause a lot of confusion. (KI, Busia)

In this place most trouble came from NRM primaries. I personally had my kanyamas to protect my votes. People here would vote several times and cheat. They would deploy soldiers and police to protect others and not us. That is why I had my boys to protect my votes. (Focus group discussant, Rukungiri)

I think NRM primaries would be a big challenge. You see last time we had no ballot papers, we used manila papers and the stamp of the LC 1. It was easy to cheat and people fought over the vote. The LC
III candidate took away the bucket that was being used as a ballot box. He returned it in the evening with ticked votes. Anyone could vote whether you are NRM or FDC, we had no proper registers. Provided someone in the village would identify you, you would be a voter. (Focus group discussant, Rukungiri)

My biggest fear is the breakaway of Amama, which is going to be like it always happens in Rukungiri where people get beaten and everyone is up in arms. They deploy the army and police and these intimidate people. They also use crime preventers to disorganise the opposition. The other day I was in Rukungiri and people were saying that you people of Kanungu are now going to taste teargas and other forms of violence. I fear this is going to be Kanungu’s turn to face torture and election violence. (FDG, Rukungiri)

This time (2016) it will be worse. The violence is still fresh in our memories. A few days ago, a family of three or four people was wiped out – killed in the night over election-related violence when they (victims) got drunk and started shouting a given candidate of their choice in the NRM primaries and the quadruplet were slaughtered like goats in the night. Even voting cards can be merely grabbed from the voters and the voter is left with no choice but to just vote for the intimidating side that will have grabbed his or her card. (FDG, Nakapiripirit)

I fear a scenario where Amama, Besigye, Muntu and Ssejusa come together to fight Museveni. There we will have a real war. You see all these are part of NRM. They are insiders who have now turned against the party. They will disorganise the party and this will result in conflicts. We may see more teargas, more demonstrations etc.

**General recommendations**

- Voter education should be conducted comprehensively and continuously throughout the years. This should be beefed up with civic education because ignorance is the greatest cause of vote buying. The EC should collaborate with churches to communicate to the people and take advantage of public functions to have wider coverage because radios and newspapers reach only a few people.
• Change of government will cause a change of guards and perhaps new policies can be introduced to address the common practice of vote buying. If one is to compare the economic status of people during Idi Amin’s government to the current regime, it is clear that there is fundamental change and the standard of living is way better.

• Adequate time should be given to presidential aspirants to consult and campaign.
• The police should be independent and should train police officers who are going to police elections.

• A standard curriculum for crime preventers should be developed.
• The position of EC commissioner should be attained through a competitive process which would involve advertisement, interview and public vetting before appointment.

• Adequate time needs to be provided for electoral reforms before electioneering.
• Freedom of expression needs to be enhanced for all.

• Laws to stop vote buying and fundraising by politicians need to be strictly implemented and heavy penalties imposed on culprits on both sides (both those receiving and giving bribes).

• Term limits should be restored for the presidency and instituted for all elective positions.
• Women representatives cover a very big electoral area. Instead, Uganda should consider having one woman and one man representing a constituency.

• Parliamentary budgets and funding should be managed by a different agency, not by Parliament itself.
• Constitutional amendments should be adequate to render elections free, fair and credible.

• A strict ban should be imposed on demanding and soliciting money or fundraising. This ban should be strictly enforced and its infringement should attract a heavy penalty. Otherwise, the culture seems to be eating away at Ugandan society.

• The army should restrain itself from providing security during elections because voters get intimidated.
• Civic education should be allocated an adequate budget.