

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF ELECTIONS IN UGANDA**

In the period following Uganda's independence attained in 1962, political, social and economic dynamics started to manifest themselves as citizens developed interest in the country's democracy.

However, prior to independence, elections were not much valued. This was due to the fact that the Colonial Government was the one handling the affairs of the country.

### **Constitutional Conference:**

The year 1958 marks a milestone in the history and the development of election management in Uganda. A Constitutional Conference was convened and structures formed to organize and conduct various elections leading to independence in 1962.

The first Electoral Commission comprised eminent local elders and traditional leaders. Under this Commission, several elections were conducted, the first one being the Limited African/Uganda Franchise and Representation to the Legislative Council (LEGCO) of 1958.

Following the recommendation in the Wild Committee Report, the Colonial Government organized direct elections in Uganda in 1961. Two (2) political parties, namely, the Democratic Party (DP) and the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) contested in the election, leading to the formation of the first ever internal self-government, headed by the Chief Minister, H.E. Benedict Kiwanuka (DP).

In 1962, the Colonial Government organized elections and DP got the majority in Parliament. However, UPC and Kabaka Yeka (KY) merged to become UPC-KY, became the majority and formed the government, headed by the first Prime Minister, Appolo Milton Obote.

### **Commission for 1964 Referendum on the Lost Counties:**

One of the first issues faced by the new government, was to handle the contentious issue of Lost Counties, by then under Buganda, but claimed by Bunyoro Kingdom. These issues necessitated the holding of a referendum, and this was set for the year 1964.

It became the first referendum to be held in the history of Uganda, and it culminated into the two counties, Buyaga and Bugangaizi voting to return to Bunyoro Kingdom.

### **The 1970s**

Idi Amin was president of Uganda from 1971 till 1979 and during this period, there were no electoral activities in the country.

### **Commission for General Elections 1980:**

After the 1964 Referendum on the issue of the Lost Counties, Uganda went without any national election for 18 years (1964-1980).

Following the overthrow of the Idi Amin regime in 1979, the new government organized indirect elections in December, 1980.

On 25th June 1980, the Chairman of the Military Commission, H.E Paulo Muwanga (RIP), established the Electoral Commission to organize and conduct general elections, which were eventually conducted on 10th - 11th December 1980.

The Commission for the 1980 General Elections comprised of K.M.S Kikira as Chairperson, and three other members, namely, Comm. Egweu S, Comm. Kera A. Bilali A, and Comm. M. Matovu. Mr. Vincent Sekkono was the Secretary to this Commission.

### **The Uganda Constitutional Commission (UCC):**

After 1980, there were no direct national elections in Uganda for almost 14 years.

On 21st December 1988, The National Resistance Council (NRC) enacted Statute No.5 of 1988, which established the Uganda Constitutional Commission to start the process of developing a new Constitution for Uganda.

The UCC was composed of:- Hon. Justice Benjamin J. Odoki (Chairperson), Prof. Dan M. Mudoola (Vice C/Person), Mr. Kidembo S. W, Hon. Medi Kaggwa, Hajji Aziz K. Kasujja, Mr. Kateera J., Lt. Col. Kale Kayihura, Dr. Khidu E. Makubuya, Mrs. Mary Maitum, Hon. Miria Matembe, Mr. Charles H. Obwangor, Prof. Phares Mukasa Mutibwa, Mr. Okot A.O, Prof. Otim A., Mr. Rwaheru C., Lt. Col. Sserwanga Lwanga, Prof. E. F. Ssempebwa, Jotham Tumwesigye, Mr. G.P Ufoyuru, Maj. Gen. Mugisha-Muntu, Eric T.S Adriko, and G. L Byekwaso. Rev. Dr. John Mary Waligo served as the Secretary to the Commission.

### **Commission for Constituent Assembly (CCA):**

The Commission for Constituency Assembly (CCA) was established by the Constituent Assembly (CA) Statute No. 6 of 1993, to organize and conduct Constituent Assembly elections. The CCA comprised of Mr. Steven B. Akabway (Chairperson), Vincent F. Musoke- Kibuka (Dep. Commissioner) and Gladys M.K. Nduru (Dep. Commissioner).

This Commission organized and conducted the CA elections in March 1994.

### **The Interim Electoral Commission (IEC):**

Following promulgation of the Constitution in October 1995, an Interim Electoral Commission (IEC) was established by the Interim (Provisional) Electoral Commission Statute 3 of 1996 and Parliamentary (Interim Provisions Statute) No. 4 of 1996, for purposes of organizing and conducting the General Elections 1996.

The IEC comprised of Steven B. Akabway (Chairperson), Mrs. Flora Nkurukenda (Deputy Chairperson), and five other commissioners, namely; Comm. Charles Owor, Comm. Margaret Sekajja, Comm. Philip Idro, Comm. Syda Bumba, and Comm. Aziz K. Kasujja.

The IEC organized and conducted the first ever-direct Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

### **The Electoral Commission (EC) 1997-2002:**

In May 1997, Parliament enacted the Electoral Commission Act (1997), which established a permanent Electoral Commission.

The Law provides that the President with the approval of Parliament appoints the Commission, who hold office on full time basis for a period of seven years. Their appointment may be renewed for only one more term.

The first permanent Electoral Commission comprised of Hajji Aziz K. Kasujja (Chairperson), Flora Nkurukenda (Deputy Chairperson), and five other members, namely Comm. Ted Wamusi, Comm. Mary I.D.E. Maitum, Comm. Robert K. Kitariko, Comm. Nassanga H. Miiro, and Comm. Charles D. Owiny.

In August 2000, Sr. Margaret Magoba was appointed to the Commission, to replace Comm. Maitum, who had been appointed as a judge of the High Court. Mr. Muwonge Andrew served as Secretary to this Commission.

It was during this time that a new staff structure was put in place, with the Secretary as Head of Management.

Below the office of the Secretary were two directorates: the Directorate of Elections, and the Directorate of Finance & Administration.

The structure initially had seven departments as indicated below:

- Election Management
- Voter Registration
- Data Processing
- Administration

- Legal and Public Relations
- Finance
- Civic Education and Training (later re-named Voter Education Department).

In 2002, two more departments were established, namely

- Planning & Research
- Human Resource Management.

The Commission established district offices with permanent staff (District Registrars) to handle continuous voter registration and other election related activities at the district level.

#### **Electoral Commission 2002-todate:**

On 18th November 2002, His Excellency the President of of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni appointed a new Commission, which comprised of Eng. Dr. Badru M. Kiggundu (Chairperson), Sr. Margaret Magoba (Deputy Chairperson) and five other members, namely: Comm. Tom W. Buruku, Comm. Stephen D. Ongaria, Comm. Dr. Jenny B. Okello, and Comm. Joseph N. Biribonwa. Mr. Sam Rwakoojo is the Secretary to the Commission.

The seventh member, Amb. Dr.Tomasi Sisye Kiryapawo, was sworn in February 20th 2006.

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