

Press Statement**Clarification on allegations of existence of 'one million ghost voters on the National Voters' Register'**

The Electoral Commission (EC) has noted with great concern, the content in a news article entitled *'One million ghost voters in register,'* published in *The Daily Monitor*, Thursday 22nd October 2009, (pages 1 & 4), and subsequent follow-up on Friday 23rd October, 2009 (pages 1 & 4), Saturday, 24th October 2009 (pages 1 & 2), and Monday, 26th October 2009 (pages 1 & 2).

The articles, based on an *'Analysis of Electoral Fraud in Uganda,'* contained untrue information concerning the management of elections in Uganda, dating back to 1996.

The Electoral Commission would like to refute the claims in the above articles and provide clarification on the issues raised therein as follows:

First, the article(s) claims that *'one million out of the 11,066,449 registered voters... are ghosts.'*

The total number of registered voters as at 22nd October 2009 stands at 10,500,560 voters. The figure of 11,066,449 quoted in the article (*Thursday 22nd October 2009, pages 1 & 4*) is a creation of the authors of the said document, and is utterly untrue.

For the avoidance of doubt, the trend of registered voters (and polling stations) since 1996 is attached.

Secondly, the articles allege that the *'one million ghost voters were introduced onto the National Voters Register in 1996.'*

Prior to any election, a display of the National Voters' Register is conducted for a period of at least 21 days. The purpose of this display exercise is to enable voters to:

- i. Check and examine the Voters' Register;
- ii. Confirm presence and correctness of their particulars on the Register (names, photographs, age, village, name of Polling Station);

- iii. Rid/clean the Register of particulars of the following categories of persons:
 - a. The dead;
 - b. Non citizens;
 - c. The under age (i.e. below 18 years of age);
 - d. Those who neither reside nor originate from the parish;
 - e. Those registered in another polling station in the parish;
 - f. Those who reside or originate from a parish other than the one they are registered in; and,
 - g. Those registered more than once on the register.

Therefore, anybody with knowledge of the *'alleged ghosts'* has had opportunity to participate in cleaning the Register. The Commission would like to emphasise that it remains the responsibility of every Ugandan to work towards maintenance of a clean National Voters' Register. We, therefore, would like to encourage anybody who knows of people who are on the register and are not supposed to be there, to come and inform the Commission.

The process of how people get on and off the Voters' Register should also be clearly understood. **After people have come forward and registered as voters, such persons can only be removed from the Register when a display (of the Register) is conducted at the polling station and their status falls under category iii above.** At any given time, people die and/or move from areas where they registered. The Commission can only know and remove such people from the Register when they are reported (by the residents) and this report is confirmed by the Parish Tribunal after the display (of the Register).

Furthermore, the text Voters' Register used in the 1996 elections (with 8,492,231 voters) was replaced in 2001, when fresh registration of voters was conducted countrywide under the Photographic Voter Registration and Identification System (PVRIS). This exercise resulted into production of a photo-bearing Voters' Register, with 8,181,720 voters, which was used in the Local Council Elections in 2002.

So it is false to allege that **'...the Electoral Commission has maintained *'one million ghost voters...'*** on the Register since 1996, when fresh registration was conducted in 2001.

Thirdly, the article states that ***'EC officials in Kasese and Lira districts would register the same voter as many as 20 different times.'*** This is totally false. It is well known that certain communities in Uganda have common names, for example, Charles Lwanga in the central region, John Okello in the northern region, as well as Bwambale in Kasese area. However, this does not mean that they are the same individual. The photo-bearing Voters' Register system has a duplicate analysis programme which has been employed to weed out any individuals who attempted to register more than once.

An anomaly of such a magnitude cannot persist from 1996 to the present with photo-bearing Voters' Register, given that corrective measures like display of registers are always undertaken before holding any elections as already stated.

Indeed, one of the positive results of using a photo-bearing National Voters' Register was the identification and deletion of over 69,141 duplicate voters during preparations for the 2006 General Elections.

Fourthly, in the absence of a national birth registration system, most applicants for registration as voters, can only provide their year of birth. Since the date and month are also 'required fields' on the computer programme, a birth date of 1st January (01/01) is automatically generated by the computer against all voters who only indicated their year of birth. This is a data collection challenge!!

The Commission further dismisses as false the allegation that '**more than 5,000 polling stations are ghosts,**' as stated in the article. Prior to any election, the Commission gazettes and publicises the total number, names, and location of polling stations where electoral activities are to be conducted (see attachment for trend of registered voters and polling stations since 1996, as well as details on our website www.ec.or.ug).

Finally, the inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the articles, especially the authors' use of wrong figures, are enough to discredit their '**findings.**'

For example in the article entitled '**Masaka, Lira lead in ghost voters,**' published on Saturday 24th October 2009, (pages 1 & 2), the total number of districts in Uganda is given as 82. The Commission has voter registration data and has conducted elections for only 80 districts to date. The Commission dismisses the two (2) extra districts as a creation of the authors.

The Commission reiterates its commitment to consistently deliver peaceful, transparent, free and fair elections. We appeal to all stakeholders to cooperate with us so that together we can fulfil our mandate and jointly continue to nurture the principles of democracy in Uganda.

Eng. Dr. Badru M. Kiggundu
Chairman, Electoral Commission

TREND IN NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS AND POLLING STATIONS AT NATIONAL ELECTIONS SINCE 1996

Year	Category of Election	Registered Voters	Type of Register	Polling Stations
1996	Presidential	8,492,231	Text	15,615
1996	Parliamentary	8,498,382	Text	15,619
1998	Local Governments	9,129,131	Text	15,893
2000	Referendum	9,609,703	Text	16,505
2001	Presidential	10,775,836	Text	17,308
2001	Parliamentary	10,570,412	Text	17,298
2002	Local Governments	8,181,720	Photo-bearing	16,308
2005	Referendum	8,524,230	Photo-bearing	16,477
2006	General Elections for all	10,450,788	Photo-bearing	19,786
2009	<i>As of 15 October 2009</i>	10,500,560	Photo-bearing	19,857
2011	<i>Projected Eligible Population</i>	12,909,096		