

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

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Ref: **Adm72/01**
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Date: **17th September 2020**
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Press Statement

Preparation for Nomination of Candidates for General Elections and Updates on Other Activities Under the Roadmap for 2020/2021 General Elections

A. Introduction

- Dear esteemed members of the Press,
- Members and staff of the Commission,
- Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the premises of the Electoral Commission. I thank you for responding to our invitation, and for observing the measures we have instituted to fight the spread of COVID-19.

On behalf of the Members of the Commission, the Management and Staff of the Commission, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to you for promoting the message of prevention of spread of COVID-19 during the electoral process.

Today, the Electoral Commission will brief you on the progress of the implementation of the Roadmap for the 2020/2021 General Elections, as follows:

B. Progress of Special Interest Groups (SIG) Elections, 2020

The Electoral Commission has concluded the conduct of elections for Special Interest Groups (SIGs) Committees from the Village to the Sub County level.

The Commission wishes to appreciate all those stakeholders who have participated in the electoral process to-date. As you are aware, this electoral process is progressive and the next levels will be conducted as follows:

No.	Activity	Period
1.	Nomination of Municipality and City Division SIG Committees Candidates (Older Persons, Persons With Disabilities, Youth)	21 st - 22 nd September, 2020
2.	Conduct of Municipality & City Division SIG Committees Candidates' Campaigns	23 rd - 24 th September, 2020
3.	Polling for Municipality and City Division OP Committees	25 th September, 2020
4.	Polling for Municipality and City Division PWD Committees	28 th September, 2020
5.	Polling for Municipality and City Division Youth Committees	30 th September, 2020

As the SIGs elections progress, the Commission reiterates that the health and safety of the voters, candidates, elections staff and other stakeholders should be the most important consideration during the electoral process.

All stakeholders should, therefore, carefully observe the Standard Operating Procedures that have been developed to guide the conduct of electoral activities under the COVID 19 environment.

C. Demarcation of Parliamentary Constituencies

As you are aware, the Electoral Commission has just concluded a nationwide exercise to demarcate Parliamentary Constituencies.

This was brought about by Parliament's creation of new counties recently, new cities and Government's creation of new town councils and sub counties, after the Commission had rolled out the Revised Roadmap. The purpose of the demarcation exercise was to clearly define the areas of representation to Parliament by Directly Elected Members of Parliament in response to various changes in population, boundaries and numbers of constituencies prescribed in accordance with Article 63(1) of the Constitution.

The list of the demarcated three hundred and fifty-three (353) Parliamentary Constituencies has been uploaded on the EC website: www.ec.or.ug and gazetted.

The Commission has also undertaken various activities in preparation for the nomination exercise and ultimately the polling for General Elections 2021.

Accordingly, as at 17th September 2020, and for purposes of the 2020/2021 General Elections, the electoral statistics stand as follows:

No	Description	Status of 16th Sept 2020
1.	No. of Districts in Uganda	146
2.	No. of Counties	312
3.	No. of Constituencies	353
4.	No. of Sub Counties/Towns/Municipal Divisions	2,184
5.	Number of Parishes	10,595
6.	Number of Villages	70,626
7.	Number of Polling Stations	34,344
8.	Number of Registered Voters	17,658,527*

**(Number of males: 8,439,564 [47.79%]; number of females: 9,218,963 [52.21%]).*

D. Nomination of Candidates for Local Government Councils Elections, 2021

The Electoral Commission has appointed **21st September to 1st October 2020**, as the dates for the nomination of candidates for Local Government Councils Elections 2021.

The nomination of candidates shall take place at the venues indicated in the table below, during weekdays, beginning at 9.00 a.m. and ending at 5:00pm on each of the appointed dates.

No	Category	Dates	Venue
1.	a. District/City Chairperson b. District/City Councilor	21 st Sept – 1 st Oct 2020	District Headquarters
2.	a. Municipality/City Division Chairperson b. Municipality/City Division Councilor	21 st Sept – 1 st Oct 2020	District Headquarters
3.	a. Sub County/Town/Municipal Division Chairperson b. Sub County/Town/Municipal Division Councilor	21 st Sept – 1 st Oct 2020	County Headquarters

The nomination exercise will be followed by a campaign period leading to the polling days for the various elective positions (above), during the period January 10th – February 8th 2020.

All persons aspiring to contest in the elections are urged to familiarize themselves with the requirements for nomination for each elective position, as outlined in the Guidelines issued by the Electoral Commission (*see attached guiding table*).

Furthermore, aspiring candidates can collect copies of the nomination forms and the above guidelines from the District Electoral Commission offices in each district across the country, or obtain soft copies of the forms and guidelines from the Electoral Commission website: www.ec.or.ug.

E. Nomination of Candidates for Presidential Elections, 2nd – 3rd November 2020

The Electoral Commission has appointed Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd November 2020 as the dates for nomination of candidates for Presidential Elections 2021.

The nominations shall be conducted at Kololo Independence Grounds, Kampala, beginning at 10:00am and ending at 4:00pm on each of the appointed dates.

A person aspiring for nomination as Presidential Candidate shall be a citizen of Uganda by birth, a registered voter, of 18 years and above.

An aspiring candidate shall submit certified copies of educational qualifications confirming that he/she obtained a minimum formal education of Advanced (A) Level or its equivalent.

An aspiring candidate whose academic qualifications are equivalent to A Level, and an aspiring candidate whose academic qualifications were obtained outside Uganda shall have to establish such qualification by producing a certificate issued to him or her by the National Council of Higher Education in consultation with the Uganda National Examinations Board.

Such a certificate shall be obtained and submitted to the Electoral Commission at least two months before nomination day.

The candidate's nomination shall be supported by not less than one hundred (100) persons who are registered voters, from not less than **ninety-eight (98) districts**, which form two thirds (2/3) of all the districts of Uganda.

Due to the sizeable number of signatures required for nomination as a Presidential candidate, the Commission advises aspiring (Presidential) candidates to submit the lists of supporters to the Electoral Commission for verification at least two weeks before the nomination dates, that is, at least by 16th October 2020.

Further, the Commission advises aspiring candidates to book time in advance on any of the gazetted dates above in order to ensure a smooth nomination exercise.

F. General Issues to Observe in Preparation for the Nominations

The Electoral Commission wishes to draw the attention of stakeholders to the following issues related to the upcoming nomination exercise:

- a) The Commission will issue a statement on the preparations for nomination of candidates for Parliamentary Elections in our subsequent briefing.
- b) Article 180 (2)(b) of the Constitution provides for one-third of the membership of each Local Government Council to be reserved for women. However, the recently passed *Local Governments (Amendment) Act of 2020*, amended Section 10(1)(e) and 23(1)(e) which are the same as Article 180(2)(b). The amendment now provides that each electoral area, that is, sub county and district, shall be represented by a directly-elected Woman Councilor. This is clearly inconsistent with the Article cited above since the said Constitutional Article was not amended.

Accordingly, the Commission will abide by the Constitutional provision, and nominate candidates in fulfilment of the requirement for one-third for women representation.

- c) Aspiring candidates should also note that while the Constitutional Amendment Act of 2017 removed the lower and upper age cap for candidates for President and District/City Chairperson, it did not extend the same to Municipality, City Division, Sub County, Town and Municipal Division Chairperson.

Accordingly, aspiring candidates for Municipality, City Division, Sub County, Town and Municipal Division Chairperson must be not less than 30 years and not more than 75 years of age.

- d) Aspirants for elections of Councillor representing Workers to Local Government Councils should note that the *Local Government Amendment Act* does not require aspiring candidates to resign before nomination.

Accordingly, aspirants for all offices under the Local Government Act will not be required to resign their offices for purposes of nomination. Aspiring candidates for elections of Workers' Representative to Parliament will, however, be required to resign their offices before nomination.

- e) A section of aspiring female candidates have expressed concern that their nomination papers may be rejected because of changes to their maiden names, following marriage and adoption of husband's name.

The Commission wishes to draw the attention of such concerned persons, to provisions of Section 36 of the Registration of Persons Act (NIRA) 2015, which requires that any change of name, whether by way of marriage, must be harmonized through a legal process.

Any candidate, who may have added the name(s) of her husband before the above Act came into force and used a Statutory Declaration or an affidavit to harmonise their names should avail the said documents during nominations.

Any aspiring candidate who may have names that do not appear on their academic papers, are advised to formalize the change through the prescribed legal process, namely, a deed poll, published in the Uganda Gazette.

- f) Since the issuance of a Revised Roadmap for the 2020/2021 General Elections on June 16th 2020, Parliament of Uganda and the Ministry of Local Government have created a number of new units as follows:
- i. Forty-six (46) new Counties;
 - ii. Three (3) new cities (which were operationalized a year earlier than the scheduled date);
 - iii. One (1) new district; and,
 - iv. Five (5) Parliamentary seats for Older Persons;
 - v. New Town Councils and

The Commission has noted that persons who wish to contest for elective offices, namely, Member of Parliament and District Chairpersons, in these newly created electoral areas have not been able to comply with timelines issued by the Commission for purpose of resignation from public office and establishment of academic qualifications with the Commission.

Accordingly, and in exercise of powers vested in the Commission under Section 50- of the Electoral Commission Act, the Commission wishes to guide political parties and organisations and aspiring independent candidates in the above affected electoral areas as follows:

- i. Aspiring candidates will now have to provide proof of resignation from public office, in the case of public servants, before the respective nomination date;

- ii. Aspiring candidates will be required to establish their qualification(s) with the Commission, that is, as persons holding a minimum qualification of Advanced Level or its equivalent, before the respective nomination day;
- iii. For avoidance of doubt, this consideration applies to persons aspiring to contest as candidates in the above new electoral areas only.

G. Accreditation of International and National Election Observers

The Commission wishes to draw the attention of stakeholders to Section 16 (1) (a) of the Electoral Commission (Amendment) Act, which provides for accreditation of representatives of political parties, civil society organizations and any other duly registered institutions to observe electoral activities.

Accordingly, for purposes of transparency, the Electoral Commission will accredit international and national observers to observe the various activities that are to be undertaken during the electoral process.

The observers will include international and regional bodies and organisations, civil society organisations, institutions and individuals.

The Commission, therefore, invites expressions of interest from individuals, duly registered national organisations and institutions, who wish to observe the said processes.

Interested organisations, institutions and individuals should submit their applications to the Office of the Chairperson, Electoral Commission through the online application system accessible at www.ec.or.ug/accreditation in time to participate in the above activities.

Invitations to international and regional bodies and organisations, will be channeled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Please note that political parties and organisations may appoint agents to observe the electoral activities.

Applicants shall be required to provide evidence to prove that governance is a key aspect of their activities, and to demonstrate a track record of credibility.

Organisations and institutions shall also be required to prove that their registration status with the respective regulatory authorities is up to-date.

The Commission shall provide all those accredited organisations with written clearance, relevant information and identification tags for the purpose of observing the various activities of the electoral process.

Successful applicants shall be required to abide by the Laws of the Republic of Uganda, and to comply with election observer guidelines and Code of Conduct to be issued by the Electoral Commission.

They will further be required to comply with the Standard Operating Procedures against the spread of COVID-19.

H. Conclusion

The Commission advises political parties and aspiring independent candidates to ensure that they follow the above programme and prepare to present their nomination forms in accordance with the guidelines issued for each elective position.

Candidates, their agents and supporters are urged to strictly follow the guidelines on public meetings as issued by the Ministry of Health and the Commission.

Finally, we call upon all Ugandans to work together to ensure safe participation in the elections.

I thank you,

For God and my Country,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mugenyi Simon', is written over a faint, light blue watermark of the Ugandan national flag.

Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon
Chairperson, Electoral Commission