

# THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

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## **Press Statement on Observations on the Conduct of Candidates During Campaigns for 2021 General Elections**

Candidates' campaign meetings for Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Councils Elections commenced on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, across the country.

The Electoral Commission wishes to appreciate candidates who have organised and conducted public meetings in accordance with the Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for conducting campaigns in a COVID-19 environment.

The Commission has, however, noted with concern that some candidates, including Presidential candidates, are holding their campaigns in a manner that violates the Guidelines for Conduct of Campaign Meetings:

1. Some candidates are mobilizing their supporters to gather at campaign venues in large numbers. It is important to note that *The Public Health (Control of COVID-19) (Amendment No.3) Rules, 2020*, issued on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, provides that gatherings for purposes of political meetings should not exceed two hundred (200) persons;
2. Some candidates are conducting processions along public roads, through towns and trading centres, and are also holding rallies in non-designated venues as per the harmonised campaign programme. This is in violation of the Commission's Guidelines that the campaigns should be conducted in observance of Standard Operating Procedures (social distancing, hand washing, and wearing of masks) and in designated places;
3. Some candidates are making impromptu stopovers in trading centres, attracting and addressing public gatherings along busy highways from their car rooftops.

These spontaneous public addresses are a violation of the Commission's Guidelines which provides for conduct of campaign

meetings **only** in the approved venues and in accordance with the harmonised campaign programme, which clearly indicates the dates, time and venues for such meetings;

4. The Commission has also noted that some candidates and their supporters are not wearing face masks during public meetings, which puts all participants, including the candidates, at the risk of contracting COVID-19.

This conduct is **unacceptable** considering that as at 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the cumulative COVID-19 infection cases in Uganda stood at 14,704 with 133 deaths so far registered in the country.

**The Commission reiterates that processions and public/mass rallies remain banned in accordance with the measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

The Commission warns all candidates contesting for various elective positions under the General Elections 2021, and all other stakeholders in the electoral process to conduct themselves in accordance with the Guidelines for the campaigns and strictly observe the measures issued by the Commission.

**Non-compliance with the Guidelines issued for the campaign period will necessitate intervention by law enforcing agencies, among other measures.**

The Commission wishes to emphasise that the health and safety of voters, their families, candidates, security personnel, the media and the general public should be of paramount consideration.

**Issued at Kampala, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November 2020**



Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon  
**Chairperson, Electoral Commission**