

Politics in Uganda Today



June 24, 2014

Structure of Government

- National--Presidential Republic
 - President is head of state and government
- Regions--Northern, Central, Eastern, Western
- District--112 in the country (111+ Kampala)
 - Chairperson of the Local Council V
 - National gov't appoints a Resident District Commissioner
 - May overlap with Kingdom government
- County
- Sub-county
- Village(Parish)--local council I

US Dept. of State Background Notes

- Constitution: Ratified July 12, 1995
- Independence: October 9, 1962
- Branches: Executive--president, vice president, prime minister, cabinet
- Legislative--parliament; since February 2011 375 members: 112 special seats for women, 10 special seats for military, five for youth, and five for persons with disabilities.
- Judicial--Magistrates' Courts, High Court,

Political Parties

- 38 registered parties
- Major parties include
 - National Resistance Movement (NRM, ruling party)
 - Forum for a Democratic Change (FDC)
 - Democratic Party (DP)
 - Conservative Party (CP)
 - Justice Forum (JEEMA)
 - Uganda People's Congress (UPC)

Principal Government Officials

- President and Commander in Chief--Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
- Vice President--Edward Ssekandi
- Prime Minister--Amama Mbabazi
- Foreign Minister--Sam Kutesa
- Minister of Defense--Crispus Kiyonga
- Ambassador to the United States--Perezi K. Kamunanwire
- Ambassador to the United Nations--acting

Article by Tangri & Mwenda

- **WHY** is Museveni (like other African leaders) so determined to maintain power?
- Museveni believes he is indispensable for Uganda's stability & prosperity
 - Stems from role in guerilla National Resistance Movement
- He is fearful of being prosecuted for wrongdoings
 - Material--bribery, contracts to family members
 - Human Rights violations

HOW has he kept power?

- Changes to constitutional term limits
 - Aided by political allies who owe him allegiance
- Highly centralized presidential political system
 - Personally makes all senior appointments
 - Intervenes in state institutions
 - Dispenses public resources without following rules
- “Electoral malpractice” (p. 33)
- Constraints on Civil Society, including media
 - (n.b. Mwenda is an editor of a leading Ugandan paper--the [Independent](#))
- Support from international donors

Evidence of Waning Power?

- Besigye gaining support
- Defection of NRM MPs who find him overbearing
- Many MPs don't have financial independence needed to challenge Museveni
 - Opposition can tap remittances from abroad
 - Mobilize those dissatisfied with lack of public goods
 - Conflict with Buganda (the place/kingdom) and Kabaka
 - N.B. Muganda is a single person from Buganda; Baganda refers to a group of people from there.

International Donors

- Should they maintain their financial and political support?
 - Common religious heritage
 - Anti-terrorism efforts by Uganda
 - HIV efforts
 - Open economic policies
- Does Museveni support or undermine their agendas in East Africa?
- Is supporting him counterproductive?

2011 Election Update

- February 18, 2011, Uganda held its fourth presidential and parliamentary elections since Museveni came to power.
- Seven opposition presidential candidates, including FDC leader Kizza Besigye (the Inter-Party Cooperation candidate) ran against Museveni.
- On February 20, the Electoral Commission declared Museveni the winner with 68% of the vote; Kizza Besigye came in second with 26% of the vote.

Political Issues

- Corruption, corruption, corruption
- Suppression of dissent
 - charges of unlawful assembly, inciting violence, and promoting sectarianism to curtail government critics' freedom of speech and assembly.
- In April & May 2011, heavy-handed crackdown on peaceful opposition “walk-to-work” protests
 - at least 10 deaths, numerous injuries, and hundreds of arrests, including of prominent opposition leaders.
- July, 2011-- shutdown day by businesses; mainly traders in central business district

Other Political Issues

- September 2009:
 - government restricted travel of the Buganda Kingdom's prime minister to Kayunga district,
 - incorrect reports of the prime minister's arrest, sparked 3 days of riots in Kampala
 - left at least 40 people dead and many more injured.
- Anti-gay legislation and US Sanctions
- Kony & LRA in northern Uganda/South Sudan