

January in Kampala is in the middle of the dry season. The temperature continues to exceed 30 degrees Celsius, which is unusual for Kampala.

On January 15th, presidential and parliamentary elections, for which campaigning had been ongoing since September last year, were held. The long election period finally comes to an end. Local council elections and the like are being held concurrently and will continue until February.

In Uganda, at the time of independence, the parliament elected the President. Prime minister was elected by an election. The first presidential election by popular vote was held in 1980. However, this election was not trusted by many political parties and became the trigger for the long civil war that followed. Elections began to be held again from 1996 under the Museveni administration. President Museveni has actively campaigned throughout Uganda, aiming for his seventh consecutive election victory this time.

Voters are Ugandans aged 18 and over who have registered as voters in advance. This time, approximately 21 million voters were registered throughout Uganda. (Note: Uganda's total population is approximately 50 million.)

The author has previously monitored elections in Myanmar, Southeast Asia, as an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time, I toured the largest city, Yangon, and its surroundings, and I clearly remember that the entire country was enveloped in tension.

On the morning of the election day, the 15th, almost no one was seen in Kampala city. This seems to be due to the fact that polling stations are basically designated in one's hometown, so everyone returned to their hometowns. Unfortunately, in past Ugandan elections, conflicts and violence between campaigners and security authorities, or between election supporters, have been constant, resulting in many casualties. Fortunately, this time, such major clashes were absent. Some people evaluated this as the maturity of Ugandan voters.

In Kampala city, where people were sparse, the presence of the military and police became noticeable instead. This was to prepare for unforeseen circumstances.

This time, embassy staff visited multiple polling stations on election day. The author also visited a counting station set up in the suburbs of Kampala the day after the election.

Uganda's presidential election is conducted by the Electoral Commission (EC). A biometric authentication system for voter identification was used on election day. Two systems were introduced this time at each of the more than 50,000 polling stations nationwide as a precaution, but unfortunately, the system did not work at many polling stations. In such cases, traditional paper-based voter verification was conducted, and voting generally proceeded smoothly.



Election Poster

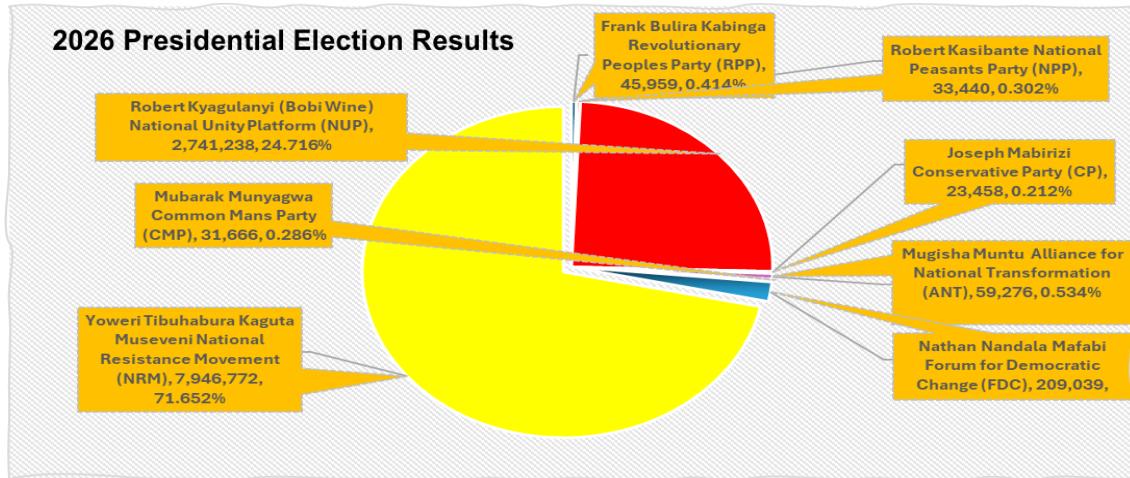


Counting Station

The internet was shut down two days before the election. In fact, the internet was also shut down during the previous election five years ago, which caused a major problem. This time, too, the authorities seem to have deliberately decided to shut it down. In many countries, when the internet is shut down by the government, protests often occur. However, this did not happen in Uganda. This is said to be because political activists somewhat expected it, and many ordinary citizens, while feeling inconvenienced, felt that it was better for the internet to be shut down than for campaigners to contact each other and cause violence. In any case, the author was also unable to use the internet, and it became an unexpected period of digital detox. The internet shutdown lasted for five days, spanning the election day.

On election day, voting began at 7:00 AM and ended at 4:00 PM. At some Polling station where had a problem with voter identification, it was extended by one hour. Vote counting began immediately, including for the election of members of parliament. The results were transmitted to relay stations in Kampala city, and the vote counting status was also broadcast live on television, with election results coming in moment by moment. President Museveni maintained the lead throughout and secured his seventh term with 71% of the vote, exceeding his previous result.

The election results announced by the EC are as follows:



2026 Presidential Election results				
	Name	Party	Score	Percentage score
Frank Bulira Kabinga	Revolutionary Peoples Party (RPP)	45,959	0.41	
Robert Kasibante	National Peasants Party (NPP)	33,440	0.3	
Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine)	National Unity Platform (NUP)	2,741,238	24.72	
Joseph Mabirizi	Conservative Party (CP)	23,458	0.021	
Mugisha Muntu	Alliance for National Transformation (ANT)	59,276	0.53	
Mubarak Munyagwa	Common Mans Party (CMP)	31,666	0.29	
Nathan Nandala Mafabi	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)	209,039	1.88	
Yoweri Tibuhabura Kaguta Museveni	National Resistance Movement (NRM)	7,946,772	71.61	
Invalid votes		275,353	2.42	
Total votes		11,366,201	52.5	
Registered voters		21,649,068		

NB: The Excel format rounds off for e.g. 0.021% to 0

The inauguration ceremony for the president, following these election results, is scheduled for May 12th. Until then, the current cabinet and members of parliament will continue their duties. A new government will be formed after May 12th.

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