

As I mentioned in this column in January, President Museveni has won his seventh consecutive presidential election. His new term will begin in May this year, and he will continue to govern for the next five years, having been in power for over 40 years.

This month and next, I would like to explain the circumstances surrounding the establishment of President Museveni's government. I believe this will also help in understanding the government that will be inaugurated on May 12th this year.

The structure of this month's and next month's columns is as follows:

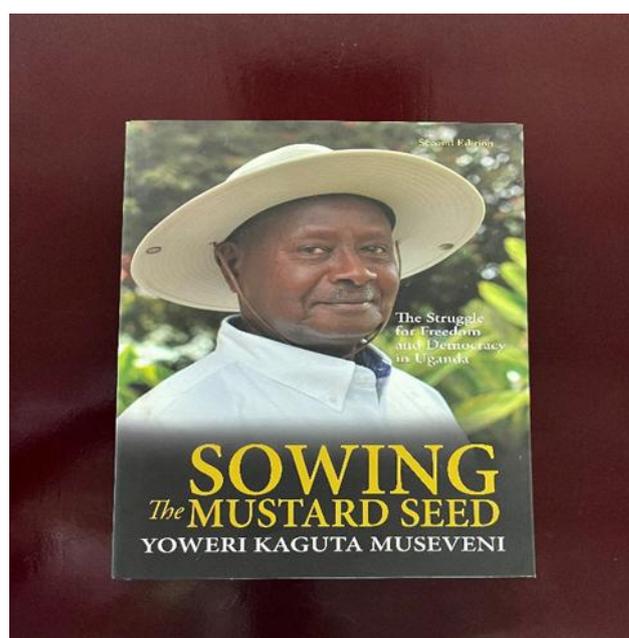
**March Issue**

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**April Issue**

1. Beginning of the Bush War
2. The Course of the Civil War: Conflict with the Obote Regime
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These descriptions are compiled from many public sources, including President Museveni's autobiography (Sowing the Mustard Seed, 2nd edition, 2016).



President Museveni's Autobiography

## **1. President Museveni's Early Life**

President Museveni spent his youth in the pastoral region of western Uganda called Kazo, Nyabushozi in present day Kiruhura district. His family also engaged in pastoralism, and Mr. Museveni grew up in what was then a standard Ugandan household, helping his family with cattle keeping as a family business. It is said that while studying European history, he learned about Pan-Africanism and anti-colonialism. One of the political leaders in East Africa at the time was President Julius Nyerere, who led Tanzania's independence.

Mr. Museveni chose to study at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania instead of a Ugandan university. It was also around this time that he visited Mozambique and North Korea. In this way, Mr. Museveni aspired for politics from a young age and gained experience as a political leader. In the 1970s, after returning to Uganda, Mr. Museveni began working as a political bureau official in the office of then-President Obote.

## **2. Conflict with the Amin Regime**

In January 1971, the Obote government collapsed due to a military coup, and General Idi Amin seized power.

At this time, Mr. Museveni fled to Tanzania. While in Tanzania, he met with President Nyerere. Neighboring countries of Uganda, such as Tanzania, Somalia, and Kenya, did not recognize the Amin regime and were in conflict with it. In 1971, Mr. Museveni organized the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) in Tanzania. Their position, having left their homeland, was to oppose the Amin regime, but they were not in cooperation with former President Obote. FRONASA was mainly supported by Tanzania at the time. They also received support from Mozambique from where they conducted military training. At the same time, this was a period when supporters were being recruited within Uganda.

During this period, Mr. Museveni met many people who would later become important. First, he met and married Janet, who would later become the First Lady. Their three children were also born during this time. He also met Amama Mbabazi, who would later become Prime Minister of Uganda. He has been working with his younger brother, Salim Saleh, since this time.

The Amin regime initially adopted a pro-Western foreign policy but gradually strengthened its dictatorial tendencies domestically. Its economic policy of expelling Asian residents (mainly Indian residents) in 1972 to reclaim the economy for Ugandans proved to be a clear failure. It suppressed citizens who did not cooperate with the regime,

and relations with neighboring countries also deteriorated. Against this backdrop, in October 1978, the Ugandan army under the Amin regime invaded Tanzania. This brought about a full-scale war between Tanzania and Uganda. The Ugandan army occupied Kagera in Tanzania but was repelled in January 1979. In April of the same year, the Tanzanian army invaded the capital, Kampala, and the Amin regime came to an end. President Amin eventually spent the rest of his life in Saudi Arabia, where he died.

### **3. The Result of the 1980 Election: From Conflict with the President to the Bush War**

After the collapse of the Amin regime, Uganda's political situation changed rapidly. To counter the Amin regime, in 1979 in Tanzania, various Ugandan exiled groups, including Mr. Museveni, convened in Moshi for a conference (Moshi conference) that led to the formation of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and appointed Yusuf Lule as leader to head an interim government. Mr. Museveni became one of its central members.

After President Amin fled to Libya and later to Saudi Arabia, Mr. Yusuf Lule, former Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University, became president. This was on April 13, 1979. Mr. Museveni was appointed Minister of State for Defense and Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission in this government. However, the Lule government collapsed in less than two months, 68 days. During this time, Mr. Museveni was transferred from Minister of State for Defense to Minister of Regional Cooperation. A fierce power struggle was unfolding.

In March 1980, former President Obote returned to Uganda from Tanzania and planned a presidential election. Former President Obote reorganized the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). The UPC was a political party organized by Mr. Obote at the time of Uganda's independence. Several political parties, including the Democratic Party (DP, a party largely supported by Catholics), put forward candidates for this election. However, at that time, Uganda's infrastructure was not well-equipped enough to conduct elections throughout the country. As a result of the election, Mr. Obote returned to the presidency, but many political parties did not accept the election results.

Mr. Museveni's forces chose armed conflict which marked the beginning of the Bush War, which would last for six years.

I would like to introduce the details of the Bush War in the April issue.

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