

Uganda's Political Outlook Post the 2016 Elections: A Review of the Process and Implications for the Future of Multi-party Democracy¹

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Abstract

Confronted by the need to address the glaring gaps in Uganda's political processes, this paper evaluates two approaches to democratic pursuit. Are promising approaches those that mobilise pro-change agents to force a powerful regime into reform or is there need to employ persuasive alternatives that enlist buy-in from powerful actors from the ruling group? This paper suggests that a two-pronged approach can be mutually reinforcing in the promotion of multi-party democracy: designing interest-based, incentive-compatible reform packages portends more success on the premise of possible buy-in from influential dominant group agents. On the other hand, this approach needs to be complemented with the building of strong and credible opposition political parties that can take advantage of the changing environment to foster pluralistic political competition.

Keywords: 2016 elections, political processes, multi-party democracy, Uganda

1. Introduction

The 2016 post-election environment in Uganda has been characterised by polarised perspectives regarding whether the country is progressing or retrogressing on the path to democratic development. While the political opposition has made an outright rejection of the election outcome, which

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handed victory to the National Resistance Movement (NRM), agents of the ruling party have tenaciously accused their competitors of being bad losers who lack the humility to accept defeat. Whatever the case may be, widely observed gaps in the electoral process² as well as the questionable conduct of diverse agents – the Electoral Management Body (EMB), political parties, and candidates – before, during and after the polls cast a shadow on the development of systems, processes and the culture of democratic practice. Such circumstances underpin the need to interrogate the state of multi-party democracy in the run up to Uganda's third general election since the legal reintroduction of political pluralism in 2005 whilst reflecting on what can be the promising approaches and policies to strengthening pluralistic democracy.

This paper examines key issues around Uganda's third multi-party elections and the political environment following the polls. We explore the shaky foundation on which multi-party democracy was restored, which was underpinned by a dominant, state-cushioned NRM party competing against a weakened opposition. The paper further assesses the context within which the 2016 general elections were conducted, which included the absence of a level playing field and the intermittent failure by opposition groups to achieve major political reforms proposed ahead of the polls. It finally debates alternative approaches to fostering democracy in a constrained environment, which is characteristic of the Ugandan political set-up.

This paper argues that the promising approaches and practices to political reform in the Ugandan context will be those that are two-pronged. First, we suggest the need to secure a buy-in from NRM protagonists – as a dominant group in the current political set-up. Our proposition builds on theoretical arguments that reforms occur when influential groups are persuaded to believe that change is in their interest (North, Wallis & Weingast, 2009). It is also supported by previous examples in the Ugandan context where attempts to force reforms that lack the NRM's support have mostly been unsuccessful. In this regard, our projection for the next legislature period draws on statistics emerging from the recent elections, which show that the NRM has retained a comfortable control of Parliament and local councils, yet it still enjoys a privileged association with state structures.

The second strand in our suggested approach relates to strengthening the organisational capacity of opposition political parties and civil society groups. Drawing further on North *et al.* (2009), we consider organisations to be important tools for coordinating collective goals as well as for seeking to dominate and coerce others towards group agendas. Reform agitators, however, need to be cautious of the catastrophic tendency to view civil

society narrowly as professional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and ignoring organic groups with specific interests in politics. Furthermore, we argue under this approach that civil society can only facilitate but not lead a process of political bargain, which should have political organisations with clear political agendas taking the front seat.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows: Section 2 discusses the Ugandan multi-party context highlighting the shaky foundation against which political pluralism was reintroduced. Section 3 evaluates the 2016 elections with a focus on the implications for multi-partyism and democratic practice. Section 4 evaluates the possibility of reform and suggests promising approaches while Section 5 provides the conclusion.

2. Multi-party democracy in Uganda 2005–2015

Following its very short lifespan upon the the country's attainment of independence, multi-party democracy was only returned in Uganda by referendum in 2005. Even then, scientific analysis (e.g. Makara *et al.*, 2009) suggests that the NRM managed the transition to multi-party democracy in such a way that it remained in control. Moreover, on the part of Yoweri Museveni – who was by then only months from his 20th anniversary as president of Uganda – the licence to return political pluralism was traded with the removal of presidential term limits from the constitution, which allowed him to run for a third term as elected president. It was to follow that Museveni would contest and win subsequent elections in 2006, 2011 and, most recently, 2016 – potentially extending his hold on power to 35 years. The fact that Uganda has not witnessed a peaceful transfer of leadership at the top casts widespread pessimism on the possibility of a peaceful democratic transition in the East African state.

With the 2005 referendum and the subsequent enactment into law of the Political Parties and Organisations Act 2005, the movement government was removing the cap it had placed on multi-party competition: the NRM had, upon achieving victory in the five-year guerrilla war that brought it to power, banned political parties from having a presence beyond the capital. For the next two decades, political parties would not be allowed to organise any activities or sponsor candidates for elective office. The 1995 Constitution legally institutionalised this limitation by introducing a so-called movement political system, which was confirmed by referendum in 2000.

Given two decades of inactivity, the organisational structures, mobilisation experience and support base of political parties gradually atrophied. This period was, however, not without winners: the NRM, whose agents would,

following the legal return of multi-party-ism, register it as a political party dubbed the National Resistance Movement Organisation (NRM-O), used this window to advance as a dominant group, later on forming a dominant political party.

Indeed, the subsequent dominance by the NRM was not only due to the abeyance of opposition political parties during the movement system period but can be equally explained by the subtle conversion of state-built movement structures into the NRM political organisation. This conversion saw the country's political elite at national and local levels consolidate themselves as agents of the movement. Put differently, traditional political parties witnessed a haemorrhage of their elite class so much so that formerly high-ranking figures within political organisations such as the Democratic Party (DP) and Uganda People's Congress (UPC) became firmly assimilated into the NRM – the majority of them were not to return to their political parties in spite of the referendum outcome confirming the opening up of political space.

Although the legal return to multi-party political competition was confirmed in the 2005 referendum, the process did not dismantle the strong fusion between party and state that had emerged during the movement period. Blended with high levels of political patronage and political system hinged on presidentialism, this environment has engendered a context where numerous layers of public servants, for example Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), presidential advisors, security personnel, members of resistance councils (RCs) – that later on became local councils (LCs) – among others, gradually metamorphosed into what has come to be a nationwide perpetual support structure for the NRM.

However, there are also concerns that opposition political parties have been slow in taking advantage of the new legal regime to invest in building effective nationwide structures. Historically, the traditional political parties, notably DP and UPC, had built their support base mostly on ethnic pillars, which explains UPC's residual strength in the Lango sub-region in northern Uganda and DP's in the Buganda region. Building trust, particularly among the elite class beyond their regional concentrations, remains a challenge for these parties. Moreover, overall, Ugandan political parties have been observed to suffer challenges of weak internal democracy, dominance by a few influential personalities who use their power to circumvent institutional provisions on decision-making, and failure to mobilise domestic financing, to mention but a few. Thus, the NRM is not only a dominant group, but it also enjoys the advantage of competing against a weak and less than organised opposition. Therefore, how the opposition groups succeed in developing

their organisational capacities as political players will be determinant of the quality of multi-party competition.

Among the major issues debated with regard to Uganda's current multi-party terrain is the question of financing of political parties. The 2010 Political Parties and Organisations Amendment Act provides for public financing of political parties. However, as Ssemogerere (2011) observes, there are challenges regarding the foundation of the system on which public party financing was provided for: this includes, *inter alia*, issues relating to fairness, equity and safeguards against potential manipulation. Moreover, the available laws are seen as being weak on the issue of accountability (*ibid.*) and remain largely silent on crucial aspects such as private contributions to political parties.

In the absence of a domestic capitalist class, political parties, particularly those in the opposition, have to rely on external sources for funding. Recent analysis suggests that domestic capitalists are relevant in supporting opposition groups as political alternatives (Mugisha, Kiranda & Krueger, 2016). Uganda, however, lacks a domestic capitalist class as big businesses are mostly owned by foreign firms whose interest in politics is limited to the extent to which their business interests are affected (*ibid.*). On the part of political parties, reliance on foreign donors always carries with it numerous limitations, including reluctance or legal limitations that deter external benefactors from financing campaign- and election-related activities of political parties.

3. The 2016 elections

The third Ugandan multi-party general elections were unprecedented in a number of aspects. First, in what seemed to be a case of 'elite fracture',³ Amama Mbabazi, the NRM's founding member, long-term secretary-general and prime minister in the government, moved to contest against his long-term friend, Yoweri Museveni, who was running as the endorsed party flag-bearer for the fifth consecutive time – to potentially extend his hold on power to 35 years. Second, the leading opposition candidate, Kizza Besigye, Museveni's former physician and bush war colleague, joined the campaigns for a fourth time subsequent to a lively internal party process during which he had competed for the FDC nomination with another of Museveni's earlier comrades and retired army commander, Mugisha Muntu. In a presidential race that seemed like a 'colleagues-fall-apart' spectacle, Maj. Gen. Biraro, another of Museveni's guillera war comrades, was one of the contestants in a race that pulled a total of eight candidates. It is our observed view that the so-called Museveni factor remains the main denominator in Ugandan

politics, so much so that it makes other crucial factors such as political party ideology or a candidate's position on development questions appear irrelevant. This reality portends major implications for the future of multi-party democracy.

At the parliamentary level, a total of 1,749 candidates⁴ competed for the 402⁵ parliamentary seats. Opposition political parties, however, did not manage to field candidates in 91 of the constituencies. The election, indeed, presented nine constituencies where NRM candidates won unopposed and 82 others where NRM flag-bearers competed against NRM-leaning independent candidates.⁶ This paper recommends further analysis to establish whether the inability of the opposition political parties to field candidates in several constituencies exemplifies a case of 'elite capture' by the NRM or if it is to be construed as evidence that opposition political parties are considerably weak in certain areas so that office-seeking elite find it costly or fatal to choose to contest on an opposition party ticket. Indeed, some opposition figures have given knee-jerk explanations for this subtle reality, where they mention contradicting factors, ranging from their lack of party structures in certain areas, the increase in candidates' nomination fees, non-availability of good-quality candidates, intimidation and harassment of the opposition, to the personal belief by the candidates that they have higher chances to succeed as NRM candidates or independents rather than running on the opposition ticket.

The 2016 electoral campaigns, which saw the first-ever all-candidates televised presidential debate, generally attracted deliberations on a number of policy issues. In spite of some observed petulance around the televised presidential debate, we construe it as progress from the politics based on personalities that typically dominated previous Ugandan election campaigns. Indeed, the campaign season, overall, attracted conversations on a range of issues: from emblematic conversations on peace and stability, to frustration over surging unemployment, to concerns over the failing delivery of public goods and services, particularly education, health and transport infrastructure, this time round Ugandans seemed to display a considerable focus on issues. However, the overall discourse remained largely constructed around the personalities of key candidates in the campaign: Yoweri Museveni (NRM), Kizza Besigye (FDC) and Amama Mbabazi (Independent).

It should be noted that some of the key actors in the elections, particularly the political opposition, joined the 2016 competition with unsettled contestation over the nature and fairness of the terrain in which they would be competing. A failed attempt to push through a series of major legal

reforms proposed prior to the election underpinned this dissatisfaction. Following nationwide consultative forums and parallel negotiations within the Interparty Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD)⁷, a number of suggestions for major reforms were unsuccessfully mooted by opposition political parties with the backing of prominent civil society actors and their international donors.

Key among the suggested reforms was the proposal to restructure the way in which the EMB – the Electoral Commission (EC) – was constituted, including suggestions for a more inclusive process as opposed to the existent one where members of the commission are appointed by the president – who had been the appointing authority of the commission as well as candidate and victor in all four previous elections. This move was seen as necessary to engender the independence and neutrality of the EMB. Other proposals related to, among others, restoration of the two-term limit for the presidential office and the effective removal of the army from politics and electioneering processes.

While the NRM, through its agents, had, within the frame of IPOD, signed up to the suggested electoral reforms, the party leadership backtracked once the suggestions were brought into public discourse and later into Parliament. Given its firm dominance of Parliament, the NRM easily blocked any major reforms to the electoral framework. It should be understood that the proposed reforms were largely viewed as a step that would engender a level playing field and consequently increase the possibility of the opposition effectively challenging the NRM. It was, therefore, not surprising that the NRM became easily dissuaded from embracing the proposed changes to the status quo. Moreover, at the height of the reform campaign, the opposition, their civil society backers and foreign financiers made a tactical mistake: they opted for a combative rather than persuasive strategy while bargaining with the NRM on the needed reforms. This failure presents serious lessons for future strategies in seeking political reform. Since the NRM dominates law-making institutions, a persuasive strategy may be worth considering as a more promising way of bargaining with the party.

By and large, without the proposed reforms coming into force, the opposition remained sceptical regarding the possibility of a free and fair election, given that the game was going to be played under the same old order, which was widely seen as being to the advantage of the NRM. Immediate post-election analysis⁸ indicated that the electoral environment seriously favoured the NRM by tilting the political playing field in a number of ways. Independent local and international observers reported that the NRM profited from the blurred lines between party and state.

Public servants such as RDCs and presidential advisors reportedly used their positions and official facilities such as vehicles to campaign for NRM candidates for different positions in the elections. Indeed, the NRM was observed to have unmatched access to financial resources and media coverage. Just one month to the elections, the campaign finance report by Alliance for Election Campaign Finance Monitoring (*ACFIM*) indicated that the incumbent president and flag-bearer of the ruling NRM had spent US\$ 27 billion (USD 7.7 million), which was twelve times bigger than the combined total of his two closest rivals.

On the other hand, security agencies acted in ways that thwarted the possibility of opposition candidates freely and effectively holding campaign events: the leading opposition candidate was, for example, several times arrested shortly before and after the polls and was, at the time of writing, making a month under confinement to his home. On Election Day and the period immediately after, the state moved ahead to gag social media: the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), the government's media watchdog, cited security reasons to order internet providers to turn off Facebook and WhatsApp platforms. The media has been seen as a strong coordination good in the fostering of democracy. However, as Mesquita and Downs (2005) posit, regimes can prevent democracy by suppressing coordination goods, thereby limiting the ability of potential opposition forces to win political power.

The vibrancy and enthusiasm exhibited by voters in the campaign period and their subsequent determination to cast their ballots was unveiled by the unusually long queues at polling stations, and provided optimism about growing civic consciousness. However, the logistical failure by the EC to deliver voting materials at hundreds of polling centres in Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono districts, which are not only within easy reach of its head office but also viewed as opposition strongholds, cast doubt on its capacity or willingness to deliver credible elections. To some this was seen as a tacit way through which the EMB acted to the advantage of the NRM – considering that the affected areas were seen as opposition strongholds – while to others it was simply evidence of incompetence on the part of the EC.

Within the stipulated 48 hours the EC announced Museveni of the NRM winner of the elections with 60.75 per cent of valid votes, FDC's Kizza Besigye retained his habitual second place with 35.61, while Amama Mbabazi in third position polled a dismal 1.65 per cent. However, four of the eight presidential contenders⁹ rejected Museveni's victory outright, with the FDC indicating that the EC in its composition was a biased referee that

acted in favour of the NRM, including by falsification of results. In line with the legal provisions, Amama Mbabazi, one of the losers in the election had, at the time of writing, filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging Museveni's victory. Any analysis of the election petition (at the time of writing) was to be largely speculative and potentially prejudicial, given that the facts were yet to be debated before court and a judgement reached. Nevertheless, experts suggest that whatever comes out of the Supreme Court will have ramifications for the credibility of the elections and the future of multi-party democracy.

It is not just the losers that cast doubt on the integrity and credibility of the 2016 Uganda polls. Anecdotal conversations severally suggested that the sombre mood which engulfed the country upon the declaration of Museveni's victory and the conspicuous absence of NRM celebrations were an indication that the winner could have lacked the necessary jauntiness in their announced success. Moreover, independent local and international observers¹⁰ not only resoundingly questioned the EMB's preparedness, competence and independence; some also clearly ruled that the polls had not been free and fair.

However, the tendency within the general discourse to place election flaws squarely on the NRM's style of engagement can be subjective and needs to be carefully considered. Electoral malpractices have also been claimed in areas with opposition dominance and where the opposition actually won seats in the parliamentary or local council contests. Moreover, in certain parts of the country, the weakness or outright absence of opposition candidates has been fronted as evidence to suggest that the opposition is simply too weak to defeat the NRM.

In a context where political organisations were seen as too weak to foster all-round political bargains, civil society actors played a crucial role in the campaign process and election process. They conducted wide-reaching civic education and election observation programmes – thanks to their international donors. The Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) launched a mass media-based civic education campaign dubbed *Topowa*, in which they encouraged citizens to participate in the elections and called upon voters to shape their decision on the basis of issues that affect them such as infrastructure, education and health service delivery. We view the promotion of issues-based politics among voters as a crucial input as the demand for policy positions by voters is the needed incentive for office-seeking politicians to address such concerns.

However, in spite of the praiseworthy contribution of civil society, their environment in Uganda has remained elite-dominated and is not socially

rooted. Indeed, theoretical literature (e.g. Kaldor, 2003) recognises the role of professional organisations like NGOs and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in fostering economic and political bargains. Nevertheless, we stress the need to view civil society more holistically as the public arena in which ‘different values, ideas, and political visions are debated, contended and struggled over’ (Howell & Lind, 2010). In the Ugandan context, this arena would have to allow groups that support the NRM as well as pro-change agents to freely contest their ideas.

The observed dynamics of donor-funded civil society requires organisations to gain the professional capacity to prepare sophisticated funding proposals and deal with complex project management tools: log frames, GANTT charts, and monitoring and evaluation tools, to mention but a few. This requirement, however, has the direct implication of leaving out organic groups such as those of peasant farmers, business associations including informal sector workers, and church and mosque groups that may have an interest in political processes but lack the sophistication to access the available support. In many instances, these groups, in a bid to access funding, have been sold out to the hegemony of qualified professionals who have the capacity to deal with complex donor requirements.

4. Outlook for the next legislature period and the possibility of reform

(a) Set-up of the legislature

Uganda’s next legislature period will be characterised by an NRM-dominated Parliament with a clear 2/3 majority. As Table 1 shows, the NRM has comfortable control of Parliament with the needed majority to pass any laws without requiring support from another group in the legislature. Additionally, the majority of the independents, who constitute the second largest group in the 10th Parliament, are NRM-leaning. This constellation is no different at the local government levels: besides Kampala and selected urban municipalities, the NRM retained decisive control of district and sub-county local governments.

Table 1: Distribution of parliamentary seats by political party

Political Parties	Direct Seats	Women Representatives	Total
National Resistance Movement	199	83	282

Forum for Democratic Change	28	7	35
Democratic Party	12	2	14
Uganda People's Congress	4	2	6
Independents	41	14	55

Source: Authors' compilation based on declared results from the February 18 parliamentary elections.

***Excludes results from 13 constituencies and 25 special interest groups seats that had not been declared at the time of writing.**

The results of the parliamentary elections also indicate that the 10th Parliament will have representation from only four political parties as opposed to the six that constituted the 9th Parliament. This reality thus arouses interest in assessing the strength of the country's multi-party political competition where a total of 29 political parties were registered, only 13 fielded candidates at parliamentary level, only four fielded candidates at the presidential level, and only four secured seats in Parliament.

The composition of the 10th Parliament, with a two-thirds majority being NRM, complemented with the re-election of President Museveni, suggests that the balance of power between the NRM and opposition will remain unchanged. We base ourselves on the existing facts to argue that regardless of the outcome of the ongoing challenge to Museveni's victory before the Supreme Court, the NRM's dominance will remain strong on the basis that it is solidly grounded by the party's overwhelming majority in Parliament and local governments countrywide. Not even the opposition's control of Kampala municipalities presents a credible threat to the NRM, especially given that Kampala was re-centralised with executive powers being vested in an executive director as a presidential appointee.

(b) Implications for the possibility of political reforms

The above realities present significant implications for the nature of political discourse over the next five years. Given its retention of the presidential office and firm control of Parliament and local governments, the NRM is most likely going to be persuaded to maintain the status quo that is solidly in its favour. Political reforms would, for that matter, cost rather than benefit the party's inherent desire to retain political power and for its office-seeking agents to retain their positions in the next electoral cycle. Moreover, powerful rent-seeking individuals and groups that have emerged over the long period of the NRM's existence and become strongly infused

with the state are most likely going to see themselves as potential losers in case reforms are implemented that portend a change in the status quo. This suggests that the NRM is going to be less inclined towards reforms unless change agitators find persuasive ways of engaging the party's protagonists.

Pursuing a political reform agenda within the above described context can be complicated. As North, Wallis and Weingast (2009) argue, reforms succeed when influential or dominant groups are persuaded about the need for change. Yet it is understood that political agents are mostly persuaded by the continuous desire to gain and retain political power as a means of controlling the allocation of scarce resources. Thus, in view of the realities within the Uganda political arrangements, the leading question that framers of political reform programmes will be confronted with is: How can the protagonists within the NRM be persuaded to embrace reform when it is clear that doing so portends an increase in the strength of their challengers?

(c) An incremental strategy for reform and enlisting NRM buy-in?

A review of previous efforts towards political reform reveals that agitators mostly targeted the big points: restoration of presidential term limits, changing the composition and appointment process of the EC, and removal of the army from politics, to mention but a few. While such high-end targets are legitimately the ultimate aspiration of a democratic development campaign, their attainment in early stages can be a tall order. In view of such a reality, it might be worth identifying small but significant aspects on which political consensus can be generated to gradually enable weaker groups to gain a share in the political settlements. Indeed, classical literature from the institutional economists (e.g. Rodrik, 2008) suggests that gradual approaches promise better chances of success as opposed to big-bang reforms. Given its dominance of decision-making organs, a buy-in from the NRM remains crucially relevant for the success of reform packages.

(d) Strengthening opposition groups and civil society

Opposition political groups in Uganda remain largely weak. The two-pronged approach proposed in this paper, therefore, emphasises the need to build credible opposition political parties and civil society groups. In making this suggestion, we do not discount the possibility of a powerful regime failing the emergence of a strong opposition through penetration and elite capture; neither are we unconscious of the fact that organisation development in Uganda remains encumbered by limited social capital. Instead, we point out that these are some of the daunting challenges that will have to be overcome to build effective political organisations that have

clear agendas and whose agents have the will and capacity to work together to pursue common goals. With regard to civil society, we emphasise the need to go beyond professional elite-controlled groups and enlist indigenous actors with deeper social rootedness and more grounding in local politics.

(e) Implications of a large youth segment

Motivated by the Arab Spring as well as the most recent developments in Burkina Faso, considerable discourse on current African political processes have paid much attention to the continent's youth. Their demographic significance and high unemployment rates are seen as factors that have augmented youth political activism. In the 2016 elections in Uganda, population statistics and the national voters' register showed that youth made up a significant proportion of registered voters: around 42 per cent of 15.2 million.

Counterfactually speaking, if Ugandan youth had significantly turned out and cast their vote as a united bloc, they could have had the ability to swing the vote to determine the eventual election outcome. However, the absence of youth-specific issues, possession of multiple identities as well as high unemployment and poverty levels made the co-ordination of the youth vote a tall order. As such, young people's demographic significance and their high numbers on the voters' register turned out to count for less. The youth face the challenges of multiple identities. Within the pluralistic system, they identify with diverse political parties. They are also divided along the lines of ethnicity, religion, nature of economic engagement, level of education and income, and rural or urban livelihoods, to mention but a few. What is going to be crucial in the next legislature period is how young people manage to build credible organisations to engage effectively in political bargains at different levels.

5. Conclusion

Analysis of Uganda's political landscape reveals major gaps within the political system, significant floors in the process, and a weak culture of democratic practice. This context is highly problematic and undesirable to change-lovers; however, it underpins the NRM's continued political success. Considering that the NRM is a dominant group where the majority of the country's political elite are entrenched, political reforms can be viewed as having the potential to produce more losers. This explains why NRM agents have been reluctant to embrace or rejected outright any proposed changes to the status quo.

Available evidence and lessons from theoretical arguments suggest that

the path to reform stands higher prospects of success if the dominant group is involved. For this reason, dialogue with a view to persuading NRM protagonists to embrace change is going to be a crucial determinant of the future of Uganda's democratic development. Thus, reform agitators have to prudently evaluate who the influential actors in the dominant group are and to map out their deeper interests. This will be a key premise for designing interest-compatible and incentive-based reform strategies that have the potential to enlist buy-in from the NRM.

And if the political opposition and civil society are to be relied on for fostering democratic transition, these actors will need to reorganise to build a wider support base to become credible competitors to the NRM. In particular, they would improve on their social rootedness to emerge as formidable challengers and contributors to the ongoing process of political formation. Only a strong opposition can provide a credible threat to the NRM's political success, which can be another incentive for motivating NRM agents to embrace popular reforms.

Notes

1. This paper was first prepared for a political analysis project of Uganda Youth Network and International Republican Institute.
2. We refer to reports by independent observers such as the EU, Commonwealth and CEON-U that challenge the integrity and credibility of the polls.
3. Larry Diamond (2008) uses the term 'elite fracture' to explain a fall-apart of influential elite or leaders within a dominant political organisation.
4. 604 were fielded by various political parties and 709 were independents for the 290 direct seats. For women reserved seats, 206 were supported by nine political parties and 200 were independent contestants for the 112 women seats.
5. This excludes 25 seats for interest groups, namely youth, women, workers, persons with disabilities and the army.
6. A candidate who is nominated without party sponsorship.
7. IPOD is a platform for informal dialogue among the parliamentary political parties in which they negotiate and build consensus on needed reforms that are considered good for Uganda's development.
8. E.g. by independent observer groups.
9. Those who rejected the presidential results outright are Mr Besigye of the FDC, Mr Amama Mbabazi, Mr Joseph Mbirizi and Mr Abed Bwanika.
10. Including the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), the Commonwealth Observer Group, and the indigenous Citizens' Election Observation Network (CEON-U).

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