

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

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Press Statement

By-election of Member of Parliament for Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District and Filling of Vacancies in Local Government Councils in the Constituency

1. Introduction

Dear esteemed members of the press, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to this press briefing.

Today the Commission will brief you on the electoral programme for by-election of Member of Parliament representing Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District, and filling of vacancies existing in Local Government Councils in the Constituency.

2. Programme for Parliamentary and Local Government Councils By-elections and Elections in Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District

The vacancy of the Directly-elected Member of Parliament for Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District occurred following the death of the former Member of Parliament, Hon. William Bejukiye Zinkuratiire.

On behalf of the Electoral Commission, and on my own behalf, I wish to extend heartfelt condolences to the family, the people of Ruhama County, all friends and fellow citizens of Uganda, on the bereavement caused by his untimely death. I request that we observe a moment of silence. May his soul rest in eternal peace, Amen!

As required by law, the statutory deadline for conducting a Parliamentary by-election is sixty (60) days after notification from Clerk to Parliament on the occurrence of the vacancy. The Commission received the notice on 13th November 2017, and therefore, the statutory deadline for holding the by-election is 14th January, 2018.

Accordingly, the Electoral Commission has approved the electoral programme for this by-election.

Please note that during this by-election programme, the Commission will also conduct elections and by-elections to fill the following vacancies existing in various Local Government Councils in Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District:

- a) District Directly-elected Councillor;
- b) District Woman Councillor;
- c) Sub County Chairperson;
- d) Sub County Woman Councillor;
- e) Councillors Representing Special Interest Groups (Youths, Persons With Disabilities and Older Persons);

Stakeholders in Ruhama County Constituency are urged to take note of the following key activities and dates:

a. Banning of Fundraising Activities in Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District

During this by-election programme, no fundraising activities shall be allowed in Ruhama County Constituency, Ntungamo District. The purpose of this ban is to allow a leveled-ground for candidates in the race.

For avoidance of doubt, this ban takes effect from Friday 1st December 2017, which is the cut-off date for registration of voters and transfer of voting location in Ruhama County Constituency, and will continue until polling day.

Those found to be contravening the law shall be dealt with accordingly.

b. Stakeholders Meeting: Thursday 30th November 2017

The Electoral Commission will hold a stakeholders meeting on Thursday 30th November 2017, at Ntungamo District Council Hall, to discuss any issues of concern that should be addressed by the Commission to ensure a free and fair by-election.

This meeting will also help to foster collaboration between the Commission and stakeholders in Ruhama County Constituency, in order to achieve high participation in the various activities, in accordance with the laws.

The stakeholders who have been invited to the meeting include the constituency leadership, representatives of political parties and organizations, representatives of civil society organizations, security officials, religious leaders, opinion leaders, sub county supervisors and members of the press.

c. Update of the National Voters' Register: 27th November - 1st December 2017

Ruhama County Constituency currently has a total number of **114,938** registered voters (as of 30th October 2017) and 199 polling stations.

An update of the Voters' Register will be conducted from 27th November - 1st December 2017, at update stations within each of the fifty (50) parishes in Ruhama County Constituency, starting at 8:00am till 6:00pm, on each of the appointed dates, including weekends.

This exercise will enable Ugandan citizens of 18 years and above, who either reside or originate in parishes within Ruhama County Constituency, and who have not had their photographs and bio-data taken before by the Electoral Commission for purposes of registration for elections, to do so.

All registered voters who wish to transfer to new voting locations shall be able to do so during this update exercise.

The Electoral Commission has appointed Friday 1st December 2017 as the cut-off date for registration and/or transfer of voting location in for Ruhama County Constituency.

d. Display of the Voters' Register and Issuance of Voting Location Slips: 11th - 20th December 2017

The Electoral Commission has appointed 11th– 20th December 2017, as the period for display of the National Voters' Register in Ruhama County Constituency.

The display of the Voters' Register shall begin at 8:00am and end at 6:00pm at all polling stations in the Constituency, on each of the appointed dates, including weekends.

During the display, voters are urged to turn up in large numbers and check for the correctness of their particulars, and confirm that photographs appear against correct particulars.

Voters are further urged to report to the display officer: the dead, the non-citizens, the under-aged, and those who belong to another Parish, so that they are removed from the Register.

During this display period, the Commission will also issue temporary Voter Location Slips (VLS) to voters, to enable them conveniently locate their respective polling station on polling day.

There will be a display of lists of persons recommended for deletion from the Register for a period of six (6) days, from 28th December 2017 – 2nd January 2018, at the respective parish headquarters.

The purpose of this supplementary display is to enable any person who may have been wrongly recommended for deletion to raise an objection to the Parish Tribunal.

The Parish Tribunal may reinstate the person if convinced of the genuineness of the objection.

e. Nomination of Candidates, Inspection of Nomination Papers, Campaigns & Polling Day

The nomination of candidates shall be conducted for a period of three days, starting on Monday 11th December 2017 and ending on Wednesday 13th December 2017, at Ntungamo District Headquarters.

The nomination will be followed by a period of eight (8) days, that is, from 11th - 18th December, 2017 during which members of the general public will have access to the candidates' nomination papers, and will be able to lodge complaints, if any, on suitability of the candidates to contest in the by-election.

Campaign meetings for candidates for elections of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) shall be held for a period of twenty (20) days, that is, from 15th December 2017 to 5th January 2018, while the campaign meetings for candidates for Member of Parliament and Local Government Councils elections shall be held for a period of twenty five (25) days, that is, from 15th December 2017 to 9th January 2018.

The campaign meetings or public rallies shall be conducted only within the stipulated time, that is, from 7:00am until 6:00pm on each of the campaign days.

All candidates are urged to observe law and order during this exercise and to conduct their campaign meetings in accordance with the harmonized programme. Hate language will not be tolerated at all.

Polling for elections of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) shall take place on Tuesday 9th January 2018 and shall be by secret ballot by electoral college at the respective sub county/town headquarters.

The polling shall start at 7:00am and close at 4:00pm.

Polling for elections of Member of Parliament and Local Government Councils shall take place on Thursday 11th January 2018 at all polling stations in Ruhama County Constituency, and (polling) shall start at 7:00am and close at 4:00pm.

f. Compliance with the Law

The Electoral Commission urges all aspiring candidates and stakeholders to acquaint themselves with the relevant laws, in order to appreciate their respective roles and responsibilities before, during and after the by-election.

g. Accreditation of Election Observers

Section 16 (1) (a) of the Electoral Commission (Amendment) Act, provides for accreditation of representatives of political parties, civil society organizations and any other duly registered institution to observe electoral activities.

For purposes of transparency, the Electoral Commission shall accredit observers to the various activities which will be undertaken during this electoral process. Accordingly the Commission invites written expressions of interest from political parties, individuals and duly registered organizations and institutions who wish to observe the said processes.

Interested political parties, individuals, organizations and institutions should submit their applications with two (2) recent passport photos to the Office of the Chairperson, Electoral Commission, Plot 55, Jinja Road, Kampala, P.O. Box 22678 Kampala, or to the Office of the District Returning Officer, Ntungamo, not later than 5th January 2018.

Please note that political parties and independent candidates shall be permitted to deploy not more than five (5) observers per sub-county, and two (2) persons at the Results Tally Center.

The Commission shall accredit election observers from 15th December 2017 – 9th January 2018, and shall provide all those accredited with identification tags for the purpose of observing the various activities of the electoral process.

Please note that media personnel will be required to present valid identification cards from their media houses in order to access polling stations and the Results Tally Center.

Any individuals purporting to perform duties of or act as an observer or agent without due accreditation, will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

3. Progress of Programme for By-election of Member of Parliament for Igara County East, Bushenyi District

The Electoral Commission is implementing the electoral programme for by-election of Member of Parliament for Igara County East Constituency in Bushenyi District.

Six candidates were nominated to contest for Igara County East Parliamentary, Bushenyi District:

No.	Nominated Candidate	Political Party/Organisation
1.	Armstrong David	Independent
2.	Kananura Bedads	Independent
3.	Katana Benjamin Kagiremire	Independent
4.	Martial Andrew	National Resistance Movement
5.	Mawanda Michael Maranga	Independent
6.	Ninsiima Christine Bekunika	Forum for Democratic Change

The Electoral Commission further nominated fifteen (15) candidates to contest for elections and by-elections to fill vacancies existing in various Local Government Councils in Igara East County, Bushenyi District.

Campaigns commenced on Sunday 26th November and will go on up to Tuesday 12th December 2017, and polling will take place on Thursday 14th December 2017.

4. Conclusion

The Commission urges all stakeholders in the two constituencies where we are conducting elections and by-elections, that is Igara County East in Bushenyi District and Ruhama County Constituency in Ntungamo District, to turn up in large numbers and participate in the above electoral programmes, and to do so in accordance with the guidelines for each activity. This will ensure a smooth electoral exercise.

I thank you,



Hajjat Aisha M. Lubega Basajjanaku
Ag Chairperson, Electoral Commission