



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - THIRD MEETING

TUESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2025





PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA  
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 8TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 4 February 2025

*Parliament met at 2.10 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

*(The Deputy Speaker, Mr Thomas Tayebwa, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. As most of you might be aware, our colleague, Lt Gen. Mugira, a representative of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), lost his father. It is very sad. I offer condolences on behalf of Parliament. The institution has been in touch with him.

I also received news on our group that our colleague, Hon. Julius Maganda, who was in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, also lost his wife in an accident. It is extremely sad.

I request that we observe a minute of silence.

*(The Members rose and observed a moment of silence.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Attorney-General, I received many calls from colleagues, wanting to get an update on issues to do with the recent ruling of the Supreme Court. Also, many Ugandans have interest in it. Their biggest issue was: what

next and what are you doing about it, as the Government? So, I do not know if you have an update that you can give us and then we move on.

2.14

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The judgment was delivered on Friday on a Supreme Court Constitutional Appeal No. 2 –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Procedure?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Mr Speaker, we are in a very complicated situation. The Attorney-General is the one who wanted the military to try civilians; he is the one who went to court. He is, therefore, a party to this case.

So, the procedural issue I am raising is whether, after his comment, you will allow us, those who subscribe to the other party, to also make some comments – because he is a party. This Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka is the one who wanted the military to try civilians.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. There are two things. Number one, I do not look at him as a party to the case now. I look at him as the chief legal adviser of the Government, who was given directives to implement by the court. So, it is from that background. Now, we no longer have issues. The issues were settled at the court level.

Number two, honourable member, you know that I am very generous on such issues. This is part of my communication. I gave a colleague chance to speak here. After speaking, I saw him on television, saying that the Speaker does not allow us to speak. *(Laughter)* I wanted to call him and say: “My brother, today you spoke four times in the House and you are now on television, saying the Speaker does not allow you to speak.” I was the presiding officer on that day.

Anyway, it happens. It is part of politics - and many things - I will allow you, honourable colleagues. I did this because of the many calls that I received from you. That is why I said the Attorney-General could update us.

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for your wise guidance. As I said, the judgment was delivered on 31 January 2025. We received the signed judgment on Sunday, 2 February 2025. We rendered advice dated 3 February 2025, and we advised as follows:

1. All pending criminal trials in the General Court Martial should cease forthwith.
2. That the General Court Martial, in liaison with prisons authorities, should provide a list of all criminal cases involving civilians, pending before the General Court Martial, for onward transmission to the courts to determine the appropriate court to handle the matter.
3. The General Court Martial should provide a list of all pending criminal cases involving members of the UPDF, pending before the court martial, that fall within the categories of transfer for onward transmission to the courts for determination of the appropriate court to handle the matter.
4. The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is advised to liaise with the General Court Martial and the UPDF to take over the conduct of the ongoing criminal trials that have been identified for transfer.

5. The Uganda prisons authorities are advised to await the process above and orders of competent courts regarding any matters concerning detention of accused persons hitherto facing trial in the military courts.
6. The Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs is also advised to immediately commence consideration of the recommendations of the Supreme Court with a view to introducing appropriate amendments to the UPDF Act.

Mr Speaker, I have also written to the Chief Justice, advising him that we have commenced the implementation of the court orders and sought for advice on the person with whom the DPP should liaise for purposes of effecting these orders.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I want all these issues handled in my brief because they were part of my communication. We have one colleague here who was among the counsels. Hon. Ssegona?

2.19

**MR MEDARD LUBEGA-SSEGGONA (NUP, Busiro County East, Wakiso):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, I want to express gratitude to the Attorney-General, that he was able - unlike the tweets that we saw, which clearly said that these suspects or some of them would not be released. At least, the Attorney-General has indicated the willingness to have the court order implemented, notwithstanding, of course, instances where he must have read these orders upside down.

Mr Speaker, as the Attorney-General was communicating, I was really touched and concerned about a number of issues. The Attorney-General knows well that a person can only be held in prison on a valid warrant.

The order of the court, which literally – and I mean “literally”, not “technically” – dismantled orders of the defunct court martial, caused the warrants upon which these people were remanded to expire.

In the case of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and Hajji Obed Kamulegeya, even without the orders of the Supreme Court, the warrant itself was expiring on Monday – yesterday - and it did expire.

My question to the Attorney-General is: currently for these people or persons that are being held, on whose orders – on whose valid warrants – do they continue to be in prison?

The second issue, Mr Speaker, relates to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions liaising with the General Court Martial. What is the DPP's business? The DPP is empowered under the law to commence prosecutions against any person of her choice, provided there is evidence before her. The reverse is not true that the DPP goes around fishing for cases.

This time, they are telling the DPP to go around fishing for cases from persons that have been conducting business illegally. Do not forget that until Friday the 31<sup>st</sup>, there was a decision of the Constitutional Court which declared that this is not a court of law – or whatever they have been doing.

They secured an interim order from the Supreme Court to stay execution. Execution, in this case, was purely the transfer of files from the General Court Martial or courts-martial to the civil courts. You cannot stay a declaration. That interim order was used by the General Court Martial to continue and commence fresh prosecutions.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, from the Attorney-General's communication, I have not even heard anything to do with timelines. So, as long as they are doing their consultations, these people can be in prison now on the orders of the Attorney-General. Where, under the law, does the Attorney-General get powers to continue an illegal remand or detain them? What he has literally done is amend the orders of the court.

Finally – (*Hon. Ssemujju rose*) - I will receive information from Hon. Ssemujju – (*Interruption*)

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Thank you very much, Hon. Medard and Mr Speaker. The information I would like to give Hon. Medard and Parliament is that yesterday, our lawyers who represent Dr Besigye and Hajj Obeid visited the Commissioner-General of the Uganda Prisons. He said he understood that Besigye and Hajj Obeid needed to leave his prison on Friday when the judgment became effective, and he was waiting for the Attorney-General. Up to yesterday, the Attorney-General had disappeared from him.

The last time people were in Luzira on warrant was after the fall of Idi Amin. I interviewed Brig. Ssebagala, when I was a journalist and he said they were driven to Luzira and told, "You go there; the warrant will come." Effectively, I did not know that things that were done by Amin soldiers and after can be done by Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka almost 40 years later. That is the information I wanted to give you. (*Laughter*)

**MR LUBEGA-SSEGGONA:** Thank you for the information, apart from the last one, which was not information – (*Laughter*) - relating to what you did not know Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka could do.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to end at criticising and critiquing my brother; I would like to give some way forward. If I were in his unenviable position, this is what I would do. From Friday through to Monday, I would not sleep. I would require the information from the General Court Martial relating to all prisoners that are held on orders of the court martial, now deceased.

From that point, I would advise the Government to sieve out all political prisoners - matters which are not pure crime - and say, "Let us go and do the honourable thing of withdrawing." That someone can continue to be in prison, and the Attorney-General is busy advising on whether somebody who is putting on a red beret should remain in prison for more than four years now.

The third thing I would do is advise the police to immediately approach the General Court

Martial, obtain all those files where we feel it is pure suspicion of a crime, not suspicion of politics, and then advise that police get those people from wherever they are upon release.

You cannot say you are complying with the court order without releasing these people. At least do the ugly thing you have been doing by arresting them at the entrance or exit of the prison the same way you have been arresting them from court. Otherwise, any continuity in detention is illegal.

Finally, I am concerned as a leader in this country. Immediately upon release of the judgement, Col. Chris Magezi, who is said to be an assistant to Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, issued a statement which he called “The official statement from the UPDF” and it was clear and categorical. “They shall not be released until Gen. Museveni, the Commander-in-Chief, gives us orders to release them.”

That is the basis upon which we challenged the constitutionality of the court martial because it is dependent on orders of the Chairman of the High Command, who is Gen. Museveni, and its membership which includes his son who is now tweeting to say, “We cannot release them.”

Mr Speaker, how long will we continue like this as a country? You have a dignified Attorney-General; that man knows the law, by the way. Even when he chooses to disobey or ill-advise, at least he knows the law.

We received another statement from the President. Half of it was dignified; the second half was very undignifying. You heard from the President, who says that this country is not governed by judges and lawyers, which I agree with, but this country is governed by the Constitution. Anybody who does not want to obey this Constitution should give us peace by leaving. *(Applause)*

I am concerned about Gen. Kainerugaba’s tweets. You saw when he said that he was going to attack the mercenaries in Congo. A few days later, it happened. How are our neighbours going to take us? You crack a war

inside; you crack a war outside. Why? Is he the Constitution? *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Leader of the Opposition?

2.29

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Mr Speaker, firstly, I am glad that the Attorney-General has correctly advised the Executive to implement the court order. That is a good thing. However, I think the learned Attorney-General is misadvising the General Court Martial.

His remarks insinuate that the court martial should keep holding on to these people until the DPP determines whether or not to take over this matter. I think that that is *ultra vires* because, for all of these people who are being held, Dr Kiiza Besigye, Obeid Lutale and NUP political prisoners that have been held for over four years now, the Supreme Court said all those matters under the court martial should cease with immediacy.

Article 120 of our country’s Constitution provides for the office of the DPP. When you go all the way to clause (6), it says that in exercising their authority, the DPP shall not be under the control or manipulation of anybody. So, nobody is meant to give any order or directive to the DPP. The learned Attorney-General seems to be saying that the General Court Martial will now be directing the DPP to say, “We have these matters; you take them up.” That is against the law.

What is meant to happen, Mr Speaker, is that the General Court Martial issues, with immediacy, release orders for these people because it no longer has any authority over these people completely. Release them, and then if the DPP, in her choosing and investigations, determines that there is any matter that is meant to come before the civilian courts, that can happen. However, the two courts are disjointed – *(Hon. Lubega-Sseggona rose)*

Mr Speaker, there is some information, if you will allow, from – *(Interruption)*

**MR LUBEGA-SSEGGONA:** In just a second, Leader of the Opposition. From the Attorney-General's communication, they have already interfered with the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) by telling her to go and liaise with the Court Martial.

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Mr Speaker, in the remaining one minute, I would like to cede the ground to our Shadow Attorney-General.

2.32

**MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndorwa County East, Kabale):** Thank you, the Leader of the Opposition, Counsel Lubega-Sseggona and the Attorney-General. Mr Speaker, this particular judgment falls in the category of what we call self-executing judgments. It is one that should be complied with without any other process, as alluded to by the Attorney-General.

If I were the Commissioner-General of Prisons, I would release all those individuals mentioned in the judgment, including the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) officers undergoing trial in the General Court Martial regarding offenses triable by civil courts. Then, as you normally do, you would arrest the people outside the prison, take them to the police, detain them for 48 hours, make fictitious charges against those who you can, and do the like.

Other than that, what is happening - and the Attorney-General agrees - is that all players, especially the prison warders who are detaining these people, are doing so illegally. We are literally doing so in utter disregard of the constitutional provision so we have overthrown the Constitution.

Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, my worry is about what is being planned by the Government. The information we have got is that they are now trying to come up with a Bill to overturn the Supreme Court judgment. That is the reason the Attorney-General has advised on a series of procedures to be taken, which he himself knows are inherently illegal.

Mr Attorney-General, my learned friend, sir, do not put my brother, Dr Byabashaija, the Commissioner-General of Prisons, into problems. Today, after here, we will advise the affected persons to take up contempt proceedings against him as an individual. He will not rely on your advice because this particular judgment is self-executing, and it does not envisage you advising them to do anything to the contrary.

Therefore, just advise the man to release the people, send your police to arrest them outside the prison gates and then begin the processes, if you so wish.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let me allow Hon. Jonathan Odur, then the Attorney-General - (*Hon. Ssekikubo rose*) - Hon. Ssekikubo, I am the one who picks who to speak. (*Laughter*)

2.34

**MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, as the shadow minister for justice, I would like to convey words of acknowledgement and appreciation to the justices of the Supreme Court for coming out very clearly and boldly in delivering this judgment, which had caused great concern among the public and some sorts of anxiety. I would like to thank the Judiciary, the Chief Justice, and the justices who delivered this unanimous decision.

Mr Speaker, Article 126(2)(e) of the Constitution states that, "*Substantive justice shall be administered without undue regard to technicalities.*" The learned Attorney-General understands this very well. What he is trying to do is to delay substantive justice. The orders are clear.

That Court Martial, in my understanding, has not been disbanded. What I had expected, today or yesterday, was for the Court Martial to sit and say; "we are now discharging all these persons that were before us. At that time, we thought we had the authority to try them. Now that the Supreme Court has declared, we are discharging them." That would be the most logical step to take.



We also know that courts rely on departments, agencies and authorities of the Government to function. They do not have the force to go and pick people. Mr Speaker, just like you observed here, Parliament cannot go to prisons and open those padlocks. Courts rely on the goodwill of the Executive in implementing the decisions that they issue. Therefore, I expected that the Attorney-General, the DPP, the Commissioner-General of Prisons or whoever is involved, to comply with this.

Lastly, I would like to ask the Attorney-General whether you rendered the very good advice you have read to us, to the President. The President quoted you that he called on the phone, and you seem to have given him advice that does not match with what you are telling us here. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, this letter from the President is in the open. I do not need to go through it. The President said that he got in touch with the Attorney-General, who explained certain things to him. I understand that the Attorney-General being a party to the suit in the heat of the moment, having lost that big case, you would have lost a little bit of your composure. However, would you now clarify to us? *(Laughter)*

I have ever been to the Supreme Court as a litigant and lost a case. I know what it feels like so I understand what the Attorney-General went through. Would the Attorney-General tell us clearly if the advice that he has told us here is exactly what he rendered to the Head of State? What the President wrote potentially undermines the rule of law and democracy.

I thought that it was incumbent upon the Attorney-General to guide the President on the next course of action. Would you clarify that opinion to us and even lay, where possible? This is not just advice, but you said it is “a legal opinion.” There is clarity on how a legal opinion is rendered.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have students from

Hatumbanja Child and Youth Development Centre from Namayingo Sub-county, Namayingo District. They are represented in Parliament by Hon. Wanyama Michael Odwori and Hon. Makhoha Margaret. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Honourable Attorney-General? Let him answer some questions then I can pick another set.

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. First, the Court Martial cannot sit to make any orders you want them to make.

Number two, Hon. Medard Lubega-Sseggona, as a senior lawyer, if there are facts like you have stated here, the best place to take them is the court.

Secondly, Hon. Lubega-Sseggona should know that as a practising advocate, after you are successful in court, you extract a decree. If you think my advice is inconsistent with what the judgment said, you should be at liberty to extract a decree, have the court sign and use it in the premises that you would like to use it.

I have read this judgment variously. You may think that I was sleeping; I was not. I spent time reading this judgment page by page and word for word. What I have advised here, I did not get from my head. I got from the judgment.

The matter under discussion is not the Court of Appeal decision but the Supreme Court decision. Therefore, reference to the Court of Appeal decision, which was appealed against, is misplaced. Now, there are no timelines. I agree. However, we have sent the matters to the courts that granted these orders. The courts are still closed with the authority to make any orders they deem appropriate - *(Interruption)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Point of order?

**MR LUBEGA-SSEGGONA:** Mr Speaker, when the Attorney-General speaks, he is the head of the Bar. Everybody at the back ordinarily should keep quiet. I agree with him that a successful litigant goes ahead, together



with the losing litigant to prepare a decree jointly. If he was waiting for a decree, what was the basis of his advice?

Number two, I am not aware, and he can now educate us on the law under which a losing or vanquished litigant would write to court asking for which orders. The orders, Hon. Niwagaba says, are self-executing. Is the Attorney-General, therefore, in order to mislead both the House and the country that the person who was in court when the judgment was being issued is waiting for a decree extracted by one party?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, would you like to clarify?

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Mr Speaker, I think where we are going is a bit of a run-around, because I have told you my understanding of the judgment *-(Interjection)-* Yes, and maybe, that is why I lost. However, what we are saying is that if you disagree with what I have written as what the court said, the arbiter is there. *(Interruption)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Procedure, Hon. Ssekikubo?

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As a law student and a practitioner, the basic principle we are taught, learn and practice is that judgments of the court, particularly the Supreme Court are judgments in *rem*, they are not in *Personam*. Meaning that all must abide by not only the Attorney-General but also the constitutional order in the country must listen and adhere.

Number two, the learned Attorney-General, did his best when he made arguments before the Supreme Court. That is the best he could offer. For this House to demand and expect a better alternative from him, would be too much *-(Laughter)-* that is the best you could offer. He stayed the Constitutional Court order. He ran to the Supreme Court, prepared himself, robed himself, got all his entourage with wheels and cartels, and proceeded to the Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, he could not do better than he did in the Constitutional Court.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is the procedural matter, Honourable?

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** In that regard, for this House to expect procedural guidance from the learned Attorney-General, when he had failed to convince the seven justices of the Supreme Court, would be a big disservice, not only to this country but to Parliament.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, I listened very well. Once you talk about the Constitution, it is the paramount and fundamental law we have. In his statement, I heard him say that the Director of Public Prostitutions(DPP), should liaise with the General Court Martial to get files and process them.

Mr Speaker, for purposes of record and the *Hansard* of this House, Article 120 of the Constitution is the directive of Public Prostitution, and Clause 6 states, *“In the exercise of the functions conferred on him/her by this article, the Director of Public Prosecutions shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.”* The learned Attorney-General telling the DPP to go and liaise with the General Court Martial is in total breach of this Constitution.

Therefore, I would like to say that his guidance is continuing to offend this Constitution. I pray, therefore that we give him leave to rest, think about the events of this country, and choose whether he wants to take the country on the constitutional path, or the dark times, without any delay comply with the Supreme Court orders and release these persons detained so that the country can breathe a sigh of relief.

Without that, whatever explanation he is talking about, he is wasting the time of this House and continuing to agonize over the constitutional order of this country. I pray that, not anymore, Mr Speaker – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** (Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka rose) Attorney-General, just wait.

I think we had started well. Appreciating each other on both sides in terms of the swift action that the Attorney-General had taken. He immediately told you how he moved, he was working on Sunday and even yesterday. Therefore, I think that was in the right direction.

However, we disagree on the content of what he has written and what he has not. As I was listening to the issue of the DPP, and I want it to be very clear, I heard you use the word "I advise." I heard it several times, meaning that the DPP still has the discretion to take the advice or not. That is what I heard.

Honourable colleagues, when we say, "The Attorney-General has guided the House wrongly", we are not making any resolution on this matter. I asked the Attorney-General to give us an update. This is a matter that the court has settled. We cannot re-open it here. We only needed an update on how far he has reached, as far as implementing the court order is concerned because honourable colleagues are raising this issue, but do not expect any other decision here to override the decision of the Supreme Court.

Attorney-General, allow me to pick Hon. Bosco Okiror and Hon. Fox Odoi. I need to balance the sides. (*Hon. Ssemujju rose*) You rushed to give information Hon. Ssemujju. Hon. Okiror?

2.48

**MR BOSCO OKIROR (NRM, Usuk County, Katakwi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to make a humble contribution to this discussion. The judgment of the court was pronounced. The most unfortunate thing that some of us are doing is thinking that we can read this judgment off from the original text.

We have extracts of judgments that people are reading and do not understand the exact judgment.

Yes, you can say that the pronouncements of court that judgments of this nature are in *rem*, it is true. However, even for you to find somebody in contempt, one of the executing officers, it ought to have been brought to the

attention of that person. We have the judgment that has been delivered by the court. However, what can only be executed is an extract of a decree or an order, which is the responsibility of the lawyers who are participating in the case.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, we can say they are self-executing judgments. That is right. However, when you read the orders of this judgment, and I particularly want to look at one of the orders. It says that all charges- By Mr Alfonse Owiny-Dollo, page 194 says that "All charges, ongoing criminal trials or pending trials before the court martial involving civilians must immediately cease and be transferred to the ordinary courts of law with competent jurisdiction."

The word "immediate" is there. It will immediately cease and be transferred. When you are reading the text, paragraph or sentence, it is in present continuous tense. It is just a matter of interpretation. Where there is a dispute, as per the interpretation, it is not for the Attorney-General but rather for the court to settle that component, "What do you mean?" If we read it to the dot, the court did not say "release." They instead said, "Immediately cease and transfer".

There is a transfer process, and I think we need to understand it from that context. We cannot castigate the Attorney-General for giving his view on all the processes that are being undertaken; rather, let us do our work. This is the real text. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Fox Odoi?

2.51

**MR FOX ODOI-OYWELowo (NRM, West Budama North East County, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, honourable colleagues!

**MR ODOI-OYWELowo:** I will take you back in time to a language that is now considered dead. It used to be the language of instruction to lawyers and is otherwise known

as Latin. In Latin, we would summarise our discussion this afternoon in one sentence: “*Corte Suprema a locutus causa finito*,” and I will translate that as “The Supreme Court has spoken, all matters are settled.”

There is absolutely nothing left for discussion, resolution, or amendment. Even here, I understood the Speaker’s position to be a request to the learned Attorney-General to render an account of the implementation of the court order.

I sat here attentively and listened to the learned Attorney-General, rendering an account of the steps they have taken to implement the court order in an orderly manner. We do not expect them to implement the court order in a manner that will cause chaos. They will never be able to amend a single order from the Supreme Court - and he is only asking you for time to implement the court order.

My learned brother, Hon. Okiror, has already told you that even where the court said there must be cessation of prosecution immediately –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Point of order from Hon. Mwijukye -

**MR MWIJUKYE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Hon. Fox Odoi is the Chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights. He is supposed to help protect the rights of Ugandans and he knows that people who are currently in prison are detained illegally and their rights are being infringed upon.

Is he in order to say that what the Attorney-General is doing is okay and people can be in prison and wait because he is doing it in an orderly way? (*Laughter*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, how will I determine points of order based on opinions? These are opinions; this is Hon. Fox Odoi’s opinion and this is how he has understood it. Where will I bias myself by saying, “You are out of order and your opinion is out of order too?” It becomes difficult for me. Hon. Fox?

**MR ODOI-OYWELowo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your very wise counsel and ruling.

The Attorney-General is in a very unenviable position and at this very critical moment, I can only state that I have absolute faith in his knowledge of the law and his commitment to actions bona fides.

Therefore, as a House, I think it would be improper for us to impute malified intentions on the part of the Attorney-General. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. At the start, I had allowed Hon. Ssemujju.

2.56

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Attorney-General has said the Court Martial cannot sit because of this judgment. However, the Court Martial is not waiting for a decree and there are also no discussions with anyone else, but they immediately stopped functioning. I would like to thank him.

For the release of prisoners, including Dr Besigye, who is now illegally in Luzira because there is no detention warrant, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is liaising and stating, “I have written to the Supreme Court.” Why didn’t you render the same advice to the Court Martial? Why didn’t he say, “Continue working as I liaise with the Supreme Court?” Why do you think they needed to stop functioning immediately but the others can continue disobeying?

I am sympathetic towards him - maybe because it is the same reason the court gave; that the military people cannot purport to be dispensing justice. The people who asked the Attorney-General to advise have already expressed themselves.

The Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) said, Dr Besigye can only get out of prison in a coffin. What sort of advice can you give a person who thinks like that; even if you are a three-time professor of law?

The CDF, who is one of the supervisors of the General Court Martial, has said that Dr Besigye can only get out of prison in a coffin. He had even arranged to kill him and went ahead to identify a tree in Gulu - and that is why I sympathise with you.

Sometimes, these jobs - I think one time we may need - one time, the late Prof. Khiddu Makubuya was asked to offer advice to the President and he said, "In law, you may or may give no advice". That is how he used to talk. "In this case, I choose to give no advice." That is what he told the President and that is one of the reasons he was eventually sacked.

What advice do you give to a person who has made the statements that the CDF has made? Then, the President, who went to Luweero to fight, killing people because he wanted power - (*Interjections*) - Yes, in Luweero they were not hunting; they were killing. He even speaks about how he was robbing guns from different barracks in Kabamba, Masindi to Hoima. He lights up. The trouble is that you support him but you do not read his books because if you did, you would find all this information.

He went to Luweero, killed, robbed banks, including one in Kabale, and then he said he was fighting point number one of the NRM, which is democracy. He has now said that judges do not rule. So, who rules Uganda? Is it the President and his son? That what they say is sacrosanct and even the Attorney-General is wasting his time.

So, I would like the Attorney-General to help me understand whether you can advise two military men who have already expressed themselves.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the Constitution does not allow Parliament to take any decision whose effect will alter a judgement of the court.

In advising these military people who are not listening, the Attorney-General was talking about an amendment. Can he tell us- I listened to Hon. Fox Odoi very carefully and I want to thank him; he said there was nothing to amend.

However, the Attorney-General said that they advised him to amend. What are you advising them to amend, Sir? Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. John Teira -

3.01

**MR JOHN TEIRA (NRM, Bugabula County North, Kamuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The technical issues about the judgement have been ably raised. What I need to add is the component of human rights.

In the whole world, when it comes to matters that affect human rights, there is always a deviation from deeper technicalities, because of a feeling is people's rights are being violated. And from the wording of the judgement, any continuation of detention of the prisoners infringes on their rights.

What the Attorney-General has put and we should lay much emphasis on, is how we should do it systematically so that order is maintained in the country. It would also be ugly to wake up in the morning, and then people say, "We have stormed the Luzira Prisons to pick our people."

I would like to implore the Attorney-General to rightly advise the powers-that-be to have an expeditious handling of the implementation of the non-debatable orders that were made in the judgement, considering in mind that we still have a long list of individuals who now fall in the category of people whose rights have been violated.

At this point, we also need to appreciate the position of the Attorney-General; he is the legal advisor to the Government. His role is advisory. I see us crucifying a messenger who has delivered a message. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Attorney-General -

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to clarify one issue that probably the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) raised - the issue of the

position of the inmates now. All the matters of the inmates who were on trial in the General Court Martial are now under the jurisdiction of the Courts of Judicature-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** - Honourable colleague, kindly take your seat. Attorney-General, continue-

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** The Court said, “cease these matters and transfer them us.” That means that the Supreme Court handed the jurisdiction over any matter that relates to any of those people to the Courts of Judicature.

Hon. Sseggona, we can continue the debate. I have rendered advice and told you that the Government has decided to comply with the court orders, as the Supreme Court has ordered. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you for that update. I implore both sides to keep in touch with each other. Matters of national importance, Hon. Nambooze, please.

3.05

**MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am so grateful that you have allowed me to raise this matter of national importance. But I also want to let you know that all of us had thought that we would get an opportunity to contribute to the debate that was before us.

Now that you have ruled that we proceed, I want to remind this House about the plight of travellers on the Kampala-Jinja road, which is of national importance.

What is happening on that highway can no longer be classified as a traffic jam but a crisis in its own style. The point of concern now is the risk we are running as a country of trucks filled with thousands of litres of fuel stuck in a traffic jam for hours on a congested road.

Some of us would not want to be prophets of doom, but it would be very bad if we did not discuss this. If it was not for the grace of the Lord, who protects Ugandans, any slight

mistake would result in thousands of people and property being lost on that road.

Just a little fire or something nearer to that, we would sit here if some of us are not victims and count the losses. I know that it is not easy to construct a road but I think that there are technical things we can do to mitigate the problem. For example, I remember some years back when I was young, trailers carrying goods would move at a particular time –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Nambooze, on matters of national importance, we have a time limit. I said two minutes, we are now on three. Just go to prayers.

**MS BETTY NAMBOOZE:** Mr Speaker, I pray that the Minister of Works and Transport comes up with interim provisions to mitigate the crisis –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, please, Hon. Nambooze, conclude.

**MS BETTY NAMBOOZE:** To mitigate the crisis on the Kampala-Jinja Highway, I pray.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Member. That is a critical matter for all of us who pass there. I do not see the Minister of Works and Transport here, but Rt Hon. Prime Minister, do you want to respond? Please.

3.09

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank Hon. Nambooze for bringing up such a question that touches everybody. I would like to inform this House and the country that the Ministry of Works and Transport is fast-tracking the Kampala-Jinja Express Highway.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, the drivers on that road, especially those big trucks carrying fuel, have been advised to use Mukono-Katosi-Jinja road so that they avoid the traffic around that corner.



**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Madam Prime Minister, if I may advise, do you think it would be prudent – because your response should be based on her prayers, where she has asked for interim mitigation measures. So, if I requested the Minister of Works and Transport to come and respond to this issue, with clear interim mitigation measures, do you think it would be more helpful?

**MS NAKADAMA:** That is right, Mr Speaker. I agree with you, but for now, I thought I was giving information that can be used as we wait for the Minister of Works and Transport to come in. They had put a signpost to divert drivers who are using that highway to use the Mukono-Katosi-Jinja route because those are big ones.

Then, between Kampala and Mukono – (*Interjections*) – can I finish? Between Kampala and Mukono, there is railway transport that has been improvised now so that those people can use it. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Masaba Karim? (*Members rose*) No, we have agreed. Let the minister come on Tuesday next week with a statement showing interim mitigation measures, and then we shall debate that. Hon. Sarah Najjuma?

3.12

**MS SARAH NAJJUMA (NRM, Woman Representative, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance about the road from Butalangu to Ngoma and from Ngoma to Kinyogoga.

There is a section from Kirangazi to Ngoma, which is becoming impassable. There are also sections on Ngoma-Kinyogoga Road. I contacted the Minister of Works and Transport, he sent us machines, but the machines are grounded up to now. The engineers on ground are telling us to wait up to April.

Mr Speaker, those are the only two roads from Ngoma to Butalangu and from Ngoma to Kinyogoga that connect Nakaseke North to Nakaseke Central and to Nakaseke South.

They are also the only two roads that connect that constituency to Kampala.

April is very far; we cannot wait. The engineers are complaining that they lack the spare parts only. I request the Ministry of Works and Transport to intervene so that the machines are back on the road. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let the minister respond on Thursday during Prime Minister's Time. Thank you.

3.13

**MR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North County, Kole):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance on the delay in crop insurance payment for farmers, under the Uganda Agriculture Insurance Scheme.

The Government has been implementing the Uganda Agriculture Insurance Scheme, which is a public-private partnership between the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which represents the Government, and a private insurance association. Under this scheme, the Government subsidises a percentage of the premium and the farmers also pay a part of it.

In 2022, more than 2,000 farmers in Kole District enrolled for this scheme and paid their premiums. They suffered crop failures, they were assessed, and they were due to be given awards. However, it is now two years down the road and their awards have not been given. The reason being given is that the Government has not honoured its part of paying the subsidies for those premiums itself.

My prayer, therefore, is that, one, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development gives us an update on the Uganda Agriculture Insurance Scheme, because we are now moving into the next rainy season.

Secondly, I also want the minister for finance to tell us why the Government has not yet honoured paying the premiums or the subsidies



for the Uganda Agriculture Insurance Scheme so as to enable the farmers to be paid their awards. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can I also guide that this is answered on Thursday, so that ministries of finance and agriculture can have time to meet over it. There was a motion.

3.15

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** Mr Speaker, I move this motion under rule 59(1)(b) – and I want to thank you. It is a motion of adjournment to discuss an urgent matter of public importance.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you because you were generous in allowing us to make comments the way we did, about the Supreme Court judgment. However, because of the importance of this judgment, I am moving this motion to persuade you, Mr Speaker, to adjourn the subject matter under consideration and to allow us, at least, an hour to discuss this matter. Why? The defeat in court was not a defeat just of the Attorney General. In fact, when Parliament was making this law, Hon. Kiwanuka Kiryowa was not even the Attorney-General. So, this judgement also touches on how Parliament conducts business here.

The way the Chief Justice described the setting up of the General Court Martial – he said it is like asking him to go to Mulago to begin operating on patients. That is what Parliament did. And, any MP worth their name must take this as a very serious matter – that what Parliament did, in setting up the General Court Martial, was like telling a lawyer to go to Mulago to operate on patients.

Secondly, this judgment touches on the constitutional order in this country – that you have a military that has taken over management of society. The CDF is issuing one tweet after another. We are now asking the Attorney-General to advise him.

The motion of adjournment is to allow us to present these matters to the satisfaction of the public. The public is now very happy with the

Judiciary. It is time for the public to also be very happy with the Parliament, especially because it is this Parliament that established that General Court Martial. I am lucky that I was not in that Parliament. Otherwise the words of the Chief Justice –

That is the motion, Mr Speaker, that I am moving to adjourn consideration of the matters on the Floor now to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, and, that is, the judgment of the Supreme Court.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Hon. Ssemujju – (*Members rose*) No, wait and I guide. I need to guide. That is why I am here.

This matter goes beyond rule 59. It goes to rule 64(2) – a Member who desires to move a motion of this nature, in writing, should – if I may read it. “*A Member desiring to move the adjournment Motion under subrule (1) –*” because it is a special motion – adjournment motion: definite matter of urgent public importance – “*A Member desiring to move the adjournment motion under subrule (1) shall, save in exceptional circumstances given out to the satisfaction of the Speaker, submit to the Speaker the terms, in writing, of the matter which he or she desires to be discussed at least two hours before the commencement of the day’s sitting*”. This is because you would have seen that it is not provided for on the Order Paper.

Number two, under rule 64(4)(d), which is the right to move a motion under this rule. “*The motion must not revive debate on a matter which has already been discussed in the same Session under this rule*”.

I gave this matter 45 minutes. We discussed it for 45 minutes. It is a matter that the Member considered to be very important, so, he should have gone to the Speaker, two hours before entering here – at midday or eleven o’clock – and say that he has an urgent matter which he does not see on the Order Paper. In my opinion, I would have moved that we adjourn debate on some items to consider this matter. Therefore, I find it effective and I cannot even put the

question to it. *(A Member rose.)* “Guidance” is not provided for anywhere in our rules.

Thank you. Next item.

Point of procedure from the Member for Buvuma.

**MS MUGABI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Last Tuesday, I raised a matter of national importance concerning a boat that capsized due to negligence of the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) Fisheries Protection Unit. One of my prayers was for this House to table the fisheries and aquaculture regulations.

Mr Speaker, you requested the Government to commit itself to when these regulations would be tabled, and the Third Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Rukia Nakadama, committed that the regulations would be tabled within one week.

Therefore, wouldn’t it be procedurally right for us to know whether the Rt Hon. Rukia Nakadama has carried along with her the regulations to be tabled in this House? This is because the fisheries community is in need of these regulations – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please, the week has not ended. She told you a “week” and the week has not ended. Stop putting her on pressure. Hon. Mapenduzi, you had an issue.

**MR MAPENDUZI:** Mr Speaker, I rise under Rule 218(2) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, the Public Service Pension Fund Bill, 2024, was referred to the Committee on Public Service and Local Government. The committee was given a period of 45 days within which it should scrutinise and report back to this House.

Mr Speaker, you are aware that on the same day, Parliament went on recess. When we returned, we were given a strict timeframe within which we were supposed to consider the Budget Framework Paper, and the committee had to accomplish that task.

Mr Speaker, considering that the 45 days have gone by and we have just a few days, wouldn’t it be procedurally correct if you find it fit, that the committee is granted permission to extend the period by about three weeks, for it to adequately scrutinise and report back to this Parliament? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable colleague. Three weeks is okay. Let us give it to you because we took three weeks away from you to handle the Budget Framework Paper. Point of procedure from Hon. Atkins Katusabe.

**MR KATUSABE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Having been a very close friend to you before we even joined this great institution, I am duty bound to submit to constitutional authority. This submission is in no way trying to challenge your decision.

Mr Speaker, everybody in this Chamber picked up a Constitution and a Bible or Quran. I am a Bible believer; I am a Catholic. We swore, or we took a constitutional oath. One, to defend, two, to preserve and three, to protect the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, we are drawing closer to a breakdown of the Constitution order. The constitutional oath that I, yourself and everybody in this Chamber took, does not give us adequate room to see what is going on, to continue.

My procedural issue is: Our Constitution is very clear under Article 92. The Attorney-General is aware that even when he is advising the Government, including this House, we are guided and directed by historic precedence.

I draw the attention of everybody in the Chamber to two precedents which are his – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Atkins Katusabe, I do not have much time.

**MR KATUSABE:** Let me wrap up, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Tell us your point of procedure.

**MR KATUSABE:** This is about the Constitution –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, Hon. Atkins Katusabe, please. You are on point of procedure; so raise it.

**MR KATUSABE:** Mr Speaker, *Ssemogerere and others v. the Attorney-General, 2004; Male Mabirizi v. the Attorney-General 2021*, – it is crystal clear; we are not going to allow a total constitutional breakdown happening on our watch. I am going to partner with my colleague, Hon. Ssemujju, that it is either that matter is considered tomorrow or no other matter.

My procedural matter is: Having taken the constitutional oath, would we be proceeding correctly while we see the Executive undermining that very oath? Mr Speaker, the ruling of the Supreme Court is non-negotiable. What I do not want is for your leadership in this House to be co-opted in an illegality and criminality, as it relates to offending Article 92 of our Constitution, which is crystal clear. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I am very happy to see that Hon. Atkins Katusabe wishes me well, and wishes this House to have powers that it would be able to use. However, Hon. Atkins, my brother, here we do not have powers of enforcement of court orders outside those directed at our institution. We can only comment. That is why I allowed this time and I ask – we can only put the Attorney-General and the Government to task to update us. However, when it comes to court orders, we cannot come here and give orders. These are matters of court, settled. The Attorney-General and the Government know what they are supposed to do.

In case they do not do what they are supposed to do, the aggrieved parties can go to court for contempt. One of our colleagues, Hon. Niwagaba, raised it and said that, “Mr Byabashaija, we will go to court to start proceedings against you for contempt of court.”

On this matter, Parliament was not party. We can only comment. In fact, we cannot start taking sides because the court made a decision.

Therefore, honourable colleagues, I beseech your indulgence; let us know where our powers stop and continue operating within the boundaries of our powers, as an institution. Hon. Aisha Kabanda?

3.30

**MS AISHA KABANDA (NUP, Woman Representative, Butambala):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is a matter on agricultural insurance that has been referred to the minister to bring a response next Thursday. Close to a year back, I raised the question again on insurance and the Attorney-General asked for time to get information but he has never gotten back to us. Wouldn't it be procedurally right that on the same Thursday he responds to the question I asked here on why banks charge double insurance on top-up loans?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Attorney-General?

3.31

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka):** Mr Speaker, I do not recall undertaking to report back about double insurance of banks. That is really way outside my realm of – I would not have undertaken that. But if you want me to go and research on it, I can do it but definitely, it is the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to give you answers. I do not know anything about insurance –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let me make it very easy for you, Hon. Aisha Kabanda; kindly put it in writing and submit. I will get the ministry of finance to respond.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Mr Speaker, it is a question I have asked twice. That would be the third time. The last time I asked that question, it was addressed to the Rt Hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister addressed the matter to the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General said, “Let me go consult and come back.”

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can I request that you raise the matter now, the way you wanted it and I will refer it to the right minister?

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. When people go to get loans from the banks, especially when they are getting top-up – ordinarily banks charge for insurance on every loan. When you go to get a top-up loan, again insurance is charged, but when they are charging that insurance, they charge for the whole loan. Let me give an example. If you are left with a balance of a loan of Shs 40 million and you want to top-up Shs 100 million and they are only going to give Shs 60 million, they charge insurance on the whole amount of loan, which is double charging – because the portion that you are not taking would have been paid for already. This is cheating people; charging them twice over money that is not taken.

Therefore, my question was: Is it fair and why isn't the Government making regulations that will guide banks not to charge people twice over top-up loans? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, respond as the regulator.

3.32

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker and colleagues, if I have understood Hon. Aisha Kabanda well, this is a matter between commercial banks and their clients.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** They have asked the ministry for finance as the regulator.

**MR MUSASIZI:** Mr Speaker, we do not negotiate on behalf of the clients. Take the loan or don't. If the loan is bad, leave it.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Senior banker, Hon. Omara, do you want to say something? Hon. Musasizi, you usually give us answers. Today I do not know who has disturbed you.

*(Laughter)* You rarely give such answers. Hon. Omara?

**MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County, Otuke):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The practice is always that every loan that we get from the bank – whether personal loans, vehicle loans or home loans – normally carries some component of insurance charges. This runs down for a period of time as agreed by the client.

However, if you have exhausted – let us say you got a two-year loan and you have finished one year and you want a top-up – normally that top-up will come with an insurance charge, again. This is a relationship and a product arrangement between you and the bank. The Bank of Uganda or the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development have nothing to do with it.

However, if there is any disagreement – because what Bank of Uganda does is to make sure – by regulation, all banks must publicly display all their charges so that the people can see and educate themselves. Therefore, if you choose to take a particular product, it is assumed that you have taken it from a point of knowledge.

Therefore, they should explain thoroughly to you about the products, benefits and the charges that come with it. I do not think it is something that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development would get involved in even as the regulator.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I do not have much time. You can see we are coming to 4:00 p.m. Okay? Please, senior counsel.

3.33

**MR MEDARD LUBEGA-SSEGGONA (NUP, Busiro County East, Wakiso):** I want to thank you, Mr Speaker. I think today, like you, I am disappointed by Hon. Henry Musasizi.

I think the matter raised by the honourable member is of interest to the Ministry of

Finance, Planning and Economic Development as the regulator;

1. We have the Insurance Regulatory Authority in this country, which is established by law.
2. The banking practice is also regulated by law and supervised by Bank of Uganda.

It raises two issues, one of law and one of consumer protection. If I were in his shoes – not likely – I would commit to carry out investigations and then report. That is number one.

I would also commit to bringing regulations that regulate that practice. One of the reasons why the economy continues to lag behind is because consumers are not protected. The credit facilities in this country remain very expensive, and these are areas which the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to look into.

When he shakes his head in disagreement, I get worried that he is not about to protect Ugandans and he is not bothered, even when he does not know. I would implore him to know; first to seek to know, then come and give us an informed answer.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, when the consumers run to us, we say, “Ask the regulator about the issue.” I think we should listen to them because these are people who do not know our issues of technicalities. You cannot just throw our issues of technicalities to them.

The Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives is not here, but I think the Attorney-General should be having information on how far we have reached with the consumer protection law, which the Government was working on. Maybe this would help us. They would be running to that either commission or committee or whatever it is. Do we have an update on the consumer protection law which the Government had promised? The Attorney-General will check and update us.

Hon. Musasizi, kindly take keen interest in the matter and report back to the House in two weeks. Thank you.

Honourable colleagues, in the Public Gallery this afternoon we have a delegation of traders from Mbale City, Mbale District. They are represented by Hon. Masaba Karim and Hon. Connie Galiwango. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. Stand up for recognition. Thank you.

Now, I called Hon. Masaba earlier on to present his matter but he was nowhere to be seen. For me to lobby more votes for him in the constituency, I am going to give him chance to speak so that his people can see him speaking on the Floor. Raise your matter, honourable member.

3.38

**MR KARIM MASABA (Independent, Industrial Division, Mbale City):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think they have heard. *(Laughter)* Unfortunately you called my name when I had gone to facilitate for them to be allowed in because they told me it was a big delegation and they needed clearance from the DPC to allow them in; that is where I had gone, and apologies for that.

Mr Speaker, the traders who have come are the representatives of a larger group of some of the traders from Mbale City who were affected by some fires a few days ago. I think some of you saw what happened in the media. Over 20 shops got burnt and they lost property worth millions or billions of shillings.

Many of them are currently devastated by what happened. They sent a delegation to come to Kampala to meet the Prime Minister but unfortunately she was held up. I opted to come and raise this matter, such that it can be picked up by the Office of the Prime Minister – to see how best our traders can be helped because they have lost property and many of them have loans and financial hardships. That is why I am raising this matter to the Office of the Prime Minister.



They have two prayers:

1. An investigation to be done quickly such that they can know the cause of this; what exactly happened and what led to these fires that led to the damage and loss of their property. Fortunately, we did not have any loss of lives due to the fires because it happened at night and all their shops were closed.
2. The last prayer is for the Government to run to their aid and see how best they can be helped; how they can facilitate them because many of them have lost property and do not know where to begin from.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Connie Galiwango, would you want to add on something?

3.39

**MS CONNIE GALIWANGO (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbale City):** Yes. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to welcome my people from Mbale. You are most welcome. “*Kwabasimire Mwanyala Kweza*”. Mr Speaker, I am sorry that I have used that language but I wanted to show my joy to my people.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What does it mean? What if you are saying they grab me from out? (*Laughter*)

**MS GALIWANGO:** I have said that they are most welcome. As Hon. Karim has stated, our businessmen and women have had very hard times after losing all that they had, given the financial status right now and what is happening in the country; people are struggling. If people have struggled and have gotten little, and many of them operate on bank loans – and if you have got a bank loan and everything has gone, it makes them so desperate that many of them have even gotten sicknesses that they have never had because of the pressure that came out of the fires.

Many times the Government has come up to help people who have had such tragedies and it is my prayer that something is done to see that they are rehabilitated. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

3.42

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RELIEF AND REFUGEES (Ms Lillian Aber):** Mr Speaker, I want to confirm that we are aware about the incidents that occurred and the team is doing an investigation to provide us with a report.

Secondly, I will collaborate with the Members of Parliament and we hold a meeting where the Prime Minister will be present, so that we can see how we can help them. I cannot be specific now because it involves compensation that needs investigation and thereafter we will be able to communicate back to them. Thank you.

#### BILLS FIRST READING

THE INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL,  
2025

3.44

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move a motion that the Bill entitled, “The Income Tax (Amendment) 2025, Bill No.2”, be read for the first time.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to lay the Certificate of Financial Implications accompanying the Bill. I beg to lay.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to be processed within 45 days. Chairperson of Committee for finance, these usually are critical clauses and are very small, that we need to sort out quickly.

Honourable minister, how urgent do you need this Bill because it is a small Bill? I just need to look at the urgency.



**MR MUSASIZI:** Mr Speaker, this is a one-clause Bill and I would wish for the House to consider it at an earliest opportunity but in any case, if we get it in two weeks, we shall be grateful.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Maximum two weeks, committee.

BILLS  
FIRST READING

THE EXCISE DUTY (AMENDMENT)  
BILL, 2025

3.45

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES)**

**(Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, the “Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2025,” be read for the first time.

Mr Speaker, I have accompanied the Bill with the Certificate of Financial Implications.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable minister. The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Finance, to process in line with rule 129, but also in two weeks’ time.

BILLS  
FIRST READING

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND  
CONSERVATION BILL, 2024

3.46

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Bill, 2025,” be read for the first time.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is it accompanied by the relevant documents?

**MR OKAASAI:** Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the Certificate of Financial Implications for the

“Energy Efficiency and Conservation Bill, 2025.”

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable Minister. The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Natural Resources to be processed in line with the Rule 129 of our Rules of Procedure.

Procedure, Hon. Mathias?

**MR MPUUGA:** Mr Speaker, it is a small matter, but this being a Bill, the record ought to be clear. The clerk calling the Bill, the Energy Efficiency Bill and Conservation Bill 2024, means it refers to a Bill of 2025. May we know on record what we are dealing with, so that the record is very clear?

**MR OKAASAI:** Mr Speaker, the Bill is labelled “2024”.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let the record capture that. Thank you so much, Hon. Mathias Mpuuga.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE  
PROLONGED PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

3.50

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I regret to report that we are unable to make this statement today. When the matter came up last week, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs made an effort to meet with the Judiciary, the Chief Justice and the team but they were busy last week with the preparation of the judgment.

This came on Tuesday but they were not able to meet him. This week they are handling the judges’ conference, which started today – which should end on Friday. The honourable minister has requested that he is allowed time to meet with the Chief Justice and then be able to report back.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, what I thought was because the Uganda Prisons Service updates the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and all the

relevant authorities. I am told that they update them every six months or every month. They inform them of the prisoners they have, their status and all that.

What would require meetings on this when you have records? Maybe, the chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights can expound on it. I do not know what the meetings are about because the record is clear; someone has been in prison for 16 years, 28 years – Chairperson, Committee on Human Rights?

3.52

**THE CHAIRPERSON, THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (Mr Fox Odoi-Oywelowo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think you have explained it all.

Only to add that we supplied to the Deputy Attorney-General a comprehensive list of all remand prisoners, who have been incarcerated for periods ranging from a couple of months to 28 years. The list we supplied to the Deputy Attorney-General includes the locations at which they are being incarcerated, when they were arrested, what crimes they were charged with and the periods they have stayed in incarceration.

Therefore, I believe they have sufficient material to work with.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do not know whether the judges are going to pronounce themselves.

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Mr Speaker, having the list in the Attorney-General's Chambers does not give you the mandate to act on them because these people are in the custody of the court.

Therefore, the complaint raised here is to be taken to the court and say, "There are these people..." Even if we have them, the only person who can make a decision about that matter is the court that remanded them. I think that is why the minister would like to meet with the leadership of the Judiciary.

Allow us time, Mr Speaker – I think the issue there is that you are seeking for their release, and therefore, you have to go to the court to take that action. Ideally, you would have gone to the different courts to do that but by the going to the Chief Justice administratively, you can deal with all those in one place, as the head of the Judiciary. I think that is what the minister is trying to achieve.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, how much time do you think you need, Attorney-General?

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** The minister has requested that you allow him to come back to this House next week, after he has met with the Chief Justice.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I am also going to liaise with the minister on this because it is a very critical matter. I will not just leave it lying low.

On Item five, honourable colleagues, I had a meeting with the Chairperson, Budget Committee today and found that there was a delay in communicating my decision to the committee so they are not ready. We agreed that they will meet this afternoon and tomorrow to finalise. Then, tomorrow afternoon, we shall handle the rationalisation issue. So, let us go to item number six.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS  
ON THE ON-GOING UPDATE OF THE  
NATIONAL VOTERS REGISTER

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Committee chairperson?

3.54

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Mr Stephen Baka):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a 20-page document. The main copy is here attached with the minutes; report of the sectoral Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs on the on-going general update of the National Voters Register.

Mr Speaker, I beg your indulgence that I read this document page by page because I think at the end of the document, all the matters that have been raised will have been resolved.

On 20 January 2025, the honourable Deputy Attorney-General presented a statement on the on-going -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let me guide you, honourable. Try to be as detailed as possible but 20 pages are too many for you to read word for word. Try to capture the salient issues.

**MR BAKA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

On 20 January 2025, the honourable Deputy Attorney-General presented a statement on the on-going voter verification exercise. During debate, a number of issues arose that required further interrogation.

The Rt Hon. Speaker, accordingly, directed the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to interact with the relevant government agencies to seek clarification on the matters.

## 2.0 Methodology

In the course of the work, the committee interacted with the Electoral Commission, National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics and we reviewed the following documents:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda;
2. The Electoral Commission Act, Cap 176;
3. The Registration of persons Act, Cap 332; and
4. Court rulings

### Compiling a voter register

This is a general matter that we need you to take note of, honourable members.

Article 61(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda imposes a duty on the

Electoral Commission (EC) to organise, conduct and supervise elections and referenda in accordance with the Constitution. In performance of this function, Article 61(2) directs the EC to hold presidential, general, parliamentary and local government council elections within the first 30 days of the last 122 days before the expiration of the term of the President, Parliament or local government councils.

One of the key activities that the EC must undertake, prior to holding any general elections, is to conduct a general update of the register in each parish or ward in line with Article 61(1)(e) of the Constitution and Sections 18 and 20 of the Electoral Commission Act.

On Monday, 20 January 2025, the Electoral Commission commenced the exercise. The provisions require the EC to:

1. Compile, maintain and update, on a continuing basis, a national voter's register, which shall include the names of all persons entitled to vote in any national or local government election;
2. Maintain, as part of the voter's register, a voter's roll for each constituency; and
3. Maintain, as part of the voters' roll for each constituency a voters' roll for each polling station within the constituency as prescribed by law.

Before compiling the voter's register, the EC is required to register persons who qualify for voting, in accordance with Article 59 of the Constitution and Section 20 of the Elections Commissions Act, and include them on the National Voter's Register.

Article 59 of the Constitution guarantees the right of every citizen of Uganda of 18 years and above to vote. The same article imposes a duty on the State to take all necessary steps to ensure that all citizens qualified to vote, register and exercise their right to vote.

Section 20 of the Electoral Commission Act provides for the registration of voters and requires that a person is eligible for registration

as a voter if that person is a citizen of Uganda and is 18 years and above.

In proving a person's citizenship status, Section 69 of the Registration of Persons Act directs that the person must possess a national identity card or National Identification Number issued by NIRA.

In generating the voter's register, Section 65(2) of the Registration of Persons Act, the EC is at discretion to compile, maintain and update on a continuing basis, a National Voter's Register and use the information in the existing National Voter's Register as well as the information contained in the registration of persons held by NIRA.

After compiling a voter's register, the EC is required, in Sections 24 and 25 of the Electoral Commission Act, to display for inspection the voter's register and a voters' roll for each constituency and a voters' roll for each polling station within the constituency.

The current voter register and verification exercise is in furtherance of the powers of the EC as outlined above and the exercise is aimed to:

1. Enable eligible Ugandan citizens of 18 years and above, who are not yet registered as voters to be registered;
2. Enable registered voters who wish to transfer to new voting locations to apply for such transfer;
3. Enable registered voters to check and confirm that their particulars are correct and appear on the voters' register at the polling locations that they indicated during registration; and
4. Enable students who are registered by NIRA and have since attained the age of 18 years to present their particulars, that is; the National Identification Number for updating and assignment of a polling station within their parish of residence or origin.

Consideration of the issues raised by Members on the voter registration exercise

During debate on the statement by the Deputy Attorney-General, a number of issues were raised by Members, in relation to the conduct of the voters' register update exercise by the EC. The issues were extracted by the committee and referred to the agencies – Electoral Commission (EC), National Identification & Registration Authority (NIRA) and Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

Below is the report of the committee on the issues raised, taking into account the responses received from EC, NIRA and UBOS, and the legal obligations imposed on those agencies under the law.

The first issue Members raised was the registration of persons without national IDs/ National Identification Numbers(NIN) by the Electoral Commission.

A number of members questioned the current practice by the EC of registering first-time voters who do not possess national identity card numbers. The Members argued that the Electoral Commission should not be registering first-time voters who do not possess NINs since such individuals have not been certified as citizens of Uganda.

On its part, the EC informed the committee that it is currently registering persons to participate in elections, whether such persons possess NINs or not.

The EC explained that where a person appears and has a national ID, the voter is registered by the EC for inclusion on the national voter's register and if the person does not have a NIN, then the person is registered by EC and his or her particulars, once collected, transmitted to NIRA for registration and issuance of a NIN.

The committee examined this matter and finds that the registration of voters is governed by the Constitution, the Electoral Commission Act and the Registration of Persons Act.

The committee is aware that Article 59 of the Constitution guarantees every citizen who is above 18 years the right to vote. The same

article imposes an obligation on every citizen of Uganda, of 18 years and above, the duty to register to vote in an election.

Article 61(1)(e) of the Constitution imposes a duty on the EC to compile, maintain, revise and update the voters register.

Section 20 of the Election Commission Act provides for the qualification of a voter in Uganda and requires that a person is qualified as a voter if that person is a citizen of Uganda and is 18 years of age or above.

In ascertaining the citizenship of a voter, a person who alleges to be a citizen of Uganda must produce a national ID or NIN issued by NIRA within the provisions of the Registration of Persons Act.

Section 66(2) of the Registration of Persons Act requires a person to produce a NIN or national identification card, or an alien's identification number or alien's identification in identifying him or herself as a voter.

The committee observes that the registration of a person as a voter is a two-step process which is commenced by a person being registered by NIRA, issued with a national ID or NIN and therefore, presenting himself or herself to the Electoral Commission for registration as a voter.

The committee notes that the current practice adopted by the EC of registering first-time voters who do not possess national IDs or NINs is wrong, since by the time a person applies to the EC to be registered as a voter, he or she must have proved his or her citizen status by registering with NIRA and being issued with a NIN or national identity card, which certifies the person as a Ugandan.

The committee, therefore, notes that it is wrong for the EC to register persons who are not possessed with national IDs or NINs because their mandate is to register citizens of Uganda for election and a person without a NIN has to first prove his or her citizenship before being registered as a voter.

The mandate to register a citizen of Uganda is the preserve of NIRA and cannot be ceded to any other person or authority. The committee, therefore, finds that the EC should only register persons who possess national identity cards or NINs or student Learner Identification Numbers.

Any person who does not have a national ID, NIN or student number should not be registered by the EC and should instead be directed to apply to NIRA to register and obtain a NIN, ID or student's number before they are registered by the EC.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends, therefore, that:

1. During the update of the voters' register, the EC should only register persons who are 18 years and above, and possess national IDs, NINs or LINs; and
2. Since NIRA and EC are carrying out complementary work, NIRA should consider undertaking registration of persons' exercises during the period EC is undertaking voter verification, so that persons who do not possess national IDs or NINs can be registered by NIRA during the same exercise, and the records of such persons be shared automatically with EC, as provided in Section 66(2) of the Registration of Persons Act.

#### Adequacy of registration kit/registration of new voters at subcounty level

A number of members raised issues about the registration of new voters at the subcounty, instead of the parish or ward, as required under section 20 of the Electoral Commission Act.

The members argued that the registration of persons at the subcounty, rather than at the parish or ward has discouraged first-time voters from participating in electoral processes, since they have to walk long distances from their villages to the subcounty in order to get registered.



Members also argued that their constituents have incurred a lot of costs associated with transportation and wastage of a lot of time on commuting to and from their villages to the subcounty.

The Electoral Commission confirmed to the committee that it had indeed supplied registration kit at subcounty level, rather than at the parish or ward level. However, the EC clarified that the kit was supposed to rotate at parish levels on different days during the exercise.

According to the EC, the total number of kit deployed for this exercise is 2,703 biometric enrolment kit, instead of the required 5,000 kit. The distribution was made based on the subcounties, except for Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono which have been allocated additional kit per parish or ward.

The EC confirmed that it had received 35,000 out of 36,000 tablets from Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the remaining tablets were undergoing verification before issuance to EC.

According to the EC, the kit obtained from UBOS is not suitable for this exercise, since they lack some of the features needed to carry out this work. The committee was informed that the 36,000 kits obtained from UBOS would be used for purposes of biometric voter verification during polling day.

The committee observed that the practice of registering voters at the subcounty in some areas of the country, instead of the parish or ward, contravenes section 20 of the Electoral Commission Act.

The committee notes that this practice was born out of expediency due to the few numbers of kit that was made available to the EC.

The committee is aware that whereas the EC had requested for 5,000 biometric enrolment kit, only 2,703 biometric enrolment kits were made available. In order for the EC to comply with its statutory duties, it made the practical decision of distributing the available kits based

on subcounties, in order to ensure that the exercise is carried out within the prescribed time.

The committee notes that currently, Uganda has 2,211 subcounties/municipal divisions/town boards, 10,690 parishes/wards, 70,000 villages/cells, 11 cities, 146 districts, 302 counties, 31 municipalities and 34,000 polling stations.

And if the kit for registration was to be stationed at every parish or ward, as required under section 20 of the Electoral Commission Act, the EC would require 10,690 kit, a number that is currently out of their reach.

The committee finds that the kit available to EC was insufficient, making it difficult for the EC to have full time kit at every parish or ward.

Therefore, the committee also finds that the insufficient numbers of kit deployed for voter verification has affected the ability of the EC to carry out the voter verification exercise smoothly and with little disruption to the normal lives of the people of Uganda.

#### Recommendations

In light of the above, the committee recommends that:

1. The EC should consider extending the deadline for the voter verification exercise, in light of the challenges faced in the process. (*Applause*)
2. The Government should prioritise procurement of election kit and other ICT equipment needed by EC; and
3. The EC, in compliance with section 20 of the Electoral Commission Act, should ensure that the voter verification exercise is carried out at the parish or ward.

The other issue was the functionality of the kits used for voter verification and update. Members were concerned about the functionality of the registration kits and have argued that they are obsolete and constantly break down, thereby delaying the registration process.



The Members were also concerned about the slow pace of the verification of individuals, reasoning that since registration kits are old, they can only work on a limited number of people and in most areas not exceeding 50 per day, thereby occasioning delays in the registration process, leading to frustration of the would-be voters.

The Electoral Commission (EC) confirmed that they have received reports of breakdowns in the kits used for registration of voters and update. It attributed the breakdown to its old age on account that the kits being used for the exercise were first procured for the 2014/2015 mass enrolment and registration under the National Security Information System project, the predecessor of National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA).

NIRA informed the committee that the kits used by EC were procured by NIRA in 2014 and are 11 years old at the moment. According to NIRA, the kits are at the end of life and support and their performance is suboptimal because of degradation over time. Precisely, they are obsolete.

The committee was informed that as a mitigation measure, the EC has deployed Information and Communication Technology (ICT) teams to deal with the problems experienced during the voter verification exercise. On its part, NIRA informed the committee that it was in the process of acquiring 5,500 new biometric enrolment kits, data centre equipment and a new national security information system at a cost of Shs 666.85 billion. According to NIRA, the Government has so far leased a total of Shs 300 billion, leaving a balance of Shs 366 billion.

However, due to delays in the releasing of funds, only a few of the kits procured by NIRA have been delivered and the rest, together with the new system, have not been supplied. NIRA was, however, hopeful that it would procure, contract, install, configure, deploy, train and have a working system before the end of the year. In other words, these ones cannot be available for the process currently undergoing.

The committee observes that the failure to replace the old and obsolete kits used for voter verification and registration is an indicator of bad planning on the part of Government, which has not only allowed the use of obsolete kits but also failed to release all the money required to purchase new kits for both EC and NIRA. This has, therefore, crippled the operations of the EC during the voter verification exercise.

The committee further observes that the failure by the Government to provide the EC with its own –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable committee chairperson, you cannot read word forward. We are going to sleep here. The whole report will be captured on the Hansard. Just go to observations.

**MR BAKA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. On this particular issue, our recommendations are: The EC should consider periodically and continuously updating the voters' register with information obtained from NIRA in accordance with Section 65 of the Registration of Persons Act.

The Government should urgently release all funds needed to procure, contract, install, configure, deploy, train and have the new 5,500 kits operational in order to ensure that the 2026 general elections can run smoothly on the new National Security Information System.

The Government should consider enabling the Electoral Commission to directly procure all its essential equipment by themselves and not relying on other Government agencies, as the case has been on the voter verification exercise.

The other issue – Mr Speaker, I am going to adopt the method you have advised on – is the requirement for a recommendation from the *Gombolola* Internal Security Officer (GISO), the Parish Internal Security Officer (PISO) and the District Internal Security Officer (DISO) in the voter verification exercise.

Honourable members, if you peruse, you will realise that the reason they have been using these people is the mistake they made to bring in new voters who did not have national

identification numbers (NINs). Therefore, the GISOs and PISOs were supposed to verify citizenship, which we have said was not their mandate, but NIRA's. If it were done that way, PISO or DISO would never appear anywhere. However, they have combined a system of new voters who do not have NINs with the exercise of verification.

To that end, the committee recommends that;

1. The EC should only register persons who possess National Identity Cards or NINs as required by Section 66(2) of the Registration of Persons Act.
2. In case the EC wishes to verify citizenship status of a person, it should contact NIRA since it is the only competent body in Uganda that can attest the citizenship of a person.
3. The EC should immediately discontinue the involvement of DISOs, PISOs and GISOs in the verification exercise since their involvement in the process is legally and administratively redundant.

The other issue was the exclusion of school-going children from the voter update exercise. Honourable colleagues, when you read you will understand that after this exercise, students who will have attained 18 years of age from March onwards will not be in the register. Why? The Electoral Commission says their register should be ready by June for them to be able to start conducting elections. The first elections are actually in June – for the youth, the People with Disabilities (PWDs) and other special interest groups. They are time-bound, so, any child who will attain 18 years after March will not be able to vote.

The committee recommends that NIRA should ensure that all learners in Uganda are registered and issued with Learner Identification Number (LIN) numbers and, once they are 18 years of age, their particulars are transmitted to EC for inclusion in the voter register in accordance with Section 65 of the National Registration of Persons Act. This will only be for this period of this exercise. Any youth who attain 18 years of age afterwards will not be able to be put on the voters' register.

The other issue was lack of electricity in some subcounties. Members complained that some subcounties do not have power and the kits are sometimes redundant because they are not charged. We have made recommendations that; The Government should endeavour to extend electricity to all parts of Uganda for the future. The EC should procure kits with longer battery usage in addition to providing power storage and backup systems in areas with unreliable or no electricity supply.

The EC should immediately provide standby generators to subcounties that do not have power to ensure that this exercise moves well.

The other issue is unavailability of voters' registers and the slow pace of voter verification. That was at the beginning and I will read it because there is something good there. Members raised concerns on the delays in the commencement of the voter verification exercise in some constituencies due to, among others, delays in dispatching the voters' register to relevant polling stations. The members averred that the delay affected the smooth verification exercise and led to voter frustration and apathy.

The EC admitted that in the beginning the exercise, in some parts of the country, did not start smoothly as expected, but now it is moving very well. The EC instituted various measures to ensure that the exercise can be completed smoothly, including deploying supervisors in every district of Uganda to ensure that matters that raised are well handled.

However, the EC also indicated that it is monitoring the situation on ground in real time and, if need be, it will extend the time for the exercise. We got an assurance from them that they are monitoring and will be reporting to us. I have a report that I received today about the same.

The committee recommends that:

1. The EC should plan appropriately to ensure that verification and other voting materials are delivered on time.

2. The EC should consider extending the deadline for the verification exercise due to the disruptions experienced at the beginning.

Irregular removal of voters from the voters' roll. Honourable colleagues, the EC explained that it is not within their mandate to remove voters and that the process for removal is elaborate under Section 26(3) of the Electoral Commission Act. They add that any voter who has been removed erroneously has an opportunity, in this period, should be reinstated but also during the display of the voters' register, which is upcoming – I think within three or four weeks from now. If you go and realise that you are not on the voters' register, there is going to be a tribunal. You raise a complaint and you can be reinstated.

The committee recommends that:

1. The EC introduces mechanisms that prevent the removal of voters contrary to the provisions of the law in order to ensure a credible, accurate and transparent voter register.
2. Any person whose particulars are missing from the voters' register after the current voter verification period can have the particulars included in the voters' register during the period of voter display as required in Section 25 of the Electoral Commission Act.

Regarding the issue of charging money from voters by Parish Internal Security Officers (PISOs), the *Gombolola* Internal Security Officers (GISOs), and local councils (LCs), the Electoral Commission acknowledged that indeed some complaints had come up and said they were making follow-ups to ensure that such do not take place and it is illegal.

#### Recommendations

The committee recommends that -

1. the Electoral Commission informs the public about fees payable, if any;

2. the Electoral Commission makes complaint reporting and handling processes simpler and more accessible to the people;

3. the Electoral Commission engages investigative agencies of Government to investigate and prosecute persons who impose any fees on the voters; and

4. The Electoral Commission makes the verification of voters simpler and removes unnecessary procedures and processes that may be used to perpetuate corruption.

Honourable colleagues, the issue of the use of the 2014 Census results in the demarcation of electoral areas - we heard that in some areas where we used to have three or four councillors, now there is either one or two. This was caused by the usage of the 2014 data in the demarcation of electoral areas.

The Electoral Commission explained that because they are time-bound, they had to demarcate areas, yet the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) is not ready with their statistics; the data of the 2024 Population Census. The reason UBOS gave us was that there were conflicts in many areas of the country. Below are the areas they gave us.

- (a) Apaa - there is a dispute in Apaa between Amuru and Adjuman;
- (b) Pararo Oroko area;
- (c) Ombechi/Kochi, Legu/Ramogi, area (the dispute is between Yumbe and Obongi districts); and
- (d) Dispute in Nyamisingiri area.

The UBOS said they are waiting to sort out these disputes with the Minister of Local Government and the local leadership. Thereafter, they can be able to release the 2024 data which goes up to the subcounties, villages, and parishes.

We have recommended as follows:

1. The Electoral Commission reviews the demarcation of electoral areas in all the parishes in Uganda to ensure that using

the population quota prescribed in Section 120 of the Local Government Act, will not result in several councillors being less than 10, in a local area as required in section 124, because there is a mitigation measure under Section 120 of the Local Government Act. Where councillors are less than 10 in a local government, the Electoral Commission has a mitigation measure under that Act to cut down the numbers to ensure that at least every local government has 10 councillors;

- 2. UBOS urgently releases the 2024 Census results.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Chairperson, please conclude.

**MR BAKA:** I am concluding, Mr Speaker. The committee also recommends that the Minister of Local Government should urgently resolve all boundary and other disputes affecting local governments as explained.

Low level of voter education

Mr Speaker, as you have realised – and we talked about it here - voter education has been lacking and minimal, not as required. Therefore, we recommend that -

- 1. in accordance with Article 61(1)(g) of the Constitution, the Electoral Commission should formulate comprehensive and detailed educational programmes for the education of the voters in the 2026 General Election;
- 2. the Electoral Commission should expedite the process of procuring entities to carry out voter education; and
- 3. the Electoral Commission should ensure that voter education exercises are undertaken before the end of the election process begins.

Mr Speaker, the committee has examined the issues raised by Members and found out that some of the issues affecting the voter

registration exercise are likely to hurt the credibility, accuracy, and transparency of the voter register.

The legal regime pertaining to the conduct of elections requires that voters must be registered to be eligible to participate in an election. Voter registration is intended to ensure that everyone entitled to vote can do so to prevent ineligible persons from voting and guard against multiple voting by the same individual.

The accuracy of the voter register is a key element in ensuring that all qualified constituents enjoy their right to vote. Since the credibility of the entire electoral system depends on the accuracy of the voter register, the Government needs to ensure that resources are made available to the Electoral Commission to undertake this delicate process in time. Every Government agency that has a bearing on the compiling, maintaining and updating of the national voter register should play its role to ensure the timely delivery of the voter register at the time of the election.

The committee finds that the challenges identified by Members during the voter verification exercise have in most cases arisen from outside of the Electoral Commission and from other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

In the instant case, the delay by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in providing funds to the National Identification & Registration Authority (NIRA) to procure the new 5,500 biometric enrolment kits, data centre, equipment and the new National Skills Information System (NSIS) has affected the carrying out of the voter verification process in a timely and efficient manner.

Likewise, the delay in supplying valid updated data to the Electoral Commission by UBOS has affected the demarcation of constituencies and other electoral areas.

Therefore, there is a need for the Government to operate in a coordinated manner since a failure by one Government MDA has a

catastrophic effect on the operation of the Electoral Commission in the execution of its mandate.

Mr Speaker, that is the end of the report. However, there are two brief issues -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, chairperson. Before you raise those two issues, first leave the rest. Please take your seat. You have the report that Members signed - are those issues part of the report?

**MR BAKA:** Mr Speaker, I received the current update from the Chairman of the Electoral Commission yesterday -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, chairperson. Your role was to read the report. If there is any update, the minister is around.

**MR BAKA:** Much obliged, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Chairperson, you have done a wonderful job. Honourable colleagues, I have been guiding the House on several occasions, but, sometimes it is difficult because people say “No, we have” - Now, Article 62 of the Constitution is about the independence of the commission, partially reads thus: *“Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the commission shall be independent and shall, in the performance of its functions, not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority...”*

The recommendation we are making here is that we are telling the Electoral Commission to adjust boundaries and extend the deadline. This is in contravention of Article 62. Moreover, we are beneficiaries of the electoral process and so, we cannot defy the law, which this House legislated upon. LOP, do you want to say anything about it? I have not yet opened a debate on the report. I am only bringing a matter of the law on where the limit of our powers stops.

**MR SSENYONYI:** Mr Speaker, the Legislature is the third arm of Government and the Executive is accountable to this Legislature.

This is why when I specifically raised this matter it was because ultimately, the people of Uganda have recourse here in the Legislature through their legislators.

The report says that the Electoral Commission should consider extending the period of the voter verification exercise. We are not sitting here to direct the Electoral Commission to extend this period by 30 days. We are not saying, “If you do not, we are going to do A, B, C, D, E...” That is not what we are doing.

We are saying that the Electoral Commission, based on all these challenges, which they also admit – number one, their kits are not adequate. Where you are lucky, you find one kit per subcounty and where you are unlucky, three subcounties use one kit yet, some of these kits are defective.

The voter education exercise has not been adequate. Mr Speaker, many of the LC I chairpersons who are part and parcel of this process are just getting to know now.

Therefore, the Electoral Commission is conceding that there have been challenges. This is why we are saying that it should consider extending because it is their duty; they are the ones who came up with this roadmap so, they are the ones that can extend it. We are only playing an advisory role for their good as well because they come to Parliament saying “give us money for this exercise.”

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Joel, I totally agree with you but I want you to take me on the matter of the law. I am the Presiding Officer of the House so; I would like to preside over the House lawfully. The issues of justifications and others are very simple. The question is: can we interfere with – yes, it is here. Because, for example, when you look at one of the recommendations - I have here recommendations which say that we should be directing the Electoral Commission (EC) on what to do.

I have “The EC should review the demarcation of electoral areas; EC should engage



investigative agencies to investigate and prosecute” - I brought it to you - otherwise, I would have ruled but I want us to be within our limits as far as the law is concerned. Only that!

**MR SSENYONYI:** Finally, Mr Speaker, I actually agree with you because previously I raised the concern of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) not being directed. But you see, the Electoral Commission falls under a certain sectoral committee, even for accountability purposes *vis-a-vis* how they utilise the resources given to them and accountability committees.

Number two, are they executing their mandate within the law? I think it is okay for Parliament to say, “By the way, your mandate, as the Electoral Commission, is to follow this law in demarcating and that kind of thing, please follow the law”. I think that is within our powers, as Parliament, to call to order any entity in this country, because it is one of our oversight roles.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Yes, Hon. Mpuuga.

4.30

**MR MATHIAS MPUUGA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I must first of all state that I am a member of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and therefore, in enumerating the issues before the House, we had in mind the limitations of our duty.

There is a reason the Electoral Commission (EC) appeared together with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). Synchronising their role is part of accountability.

If you go by the command of Article 63(5) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, on the roles of the Electoral Commission - barely 10 months to the elections - and they have not done that role, and the abdicative outlook of UBOS in releasing the census results, this Parliament is really doing its work in reminding them of

that obligation and the timelines within which they have to execute that mandate. I think we are moving well. The coaching of the language of the report could probably sound as though directing but we are reminding these agencies of these critical obligations to the people under the Constitution. So, we are within our limits, I contend.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Nambooze?

4.31

**MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is true that the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for the independence of the Electoral Commission but I think that is in relation to the fact that the Electoral Commission itself is also doing things in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

It is the same Constitution that provides for the powers of the people of Uganda through their elected leaders and it is the same Constitution that provides for Parliament and its oversight role.

As long as the Electoral Commission is not following the Constitution and the laws of Uganda, I think it is right and prudent for Parliament, on behalf of the people of Uganda, to call them to order. For example, it is provided for under the Constitution that the determination of electoral areas shall be done after a census. And there was a census in Uganda in 2024, but the Electoral Commission is saying, “No, we are using 2014 census results” – from more than a decade ago.

By doing that, they are disenfranchising the people and denying them leaders. In certain places like my council, they left us with councillors who cannot be used to constitute a council and its organs like forming committees of the council, i.e. the executive committee and the other working committees of the council.

Therefore, we should not allow the Electoral Commission to hide behind their independence



to violate the Constitution. We came here and took oath to defend the Constitution at all times and by calling on the Electoral Commission to do what is right, we are defending the Constitution and ensuring that the power of the people of Uganda prevails through their elected leaders. I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I think my issue is not us calling on the Electoral Commission to do the right thing. We can do it through any forum but rather, but it is us making resolutions, which we are saying “Go and implement as the Electoral Commission.” Since it is a matter of the law - we have the Attorney-General here. I need your guidance on this.

4.35

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka):** Mr Speaker, I think your guidance is quite right. The issue is not that we cannot discuss the electoral process but rather, what instruction we are giving. For example, if you say that the EC should immediately discontinue the involvement of DSOS, PSOS etc, you would have gone to another point. So, you need to tell them that the identification – (*Interruption*) - no! For example, when you say you cannot register people who do not have national identification numbers, that is not correct.

This is because the law says that the Electoral Commission may use the register. It is only for identification. So, what I am saying is that - and I think I agree with the Speaker - that when we are going about this - if we are giving advisory recommendations, they can be given on matters of principle.

The moment you start telling them how to conduct a particular function, we may cross the line. I think that is what the Rt Hon. Speaker is saying. Thank you.

If I could guide, could we receive the report of the committee and have them look at the matter? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I want to give my ruling on this matter. I am uncomfortable presiding over a House, which is interfering with the powers of a body, which we as legislators said should be independent. If we wanted to interfere, we should have expressly stated it in the law. I just want to make that very clear.

However, I consulted a little bit; I have been talking to the Electoral Commission because they are following up on these issues. Let us send this report to them as a gesture of goodwill and showing our - because the report has captured all the issues, which Members were looking at.

The moment we say we first adopt it, then Rule 220 of the Rules of Procedure will require them to come and report here within certain timelines, but let us take advantage of the goodwill that Parliament has shown to the Electoral Commission. We send them this report, and at an appropriate time, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs will update us on this. Yes, Leader of the Opposition - I have made my ruling and Rule 87 of our Rules of Procedure guides you on how to challenge my ruling. Just go to the Rules of Procedure and you can challenge my ruling.

4.38

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Mr Speaker, without revisiting your ruling, I am just trying to see how we get a balancing act so that the concerns raised by the people of Uganda, through these their legislators, are attended to.

How do we get commitment from the Government that they are going to attend to these issues and for that matter by way of an update - because these issues are very critical and are of concern out there? Therefore, I do not know, maybe let me wait to get your attention, sir. I want to see how you could guide us on how we get commitment from the Government to address these concerns of the general public because these are cross-cutting issues by the way. This side and the other side, that is what our people are raising as concerns –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can I have the attention of the Attorney-General?

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Therefore, how do we, Mr Attorney-General and Government, get a commitment that these issues of concern are going to be addressed in a timely manner? That is what is hovering over us.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Attorney-General?

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Mr Speaker, we can have the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs come back here next week to report on the actions that have been taken, having listened to what Parliament has to say in the form of reporting back on the process of –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, we can say “The minister updates the House”, okay, and on the process and in the update he takes cognisance of the issues, which had been raised here. Now, that even gives us the freedom to debate his statement, okay; it makes it much easier for me to manage the debate on the Floor.

So, colleagues, the next item – no. Let me make it very clear: on this issue, there is no point of procedure, okay; I am done. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE  
REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY ON  
THE MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS  
(DECLARATION OF PROTECTED  
HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HERITAGE  
RESOURCES OF SIGNIFICANT VALUE  
TO UGANDA) REGULATIONS, 2024

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, the process ends on Monday; can the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs update us on Thursday? Okay? Let the minister update us on Thursday.

**MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA:** Sure, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you - just wait a bit. Honourable colleagues on Item Seven - (*Hon. Aisha Kabanda rose*) – please, I am on item number seven. By the way, it is not mandatory that I allow points of procedure. I just want to make it very clear. It is at my discretion that I can allow any point of interruption of debate in the House. Therefore, I request that when I say “Procedure”, sometimes I have also been pushed very far and I need to move. I am stuck somewhere. Okay?

Honourable colleagues, on Thursday, 17 October 2024, the Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife, And Antiquities, Hon. Martin Mugarra, tabled the Museums and Monuments (Declaration of Protected Heritage Resources and Heritage Resources of Significant Value to Uganda) Regulations, Statute and Instrument No. 69 of 2024, which the House referred to the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry for scrutiny in accordance with Section 95 of the Museum and Monuments Act, Cap 149.

Section 95 of the Museums and Monuments Act states that:

*“The minister may, on the recommendation of the Department, by Statutory Instrument, make regulations for better carrying into effect the provisions of this Act;*

*Without prejudice to subsection (1), the minister shall in consultation with the minister responsible for mineral development and with the approval of the Cabinet, by Statutory Instrument, declare protected heritage resources and heritage resources of significant value to Uganda;*

*A Statutory Instrument made under subsection (2) shall be laid before Parliament; and*

*Parliament may, by resolution, revoke the Statutory Instrument laid under subsection (3) or a particular provision of the Statutory Instrument within thirty days from the date on which the Statutory Instrument is laid.”*

Honourable colleagues, the provision mandates the minister, having consulted the Cabinet,

to declare protected heritage resources and heritage resources of significant value to Uganda by Statutory Instrument and this Statutory Instrument was laid in Parliament.

The provision further requires that once the Statutory Instrument is laid, Parliament may by resolution, revoke the Statutory Instrument or particular provision of that Statutory Instrument within 30 days from the date on which the Statutory Instrument is laid.

Honourable members, I note that the minister laid the Statutory Instrument in Parliament on 17 October 2024, and I further note that we have exceeded the 30 days within which Parliament was expected to have taken action of revocation of the Statutory Instrument or a particular provision of the instrument.

Given the above, I, therefore, guide and rule that we are constrained by the limitation of the 30-day time frame to consider the committee report and therefore guide that the Statutory Instrument laid in Parliament on 17 October 2024 was approved by Parliament by virtue of lapse of time in accordance with Section 95 of the Museums and Monuments Act, Cap 149. That is very clear. Let us go to the next item.

Also, I should not stop there; I should apologise. This was such a big oversight; I hope it does not happen again. Rule 129 of our Rules of Procedure gives the committees 45 days. I do not know when we are making the Act, at least we should have complied with Rule 149. Maybe the committee followed Rule 129.

However, honourable minister, since you interacted with the committee, I would propose that you receive this report in good faith, though now it is not a report of Parliament because it is not adopted. Receive it in good faith, look at it, and then propose amendments in line with what the committee had proposed. This would be good for the relationship between you and the committee. Do you want to say something about that? Thank you.

4.46

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra):** Much obliged, Mr Speaker. It is good that the committee had equally agreed with the Statutory Instrument with some recommendations. I would like to assure the House that we will go ahead and implement the recommendations of the report by the committee.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Because this item is vacated, let us allow the minister to continue. Yes, a procedural matter from Hon. Mpuuga.

**MR MPUUGA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is because I had not captured your eye when the matter was still alive, but related to a matter earlier vacated, but not trying to bring it back as a matter of debate.

You have been consistent in ensuring that Parliament plays its role. That thread of debate and guidance cuts through an earlier debate on the role of the Attorney-General in the release of prisoners after the court ruling. That is the way to go.

Now that we have taken that route of sticking to our role, Mr Speaker, and the Attorney-General is in the House. Three months ago, I tabled before your office a plethora of amendments to cause reforms of electoral matters and that role to which we have a duty, we have not played as a House, Mr Speaker.

First, may we be guided by the Attorney-General on whether he has any reforms of a legislative nature he is bringing that relate to elections?

Secondly, when will mine see the day on the Order Paper now that that is our role and therefore, we stick to that?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. As I look for an answer to give you, let us start with the Attorney-General. He seems to be more ready.

4.47

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka):** Mr Speaker, I have not received any instructions to draft any reforms from the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs but I will check.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Mpuuga, let me also go back and consult with the Clerk and the technical team and then I will give guidance on the matter. Thank you. Yes, Hon. Ssasaga.

4.48

**MR ISAIAS SSASAGA (FDC, Budadiri County East, Sironko):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Sometime back in the ninth Parliament, I presided over a committee of Parliament; the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation and such a scenario also happened.

The time which has been allocated to the committee to process the work and present a report expired, but the committee had done its work and finished processing the committee report.

The challenge was that the work could not get itself on the Order Paper until the time, which had been allocated indeed expired.

In such a scenario, where a committee has done and processed its work, but the work has not got itself on the Order Paper earlier on – for example, this committee report - under such circumstances, how should you proceed as Parliament? Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable, the law does not talk about when the committee finished work. The law talks about when the decision was made by this House. I do not know when the committee submitted the report. I need to go back and cross-check but even if I did that, it is post-mortem. The law does not consider the committee report. The law considers a resolution of the House. That is why I have said, honourable colleagues, that, that was a mistake on our side, and I am praying that it does not happen again.

When we have statutory deadlines, we should meet those statutory deadlines. I am going to go back to the Clerk; we shall look through and we will be on clear guard that it does not happen again. Yes, Hon. Mugole.

**MR MUGOLE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point of clarification -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no one on the Floor. A point of clarification must be directed at someone on the Floor.

**MR MUGOLE:** The clarification I was making is from the two submissions –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, that is not viable.

**MR MUGOLE:** The clarification I am seeking is from what you said –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, you are unsure. You started with the two –

**MR MUGOLE:** Mr Speaker, it is because he stated that such a scenario happened and again the question came back to you. The question I am posing is: what happened to their report? Did it proceed for a precedent to be used or not?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, there is a law to use. If there is a law to use, why should I look for precedents? There is a law to use and it is very clear. I put this matter on the Order Paper so that it can be formally vacated. Otherwise, it was going to remain pending on the Order Paper. What is very important is ensuring it does not happen again. Yes, Hon. Ababiku.

4.51

**MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I request to understand something better from you, based on your earlier ruling on the issues of elections -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, that is closed. If you want to submit on it, you

challenge my ruling and for you to do that, follow Rule 87. Thank you. Yes, Hon. Laura.

4.52

**MS LAURA KANUSHU (NRM, PWD Representative):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just want to add to what you said about these reports. I take note that you have apologised and you have guided, based on the law.

However, I want to say that these reports, sometimes, do not come within the confines of the law because they are not given space on the Order Paper. This almost happened to an ad hoc committee when we were investigating the National Council of Sports. It looks ugly. Sometimes, it is suspicious. The Members go out there, we do our job and finish yet you, the presiding officers, who have told us to do this job do not give us space on the Order Paper and at the end of that day, we are going to be accused that, “You see, they were bribed, something happened.”

I implore that as presiding officers, who manage the Order Paper, this incident should not happen because it tarnishes the names of the Members of that committee. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I totally agree with you, honourable member. It is very unfortunate. You know, there are things about which we should not pretend. This was ours as presiding officers; we failed on it. We have to ensure it does not happen again. Working with our Clerk, we should be ensuring this does not happen. Thank you. Hon. Pacuto? I can pick Hon. Aisha as you look at the microphone.

4.54

**MS AISHA KABANDA (NUP, Woman Representative, Butambala):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Previously I asked a question to the Minister of Internal Affairs whether women who dress up in hijab would be allowed to register with their photographs taken with a hijab. The minister said, “Yes, they would be allowed as long as they dress in accordance with the IKOA standards.” IKOA standards are just the way I am dressed. I even searched to look for pictorial evidence of what IKOA standards are.

I regret to inform the ministers here in the House that Muslim women are again forced to remove their headscarves. They are told ears should be out. IKOA standards do not say ears should be out.

The registration exercise is about to expire. Can the Attorney-General comment on this so that the Muslim women be given the right to practice their faith, yet be able to exercise their democratic role of voting their people?

Additionally, also being able to possess identity cards in the way they want to look like because the minister had said that they would be allowed. I do not know what is wrong.

The technical people say that their machines are programmed in a way that ears should be displayed but IKOA standards of dressing are just the way I am dressed. Can we be guided by the frontbench on how Muslim women should be registered? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. As we come to that, without the presiding officers taking away their responsibility, which includes supervising the committee leadership and the Clerk - I have seen here, that the Office of the Clerk received the report on monuments on 31 January 2025, which was way beyond the 30 days.

Also the committee – but we are going to go back. I just wanted to put it on record that we should have ensured it comes before that time. I will talk to the Clerk, that will also bring in the committee Clerk, to know why a committee Clerk should allow this to happen because they are technical people who should know this very well.

Attorney-General, you have heard Hon. Aisha Kabanda.

4.56

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I have quickly flipped through the law and it does not tell us how a person should be dressed when they are taking the picture. I need some



time to understand that. Obviously, I think there are certain things that must be done. I think the face must be clear – I do not know. I am just going to read up on it and understand how it needs to be done. I really do not have an answer right now.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Attorney-General, this is a concern of the Muslim community. Kindly take it up seriously. I had allowed Hon. Pacuto. Maybe it can be one of the issues, Attorney-General, when they are updating us, that they can touch on Thursday. Thank you.

4.57

**MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the fact that you have apologised and also guided on the matter.

However, I am seeking further guidance. When a committee like the one of trade has sat, made a report and brought it to Parliament and it has been referred, like it has been referred now, and we, the representatives of the people that have felt that we would add value by making a contribution on the Floor – because some of these monuments, for instance, are there in our districts – how would you guide us on how we can proceed now that we are not going to debate? How can we present the views, recommendations and desires of our people? That is the guidance I seek.

I had really prepared myself to contribute to the committee's report because I have several monuments in Pakwach District; some developed, some not developed, some not even marketed at all. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable, unfortunately, we face the consequences of our mistakes together. Hon. Jonathan Odur, did you want to comment on the same?

4.58

**MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira):** Thank you. Mr Speaker, this instrument is a part of the laws that we

make here and they are not cast in stone. If there are issues with the instrument, the minister can still, in my opinion, amend it and come back here.

Therefore, the best way forward, in the circumstances, would be for the members to reach out so that the minister can again commence the process of reviewing it.

However, coming back to the core issue of this delay, I summarise it to one thing; committees are not given money to do business at the right time.

When you retreat and hold a meeting with the Clerk and the Minister for Finance - let committees of Parliament be provided money in a timely manner to conduct business. If you interrogate the reason for this delay, you will find that the committee did not have money and that is what we should address.

Once money is available, this Parliament is competent to dispose of these matters, even within a week or two.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. That is well noted. Hon. Jonathan Odur, what you have said is in line with how I had guided the minister and the minister had committed. Therefore, let us go on with that commitment from the minister. Hon. Pacuto, your issues will be solved under that. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY,  
ON PERSISTENT HUMAN-WILDLIFE  
CONFLICT IN NATIONAL PARKS  
AND WILDLIFE GAME RESERVES IN  
UGANDA

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, honourable chairperson.

5.00

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Ms Sylvia Nayebale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I present to the House the Report of the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on

persistent human-wildlife conflict in national Parks and wildlife game reserves, in Uganda.

The Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry was assigned to consider the matter, with guidance to emphasise aspects related to the Government's compensation to victims of human-wildlife conflict, specifically to establish whether victims of human-wildlife conflict were compensated and related matters.

The committee informs this House that whereas the matter raised by the Hon. Geoffrey Okello Charles was limited to havoc caused by elephants, among some residents of Nwoya District, the committee considered other wild animals involved in incidents of human-wildlife across the country.

Mr Speaker, in accordance with the instruction of this House, the committee wishes to present its report on the matters. I will go through the terms of reference because they will guide us in the report.

Mr Speaker, the committee was guided by the following terms of reference.

To establish the extent of damage, loss or death suffered by victims of human-wildlife conflict;

1. To establish whether the Government compensates victims or survivors of victims, for losses suffered on accounts of human-wildlife conflict;
2. To establish Government adherence to the legal framework on the compensation of deaths, injury, loss, and damage to property, arising from incidents of human-wildlife conflict, and
3. To consider the matters that are incidental to human-wildlife conflict in areas adjacent to wildlife parks.

I will skip the methodology because of time but just to bring it to the attention of the House, in the methodology, the committee extended an invitation to members representing areas adjacent to national parks, where incidences

of human-wildlife conflicts have occurred interfaced with the committee. The districts are listed there; the districts are listed.

I will now go straight to the observations, findings, and recommendations of the committee, with your guidance.

Number one term of reference, extent of damage, loss, or death suffered by victims of human-wildlife conflict in areas adjacent to national parks and game reserves in Uganda

In the course of considering the matter with the ministry responsible for wildlife, and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the committee established that some incidents of human-wildlife conflicts have resulted in injury, loss, and damage to property.

The committee further established that livestock has been preyed upon by predators and destruction of crops by herbivores. A list of claims received by UWA is attached hereto and marked as Appendix F, which I will lay.

The committee received testimonies from affected persons on incidences of human-wildlife conflict that have occurred in areas adjacent to national parks and wildlife game reserves in Uganda.

For instance, the death of Amunyo Longoli and Denis Angok, killed by buffaloes. Mr Jacob Mugizi from Mbarara was equally killed by a buffalo. We have baboon attacks on Spensa Mwesigye in Rubirizi District.

Displacement of families occasioned by human-wildlife conflicts

During the committee's visit to some hotspots in Nwoya District where incidents of human-wildlife conflicts occur, the committee was informed that seven families sought sanctuary at Gonycogo Community Primary School in Gonycogo Village, Lutuk Parish after their homesteads were destroyed by elephants.

The committee was informed by UWA that the Wildlife Compensation Verification Committee

had since the gazettement of Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022, convened 12 times, verified 583 claims, and recommended the same to the Board of Trustees for approval. You can see the extract in Appendix H.

The committee was informed by UWA that factors such as increasing human-wildlife population, wildlife habitat loss, climate change and wildfires, have orchestrated human-wildlife conflict.

The committee was further informed by UWA that despite clear boundary demarcations, human beings residing in areas adjacent to national parks have defied such demarcations, and opted to carry out activities such as crop cultivation, firewood collection, and livestock grazing within the boundaries of the national parks.

Mr Speaker, the committee observes as follows:

1. Wild animals, especially elephants, have particularly invaded human settlement areas and destroyed lives and property.
2. Unlike human beings, wild animals are oblivious to the existence of national park boundaries and will instantly migrate to locations where they once lived, fed and bred.

For instance, in Alerek Village Abim District, elephants have continued to invade human settlement areas and destroy crops despite the presidential intervention through the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) to drive out herds of elephants using helicopters, back to Kidepo National Park.

Similar challenges of elephant invasions have persisted in Kiyanga Village in Mitooma District and in Gonycogo Village in Nwoya, among other areas.

The growth of invasive plant species which destroy wild animal pasture and inadequate water sources in most national parks during dry spells, has often forced wild animals to move

beyond gazetted national park boundaries into private and community land.

The lack of clear physical boundaries and demarcation of national parks, has particularly occasioned wildlife habitat loss, as humans have engaged in livelihood activities such as agriculture, lumbering, poaching, fishing, and mining, thus pushing out wild animals from their known natural habitat.

For instance, in Mbuga Village in Katerera County, hippos and other wild animals were reported to have pitched camp in nearby swamps and in crater lakes.

Recommendations of the committee

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends as follows:

1. The Government, as a matter of urgency, takes deliberate measures to provide sustainable relief food items to residents of Alerek and Gonycogo in Abim and Nwoya districts, respectively, and to other affected areas throughout the country;
2. The Government takes deliberate measures to fence off gazetted areas and employ other measures like the digging of trenches, community engagements, and educational initiatives to foster and promote human-wildlife coexistence in order to mitigate the incidence of human-wildlife conflicts;
3. The Government reclaims and restores the encroached upon areas to make them habitable for wild animals;
4. Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) should construct valley dams in national parks with a view of ensuring sustainable supplies of water to wild animals;
5. UWA, in collaboration with Uganda Wildlife Research Training Institute and other research institutes, carries out research on invasive species with the aim of controlling and eradicating them to deter the movement of wild animals from national parks to human settlement areas;

6. UWA engages in the sensitisation of people living in districts prone to human-wildlife conflict on the cause and dangers of human-wildlife conflict as well as compensation rights and procedures under regulations in case of harm to life or property; and
7. UWA ensures the timely payment of claims for compensation that are due to claimants in compliance with Clause 15 of the Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022.

#### Problem animals in human-wildlife conflict

Mr Speaker, from the submissions that the committee received from UWA and from residents in areas where human-wildlife conflicts have occurred, wild animals that have caused mayhem include elephants, hippos, buffaloes, chimpanzees, monkeys in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Murchison Falls National Park and Kidepo Valley National Park, followed by crocodiles that have killed humans and caused injuries in some parts of Buliisa, Oyam, Apac, among others.

Furthermore, Caracals have been reported by some residents in Katakwi and Serere districts to frequently predate on domestic animals and birds, including sheep, goat, cows, turkeys, chicken and ducks. Mr Speaker, we have attached an image of the Caracal, for those that do not know it, on Appendix J.

Mr Speaker, the committee further observed that whereas Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Act, Cap. 315, provides for compensable wildlife species whose damage creates liability for compassion, including elephants, lions, leopards, crocodiles, buffaloes, hyenas, hippopotami, gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons and bush pigs, damage to property and lives is caused by other wild animals including monkeys, caracals, squirrels, edible rats, snakes, for which the law does not provide compensation.

#### Recommendations of the committee

1. Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that in order to safeguard communities

from incidences of human-wildlife conflict, UWA should take deliberate steps to relocate identified problematic animals to gazetted national parks and game reserves; and

2. The Government should amend the Wildlife Act, Cap. 315 to include other wild species like caracals that cause destruction to human lives and property, but are currently not included in schedule four of the Act.

#### Behavioural instincts of wild animals

The committee observed that wild animals have instincts and unique behaviours. For instance, herds of herbivores like zebras, impalas, antelopes, elephants, and buffaloes will migrate to different locations following specific routes, purposely to feed, breed, and raise their young ones.

Carnivores like lions, hyenas, and leopards are territorial in nature and will mark their hunting grounds with urine as a sign of their dominance over their grounds.

According to research carried out on elephant migration triggers and effects on the surrounding environment, it was established that elephants' migration is unique because elephants do not migrate innately like other species such as zebras and hummingbirds. These species are born with an innate sense to migrate every year at a certain point without fail.

The study stated that elephants can make a concise decision to migrate based on when they feel necessary, and that causal factors that may lead to their migration include habitat loss, search for nutrition, and avoiding predators. Migration of elephants can be triggered in some ways and this migration causes considerable damage to the surrounding environment.

Mr Speaker, the committee observes as follows:

1. Some causal factors like increasing human population that lead to habitat loss have driven wild animals like elephants out of

their original sanctuaries to safer havens and in the process engage in destructive activities of developments encountered along their known paths or routes; and

2. The committee observed that elephants will re-migrate to their original habitats, where humans would have established settlements, which result in human-wildlife conflict.

#### Recommendation of the committee

The committee recommends that UWA identifies high-risk animal corridors and routes with the intention of prioritising target interventions, including installing electric fences and trenches, among others, to those areas to deter animal movements therein; and UWA engages with communities' resident in areas where elephants live in close to proximity to human settlement to, in the meantime, engage in measures such as planting of chilies and hot red paper in gardens to prevent elephants from destroying crops.

#### TOR 2: Government compensation to victims of human-wildlife conflicts

Section 83 of the wildlife Act authorises UWA to establish and maintain a wildlife compensation scheme that consists of two per cent of the money collected by the authority from services it offers, money appropriated by Parliament and money from any other sources appropriated by the board. The money is used for financing compensation claims for human deaths, injuries or damage to property caused by wildlife outside a protected area.

Mr Speaker, the table below shows the performance of the two per cent wildlife fund in respect of the wildlife compensation fund, which I will not go through.

Mr Speaker, the committee observed as follows:

1. The total transfers of Shs 3.9 billion that UWA made to the Compensation Scheme Fund Account were below the 2 per

cent, which is equivalent to Shs 7 billion required as prescribed under Section 83 of the Uganda Wildlife Act, Cap. 315, giving rise to a variance of Shs 3.1 billion;

2. Upon further examination of the bank statements provided by UWA, the committee established that Shs 682 million was paid out in respect of 121 claims. Mr Speaker, the table is below.

There were three claims in Financial Year 2022/2023 and 118 claims in Financial Year 2023/2024 – that were verified by UWA. Whereas the committee noted that the Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022 prescribes under clause 18 that in case of death, the victims shall be compensated an amount not exceeding Shs 20 million, the committee observed that there was a disproportionate payment to beneficiaries for loss of life on account of human-wildlife conflict.

Mr Speaker, the committee examined bank statements provided by UWA, reflecting compensation payments and observed that they reflected different compensation amounts for human life lost on account of human-wildlife conflict.

The committee noted that claimants received varying figures. For instance, while some claimants received Shs 17 million, others received Shs 10 million, while others received a maximum amount of Shs 20 million as provided for under the regulation.

Mr Speaker, these are the committee's recommendations.

1. The committee recommends that UWA fully complies with Section 83 of the Uganda Wildlife Act on the transfer of two per cent to the Compensation Scheme Fund Account of the money collected by the authority for the services it offers;
2. The committee recommends for standardisation and minimising abuse of the fund. The minister responsible for wildlife



should amend the regulations to provide for 10 per cent of the maximum compensation payable as financial support for burial arrangements in case of life, which will be deducted once compensation is made.

TOR 3: Government adherence to the legal framework in compensation of victims of human-wildlife conflicts

Challenges to compensation of victims of human-wildlife conflict

Mr Speaker, the committee noted from the submissions made by victims of the human-wildlife conflict that UWA requires the victims from the communities where there are no UWA offices to pick confirmation claims forms from nearby police stations or posts, the issuance of which allegedly requires them to pay an unspecified amount of money which the communities are not comfortable with.

The committee, however, noted that the Schedule to the Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022 provides simplified forms for claims for compensation for injury or death of a person caused by wildlife injury or death of livestock caused by wild animals and for property damaged by wild animals.

Mr Speaker, the committee further noted that UWA requires victims of human-wildlife conflict to have bank account numbers registered in their own names or those without to open them for the purpose of depositing money in respect of settlement of claims for the compensation.

UWA informed the committee that failure to process payment for compensations was caused by the delay in gazetting the Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022, inconsistencies and inadequate information from claimants, as well as delayed court rulings on rejected awards.

On that, Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that:

1. UWA expedites payment to ensure timely compensation to victims of human-wildlife conflict in accordance with clause 15 of the regulations;
2. UWA utilises all available money transfer options to ensure timely and efficient compensation, including the use of mobile money services.
3. The minister responsible for wildlife amends the Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022 to ensure compensation is paid to victims of human-wildlife conflicts within a period of 30 working days from receipt of the claim.

(b) Compensation payment to families of deceased victims of human-wildlife conflict

The committee was informed by UWA that non-standardised cash payments dubbed, compensation payments, are made to immediate families of deceased victims of human-wildlife conflict. The committee was further informed by UWA that amounts of money paid on compassionate grounds were subjected to recovery at the time of processing compensation to claimants. On further interrogation by the committee, senior staff of UWA gave contradictory information on whether the compassionate payments are deducted from the final payment for compensation or not.

The committee observed that compassionate payments made to families of victims who suffered death on account of human-wildlife conflict is discriminatory in nature and not anchored on any legal regime and may be abused by UWA.

#### Recommendations

The committee recommends that payments for compensation claims by UWA should strictly be in accordance with the Uganda Wildlife (Compensation Scheme) Regulations, 2022.

TOR 4: Matters incidental to human-wildlife conflict in areas adjacent to wildlife protected areas

Community awareness creation and sensitisation campaigns

The committee observed that UWA does not conduct adequate awareness creation and sensitisation campaigns among community residents in areas adjacent to national parks on dangers and possibilities of attacks by wild animals as well as peaceful coexistence between human and wild animals.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that UWA should foster strategic collaborative partnership with local leadership to sensitise the communities on possible dangers of human-wildlife interaction and peaceful coexistence.

Installation of the electric fences to mitigate human-wildlife conflict

The committee was informed by UWA that a total of a 100.5 kilometres of electric fences have been installed in some sections of the boundaries of Queen Elizabeth National Park and 153.5 kilometres along some areas of boundaries of Murchison Falls National Park while in Kidepo Valley National Park, no installation of fence had started. Mr Speaker, we have appendix K on that.

The committee was further informed that plans were underway to install an electric fence along the remaining sections of the boundaries of Queen Elizabeth National Park - that is 62 - and Murchison Falls National Park - that is 112 - during the Financial Year 2024/2025. There are plans of concluding the aforementioned parks during the Financial Year 2025/2026, in addition to commencing the fencing of Kibaale National Park and Kidepo Valley National Park. Mr Speaker, we attached all those in annex L and annex M accordingly.

The committee further observed that while in some parts of the boundaries of the protected

areas, the electric fence mounted on wooden poles had been damaged and destroyed by termites, hence allowing the free movement of animals out of the protected areas into the communities, other parts of the protected boundaries had electric fences mounted on fibre poles which are more durable, hence effectively restricting animal movement.

Recommendation

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that the Government allocates funds to UWA to ensure the timely completion of the installation and maintenance of electric fences around the boundaries of national parks to mitigate incidences of human-wildlife conflict.

Mr Speaker, as instructed by this august House, the committee considered the matter of human-wildlife conflicts and it emerged that there were increasing incidences of human-wildlife conflicts that had significant negative impact on the welfare of communities and residents in the affected areas. It also emerged that the Government needs to invest in infrastructure and community sensitisation and awareness to mitigate incidences of human-wildlife conflicts.

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable chairperson.

**MS NAYEBALE:** With all the appendices in here, Mr Speaker. There is appendix F -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You do not need to; they are already captured.

**MS NAYEBALE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, chairperson. Is this your maiden report? *(Laughter)* Should we pass it without discussion? Honourable colleagues, this is on a light note. We usually say that when it is maiden, no interruption.

Honourable minister, I just want to ask you, since you received the report earlier and read through: are there a few clarifications you would like to make, which can guide us in the debate or is everything perfect?

Honourable minister, we also assigned to you the issue of Hon. Chemonges - that you respond to it today as we debate. If it is not there, do not bother.

5.26

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra):**

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson and the committee for a wonderful report. We intend to look into most of the guidance and probably implement most of the resolutions of the committee.

Just to start with the provision in the Schedule of the animals for which compensation can be given, Mr Speaker, it is the committee's recommendation that we provide for monkeys, squirrels and snakes. This could be a bit difficult because it can become a bigger problem. I think the intention, when Members were passing this law in 2019, was to mainly focus on the animals that we have in the protected areas, which are mainly the lions. If we open it up to the snakes - and relocating them to the protected areas may not be as easy as we think it is. These are recommendations that we will look into -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We shall add termites. *(Laughter)*

**MR MUGARRA:** You can see the challenge, Mr Speaker. I know Members are going to raise a lot of issues to do with the fencing but we have done a proper survey – *(Interjections)* - No, it is already in the report -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is why I said if there are issues you can clarify so that they help us when having a debate and we do not repeat ourselves -

**MR MUGARRA:** I want to thank the committee because when they were presenting the report, they talked about the areas that we had fenced and those that we had not fenced. We have the amount of money that we need to do the fence but the issue is really the funding.

Mr Speaker, we have no problem and probably, we will get support from this House and Government so that we resolve this matter going forward by implementing and using fibre poles not the wooden ones that have been affected by termites. The fibre poles are more expensive but they are a better solution.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of human-wildlife conflict, just like the chairperson said, most of these animals you see, specifically the elephants that are disturbing most of us, sometime back, probably, most of these areas were sparsely populated with less human activity. It is obvious now that the population is denser and these elephants will always go back to the areas where they were taken as young ones. They tend to remember these migratory routes and go back and when they do, they find the communities.

The only solution is really the electric fence. It has worked and my hope is that the moment we implement it; we will have most of these issues done away with.

On the recommendation of the committee to raise the compensation figure from 2 per cent to 10 per cent, it is an issue we will discuss and see how to go about it.

On the length of time taken between an injury or death caused by wildlife and the time when someone gets compensation, we agree it is lengthy. We are looking at the regulations. We have only been implementing them probably for two years and we are working on amending them to make the period shorter. Usually, it has been between five to six months. I want to request Parliament and the committee that probably in the next three months, we will have amendments to these regulations.

In conclusion, chairperson, on the issue raised by Hon. Chemonges - we were on a conference call today with the warden and the rest of the team. Of course it was an unfortunate incident. We have taken some action as Uganda Wildlife Authority. I do not want to go into counter accusations, but the four officers that were involved have been suspended.

I have personally written a letter to the Inspector General of Police to take interest in the matter and help us with the investigation so that if our officers are found culpable, then they are dealt with by the law.

Unfortunately, there has not been burial of the victim yet. It is now a matter beyond our control because it involves two families that are disagreeing on where to lay the victim to rest. However, we have availed support to the family to the tune of Shs 6.5 million to help with the burial expenses and we will continue the engagements to see, in case we are found culpable, first of all to deal with the errant officers that participated in this but also to see how we continue discussions with the family so that we continue with good relations between the community and our rangers.

Those are the main issues but I want to assure you, Mr Speaker and the House, that we are going to look into all the recommendations made by the committee.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, that comment comes after we have adopted the report but what if it is rejected?

**MR MUGARRA:** Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will pick Hon. Rose Obigah, the Toro representative, then the two honourable gentlemen – Sorry, I am starting with this side but I am coming that way, okay? Yes, Abim representative, then Hon. Faith, then I come that way.

5.31

**MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I want to, in the same vein, thank

the committee and congratulate them for a wonderful report.

Mr Speaker, two to three weeks ago, on the Floor of Parliament here, my sister from Obongi brought a report where a hippo broke the bone of somebody. Two weeks later, the hippo also broke the bones of two people and killed animals. To date, there is nothing done for these people who are hospitalised.

In addition, the minister has said they are going to reduce on the time but compassionate contribution, if at all, is supposed to be merged with the contributions at the end or compensation. Honestly, treatment is an emergency issue. I kindly request that the period for helping such persons be as urgent as possible.

Lastly, UWA prefers animals to human beings. I can tell you that West Nile has gone through a lot. We were here on the Floor of Parliament talking about Karuma Road. We have not come back over this issue of Karuma Road. UWA is already charging our people. This was a presidential directive. UWA loves money. They spend money at source but they cannot fence at all.

How can normal human beings erect wooden fences and they are destroyed by termites? Wooden fences can be treated. What happened? Luxury in spending taxpayers' money! I think UWA should wake up and do quality work rather than just come here - you treat our people like they do not matter. I want to understand why you are charging our people before Parliament has pronounced itself. The road is not yet complete; our road is so badly off. Do you want us to die on that road? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I see where this debate is going - to the matters in this report. So, I am going to give you two minutes, each. Hon. Kagwera?

5.33

**MR STEPHEN KAGWERA (NRM, Burahya County, Kabarole):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the report, I have not heard about the inadequacy of the staff. These people are constrained because they are very few, and we need to add on the numbers.

Mr Speaker, about the trenches, these animals are now wiser than they were before; they cover them. I think it is good that we use electricity. Unfortunately, when we talk about the termites, it is very disturbing because, you know, the UMEME poles remain for years but when you suddenly say, we put them there and they were destroyed by termites, then the work is really very dangerous.

About the response of UWA, at times they deliberately refuse to come. People call them, they have vehicles but they report in four or five days. I believe that we need to do much better. Otherwise, like my colleague has said, people think the Government prefers animals to human beings and it causes us a lot of problems.

The number of people that have been compensated and those that have been killed are much lower than what is on ground. Sometime back, I used to chair this committee and we were in Nwoya. Five people were killed on the same night. We were together with the honourable minister present here in my constituency. So many people have been killed and the compensation is a nightmare. The procedures are really a nightmare.

Therefore, honourable minister, we need to do much better. We really value our animals, but we value human beings more. These animals are here because of the people of Uganda. We need to do a lot, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Yes, honourable.

5.35

**MR YOVAN ADRIKO (NRM, Vurra County, Arua):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. Ajai Forest

Reserve and Ajai National Game Park are in Madi-Okollo, on the border between Arua District, Vurra Constituency. Last week, animals crossed to Arua District in Vurra and destroyed a lot of crops.

I am requesting the minister to go on the ground and inspect the area and also fence that line because many people of Vurra are suffering a lot. These animals always cross, destroy very many crops and it is going to cause a lot of problems. I request the minister to consider Madi-Okollo; this is Ajai Forest Reserve in West Nile. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Magolo.

5.36

**MR JOHN FAITH MAGOLO (NRM, Bungokho County North, Mbale):** Mr Speaker, I think matters of human-wildlife conflict have appeared on the Floor of Parliament more than other motions, always because they touch lives.

One time I asked a question here: we have a problem majorly of elephants in all national parks. Do we have to multiply numbers to infinity? Don't we have to reach a certain number so that culling; that is removal of some of the old, unwanted –because there is a target of a number of elephants that are needed in every national park.

I suppose that in some national parks, the numbers now exceed - This human-wildlife conflict will continue again and again. I think there is a point we should reach and say, for this national park, we need to do culling. I submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, some of these animals are like human beings, being near the national park.

My people usually tell me, when they come over for an evening talk, that when you give a person who has tasted wild meat a whole cow and there is one kilo of wild meat, he will go for that kilo of wild meat. I think they get addicted. So, it seems even when these elephants cross



over and eat bananas, they get addicted. It is not just an issue of numbers.

I am told that in Queen Elizabeth National Park, our animal numbers are small. We need more animals there but now, they keep crossing over to my constituency. I have around three subcounties; I can tell you it is a disaster. I took Hon. Martin Muggara there; he went and gave us hope. We survived on it for a month or two; he has now refused to come back.

5.38

**MS JANET OKORI-MOE (NRM, Woman Representative, Abim):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and I thank the committee for a very good report. When the committee came to Abim, I was on the ground and it saw the mood of the people. In that meeting, the committee was informed that five subcounties in Abim are affected by wildlife, especially elephants. Regarding the two persons whose names were read by the chairperson, one was killed by a buffalo and the other was killed by an elephant, and this was a very young person.

The honourable colleague is saying we need to weed out the old ones, but I would like to inform this House that even those old ones are very dangerous. Just yesterday, we lost two people, the *bazungu*, while they were doing spot hunting in Kidepo National Park. Therefore, I have sent an appeal to the minister.

There was a presidential directive to fence off Kidepo National Park. Abim, for example, does not border any park. The seven affected subcounties do not border any park or wildlife reserve. However, you can imagine elephants walking from Karenga, passing through Kaabong, coming to Kotido and being residents of Abim. (*Laughter*) It is very unfortunate.

Mr Speaker, from the time the committee left Abim, nothing has changed. The affected families do not have food; they have not been supported. I appeal to the Government to support their supporters who are going to vote tomorrow.

I would also like the minister to ensure the presidential – (*Member timed out*)

5.41

**MR JACOB KARUBANGA (NRM, Kibanda South County, Kiryandongo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Going straight to the point, I was touched by the minister's observation that there are a number of people who have been compensated, yet in Kiryandongo, which lies along the Karuma Wildlife Reserve, a lot of cases have been reported but there is no single compensation so far.

We are blessed that we dug a trench, but these animals are so curious. The elephants have learned how to tread on the soils, cover the trench and walk over. Actually, a latrine was constructed in Nyakarongo and poles were delivered at Nyamahasa with a view of fencing off. I do not know how those poles migrated from that place.

The minister told us, "You know what, the budget is small." I appeal to this Parliament to appropriate enough funds so that we solve this matter once and for all. Thank you.

5.42

**MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I must thank the committee for the good report. I would like to draw the attention of this House, also alluding to what the minister stated, that not all wild animals live in the park. Some of these animals live in the water bodies of Uganda, for example, the Albert Nile.

We have many crocodiles and the people of Pakwach have suffered several times. I did ask the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities here - I think a year ago – on what plans the Government has to put electric fences at the landing sites at least.

We have one of the landing sites where there are hippos and crocodiles. My people have suffered so much with crocodiles. They move as far as Pakwach Secondary School and

there are no fences – (*Hon. Okeyoh rose*) - Fisherman, I am going to give you.

The other issue is that the report points out facts about compensation. Mr Speaker, our people are not so much interested in money. When you have lost your person, money can never buy them back. We passed laws here. Who is responsible for popularising these laws?

I went to all my parishes and told the people about the Act, but what is the ministry doing to inform our people about the dos and don'ts in the park, for instance, and the law? I am just hearing about it now that for somebody to be compensated, you have to have a bank account.

Mr Speaker – (*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. My sister, if you look at that form, it is almost like the Parish Development Model (PDM) form. I tried to print out PDM forms for my people; I found out that eight pages were regulations and all that, which people in the village do not understand. Someone wants money; he does not want to know about this. (*Laughter*)

That is very good guidance from Hon. Pacuto. For those of us who come from those areas, honourable minister, our aim is not to get compensation from you because the compensation you are giving is inadequate and untimely. You will not manage that compensation; it is huge.

Honourable colleagues, what we should do is support the ministry in ensuring that they restrain and prevent all this from happening. People are not interested in your compensation; it comes as a last resort. Can we do something to stop animals from destroying our crops?

5.45

**MR JULIUS ACON (NRM, Otuke East County, Otuke):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to add my voice to the committee report.

These animals do not require a travel visa or passport, so they just move anywhere. Whatever

affects Abim affects Otuke as well. Each year, we have buffalos which come from Kidepo that is about 190 kilometres from Otuke. Just last year in July, we had two lions which escaped and came to Otuke. The situation was worse because by 7.00 p.m., everybody would go to bed because they were living in fear.

The only way is to advise the Government to come up with a solution of installing a fence; this is what will help. If we do not do this, even people in the districts which are far away from the game parks will always have these challenges. They will always be killed.

Just last week in Bweyogerere in Kampala, there was a leopard; I do not know where it came from. I personally saw it at night when a dog was barking throughout - a huge wildcat. In the night, we do not know what is going on. We do not expect to have any animals coming to these places. Thank you.

5.47

**MR ISAIAS SSASAGA (FDC, Budadiri County East, Sironko):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I come from Budadiri East, which is on the Mount Elgon slope but I wonder if the scope and terms of reference stopped on the other side because I do not see any district to do with Mount Elgon in your report.

Two, these areas, which were made game parks, were initially game reserves. I expected, in the committee report, to see why the communities in some of these areas have continuously violated the boundaries of the game parks. These communities were not compensated.

As the land was taken over by the Government from the game reserves - the minister is aware of - for example, the communities living in the Mount Elgon belt to the National Park were supposed to be compensated by the Government. To date, they have not. Out of 21 subcounties in my constituency, six of them have been affected and they have never been compensated.

I recommend that the Government expedites the process, as one of your recommendations in

that report, of paying these communities so that they can be able to observe the demarcations by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

Secondly, you talk about electric fencing but in the Mount Elgon region, you will discover that electricity has never reached all communities neighbouring the mountain. Honourable minister, in your planning, you should have captured and ensured that those areas have electricity.

The last one is about monkeys. Much as we recommend electric fencing, I do not know if they will also capture the monkeys – *(Member timed out.)*

5.49

**MS SARAH KAYAGI (NRM, Woman Representative, Namisindwa):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and I thank the chairperson of the committee for the report. The issue of unclear boundaries is something that has been on the Floor of this Parliament, I think, since I have been here. That was in the Eighth Parliament.

We have talked about clear boundaries in the national parks but it has not yielded results. This is one issue that is causing conflict between UWA and the people living near the reserved areas. Honourable minister, what has held us in ascertaining the boundaries? In one part of the region, they talk about the 1994 boundary. You go to another; they are speaking about 1995. Which boundary are we implementing?

Secondly, I would like to inform the minister that your UWA officials hire out land in the reserved areas to the people who live close to the national park. They allow them to plant crops. When they are transferred and a new team comes in, they also expect to be paid. When the people refuse and tell them that they paid the officials who left, they cut down the crops.

Look into this matter and let your officials respect the boundaries. If they are saying no planting of crops, let them not hire this land out. If they hire it out and find mature crops,

let them allow people to harvest the crops and they leave.

The last issue is, honourable minister, you – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, just give me a minute and I will give you information on the issue of the boundaries. I went to welcome the committee as an area Member of Parliament for Ruhinda North when they came to visit Queen Elizabeth National Park on this issue.

Honourable minister and Attorney-General, the Director for Legal Affairs in UWA updated us on what they were doing. It will require you, honourable minister, to see how it can be expedited in Cabinet. UWA sat down and said, let us be realistic. Which one is our land? Which land are we occupying? Why are we quarrelling with people every day? People say, “We are entering.” They say the Constitution stops them from de-gazetting but not from adjusting their boundaries properly. This is where the problem is. We shall need help because this is the same Government here.

Honourable Attorney-General, what is funny is that if you are to go by the boundaries they are talking about, in Mbale alone, the city will be gone. My home in Mitooma will be gone because when our parents came in 1952, the government then gave them Queen Elizabeth National Park. We have three subcounties of Bakiga down there.

The moment you are to follow your boundaries – Recently, the National Forestry Authority (NFA) came and said, “You are in the Maramagambo Forest” and marked it. People started running around. We cause panic as if we are not serving the people of Uganda. Why don’t we live a realistic life?

Therefore, minister in charge of UWA and the Attorney-General, why I called on you is for you to interest yourself in what they have done. They said they did a mapping. I think, honourable minister, the updated one is for around 2022. They have an updated one.

They are supposed to come before Cabinet. Look into this so that you sort out issues of human-wildlife conflict. In fact, leave alone human-wildlife conflict. It is the UWA-people conflict whereby UWA says, Mbale town is a national park. I think we should move Mbale. *(Laughter)*

These are issues, which were determined by the government then. These people did not put themselves there. For us the Bakiga, when we were coming, *Omugabe* Gasyonga brought my grandfather and said, "If you have energy, wherever you can stop cutting, that is the land you will take." That is why we have land there. Otherwise, you will have to take all of us; over 60,000 people, out.

We need titles. You even allowed people to make titles and now you are coming to say, "You are in our land." I have passionately talked about this because of the Elgon issue. People there are doing badly. We go there and we promise but never implement.

Therefore, I request the Attorney-General to interest himself in this matter, together with the Directorate of Legal Affairs and the minister, because they told us they have got a solution. They need it before Cabinet. This is the only realistic way we are going to solve issues to do with contestation over land between UWA and the local people.

I am sorry I have gone deeper but I felt I should give you that information since I was there. Hon. Sekyanzi and Hon. Emma.

5.55

**MR BENARD SEKYANZI (NRM, Budyebo County, Nakasongola):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for a good and touching report that they have presented. Why am I saying that this report is touching? I was weighing animal and human life. Looking at compensation, in case you are caught poaching, the fine is Shs 20 billion but only Shs 20 million for the death of a human being.

I request the ministry that when you are drafting the regulations, you need to bring them here and we also discuss them. Thank you.

5.56

**MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for a good report. For us, like my colleague Hon. Jane has said, who are around water, we have an added burden occasioned on us by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) operations. Sometimes, through their operations, as people run away from the UPDF, they go into areas where there are a lot of hippopotamus. Their boats are broken and people are killed and it is one government. It is very painful for us. In that way, I ask that our people need to be protected.

Number two, from what I hear, when the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) officials are in their offices and within the park, they do not have any structure amongst communities to support them. If they had liaison persons - The Government has Community Development Officers in the surrounding subcounties. Why can't you pick on them and provide them extra training and they become liaison persons for you so that they can help bridge the gap between the UWA people and the community? That was a suggestion I wanted to give.

Finally, I suggest that regarding the money you keep giving to the subcounties surrounding the park as a way of payback, if you could also have - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. AOL and the Hon. Santa.

5.58

**MS BETTY AOL (FDC, Woman Representative, Gulu City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Two things only. One is that we know that tourism collects a lot of revenue. I do not know why you cannot ask for enough to let you complete the electric boundaries to control elephants and other animals.

Number two, the compensation for a human being is Shs 1 million and for poaching, you heard that those people who live near the park are used to eating wild game meat. If you are found, it is your life. Why do we have to

kill people? We should get a better way of controlling other than killing.

If we are paying for people it should be Shs 20 million, it should be Shs 20 million for all, not some Shs 1 million, Shs 3 million, Shs 5 million, Shs 10 million and none is given Shs 20 million. Minister, please try to standardise that. Otherwise, thank you for the report of the committee.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Santa followed by Hon. Oguzu Lee.

6.00

**MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. I thank the committee for at least coming to our areas.

I will address myself to the minister. Honourable minister, some animals have been disturbing people, eating cows, goats, and sheep since last August. Up to now, we have not got any response and these animals are still there. I was in the constituency over the weekend and two cows were eaten, goats - People are so scared.

Around this time, people are preparing to enter their houses. This is so strange and yet we have a Government responsible for protecting people's lives and their properties. When are you coming to our rescue, honourable minister?

Two, on the issue of compensation, we lost so many people before part of our area was fenced but up to now, we have not seen any compensation.

Three, on the crocodiles, much as part of our area was fenced, we still have crocodiles eating our people. What are you going to do about this? We need protection.

Finally, I agree with Hon. Ongiertho about training the local people. We need a rapid response unit to help our people in such cases. Thank you.

6.01

**MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We all know that tourism has the potential to transform this country and I think what is eluding us is planning for the sector. If you look at the budget for this financial year, the sector got about Shs 200 and something billion. In the National Development Plan (NDP) III, this sector should have been allocated more than Shs 2.9 trillion but it has never got it.

Therefore, when we "cry" here about the impact of wild animals, we must be mindful of our role as people who appropriate resources. The Budget Framework Paper has been here. What is in the framework paper for this sector? I agree with those who say that this issue has been recurring.

Every time we are singing about it but there is no action. Who should we blame? Should we blame the minister? Where does he get money to compensate the people? We must stand our ground when it comes to budgeting and ensure that not less than 0.5 per cent of the budget is appropriated to the tourism sector, if we want to reap from it.

Globally, tourism is contributing up to US\$ 9.5 trillion to GDP but we are only getting 0.1 per cent. If you look at arrivals globally, it is to the tune of US\$ 1.3 billion. What are we getting? 0.15 per cent. This means we are not doing enough to tap from tourism and yet we have the potential. I think - (*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Hon. Oguzu Lee. Hon. Ssewungu -

6.04

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the committee and the minister who is always here because I doubt whether the senior minister still remembers the road that leads him to Parliament.

However, Mr Speaker, I do not know - If there was a chance of Members getting a lion and we meet these ministers, we release it and it chases



them so that they see the suffering of Ugandans - Because whatever is failing in this ministry is because of poor planning. We cannot be crying and the ministry continues lamenting year in, year out, while Ugandans are dying. Do you generate a budget from your ministry that gives attention to the creation or building of the fences? You have failed.

There is a government assurance of fencing national parks but up to now, nothing is happening. Even today, you did not inform Parliament and the committee that you are putting in money specifically to fence these parks in this particular area where challenges are but still, you come - I am looking for money and hiding all your weaknesses behind Parliament.

So, if we could get a good lion - *(Laughter)* - bring it before these ministers and it also gives them a lesson, to plan. I do not know how many times we have talked about this issue of not fencing and compensating people who are dying and the ministry continues coming here with lamentation.

The Speaker is giving first hand information on the same matter and here we are. Where have you put this? Ugandans are dying. I was the Deputy Chairperson for the Committee on Government Assurances and we have all this information. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I think you must give a directive and we must - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. We are going to deploy Hon. Ssewungu as our lion.

6.06

**MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. In Nakaseke, that is part of Ngoma, in Hon. Nyongore's constituency, Wakyato, and Kinyogoga, wild animals from Masindi attack our people. Two years back, I raised the matter before Parliament but the ministry has never come to rescue our people by way of compensating them. The ministry should have a clear approach or

programme on how to remove wild animals from the public.

Lastly, about sensitisation, our people are not aware of it; they were not given community awareness. A sensitisation campaign should be done by the ministry in areas adjacent to national parks. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. This is a very straightforward matter. Honourable minister, these are issues that you should look at.

I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on persistent human-wildlife conflict in national parks and wildlife game reserves in Uganda be adopted.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Report adopted.*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** House adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

*(The House rose at 6.07 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 5 February 2025, at 2.00 p.m.)*