



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - THIRD MEETING

THURSDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2025



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA  
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 10TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Thursday, 6 February 2025

*Parliament met at 2.13 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. Next item – okay, point of procedure?

2.16

**MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a point of procedure regarding some of your guidance and rulings yesterday. In a way, as you guided the proceedings of Parliament, you mentioned that the role of this Parliament is to talk.

Mr Speaker, outside there, the people who were following this Parliament directly, because it is relayed live, and the others who got to know about this through the media, interpreted that to mean that this House is just a bunch of casual talkers, akin to something like TikTok - maybe, this one is parliamentary talk - and that there is nothing serious that can come out of this House.

Today, I received one of my constituents - it is very rare that people come to address us about

matters happening here. They usually come for personal issues but this one came and said, "If, indeed, you just converge there to talk and the talk is of no consequence, then why don't you disband Parliament and come back home?"

Anyway, the point of procedure I want to raise is that I believe and trust that this was not the full import of your guidance. Wouldn't it therefore, be procedurally right for you to clarify so that the public gets to know that this is not just a platform for a talk show as people have interpreted your guidance? I beg to move, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. That is a very good point, honourable member. Whenever clarification is needed, it needs to be done. First, here indeed we talk because we can only do our work through talking; that must be put on record.

However, number two, and which I was cautioning honourable colleagues to know, is that where we have powers of resolution and conclusive decisions, it is expressly stated in the Rules of Procedure of Parliament and also in the laws. For example, our power to approve the budget, Government appointees and to make laws. However, where you want me to also pronounce the House on powers to go and implement court judgments where the House was not a party or on powers to ensure people are released from prison – that is why I also to put it to you and asked: "Honourable colleagues, advise me; what do we do?" This was so because, in this House, we put our

heads together. It is not just about throwing it at the Speaker and say: “The House cannot go on.” If it cannot go on, what do we do? Should I close it and we go yet we have other duties?

Therefore, I am cautioning honourable colleagues not to stretch the House beyond where it is supposed to stop. Let us not think like what I used to hear that what the House cannot do is to turn a man into a woman. No, we have our limits and whenever we have gone beyond, the courts have come out and said “you have gone beyond your limit.”

I am only advising you, honourable colleagues, that here is your platform to raise the issues but when you want me to close the House, for example, by saying, “I will not call Parliament until this happens” I think I would be going beyond, because I have other work to do, and we are paid by Ugandans to come and do that work. That would be going into a demonstration.

Therefore, when it comes to fighting for the rights of our colleagues here, we try our level best. Like on the issue of Col (Rtd) Dr Besigye, you requested and I sent the committee to Luzira. It went, visited and we settled that matter.

However, on the issue of a court judgment, where the aggrieved parties have other ways of addressing their concerns but you want it sorted here yet it becomes difficult for me, as a Presiding Officer to do that. Beyond talking, what could I do on that issue? There is nothing I can do. There are issues where I do not stop at talking.

Honourable colleagues, I do not want to go beyond that; let us go to the next item.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS ON THE ONGOING VOTER VERIFICATION EXERCISE (UPDATE)

2.20

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Nobert Mao):** Mr Speaker, I make this statement in response to your directive –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, did you give us copies of your statement? I want to know if it is uploaded.

**MR MAO:** My office is supposed to have emailed it.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let us just make it very easy, honourable minister. Since it is signed, let us be handling the next item as they upload it, for easy follow-up by Members. Give a copy to the Clerk and they quickly upload it. Yes, Hon. Ssemujju.

2.21

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** Mr Speaker, yesterday you guided that the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, who is the Democratic Party (DP) President but also a minister in the National Resistance Movement Government, Hon. Nobert Mao, will guide us on the issue of the Supreme Court judgment. You said that he would be here and I am happy he is.

Mr Speaker, I did not see this matter on the Order Paper. I am only asking you to guide us on whether you will be calling him to explain what you promised yesterday to the House.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, I talked to the minister and guided him that he will just give us an update as he concludes his statement. Honourable minister, you can give us an update. His was not for guiding the House but to provide an update on the implementation of the court orders. Yes, honourable minister.

2.22

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Nobert Mao):** Mr Speaker, I will not respond to the preamble of Hon. Ssemujju because it is irrelevant. What the Supreme Court did is what linesmen do in a game of soccer. They simply raise the flag and say, “You have crossed the line.”

The courts do not make laws. It is not the courts that made the Constitution, neither is it the courts that enacted the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) Act. Therefore, if the court says the UPDF Act collides with the Constitution, we have homework to do and the Government is committed to doing that homework; to do wheel alignment because they have simply said the wheels are facing in different directions –(*Interjection*)- that is in general terms. So, the media drama about the courts - this is not the first time the court has thrown out laws. In the Police Act, many provisions were thrown out - (*Hon. Ssemujju, rose*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, the minister is holding the Floor. I will give you a chance to respond later.

**MR MAO:** Mr Speaker, you said earlier that we come here to talk, and I am doing exactly that. Is there anything offensive that I have said? I have simply said that the Government has a duty to respect the decision of the court; it is as simple as that. If the linesman raises the flag, it is the duty of the referee to blow the whistle to acknowledge - these days we even have the Video Assistant Referee (VAR). Therefore, all the drama is unnecessary. We stand by the Constitution, which says that whenever there is a dispute about the interpretation of any law, the courts have the final word. That is obvious.

Concerning implementation, I am a lawyer, and all of you, lawyers, know that courts do not implement their own decisions. I do not know whether an order was extracted by the lawyers in these cases to take the next step. I am asking this because when those orders are

extracted, then they are served onto the people or the Government, you move the agencies, and even if the court has made the order, some procedures have to be taken.

The reason the Government takes anybody to court is because the prosecution believes that they have enough evidence. Therefore, it will be up to them to now take the measures and transfer the cases to the civilian courts and those are in the hands of the appropriate authorities, namely; the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), it is not in the hands of the prison authorities. The prison authorities are only holding the suspects.

Therefore, leave this to those who have been directed, I can only confirm that those who are supposed to do that work are doing it. Thank you.

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

2.26

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My former President of the Democratic Party and now on the NRM side; there is a saying in Luganda - Hon. Mao is a very good orator in Luganda, which says thus: “Some people go into a boat to sail through the water, but after getting out of the water, you say, “This is a *ki*-boat (*ekyato*)”

We have been struggling with Hon. Mao under this regime, on bad governance. Coming before this parliament and calling what is happening after the Supreme Court judgment as just media drama, is unprecedented, and an attack on the media, where you are always entertained on NBS and everywhere.

The issues we are raising here are not about media drama. They are legal issues. You helped me become a lawyer because I was with you, and I got interested in studying law. Here you are, people are in prison. Under which legal regime are they after the Supreme Court judgment?

Then you are telling this House that we are having media drama while facing me? Someone who was arrested one time from DP headquarters at the city house, we came and fought - you were kept in Nakasongola for three weeks. Now, because you are out of the boat, you are calling it *ekyato*. Are you fair to this House?

Inform this House under the legal regime is Col Dr Besigye, NUP, and all those people who are in prison and the *Karachunas*, are being held after the Supreme Court judgment. What is your role on these judges as the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs? You do not want to bring out facts. Kindly help us because today it is me, and tomorrow it is you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I have been very cautious. That is why I said that you are pushing us into unchartered waters, a territory that is not ours. My issue is: if the minister says, "I do not even know whether they have already extracted the decree and been served on us for implementation." He says that it is not his duty; the victor in this case should be the one to move and extract a decree. Which resolution do you want the House to make on this? We order the minister to go and extract a decree. Minister, you are ordered. Hon. Ssemujju, then Hon. Nakut?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Hon. Mao made it very clear that he was just talking and I do not want to fault him. I was in Luzira Prisons in 2011, in B2. I slept on the mattress that Hon. Mao had left there, and my first meal was what he left before he was taken to Nakasongola.

Therefore, Hon. Mao is a victim. What the Speaker did yesterday was to shift the responsibility to a person who has washed his hands clean that saying he is not responsible. That is why, Mr Speaker, I had to go by your guidance, the Attorney-General who went to court was here, I do not know, but your guidance took us to the wrong address.

That is why even the Hon. Mao is asking, "Have they done this?" My only disappointment is not what he has said. The disappointment is that we have suffered with him. You can imagine, I slept on his mattress, the one he had left there. I do not think you celebrate those days when Mr Museveni took you to prison.

That is why you must lead us in liberating and rescuing people who are suffering the same way you are suffering. That is the only disappointment I have; that you can seek to rationalise the disobeying of a Supreme Court judgment by Government agencies. At least your presence there should be - like last time when I saw you regretting why you joined and you were threatening to leave.

Therefore, if they are not following the Constitution, I have known you Hon. Nobert Mao for a long time, since you were an MP here. You have been pushing for constitutionalism. I want to hear that Hon. Mao, who speaks about constitutionalism and the rule of law, not one who rationalizes people who are disobeying Supreme Court orders.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, yesterday, I watched the news and today, as I was checking on *Twitter*, I read that Hon. Winnie Byanyima had filed an order for habeas corpus; the lawyers are moving to ensure that the decision of the Supreme Court is implemented. Why don't we leave it at that? I had allowed Hon. Nakut, Hon. Kanushu, then LOP?

2.34

**MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak):** Mr Speaker, I have stood here to thank you, for standing with people who are in jail under these circumstances. It is not only Dr Kizza Besigye; there are thousands of Ugandans. I know that you have given adequate time to this matter; just the other day, you gave one full hour. Yesterday, you gave us another hour, and even today, we are clocking another hour.

The Attorney-General came here and submitted on the Floor. The Deputy Attorney-General

also came and did the same. Now, the minister is here and he has said the same words. Mr Speaker, I know that you mean well for our people but in your wisdom, if you feel that this requires a full day worth of debate, put it on the Order Paper and we debate it for a full day.

Yesterday, my colleagues came up with a matter of urgent importance concerning Ugandans stuck in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). That matter cannot be raised here because of the court decision, which we want to exhaust. Can we set a day for this, exhaust it, and then handle other issues of the country?

There are Ugandans who have lost business in DRC. (*Applause*) We cannot discuss that. I would like you to guide this House.

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

2.35

**MS LAURA KANUSHU (NRM, PWD Representative):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. When the Attorney-General came here to give us an update, he said almost all the same things that the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs has said.

Since then, I have been wondering, since then, why we continue to discuss a court ruling. Apart from asking the Attorney-General to make sure that the ruling is implemented, what value can we add, as Parliament, by continuously discussing a court ruling, which should be implemented?

The Attorney-General explained the phases and the steps that are going to be taken to implement the ruling. Mr Speaker, by discussing this, where are we going? Why are we discussing this? For what? What can we do as Parliament? Is it within our jurisdiction to discuss a court ruling where we are not going to do anything? Or are we just talking because we want to show people that we are using the microphone?

Mr Speaker, we come to this House to discuss issues that affect our people but we are not given chance to speak; you raise seven procedural

issues about a matter that has no resolution. As Parliament, we cannot make a resolution on a court judgment. Even a layman understands that. I pray that you guide this House because we cannot do anything about a court ruling. Thank you.

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

2.36

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I agree with my learned friend, Hon. Laura Kanushu, that when we convene here, we convene to discuss pertinent issues; matters of concern about people out there. That is actually true and this matter is about people. This matter is about Dr Kizza Besigye, the National Unity Platform (NUP) supporters and the Karamojong represented by Hon. Nakut Faith, who have been held for donkey's years by the General Court Martial. I think that those people matter. I thought that the people that Hon. Nakut represents matter and that is why we are discussing this.

Mr Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs has given an update to this House. First, he was party to this matter because the Attorney-General who appealed this matter in the Supreme Court is legally supervised by the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. So, in effect, Hon. Norbert Mao was in court, through the Attorney-General, whom he supervises. He has given an update, which I think is partial and incomplete.

The honourable minister told us something that excited me a little bit until I heard the end. He said that all entities and authorities who are meant to act on the Supreme Court order are doing what they are supposed to do. That excited me. The only challenge is that he left it hanging. Who is doing what, Mr Speaker? I think that update is important for us to know what is exactly happening.

The paradox is this: while Hon. Norbert Mao is telling us that the Government is doing all that it is meant to do to implement this court order, the Head of the Executive, under which Hon. Norbert Mao works, has said that the Supreme Court made a mistake and is lambasting it.

I have been watching a bit of what is happening in Kyotera. The Chief of Defence Forces, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba - the one who is promising to behead people, hang them, and so on - has said that what the Supreme Court ordered is problematic and they are going to discuss it in the Army High Command to determine what to do.

That is the paradox and I do not know what Hon. Mao is talking about by saying all the Government entities meant to act are acting because the Head of the Executive is saying "no." The Chief of Defence Forces who supervises court martials and so on, is saying "no." Maybe, if he could complete that update by saying "everyone in the Government and every entity who is meant to do what they are meant to do is doing it." Who is doing what, honourable minister?

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

**MR MAO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think this debate is a healthy one. When courts make decisions, there are those who are happy, and there are those who are unhappy. There are those who disagree with the court decision but my main point, as the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, is to insist that it is the duty of everybody to respect and abide by the court decision.

That does not stop you from disagreeing. If you do not like driving on the left, you can keep driving on the left while holding a sign saying, "It is stupid to drive on the left" and you will not be arrested, provided you are driving on the left. *(Laughter)*

Therefore, what that means is that you are disagreeing with the law, but you are not

disobeying it. As the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, I can tell you, that it is not illegal to disagree with the law; it is illegal to disobey the law.

Our laws put the Supreme Court at the apex of our judicial system and I said that point. But of course, that was not enough, for Hon. Ssemujju. He must associate Hon. Mao with what he calls a "junta" because that gives him great pleasure; that I am now a monster, an oppressor, and that is how he will earn his next term in Parliament. *(Laughter)* So, I am glad you are cooperating with him to make sure his people see him on TV battling this monster that has now swallowed Hon. Mao, and that is part of the drama here.

Now, as far as the President's statement is concerned, it was extremely balanced. The President acts advisedly and he said there are aspects that he likes. He also said that he believes it gives an opportunity for some reforms.

There are Ugandans who believe that civilians should be tried in military courts but the court has said, "No." The court has also said that the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Act collides with the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

Now, those who are talking about the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), who has been speaking in Kyotera - the CDF knows the mandate of the UPDF and I am sure the most important organ of UPDF is not the Court Martial. We have battles on our borders. That is the real mandate of the UPDF and we cannot reduce it to a court in terms of even percentage. The people who are even tried in the Court Martial have become prominent because of the case of Dr Besigye.

Mr Speaker, it is erroneous for anybody to think that what the Supreme Court said was a release order. The Court did not say, "I have been freed" because the case has not been heard. They are only saying; "bring it before the proper court, so that they hear the case." *(Applause)*

Therefore, we should not misguide the population, by exciting them that it is a release order. I would like the lawyers for Dr Besigye to do their job. None of us is in office to fight the Supreme Court. If the Supreme Court does something by saying that these laws are colliding, we do what I have called wheel alignment. I have nothing more to add to that. I just want to call upon colleagues to put aside their political lenses when they are discussing this. If the evidence is there, it will be presented before the civilian court.

That will also be a trial; but now you are misleading the public by saying that the court has said that these people are free yet the Supreme Court did not hear the case. So, how can they determine it? It is a shame that honourable members can misguide the nation like that.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. For clarification, honourable minister, I did not cooperate with any Member to finish you here. When I give a Member an opportunity to speak, I do not know what they are going to say. So, I think it is unfair to say that I have cooperated with Hon. Ssemujju to swallow you. That is unfair, honourable minister. *(Laughter)*

**MR MAO:** Mr Speaker, Hon. Ssemujju has more than his fair share of air time here and that is why I said you are cooperating with him.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Okay – *(A Member rose)* - There is no one on the Floor; that is the problem I have. Honourable minister, I want to put that straight. Whether I give a Member a lot of time, I do not know what the Member is going to say.

Hon. Mao has not been coming here very often. If it were Hon. Dr Baryomunsi - that is what I wanted to put on record that I can never cooperate with a Member here to finish another Member. No, that is not how I work. He is the one who raised the issue and that is why I allowed him to speak.

Secondly, honourable colleagues, in Parliament, whatever we submit should be concluded

into resolutions, which are implemented. On such a matter, we are not going to make any resolution. I have closed this matter. I leave it to the parties to the case to handle. Honourable minister, please read your statement – okay, point of procedure, Hon. Odur.

**MR ODUR:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to beg your indulgence. When we come to this House, we raise issues and expect responses from the Front Bench. I would like to update the minister, who was not available, of the background as to why he was asked to come here.

Many of the prisoners on remand, and it is not only Dr Besigye, were remanded by the Court Martial. The procedure of remand is that you are remanded for a specific period. When that remand warrant is sent to prisons, it says “You are remanded until 28th or 29th of this month.”

When that remand period comes, you are expected to come back before the court for the court to try you or to issue a new remand warrant.

Therefore, the background that we wanted the minister to clarify here is that the Attorney-General informed us that the court martial ceased to operate with respect to the matters that were declared by the Supreme Court. So, under what arrangement are the prisoners still being held so that – because this is not only about Col Dr Besigye; there are others? The minister was supposed to come and inform us of the new arrangement because any person held in prison illegally offends the Constitution –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Member is on procedure; I cannot put a point of procedure on procedure. Honourable colleagues, you might think that I am very lenient but I know what I am doing. Please allow me to do my work here.

**MR ODUR:** I am concluding, Mr Speaker. So, the question that remains for the Executive to answer is: we have this number of prisoners whose remand period expired and are now



being held in prison unlawfully, under what arrangement? The answers we expect are that “maybe there was an arrangement made and they were charged and we are not aware.”

They should explain that to us because the Constitution does not allow for anyone to be held in prison unlawfully and we submit that those who are in prisons now without a valid warrant are being held there unlawfully. This is what the minister should clarify to us.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Now, honourable colleagues, that is why I said that if we really want these people released and any action taken, the law provides for all this. The aggrieved parties - because the minister can only come and make whatever statement and maybe we even say to the minister that they are there irregularly but that won't lead to their release.

The parties to the case are already moving. Let us give them a chance to do their part. This matter is closed. Honourable minister, please present your statement on the Electoral Commission update. [*Hon. Zaake rose*] Under what rule, Hon. Zaake, do you rise? (*Laughter*)

No, Honourable Member, Rule 78 of our Rules of Procedure requires that if you stand up on a procedure, you state the rule – no, that is your own rule. Honourable minister, please present your statement. (*Laughter*)

2.50

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Norbert Mao):** Mr Speaker, I make this statement in response to your directive that I brief Parliament on the voter verification exercise going on in the country.

This exercise is an important milestone giving effect to Article 1(4) of the Constitution, which provides that, I quote: “*The people shall express their will and consent on who shall govern them and how they should be governed through regular free and fair elections of their representatives or through referenda.*”

Free and fair elections are, therefore, the bedrock on which our Government is established. When we undermine that bedrock, we weaken the glue that keeps us together as a nation.

Let me provide a brief context, Mr Speaker. It is not lost on me that today is the 6th of February in common parlance known as *Tarehe Sita*.

Forty-four years ago, today, President Yoweri Museveni, who was then leader of the Uganda Patriotic Movement, launched a guerrilla war against the Ugandan Government, eventually overthrowing it in 1986.

The declared reason for the guerrilla war was the failure to resolve, peacefully, the disputes about the 1980 elections. No wonder the preamble to our Constitution exhorts us to recall, and I quote: “*Our history, which has been characterised by political and constitutional instability.*”

The Government welcomes the report of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. I have had a conversation with the chairperson of the Electoral Commission, and he assured me that the Electoral Commission will implement, to the fullest extent possible, the recommendations of the report.

I am pleased to inform Parliament that the people of Uganda are very enthusiastic about the next elections, of which the ongoing update of the national voters' register is a key component.

As I speak, the chairperson, members and staff of the Electoral Commission are in the field assessing the exercise. They have witnessed long queues of people seeking to verify their voter status. The people are ready; the Government needs to be ready; the Government needs to be ready.

Nevertheless, it is my duty to respond to the issues of concern that the people have raised, although many of them are in the committee report.

When the Chairman and the members of the Electoral Commission conclude their field visit tomorrow, they will address the nation and announce important decisions that will deal with the issues of concern regarding the ongoing exercise.

The Chairman of the Electoral Commission assured me that they are leading the process with the technical support of officials from NIRA. I would, therefore, like to assure the House that the Electoral Commission is doing the best with what they have.

The Electoral Commission could not wait for the new NIRA registration kits. They are using the old kits, which are numbering only 2,703. These kits have been assigned to sub-counties and they move to parishes and wards on a rotational basis. I am informed that due to delays in the release of funds and procurement, the new kits numbering about 5,000 have arrived at NIRA, but they are still being formatted. These new kits will not be used for the current voter update exercise, but will instead be used for the mass enrolment of citizens.

Mr Speaker, in my conversation with the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, I raised the question of the possibility of extending the deadline for the update. The Chairman told me that should the 10<sup>th</sup> February arrive when the exercise has not been completed, the Electoral Commission will announce measures for redress. For now, 10<sup>th</sup> of February remains the deadline.

What is being done in the current exercise is simply the compilation of raw data showing who is eligible to vote and where they should vote.

After all the data has been captured, there will be a display process of the register. The display will allow for correction of the register, for instance, deleting non-citizens and the dead. This process is superintended over by parish tribunals that are established by magistrates. These tribunals will determine any complaints and then forward the final data to the returning

officer. The result of all these processes is what the citizens expect to be a credible and verifiable national voters' register.

Finally, in response to the concern that women of the Muslim faith are required to remove their religious dress for purposes of registration, I would like to give assurance that the Electoral Commission does not do anything that is different from what NIRA does. The women in question have national IDs. They, therefore, had to go through the standard procedures of NIRA in order for their full data to be captured, including having their photographs taken.

In case there are any overzealous officials whose conduct insults the modesty of Muslim women, we undertake to investigate fully those instances and deal with such errant officers according to the law. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. This is a matter that was raised by the LOP; he asked for an update, especially taking into consideration the independence of the Electoral Commission. You could see that the minister was very cautious in his statements to show that he was not directing or influencing the Electoral Commission when it is carrying out its mandate.

I will allow the LOP who raised the matter to make a comment. I will allow a few comments before we move to another item.

2.56

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs for getting back to us. That is good manners; that when we raise issues, there is feedback.

He has hinted at a couple of things, but I thought there would be an update on some others, for example, the extension of the deadline. He has insinuated that the Electoral Commission might. There is a bit of hope. Okay, let us wait and see how that goes because there are numerous challenges in the field.

However, I thought we would also get an update on the question of DISOs, “PISOs,” GISOs and so on who are involved in this process because legally they have no place at all. As we hear, some of them are demanding for money from people. If you want me to recommend you pay Shs 10,000, or Shs 20,000 and so on. I thought the minister’s statement would comment on that issue.

Also, the demarcation question: it has raised many eyebrows. The Electoral Commission has merged some electoral areas in a couple of places. I do not know what formula they are using because there are areas in the urban centres where an LCI chairperson superintends over more people than some colleagues in this House as Members of Parliament. That is a fact, in terms of numbers.

We on this side have always been for a lean government, that we lessen the numbers of government officials at all levels, whether it be Cabinet ministers, Parliament, coming down all the way to councillors; but that it gets to be done in a formula that is properly understandable and acceptable. The formula of numbers, even legally, is acceptable. So, we want to understand how the Electoral Commission did that. Within the urban centres, where there were three councillors, now there is going to be one councillor.

Is it because the population has lessened there? Obviously not, even according to the UBOS statistic. So, what formula is being followed because we do not see the same formula apply across the country?

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

3.01

**MR ISAAC OTIMGIW (NRM, Padyere County, Nebbi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable minister for the statement. *(Mr Ssemujju rose\_)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssemujju under what Rule do you rise?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am raising this point of procedure under Rule 77. A while ago, the Hon. Odur asked the DP President, whose party’s victory was stolen in 1980, and when those who went to Luweero returned, they did not restore that victory; they instead became the government themselves.

The procedural issue is that Hon. Odur asked a specific question. Under which legal regime is Dr Besigye and others still being held in prison when their warrants expired?

Mr Speaker, you answered the question though I thought you would allow – because our rules protect the Speaker, they do not allow you to answer on behalf of the Government – I thought you would allow the Hon. Mao to answer that question. Under what legal regime is Dr Besigye still being held in prison?

Instead, Mr Speaker, it looks like you are the one now answering on his behalf.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. This was a very straightforward matter if you listened to Hon. Odur. He stood up on a point of procedure. A point of procedure is directed to the Speaker, not a Member. Therefore, the question was to me and I had to give my guidance.

If he wanted to ask the minister any other question, he would have stood up under a point of clarification or information and he asks. But as long as you stand up on procedure, you will only expect an answer from the Speaker. Where I feel another colleague needs to be consulted, then I can pass it on and I say consult.

Anyhow, what was very important, was that these are issues, which court should answer. These are issues which should be handled at court level.

**MR OTIMGIW:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to again thank the minister for the statement provided. It was clearly stated last time that the mandate to verify citizenship is clearly a cut-out job for NIRA.

However, the complaints we are receiving from some of our voters are that the Electoral Commission officials are also taking the opportunity to deny people registration, even if they do have national IDs. Yet it is not their role to verify who has the right to have a national ID and who does not. Whoever comes with a national ID should be registered for voting.

We would like to get that clarification from the honourable minister. Why are the electoral officers actually taking this upon themselves? Also what steps have they actually taken?

We realise that the constituencies or districts near the borders of our country have communities on both sides and, sometimes, they vote on both sides. What steps have they taken to cope with that situation? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Ababiku and then Hon. Pacuto.

**MS ABABIKU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I thank the minister for the response.

I seek clarification from the minister about the registration or the update that is taking place in Adjumani District, specifically in Akaa. Akaa is in Adjumani, but the Madi have been stopped from attending the exercise and from being registered.

When we made inquiries on the 31<sup>st</sup> of last month, we were told that the Government had made that place a special area. Can we know how a special area is gazetted in Adjumani District without our knowledge, and when we are not even allowed to access the service? Thank you.

3.04

**MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the update, and for, particularly, bringing out the fact that the Electoral Commission is committed to extending the registration days, if they will not have completed registering everyone by the 10<sup>th</sup> of February.

Mr Speaker, it is always interesting, in this country, that when the time for voting comes, there is a very low voter turnout. Why am I bringing this out? I would pray, together with this House, that should the 10<sup>th</sup> of February come and a good number of our citizens are not registered, they be given room to be registered so that it would be time for –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, I cautioned you last time. Article 62 of the Constitution does not allow you to go into that matter. Leave it to the Electoral Commission to assess. They have their independence, please.

The laws do not allow it. You have already seen the green light somewhere. Take advantage of that.

**MS PACUTO:** The point I am trying to build is that in other countries when people who are registered do not turn up to vote, they are reprimanded. It is the responsibility of every citizen to vote. That is how the leaders can be more accountable to them –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Like which country?

**MS PACUTO:** Like in the UK, Mr Speaker, and Australia. It is time for this country to pick such good examples and enforce the fact that people should turn up to vote so that all leaders are accountable to them. Mr Speaker, I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Baka and then Hon. Nsereko.

3.06

**MR STEPHEN BAKA (NRM, Bukooli County North, Bugiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I rise to thank the minister for the statement, and the Electoral Commission for acknowledging, through the minister, our report. They have also noted that they will try, as much as possible, to implement the recommendations.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, during our meeting with the Electoral Commission, they promised that they would be, periodically, informing the country about what is happening. I am happy that, that statement has come. The chairman and the secretary have been constantly in touch with me to assure me that the exercise is moving very well. From my research on the ground, it is true. There are many people in the lines ensuring that they register.

My prayer, Mr Speaker - (*Interjections*) - is that the Electoral Commission commits itself further to the promise they made to us, that if there are still some gaps by the 10<sup>th</sup>, they are willing - and they committed in the committee - to make an extension. I pray that they commit to ensuring that we all benefit from the exercise. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable chairperson, you have been told that the commissioners are in the field. After coming from the field and making an assessment, they will update the country. Let us allow them to do their work.

3.07

**MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala):**

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have just three matters of concern to raise to the minister. After the matter of the former candidate, Rt Hon. Aama Mbabazi, was presented in court, the court made the following observations. One, that the deployment and use of technology should be followed up - whereas it is desirable - by necessary regulation. I would like to ask the minister how far they have gone with that matter.

Secondly, the minister, who I have a lot of respect for, clearly stated to this House that he would present comprehensive constitutional reforms for this House to discuss, much of which would inform, partly, the issue touching electoral reforms in this case. The country needs to know how far you have reached on this matter.

Mr Speaker, there is the issue of our foreign nationals. Ugandans living in the diaspora have

the desire to take part in the elections through voting, just like it happens in other countries, in different embassies and high commissions. We are doing a voter update and that is something we need to interest ourselves in. This is because they contribute to the development of this country, but they also remain our nationals who should take part in the elections.

I pose a question to the honourable minister in charge of justice as to how far he has gone in implementing that matter to follow suit, just like the global trend is, for nationals within the boundaries and those that are outside to take part in elections.

Finally, we are going through a voters' register update exercise and we have children who have gone back to school. I do not know who is working on their records so that we update the national register with their involvement. That would bring in the question of hon. Mathias Mpuuga about the comprehensive reforms that we need to address so that we have an election that is acceptable to all, as a tool of democracy. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Bob Okae, Hon. Nambooze, and Hon. Odur.

3.10

**MR BOB OKAE (UPC, Kwanja North County, Kwanja):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for the report.

Mr Speaker, my concern was mostly about the students. This is because in my subcounty, they have only covered one parish out of six. Students are not happy because most of them have gone back to school - and most of them study in rural schools. They wonder whether those people will reach them if they could not find them at home. The minister should clarify on that. Thank you.

3.11

**MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The minister started with congratulating the Uganda People's Defence

Forces (UPDF) and even cited the function going on in Kyotera. However, as a minister for constitutional affairs, I want to know if the UPDF is really 44 years as the celebration depicts.

This is because it would be in the interest of the minister for constitutional affairs to make sure that this country adopts constitutionalism, as a value. It is bad to encourage people, who are violating our constitution, when you, as a minister, should give them guidance and advice.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Voters' update?

**MS NAMBOOZE:** Mr Speaker, it was in his statement; that is why I have talked about it. As soon as the minister admits that the kits are being presented to voters rotationally, I think that is also an admission that we shall not have the same days as we had programmed to have for this voters' update of registers.

When you announce a deadline and you arrogantly declare that you are not bound to change, you create panic among our people. When people go to these centres and do not find the kits, they eventually come to us asking why and they think that they will not be able to register because when they go for registration at their places, the kits are not there because they are being presented to them in a rotational manner.

I think the best thing for the Electoral Commission (EC) to do, and I so request, is that they should not continue ransoming people saying, "We shall have this deadline and are not extending it". Yesterday, over the news, the spokesperson of the Electoral Commission declared that they will not extend. This has caused panic among the people who have not registered and are due for registration.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I came here and raised the issue of gerrymandering; the way electoral areas were being created without consulting the stakeholders. What the Electoral Commission is doing is, they are using the census of 2014

for the creation of electoral areas for elections of 2026, yet the country has just gone through a census. I want to know from the minister what he thinks about this. Why should we use old census results when we have just had a census?

The Constitution provides that after every census, the Electoral Commission shall create constituencies depending on the results of the census. When do they intend to do this as provided for under the Constitution?

Lastly, Mr Speaker – (*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, Parliament is a very important platform and I request you to use it to encourage our people to go out and register. When we start informing people and making them believe that there will be an extension then even those who wanted to give it a lot of attention will do whatever they are doing first saying, "Moreover an extension is coming, I will go next week." I think I have seen signs which are positive; that we are ready to respond to these issues and all that.

Personally, I also took time off to talk to the commissioners. They said, "No, there is no way you can say we pronounce ourselves, for example, on extension, before we review what we have gotten from the field". Therefore, let them first review, but for now, let us encourage all Ugandans to go and register, and if there are gaps then we shall go for them.

Hon. Komakech, Hon. Baba, and Hon. Karubanga. Oh, I had first picked Hon. Odur, sorry.

3.16

**MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am trying to get some Independents. That does not mean that every one of you should stand up. I will pick two and I have already seen them. Yes, honourable?

**MR ODUR:** Thank you. Mr Speaker, I am comforted by the statement of the minister informing us that the Electoral Commission has perused through the recommendations made by this House and has made commitments to implement them as much as they can.

I want to particularly point out an area of concern that there are areas that have informed us of difficulties in accessing both network and electricity. Those particular regions should be given special consideration when they review and evaluate the whole programme.

Secondly, I want to implore the minister to come back and inform us officially as Parliament. I know the Electoral Commission may make a statement but it denies Members of Parliament the opportunity to interface. As soon as the Electoral Commission is done, it would be prudent for the minister to come and inform the House.

One particular issue, Mr Speaker, that I would like to emphasise, and I will illustrate it with an example - In the last cycle of elections, Lira City East Division, which is a constituency of 117,000 voters was a result of a merger of five administrative units, five subcounties, two divisions and three subcounties to form one division. The Electoral Commission provided a demarcation for local councillors to the city. These were five.

In the current demarcation, they have collapsed all the five into only one, meaning the local government councillor has the same number of voters and area as the area Member of Parliament. The implication is - as you know, Mr Speaker, in the local government elections - for you to be eligible to be nominated, you must be a registered voter in an electoral area. So, the councillors are now panicking because they come from different areas and now they only have one area. This is an area I wanted the minister to take particular interest in.

The Electoral Commission says they are basing on Section 120 of the Local Governments Act, which gives them the mandate to demarcate based on the number of voters and other

parameters. However, there is a big concern now. Imagine a local councillor going to the city council will now have to campaign in 87 polling stations in Lira City East Division alone. If you go to Lira City West, and I believe the same is happening in Kampala, Mbarara, and in all the new cities -

Therefore, I want to implore the minister to go back and work with the Electoral Commission and inform the House how they will address that impasse of the local government councillors who are now in panic. In fact, many are going to lose out and the risk is that a city council is likely to have less than two members in plenary. Once the vice chairperson is appointed and the Executive is constituted, the entire city might have only a total of five councillors. They cannot form government, in other words. This is an area that I wanted the minister probably to clarify on or to consult with the Electoral Commission and address us on, in consultation with the Minister of Local Government. Thank you.

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

3.20

**MR CHRISTOPHER KOMAKECH (Independent, Aruu County, Pader):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the statement that he has delivered before this august House.

Mr Speaker, in the same spirit, I want to thank the people of Aruu County for taking the bull by the horns and going to register. However, just as I am, Aruu County is formed mainly by youths who have never voted, meaning they are turning up in high numbers.

Honourable minister Norbert Mao, you are well aware of the sparsely populated numbers of people that we have in Acholi Subregion, in that you find a group that is almost 30 kilometres away in a parish, meaning that they have to travel 30 kilometres to come and register. A case in point is Lagile and Awere subcounties. These youths travel from morning to go and look for one computer that is set up

in Lunyiri. They are able only to register 30 people. At the end of the day, they travel back 30 kilometres.

I request, if it would be possible, that the new administrative units that were created in Pader District, especially Lunyiri and Puranga subcounties, be availed with computers and officers to register. Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Shadow Attorney-General and Hon. Baba.

3.21

**MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndorwa County East, Kabale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs for his statement. I just have one issue. In your statement, honourable minister, you recognised that there are many long queues at registration centres. One of the yardsticks we had agreed with the Electoral Commission, which I thought you would bring before the House, was that they would give a status report, on a daily basis, of how many people have been turned away because they register close to 30 people maximum per day.

How many have been turned away per day for us to know how many remain unregistered on a particular day? That should be the basis for the decision which they are supposed to make. Is it possible for you to liaise with them and get the statistics of daily registration countrywide indicating how many have not been registered for failure to access the existing kits?

3.23

**MR JAMES BABA (NRM, Koboko County, Koboko):** I would like to thank the honourable minister for his concise statement. In the statement, there was a clear admission that in the registration exercise, there was inadequacy of equipment and network challenges. Therefore, there is likely to cause a delay in the completion of the exercise and consideration is being made as to whether to extend it or not. That will be determined on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February.

Mr Speaker, 10<sup>th</sup> of February is this coming Monday. It is not very far away and yet; a majority of people have not yet registered. This is a plea and not a direction to the Electoral Commission or to you, honourable minister, that in view of the inadequacy of equipment and in view of the fact that a number of people have not registered, this be seriously considered.

It is not a question of directing the Electoral Commission. If we see something wrong, it is up to us to point out the inadequacies. After all, they should also listen to guidance and advice from outside themselves. My plea is that this be seriously considered.

I went to check on my register and the equipment was not there. I went the following day, that is in Kuluva subcounty in Koboko, and it was very far away in another parish where I could not reach. What about the other people? I, who had a vehicle - *(Laughter)* The challenges are real.

People should not be rotating, chasing the equipment but the equipment should find them where they are supposed to be. This is a plea to you to take to the Electoral Commission. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Muloni?

3.25

**MS IRENE MULONI (NRM, Woman Representative, Bulambuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. I want to thank the minister for his statement. In the case of Bulambuli, where we experienced landslides last November, we are in the process of relocating our people and resettling them in a safer place.

The people who are affected currently in my district of Bulambuli, are those in Elgon North constituency and Elgon constituency. The resettlement camp where the Government is set to procure more land to resettle them is in Bulambuli constituency on the lower side. We are in the process of verifying these people before they can be resettled in another place.



I would like to hear from the minister on what arrangements the Electoral Commission will have for our people who are currently in the verification exercise and we do not know at what time they will be resettled in a new place. What arrangements are there for them because they will need to vote wherever they are?

3.26

**MR JACOB KARUBANGA (NRM, Kibanda South County, Kiryandongo):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I would like to remind us about a category of people who have never been on the voters' roll. For example, a number of Bagabo, Bakingwe, Benet, Marangoli, Sabot, Bahaya, and Baziba. I want to recall that this Parliament, both the 11<sup>th</sup> and this current Parliament, gave leave for a constitutional amendment so that they can access IDs and be registered to vote.

I would like to ask the minister - (*Interjection*) - they are there, there is a report about that, Mr Speaker, which can be adduced to this Parliament to be considered so that they can be included in the Constitution to be able to exercise their rights to vote.

Mr Speaker, I would like to implore the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to update us on how far the ministry has gone to ensure that this matter is put to rest. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member representing workers then Hon. Mpuuga -

3.27

**MR RWAKAJARA ARINAITWE (NRM, Workers' Representative):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I thank the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs for the good report. However, honourable minister, the Constitution of Uganda recognises different interest groups and one of the interest groups is workers.

These interest groups are represented at all levels. The workers are represented at the national level in Parliament and at the

district level. They are not represented in municipalities, they are not represented at division levels, and subcounties. What are you saying this time, as we go for elections? Will these workers be represented like other interest groups? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Mpuuga?

3.28

**MR MATHIAS MPUUGA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am excited by the prospect of having hon. Norbert Mao answer questions relating to the transparency of elections at this moment in our constitutional history. For so long a time, he has been a victim. If the next election in any way becomes botched by virtue of a wrongly assembled register, he will be both a culprit and an abettor of that fraud. I am happy that he is here to answer to these questions in earnest.

I have a few issues for him, Mr Speaker:

1. What kind of register will finally come out of this process? Will it be biometric or manual, aware of the trouble that we had in the last series of elections, courtesy of bearing different types of registers used concurrently at polling stations and what that heralded in terms of transparency, especially in trying to curtail multiple voting?
2. Mr Speaker, Hon. Nsereko alluded to part of the duty that hon. Mao owes this nation, namely: to offer leadership on key reform issues that have been a subject of court, variously; the Supreme Court, including particular and peculiar orders to be followed, like the correction of the nature of register.

I want to be specific. Hon. Mao is alive to the ruling in the *Kalali Steven v. the Attorney-General*, to which there was no appeal lodged by the Attorney-General that the continuation of disenfranchising Ugandans in the diaspora and prisoners is a serious violation of their right to exercise their civic rights. Are you

going to abet the continuation of this violation? It was declared unconstitutional and a violation of their right to vote.

As a Minister of Justice and as a former victim, if there is such a thing as a “former victim” of disenfranchisement, are you prepared to abet this illegality and violation of the Constitution?

I am also aware that some months back, hon. Mao was very warm and enthusiastic about constitutional and electoral reforms and that – *(Interjection)* - the Speaker will not extend my time. Kindly allow me to - he has indicated that propensity not to extend my time.

Mr Speaker, I am aware that hon. Mao’s enthusiasm has since gone down because, allegedly, he had a very good document on electoral and constitutional reforms, including the transition. However, because of that last statement, some people broke into his office and stole everything; the document, the computers, and he now has nothing to work with.

May we know whether he is working on something fresh or needs help to go back to his text that offered this country some gleam of hope that we would transition? The question I would have asked the Speaker - you are going to answer it - and of course, I have a procedural matter I would reserve to the Rt Hon. Speaker, related to that matter. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister – *(Hon. Ekanya rose)* Under what rule do you rise, Hon. Ekanya?

**MR EKANYA:** Mr Speaker, we have been discussing and debating the report -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleague, Rule 78(4) -

**MR EKANYA:** Rule 8.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Under Rule 8? Okay.

**MR EKANYA:** Mr Speaker, we have been discussing the statement of the Minister of Justice

and Constitutional Affairs. In your response and guidance - *(Laughter)* - several Members responded as if the hand of this House is tied.

The Constitution creates different Arms of Government and institutions and one of them is the Electoral Commission. The Constitution gives independence of institutions. The independence is not to protect them from accountability. That is why the Electoral Commission reports and appears before this House.

It is just proper that we exercise our power, as provided for in the rules and the Constitution, and direct the Electoral Commission. If there is any omission that this House sees and that omission will lead to violation of the Constitution - The activity of registration and update is a very serious one, as it determines the democracy, peace and security of this country. Therefore, Mr Speaker, in the statement of hon. Mao -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, state your point of procedure.

**MR EKANYA:** Yes, the procedural issue is that the minister stated that he had a conversation with the Electoral Commission. However, the aspect of that conversation is not provided for within our rules.

Mr Speaker, Rule 8(1) says, and I want to read:

*“Procedure in a case not provided for and precedents*

*(1) In case of any doubt and for any question of procedure not provided in these Rules, the Speaker shall decide, having regard to the practices of the House, the Constitutional provisions and the practices of other Commonwealth Parliaments in so far as they may be applicable to the Parliament of Uganda.”*

Mr Speaker, the question of this House not having power to direct the Electoral Commission to comply with the Constitution is for us to run away from our role and powers as provided for in the Constitution. This House has the power. We can direct the Electoral Commission to perform its duties and be accountable.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I am seeking your guidance. Isn't it proper for this House to move a motion to direct the Electoral Commission to extend the days, acquire the necessary equipment and put the necessary documents together in order to perform all the tasks that this House wants?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, let me make it very easy for you. Our Rules of Procedure cannot override the Constitution. Article 62 of the Constitution is very clear. It states: "*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.*"

How do you now want us to go under the rules to suppress the Constitution? Honourable colleagues, we have moved very well with the Electoral Commission. The minister is here and we have asked him questions so let him answer. Honourable minister?

3.38

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Norbert Mao):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Members for raising very pertinent issues. In general terms, the Electoral Commission or anybody that is said to be independent cannot hide behind the phrase of "independence" in order to avoid being accountable. That is a general principle which we should all accept.

Secondly, if you can persuade, why should you direct? It is important that we also do not underrate our power of persuasion. In any case, the people are busy persuading the Electoral Commission on your behalf. The very people you represent are speaking for themselves to the Electoral Commission now. I propose that we give the Electoral Commission time. I do believe that they will do the right thing because elections are about the people.

Concerning the workers, I have consulted with the Minister of Local Government and I wish to inform this House that under Section 131, there will be an amendment so that the workers

do not get excluded. I hope that assures hon. Katambuka that the workers will be included.

On the question raised by Hon. Jacob Karubanga Ateenyi, basically it is about those who are considered to be stateless. Let me state here that the fact that your tribe is not in the Constitution does not mean that you cannot vote. Everybody feels that everything should be included in the Constitution. The Constitution is a supreme document. It does not need to have everything. The Ugandan Constitution is 10 times the size of the American Constitution and I do not think the American Constitution has served the American people any worse than ours.

Therefore, that conversation about everybody wanting to be in the Schedule is another conversation. Let us separate it from the issue of voting.

Regarding the right of the diaspora to vote, it is the policy of the Government that the diaspora should vote. What we intend to do is to now translate that policy into law. However, the policy is that our diaspora, who are daily being celebrated for their contribution to the Government, should not be excluded.

On the use of technology, I want to inform this House that I already took the Bill to the Cabinet and the Cabinet had some reservations and referred the Bill to a committee, which is chaired by hon. Chris Baryomunsi. I hope, on Monday, he will report to Cabinet.

The use of technology is very important to deal with the question of ballot stuffing, where people who never showed up at the polling station vote. In this case, the record in the machine must tally with the ballot papers that are cast. We have even created an offense, a term of imprisonment for up to five years for any presiding officer under whose watch votes cast do not tally with the votes that are recorded in the machine.

We are even proposing – (*Interjections*) - it is in the law and in any case, the law will come here after it has left Cabinet and you can improve

it as you wish. We are even proposing body cameras so that whatever goes on at a polling station can be on record.

Concerning the question of boundaries, under section 120 onwards, these boundaries are the exclusive duty of the Electoral Commission.

On the question of whether the security officials are meddling, that is a matter that we have to deal with because for long, we have insisted that the Electoral Commission must be seen to be in charge and not be ousted by anybody or authority.

Now, let me state the position of the law. A national ID is a *prima facie* evidence of citizenship so no one can again start asking questions. If somebody says that the national ID was obtained fraudulently, that is another matter but on account of disenfranchising somebody, you cannot start raising a lot of issues.

Hon. Ababiku talked about Apaa. I would like to state here that this matter remains contentious but as far as I am concerned, it is not a question of where Apaa is located. It is a matter of Ugandans having the right to vote. So, we should not mix up the contentions of the people about where Apaa belongs, whose land it is and so on, with the question of voting.

I am not here to talk about the contention on Apaa but to guarantee that anybody who feels like voting in Apaa can go and vote, in the same way that I can go and change my polling station to Kololo tomorrow. I can change my polling station to Masaka in hon. Mathias Mpuuga's polling station, provided that I can prove that I have a banana plantation there. *(Laughter)* That will allow me to vote.

In one election, I was registered in Omoro County because I have a garden there. The grounds on which you can change your polling station are in the law. So, the question of Apaa is a subject of the commission of inquiry and I believe they will deal with it.

I would like to assure Members that the Electoral Commission will speak for itself. There are ways in which we can influence the work of the Electoral Commission. We have the National Consultative Forum (NCF) for political parties, which is chaired by the NRM and the Deputy Chairperson is from the National Unity Platform.

I request that, that forum discusses some of these issues because the players in this election are the political parties and they do not have to raise all the issues on the Floor of Parliament. It is possible for them to face the Electoral Commission and if need be, they can even challenge any decision that would disenfranchise somebody in the court. I had to go to court in order to be put back on the voters' register.

On the question of the census, it is not about the census; it is about who is qualified to vote. I want to state here, Mr Speaker, that I was not counted in the last census but I am on the voters' register and I am going to vote.

We should not mix up the issue of the census; that somebody is using the census to raise issues. I do not think there is a census book where Ugandans who were 18 years after 2014 will be told that "you will not be registered because you are not on the 2014 data." That is not the basis for registering voters. The basis for registering voters is the data captured by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). Once NIRA has you on their database, the Electoral Commission works with NIRA to put your name on the national voters' register and it has nothing to do with whether you were counted or not.

Finally, Hon. Odur has misled all of us here that there is likely to be a council which has five members. Obviously, he was quoting the law, but I do not think he is very well acquainted with it because under section 124, the law says that no council shall have less than 10 members. So, where do you get this fiction, apart from a novel? *(Laughter)*

If you are reading the Local Government Act and then you quote a novel – *(Laughter)* Obviously, there will never be a council with five members because the law puts the minimum at 10.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, conclude.

**MR MAO:** The issues that have been raised by hon. Mathias Mpuuga are very important. Since his arrival on the national stage, seeking to become a national leader, it is obviously important – *(Laughter)* - that the Government is seen to be taking him seriously. Hon. Mpuuga has arrived but these issues had arrived before him - *(Laughter)* - and we are definitely dealing with them. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, the minister has informed us that the Electoral Commission is going to update the country. After they have updated the country, it would be very important for you to come back and update Parliament so that we can add value in terms of how this whole process is concerned. Next week, I will be in touch with you to give you space. Next item.

#### LAYING OF PAPERS

##### (I) EXTENSION OF TERM OF OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT COUNCILS (LOCAL COUNCIL I AND LOCAL COUNCIL II) (UNDER REGULATION 12(D) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS REGULATIONS)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Local Government - Honourable colleagues, this matter will also be here on Tuesday next week, so we have not closed it. Let us get an update after the Electoral Commission has finished.

3.50

**THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Mr Raphael Magyezi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table General Notice No. 2827 – *[Hon. Naluyima: “Procedure”]* -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Not granted, honourable. Minister, continue.

**MR MAGYEZI:** I beg to lay on the Table General Notice No. 2827 of 2024, under the Local Governments Act, Cap 128; the extension of term of office of administrative unit councils (Local Council I and Local Council II) under Regulation 12 of the Local Government Councils Regulations.

Notice is hereby given to the general public, pursuant to Regulation 12(d) of the Local Government Councils Regulations, that the term of office of administrative unit councils which expired on 30 December 2024 is extended for a period not exceeding 180 days from 31 December 2024. Together with this notice is the Uganda Gazette of 13 December 2024 under which this extension was gazetted – *(Hon. Naluyima rose\_)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, let me make it easy for Members. On laying of papers, if he has made a mistake, we are referring this to the committee, which will handle it from there. This is laying of papers.

**MR MAGYEZI:** Together with this notice, I beg to lay on the Table the Uganda Gazette of 13 December 2024, gazetting this extension of the Local Councils I and II.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. The instrument is referred to the Committee on Public Service and Local Government. Honourable colleagues, Section 194 of the Local Governments Act gives Parliament only two weeks to revoke the instrument in its entirety or amend part of it. This means that the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, which give us 45 days to handle such issues, will not apply because the mother law is very clear.

Therefore, I direct the committee to report on the Floor on 18<sup>th</sup> of February so that we can do our job in line with the confines of the law. Next item?

(II) THE TIER 4 MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS AND MONEY LENDERS (PRESCRIPTION OF MAXIMUM INTEREST RATE) NOTICE, 2024

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister for finance.

3.53

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table Legal Notice No.21 of 2024 - the Tier 4 Microfinance Institutions and Money Lenders Act, Cap 61; the Tier 4 Microfinance Institutions and Money Lenders (Prescription of maximum interest rate) Notice, 2024 under Section 89(1) of the Tier 4 Microfinance Institutions and Money Lenders Act, Cap. 61.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. This is for noting, and Members to read for information purposes. I therefore refer it to the library in case a Member needs it.

Honourable members, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of 25 subcounty speakers and 25 subcounty deputy speakers from Kakumiro District Local Government. They are represented by the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, Robinah Nabbanja, Hon. Fred Byamukama, Hon. Josephat Tumwesigye and Hon. Aisa Agaba. Please join me, once again, in welcoming them. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. *(Applause)* Thank you – procedure?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Mr Speaker, yesterday Hon. Ekanya –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Under what rule, honourable member?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** I will state it after the issue.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No. Rule 78(4) says you state the rule first.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Eight. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have been extremely generous. I was even ready, by the way, to tolerate a little abuse of procedure but then it has gone beyond. Anyone who wants to speak from any aspect, “procedure”.

I want to inform you, honourable colleagues, that I have the power to grant a point of procedure or not to. It is not mandatory. When I say, “No,” please know I have said “No” – *(Laughter)* - so let us proceed under Rule 8 on procedure not provided for.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Mr Speaker, yesterday when the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget assigned another member to present a report, Hon. Ekanya raised issues of our record. When you call the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget and someone else stands, at least the record must be corrected that the person standing is doing so on behalf of another person.

Mr Speaker, you called the minister for finance and a junior minister stood up. He did not say that he has been assigned by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to do the work. The record will have the minister for finance, Hon. Matia Kasaija yet it is one of his juniors who has come to represent him. I am only concerned because people use the *Hansard* for many reasons including academic.

Therefore, the reason I stated the Rule 8 is that it is not provided explicitly anywhere that people must introduce themselves properly when they are signed by their superiors. That is what I was drawing to your attention, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, we received a rota from the Leader of the Government Business, which shows a day which minister should be here representing a ministry, not a senior minister. We take record of that. I do not think it is problematic in any way in terms of us capturing the record. I will cross-check with the clerk to see. If he finds it problematic, then we can always insist, but it is a ministry.

**MR FOX ODOI-OYWELOWO:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise to raise a procedural matter under Rule 72(2) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament. With your permission, let me read it verbatim:

*“(2) The conduct of the Speaker, Members, the Chief Justice and Judges of the Courts of Judicature shall not be raised, except upon a substantive Motion, and, in any amendment, question to a Member or remarks in a debate on a Motion dealing with any other subject, any reference to the conduct of persons mentioned is out of order.”*

Mr Speaker, I was in this House when my learned brother, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, was making presentations and made mention of your conduct in respect of the Hon. Ssemujju that you are in some unknown co-operation. He also made mention of the fact that the Members of this House are engaged in drama. He accused us collectively. He also accused us collectively of misinforming the country.

Mr Speaker, his last remarks were about Hon. Mpuuga. He made mention of the fact that he had arrived and was seeking, perhaps, recognition. All these issues offend our rules, and we should not leave them on record. This rule is otherwise known as the law against “casting as passion.”

Mr Speaker, may I move that any reference or references made by the said minister that offend the rule be expunged from the record. I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, it is difficult for me, when you stand up, to know what you want to say. Hon. Mao made a sign to me that he had indeed, should I say, apologised. I think it needed to be on record because I was accused of colluding – offering aid to Hon. Ssemujju to swallow him. I can never do that. I mentioned it clearly.

The unfortunate bit is that the minister is not here. He has moved. Usually, we want a Member to come on the Floor and justify or

withdraw – because that was a very serious statement. I give you space to speak, you go for each other and, then, I am accused of aiding.

I am supposed to pick Members to speak. It is up to you to be cautious and ensure that what you say is within the confines of our Rules of Procedure. Now that he is not here - those statements are disturbing because you are questioning me, as if I colluded with someone to finish another here. It is very unfortunate.

Under Rule 229 of our Rules of Procedure, I will instruct the Clerk to review and look at only those aspects – to expunge that aspect.

This is a straightforward matter – *“Where the Speaker is of the opinion that the words that have been used in debate are defamatory, indecent, un-parliamentary or undignified, the Speaker shall order that such words be expunged from the official record of Parliament”*.

I, therefore, take this opportunity to exercise my power – *(Laughter)*- and order that that part is expunged – let me be specific;

- i) Where the presiding officer was accused of aiding.
- ii) Where the House was accused of being involved in drama – and on both sides; if Hon. Ssemujju also put it on that side.

Hon. Jonathan Odur has reminded me that we have ever done drama on several occasions, here. *(Laughter)* Let me stick to that one of accusing the Speaker. The rest are debatable; we check our conduct.

Point of privilege, Hon. Mpuuga?

**MR MPUUGA:** Yes, Sir. Thank you. Let me be very clear. I do not mind the banter between Hon. Mao, and I; we normally do that, and I cannot take that to be personal. I normally do it to others and I do not take offence when somebody does that.

However, the matter of privilege is that representation is a right and an obligation. For a minister to come here and he does not answer,

directly, the question that we have asked, and he simply veers into banter, it is a problem – then, he disappears! When we rise on procedural matters to put him, correctly, to answer the questions – Mr Speaker, it undermines our role of representation. I want to be on record that Hon. Mao did not answer anything. He simply veered into banter, and disappeared.

Mr Speaker, I am not sure how those who will read the question raised and his answers will rate him, and how our people that want these questions answered will judge Hon. Mao. So, other than speaking in colloquial English, he answered nothing.

Mr Speaker, I do not know how you will guide us when our role is undermined and the Member simply veers, fails to answer and then he takes fast leave.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I think that Hon. Mao answered, but not to your satisfaction. I think that is what the record should capture.

Number two, honourable colleagues, it is difficult for me to say: “No, honourable minister, the answer you have given is not satisfactory. So, go and bring another good answer.”

However, the minister is committing the Government on most of these issues. He needs to go back and consult. He might make commitments here that are not tenable, and that when he goes to Cabinet, they are not allowed and then we come and hold him accountable here, saying: “Honourable minister, you promised this.” So, like we said, he updates us next week, let it be a continuous process.

Honourable members, next item. Our time is gone; it is already 4.00 p.m. Let us first do Item No.7 and then we come back to Item No.6.

STATEMENT BY THE RT HON. PRIME MINISTER ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS FOR THE SUCCEEDING WEEK, 11<sup>TH</sup> TO 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025, PURSUANT TO RULE 28 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister?

4.07

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for welcoming our speakers and deputy speakers from Kakumiro District. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, I move under Rule 28 of our Rules of Procedure, which requires me, as the Leader of Government Business, to make a statement in the House regarding the Government business for the succeeding week. I, therefore, submit the following businesses for the succeeding week, from 11 to 13 February 2025;

1. The Uganda Railways Bill, 2025.
2. The Minister of Health will give a statement on the status of;
  - a) The Mpox disease in the country.
  - b) Ebola outbreak in the country.
  - c) Cholera outbreak in Lamwo District.
3. Statement by the minister for the presidency on the commemoration of Archbishop Janani Luwum Memorial Day.
4. Statement by the minister for Kampala and Metropolitan Area on the status of solid waste/garbage management in the Greater Kampala and metropolitan areas.
5. Statement by the Minister of Water and Environment on the weather forecast in the country.

I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. Next item.



MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT TO AUTHORISE THE GOVERNMENT TO REALLOCATE BUDGETS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 AND REVISE WORK PLANS FOR THE SECOND BATCH OF INSTITUTIONS AFFECTED UNDER THE RATIONALISATION OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EXPENDITURES (RAPEX) REFORMS

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister for finance?

4.09

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move a motion for the House to consider the reallocation of budget estimates for Financial Year 2024/2025 and revision of work plans for the institutions affected under Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditures (RAPEX) Reforms.

I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded? (*Members rose*) It is seconded by the Government Chief Whip, Hon. Pacuto, Gen. Katumba, Rt Hon. Prime, Hon. Muloni, Hon. Komakech, Hon. Rwemulikya, Hon. Norman and many Members of the House.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, do you want to speak to your motion?

**MR MUSASIZI:** Mr Speaker, in accordance with Section 19 of the Public Finance Management Act, Cap. 171 and Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I have moved a motion to consider the work plans for the second batch of institutions affected by rationalisation of Government agencies and public expenditure reform.

His Excellency the President, assented to an additional nine Bills following parliamentary approval. To ensure uninterrupted service delivery as we implement the transition process,

there is a need to transfer or reallocate the prospective budgets of the affected institutions to enable the receiving institutions to take on the rationalised functions.

We are required to re-allocate budgets and revised work plans for the following 13 institutions;

1. Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA)
2. Uganda Road Fund
3. Ministry of Works and Transport
4. Dairy Development Authority
5. National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)
6. Cotton Development Organisation
7. Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA)
8. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries
9. Uganda Free Zones Authority
10. Export Promotion Board
11. Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority
12. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); and,
13. Higher Education Students Financing Board.

Mr. Speaker, a total of Shs 2.4 trillion is the approved budget for rationalised institutions. At the end of quarter two, an amount of Shs 1.17 trillion had been released, leaving a balance of Shs 1.27 trillion, of which Shs 33.39 billion is a projected saving as disaggregated in the annex which I will lay on the Table.

The above savings are to be realised from board expenses, medical expenses, National Social Security Fund (NSSF), contract gratuity and rationalisation of staff and their salaries. Therefore, the funds available for transfer amount to Shs 1.241 trillion.

The above savings will be deducted from the affected votes in the MTF for Financial Year 2025/2026. However, in the current financial year, the releases to the affected votes will be reduced by the computed savings and repurposed to finance some of the emerging funding needs during the year and will be presented to this House for approval.

Mr Speaker, you may wish to note that the funds for retrenchment costs for the affected staff under the above institutions will be provided this Financial Year 2024/2025 in line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Service.

The retrenchment costs were not included in the approved budget for Financial Year 2024/2025 since the Bills had not yet been assented to by His Excellency, the President at the time of finalisation of the budget.

With this justification, I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Committee Chairperson?

4.15

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON BUDGET (Mr Patrick Isiagi):** Mr Speaker, aware that the minister has already put up a motion and aware that yesterday we handled Batch 1 and under the same process, Batch 2 was handled.

I would, therefore, like to lay on the Table the report of the committee together with the minutes of the meetings and the work plans of the entities. I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, this House should take note that out of all those rationalised entities, most of them are going to have adjustments within the same Votes. So, the money will stay in their Votes. The affected Votes will be; National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA), Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions Authority, National Planning Authority, Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions. Those are the only ones going to be affected that will require transferring money.

I, therefore, having had enough of the discussions, pray that we adopt the report and go straight to have the money supplied to those few Votes. I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, this is in line with

yesterday's principle, which we agreed upon. And we said we will receive this because the issues of yesterday are the issues of today, in the same report.

Honourable minister, what I remember - one of the issues I wanted to confirm was whether the new Vote which you created has an Accounting Officer? We would like to know the name of the Accounting Officer, on record just to be sure and I request you to lay it if you have it ready.

**MR MUSASIZI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The document in my hand has a heading that reads as follows:

*“Mr Masagazi Deogratus, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives Appointment of Accounting Officer for Financial Year 2024/2025.”*

And this letter is dated 6 February 2025. It is signed by Mr Ramathan Ggoobi, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury.

I, therefore, wish to confirm, with this supporting document that Vote 168: Free Zones and Export Promotion has an Accounting-Officer duly appointed. I beg to lay.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Oguzu Lee stood up first.

4.19

**MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am glad the minister is attempting to act in accordance with his commitments yesterday. According to the chairperson, we are getting to the Committee of Supply but to the best of my knowledge, the report he has presented here has not been looked into by the various sectoral committees to acquaint themselves thoroughly and justify what they want to do.

Mr Speaker, as a process provided for in the law, if we move the way they are trying to, you should be sure you will be presiding over an illegal exercise because whatever they are bringing here must have been looked into by the sectoral committees first.

Therefore, you will have to decide whether you want to enjoin in that illegality or you want this House to move as provided in the law. I just thought this should be on record so that we choose as a country how the public out there should look at us; whether we want to jump steps - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, this is a matter which was settled yesterday. This is not in the law, but part of our procedure. In addition, we discussed the same report yesterday. Hon. Basalirwa, you are not here; please allow us to finish our work. We were here and concluded on this.

Honourable colleagues, I put the question that the motion for a resolution of Parliament to authorise the Government to reallocate budgets for the Financial Year 2024/2025 and revise work plans for the second batch of institutions affected under the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditures (RAPEX) reform be adopted.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Motion adopted.*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Next item.

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESOLVE ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULE NO.2 FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister for finance –

4.22

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

**(Mr Henry Musasizi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to move a motion for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the supplementary schedule No.2 for the Financial Year 2024/2025. I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded? *(Members rose.)* The motion is seconded by the Government Chief Whip, Hon. Chairperson, Isiagi, Hon. Shartsi, Hon. Milton, Hon. Margaret, Hon. Komakech, Hon. Dr Opio, Hon. Noman, Hon. Nyakato, Hon. Kajwengye, Hon. Dr Ruyonga, Hon. Rose Obigah, Hon. Aber, Gen. Katumba Wamala, and many Members. Honourable minister, would you like to speak to your motion?

**MR MUSASIZI:** Mr Speaker, Parliament approved the total budget of Shs 72.137 trillion, for the Financial Year 2024/2025, disaggregated as follows: Shs 34.318 trillion appropriated budget by Parliament and Shs 37.819 trillion as statutory expenditure.

Mr Speaker, Section 24 of the Public Finance Management Act, Cap 171, states that the total supplementary expenditure that requires additional resources over and above what is approved by Parliament shall not exceed 3 per cent of the total approved budget for that financial year without approval of Parliament.

Where the funds are expended under subsection (1), supplementary estimates showing the sums spent shall be laid before Parliament within four months after the money is spent.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency, the President, assented to the first and second batch of the RAPEX Bills in July and December 2024, respectively. Consequently, I tabled motions for resolution of Parliament to authorise the reallocation of budgets and revision of work plans for the RAPEX affected Votes.

Mr Speaker, out of the 11 Votes receiving the rationalised functions, only six require the transfer of funds from the rationalised entities; while five Votes require reallocations within the same Vote to mainstream the rationalised functions and all subventions under the newly created departments.

The five Votes include; the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, this is Vote 018; Vote 015, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives; Vote 022, Ministry of Tourism,

Wildlife and Antiquities; Vote 009, Ministry of Internal Affairs; and Vote 013, Ministry of Education and Sports.

Mr Speaker, following Parliament’s approval of budget reallocation for institutions affected by RAPEX, I have accordingly prepared Supplementary Schedule No.2 totalling Shs 1.243 trillion for the six Votes. This supplementary expenditure is to facilitate the transfer of funds from the rationalised Votes to the receiving institutions to implement the mandate and functions of the rationalised institutions. This is disaggregated as follows:

1. Recurrent - Shs 296.027 billion
2. Development - Shs 940.097 billion
3. Statutory – Shs 7.066 billion

Mr Speaker, I provide details of this supplementary as follows:

Recurrent expenditure

Vote 137: National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA) - Shs 1.036 billion.

This is required to implement the revised structure and operationalise the civil registration functions transferred from the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB).

Vote 019: Ministry of Water and Environment - Shs 7.178 billion:

This is to implement the revised structure and operationalise the functions received from the Uganda National Meteorological Authority.

Vote 016: Ministry of Works and Transport - Shs 246.155 billion:

This is required to implement the revised structure and operationalise the functions received from the Uganda National Roads Authority and the Uganda Road Fund.

Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries - Shs 32.781 billion:

This is required to implement the revised structure and operationalise the functions

received from the following rationalised votes:

- i) Dairy Development Authority (DDA);
- ii) National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS);
- iii) Cotton Development Organisation (CDO);
- iv) Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA)

Vote –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, let me cross check. Do we have this uploaded, Clerk? Members need to look at these figures. It is very critical. Clerk, can I have a copy uploaded so that Members – With these figures, we cannot leave Members to just read and take on face value.

Colleagues let us stand on this for 10 minutes and we have the item uploaded. Then we shall come back here. The House is suspended for 10 minutes.

*(The House was suspended at 4.29 p.m.)*

*(On resumption at 4.44 p.m., the Deputy Speaker presiding\_)*

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESOLVE ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULE NO.2 FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Order, honourable colleagues.

The document is now uploaded and let it be displayed on the screen. Honourable colleagues, ensure that you get the figures very well. Honourable minister, let us resume.

4.45

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

**(Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker, I was on page 4, Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority; Shs 2.369 billion is required to facilitate the completion of the Free Zones Centre in Entebbe that was approved in

the Financial Year 2024/2025 budget and retool the department of export promotion under the functions for Uganda Export Promotion Board, which were transferred.

Vote 108: National Planning Authority; Shs 6.207 billion is required to implement the revised structure, mandate and functions of the rationalised National Population Council and the National Physical Planning Board.

Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority; Shs 0.859 billion is required to cater for contract gratuity and NSSF, for staff of the new Vote.

Mr Speaker, I now present the funding for the Supplementary Expenditure Schedule 2. This Supplementary Schedule 2 will be funded using the unreleased resources that had been appropriated to the rationalised votes.

I request this august House to consider and approve the supplementary request for the recurrent and development budget, totalling to Shs 1.236 trillion and approve the Statutory Budget of Shs 7.066 billion.

I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. Honourable colleagues, in the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of members from She Leads Uganda, who appeared before the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, from Bukooli County North, Bugiri District.

The delegation is led by Ms Kagoya Resty Racheal. They are represented by Hon. Baka Stephen Mugabi and Hon. Basalirwa Asuman. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Yes, Government Chief Whip; motion?

4.48

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua):** Mr Speaker, I rise under Rule 16 on the suspension of the Rules of Procedure, to move a motion pursuant to item number six on the Order Paper for today, that has just been

dealt with by the honourable minister; that Rule 153(3) on referral, 153(4) on consideration of the supplementary estimates, and 153(5) on reporting back, be suspended such that we can proceed with item number six until we finalise.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded? Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, Hon. Rwemulikya, Hon. Muwuma, Hon. Walyomu and others. Thank you. Just a few are enough. Government Chief Whip, do you want to justify your motion?

**MR OBUA:** Mr Speaker, I have moved this motion in very good faith. One, from yesterday up to today, we are all preoccupied – and we agreed yesterday that today we shall give effect, as a House, in terms of approving this request from the Ministry for Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Government, arising from the decision that we took on Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX), where we transferred functions of certain agencies of the Government.

This will also facilitate the agencies whose resources and functions were transferred, such that under RAPEX, they can be in a position to facilitate the budget process through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Mr Speaker, the committee of this House has equally considered the motion on reallocation. Therefore, in my humble opinion, there would be no need going through the due processes under Rule 153.

That is the reason I have moved under Rule 16 that Rule 153(3)(4)(5), be suspended in order for us to proceed with this item, right now. I beg to move.

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

4.51

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Mr Speaker, firstly I oppose the motion, but additionally, I would like to draw your attention to whether or not

we have a quorum. This is because we are going to discuss a very critical issue that has huge implications.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let me urge the Members who are outside to enter. I saw very many Members in the corridors – then the Clerk helps me to establish. Whips, please do your work. Hon. Jonathan Odur?

4.52

**MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira):** Mr Speaker, I also rise to oppose this motion based on the following reasons: Rule 153 operationalises Article 156 of the Constitution, to the extent that it reproduces the provision of Article 156.

By the move to suspend this rule, the mover also purports to suspend the provision of the Constitution. In that case it would be unconstitutional.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the motion that has been moved does not only deal with the reallocation; it also deals with other aspects of supplementary budget or supplementary expenditure.

For example, we approved the transfer and reallocation of the civil registration function, from Uganda Registration Services Bureau to the National Identification Registration Authority.

The amount available, that we approved in the reallocation, is about Shs 360 billion.

However, what we are required here is to approve a supplementary expenditure now amounting to over Shs 1 billion. That means the minister should actually help this House and separate the reallocation budget, which we already approved with the amounts.

Then deal with the issue of the need by the Government to spend more money, separately and the procedure should be followed for that process. What he has done is to bring it here omnibus and it will deny the sectoral committees the opportunity to interrogate the

work plans that were presented, how far such work plans had been implemented and what remains.

To further confirm that, the consensus we had yesterday was that the approval for the reallocation is an authorisation given to the minister to go and initiate this process, come back here and comply with the processes that we have.

Therefore, I beg to oppose this motion and say you cannot suspend the provision of the Constitution as far as the rules operationalise it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let me clarify that the rules, which the House felt can be suspended, were clearly stated under rule 16. In making those rules, rule 153 is not among those that were considered. I have just looked at rule 16, where you clearly stated as a House the rules you can suspend. The rest will be for us to give our submissions, whether we agree that this can be or not. As for me, as long as it does not offend rule 16, any rule not provided for under rule 16, the Members will decide on whether it can be suspended or not.

Two; honourable colleagues, I want us to have a spirit – We moved very well yesterday and today – You have been putting us under pressure about emergencies in your constituencies; your roads and other urgent needs. Money is available but it cannot be released until the process is completed.

The process has delayed for long; so, it will be you to decide. The chairman of the Committee on Budget wants to clarify the issues raised by Hon. Odur.

4.56

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON BUDGET (Mr Patrick Opolot-Isiagi):** Mr Speaker, I would like to clarify one thing and confirm to the colleagues: The figures Hon. Odur has talked about — there is no figure which is above the earlier approved budget.

You talked about Shs 1 billion and Shs 36 million; it is wage which was Shs 323 million, and non-wage is Shs 713 million.

Therefore, I would like to remind colleagues that the transfer of Uganda Registration Services Bureau to the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) is, according to them, moving from a lower salary scale area to a higher salary scale one. Their request was to have an additional Shs 713 million for wages.

The committee said, “No, at this stage, we are not addressing that. We are addressing the reallocation of already voted monies.” It only accepted the extent of what was available. The fears of Hon. Odur have been taken care of here. We are only transferring the available monies. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, for the record, the people of Bukooli are also represented by Hon. Agnes Taaka as their Woman Member of Parliament and she is in the House. I want her voters to take note of that, for the record. Yes, Hon. Lee?

4.57

**MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha):** Mr Speaker, I have risen to oppose the motion. First, allow me to build on what Hon. Odur submitted.

I would like to draw the attention of Members to a report which was presented here by Hon. Abdu Katuntu. In that report, he cited the case of Hon. Zaake, where some rules were suspended – the way we want to do now – and the suspension violated Articles of the Constitution.

We all know the Constitution is the supreme law that cannot be defeated by these other statutory instruments or Acts. As far as the Constitution dictates that there is a process through which we process a budget and supplementary expenditures, it is important that this Parliament complies with that requirement. We cannot rise above what the Constitution has dictated.

The chairperson of the Committee on Budget has just submitted that Hon. Odur should not get worried. Mr chairperson, I want to draw your attention to a requirement of the Public Finance Management Act, which dictates that after every three months there should be an expenditure report. If we were able to see the expenditure report, then we would know, out of the money we appropriated, so far, this has been spent, and the balance is this, and how it can move. You are trying to hide something very important.

Yesterday, I gave an example: If a procurement officer in UNRA, for instance, was being paid Shs 10 million. Your agenda for rationalisation was to cut expenditure, yet we know the procurement office of the Ministry of Works and Transport is paid Shs 5 million. What is going to happen to the balance of Shs 5 million which you –? *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Obigah Rose?

4.59

**MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. We will not be scared to do the right thing.

One, I know my brother is aware that Pakwach is moving in. This money we are appropriating is going to help us cross to West Nile. If we do not – of course he who mourns should understand why he is mourning more than the bereaved.

We have a challenge in West Nile; we can no longer cross. Very soon, Pakwach will move in. We are getting accidents from Karuma to Pakwach. You can imagine; you want to hold us here in Kampala. This is a serious issue; it is so critical. *(Interjection)* I need your protection, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, a Member has moved that we suspend the Rules. The decision is yours to take.

I put the question that the motion for suspension of Rule 153(3), (4) and (5) of our Rules of Procedure be adopted.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues I have been informed by the Clerk that the quorum – both physically and online – is 179 Members. I want that to be on record.

Honourable colleagues, I put the question that the motion for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the Supplementary Schedule No.2 for the Financial Year 2024 /2025 be adopted.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Motion adopted.*

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

**THE CHAIRPERSON:** Leader of the Opposition, I have not allowed you, please. Clerk, let us proceed.

Vote 137: National Identification Regulatory Authority

**THE CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I now propose the question that a total sum of Shs 1,036,858,995 be provided to Vote 137: National Identification Regulatory Authority as a Supplementary Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 1,036,858,995 be provided to Vote 137: National Identification Regulatory Authority as a Supplementary Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I request you to take your seats. When the Speaker is speaking, he speaks to you when you are seated. Now, honourable colleagues, listen. Next?

Vote 019: Ministry of Water and Environment

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose the question that a total sum of Shs 7,178,181,120 be provided to Vote 019: Ministry of Water and Environment as supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 7,178,181,120 be provided to Vote 019: Ministry of Water and Environment as supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 016: Ministry of Works and Transport

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose a question that the total sum of 246,155,118,160 – *(Mr Oguzu Lee rose)* – should be provided to Vote 016: Ministry of Works and Transport as supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that the total sum of Uganda Shs 246,155,118,160 be provided to Vote 016: Ministry of Works and Transport as supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose the question that a total sum of *-(Mr Oguzu Lee rose)*- Shs 32,781,117,491 be provided to Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 32,781,117,491 be provided to Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as supplementary current expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.



*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 8,875,535,879 be provided to Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority as a supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that the total sum of Shs 8,875,535,879 be provided to Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority as supplementary recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 108: National Planning Authority

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose the question that the total sum of Uganda Shs 104,150,160 be provided to Vote 108: National Planning Authority as supplementary development expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that the total sum of Uganda Shs 104,150,160 be provided to Vote 108: National Planning Authority for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 016: Ministry of Works and Transport

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose the question that the total sum of Uganda Shs 934,997,150 – honourable colleagues, for anyone who has something, at recommitment, they can move to recommit. I propose the question that the total sum of Shs 934,997,150,126 be provided to Vote 016: Ministry of Works and Transport as supplementary development expenditure for financial year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that the total sum of Shs 934,997,150,126 be provided to Vote

016: Ministry of Works and Transport as supplementary development expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I propose a question that Uganda Shs 2,626,505,892 be provided to Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as supplementary development expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that the total sum of Uganda Shs 2,626,505,892 be provided to Vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as supplementary development expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose the question that the total sum of Shs 2,368,906,200 be provided to Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority as supplementary development expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 2,368,906,200 be provided to Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority as supplementary development expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 108: National Planning Authority

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I propose the question that a total sum of Shs 6,207,895,598 be provided to Vote 108: National Planning Authority as supplementary statutory recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

I now put the question that a total sum of Uganda Shs 6,207,895,598 be provided to Vote 108: National Planning Authority as supplementary statutory recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I propose a question that a total sum of Uganda Shs 858,557,500 be provided to Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority as supplementary statutory recurrent expenditure for Financial Year 2024/2025.

Honourable colleagues, I put the question that a total sum of Shs 858,557,500 be provided to Vote 168: Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotion Authority as supplementary statutory recurrent expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Total Recurrent Expenditure including Statutory

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I now propose the question, that a total sum of Shs 303,093,264,743 be provided as total Supplementary Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025. I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 303,093,264,743 be provided as total Supplementary Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Total Development Expenditure

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** I now propose the question that a total sum of Shs 940,096,721,378 be provided as total Supplementary Development Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that a total sum of Shs 940,096,721,378 be provided as total Supplementary Development Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

Grand total

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable colleagues, I propose the question that a grand total sum of Shs 1,243,189,986,121 be provided to the various Votes as Supplementary Recurrent and Development Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that a grand total sum of Shs 1,243,189,986,121 be provided to the various Votes as Supplementary Recurrent and Development Expenditure for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable minister?

5.17

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Chairperson, I beg to move a motion that the House do resume and the Committee of Supply reports thereto.

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable members, I put the question that the House do resume and the Committee of Supply reports thereto.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*(The House resumed, the Deputy Speaker presiding.)*

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF  
THE WHOLE HOUSE

5.19

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

**(Mr Henry Musasizi):** Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has considered the motion for the Supplementary Schedule No. 2 totalling to Shs 1,243,189,986,120 and passed it with no amendments.

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

MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF  
THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF  
SUPPLY

5.21

**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 report from the Committee of Supply be adopted.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I put the question that the report of the Committee of Supply be adopted by this House.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Report adopted.*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, this is money we had already appropriated and the source is available. We are only now completing the cycle of RAPEX. People outside are crying that they are not being paid, our roads are stuck – I think indecision on the part of the House and the delay does not help especially as far as running this is concerned.

House is adjourned to Tuesday at 2.00 p.m.

*(The House rose at 5.21 p.m. and adjourned  
until Tuesday, 11 February 2025 at 2.00 p.m.)*