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TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2025



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 5TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 28 January 2025

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

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. Tomorrow, we shall consider the National Budget Framework Paper (BFP), and I want us to start at 10.00 a.m. The whole day will be dedicated to the BFP, from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

This is because I do not want to limit you in terms of time. I do not want you to lobby or wink at me to catch my eye. I just need you to go read through the BFP. I know the budget committee has not yet transmitted the report, but I am very sure that if you are interested yourselves, by now, you would have a lot of data and know the areas of interest.

We hope that they will finish signing the report so that we upload it tonight and you read through it by morning, for us to have enough time to discuss it. I am very happy that the chairperson of the budget committee is here.

On Thursday, I will handle the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public

Expenditure (RAPEX), because I have talked to the minister for finance, and they are stuck. The money that is under the entities that we merged cannot be accessed, yet the rest of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are doing very well.

Therefore, we need to conclude it to permit them to transfer money from the Votes of the merged entities to the ministries where they are supposed to be, especially the works ministry. They are stuck; they can't do anything and the minister has requested us to do it urgently.

Budget committee, I hope we have given you enough time. Tomorrow, Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and Thursday, RAPEX. I need these matters sorted.

Honourable colleagues, I will amend the Order Paper to allow the statement from the Attorney-General and the report of the Committee on Human Rights, on the issue of Dr Besigye's status in hospital. *(Applause)* I want those issues sorted out today.

I hope my communication is clear. I would not want us to be derailed.

2.14

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

This House, as the Legislature, is in many respects the gatekeeper of our country. When there are critical matters of concern out there, they can be discussed on talk shows, and so on.

However, Parliament is critical because this is where Ugandans are represented.

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw your attention and seek your indulgence. There is a brewing conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). DRC is our neighbour. There are a couple of Ugandans who are there, and what is happening there is of great concern to us as a country.

Mr Speaker, for about four years, the Ugandan ambassador to DRC has not been accredited. So, I keep wondering what our relationship with DRC is like. I will also remind you that while Uganda waived visa fees for DRC, the DRC has not returned the same favour. It appears to me that we have some kind of frosty relationship with DRC, and with the ongoing conflict there, it is concerning.

The Government needs to update us on; number one, what is happening around the border; and number two, Ugandans who are held in DRC, given the conflict that is happening there. As you know, Uganda has previously been blamed for supporting the M23 Rebel Group. Of course, the Government denied that.

Mr Speaker, we have our troops in DRC. Remember that years ago, Uganda raided DRC, DRC took us to court and we are still paying heavily. Given all that is happening, it is very concerning and through you, Mr Speaker, the Government should update us because we are caught in this. These are our neighbours, and we have Ugandans across and all the other attendant issues.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Leader of the Opposition.

Twenty minutes ago, I was on a call with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Regional Cooperation), Hon. John Mulimba, and he asked for space on the Order Paper to bring a statement to update us on the happenings in DRC, especially concerning the burning of our embassy, today. I told him that he should get

back to me in the evening when the statement is ready. We can accommodate his statement tomorrow as the first item, and then go to the BFP.

However, the Government has already moved to request space on the Order Paper. They are in a meeting right now. I told him that I could give him space today, but he told me – for statements of this nature, you have to be very cautious because you might end up causing much more problems. He told me that they had already finished speaking to the Commander of the Defence Forces (CDF) of DRC, and they were consulting other people to finalise a statement, which could be brought here. I request that we do that tomorrow, and we give him space since it was his initiative.

2.18

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

That is a very sensitive matter just like you have said, and we will have to be patient until tomorrow. However, Mr Speaker, you issued an Order Paper, and also directives and confirmations from the Attorney-General last week that he will be here to present that statement on Dr Besigye.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, the other issue, the Order Paper is very clear, and the third item was on the ongoing voter verification. I do not see the minister responsible here – (*Interjections*) - where? Oh, he is just arriving.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, because both items were actually for the Attorney-General –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for mobilising him.

MS OPENDI: Yes, since the Deputy Attorney-General has walked in, I now rest my case, Mr Speaker.

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

Rotaract Club of Kabalagala. They are here to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you.

We also have, in the public gallery, this afternoon, a group of students from Bwizibwera Rutooma Skilling Centre, and Rubindi Skilling Centre. They are represented by Hon. Nathan Twesigye Itungo, Hon. Basil Bataringaya, and Hon. Margaret Ayebare. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Thank you. Let us hear from the Chairperson of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs.

2.20

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Mr Linos Ngompek): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is on the executive order by the United States of America Government instructing all agencies -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, but honourable colleagues, you have started raising matters of national importance. I thought you rose on a procedural matter. I have matters of national importance listed here.

MR NGOMPEK: Okay, thank you – *(Mr Ssewungu rose)* - sit down, Hon. Ssewungu.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ssemujju and Hon. Ssewungu -

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The procedural issue I have relates to the statement that you said the minister for regional cooperation was still carefully putting together.

We have invested money in constructing roads which link us to the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Mr Speaker, you also know that we are paying almost a trillion shillings through our budget to DRC because we stole her gold. Mr Speaker, I am only requesting, if you may find the pleasure, in asking the minister for regional cooperation to update us on especially the investment we have made, which makes sense in trade.

Finally, on the burning of our embassy, as you said, the minister will explain. I have raised the issues here of the reckless conduct of our Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). The other day, he spoke in support of M23 and we nearly got chased from DRC, where our military is still fighting.

Mr Speaker, can you also ask the defence ministry to come here and explain because these things were bound to happen? When we talked about it, some Members of Parliament thought we were joking; the way he mocked DRC, the reckless nature of the CDF and the trouble that it has started causing Uganda. That burning of our embassy is partly because of his tongue.

Can you, Mr Speaker, procedurally ask the defence ministry to come here and explain if they have now contained his tongue? This is because sooner than later, you will have a problem either with Khartoum, Ethiopia - the other day it was Kenya and now they are burning our embassy in Congo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable colleague. To begin with, we shall get a statement tomorrow. I can see that your submission was more or less debating the statement we expect tomorrow. If there are any clarifications from the Government, they will be made here.

Secondly, I think it would be unfair for me to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs to come and update the Government on the roads we are constructing in DRC and the payments for these roads, when their funding was approved by us, as a Parliament, and there is a sectoral committee in charge. The money that was paid as reparation to DRC was approved by us, as a Parliament. Therefore, we might not have the same opinions on the same, but at least, all this was done with the resolution of Parliament. I think the committees responsible - when we are handling the budget - should look into these matters and then the Members will pick interest.

Otherwise, I would not want us to mix a lot of issues. The situation in Congo is very fragile.

I do not want us to come here with statements again, which will add salt to the wound. I do not want us to inflame the situation. Therefore, let us wait for the minister tomorrow and then we shall see how we will handle it.

Hon. Ssewungu, then Hon. Atkins.

2.25

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My prayer to you from that communication about DRC is that Uganda Airlines takes it -

THE SPEAKER: It is DRC. You know there is Congo Brazzaville and DRC.

MR SSEWUNGU: Yes, DRC. Uganda Airlines should take immediate attention because they have business in DRC and are always flying there.

Mr Speaker, my other issue is that since you have called us here tomorrow at 10.00 a.m., I pray that the frontbench becomes healthier than it is today because we need them to respond to issues. You know we have a challenge with the Prime Minister of Uganda. She is never here. She only comes on Thursday for the Prime Minister's Time, and yet she is the Leader of Government Business. A number of issues in the budget must be reflected and responded to by the Prime Minister.

I am not attacking the one seated here and I want to praise her but sometimes we do not get substantial answers from her. The substantive Prime Minister should appear here every day whenever we are sitting because that was why she was appointed -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have a point of order from Hon. Lilian Aber.

MR SSEWUNGU: Order on what? *(Laughter)*

MS ABER: Mr Speaker, is it in order for Hon. Ssewungu to allude that the Office of the Prime Minister is not represented? There is not a single day that this House has sat without

a representative from the Office of the Prime Minister.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I received a notice from the Rt Hon. Prime Minister. She informed me that she is in Tanzania on official duty representing the Government. That is why she is not here.

However, she has been giving us time when she comes; every Thursday, she gives us valuable time. You know, it is a very important time. Tomorrow, I request - in fact, I will be shocked to find a ministry not represented when we are discussing the budget. I do not know how they will want to operate. I hope we come in so that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development does not carry the burden alone.

To the Government Chief Whip and Rt Hon. Prime Minister, who is the Leader of Government Business, please ensure that each ministry is represented tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. so that we can kick off business.

Finally, Hon. Katusabe -

2.27

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on the valley system of "I am my sister's keeper; I am my brother's keeper."

Mr Speaker, for those that probably do not know the history of the people that live in Kasese as a community, our great-great fathers were born, migrated and came to Uganda. Naturally, we are, by extension and tradition, Congolese, because that was where our great-great parents came from.

Now, under the valley system, "I am my sister's keeper, I am my brother's keeper," now that we have an insecurity condition, and you have wisely guided, can I request you, Mr Speaker, that the fact that Kasese borders DRC, our intelligence - offensive, defensive - and military capabilities be scaled up?

This country has not recovered from the shock of our lives; 42 Ugandan citizens, and students, in a boarding school in Mpondwe were burned to death. I request that our intelligence, strategic, offensive, defensive and sustainable capabilities within the military be scaled up along the border, including Bundibugyo, so that our citizens are catered for in terms of security and safety. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That is for the Government to note and take seriously from the MP of the affected area. Hon. Patience Kinshaba?

2.29

MS PATIENCE KINSHABA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kanungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I rise on a matter of urgent public importance as per Rule 54 of our Rules of Procedure.

Mr Speaker, yesterday early morning, a motor vehicle transporting tourists of American nationality, who were returning from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park got into an accident. This accident occurred at Kakuriju-Munyaga Bridge, 13 kilometres from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, leaving one tourist dead and two fatally wounded, including their driver.

Mr Speaker, 6 kilometres on the same stretch where the incident occurred, there is Ishasha Bridge. Anytime, this bridge will cave in. This is not good for Uganda. On the same stretch, all the roads are in a bad state. The loss of lives of tourists sends a bad signal to the international community, which negatively impacts this country.

This same road was earmarked by the President in his manifesto of 2021/2026 but the road works have not commenced, and you know very well that Kanungu is a tourist destination. We have two national parks: Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

Mr Speaker, I beg that the Government and this Parliament work hand in hand to make

sure that our roads are worked on so that this road - Kanyantorogo-Buhoma-Butogota Road - is expedited. Otherwise, we will keep getting these kinds of incidents. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

2.32

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Fred Byamukama): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I agree with the honourable colleague, that we had an accident there. We got the report for this specific accident; the tourist vehicle had a mechanical problem and it rammed into the water just a distance away from the bridge.

As for the road, we are working with the former UNRA; once we have formalised the transfer of the funds, we are going to work on it.

Then the Ishasha Bridge, which is the addendum of the earlier loan procurement, which we are working on. We are engaging the finance ministry and once they clear it, we shall do its reconstruction. Thank you very much.

2.32

MR RICHARD SEBAMALA (DP, Bukoto County Central, Masaka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. You very well know that we had instances of insecurity in Masaka District shortly after the elections; we had the pangas and many other things. These insecurities were not curbed down, although they got out of the media.

As we speak, today, around five mobile money shops have been attacked. We have had two deaths and there is a lot of theft and insecurity in Masaka District. I have tried to engage the Minister of Internal Affairs, the DPC, and the police about these issues, but they continue to say that they do not have transport and their motorcycles are out of order.

I am now praying, Mr Speaker, that a vehicle is given to Masaka District for the police. We have had fires and there is no fire brigade. We are just in disarray. I only request that the Government provides transportation for the police of Masaka District. Thank you.

2.34

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are going to direct the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide a vehicle, which is in better condition, plus more security so that the situation can be handled *-(Interjection)-* I am going to engage him as soon as possible after this meeting.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, and please be in touch with Hon. Sebamala. Hon. Susan Mugabi.

2.35

MS SUSAN MUGABI (NUP, Woman Representative, Buvuma): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak as the Shadow Minister for Fisheries.

Mr Speaker, yesterday, a boat with about 15 people capsized on Lake Victoria in the waters between Buvuma and Mayuge. These people who were on board had been arrested by the UPDF Fisheries Protection Unit, who are attached to Namugongo Barracks in Jinja District.

The suspects were handcuffed with ropes, had no life jackets, the boat was overloaded and all the 10 suspects died. The FPU officials survived because they had life jackets and so, they managed to swim to save their lives.

Mr Speaker, this is what we have always talked about. On so many occasions, as a shadow minister, I have been here emphasising that we should table the Fisheries and Aquaculture Regulations for the law to be fully operationalised.

The UPDF on the lake does not have sympathy for our people and we said, that if this law becomes operational, the marine police - as we proposed in the law - plus officials from the fisheries sector, if they were the ones on the lake, maybe such accidents would have been avoided because these are well-trained people. It is really disheartening that someone can

lose a life because she or he is unable to save themselves. This is illegal - how do you arrest someone, handcuff someone with a rope, and put someone in a boat that is overloaded, with no life jacket? My God!

Mr Speaker, my prayer is that these people should be compensated or their families, but even compensating them is not enough.

The officials attached to the UPDF Fisheries Protection Unit should be arrested and charged for negligence of people's lives.

Lastly, we should table the Fisheries and Aquaculture Regulations for the law to be fully operationalised. The UPDF is not supposed to be on the lake.

It is really disheartening. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, my condolences. It is really sad. Hon. Migadde had come to me on the same and he said he wanted to add on something.

2.38

MR ROBERT MIGADDE (NRM, Buvuma Islands County, Buvuma): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Like my colleague has stated, these are not first-time occurrences but have happened a number of times. One time, we saw marine police officers also capsizing, and they did not know how to swim and yet they are marine officers, and part of the training they are supposed to undergo is how to save lives.

I think we should agree and the police have to devise means; the way you handle suspects on the mainland where you run after people and you know there is a chance that you can park the vehicle and run to the bush should not be the same way on the lake because when you run after a suspect, there is nowhere to hide. Therefore, in case one wants to run away from this, the only option is to capsize and these incidents have been happening.

However, as police, the practice should be that much as on the mainland you take a suspect handcuffed, on the lake, it should not be and should not even be heard of.

Mr Speaker, we need serious action on the officers, and this action should be communicated to this House. We have previously taken action but find the same people transferred from a police post where they are known to where they are not. This time, serious action is needed from this House.

Lastly, it should now be common practice that as these people carry out arrests, they should not arrest suspects beyond the life jackets they have in their boats. If they have 10 life jackets, at no one time should they arrest more than 10 suspects. That is why they survived because they were putting on life jackets. The practice of collecting suspects from one island to another, and spend with them the whole day on the lake, and then turning the boat into a passenger boat with 70 or 50 people should stop.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister for fisheries, how can your officers arrest people, and pile them in a boat without providing life jackets, well knowing that anytime danger can come in and people die? Really? Honourable minister?

2.41

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Fisheries) (MS Hellen Adoa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is very unfortunate to hear that such an incident took place. I want to pledge to investigate and follow it up together with the minister of defence. We are going to investigate and come back to the report. Otherwise, it is very unfortunate and it should not be like that. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, issues of investigation cannot just be rushed that way. But honourable minister, we had agreed that in a month, we should have regulations. Where are they?

MS ADOA: Mr Speaker, I have been on the neck of the technical team. I am happy that after that day in the House, you still called us and you met me together with some of the technical team. I have been pressing them and they say the legal team is finalising it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Rt Hon. Prime Minister, why should we beg for regulations when it is clearly a requirement under the law? Can we assign this to you? The issue of regulations for aquaculture; fisheries and –

MS NAKADAMA: Mr Speaker, one; I want to send condolences to the bereaved families, those who have lost their loved ones, and like she has said, it is not the proper way to handle our people.

Mr Speaker, the agriculture ministry in charge of fisheries should bring the regulations in a week's time. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Juliet Agasha?

2.44

MS JULIET AGASHA (NRM, Woman Representative, Mitooma): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I rise on a matter of national importance, about the hailstorm that struck some villages in Katenga subcounty, Mitooma District.

On Sunday, the 19th Day of January this year, some parishes of Katenga, that include Igambiro and some villages in Karire and Sazinga in Rukararwe subcounty, were seriously destroyed by the hailstorm.

Previously, some other villages in Kanyabwanga and Rurehe subcounties were also affected, but that was the time when we were not here; we were in recess, and I did not raise the matter. We have the detailed report from the district.

My prayer is that the affected residents get supplies of beans and posho. Additionally, I request for some iron sheets for some churches that were destroyed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister for disaster preparedness.

2.45

THE MINISTER OF STATE, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees) (MS Lillian Aber): Mr Speaker, I have taken note of the matter raised. I request Hon. Juliet to provide my office with the report so that I can provide - I will provide both the iron sheets and the food because we have them in the stores.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, the Chief Administrative Officer(CAO) of Mitooma District has already transmitted it to your office. Kindly follow up from there. Hon. Anthony Akol?

2.46

MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru): Mr Speaker, I call for your protection.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You do not need it. Your size protects you, honourable. *(Laughter)*

MR AKOL: Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent national importance. You are aware that on the 20th of January 2025, the United States of America swore in a new president who has signed instruments and executive orders. You are also aware that many members have raised concerns that this is really affecting Uganda as a country, especially in the areas of malaria, HIV protection and treatment, and tuberculosis.

Mr Speaker, a large number of Ugandans are on ARVs, let alone malaria being the number one killer in the country. We are all candidates of either malaria or you are going to be a candidate of ARVs or any other. I mean, you cannot predict.

My concern right now is that the Ministry of Health and the finance ministry should look for a way of mitigating this gap that has been created by these executive orders that are signed.

My prayer is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should have a way of negotiating for the country; otherwise, we are going to be affected, and many Ugandans will die with this approach that has been taken by the new President of the US.

I beg to move. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I think it is very important for us to note that this is a sovereign right of the United States whether to give or not. What is important is our readiness to plug the hole. I would not want this issue to come and take much of our time. Let us have it at that.

Honourable minister, what is the level of our readiness to fill the gap that will be created by the withdrawal of this aid? The minister for finance is not here. Let us handle this issue when we are handling the Budget Framework Paper. Isn't it? Because we shall be - no, I know the two people I am not mentioning. I do not want us to escalate this. No, let it be at this at this level. I do not want us to start here issues - either supporting the US for withdrawing aid or attacking it or what? No.

Honourable colleagues in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation from Marera Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, under the Diocese of Kumi. They are represented by Hon. John Bosco Ikojo and the Rt Hon. Anita Among. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Next item?

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER ON THE ONGOING VOTER VERIFICATION EXERCISE

2.51

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition raised an issue regarding the ongoing voter verification exercise and I was asked to prepare and present a response.

Mr Speaker, on Monday, 20 January 2025, the Electoral Commission commenced the exercise of the general update of the National Voters' Register. The purpose of the update exercise is:

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

Mr Speaker, I wish to report that the general update exercise commenced in all the districts and cities across the country. We, however, note that the first day always has peculiar and challenging dynamics, which vary from place to place. I wish to report that day one was largely used to rally stakeholders on the location and programme of the exercise, and the location of kits within the parish and subcounty.

As we speak today, Mr Speaker, the activity is ongoing and progressing well. We are confident that the objectives of the exercise, as mentioned above, will be achieved within the timeframe set.

Public awareness about the exercise

Mr Speaker, concerning public awareness about the exercise, the commission issued a press release on 10 January 2025 and published it in leading dailies, including vernacular publications (newspapers, brochures and posters). This communication started with informing and notifying the country of the adjustments of the commencement date.

The messaging has been amplified by leaders, including His Excellency the President, who issued a public statement, urging Ugandans to participate in the exercise. Other leaders, including religious leaders, have been giving similar calls. Radio talk shows on the exercise are ongoing.

The commission organised stakeholder workshops at the regional level in all 12 electoral regions of Uganda to mobilise key stakeholders and provide critical information to the leaders, including political parties, the media and civil society.

Information, educational and communication materials on the exercise have been produced and distributed, and this is still ongoing. The commission is further using digital platforms to engage stakeholders.

Mr Speaker, on the ground, the Electoral Commission recruited, trained and deployed supervisors at parish and subcounty level, who also have the function of voter education, mobilisation and awareness creation. We have facilitated them with megaphones to mobilise up to the lowest level, informing the masses about the exercise. This includes information about the location of the update stations. The commission is also using community radios (*kizindaalo*) to publicise the exercise.

Regarding awareness of the exercise by LC I and LC II chairpersons and leaders, the commission, in the stakeholders' workshops held countrywide on 10 January 2025, engaged the Chief Administrative Officers and Town Clerks, and requested them to disseminate the message on their role to the grassroots leaders.

In addition, the parish and subcounty supervisors, who have been recruited, are engaging those local leaders continuously to enlist their support for the exercise.

The commission wishes to thank the local leaders who have mobilised their communities to participate, including providing logistical support, for example, suitable venues. The reports we are getting from across the country

indicate that local leaders are supportive, but we acknowledge the need to involve them more.

The commission has established a system for receiving and handling complaints arising out of this exercise. This includes establishment of a query/complaints desk at the Electoral Commission headquarters that receives and responds to complaints and emerging issues.

Mr Speaker, concerning the adequacy of kits allocated for the exercise, the commission is conducting the exercise using kits provided by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). The total number of kits deployed for this exercise is 2,703 kits. Our need was 5,000 kits. The distribution has been made, based on the subcounties, except for Kampala Capital City, Wakiso, and Mukono districts, which have been allocated additional kits per parish or ward.

Our update officials and supervisors are providing a schedule on the rotation and movement of kits, and informing the people of when and where the kits will be on a particular day, to ensure coverage of the target population. The update teams are supported by technical teams or trouble-shooters that respond to machine issues as and when they arise.

Mr Speaker, it is true that some technical problems (faulty machines) have been reported in some stations. The equipment being used was first procured for the 2014/2015 mass enrolment registration exercise under the National Security Information System (NSIS) Project, the predecessor to NIRA. This explains the reported cases of breakdowns. Our teams have been on standby to respond to any reported malfunctions.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of the requirement for a recommendation from the Gombolola Internal Security Officer (GISO) and the District Internal Security Officer (DISO), we wish to guide that this applies to first-time applicants and is based on the need to verify citizenship. Please note that only verified citizens qualify to be on the voter register

and the agency responsible for ascertaining citizenship is NIRA.

The Electoral Commission engaged the leadership of Uganda Police and the sister security agencies to facilitate the new applicants with such letters to complete their applications.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the Electoral Commission is cognisant of the challenges that have been identified in these first days of the exercise but we are confident that with the mechanisms put in place to address them and with the heightened awareness created by our teams that are based at the parish level, who are mobilising the communities on the operational plans regarding venues, time and requirements for completing the exercise; the time allocated will enable Ugandans to register and update their particulars.

The commission appeals to all stakeholders, including the honourable members of Parliament to support the mobilisation and call on their constituents to participate in the exercise.

The registration centres in the parishes are working daily during this update exercise, from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., including weekends. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Dr Bhoka and then Hon. Bataringaya.

3.03

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Attorney-General for the report. On the 21st, which was the first day of the beginning of the National Voters' Register, I went to my parish, Odonga Parish and I was told the team was not in my parish. All of them were seated at the subcounty headquarters.

My first observation was the old machine that was being used. All the parish electoral officers were seated waiting for the same machine.

Number two, no register was delivered to the polling station for me to verify my name.

Number three is a district in this country without electricity relying on a battery, which runs out every two hours, and is required to be charged.

The feedback from the community is that, we need more machines. Two, this exercise needs to be in the parish as planned. Three, sufficient power be provided for districts without power. I submit.

3.04

MR BASIL BATARINGAYA (NRM, Kashari North County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the honourable minister for the submission of the voter registration exercise. Electronic equipment is assigned years in which to serve and I have heard him talk about those procured in 2014. So, surely, these must have become obsolete by this time and, therefore, we do not expect good results from these machines.

Two, what happens between the collaboration of the ministries? We have just finished a national census. What happened to the equipment that was being used by the Uganda Bureau of Statics (UBOS)? Why can't it be deployed for this purpose?

Thirdly, what about the students who have already gone back to school? How will they update?

Fourthly, what happens to those areas where we have sung for years especially my constituency, where electricity has remained a sore and has not been extended? How do we continue to update the registers?

Lastly, given that the machines are very few, as he has said, they expected 5,000, but they received only 2,000; not even half. Therefore, people have to commute long distances to go for this registration and an average person takes over 10 minutes. I anticipate the time assigned will not be enough to complete this exercise. So, in anticipation, I beg that this time be extended. Thank you for the opportunity.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Mbarara, Member for Busia and Member for Agago.

3.07

MS MARGARET AYEBARE (NRM, Woman Representative, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, thank you for welcoming my people in the gallery who are from my district, and my established skilling centres. I thank the honourable minister for the statement.

Yesterday, as I was coming back from the constituency, I passed by Mbarara District Headquarters now located at Bwizibwera.

After seeing so many people crowded, I wanted to know what was happening. I witnessed many people gathered there and not being worked on, not because the people who were working on them did not want to, but because the process was very slow. I asked the girl who was working with the machine and she told me they could only work on only 50 people per day.

Mr Speaker, very many people were already gathered outside and the majority of them were youths already shouting. We tried to gather them so I could speak to them and we agreed that every day since they already know that they work on only 50 to 60 people, they should only register those on paper – (*Interruption*) - I was saying that we agreed with those people that in order not to make people get tired of the exercise because people go there very early in the morning and spend the whole day there and in the evening, they are told to go back because they are only working on 50 people. This will make them hate the exercise.

Secondly, most of our parish headquarters have no electricity. Therefore, all people who were going to the parishes were bounced back to where there was electricity. People felt they would rather be registered there instead of going to where there is no electricity. At the end of it all, it will turn out that on the polling date, people are not in their respective parishes

because they were compelled to register where electricity was. I beg to submit.

3.10

MS HELLEN AUMA (NRM, Woman Representative, Busia): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank the honourable minister for the statement. I have just landed from Busia Border where I was mobilising for this exercise.

I got three concerns. First, was that many stations lack electricity; so, people were bounced and referred to far places. My voters were complaining. Most of them said, "Honourable member, we shall not go there unless you get for us means of transport." I could not afford to transport those people to those stations.

Our second concern was about the registers. When I went to some stations to find out, there were no registers. Also, I failed to check my name up to now until I left home – (*Interjections*) – I am not a Kenyan. Those are the concerns I have for my area. Thank you.

3.11

MR AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Whereas I concur with many other issues that have been raised by our colleagues, I want to address my mind on one very important issue. I experienced it in the previous elections and, where voters move from one polling station to another looking for their names so that they can vote. It is because of lack of preparation. The way I see this exercise being done tells us that a similar occurrence is going to take place.

In my constituency, where they are sharing those kits, it is alarming because our subcounties are huge and even the parishes. For example, in Kuywee Subcounty where I come from, we are sharing the kit with Kalongo Town Council yet we have more than six parishes. Those parishes are even bigger than some of the subcounties. This is a clear sign that even the time given will not be enough.

Secondly, I wonder why the National Identification and Registration Authority

(NIRA) - each time our pupils and students reach a certain age, they are registered for identity cards. It is the same NIRA that has the ability and official work that you have given them to control this register. Why don't we have an automatic update?

Someone reaches 17 years and gets an identity card but when they are 18, they still need them to go and take a photograph. If those names were brought forward so that they just go and check, it would save us from spending a lot of money and time.

I have gone to check for my name, but it is not there because the voters' register is also not there. You know what happened to the honourable minister, Nobert Mao, some time back. You are here and you do not check your name because there is no voters' register and you find your name missing at the time of voting. You will see how you miss contesting again. (*Laughter*)

Finally, this is the time when we can make corrections, where necessary. My parishes are always very big. Why doesn't the Electoral Commission consider putting in place more polling stations? In some places, there is one polling station in a parish yet the distance people move so that they can go and vote is more than five kilometres.

Can they, in this process, map out a parish to see whether or not it is too big? They said we talk of a minimum of two kilometres for somebody to access a polling station. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Naluyima, Hon. Lucy Akello and Yes, Hon. Nyeko.

3.15

MS ETHEL NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are very grateful that this matter is being considered now because from the word "go," we raised this matter. First of all, to react to the minister's statement, it is not true that Wakiso District has been considered at the parish level; not all. A town council like Kyengera, with over 330 residents and 10

parishes, has only four kits. A subcounty like Kakiri already has one kit. To this date, it still exists.

Mr Speaker, the problem is really big. It is disturbing that we have the deadlines still maintained because, in his statement, he has not committed that the Government would extend the date from 20th February. He has elaborated that we have technical problems and also human issues. Where shall we be as a country when many of our citizens want to fulfil their constitutional mandate but have failed?

We also want the Electoral Commission, through our minister here, to inform us why some people are missing to date. I have councillors of Kira Municipality who voted and were elected. They were in the register but now they have tried out the system and it is not reflecting their polling stations anywhere. What has happened? How did Ugandans disappear from this register? Where is that commitment that they will be back and be able, not only to stand as citizens, but also vote? I have enough information to attest to what I am saying and what is happening.

Take a district like Wakiso, I just do not go there; I am part and I check, daily, what is happening. A village like Kasokoso has over 10,000 residents and over 6,000 want to vote but the kit is only based in one place. When shall we wait for these kits and how come after five years, the country is not ready to ensure that it has enough for this exercise? Thank you.

3.17

MS LUCY AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Amuru): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. Unfortunately, I did not hear much emphasis on how best we are utilising the e-verification system. I have tried to sample it from the House here, and yes, it works. You get to the portal of the Electoral Commission, just put in your National Identification Number (NIN) and it brings everything.

I know that there are many Ugandans who cannot afford this but there is also quite a number of those who can use this. Can we promote both?

Unfortunately, this portal does not give a provision for ticking. What I know is that once I have verified, it has to be ticked on that register. It does not help to ensure that my name remains...

Secondly, my biggest disappointment has always been that we have so many entities and departments doing almost the same work. Why can't we have one system that works for all? For instance, when you apply for a passport or go to the National Identification & Registration Authority (NIRA), they ask you for the same information. Now, the Electoral Commission (EC) is also asking you for the same information. As a Government, why can't we come up with one system that will work for all of us and save time?

Finally, Mr Speaker, I am disappointed that we are never ready for our processes. We have a whole ministry in charge of planning for this country. We knew that there was going to be an election after five years. Why can't we have enough machines? Why can't we deploy people as opposed to making people suffer all the time? It is going to make this process very cumbersome and people will fear to vote.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Derrick Nyeko?

3.20

MR DERRICK NYEKO (NUP, Makindye Division East, Kampala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is on the Parish Internal Security Officers (PISOs). In areas where we have a very high population like Kampala, a parish has around 20,000 residents, but the PISOs are nowhere to be seen.

The phones of the PISOs, who would be located at the station where the operation is

taking place, are off; they are nowhere to be seen and they are not known because these are not offices. They are supposed to give security intelligence, not offices that are known to everybody. Therefore, this is work that should be done by Local Councils (LCs), not the PISOs, because they do not have a particular location to be found.

Mr Speaker, my second concern is Kampala, which has a high population; a parish of 20,000 residents. That is just one parish equivalent to a subcounty or even equivalent to some of your districts and constituencies. We cannot have one machine in operation. It is unfair and it cannot accommodate all the residents.

Therefore, this is something that you need to revise so that at least in every two or three zones, we have a machine in operation for our people to get to vote. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nambooze, then Hon. Kivumbi.

Honourable colleagues, all of you are catching my eye, but I can only pick one at a time. I can even start from there and say Hon. Kirumira, Hon. Oneka Lit, Hon. Katusabe, Hon. Mpindi, Hon. Kunihira and Hon. Rauben. I can continue like that but it does not help. Therefore, take your time. I am giving this enough time.

3.23

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am not joining my honourable colleagues in thanking the minister because:

- i. The minister was moved to come here and I do not know why they do not deliberately give information to this House.
- ii. The statement he has given is full of misinformation, and it is wanting.

Mr Speaker, at most, in my opinion, a kit should be at the polling station because when you think about a parish, people will require money to travel to those places. They have 2,700 kits for 10,595 parishes in Uganda. From those two figures, you realise that this is just a drop in the sea.

It is not true that each parish in Mukono has been given a kit and that we have even received more. The fact of the matter is that each subcounty in Mukono has been given one kit. For subcounties with say 10 or more parishes, each parish is supposed to be with the kit for only one day - Am I safe? Special Forces Command (SFC) - the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) said he would beat my committee members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, you are very safe?

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE: Am I safe?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are very safe.

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, the CDF promised to come for Members of my committee, so I had feared. *(Laughter)* It seems I am safe now.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That also had to pass - you had to find a way.

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, the fact of the matter is that our people, who are seeking to register for the first time, are told to look for the Gombolola Internal Security Officer (GISO) for clearance, and they charge them Shs 10,000 per person.

Two, people transferring from one polling station to another or from one area to another are supposed to carry with them a letter from the LCI, who are charging people up to Shs 5,000 for the transfer letters. In my area, they have been charging up to Shs 5,000, but hearing from honourable colleagues, they charge up to Shs 30,000.

Mr Speaker, an election is not rigged on the day the vote is cast. Elections are rigged through the entire process. I would like to inform this House that, for example, the Electoral Commission is using the Census of 2014 to determine the constituencies and to prepare for the elections. To them, the Census of 2024 does not exist because, as they have said, the results are not fully gazetted.

We are in 2025 preparing for an election of 2026, using information from 2014 - a decade ago. Mr Speaker, can we continue? From what honourable colleagues from the other side have submitted, and what has been coming from this side, it shows that the whole exercise is already messed up.

I, therefore, suggest that this House takes control and gives guidance to the Electoral Commission, first of all, to stay the rolling out of programmes, until they are prepared for these exercises and forget anything to do with deadlines. This is because when you create a deadline and you do not have materials on the ground, you create a rush. People are rushing because there is a deadline.

We find people piling up at parishes and the machines are not there. Where they are, they are faulty; where they are working, there is no power; where they are using batteries, the batteries are on and off. Therefore, these people are not ready.

I would like to move a motion without notice that this House resolves to guide the Electoral Commission to stay the exercise until they are fully prepared for it. This includes allowing the people in charge of the census to gazette the results of the last census properly so that we organise an election based on the true population of this country. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, motions without notice are provided for under Rule 59 of our Rules of Procedure. A motion of this nature under Rule 59(1)(k) should be in the opinion of the Speaker; that this is an emergency. However, in my opinion, it is not, and therefore, I am not allowing the motion. I just want us to have a debate with the aim - and the way most of you are submitting, you are aiming at improving the process.

A very good example is, the other day, the Minister of Internal Affairs was here; he said they were ready to roll out the new National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) kits. What we should be asking is that the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional

Affairs works with NIRA to ensure that they have more gadgets on the ground – and these gadgets are new. It was just last week when the minister told us that they had secured them.

We need to see a way for the Government to build synergies to make the exercise better. Otherwise, time is not on our side because election time has statute deadlines. We will say, “Stop the exercise so that we first prepare,” and then you will find yourself reaching the election period, and then they will say we should continue the election without a voters register update. Therefore, we should find a way of - I had allowed Hon. Kivumbi

3.30

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI (NUP, Butambala County, Butambala): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

Mr Speaker, you have just spoken about NIRA equipment, but when we were procuring equipment worth \$100 million for Uganda National Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the justification in the budget committee was that after the census, that same equipment would be passed on to the Electoral Commission to prepare for this election. The question is, where did that equipment for which we spent \$100 million go?

Secondly, I was the shadow minister for internal affairs then, when we were making the NIRA Act. One of the core justifications for NIRA to even become an authority was that it would become the one centre for data collection from which all Government agencies would feed.

One of the key primary beneficiaries was supposed to be the Electoral Commission. Going forward, every time they would need to upgrade the voters' register, they would just go to the NIRA website and download just by clicking a button, and all the names of those who would have clocked 18 - and they would know where they come from. They would then produce a voters' register for citizens to verify. Presently, they are short-changing citizens, telling them, “Please go and register afresh.” For how long will this country be taken for a ride?

Lastly, I had a consultative rally on Friday in my constituency, and the Leader of the Opposition was there. Citizens complained about Parish Intelligence Security Officers (PISO), demanding from them between Shs 5000 to Shs 30000 for a stamp. The question is, under the law and in this exercise, what is the role of the PISO?

Therefore, we demand that somebody investigates the role of the PISO - which is emerging across many contributors here, that they are demanding payment from these young people who want to go and vote. We are talking about 4 to 5 million young people who are first-time voters, whom I think - and I would like to imagine, somebody out there may be deliberate in disenfranchising them because the fear is real. When you have an 80-year-old possible candidate, he fears younger people; that is a given. He would work towards disenfranchising. Let the young people determine the leader they want for Uganda. Not an 80-year-old man, disenfranchising the *wanainchi* for non-registration. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson, Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Motion?

3.33

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to move a motion for consideration of the House. A motion without notice under Rule 59 of the Rules of Procedure. In listening to the Members, the issues being raised are - (*Interjection*) - in all districts and constituencies.

The issues of faulty equipment, distance, charging money, the issues - and we do not have the Electoral Commission here to answer these queries.

I am moving a motion that this matter be referred to the committee and that they be given two days to interface with the Electoral Commission and other officials, and then, bring a report for us to debate, and make clear recommendations.

Otherwise, short of that, this is a statement where we shall speak, and these matters will simply go unsolved. I, therefore, move under that rule that let us be organised as a House, and give this matter to the committee to interface with the relevant agencies like NIRA and the Electoral Commission. Why can't we use the NIRA registration? Most children who are 17 years now have National Identification Numbers (NINs). So, why can't we use the data from NIRA to have these people registered?

THE SPEAKER: But now, honourable, you are submitting -

MS OPENDI: Yes, I move a motion, that the House consider referring this matter to the committee and the committee be given two days so that we can debate a report with clear recommendations. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, this is a motion where I do not just put the question - it is my opinion.

However, two things: firstly, you know, when we have such a statement, the honourable colleague who raised the question should be given an opportunity to speak first. However, because it was the Leader of the Opposition, we agreed that he would wait because there might be issues which would come up, and as the Leader of the Opposition, he would need to speak. So, if I take up this motion now, I would have denied him an opportunity to comment on something he raised. That is number one.

Secondly, when such controversial issues come up, the Speaker is supposed to guide at the end because the statement does not have a provision for a resolution of Parliament. So, the Speaker guides at the end. It would be unfair if I just pushed it to the committee without first listening to colleagues on these issues.

However, I really appreciate what Hon. Sarah Opendi has raised. I had allowed the Chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, followed by Hon. Okiror and then the Shadow Attorney-General - Hon. Mwijukye.

3.38

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Mr Stephen Baka): Thank you, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am going to allow Independents as well. Procedure, Hon. Naome Kabasharira?

MS KABASHARIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this chance. Wouldn't it be procedurally right for us to first hear the answer to the question Hon. Kivumbi has just raised which reminded us of what Parliament passed in the budget but has not been fulfilled?

Wouldn't it be procedurally right for us to first listen to what happened to that before we even continue hearing from each other? Because it is Parliament that passed it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I hear you, honourable, and I picked many critical questions. Now, in the interest of time, I felt that the minister should answer at once. Otherwise, issues will come up, and we will say they are all critical, and he should first respond to them. So, let us first listen to the chairperson.

MR BAKA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Without prejudice to the issues raised by Members - the issues of few kits, power which is not in many parishes, and the issues of the delays, I rise up to also inform this House that the Electoral Commission is working under very difficult conditions, and also implore colleagues that tomorrow we shall be handling the Budget Framework Paper.

The Electoral Commission has not been funded for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the 2026 general elections, of which this verification is in phase two, but they have not been funded. They need Shs 450 billion to be able to handle Phase 2 and Phase 3.

I rise, Mr Speaker, to implore this House to speak together as one voice. Under Article 66, we have an obligation to ensure that the Electoral Commission is well-funded

to adequately handle its mandate under the Constitution.

Therefore, as a House, Mr Speaker, tomorrow as we handle the Budget Framework Paper, we must rise collectively to ensure that we make recommendations that give the Electoral Commission good funding to be able to deliver a credible election in 2026.

Other than that, the Electoral Commission is not funded, and we must fund it, as an obligation of this House under Article 66. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I had picked the Shadow Attorney-General.

3.39

THE SHADOW ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Wilfred Niwagaba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Having read the Deputy Attorney-General's statement, I should have moved at the earliest that we throw it out because it does not give us solutions. All of us are lamenting, and this statement is also full of lamentations and contradictions.

Mr Speaker, we have over 30,000 polling stations. The statement of the Deputy Attorney-General says they required 5,000 kits to serve over 30,000 polling stations. The statement is talking of registration at the parish level, and yet we know we have over 10,000 parishes vis-a-vis the 2,700 kits. Who is actually telling the truth?

The statement talks about technical teams to troubleshoot whatever is wrong with the computers. It has not even mentioned how many people are attached to the 2,700 kits. Also, it does not give us the solutions to the kind of challenges we now have. Yes, I know the budgetary issues, but as Hon. Muwanga Kivumbi said, where did the kits we procured for the census go? Where are they? They were given to each village, so where did they go?

I would move, Members, that we reject this statement and require the Attorney-General to come back with a clear statement giving us

solutions to the issues Members have raised. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.41

MR BOSCO OKIROR (NRM, Usuk County, Katakwi): I want to sincerely thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to catch your eye. The concerns of the Members are very clear and very loud. When you look at the distribution of the kits – personally, in my county, I have a town council and a subcounty, Usuk Town Council and Usuk Subcounty have one kit running a town council and a subcounty. We find it very challenging.

I think we should give this - I want to appeal to my senior colleague, the Attorney-General and the Government that we need time to do this. I know the electioneering process is like a vehicle already in motion, but we need time to do something good because we do elections once every five years. Let us give this matter - this is one way we determine the issues of leadership. One way, actually, to disenfranchise people and deny them the right to participate in elections is through some of these exercises.

However, I would like to defer from the averment that it could be an indicative planning that the 80-year-old is disenfranchising - who knows who that person will vote? Nobody knows. My senior colleagues here, the lawyers, know that in law, they say not even the devil knows the intent of man. We cannot know who they were supposed to vote for; so, we cannot attribute blame to an individual, yet it is an exercise that we can embrace.

Therefore, I want to appeal to all of us as colleagues that the election knows no party. For us to have a clean register, all of us are interested parties. Whether you are in the Opposition or NRM, we want everybody to register and participate in the exercise. I beg to submit.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery, this afternoon,

we have a delegation of councillors from Pabbo Town Council located in Kilak North constituency, Amuru District. They are represented by Hon. Anthony Akol and Hon. Lucy Akello. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Let me first hear from the LOP.

3.44

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, perhaps you allow me one minute before I respond to the statement, to raise a matter of our rules but also to seek your further guidance. You know, even as learned friends, we keep guiding each other.

You quoted rule 59 in response to a motion moved by Hon. Betty Nambooze and Hon. Sarah Opendi. You said Rule 59, which provides for “*Motions without notice,*” and you referred us to 59(k), “*Motion which in the opinion of the Speaker is a matter of emergency;*” You said that for any of these motions to be moved, they must be moved as long as, in your opinion, it carries the day.

Mr Speaker, I would like to respectfully disagree with you, sir, because Rule 59(1) says: “*The following Motions may be moved without notice;*” and it provides for different kinds of motions. 59(1)(k) is only one of the motions that can be moved without notice. That is, “*Motion which in the opinion of the Speaker is a matter of emergency.*”

Therefore, it is not true that any of these motions can only be moved as long as, in the opinion of the Speaker, it is a matter of emergency or carries the day. That is my interpretation, but as I said, I seek that you guide me further on this issue, and then I proceed, Sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, thank you. Now, honourable colleagues, it depends on how you present your matter and how you qualify it. Okay? If you want us to adjourn a debate, for example, as Hon. Sarah Opendi moved, it means I will adjourn the debate to maybe tomorrow or another day. *(Hon. Sarah*

Opendi rose) It is me interpreting. I am the custodian of the rules. Okay?

Now, if you say I refer it to a committee, you are telling me to send the matter to a committee and it makes a report. The new report comes here, they present it, and we debate the report and come up with a resolution, which is different from a statement that does not require a resolution. Okay? That is how I interpreted it, honourable colleagues.

MR SSENKYONYI: Mr Speaker, yes, I do see that further guidance of yours. However, according to our rules, when you proceed further to Rule 60 and so on, the Speaker actually has limited space regarding a motion. For as long as a motion gets to be seconded and it has carried majority Members, the Speaker actually cannot stifle that motion. That is according to our rules, Sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Under what rule would I have proceeded with Hon. Sarah Opendi's motion?

MR SSENKYONYI: Rule 59, Sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: 59, what? We have 59 -

MR SSENKYONYI: They can give further guidance.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

MR SSENKYONYI: Mine was actually –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable LOP, we have 59(1), which starts from (a) to (o). We have 59(2); you are saying 59(1)(k) is redundant. Okay? What I am saying is that I have interpreted Hon. Sarah's motion, a very good example, and my interpretation is simple. This is a statement provided for under Rule 52; on a statement, you do not make a resolution. Is that clear?

Hon. Sarah Opendi rises, and says that I refer the statement to the committee. Listen, 59(c) is a motion for the adjournment of debate.

In adjournment, you have not concluded the debate but just adjourned the debate. You are sending me to a committee, the committee will make a report, the report will come here, and we adopt the resolutions from the committee's report.

Anyway, that should not derail us. The chairman of the Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Discipline is here; let him guide.

Chairman, please, wait a bit. Let us hear from Hon. Namboozee first.

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, the point of procedure I want to raise is to assist those who will read this *Hansard*, when it finally comes out.

Mr Speaker, you overruled a motion that had been moved and seconded on the grounds that you did not consider it to be an emergency. However, the reasons you gave were indicating that, in fact, this is an emergency. You said we do not have time, as a country; the elections are very important; they are at the doorsteps, and there are constitutional days. You were pointing at reasons why this is really an emergency, and then you ruled that we cannot move a motion based on rule 59(k).

I just want to be guided: how will this be reconciled when people get to read the *Hansard* - the ruling of a Speaker who is disallowing a motion from getting seconded, giving reasons that it is not an emergency, yet he is coming out to say "I am doing this because this is really an emergency"?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Number one, the motion was not seconded because for it to be seconded, I must first allow it. I want that to be very clear. Shouting "seconded" is not the same as going on record. When it is seconded, I call for the seconders, and they go on the record of Parliament.

Number two, honourable colleagues, we have just picked three or four colleagues. For you, after submitting, you want to suffocate the debate; you do not want others to debate, yet

others were standing up all over. If I had taken it then, all these people would not have spoken. They came and wanted to speak, including the LOP who raised the matter. He would not have spoken at that time. I would have been unfair to the Member who raised the matter. Okay? Do you get it?

Number three, rule 59, has an elaborate number. There are motions, which are not in my opinion. Motion by way of amendment to a question already proposed by the Speaker is not in my opinion. Motion for an adjournment for purposes of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance is not in my opinion. There is a motion for adjournment of a debate. There is a motion for the suspension of any rule under procedure. All these are not in my opinion; I am instructed. Okay? But then, I must be very cautious, and we strike a balance.

Honourable colleagues, this is a non-partisan matter. I hear both sides speaking the same language: we have a problem. I would request, really, that we remain focused and we sort it out. I had allowed the chairman of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline to guide further and then we continue.

3.52

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND DISCIPLINE (Mr Abdu Katuntu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, “emergency” does not necessarily mean that it is not important, and “important” does not necessarily mean that it is an emergency. A matter may be important, yet it is not an emergency issue. And this matter is quite important; I am sure we all acknowledge that.

However, I think Hon. Sarah Opendi did a disservice to this House. Other than bluntly saying, “I move under Rule 59”, you would say, “I move under Rule 59(1)(c)”, and if it is (c), it is purely about adjourning a debate to another date – all and the same debate. Once you bring in other issues, then it ceases to be debate because the most important aspect of her motion was to refer the motion to the committee, not purely adjourning.

The only rule, which is relevant to this should have been rule 59(1)(k), where the Speaker must determine that, actually, it is of an emergency nature and, therefore, it should proceed. I hope I make myself clear on that. However, this is all different.

In my view, I do not see where the controversy is. Do we need a thorough debate over this matter? Yes, we do. This is because the credibility – the integrity – of an election starts with the register and registration. Colleagues, you will be the ones crying foul if there is no integrity with that register. All of us – whether you are pink, purple, yellow, or red, it does not matter – you need a credible register and a credible process.

However, Mr Speaker, what is the end of this debate that we are having now? Where is the end?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is what I must guide on.

MR KATUNTU: We now need guidance from the Speaker because that is within his power – to set the way the debate is proceeding; we might need a process that will give solutions to the challenge we are having.

Mr Speaker, I plead with you: guide now.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I had wanted the LoP, as the one who raised the question -

3.55

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. By the way, for the record, I was not at all in support of Hon. Sarah Opendi’s motion because it is important that this debate gets to run through. I was only saying let her not be knocked out technically, that at that point, we would have subjected her motion to secondment – of course, she was not going to have anyone seconding – and then we would throw it out. *(Laughter)*

Let me proceed quickly, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I want to thank the Deputy Attorney-General. Everyone has been lambasting him. I want to thank you, Sir, for coming up with a statement. I disagree with the contents of the statement and so on, but the fact that you have brought a statement is a credit to you.

Many times, this Frontbench here – Members across, by the way, both from the Opposition and Government sides – raise issues, ministers promise that they are going to report back, and they never do. Therefore, I want to thank you that you have come back, but also that you followed up with me. He reached out to me and asked that I list for him the concerns that I raised here.

The challenge, though, is that he did not address the issues that I put to him when he reached out. Still, I thank you that you reached out.

Mr Speaker, the biggest disagreement I have with the Deputy Attorney-General is that he concluded his statement by saying that the activity is going well. It is not, my brother. You have heard colleagues who are raising concerns. That was your number one undoing. This process is not going well. That is why we are raising these concerns.

Inadequate awareness – Mr Speaker, the Electoral Commission put out a call in October last year for expression of interest to conduct voter education for the 2025/2026 general elections. This was on the 14th of October. Many stakeholders applied – civil society organisations and so on – to support the voter education process. However, the Electoral Commission has, to date, not accredited any of them. Yet, the Electoral Commission is saying, “We are using our limited resources to do a few talk shows here and there,” and that kind of thing to create awareness.

You put out a call to be supported by the Electoral Commission – and here is the letter signed by the Secretary to the Electoral Commission on the 14th of October. Why was this call put out? It is because the Electoral Commission knows it does not have full capacity across the

country, to do voter education. The election process is a process, like I am saying. It is not just on election day.

I do not know why the Electoral Commission put out this call, many stakeholders applied to do voter education, and it has not given them feedback; it has not accredited them. It is as if to say that the Electoral Commission is sufficient in and of itself, yet it is not. They need to help us understand why.

Mr Speaker, my concerns are: why do we have all these local councillors (LCs), Gombolola Internal Security Officers (GISOs), and District Internal Security Officers (DISOs)? Maybe LCs, yes, but GISO, DISO, and Parish Internal Security Officers (PISO); what role do they have in this? They are unknown, by the way, by most people, and they also do not know most people. This is in contrast to LCs because they know their people. Why are we bringing in all these people?

They are bothering the population, asking them for money; Shs 10,000 and Shs 20,000, if you need a recommendation. People cannot afford this, especially young people. Somebody has just clocked 18, they are still in school, and they are even looking for pocket money because they are going back to school. Now, a DISO or GISO are asking them to give away their pocket money so that they can recommend them. It is not acceptable.

Mr Speaker, there are many Members asking to give information. With your permission, you will guide, sir *-(Interjections)- (Member rose)* Mr Speaker, I am looking at you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we have very many statements that you want us to sort today. Please, just wait for my guidance. Let the Leader of the Opposition finish.

MR SSENYONYI: The Deputy Attorney-General’s statement did not include that element, even to say; you are going to follow up on this matter or task the Electoral Commission. This is because it is happening

all over, and you can hear that it is on both the NRM, and the Opposition sides. People are saying that their voters are asking for money to get recommendations. This is totally unacceptable, and it has got to be nipped in the bud.

Mr Speaker, the process has not commenced in many places, including here in Kampala where the Electoral Commission is headquartered. I am thinking about deep rural places in Abim, Bupadhengo, Moyo, Kabale, and so forth. It is the worst of situations. The Electoral Commission told us that Kampala was given a bit of special attention and that more kits were distributed here, which is also not true.

Mr Speaker, I was given information by one of my colleagues, Hon. Susan Mugabi from Buvuma. In most of these islands, and by the way, not just islands, there is no electricity, so these kits cannot operate. There is no connectivity at all. They are meant to print many forms, but they do not even have where to print them from. However, the Electoral Commission says that the process is moving on smoothly. No, that is not true.

Mr Speaker, it is important that the Government concedes that there is a need for more time for this exercise because we all want it. It is good for all of us and our democracy. Let us increase the number of days because there have been glitches up to date, and in many places, the exercise has not commenced. We need more time for this process to be a free and fair one.

Mr Speaker, for an election to be free and fair, it is not just on the D-Day. It begins with a process. When people feel like they are being disenfranchised - the young people, you are locking them out because of all these different quandaries - that is not a free and fair election. Can we increase the time?

Mr Speaker, I do not know what your guidance is going to be, but I would like to move a motion without notice under Rule 59 of our Rules of Procedure that Parliament urges the Government to extend the duration of the update of the voter registration process by two months.

It is important, and the Government can suggest whichever period. What is important is the need to extend this process - *(Interjections)*- So far, several days have passed, but the process has not commenced in many places.

On 10th February, the Electoral Commission is looking forward to announcing that they have stopped the exercise, yet the kits will not have reached some places. The exercise will not have been carried out. I hope that the Government will find it relevant to extend this process without Parliament having to urge it and push it around. Find it important to extend this exercise and then sort out the sticky issues. Otherwise, you may extend the time but then the sticky issues and complaints remain apparent. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, the Leader of the Opposition. The same motion falls under rule 59(1)(k), and it does not meet the threshold, according to me.

Honourable colleagues, we have had issues which go beyond the Electoral Commission. We have questions from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). You told us that you procured these expensive kits, and they are going to be used. Where are they? Why aren't you deploying them?

We have the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) that said they are going to start this exercise; the kits are ready, and they will help with voter registration. We have very many issues here and there that I believe the Attorney-General will not sit down to answer and comprehend fully.

The problem with these statements, which are provided for under rule 52 - I have only one hour, maximum, and we have already exceeded this maximum.

Honourable colleagues, I refer this statement to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. The committee will meet, among others, NIRA and UBOS. Members who have issues they want to raise can go in, but I am sure that the issues which have been raised here are

universal. I said, among others. I added NIRA, which is under internal affairs, and UBOS, which is under finance.

The Electoral Commission should be the one to explain the role of PISOs and GISOs. How did it allow them in if they were invited? Honourable chairperson, we can do this tomorrow and Thursday and then on Tuesday - because we can debate a report for two to three hours.

Honourable the Leader of the Opposition, this will give us a better resolution. A resolution just “urging” is putting it in someone’s hands to decide. Through the committee report, we can have a recommendation that is very clear for them to extend instead of urging or begging if the committee finds it necessary.

Chairperson of the committee, you have up to Monday to provide us a report, so that on Tuesday, this matter is put on the Order Paper and discussed comprehensively. *(Applause)* You have picked the views that are needed. Next item.

MS OPENDI: Allow me to thank you, Mr Speaker, for getting back to my point. Thank you very much.

LAYING OF PAPERS

(I) REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA DELEGATION TO THE 4TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT, 28TH OCTOBER TO 11TH NOVEMBER 2024 IN MIDRAND, SOUTH AFRICA

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Katuntu. We shall use 10 minutes, maximum.

4.07

MR ABDU KATUNTU (Independent, Bugweri County, Bugweri): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Rule 33(1), I beg to lay on the Table the following documents: the report of the Pan-African Parliament delegation to the

4th Ordinary Session of the Sixth Parliament of PAP; Resolutions and recommendations of the Ordinary Session of the Sixth Parliament; the Strategic plan of the Pan-African Parliament, a model law on the right to nationality and eradication of statelessness in Africa, a model law on labour migration in Africa, and the Pan-African Parliamentary calendar of activities 2025.

Mr Speaker, I beg to lay.

I will just give a small executive summary. At the Fourth Ordinary Sitting of the Sixth Parliament of Pan-African Parliament (PAP), which was held in Midrand South Africa under the theme “*Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century: Building Resilient Education Systems for increased access to Inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.*”

The official opening was graced by His Excellency Sergeyenko, Chairperson of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus. He emphasised the importance of cultivating strategic partnerships between Africa and his country, particularly focusing on education.

The Hon. Dr Fatimetou Habib of Mauritania was elected as the Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament during that session.

Mr Speaker, there were around seven key milestones, which were all laid on the Table but the following were the resolutions:

1. The adoption of the 2024-2028 strategic plan of the Pan-African Parliament;
2. Resolution on the endorsement of the draft model on the right to nationality and the eradication of statelessness in Africa;
3. Resolution and endorsement of the draft model law on labour and migration in Africa;
4. Resolution on the legal and policy framework paper for the draft model law on the implementation of decisions of African human rights bodies;

5. Resolution on peace and security in Africa;
6. Resolution of the Pan-African Parliament's participation in the United Nations Summit for the future; and
7. Resolution on the alignment of the rules of procedure of the Pan-African Parliament to the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament protocol following the violations outlined in the legal opinion of the Office of the Legal Counsel and the Directive of the Executive Counsel.

Mr Speaker, these were the recommendations. The details are within the report.

1. Recommendation on the joint seminar on Agenda 2063: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children;
2. Recommendation on the advocacy mission to promote the ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons; The Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security;
3. Recommendation on the state and financing of the African Union;
4. Recommendation on the report of the African Risk Capacity Agents;
5. Recommendation on the state of African integration and
6. Recommendation on the state of industrialisation in Africa.

The session was concluded on 17 November with a call for members to report the session's outcome to their National Parliaments, and ensure the PAP resolutions, recommendations, and declarations are translated into meaningful action.

Mr Speaker, we shall wait for your appointment for which day to debate our report as provided for under Rule 33(3). I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Katuntu, I have seen that your report should be under rule 38 because when you referred me to Rule 33(3), it would require me to allocate time, but on the Pan-African Parliament, rule 38(3) states that "*debate shall not ensue.*" This means that the report should be taken to the library for Members to read and get information once they need it.

I really want to thank you very much, for the job well done and the feedback we have as a leadership that our delegation is doing a fantastic job at the Pan-African Parliament. Thank you. Next item?

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
QUESTION ON A MILITARY COURT
MARTIAL AND THE RIGHT TO POLICE
BOND

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Attorney-General?

Yes, Hon. Basalirwa?

4.13

MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri): Mr Speaker, once again I would like to seek your guidance. While Hon. Katuntu made the presentation, he articulated in his opening remarks that "*This report is being made pursuant to Rule 33.*" Rule 33 has provision for debate and it talks about "Laying of reports of Parliamentary delegations abroad."

Rule 38, which you seemed to guide on limits and emphasizes the laying of decisions of the African Union by the Minister responsible for foreign affairs, relating to biannual reports.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, it should have been Rule 37. Good clarification.

MR BASALIRWA: Okay, thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: However, under Rule 37, debate shall not ensue.

MR BASALIRWA: Mr Speaker, what you needed to clarify for record purposes is the presentation of the reports. What I heard was that Hon. Katuntu Abdu presented under Rule 33. That was why he ended by saying- because Rule 33 has a provision for debate. There is a need to reconcile for record purposes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: He can sort that.

MR BASALIRWA: We were ready to debate it.

MR KATUNTU: Mr Speaker, it is true that under Rule 37, the Pan-African parliamentary delegation report may be laid, and debate shall not ensue. In our opinion, as a delegation, we thought it was unfair to have our reports never debated by this House. We wanted to hide under Rule 33 as a delegation to allow this House the opportunity to debate our report.

At some point, I think we will have to reconcile to see whether it is possible to have our reports debated. It is of no use for the Pan-African Parliamentary delegation to go and just get the reports, lay them, and people go to the library. Therefore, if they are presented here, I think they could be enriching to the delegation if they hear from the House. We shall reconcile those rules since we are even in the process of amending the rules. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Basalirwa wanted clarification. You can amend the rule under which you presented the report. The shortcut we found was not right. Do you think you can report under Rule 37?

MR KATUNTU: Let us report under Rule 37. I said, you really wanted to bypass it. The matter has been laid on the Table and debate shall not ensue.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That was noted.

Attorney-General, you had already been called.

4.17

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. There are a number of questions that were raised by Hon. Nambeshe, with respect to the Military Court Martial, and others, which I need to respond to. There are three in total.

Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge receipt of a letter from the Clerk to Parliament referenced 14 January 2025, by which I was given a copy of the *Hansard*. This is because I had indicated to Parliament that Hon. Atkins Katusabe, who sought to remind Parliament, as a follow-up to these questions, had not clearly understood what he wanted.

Therefore, Parliament did the needful and gave me a copy of the *Hansard* dated 9 January 2025 – (*Interjection*) - I do understand English but it is his accent that was a bit troubling. It is easy for me to understand my colleague, Hon. Asumani Basalirwa.

There were three questions:

1. The jurisdiction of the Court Martial over civilians;
2. Whether the Court Martial qualifies as a court of judicature; and
3. The alleged unconstitutional threat to ban the right to bond.

Question 1: The Court Martial's jurisdiction over civilians

The matter of the Court Martial's jurisdiction over civilians is pending determination before the Supreme Court in a case known as, Attorney-General v. Kabaziguruka, which is an appeal to the Supreme Court. These same questions have been raised before the General Court Martial during the current hearing of the case against Col Dr Kiiza Besigye. The same questions have been raised in the Constitutional Court; the same questions have been raised in the East African Court of Appeal.

We have received a judgment notice from the Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court informing us that the judgement in Supreme

Court Constitutional Appeal No.2 of 2021: Attorney-General v. Hon. Kabaziguruka Michael is scheduled to be delivered on the 31st of January 2025, which is this Friday. The Supreme Court's decision in this matter will conclusively address the issue of the General Court Martial's jurisdiction over civilians.

We recommend, therefore, that we respect the sub judice rule and avoid discussing a matter that is currently before the court.

The second question is whether the Court Martial is a court of judicature. The Court Martial is established under Article 129(1)(d) and Article 110 of the Constitution.

Under Article 129 as amended, it states:

“The judicial power of Uganda shall be exercised by Courts of Judicature, which shall consist of –

- a) the Supreme Court;
- b) Court of Appeal;
- c) the High Court; and
- d) such subordinate courts as Parliament may, by law, establish, including Kadhi courts for marriage, divorce, inheritance of properties, and guardianship, as may be prescribed by Parliament.”

Article 210 of the Constitution provides that: “Parliament shall make laws regulating the Uganda people's Defense Forces and in particular providing for –
(a) the organs and structures of the Uganda People's Defence Forces...”

This mandate implicitly includes the establishment of courts, such as the General Court Martial.

By passing the UPDF Act, this honourable Parliament established the General Court Martial as a court of judicature.

Question 3: The alleged and constitutional threat to ban the right to bond.

It should be noted that His Excellency, the President, in his New Year's message, stated, among others, that:

“I have raised the issue of bail with His Lordship the Chief Justice and I have banned the issue of police bond. Any police personnel that gives a police bond to a village thief, when the case is ready for trial, will be held accountable. The handling of village thieves legally but firmly is good for villages and also the thieves themselves.”

The implication of the above statement is not necessarily to ban police bond but to emphasise to the police that once a case is ready for trial, then there is no need to give bond to the suspects.

It should be noted that the President's statement strictly referred to cases ready for trial. What this means is that the stage of investigations is complete and the case is ready for hearing, and as such the suspect is already on remand.

The President's statement was a clarion call to the Justice, Law, and Order sector to ensure that they use their discretion jealously in granting bond.

In conclusion, the President's statement, as analysed in its full context, is not a threat to abolish the right to police bond but rather a call for caution and greater accountability in its application. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Attorney-General. Honourable colleagues, out of our push for this statement, the issue of Dr Besigye's condition came up and we said the committee should go and visit him in Luzira. The committee report, whose deadline was today, is ready. I propose that we also receive the committee report and then debate them at once since they are related. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE VISIT TO
LUZIRA MAXIMUM PRISON TO ASSESS
THE PRISON CONDITIONS OF COL (RTD)
DR KIIZA BESIGYE AND HAJJI OBED
LUTALE KAMULEGEYA

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights? As he comes, let us get a point of order.

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, this House has two sides; the Opposition and the Government. It is always with your powers that we determine whether you are giving us free sitting or not. Here, we have a Member seated on our side; he is conducting a conversation but the best practice is, if you want to talk to somebody, you call him out, and you talk, as we proceed.

Is the honourable Deputy Chairperson for the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs in order to come to our side, squeeze the chairperson - president, and disorganise you, Mr Speaker? You are conducting business, and he is talking, yet there are a number of seats on this side. Is he in order?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I have seen this happening on several occasions. I think I need to remind you of Rule 83(1)(b), where Members are not supposed to move unnecessarily. I can declare a by-election in your constituency now because you have crossed the Floor. *(Laughter)* So, I should forgive you now, go back to your seat, Hon. Linus - or else the Clerk can draft for me a letter and I declare a by-election from here because the Member has crossed the Floor. Thank you. But colleagues, let us avoid - I have seen it on several occasions, Members moving unnecessarily. One day I will invoke that Rule.

MR SSEWUNGU: I have been here - we were trained. Many Members even come to you - When a Member of Parliament is meeting the Speaker or facing or entering, we have to give respect to the Chair-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You know, you come bowing.

MR SSEWUNGU: You bow, but for me, I feel embarrassed. The way Members come to you, others walking; how do we give sanctity to this institution? I pray that that should be given first priority. Whenever I am passing before you, I bow. Otherwise -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Jonathan Odur, are you listening? *(Laughter)*

MR SSEWUNGU: And the dress code -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is one of the most disciplined Members.

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, the dress code is dying. You ruled one time here but people are dressing the way they want. If we want, we should amend the rule on the dress code, and say I can come with my gumboots the way I want from my farm; but decorum is key here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, let us save time. Time is not our best ally. Let the Attorney-General, Yes, Hon. Basalirwa. Do you have a procedural issue?

MR BASALIRWA: Mr Speaker, I thank you. There were two directives that we were given by the presiding officer on the issue of Dr Besigye. The first time, the issue was raised by Hon. Ssemujju Nganda, and I was among the people who made supplementary comments, and the Attorney-General was asked to present a report. Subsequently, when there was no report, the Opposition Chief Whip, equally raised issues, supplemented by the Hon. Katusabe.

Listening to the learned Attorney-General, his response was limited to the comments that had been made by the Opposition Chief Whip. The earlier issues that were raised are omitted in the statements by the Attorney-General.

Even the report- your guidance to the Human Rights Committee did not cover the issues that were first raised by Hon. Ssemujju and subsequently other Members of the committee.

Mr Speaker, I just wanted your guidance in light of the fact that the statement by the learned Attorney-General omits some of the issues that had been raised there and seeks to focus on only the issues that had been raised by the Chief Opposition Whip. The presiding officer directed the Attorney-General twice, in as far as the report is concerned.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Attorney-General, do you want to respond to that?

4.31

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Mr Speaker, I want to state categorically clear. My response is based on a copy of the *Hansard*; what is written on the *Hansard* as it was given to me. There was nothing deliberate that I intended to leave out anything, okay? But if you feel that something else was left out, we can refer to that particular *Hansard*. I will apply for it and make extra responses.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, now, just let us make it easy. Honourable Attorney-General, the *Hansard* was referring to issues raised by Hon. Katusabe because you asked for the *Hansard* -, because you said you did not understand his submission; so, you wanted the record.

Now, for the other people, you did not say that you did not understand. So, we knew you had picked the issues and you would respond to them. Hon. Jonathan.

4.32

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank You, Mr Speaker. Many times, the Front Bench commits here, and in the spirit of the House, we do concede when they request that they will come after two weeks or a month. One such commitment that came from the Deputy Attorney-General, was when I asked the question here on the performance of the Judiciary, which came from the report released by the Judiciary stating that the Supreme Court was able to perform at only 15 per cent.

This means that about 85 per cent of decisions expected from them were not delivered. The same with the Court of Appeal that had performed around 20 or 25 per cent; the best was the High Court at 35 per cent.

However, that translated into about 80,000 cases that are before court and those of a criminal nature means that we have people detained which accounts for the congestion in the prisons, and accounts for a number of all these things. The Deputy Attorney-General undertook that he would come here with a full report accounting for those cases.

If I may cite one example, Mr Speaker: There is a gentleman called Robert Byaruhanga who has spent 28 years in Luzira Maximum Prison without trial; 28 years!

I know many people who are charged with murder and capital offences that have been sentenced to 15 to 20 years. So, that tells you already that even if the person is tried eventually, the sentence that will be passed by the court may actually be five or 10 years. So, how do you then compensate that person for their 20 years that you have wasted? And that is just one case amongst so many. So, he had undertaken, I think, the period that has passed, to bring a comprehensive report detailing cases that are pending at the Supreme Court and what the issues are.

I raised that issue because this Parliament, in my opinion, had done very good justice to the Judiciary. When we passed The Administration of Judiciary Bill into law to make them comfortable to do their work, when we approved the number of judges and judicial officers, we expected speedy and timely disposal of cases, so that those who are guilty are judged as such, and then they are sentenced. Then, those who are not are removed.

If you look at the statistics, out of the 80,000 plus people who are in prisons, more than 50 to 60,000 are actually on remand. What happens when they are judged or when they are found not to be guilty? That is the issue.

Therefore, we do not have to come every time to remind the Deputy Attorney-General and I think it speaks to what Hon. Asuman is talking about. My understanding of Parliamentary procedures seems to be different. I expected the frontbench to be serious, to be supported by their team, and that when they make commitments here, they are people to remind them.

That is why, Mr Speaker, you have so many procedures reminding you, or I have to come and line in your office just to remind you that Sir, there was that issue I raised a month ago and it has not been answered, can you put it on the Order Paper? That is why the business of this House cannot move -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR ODUR: So, if they could be cautioned and probably guided, so that the commitments they make here, they are there for them so that we do not clog this House so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I totally agree with you Hon. Jonathan. And I have been emphasising, honourable colleagues, that we do not clog the Order Paper. But, sometimes you bring responses already overtaken by time, and all that - you know, we end up having issues. Honourable Attorney-General, these other issues.

MR KAFUZI: Mr Speaker, that may have been an oversight because I really acted based on what was raised then. I am going to write to the Clerk so that I get a copy of that other *Hansard* so that it can guide me on what was actually raised. But also, be mindful that if it falls within what is expected to come out of court, I will leave that out and respond to that which is not. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, it is okay. We know issues when they are subjudice. You come here when you are limited, you say subjudice, and we also pronounce ourselves on that. That is number one.

Number two, I think, let us not wait. I am going to instruct the Clerk to write to you because

I know what they do. The practice under the Office of the Government Chief Whip has been to pick these issues, and you write to the minister responsible to come and respond because this is what coordination is all about.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, I request that you discuss this with the technical officers in the Office of the Government Chief Whip. They will make it very easy for your Front Bench. The issues are always picked, you write and also give us copies, so that we avoid this situation.

Honourable colleagues, we have this report. Why don't we go to the statements? [*Hon. Katusabe rose*]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Atkins?

4.38

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It pains me to see the honourable Attorney-General making a fool out of this House, with due respect.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But the honourable Attorney-General said he does not understand you. For him to understand you, I have to deliver a *Hansard* to him. (*Laughter*)

MR KATUSABE: You see, that is the foolery I am talking about. (*Laughter*) Mr Speaker, it depends on the gravity of the matter. You are talking about life and death.

When he went to the Clerk to Parliament, he was served with a copy of the *Hansard* and he called me out of the chamber. I respectfully went to the Attorney-General. We sat, and he had a paper copy. It shocks me to the bone, to see the Attorney-General not addressing the matter.

Mr Speaker, some of us have been to court. We know what Dr Besigye is going through. I was seated next to his sister, Dr Olive Kobusingye. The lady cried all through the court session. That is the matter we are talking about, Mr Deputy Attorney-General (DAG). Be kind to the family.

Dr Besigye may not be a relative, but be kind to his son, his wife, his sisters and brothers, and the entire country, especially some of us that believe in him. (*Applause*) This cannot be a joking matter. You come here and just pass time, as if we are here to serve at your pleasure. We are not entertainers, Mr DAG. We are not.

Mr Speaker, as I cede ground, please let him commit and it should not be beyond tomorrow. We have been waiting for that report. You have the *Hansard*; you have no excuses. This is not a House for excuses. Enough is enough. We want to see that report tomorrow, Mr DAG, with due respect.

In conclusion, surely from today moving forward, I do not want to put it before you, Mr Attorney-General, that being a Deputy Attorney-General does not change who you are; it reveals who you are. I ask you to, please, for one minute, have a human heart. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I do not know why we have gone personal. I think we were moving very well but the challenge I am now getting, honourable colleagues, is that we stand up on a point of procedure, and then we start submitting substantively on items that we have here.

Why don't we receive the report of the Human Rights Committee, I open it up, Hon. Namboze, and you debate?

MR KATUSABE: But we need a commitment, Mr Speaker, that this report he was supposed to address himself or pay attention to will be here tomorrow without fail. That is my request. This is from family, the global community, and our fellow citizens.

We cannot allow you to just sit in this House, looking at the Front Bench, making a joke out of this institution that you preside over, Mr Speaker. We are not going to allow that. That is your constitutional office; you are the presiding officer. We are not going to allow people like my honourable brother to make a joke of or fool this House; not on our watch, Mr DAG.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I think where we have reached, I am going to direct the Clerk that if anyone picks a microphone without my permission and submits, that submission shall be expunged from the record of Parliament. Maybe then, we will have order. Otherwise, people are going to keep grabbing microphones and then the ones who are behaving will ask, "What about us?"

Otherwise, anyone who has a microphone in front of them can easily grab it and express their opinions. However, I request that we calm down. We sent the committee to Luzira and it has brought its report. Hon. Deputy Attorney-General?

MR KAFUZI: Mr Speaker, I find that to be more or less a personal attack; an attack on my person as an individual and character. I request that it should be expunged. If he has anything personal with me, we can handle it outside Parliament. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, the tone is a little bit different from the language. I do not know. Hon. Atkins, we shall have a talk in the office. I want to understand why you are behaving the way you are doing these days.

Sometimes, I see situations and decide to keep quiet. I leave you to talk and in the end, I keep quiet. I think we are brewing a storm in a teacup. We are listening to each other. There is a report of the committee. I suggest that we go to that report.

Today, I am so lenient; I want to be as lenient as possible. It will be up to you. It is 4.00 p.m. and I want to adjourn at 5.00 p.m. I see the time you are wasting. So, if you decide to use your time this way, then at a certain time, I will adjourn, and we will have concluded the matter. Chairperson of the committee?

4.45

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (Mr Fox Odoi-Oywelowo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Permit me to lay on the Table the following documents:

1. A report of the Committee on Human Rights;
2. A minority report attached to the report of the Committee on Human Rights;
3. Minutes of two meetings held in respect of this subject; and
4. Written submissions of the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the Uganda Prisons Services.

I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, permit me to present a report of the Committee on Human Rights on the visit to Luzira Maximum Security Prison to assess the prison conditions of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and Hajji Obeid Lutale Kamulegeya.

With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, may I skip page 1, which has the introduction? It also has the Members of Parliament, who visited Luzira. Pages 4 and 5 have the legal framework. Page 6 has the objectives of the field visit and methodology –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, we can do it from 2.0, on page 6. Objectives, methodology – we need to know how you went and...

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: Mr Speaker, the objectives were:

1. To visit Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and Hajji Obeid Lutale Kamulegeya to establish their detention conditions.
2. To assess the Human Rights conditions of Luzira Maximum Security Prison.

Methodology

The committee;

- i) Conducted a tour of Luzira Maximum Security Prison.
- ii) Held a meeting with the Regional Prisons Commander for Kampala Extra and the officers in charge of Luzira Maximum Security Prison.
- iii) Interacted with Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and Hajji Obeid Lutale Kamulegeya.
- iv) Held meetings with the Attorney-General and Uganda Prisons Service.

- v) Received written submissions from Uganda Human Rights Commission.
- vi) Reviewed the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Findings

This section of the report presents the findings of the committee through the aforementioned methodology.

4.1 Visit to Luzira Maximum Security Prison to assess the physical conditions of the prison

The committee visited the prison and interacted with the prisoners, who raised the following issues.

4.1.1 Dr Kiiza Besigye's issues in prison

Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye informed the committee that he feels safer in Luzira prison compared to other detention facilities. He commended the prison authorities for their professionalism and for ensuring that inmates' rights are upheld and protected. He also added that the prison doctors visit him daily and he is allowed to see his personal doctor whenever the need arises.

Dr Kiiza Besigye noted that he has access to adequate food, with three authorised suppliers providing his needs. Similarly, his co-accused, Hajji Obeid Lutale, has three authorised suppliers providing his food. They cook their own meals, for security reasons.

It should be noted that whereas the Uganda Prison Service provides three meals a day for other prisoners, Dr Kiiza Besigye informed the committee that he refused to eat the food provided by the prison, for fear of being poisoned.

He acknowledged significant improvements in prison conditions over the years. Systems have been computerised, and the facility is better maintained than it used to be. He further confirmed that there had been a remarkable improvement between 2016 and the present day, with the prison currently fitted with running water, waterborne toilets, the abolition

of the “bucket system” in Luzira Maximum Security Prison, and a fresh coat of paint had been applied to the walls, which were all commendable developments.

Dr Besigye, however, highlighted some personal concerns;

- i) He is detained in a highly restricted section, which he described as “a prison within a prison,” requiring passage through five gates to reach his cell. He expressed fear for his safety, particularly as he is held alone in a cell with a toilet, and a shower, within the northern wing which accommodates a total of 18 prisoners;
- ii) He shared concerns about unexplained late-night activities in the prison, such as padlocks being opened and closed without anyone entering his cell. He fears being poisoned or harmed in such an environment;
- iii) Dr Besigye lamented that he is not allowed to interact with fellow inmates and the rules applied to him are more restrictive than those applied to other prisoners; and
- iv) He is not allowed to attend prayers with other inmates in the prayer houses within the prison.

5.0 Observations and recommendations of the committee

Food for prisoners

The committee observed that the food provided by the Uganda Prison Service to the prisoners lacks variety and does not meet the minimum standards of a balanced diet as provided for in the law on account of the limited budgetary provisions.

To mitigate this, the Commissioner-General informed the committee that Uganda Prisons Service allows inmates access to their own non-cooked food supplies from external sources.

The committee recommends that the Government should provide adequate funding to Uganda Prisons Service to exploit the prison farms for purposes of producing food crops for the provision of nutrition to prisoners.

Conditions of detention

The committee observed that interventions have been instituted to improve the living conditions of prisoners in Luzira Maximum Security Prison, as confirmed by Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, who stated that there had been remarkable improvements. The reports of running water, waterborne toilets, the abolition of the “bucket system” in Luzira Maximum Prison, and the fresh coat of paint are commendable.

The committee recommends that the “bucket system”, as far as possible, should be eliminated from all facilities in the country. The Government should increase funding to Uganda Prisons Service to facilitate the construction of waterborne facilities in all prisons in the country.

Congestion

The committee noted that the rate of occupancy of Luzira Maximum Security Prison exceeds 500 per cent since the facility was designed to hold 600 prisoners, but currently holds 3,292 inmates.

The committee recommends that the Government should prioritise setting up new prison facilities or expanding the existing ones to address the issue of congestion.

The Government should take practical steps through the Judiciary to urgently address the issue of case backlog.

Separation and classification

The committee noted that the current incarceration of convicts, the condemned and prisoners on remand in the same facility results in prisoners on remand, who should be presumed innocent until proved guilty, being treated as convicts, whereas, as much as possible, their rights should not be severely curtailed to the same extent.

The committee recommends that the three categories of prisoners should be housed in

different prison facilities to ensure that the rights of prisoners on remand are not abused since they are innocent until proven guilty.

Prolonged pre-trial detention

The committee observed that pre-trial detention periods in Uganda range from days to decades with some cases taking as long as 28 years in the judicial system without resolution. It is well elaborated that justice delayed is simply justice denied. Notably, some of these cases are awaiting ministers' orders as they have an element of mental illness.

The committee recommends that the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs should take appropriate measures to address impediments to access to justice.

As I conclude, the committee appreciates the contributions of the Uganda Prisons Service, the Attorney-General, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, and the members of the committee who turned up in large numbers to attend to this very important function. The committee prays that this report is considered and the recommendations therein adopted. I beg to move.

Mr Speaker, as I stated, four of our colleagues exercised their rights under Rule 205 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Uganda to author a minority report stating three areas of dissent. With your permission, may I invite Hon. Jonathan Odur to present the minority report?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Jonathan.

5.00

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The first area of dissent is the safety of Dr Kiiza Besigye, known as "Uganda Remand 1867 of 2024 - Fear of being killed in prison".

The committee was informed by Dr Besigye that he is in fear of being killed in prison through poisoning. His biggest fear is that the State being the complainant in this case, the

persecutor, and has the command and control of the Uganda prisons, puts him in danger. To this fact, the Commissioner-General of Uganda Prisons Services confirmed knowledge of the fears of Dr Besigye and stated that it has put the prisons authorities in a precarious situation, having a prisoner under them who fears being killed by them.

The second area of dissent is the opening of two out of the four security locks to access Uganda Remand, 1867 of 2024 – Rtd Col. Dr Kiiza Besigye

He informed the committee of an incident where deep in the night, to be exact, after midnight, two of the four doors were opened. This scared him into shouting, and the people opening retreated. He sought an explanation, and three different versions of events were told to him.

The first is that there were some items forgotten within his detention facility.

Secondly, he was told that the opening of the doors was because some padlocks had not been locked so they had returned to lock it. The third explanation was that it is a routine inspection by the prison authorities to come into the night and inspect whether the prisoners are inside. This made him fear that the contradiction was not justified.

Point number three of dissent is the solitary confinement of Uganda Remand 1867 of 2024

It was the submission of Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye that he was being detained alone and was not allowed to interact with other prisoners including attending prayers on Sunday with the rest. This is contrary to Section 57(c) of the Prisons Act, 2006.

The Commissioner-General of Uganda Prisons Services informed the committee that the isolation of Rtd Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is, first, for his safety. Also, Dr Kiiza Besigye has the capacity to excite the prisoners, which might spiral out of control.

The Uganda Human Rights Commission in its written submission to the committee noted that solitary confinement, when used excessively under harsh conditions, can be considered a violation of human rights due to its detrimental effects on the mental health and well-being of a person. In fact, Dr Kiiza Besigye complained of being in a difficult mental health situation, which cannot be handled by the medical personnel at Luzira Prison.

Point of dissent number four is the confiscation of the Christmas greetings to Ugandans

Uganda Remand 1867 of 2024 – Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, wrote a Christmas greeting and message to Ugandans and it was confiscated for having two words; freedom and justice. There was no plausible justification by the prison authorities for detaining a message, confiscating it and eventually sentencing that message to death and the execution of the message was done.

Point No. 5, which is the last in dissent is the denial of access to advocates to Dr Kiiza Besigye

The committee learnt that Counsel Lukwago Erias, advocate to Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, was denied access to his client on a critical day when the Court Martial was sitting the next day. The lawyers had papers, applications and affidavits that needed the signature of the accused persons.

The Commissioner-General informed the committee that he denied the lawyer, Lukwago Erias access to Dr Kiiza Besigye since that same day, there were Members of Parliament who were visiting Dr Besigye. He could not allow both the lawyer and the MPs to access him.

Recommendations

The minority recommends that:

- 1) Parliament takes keen interest in the fears of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye of being killed in prison by poison.

- 2) The trial of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and subsequent detention in Luzira Prison be terminated and any trial be held under the civilian authorities.

I beg to report.

This report is signed by Hon. Derrick Nyeko, Hon. Flavia Kalule Nabagabe, Hon. Francis Zaake and myself. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Jonathan. Honourable colleagues, we have received two reports. Members of the committee are constrained to debate the same. These are our findings; so we should not take that long. I am picking 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20 and 21. I have picked you so follow each other in that order.

What we can do - I hope the Clerk has helped me to note – is that we can mix.

5.06

MS JOSEPHINE BEBONA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bundibugyo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee chairperson for the report and some of the good recommendations. I know this report does not only concern Luzira. Some of the things he has mentioned are happening elsewhere and I know the committee has moved to other prisons and saw what is happening there. Therefore, some of the recommendations should be taken up for action but the common one is congestion, which is in all prisons in the country.

Secondly, is the prolonged pre-trial detention. The Attorney-General has already talked about it and it is a very big concern that prisoners stay long without trial, which also contributes to the congestion. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, on these issues, I saw the reaction. There is a matter that has been settled, from what I see, because the majority report touched on it and the minority report did not disagree. There has been a perception that Dr Besigye is denied food. I think that is a settled matter now.

He appointed three people who could take non-cooked food for him. If you are not among those three - the public should know because they can go to Luzira carrying food and all that - if you are not among the three who were nominated your food will not be allowed in and the same applies to *Hajji* Obed Kamulegeya. I want us to shape our issues very well. We know the issues that were raised.

5.08

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to confirm that position, that any member of the public who would like to support Dr Besigye is free as long as the food goes through those three, because once you are in prison, you are limited and support is required. It is not like the rest should not.

However, it should also be on the record. Initially, the main point raised here was that Dr Besigye was denied food. It is true, he confirmed to us that when he went to prison, at first he was allowed to access his food and prepare. Then at some point, the Uganda Prisons Service changed the rules and said we will not allow you to prepare your food. What we shall allow is that you give us money and we buy for you from the staff canteen or you send us outside and we buy for you.

That is linked to his fear and he refused to eat. What ordinarily would be a hunger strike. Eventually, the prisons administration reconciled and agreed that yes, you can now resume and get your supplies, but because you have accused us that you are not safe here, we want three people to be the ones to bring you food. Therefore, that matter has been settled, although it was a concern.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Wakooli?

5.10

MR GODFREY WAKOOLI (NRM, Butiru County, Manafwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This country needs to know the truth. I was among the people who went to Luzira. The reasons given by Dr Besigye for not eating food

and the Uganda Prisons Services answered and said, "We were receiving many visitors bringing food to Dr Besigye" and they were worried.

They said it was just an oversight. There was a point of agreement on whether they should continue bringing food for Dr Besigye or he should buy food from the prison canteen because they wanted to safeguard his life. They said, "As Uganda Prisons Service, we are not going to allow all these people we do not trust to bring food for Dr Besigye". Therefore, the only idea was for him to buy food from their safe stores.

Dr Besigye was also adamant. He said, "I cannot trust the jailer. Therefore, I can only designate my person who will be supplying me with the food." That is what he said. Therefore, for you to say that they were forcing him to buy food from the prison canteen is not true. We need to tell Ugandans the truth other than to excite the nation.

Mr Speaker, the gentleman was very honest. Even though our honourable colleagues from the Opposition were pushing him to say otherwise, Dr Besigye was honourable enough to tell the committee the truth and the whole truth. Even the issue of him staying in a single room is not true.

These are people like you who have rented, you have an apartment and one of you is staying here, another one there. It is not true that he is staying in one room and he is put alone there. He even gets access to worship, a Bishop attends to him religiously. I think it is important to tell the country the truth.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, apart from the tone, you presented the same. The only issue I heard from there was what Hon. Wakooli said that it is insinuated that Dr Besigye was being forced to buy food from the canteen.

However, from the records I have, I interacted with Members on both sides, the opposition and the NRM who went to Luzira. You are

collaborating on information, and we are moving very well on these issues.

Hon. Christine, then Hon. Niwagaba. I am speaking from here and there.

5.13

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I would like to thank the Government on the note that Dr Besigye made a statement on improvement in the conditions in prison. It means that the effort of Parliament has been considered. I also support one particular recommendation for the removal of the bucket system.

I would like to agree that in some of our areas, the bucket system is no longer there. How I pray that it cuts across the country. I thank the Uganda Prisons Service leadership for the better handling techniques. When we look at a situation where Dr Besigye is allowed to see his personal doctor when it is necessary, that is okay because there is no aspect of imposing doctors on him.

Therefore, my prayer is that the improvement in Luzira Prisons should cut across the entire country in relation to the provision of water services. Thank you.

5.15

MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndurwa County East, Kabale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will respond to the two reports and begin with the one from the Attorney-General. I invite the Attorney-General to read Article 129 of the Constitution and see whether the reference to subordinate courts includes the reference to military courts or military tribunals, as they are called, vis-a-vis Article 210 of the Constitution.

If you applied both the strict interpretation rule and the *ejusdem generis* rule, you would import the provisions of Article 210 to Article 129 and I will respectfully disagree with you that military courts are envisaged as subordinate courts, under Article 129.

Secondly, with respect to the police bond, thank you for the clarification, but you need to be very clear and advise the policemen who have now taken the presidential directive on banning the giving of bonds because giving a bond is police discretion. And you know the constitutional timeframe of bringing suspects to courts the weaknesses in investigations and the like. Therefore, you must be very clear that yes, if you are to deny a person bond, make sure that you produce that person in court within 48 hours.

Lastly, on the Minority and the Majority reports of the Human Rights Committee, essentially they both agree, but there are two areas; one is the idea of solitary confinement of a prisoner, especially who is on remand, because solitary confinement is literally a punishment. It is actually serving a sentence. The solitary confinement of a prisoner on remand, to me, is illegal, it amounts to torture and must be condemned. The prison officers must be cautioned and told in explicit terms that they should not be confining a prisoner who is on remand to solitary confinement.

Secondly and lastly, wrong pre-trial remands. Mr Speaker, we have allocated substantial monies to the Judiciary, which has actually been over-decentralised. I even pity some of the recruited judicial officers who have been posted to subcounties without any facilities.

Unfortunately, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), which deals with people in prisons, has not been given matching resources to recruit staff. This is an area where the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should take up to either halt the further expansion of the Judiciary, until we match the human resources in the Office of the DPP, or do away with the Judiciary in some of the areas.

Part of the explanation as to why we have prisoners on remand for these long periods is largely because the Office of the DPP is not as facilitated as the Judiciary. However, we also need to caution the Judiciary because there are provisions in the Constitution where you can

release people on their own cognisance after they have spent the mandatory period in prison without trial.

The Judiciary is not using that opportunity or discretion. We really need to cut down the number of prisoners on remand in prison who have not been tried. A person being in prison for 28 years, honestly? Then you sentence him after? No, we need something done.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: By the way, on that issue, I forgot, I do not - well, the presiding officer had already pronounced that the Attorney-General responds, but I think these are some of the issues which the committee should go and look at.

For example, someone in prison for 28 years on remand? It just shook me and it can happen to any of us - 28 years? I do not know which crime we would have committed or which sentence that person would get.

Procedurally, let me get the opinion of my colleagues here. I am still trying to get an opinion from my colleagues - No, I am on something different, which is someone in prison for 28 years. You are talking about Dr Besigye who went there yesterday – we are talking about 28 years.

Honourable Chairperson, Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline? Is it on that same person of 28 years?

5.21

MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju): He is not just on remand for 28 years but he has never appeared in court -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: For 28 years?

MR MWIJUKYE: You can be on remand whilst appearing in court, but this very one - they are actually two; 28, and 16 years respectively, and both of them have never appeared in court. They are just waiting for the minister's order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, because you see - yes, let the Attorney-General speak before the Chairperson of the Committee on Rules, Discipline and Privileges - I seek my guidance.

5.21

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When we appeared before the Committee on Human Rights earlier today, I appeared together with the Commissioner-General of Prisons, and some of these issues were raised.

We agreed that we are going to take two days, engage with the leadership of prisons, get all the necessary information, and see the next step. We either ask for an automatic release or advise accordingly. Nonetheless, in two days, we will be able to get back.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you have agreed upon two days, can you update the House on Tuesday, over the same?

MR KAFUUZI: Yes, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable colleagues, let us not take it as if the minister has got only two people on remand because this came from the House itself. I am sure they must have given more information and there are more people.

MR KAFUUZI: Mr Speaker, among the issues they raised was that some had been there awaiting the minister's orders; those who are deemed mentally unstable and have been waiting. However, we now need to engage with the commissioner and I believe -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, this matter – Hon. Katuntu, I had wanted your guidance but with the submission of the Attorney-General, I have got a true picture.

The Attorney-General has said that they have agreed that within two days, they should sort out this matter. I am saying, two days starting

tomorrow and Thursday; they even have an allowance of Friday and Monday.

Then on Tuesday next week, the Attorney-General updates the House on the status of prisoners of that category and what they have done about it. Then we can carry it from there. Can we continue with the debate? Hon. Katuntu?

5.23

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND DISCIPLINE

(Mr Abdu Katuntu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. As you know, I do not always rise up on such issues but we seem to be dealing with a systematic problem; it is not about Luzira.

The learned Attorney-General should be talking about the entire prisons service. *(Applause)* We might be thinking it is Luzira, but somewhere in Mitooma, there, in a prison, is somebody who has not received justice for 10 or 20 years.

Therefore, this issue is not only about the Uganda Prisons Service but it is also about the Judiciary and the Directorate of Public Prosecution. If you have investigated a matter and you have a suspect or an accused person and you have not prosecuted him for 20 years, then this is something that should attract further investigation, including a judicial commission of inquiry. It is not only illegal, but it is certainly unconstitutional.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda demands for a fair, speedy trial – It is a constitutional command. How can 20 years - you know, somebody has been arrested and is now begging you to be prosecuted but he begs for 20 years saying, “Please prosecute me”.

We cannot sit here as legislators - not these guys who put on wigs as judges - to say they are dispensing a system of justice, which keeps somebody in jail for 20 years without due process of the law.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, as the Attorney-General comes after the days you have given him, I think he should be able to look at the

entire prisons service and give us statistics. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we are diverting our debate. We had an issue; so, let us remain focused on it. Attorney-General?

MR KAFUZI: Mr Speaker, in light of what my senior, Hon. Katuntu has said, the Commissioner-General for Prisons has already shared a list so we are going to look at it -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Across the whole country?

MR KAFUZI: Yes, across the whole country. I think that should also go a long way in answering what Hon. Odur was saying earlier. We will report back on Tuesday. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Attorney-General, as you report back, someone slept on the job which resulted in very serious and bad consequences. It is unacceptable; 28 years?

Firstly, who is keeping that prisoner? If you have someone for 28 years and you have never taken them to prison - So, I think it should not stop you from looking at these prisoners and – anyway, you are going to report but you should be looking at taking action on those officers and probably compensating these people; 28 years and someone has never been to court! You know some of the things appear like stories in novels and action movies.

However, let us not be diverted, honourable members. Let us refocus and go back to where we were. Hon. Betty Aol –

5.27

MS BETTY AOL (FDC, Woman Representative, Gulu City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and I would like to thank the Committee on Human Rights and also the Attorney-General for the reports and the statement. At least it is opening our eyes to what is happening in prisons. Today, it is Doctor and tomorrow it is somebody else.

I would like to tell you that for us as mothers, it is so painful, especially since the minority report pointed out the Doctor going on a hunger strike. It is very painful. His younger brother died after prison; so, he has the fear of being poisoned. Why do we deny him food from out? We know that the practice was there – *(Interjections)* - yes it was there, at first he was denied, and that was why he had to go on a hunger strike until they opened.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us go on to unsettled issues because settled issues will derail us.

MS AOL: Yes. At least, we are happy that this is now helping us even to solve other problems, other people's problems. One time, I visited Luzira Prison and gathered with people from the North only to find out that one person was there without proper documentation. How do you allow a person in prison without proper documentation? Then I asked how he entered there without proper documentation. I think that should also be investigated. I left it to the legal minds. You know, we are not legal minds. It is very painful when we keep people in detention and prison. We all want peace. In order for us to have this peace, justice should be there for all of us – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member. Colleagues, Hon. Odur shocked me and I am still recovering. The idea that someone has been in prison for more years than Hon. Frank Kabuye has - Hon. Frank Kabuye, are you more than twenty-eight? – Hon. Frank Kabuye here and I think Hon. Hellen Auma. It is really shocking.

To me, the visit to the prisons - but then I will ask you, chairperson, you have been giving us a report every year on the status of prisons. How come you had never seen this? Parliament has been here for the last over 28 years.

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The record will bail me out. We have constantly raised, in our reports, the questions of long pre-trial detention. It is on record. This House has made resolutions in respect to this matter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You see, chairperson, why I am asking is how you present. For example, Hon. Odur has made it very easy for me, by shocking me, that someone for 28 years - I do not think that even the Attorney-General hearing that someone has been in prison for 28 years, it can go on as business as usual. However, when we do generic reports –

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: Mr Speaker, I am not in the habit of authoring generic reports. I am a slave of detail. In all our reports we have indicated to this House, naming persons, giving the dates on which they were arrested – Wilfred Byamukama arrested on 12 March 1997; the case, murder; mental issue, schizophrenia; the court circuit, Mbarara. If you calculate from 1997 to the current date, it gives you 26 years. We have stated and named the specific prisoners.

However, Mr Speaker, you were talking about sleeping on the job, even the Commissioner-General of Prisons has constantly reminded the ministry for justice and the Judiciary. We task them every six months to write to the Judiciary and point out the plight of these prisoners and they have been doing that consistently.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Anyway, on Tuesday, let us look at this matter extensively. Hon. Rita –

5.33

MS RITA ATUKWASA (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbarara City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to comment on two things: first, the Deputy Attorney-General's statement has pointed out the issue of the presidential directive on bond. The issue of bonds is a two-edged sword. It amazes me that if you owe a moneylender any coin, you will not be granted a bond but if you steal a *boda boda* from a *boda boda* rider and you are arrested with the help of other riders, in a day you will be given bond.

I had two meetings with *boda boda* riders in Mbarara City. On the 28th of December last year and the 24th of January. They are very

devastated and desperate to the extent that they think probably taking the law in their hands is the solution.

Therefore, as we agitate to say that bonds should be given to people, we also need to consider the village thieves. I think the President's idea is really factual. People who steal goats and chickens go scot-free because the moment they enter; they are given bond. Attorney-General, we need to be very considerate on that matter.

As you cry, on the other side, that bond should be for everybody, the issue of the lack of small claims courts comes in here. Mr Speaker, the Attorney-General should be able to elaborate on this issue. If somebody has taken my goat and it is Shs 150,000, must I go through the whole process?

The police stations, for instance, in Mbarara City, are full of young people who cannot process and clear all of these small claims so that they go back home. Mr Speaker, I beg your indulgence that you task the Deputy Attorney-General to substantiate this matter of the small claims and the issue of bond.

The other issue, Mr Speaker, most times in this House, most of you are lawyers and are referring to the law, but also sociologists exist. The functions of the prisons are very key. There are four most cardinal reasons but I will use just two.

One is the issue of deterrence and rehabilitation, and recently we talked about restitution. If you are confined in jail for three months, 15, or 28 years, which you should not be, are we solving any problem, or addressing the cardinal reasons why people go to jail?

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I support that the committee goes back and brings the lists of individuals who are in these prisons. The person being spoken about here comes from Mbarara and I do not think she or he is the only one. Therefore, the committee should do us justice. Go back and bring these lists so that we task the Judiciary to drop these cases so that we know we are doing work and not just here speaking. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Rita Atukwasa, what you are saying is in line with what Hon. Niwagaba said, that clarify to the police officer - this clarification would be good so that they know it is not just a matter of denying. Ensure people are tried. If they are not tried within the constitutionally limited time, give them bond.

Of course, village thieves are a big problem. Someone just came to my trees. He had the audacity to cut trees and even bring a lorry to load. *(Laughter)* He is from around there, and then they go to Mitooma and get bonded.

Then for coffee; you do coffee, and they harvest it on your behalf. You do seedlings, when they want to go and get a drink, they pass by your nursery bed, steal and sell around 10 them and get money for waragi. It is a big problem, but I mean – voters. Yes, Hon. Onzima.

5.38

MR GODFREY ONZIMA (NRM, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I want to make a comment on three issues. Issue number one is to thank the committee for this report because when this issue was presented in the House, it appeared very nasty, and it was accompanied by a picture of Dr Besigye. However, when you read the report, you notice that it has clarified all this.

On the other side, the report also raises questions about the credibility of the issue, which was raised, and the manner in which it was raised. I want to thank the committee for that.

On the issue of limited dietary implications for the inmates, I had an interaction with the prison authorities, and they said that actually, they produce all the food for the people who are in prison.

Also, they have gone ahead to produce seeds for the country. They are supplying many private farms with seeds and seedlings. I think the best we can do is to encourage them to diversify the production of food so that it can meet that dietary challenge.

On the issue raised by the committee about congestion, I had an interaction with a former inmate. He told me that he had a chance of going to two of these prisons; Kigo and Luzira. He said that if he is to tell me the stories, much as people complain about the situation in Luzira, it is worse in Kigo. Even the food is not enough. When it comes to sleeping spaces, if you get a space where to put yourself, you will actually be the luckiest.

The recommendation by the committee that the Government needs to look into building more prisons so that we reduce the congestion is apt. We need to build more prisons facilities to reduce the congestion. I really support it and as Parliament, we should really think about that. I thank you.

5.40

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I visited Luzira in my capacity as the Shadow Minister for Internal Affairs, and I had the opportunity to go inside the prison and even visit the so-called room where Dr Besigye is being held.

First of all, I want to tell colleagues here that Dr Besigye was once a Minister of Internal Affairs. Today, he is the prisoner for whose rights this House now sits to deliberate on. Let us not wait until we become suspects or even convicts in Luzira before we come out to ask for better conditions in our prisons.

When I visited the room where Dr Besigye is being held, and I want to put the “room” in quotes, it is like a hole that is only one meter wide. In fact, the adjacent bathroom is bigger than the sleeping cubicle. There is no window, but a single ventilator that is about 20 feet high. When you are in that *ka*-cubicle, it is as if you are in a hole. There is no window and I think these are –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nambooze, for the record, what is *ka*-cubicle?

MS NAMBOOZE: I am sorry, I withdraw that. What I wanted to express is that it is really

a very tiny place. It is like a box; it is very tiny.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: For record purposes, you mean a small cubicle.

MS NAMBOOZE: It is so small, Mr Speaker, that I was tempted to forget that this is Parliament and I used that word; I am sorry.

I think these cubicles, which are only slightly bigger than a coffin, were created for hard-core criminals who have been convicted, but not people on remand. People on remand are not guilty. They have not committed any offense. They are just being held there for the sake of the processes of the law. The probability that they will be declared innocent is even higher.

It is very bad to make somebody serve a punishment while on remand. In any case, if we had provisions, we would not mix convicts with the people on remand.

Two, this tiny coffin-like hole where Dr Besigye is being held is locked from outside all the time. In Luzira, they serve lunch in the morning at 9.00 o'clock. At 3.00 p.m., they are serving supper, and it is bedtime.

To be held in that condition for several hours is torture. The bed in that cubicle does not even have a mattress, but only two folded blankets. I do not know if we are intending to create another Mandela for this country, because these are places people will tour and say, “How cruel were these people who lived during these times?”

This is not about Besigye alone. It also affects many other people. For example, by the time I visited that place, which holds 18 people, only three of those 18 were convicts. Only three. Others; there was one NUP supporter, he had been arrested in 2021 when he was coming in from South Africa because he is a member of our chapter in South Africa, but up to today, he is still there.

He was visiting Uganda from South Africa but because he belongs to the NUP chapter in South Africa, he was arrested at the airport –

his claim – he told me he is not – even us at NUP were not aware that he is there. Even his relatives in Uganda did not know that he had travelled to Uganda, and those people in South Africa considered him missing.

Mr Speaker, it is not about even putting better conditions for some prisoners at Luzira. It is about resolving our political issues. Some people are being held as political prisoners. We now have a category of prisoners who are called political prisoners. People who are arrested, go to jail through the court martial, and until they plead guilty through *Full Figure* and Hon. Balaam, they cannot be released from prison until they are forced into making a plea of guilt.

It is so disheartening to resolve our political issues using the UPDF courts – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us hear from Hon. Onzima, Hon. Abdallah, and then the vice-chairperson – sorry, let us start with Hon. Tom Aza; he had not spoken. I cannot forget my old boys. (*Laughter*)

5.46

MR TOM ALERO (NRM, West Moyo County, Moyo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. A lot has been said about Dr Besigye, while he is held in Luzira Maximum Security Prison; issues related to safety, security locks, solitary confinement, prayers, and so forth.

Mr Speaker, Dr Besigye is a high-profile prisoner in Luzira. I have not heard about issues related to communication and information. Does he have access to television and radio? Him not having access to those two, is tantamount to blindness. He cannot see what is happening in the outside world.

My concern here is that in the near future, let such high-profile politicians or prisoners have access to communication – television and radio. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The chairperson will help us with that. Yes, Hon Abdallah Kiwanuka.

5.48

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA (NUP, Mukono County North, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, I invite colleagues to –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can see high-profile people lobbying.

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, I invite colleagues to specifically look at two Articles of the Constitution. One is Article 28(3), which provides for innocence until proven guilty. In this line, Attorney-General, I beg that you advise the President.

A person, once arrested, is presumed innocent. We are not running away from the fact that this person has to be tried. One, as it was said that you should advise the Police - 48 hours is a dictate of the Constitution. If investigations are not yet over, the Constitution is very clear; you should be very clear about that.

Article 128 is about the independence of the Judiciary, which clearly states that no person shall interfere with the judicial system or give them directions on what should be done. You have clearly said that the President - and he has always been saying that “I have directed the Chief Justice not to grant bail” – now also talking about bond. The President has been consistent won this. Why interfere with the judicial system, yet the Constitution is very clear about that?

Lastly - I am not going to comment on the Kabaziguruka case because it is sub-judice - there is a very recent judgment of Ssemujju Abdunul v. the Attorney-General. It is Constitutional Petition No. 4 of 2018, and the judgment was delivered on 3 February 2023, clearly stating that civilians should not be tried in the court martial. You are not implementing it. You are just silent about it.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, through you, I want to inform the Attorney-General - honestly, I may not be complaining about Dr Kiiza Besigye, but he was charged with two other people, Olal and Obed. You have not talked about Olal. Even the report from the committee does not talk about him. Where is he? Is he in prison? Where is he being detained? We need clarification. Thank you.

5.51

MR LINOS NGOMPEK (NRM, Kibanda North County, Kiryandongo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Committee on Human Rights for the report.

The chairperson, in his statement here, mentioned that there are three groups of people qualified to provide food, or deliver food to the retired Colonel –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Three individuals, not groups.

MR NGOMPEK: Yes, three individuals. However, as Government, you know that the Opposition is so desperate for power and they will look for everything to tarnish the name of the Government. Mr Speaker, through you, do the prison authorities check the food that is delivered? Even those individuals who deliver the food might compromise it, the person jailed or incarcerated gets poisoned, and they blame the Government. We also have to look into that, as the committee, because the Government is vulnerable. They can do everything in order to tarnish our image. Thank you.

5.53

MR FRANK KABUYE (NUP, Kassanda County South Kassanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for the observations made and some of the recommendations, especially those in the minority report.

Mr Speaker, my concern is about the 500 per cent congestion rate in Luzira Prison. I believe this is not only in Luzira, but in other prisons as well, just like what comrades have said about Kigo, Kitalya, and other prisons, where many

people have been remanded or convicts have been sentenced.

Mr Speaker, most of these people have not been seen in courts. They have not seen justice. They have not been convicted, but they are on remand for years. This is affecting their families and their rights because these are young people.

When we talk about convicts, and the people who are remanded for years - for example, in the National Unity Platform (NUP), we have many political prisoners who are still in Kitalya, Kigo and Luzira prisons, and their rights are not being served because they have been denied justice in the courts of law. These are the people who are congesting the prisons, which were meant to hold only 600 prisoners. Now, they are holding 3,000 prisoners.

How I wish the Government would come out clearly to give freedom to these young people because most of them are being charged politically. They have not engaged in the corruption that we have been seeing around. They have not been found with any arms, but they have put up charges against them, and now they are serving a punishment.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the committee - and also seek clarification from the chairperson – to the third person who is co-accused with Dr Kiiza Besigye. We would like to know the state in which he is and where he is. Did you interface with him in the prisons or is he out enjoying his freedom, and waiting to be brought back to the court-martial, as a masquerade that he was part of the plans that put the doctor and Lutale in the cells? I beg to submit.

5.55

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. Thank you, the Committee on Human Rights, for presenting both the majority and the minority reports.

Mr Speaker, this has been occasioned by the question that people asked here, mainly about

the health of Dr Kiiza Besigye, and his feeding. Other things have come in only as a by the way – as a discovery on what people found out there.

Mr Speaker, I admire the resilience of Dr Besigye a lot especially. Some of us would have chosen just to die. *(Laughter)* Some of us are not prepared to take what Dr Kiiza Besigye has gone through; we would rather die.

Also, I want to warn the Government. Mr Speaker, over the weekend, I was in Nebbi. The perception people have is that whether you release Dr Besigye today or he stays - I do not know for how many years and eventually dies - People told me that there is no way, there will be no accusation on the Government because whatever he has gone through for all these years has cumulatively impacted negatively on his health; that is the warning there.

I saw a minister praying for Dr Besigye to be okay. She had come in but she has now gone away. I wish we continued with such prayers. Honestly, by the confession that now that he feeds well and can access his personal doctor and that - if we see Dr Besigye now, he is looking good. Previously, Dr Besigye was looking so bad. I do not think as a Government, we really want somebody to go to that extent.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I have never been to prison, either a prisoner on remand or something. However, from the reports I receive, I feel for our people. I have a prison in my constituency, that is, Wadelai. If you see the load of work these people do and the food they produce, you would imagine that they can even sell and eat fish since we are close to - they can eat variety; they produce their own food, sell some, and make sure that from the money they get, they can have other sources or other varieties of food.

Therefore, when I hear that they only eat posho and beans - I am very sure that even the beans must be of a very poor quality yet they produce so much that can be sold to buy other food items to eat. This is something we need to look into. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Oneka Lit. Allow me to pick members of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). Then, those who are FDC by association like Hon. Okupa - *(Laughter)* - Hon. Okupa, you are an Independent Member of Parliament. Yes, Hon. Oneka Lit and then Hon. Dr Batuwa.

5.59

MR DENIS ONEKA LIT (FDC, Kitgum Municipality, Kitgum): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I feel the pain and frustration that Dr Kiiza Besigye is going through. In 2021, I was arrested when I procured an ambulance for Kitgum Municipality during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was subjected to very poor treatment and isolated in a very bad, small, and poorly-ventilated room. My senior, Hon. Namboozie called it a cubical. I did not sleep that night.

Mr Speaker, I can feel the pain of Dr Besigye persevering in solitary confinement, having a passage of six gates to access him. He is confined and is not allowed to go for prayers out of everything.

Mr Speaker, in history and on record, we have heard of very many political prisoners who have been given even time to give wishes to the public; the likes of Mandela and so many people. For Dr Besigye's Christmas message to be denied to be published just because it had the words "rights and freedom" pains a lot.

Mr Speaker, I really request that this House, and the Government in particular, put their feet in the condition of Dr Besigye, the pain he is undergoing, and many other Ugandans. If Dr Besigye can have the freedom to socialise with the prisoners, it will do less harm. Let him be given the freedom to socialise with his fellow prisoners. It is very important. The torment is terrible, Mr Speaker. *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Dr Batuwa.

6.02

DR TIMOTHY BATUWA (FDC, Jinja South Division West, Jinja City): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting me this opportunity to speak about the person of Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye.

There is no doubt that if anybody is to name three important Ugandans, the name of Rtd Col. Dr Kiiza Besigye will be missed. It is clear in everybody's mind that he has sacrificed for this country. It is clear in everybody's mind that he is a very popular person. The last time he was in an election, he garnered over 3,500,000 votes as per the Electoral Commission.

Mr Speaker, I looked at the legal factors that inform the need to remand a person and one of those is the fear that that person will intimidate witnesses. Another is to do with the fear of the risk of tampering with evidence. There is also fear that this person could run; and fear of the seriousness of the offense.

When you look at Dr Kiiza Besigye from these perspectives against those reasons - Mr Speaker, in 2005, the very first time Dr Kiiza Besigye went to prison, he was in South Africa when the charges, he, in his words, called "trumped-up charges" were put against him. The charge sheet was sent to South Africa, read before him by a colleague trying to intimidate and scare him from coming back to Uganda but he did the opposite. He did not hide in South Africa even in knowledge of what would happen when he got back here.

Mr Speaker, Dr Kiiza Besigye boarded a plane and came back to Uganda. True to what he was told, he was arrested, and detained; he was the first presidential candidate to be nominated while in prison.

Mr Speaker, if you look at that against these - being a high profile person - sincerely he is the kind of Ugandan you would prefer because in case, he has a case to be answered of this nature, he would be kept in the comfort of his home. I am sure, as and when he is needed, he will present himself as he did when he was in South Africa.

Mr Speaker, what is before us is a gentleman respected and loved by Ugandans, locked up five doors deep inside the prison. What would happen in the event of fire? Each door has two locks. The keys to those locks are centrally placed. What will happen in the event of a fire?

When a doctor like Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, who was in the bush fighting for freedom and liberty in this country, talks of poison, it goes beyond the fear of food. You can look at it in the nature of solitary confinement that he is in. You have put him in one room yet other prisoners are sharing rooms - as a doctor, he knows that he can inhale poison - *(Member timed out.)*

6.06

MS ASINANSI NYAKATO (FDC, Woman Representative, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is one of my motivators as to why I am here today. The inspiration many of the youth and many of the leaders that are coming up have, has been because of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye.

Mr Speaker, at 70 years, Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, a freedom fighter and a liberator in this country deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, not those detentions and tortures that he is going through.

Today, as we head into the 2026 general elections, most of us are in fear as the opposition, now that the President is giving those directives of no bond, no bail. We are all victims who may fall into the same situation that Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is in today. If you oppose the Government, anything can happen to you, but even you who are on that side of the NRM can fall victim to exactly what Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is going through.

My prayer is that Dr Col (Rtd) Kiiiza Besigye's unlawful detention and arrest - when we went to the Court Martial in Makindye, I saw the pain that he had on his face, it demonstrated what most Ugandans are going through. The pain of a father, husband, and the pain of that woman who is dying silently when her husband has been arrested and detained. The pain of a

husband, a father or a brother whose child has been arrested innocently, and has nowhere to go for justice but only to beg the Government. I saw the wife, Hon. Winnie Byanyima, pleading to the Government before he was taken to the court martial for – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Okupa.

6.08

MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere): Mr Speaker, I was just seated, thinking and reflecting on those people who are in prison, in the police cells, and un-gazetted places - it reminded me of the 1988 incident when, as a young man aged 18 years old, was arrested by the NRA, undressed, locked up in a room of over 20 people, naked, women and men, and women were raped in front of us.

I spent three days without tasting any food. The bucket system was being used. The porridge was being brought in buckets and you all had to dip your hands into it, no matter whether you had washed your hands or not yet we had been urinating in the same place.

When I reflect on that, it brings pain to one's heart. It is not until possibly you have been there that you will get to know the pain one can go through. At that age, I went through that for three weeks.

When we are speaking about this issue of congestion, it perturbs me and I think it is not only limited to the prisons but even the police cells. So, I want to call upon the Committee on Human Rights to do some impromptu visits to the police cells within Kampala.

On 29 December 2024, I got the news that one of the people from Kasilo had been arrested and brought to Kyaliwajjala Police Station and had been there for five days. I looked at them - there were seven of them in a cage like the way you see chicken in Nakawa Market. I have a photo here of those people. They could only stand and did not have where to squat, but they had to kneel on one another in order to sleep.

I want to call on the Committee on Human Rights to visit these places to know how people

are suffering yet they are being held on just petty issues. I was reflecting on how one can feed on beans and posho for 28 years.

Mr Speaker, when you asked about when Hon. Kabuye was born, I just said, "Can you imagine someone going without conjugal rights since the time Hon. Kabuye was born?" Hon. Kabuye has even got children. How many of you can last for all that? That is the pain - *(Laughter)* - we can take it to different dimensions to make you feel - maybe that is the language you need to get and get to feel - you do not even know for what case someone has spent all those years. I wish the Attorney-General was still here, I would have asked him whether - *(Member timed out.)*

6.12

MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju): Mr Speaker, I am not a member of the Committee of Human Rights, but because I am the person who raised this matter here, I went with the committee as an observer, and I have been following up the matter. I want to thank them for the good job.

I was there when Dr Besigye was ushered in. I looked at the members, and apart from Hon. Fox Odoi, I saw almost everybody shedding tears. I think Hon. Fox Odoi is the strongest - I do not know whether strongest or he was not as touched as most of us - but two – *(Interruption)*

MR ODOI-OYWELOWO: Mr Speaker, my wonderful friend, Hon. Francis Mwijukye, has stated on record that he observed the members of the committee and concluded that almost all of them cried except me. Is Hon. Mwijukye a competent and fit person to determine the emotions of people and is he in order to insinuate that I am a heartless - *(Laughter)* - Member of Parliament without any feelings?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What if he cried from inside if there was a cry? Honourable colleagues, let us not try to insinuate that. I know we can express our opinions better.

MR MWIJUKYE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I wanted to say that while there, Dr Besigye said that health-wise, he was okay -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Mwijukye, your colleague, who was gracious enough to invite you, even as an observer -

MR MWIJUKYE: Yes, he is a very strong man, he could not cry. After all, he is a chairperson and if a chairperson cries, who will remain? *(Laughter)*

Anyhow, Mr Speaker, I put it to the doctor, I said, "You are accessing doctors, and you say your health is fine, but we see you frail, what is the problem?" He said, "It is trauma." He said, "With this trauma, these doctors cannot treat it. So, the only solution for me is to get out of here. Otherwise, with trauma, doctors cannot find solutions to it."

You would see that even when he said that he was accessing services, he was weaker. He at some stage almost fell down while he was standing to speak to us. I just wanted to conclude by saying that Parliament has done a good job because when we discussed it - I am told after our discussion here - the prison services started discussing certain issues, which have since changed. So, the role of Parliament can't be underestimated.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for taking up this very important issue and asking Hon. Fox Odoi, the strongest man, to lead the committee that has come up with a report that will remain in the history of this country for the future. Of course, to also - *(Member timed out.)*

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

6.16

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, I am glad that the Committee on Human Rights went to visit Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and Hajji Obed Lutale. I said here that it is important for us, as Parliament, to do something so that we do not let down these people. Hence, this is step number one, but you see, it is only step number one. I hope that we can push the Government on some of these concerns.

The concern of solitary confinement has come through again and again. For those who have been to prison, solitary confinement is actually a prison within a prison. Normally, especially the convicts, some of them become errant or whatever the case might be; that is when they will be taken to solitary confinement. It is a punishment.

Now, here you are, Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is still innocent until proven guilty, but he is being punished. That is why we are concerned about political persecution because, clearly, that is what it is. You would wonder why.

Somebody said that you see he is allowed for a priest to go to him and pray with him, but again, that is taking away his right to freely associate with other prisoners. The excuse that he is very popular and so there will be excitement, how is that his problem?

Mr Speaker, one of my colleagues did ask about a new co-accused of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, Capt. Denis Ola. I consulted our Shadow Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, who is a Member of this committee. In his interaction with the prison officers, they said that they do not have him, they do not have a detention order for him, and so, they do not know his whereabouts.

This is a concern in two ways: one, that this could have just been propped up as a red herring. Two, that very concerning, he could be held God knows where. Where is this man? I hoped that the committee would follow this up to establish - because you see now, it is Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, Hajji Obed Lutale, and now there is Capt. Denis Ola. I thought that you would be interested in knowing where he is as well because he is a co-accused. Where is this man? We did not hear that.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the learned Attorney-General talks about the police bond. Let me reiterate. Article 28(3)(a) of our country's Constitution talks about the presumption of innocence. This whole narrative of, "these thieves should be denied bond; these thieves..." It is only a competent court that can determine that some-

body is a thief, a murderer, or whatever. Even by referring to them as thieves, you have convicted them yet you do not have that right, regardless of who you are in this country. That is why they are treated the way they are treated.

Mr Speaker, you remember a couple of days ago, some people were shot at by police. Then they said, "You see, three of these people have been on our wanted list and we have been looking for them." Arrest them and take them to court. They instead are treating them as convicted people and that is the challenge, even with this whole, "let us ban police bond; let us ban bail" because you treat these people as guilty already. The Constitution is clear. Let there be due process, then a competent court can determine that this person is guilty, so they should serve a particular sentence or that kind of thing.

That is why there is a negative attitude towards some of these people. Take a look at the way Dr Kiiza Besigye is being treated because as far as he is concerned, he is saying, "These people have already adjudged me guilty. That is why they are treating me the way they are treating me; solitary confinement and taking away all these different rights." You do not treat these people as suspects, which is problematic.

Any of us, Mr Speaker, whether on this side or the ruling side, can, on any day, find ourselves in a situation like this.

The other day - and I see Hon. Paul Akamba is here - we were talking about him when we were asking questions; we were asking the Government where Hon. Paul Akamba was because after he had been granted bail, he had been kidnapped within the precincts of the court. For about three or so days, no one knew where he was and we were asking though he belongs to the Government side.

This should not even be a partisan issue; it should be a concern to all of us, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, committee chairperson.

6.22

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (Mr Fox Odoi-Oywelowo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will respond to a few issues. The first one is solitary confinement. The facts are clearly captured in the report. Col. (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is detained in a wing that has a total of 20 prisoners -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Twenty or 18?

MR ODOI-OYWELOWO: Let me go back to my records - you are correct. It is a total of 18 prisoners, Mr Speaker. Solitary refers to the word, "sole." It is singular. You cannot impute - there is no way you can state that a wing that accommodates 18 people has a prisoner in solitary confinement. These are common sense issues; those are the facts.

Number two, Mr Speaker, it is also not true - (*Interjections*) - can I just explain this - I will give you the opportunity - (*Interjections*) - I will allow you to speak. In the wing where Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye is detained, there are single rooms and there is an open cell. Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye occupies one of those single rooms that is never locked. In fact, the door is never locked. Directly opposite him is Hajji Obed, occupying a single room that is never locked too. Therefore, they are not in solitary confinement, and we had this discussion with Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye himself.

The third issue I would like to clarify, Mr Speaker, is access to television and - I should apologise. We did not report on this. The prisoners have access to a television set. It is the size of that television up there - (*Interjections*) - yes, that television is in the corridor. We asked Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, "Do you have access to television?" He said, "Yes, we are permitted to watch news on NTV and on NBS." He specifically stated those two television stations.

We also asked him whether he has access to newspapers. We had a three-hour interaction with Col. Dr Kiiza Besigye and we interrogated every aspect. His answer was, "Yes, I have

access to newspapers.” The newspapers are censored through the removal of expressive female photographs. They remove female photographs before they give them the newspapers.

This morning -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you mean Dr Besigye cannot access Hon. Namboozé's picture in the newspapers now?

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: If it is partially nude. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, she is always decently dressed.

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: This morning, we tasked the Commissioner-General of Prisons to explain the rationale for removing female photographs from newspapers. His answer, which is even contained here, was: “We need to maintain order in the prison service,” and I can understand -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Committee chairperson, please, I do not have much time.

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: The next issue that we should clarify is of Capt. Denis Ola. We asked the prisons service about Capt. Ola's whereabouts when we visited Luzira. They gave us answers at that time.

This morning, they again submitted their position in writing. The written submission of the Commissioner-General of Prisons is contained in the documents that I laid on the Floor of the House; their answer is on page 7; letter G.

The question was: if the Court Martial directed that Capt. Denis Ola be brought to Luzira Prison, why is he being held elsewhere? The answer relates to Section 58 of the Prisons Act, which states thus: “No person shall be received or admitted in prison custody without a valid commitment or remand warrant, order or detention warrant of conviction or committal signed with a court seal or authenticated by a person authorised to sign such a warrant.”

The Uganda Prisons Service has never received any of the above documents to admit the said Capt. Denis Ola in the prison's custody. It continues to state on page 8 thus: “The remand orders for Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and *Hajji* Lutale are hereby attached. As already mentioned, Capt. Denis Ola is not in our custody. We have, on our record, the detention warrants of the two prisoners. We do not have the detention warrant for Capt. Ola.”

We investigated this matter further by getting the testimony of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye to the effect that he met Capt. Ola for the first time in the dock and interrogated him. Col (Rtd) Dr Besigye said that the information he got from Capt. Ola is that he has been appearing before the General Court Martial for a very long period and is remanded within Makindye Barracks. We have not had the opportunity to verify that information. That is the reason it did not appear in the committee report.

Mr Speaker, we undertake to continue making impromptu visits to police cells. During the course of last year, the Committee on Human Rights visited police cells in the whole of Eastern Uganda, starting with Jinja all the way to Karamoja. We are working on a report that we shall present very soon.

I did not want to make any comments on the state of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, but only to state that as a Christian, I feel for every person in prison. As a human being, I know the inevitability of ending up in prison. As a human rights lawyer and defender, I have a duty to protect the rights of every citizen of the Republic of Uganda. So, to insinuate that there are some members of the committee who are better predisposed to - *(Laughter)* - Mr Speaker, we asked Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye to make a self-assessment of his health. When he was produced before the committee, I had even asked him to make his submissions while seated and his answer was, “I am strong enough to stand”. He stood on his own volition and made a presentation that lasted three hours.

So, I do not know where Hon. Francis Mwijukye got this position that he could not even stand. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Odur, you wanted to speak.

MR ODUR: Mr Speaker, my one second is not about anything in rebuttal. I would like to thank you, for giving the Committee on Human Rights business.

This committee that I have been part of - I have complained about it and it must go on record – is one of the most dormant committees. If you had not given us this business, it was possible that this financial year would have ended without the Committee on Human Rights doing business. *(Applause)* I would like to thank and appreciate you and invite you to give us more business. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, each committee's mandate is provided for in our rules. Hon. Fox, you should thank me for giving you business. *(Laughter)*

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving us business but it is not true that we are a dormant committee. What is factually correct is that Hon. Odur has missed more than the 15 sittings of the committee and I will never raise that issue.

Mr Speaker, I rose –*(Interruption)*–

MR ODUR: Mr Speaker, I am on record. I know what constitutes a committee meeting in Parliament. A workshop by entities other than committees of Parliament at the Golf Course Hotel or Imperial Royale Hotel, purported to be a committee meeting, is not a committee meeting. I have the record. I can prove that the chairman has been inviting members to workshops organised by NGOs.

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: That is not true. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable colleagues; we are going beyond this.

MR ODOI-OYWELowo: Mr Speaker, can we make progress? There is a more serious issue.

I had some preliminary consultations with the authors of the minority report to try and narrow the gaps. They make two recommendations and we are amenable to adopting the first recommendation; that Parliament takes keen interest in the fears of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye. For what it is worth, I would concede that we adopt this, together with the recommendations of the committee.

In respect of the second recommendation in the minority report, I pointed out to Hon. Odur that we think this offends the law. In my discussions with him, I also stated that this matter is already in court. It is only on the premise of the court to grant the orders sought by this recommendation. It is only the courts that can make orders for determination of the trial of Dr Kiiza Besigye or the transfer of his trial to the civilian courts.

So, if my brother can be heard on this matter, we could make progress and resolve this issue. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Attorney-General, what is your view on the second recommendation?

MR KAFUZI: We agreed with the committee chairperson that this matter will most likely be addressed in a Supreme Court ruling that we expect to come up on Friday. In any case, deciding whether it should be civil or criminal is now outside our ambit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Jonathan Odur, I had also read it and noticed that it is going beyond the scope and mandate of Parliament to order that the detention in Luzira be terminated and any trial be heard in the civilian court. I thought it was going beyond but usually, we consult. These are issues where we can build consensus. Hon. Odur, I do not know what your view is on opinions expressed on this.

MR ODUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. For the record, recommendation number two was that the minority report recommends that the trial of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and subsequent

detention in Luzira Prison be terminated and any other trial be held in the civilian courts.

I have no problem if the House thinks that this recommendation needs to be dropped. However, I want to invite the Attorney-General and the chairperson to also take cognisance of the fact that in criminal cases, the prosecutor is the executive, ordinarily, and where there is a compelling reason to prosecute, they can decide to discontinue the case.

I was just coming from that angle; that since they are in control, out of so many other factors that I did not want to mention, it could be health, it could be the things we have discussed - they could find in their heart of the Executive - I am not meaning us - to say that we are considering this but if it is problematic, I have no problem because this is not my sole recommendation. It is for the House to adopt and if the House feels like a more moderate and considerate recommendation can persuade the Executive, then I have no problem conceding to it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, you can see the intention of Hon. Odur. He wanted to bring this issue to the attention of the Executive to think about but in the end it becomes a recommendation of Parliament. The moment it is a resolution of Parliament, Rule 220 will apply where we shall come and ask for action. It will no longer be something to go and think about, it will be something they must go and implement, which would offend the law.

The way I am looking at this minority report, it enriches the main report. If you remove this part, which is a bit problematic, then you would adopt both of them at once so that it is more or less one report and we shall demand action on both of them. It is an issue, which we should agree upon; these are issues of human rights, and we should not be having so much debate on them.

Okay, honourable members, I am going to frame my question this way, the Clerk will clean it: I put the question that the report of the Committee on Human Rights on its visit to Luzira Maximum Security Prison to assess

the prison conditions of Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye and Hajji Obeid Lutale Kamulegeya, together with the minority report, save for recommendation number two, be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think this is clean enough. Do you have something to respond to - leave the Attorney-General.

6.40

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Mr Speaker, you have made a number of directives and like Hon. Odur said, there were several other commitments made earlier. I am humbly requesting that the Office of the Clerk gives them to us in writing so that we see how best to address them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I have received a request from the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, they have told me that their report is not yet ready. So, if we start tomorrow at 10.00 a.m., it will be difficult for them to present it, but you remember we have a statutory deadline of 1st February, which is a Saturday. Committee on Budget, you have been with this Budget Framework Paper (BFP); I do not know why we cannot conclude it.

MR ODUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In light of the discussions we held, if you could reach out to the budget committee to handle our worry about the budget shortfalls in funding certain areas resulting from certain decisions that we do not control - I feel that if the budget committee could have a paragraph to interact with the minister of finance so that it is addressed in their report that "We are aware of this decision made elsewhere and it will impact the budget in this way but that we have taken care of it in the following terms," it would be better.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We can even handle that when we are on the Floor in case they do not get it, since the BFP is not final in

its own right. With that, I have discussed with the committee that we do it tomorrow at 2.00 p.m. with whatever will be ready because we have the report on Rationalisation of Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX), the report on the BFP and then the report for Government Assurance, which I want to sort tomorrow because it has been pending for a long time. I had communicated earlier that the House would start at 10.00 a.m. but it will now start at 2.00 p.m. The House is adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

(The House rose at 6.42 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 29 January 2025 at 2.00 p.m.)