



**REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS ON THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND
ORGANISATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025**

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S. M. S. S. S.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

On 14th May, 2025, the Political Parties and Organisations (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs for scrutiny and report back under Rules 135 (1) and 200 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

2.0. OBJECT OF THE BILL

The object of the Bill is to amend the Political Parties and Organisations Act, Cap. 178 to-

- (a) restrict Government funding and other public resources provided to political parties and political organisations that are represented in Parliament to only political parties and organisations that are members of the National Consultative Forum;
- (b) provide for the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue and the Forum for Non- Represented Political Parties and Political Organisations as organs of the National Consultative Forum;
- (c) provide for the functions of the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue and for related matters.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

In the process of analysing the Bill, the Committee;

- a) Held discussions with;
 - i. The Mover of the Bill represented by Hon Mutembuli Yusuf; and
 - ii. Mr. Lawrence Sserwambala – Executive Director, IPOD.
- b) Reviewed the following relevant documents;
 - i. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995;
 - ii. The Political Parties and Organisation Act, Cap 178; and
 - iii. Written submission by Attorney General.

4.0. REGULATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN UGANDA

Uganda returned to a multi-party political system in 2005. The country had been operating under Movement system since 1986, but in 2005, Parliament passed a Constitutional amendment allowing for multi-party politics once again.

In order to regulate the formation, operation and membership of political parties and organisations in Uganda, Parliament enacted the Political Parties and Organisation Act, Cap 178. The Political Parties and Organisations Act contains, among others, provisions that foster tolerance, dialogue and peaceful co-existence between and among different political parties, organisations, their members and supporters.

These include section 20 which establishes a National Consultative Forum for political parties and organisations, sections 15 which imposes a duty on political parties to give information to the Electoral Commission and 17 which provides for merger of political parties and organisations.

The Political Parties and Organisations Act further sets out a code of conduct for political parties and organisations with the objective to, among others, promote tolerance, peaceful co-existence and democratic principles between and among different political parties, organisations and their members.

The Code of Conduct, in paragraph 3 (c), (f) and (h) of Schedule 4, obligates political parties and organisations to-

- (i) Respect, uphold and promote democratic values and principles, performing inclusive participation of members of the political party and accountable representation in governance for development of the country;
- (ii) establish and maintain effective lines of communication with the Electoral Commission, the National Consultative Forum and other registered political parties and organisations; and
- (iii) respect, uphold and promote good governance, integrity, respect, tolerance, peaceful co-existence, transparency and accountability.

Political parties and organisations represented in Parliament have supplemented measures prescribed in the Political Parties and Organisations Act for maintaining communication, dialogue and cooperation between political parties and organisations by creating the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD), an organisation aimed at promoting inter-party dialogue and cooperation as a means of dealing with political differences and managing conflict (between political parties.

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IPOD was formed in 2009 as a loose coalition of political parties with representation in Parliament with support from the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) at the request of the Government of Uganda in a bid to support its nascent multiparty democracy following a return to multipartism in 2005.

At the time of its foundation, there were five political parties in Uganda's Parliament including the Conservative Party (CP), Democratic Party (DP), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC). IPOD's membership changes with the electoral cycle.

Membership to IPOD is voluntary and political parties are free to join or not to join. IPOD has two organs, the Summit, comprising of presidents and secretaries general of all political parties represented in Parliament and a Council, comprising of representatives of political parties including the SG and three other senior members of the party, one of whom must be a lady. The Council also has the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and Opposition Whip.

The Political Parties and Organisations Act contains mechanism for encouraging the growth of strong and independent political parties and organisations. One such mechanisms is contained in section 14 of the Political Parties and Organisations Act and obligates Government to provide funding and other resources to political parties and political organisations represented in Parliament.

This funding is restricted to political parties and organisations represented in Parliament and are provided -

- (a) registered political parties or organisations are be funded by Government under this Act in respect of elections and their normal day to day activities;
- (b) in respect of election, Government shall finance political parties and organisations on equal basis;
- (c) in respect of normal day to day activities, funding shall be based on numerical strength of each political party or organisation in Parliament.

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5.0. GENERAL ANALYSIS, OBSERVATION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the analysis examines the Bill and considers the provisions being amended, the proposed amendments made to the provision, the effect of the amendments, including the provisions' legality, effect and effectiveness in light of other provisions of any other law, existing public policy if any, Court decisions and the mischief it intends to cure. The analysis is classified in thematic areas the Bill proposes to amend, after which a recommendation is stated.

5.1. CLAUSE 1: AMENDMENT OF SECTION 14 OF CAP 178

Clause 1 of the Bill seeks to amend section 14 of the Political Parties and Organisations Act to condition receipt of funds and other resources provided by Government to political parties and organisations represented in Parliament.

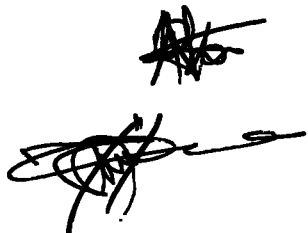

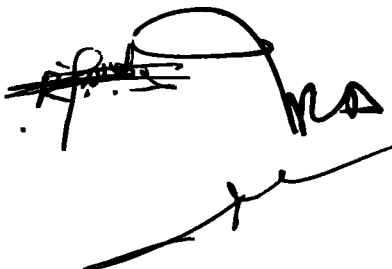

Section 14 of the Political Parties and Organisations Act mandates the Government to provide funding and other public resources to political parties and political organisations represented in Parliament.

This funding is restricted to political parties and organisations represented in Parliament and are restricted to-

- (d) registered political parties or organisations shall be funded by Government under this Act in respect of elections and their normal day to day activities;
- (e) in respect of election, Government shall finance political parties and organisations on equal basis;
- (f) in respect of normal day to day activities, funding shall be based on numerical strength of each political party or organisation in Parliament.

The Mover of the Bill informed the Committee that the amendment is necessitated by the need to condition the funding on the political parties' and political organisations on their commitment to the principles of tolerance, dialogue and peaceful co-existence as provided in section 14 since funds are received by political parties without any obligations on their part.

The mover urged that in order to promote transparency, accountability and equitable access to public funding among political actors, adherence to these democratic principles should be a prerequisite for accessing Government

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funding. This will ensure that funds are used responsibly and effectively, and accessed by political parties that have agreed to align with democratic values.

The Attorney General supported clause 1 of the Bill on ground that the amendment will further operationalisation Article 72 (3) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, which empowers Parliament by law to regulate the financing and functioning of political organisations in addition to the funding principles already provided for under section 14 of the Political Parties and Organisations Act.

The Committee has examined the proposal and section 14 of the Political Parties and Organisation observes that apart from the requirement to account, political parties have no other obligations imposed by law for receipt of the funds provided to them by Government.

The Committee is also aware that political parties have an obligation to adhere to and promote tolerance, peaceful co-existence and democratic principles between and among different political parties, organisations and their members as provided in the Code of Conduct for political parties, specifically in paragraph 3 (c), (f) and (h) of Schedule 4.

Where a political party doesn't adhere to the conduct of Conduct, paragraph 16 (5) of the Code of Conduct for political parties provides punishments, which need to be enhanced for effectiveness, in order to act as a deterrence.

The Committee agrees that conditioning receipt of funds provided by Government under section 14 will make political parties adhere to the requirements of the Political Parties and Organisations Act, induce behavior change and achieve more cohesion. Funding political parties should be conditional on their adherence to principles of tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence for several important reasons, including-

- Officer*
- (a) **Promoting Stability and Peace:** When political parties commit to these principles, it reduces the likelihood of conflicts, violence, or divisive politics, fostering a more stable and peaceful society.
 - (b) **Encouraging Responsible Politics:** Conditional funding incentivizes parties to engage in constructive dialogue and respect diverse viewpoints, leading to more responsible and democratic behavior.
 - (c) **Upholding Democratic Values:** Tolerance and peaceful coexistence are fundamental to a healthy democracy. Ensuring parties adhere to these principles helps protect democratic processes and human rights.
- Ch. Baka*
Sum
Shah
Don
Am
Silwaji

(d) **Preventing Extremism and Divisiveness:** Conditions discourage parties from promoting intolerance, hate speech, or violent rhetoric, which can undermine social cohesion.

(e) **Accountability and Good Governance:** Linking funding to these principles encourages parties to act ethically and responsibly, fostering a political culture based on respect and inclusivity.

Overall, conditional funding helps create a political environment conducive to democracy, stability, and social harmony.

However, whereas the Committee agrees with the principle for the amendment proposed in clause 1, the committee finds that using the word "National Consultative Forum" is confusing since the National Consultative Forum is a forum of all political parties in Uganda, including those parties that do not receive funding from Government. The Committee notes that since the intention of the Bill is to condition receipt of funds on the commitment of Political Parties and organisations represented in Parliament to the principles of tolerance, dialogue and peaceful co-existence, using the word National Consultative Forum as proposed in clause 1 will extend the application of the provision to other political parties and organisations otherwise not represented in Parliament.

The Committee is therefore of the considered opinion that clause 1 should be redrafted to require Government to only provide funds or other public resources to a political party or organisation if the political party or organisation is a member of and participates in activities of IPOD.

Recommendation

The Committee Recommends that funding to political parties should be conditional on the adherence of political parties and Organisations to principles of tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence as proposed in clause 1.

The Committee further recommends that Government should only provide funds or other public resources to a political party or organisation if the political party or organisation is a member of and participates in activities of IPOD.

5.2. CLAUSE 2 AND 3: INSTITUTIONALIZING IPOD

Clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill propose amendments to section 20 and an insertion of a new section 21 to institutionalize the Inter Party Organization for Dialogue

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The Bill in clause 2 proposes to institutionalize IPOD as an organ of the Consultative Forum. The National consultative Forum currently is created under section 20 of the principal Act. The National Consultative Forum is a forum for all political parties in Uganda and has representation from all political parties and organisations. It has representation from the AG, the chairperson of the Electoral Commission, and the secretary of the Electoral Commission. One of the functions of the National Consultative Forum is to enforce the code of conduct of political parties and resolve disputes of political parties and organisations.

(a) the organ for political parties and political organisations with representation in Parliament which shall be known as the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue; and

According to the Mover of the Bill, the proposal to institutionalize IPOD will ensure that Political parties represented in Parliament have their own organ within the National consultative forum where they will discuss their unique issues pertaining to them. Furthermore, the mover argued that there will also be a Forum for Non-Represented Political Parties and Political Organisations in which the non-represented parties also have their own organ to discuss issues pertaining to them. The mover informed the Committee that the current council of the National Consultative Forum will remain for purposes of enforcing the code and dealing with matters arising from the two organs.

In supporting the proposals contained in the Bill, the Attorney General argued clustering the Political Parties and Organisations registered in Uganda under National Consultative Forum based on the representation in Parliament and those that are not represented in Parliament shall promote the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and peaceful co-existence since the clustered political parties and organisations share similar and unique challenges that can be resolved through dialogue among themselves in their respective organs. The AG further reasoned that this approach shall promote transparency, accountability and adherence to

multiparty political system principles provided for under article 71 of the Constitution by the respective Political Parties and Organisations.

The Committee notes that the proposal to create an organ within the National Consultative Forum is intended to institutionalize the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue as an organ of the National Consultative Forum. The Inter Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) Uganda is a legal entity incorporated in 2021 with an aim of pursuing and promoting inclusive democracy and the fundamental principles of democracy, good governance, human rights, institutional strengthening of political parties to be trusted representatives of public interests, non-discrimination, promoting interparty dialogue and cooperation as a means for dealing with political differences as well as managing conflict without resorting to undemocratic means.

The Committee further notes that IPOD was formed in 2009 as a loose coalition of political parties with representation in Parliament with support from the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) at the request of the Government of Uganda in a bid to support its nascent multiparty democracy following a return to multipartyism in 2005. At the time of its foundation, there were five political parties in Uganda's Parliament including the Conservative Party (CP), Democratic Party (DP), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC). IPOD's membership changes with the electoral cycle.

The Committee notes that the institutionalization of the Inter-Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) as a statutory body represents a critical step in the evolution of Uganda's democratic governance and political maturity. At Institutional level, IPOD will be moving into a direction that is fundamental to its work. Since its inception, IPOD has provided a unique platform where political parties across ideological and partisan divides can engage in structured, principled, and evidence-informed dialogue.

The Committee notes Uganda's political history is characterized by cycles of conflict, contested transitions, and post-election tensions. IPOD has played a stabilizing role during these periods by facilitating inter-party communication, managing disputes, and encouraging tolerance.

The Committee notes that formalizing IPOD's status through an Act of Parliament will-

- (a) Provide a permanent institutional home for political dialogue.

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(b) Reduce the reliance on informal or external mediators.

(c) Strengthen early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms in the political sector.

(d) enhance political party accountability for non-violent and issue-based competition.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that IPOD should be institutionalized as proposed in clause 2 and 3.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee recommends that the Bill be passed subject to the proposed amendments attached hereto.



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PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

CLAUSE 1: AMENDMENT OF CAP. 178

Clause 1 of the Bill is amended by substituting for the proposed subsection (2), the following-

"(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Government shall only provide funds or other public resources to a political party or organisation referred to in subsection (1) if the political party or organisation is a member of Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue."and participates in activities of the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue."

Justification

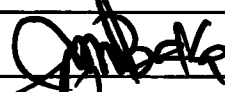



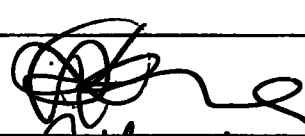
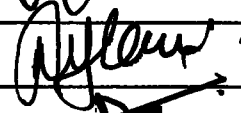

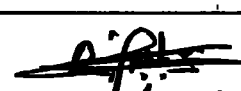
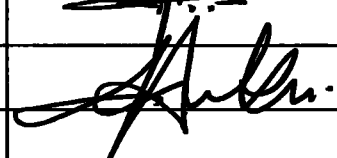
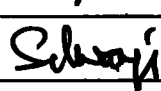
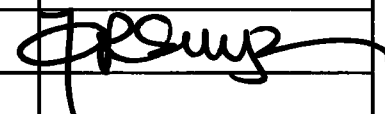
- *For clarity, to require a political party and organisation to, not only be a member of the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue but also participates in activities of the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue*

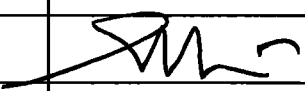
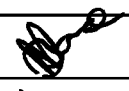

Amended.

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**SIGNITURE SHEET FOR THE REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE ON LEGAL
AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS ON THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND
ORGANISATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025**

No	Name	Constituency	SIGNATURE
1	Hon. Baka Mugabi	Bukooli North	
2	Hon. Teira John	Bugabula North	
3	Hon. Nkwasiibwe Zinkuratire Henry	Ruhaama	
4	Hon. Werikhe Peter Christopher	Bubulo West	
5	Hon. Fox Odoi Oywelowo	West Budama Northeast	
6	Hon. Lokkii Peter 'Abrahams	Jie County	
7	Hon. Pamela Nasiyo Kamugo	DWR-Budaka District	
8	Hon. Kamusiime Caroline	DWR-Rukiga	
9	Hon. Achayo Juliet Lodou	Ngora	
10	Hon. Okiror Bosco	Usuk	
11	Hon. Oseku Richard Oribo	Kibale	
12	Hon. Okia Joanne Aniku	DWR-Madi Okollo	
13	Hon. Kisembo Neoline	DWR, Kibaale	
14	Hon. Silwany Solomon	Bukooli Central	
15	Hon. Musinguzi Yona	Ntungamo Municipality	
16	Hon. Remegio Achia	Pian	
17	Hon. Malende Shamim	DWR Kampala	
18	Hon. Lubega Medard Ssegona	Busiro East	
19	Hon. Ssekitoleko Robert	Bamunanika County	

20	Hon. Patrick Nsanja	Ntenjeru South	
21	Hon. Adeke Ann Ebaju	Soroti City	
22	Hon. Alum Santa Sandra O	DWR Oyam	
23	Hon. Asuman Basalirwa	Bugiri Municipality	
24	Hon. Niwagaba Wilfred	Ndorwa East	
25	Hon. Katuntu Abdu	Bugweri County	
26	Hon Barnabas Tinkasiimire	Buyaga West	
27	Hon Zijjan David Livingstone	Butembe	
28	Hon Lumu Richard Kizito	Mityana South	
29	Hon John Baptist Nambeshe	Manjiya County	
30	Hon Mathias Mpuuga	Nyendo-Mukungwe	
31	Hon Jonathan Odur	Erute South	
32	Hon. Najjuma Sarah	DWR, Nakasekwe	
33	Hon Odoi Bernard	Youth MP, Eastern	
34	Hon Akampurira Mbabazi Prossy	DWR, Rubanda	