

## **Museveni Faces Tough New Parliament**

**Author:** IWPR

At least 80 incumbent members of parliament lost seats in last week's election, which could mean trouble for Museveni's third term.

A new political landscape is beginning to emerge in Uganda following last week's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Early results show that at least 80 incumbents lost seats in Uganda's first multi-party election in 25 years.

Many of those were President Museveni's cabinet ministers, which some interpret as a rejection of the administration.

Nonetheless, Museveni's National Resistance Movement party will control 190 seats in the 304-member parliament, and maintain a comfortable majority.

But election results show that the opposition is growing.

When Uganda's 8th parliament opens in May, it will have 36 independents, and 34 members from the oppositional Forum for Democratic Change, the party led by Kiiza Besigye, who tallied second behind Museveni in last week's election.

In addition, the parliament will have 16 members from other minor parties, including the Uganda People's Congress, the party of the late Uganda president, Milton Obote.

Though Obote's widow, Miria, collected less than one per cent of the vote in her bid for the presidency, Obote's son, Jimmy Akena, won a parliamentary seat from his home region of Lira.

An analysis of the election results shows that Museveni was soundly defeated across the north and eastern sections of the country, as well as in the capital of Kampala, and pockets in the far east and far west.

However, Museveni found solid support in central and southern districts, including the remote northeast region of Karamoja where his campaign convoy was attacked by gunmen.

Observers say Museveni's task now will be to unite the country and refrain from retribution against districts that did not support him.

Political scientist and lecturer at Makerere University, Sali Simba, says that Museveni should use his third term to clean up his cabinet, eliminating the corruption that many in the country reject.

Museveni should consolidate his support throughout Uganda and focus on creating a credible leadership, said Simba, by naming a new cabinet that includes opposition members.

Simba noted that voting trends have shown a steady decline in Museveni's popularity. This could be attributed to the lack of development projects in the regions that did not vote for him, he said.

Since the public rejected many of his ministers, he said, the credibility of Museveni's government will depend on him not re-appointing those who were voted out of office to powerful government posts.

Fears of exclusion and retribution against the new parliament were echoed by Abed Bwanika, a veterinarian who ran as president and gained just 0.9 per cent of the vote.

In his first post-election statement, Bwanika, a newcomer to Ugandan politics, advised Museveni not to punish those who did not vote for him or NRM parliamentarians.

Museveni received more than 4 million votes of the total 7 million cast, but Bwanika noted that it was only 39 per cent, a clear minority, of the total 10.4 million registered voters.

Bwanika dismissed rumours that he might be given a ministerial post in Museveni's next cabinet and indicated he preferred to stay politically active.

One of the first problems Uganda's next parliament must solve is office space, which will now be distributed according to parties, rather than by district.

The parliament must also adopt new rules to insure the fair appointment of deputies to assembly committees.

While the country's major leadership posts have been decided, Ugandans now must vote for a host of city and other local government positions, including the powerful mayor of Kampala.

These elections will be held in the coming two weeks.

Meanwhile, life has been returning to normal after many left the capital last week to vote in their home villages. Some also feared violence following the election.

On February 27, the centre of the capital reopened after several days of closure following the elections. Streets were jammed and bus terminals were flooded with passengers returning from different parts of the country.

Schools around the city resumed after a five-day break.

This story was compiled from reports by staff at Uganda Radio Network, an IWPR project.

**Location:** Uganda

**Focus:** ICC - International Criminal Court

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/museveni-faces-tough-new-parliament>