

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, March 1st, 2010 (covering February 22nd to February 28th 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. February 22, 2010, in English

"Electoral body accused of hiring NRM supporters" by Sheila Naturinda

- The mode of recruiting polling day supervisors for the forthcoming 2011 general elections by the Electoral Commission has sparked fury and suspicion among opposition politicians, Daily Monitor can reveal.
- The EC, which is currently recruiting election officials across the country, has been faulted for initiating a move seen as beneficial especially to the [ruling] National Resistance Movement [NRM] party.
- The Justice Forum party [Jeema] raised the red flag, accusing the electoral body of appointing ruling NRM members as election supervisors, hardly a year to the general polls. A statement delivered to Daily Monitor by Jeema President Mohammed Kibirige Mayanja claims District Internal Security Officers [DISOs] and Resident Commissioners [RDCs] are already hand-picking those to officiate at the polling day.
- More alarm bells are ringing about the format of the application forms. Those intending to apply for the same positions are required to give their details including their parents' and or spouse's details.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. February 25, 2010, in English

"Concern grows over Tullow Oil's request for more land" by Catherine Haywood

- Villagers in Buliisa District [western Uganda] are concerned about the request for more of their land by Tullow Oil around the Kasamene Oil Field.
- At a meeting in Bikongoro on 8 February, Tullow representatives requested the potential use of 3.5 sq kilometers of land for activity in connection with the development of oil wells in the area, and the expansion of their existing Kasamene perimeter by 50 meters.
- Tullow has predicted it will produce crude oil for industrial use from Kasamene 2 by mid this year. It is understood that some of the land requested is communally-owned, used for animal grazing and collecting firewood. Residents are concerned they will not receive compensation for the loss. Local NGOs say six communities will be impacted.
- In a statement yesterday, a coalition of civil society organizations from Bunyoro sub region demanded that, "Communal land rights should be respected." Mr. Brian Glover, Tullow business unit manager Uganda & East Africa, said Tullow was currently testing the suitability of the site for operational use, and no final decisions had been made.

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Radio Uganda, 0700 GMT. February 25, 2010, in English

"Opposition party calls for compulsory voting" [Author unknown]

- The opposition People's Development Party has called for an amendment of electoral laws to make voting compulsory. Many Ugandans above voting age do not take part in elections for various reasons.
- The party president Abed Bwanika says punishment should be introduced for any eligible person who deliberately refuse to take part in the electoral process. Dr

Bwanika says voting and participation in the election of leaders is the biggest responsibility of the citizens.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. February 26, 2010, in English

"Journalists form rights coalition" by Jeff Lule

- Leaders of media organizations and institutions have launched a coalition to campaign for media freedom and reform of restrictive laws.
- The initiative dubbed "Article 26 Coalition" is to ensure that Article 26 of the constitution is upheld.
- The article says "Every person shall have the right to freedom and expression, which shall include freedom of the media."
- Launching the initiative at the Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala on Wednesday [24 February], the chairperson of the Ghana National Media Commission, Ambassador Bray-Amihere Kabral, said freedom of expression cannot be legislated upon.
- "This is something we fought in our country and the government left it to an independent National Media Commission," he said.
- The minister of information, Kabakumba Matsiko, recently asked the cabinet to amend the Press and Journalist Act (2005) ahead of the 2011 elections. The amendment allegedly seeks to introduce new licensing conditions for newspapers and give the Media Council powers to shut media houses that violate them. She also wants a provision for offences and penalties against media houses that print material prejudicial to national security, stability, and unity or utterances that are injurious to Uganda's relations with her neighbors and friends.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. February 27, 2010, in English

"Religious leaders want EC disbanded" by Mercy Nalugo

- Religious leaders have proposed that the current Electoral Commission [EC] be reconstituted to ensure free and fair elections.
- The leaders, through their umbrella organization, the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), while meeting MPs on the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee to give their views on government's proposed electoral laws on Thursday [25 February], said Ugandans want an independent and impartial electoral body that enjoys security of tenure.
- The executive director of UJCC, Rev. Fr. Sylvester Arinaitwe, reported that during their recent consultative meetings, a cross section of Ugandans expressed dissatisfaction with the constitution of the current Electoral Commission. Religious leaders join a cross section of Ugandans who have called for the overhaul of the EC. On Wednesday, women demonstrators from the Inter-Party Cooperation staged a sit-down demonstration at parliament calling for an overhaul of the electoral body.
- This was the second time the women were mobilizing against the Eng Badru Kiggundu-led electoral team which President Museveni reappointed last year. The UJCC team also criticized the involvement of security forces in the elections.