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# UGANDA WEEKLY FOCUS



*Top highlight*

## PRESIDENT MUSEVENI COMMISSIONS USD 100 MILLION PRO INDUSTRIES ETHANOL PLANT IN LUWERO



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*Thanks to*

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# The EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to 2026.

A new year always carries with it fresh hope, renewed energy, and the promise of new beginnings. As we step into 2026, there is a shared sense of anticipation and reflection. We are grateful for what 2025 delivered, the lessons it taught us, and the foundations it laid for the journey ahead.

This New Year also finds our nation at an important moment. With the countdown to the 2026 General Elections underway, we give thanks for the progress made so far and for the peace and stability that continue to guide Uganda forward.

As always, Uganda Weekly Focus remains committed to keeping you informed with accurate, timely, and balanced updates from across the country.

This edition is particularly special as we celebrate our 10th Edition. We do not take this milestone lightly. It is a moment to pause and sincerely

thank you, our readers, contributors, and partners, for walking this journey with us. Your continued trust, feedback, and engagement are the reason this publication exists.

A special word of appreciation goes to our readers and contributors who remained active even through the festive season. While many took a well-deserved break, you stayed alert, gathered stories, shared insights, and ensured that the nation remained informed. You are truly the unsung heroes of this edition, and we are deeply grateful.

The year has started with significant developments, and in this edition, you will find, among others:

✓ President Museveni commissioning the USD 100 million Pro Industries ethanol plant in Luwero, marking a major boost for industrial growth and energy security.

✓ The Electoral Commission confirming readiness for the January 15, 2026 General Elections, while warning against misinformation and unauthorized platforms.

✓ Uganda welcoming 2026 peacefully under tight security oversight, with calm nationwide celebrations and effective public safety measures.

✓ The operational dissolution of the UPDF Fisheries Protection Unit, following intelligence reports citing serious breaches and restructuring of enforcement roles.

These and more stories are captured in this edition as we continue to inform minds and inspire change.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for believing in Uganda Weekly Focus. Welcome to 2026.

# UG NEWS BRIEFS

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## President Museveni Commends Victoria Sugar Limited's Role in Industrial Growth

On 30th December 2025, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni praised Victoria Sugar Limited for its contribution to Uganda's industrial growth, wealth creation, and energy security. Speaking at the company's facilities, the President reaffirmed Government's commitment to improving workers' welfare, including addressing the minimum wage, and reducing electricity, transport, and water costs to boost competitiveness.

The Victoria Group

employs over 8,000 Ugandans, supports more than 9,000 livelihoods, generates 15 megawatts of clean power, and has invested over US\$150 million. President Museveni urged Ugandans to support the NRM to consolidate gains in industrialisation, job creation, and national development.

## EC Confirms Readiness for 2026 General Elections

The Electoral Commission has confirmed that preparations for the 2026 General Elections are on track, following the completion of all

roadmap activities scheduled to date. Addressing the media at the Commission's headquarters on 31st December 2025, EC Chairperson Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon said recruitment and training of election officials had been finalized, ballot papers received, and election materials dispatched nationwide. He reaffirmed the mandatory use of biometric voter verification to safeguard vote integrity and cautioned the public against misinformation, urging citizens to rely only on official EC platforms.



## **Businessman Remanded Over Shs815m Teachers' SACCO Theft**

Kampala businessman Andrew Muhandiki has been remanded to Luzira Prison after being charged with stealing Shs815 million from the Uganda Liberal Teachers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society. Prosecutors allege that in May 2025, Muhandiki and accomplices fraudulently withdrew the funds using a fictitious contract to develop non-existent 500 acres of land in Kyangwali, purportedly purchased for Shs2.75

billion. The case is linked to a wider scandal involving over Shs3.6 billion misappropriated from a Shs20 billion presidential grant for teachers' welfare. Muhandiki will reappear in court on January 14, 2026, as investigations continue.

## **President Museveni Uganda Welcomes 2026 Peacefully Under Tight Security Oversight**

Uganda ushered in the New Year 2026 peacefully, with no major security incidents reported nationwide, authorities have said.

The calm celebrations followed strict enforcement of fireworks regulations and public safety guidelines by the Uganda Police Force. Police authorized 2,385 fireworks displays across the country, each limited to five minutes and conducted under the supervision of Counter Terrorism officers. Additional measures were implemented to prevent overcrowding at music shows and prayer gatherings, while tyre burning and celebratory gunfire were strictly banned. Security patrols were also extended from

the Christmas period into the New Year to ensure public safety and order throughout the festivities.

### **No Card? No Problem: Byabakama Confirms You Don't Need National ID to Cast a Vote**

The Electoral Commission has clarified that registered Ugandans will be allowed to vote in the January 15, 2026 polls even without a National Identification Card. Addressing the media on December 31, 2025, EC Chairperson Simon Byabakama said eligibility to vote is determined by appearance on the official National Voters' Register, which includes

a voter's photograph. He explained that the photo-bearing register remains the primary reference document at polling stations. Voters without a National ID or Voter Location Slip will still be verified using the Biometric Voter Verification Kit, which confirms identity through fingerprint and facial data already captured during registration.

### **Museveni Says Uganda's Economy Is Growing as Country Enters Lower Middle-Income Status**

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has declared Uganda's economy strong and growing, announcing the country's

transition from Least Developed Country status to a lower middle-income economy. In his December 31, 2025 end-of-year address, Museveni said the economy is projected at USD 68.4 billion by exchange rate and USD 194.2 billion in PPP terms, with GDP per capita expected to reach USD 1,399 by June 2026. He highlighted growth in agriculture, industry, tourism, and exports, noting that export earnings now exceed imports. The President also reported significant job creation and confirmed that first oil production is expected in 2026.



# Uganda

## 2025 IN REVIEW

2025 marked a year of steady growth and national resilience for Uganda, with gains across the economy, health, infrastructure, environment, and human capital. From stabilizing prices to advancing oil projects and strengthening conservation, the country laid firm foundations for 2026 and beyond.



### Robust Economic Growth

In the 2024/2025 financial year, Uganda recorded 6.3 percent real GDP growth, according to the World Bank. This growth occurred nationwide and was driven by strong performance in agriculture, industry, services, and a recovering tourism sector.

Public infrastructure investments, increased household consumption, and improved export performance fueled expansion. Inflation

remained low at 3.5 percent, protecting purchasing power and stabilizing prices. As a result, poverty levels declined and job creation expanded across regions. Uganda emerged as one of East Africa's fastest-growing economies, strengthening investor confidence and positioning the country for sustained medium-term growth.

### Inflation Containment Success

Throughout 2025, Uganda maintained headline inflation

between 3.5 and 3.9 percent, despite global supply shocks and currency pressures. This achievement was led by the Bank of Uganda, through tight monetary policy, prudent interest-rate management, and coordination with fiscal authorities. Stable food production and improved supply chains further eased price pressures. Low inflation preserved household incomes, stabilized business costs, and supported economic planning. By keeping prices predictable,

Uganda strengthened macroeconomic credibility, protected vulnerable populations, and created a stable environment for investment, growth, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

### **Shilling Appreciation Milestone**

In July 2025, the Ugandan shilling appreciated by 0.5 percent, averaging Shs 3,586 per US dollar, marking one of Africa's strongest currency performances that year. This occurred due to improved export earnings, disciplined monetary policy, and stronger foreign exchange inflows from tourism and commodities. The appreciation reduced import costs, eased inflationary pressures, and boosted investor confidence. A stronger shilling enhanced Uganda's regional trade competitiveness and supported long-term ambitions toward a high-value, export-driven economy, aligned with national targets such as reaching upper-middle-income status by 2040.

### **Ebola Outbreak Containment**

The Sudan Ebola outbreak, first detected in Kampala on January 30, 2025, was officially declared over on April 26, 2025, after affecting 14 cases and causing four deaths. The Ministry of Health, working with international partners, implemented rapid contact tracing, isolation, community surveillance, and vaccine trials. These measures prevented wider transmission in urban and rural areas. Uganda's swift response demonstrated strong public health preparedness, protected regional health security, and earned international recognition as a model for epidemic containment in low-resource settings.

### **Major US Health Funding Agreement**

On December 10, 2025, Uganda signed a five-year, USD 2.3 billion bilateral health agreement with the United States in Kampala. The agreement focuses on disease prevention, health system strengthening, workforce development, and improved access to essential services. This historic investment supports millions of Ugandans by expanding healthcare infrastructure, enhancing epidemic preparedness, and improving service delivery. The partnership reinforces Uganda's commitment to universal health coverage and positions the country as a regional leader in public health resilience, innovation, and long-term human capital development.



## Emergency Medicine Advancements

On June 2, 2025, Uganda launched its first national Emergency Medical Services (EMS) report in Kampala, led by the Ministry of Health with development partners. The report assessed emergency care capacity, response times, infrastructure gaps, and workforce readiness across the country. This milestone formally recognized emergency medicine as a critical pillar of the health system. By identifying gaps and setting standards, Uganda improved coordination of ambulances, referrals, and trauma care. The initiative strengthens life-saving response capabilities, especially during accidents, disasters, and medical emergencies, ultimately reducing preventable deaths nationwide.

## Oil Sector Progress Toward First Production

By mid-2025, Uganda had drilled over 100 oil wells under the Tilenga and Kingfisher projects, raising

recoverable reserves to 1.65 billion barrels. Led by government and private partners, including TotalEnergies, project development reached 60–74 percent completion. Activities occurred mainly in the Albertine Graben, creating thousands of jobs and local supply opportunities. Infrastructure construction, well pads, and processing facilities advanced steadily. First oil is targeted for 2026, positioning petroleum as a major revenue source to finance infrastructure, social services, and industrial growth.

### EACOP Pipeline Milestone

By November 2025, construction of the East

African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) had reached 75 percent completion, with over USD 3.3 billion invested. This 1,443-kilometre pipeline, running from western Uganda to Tanzania's coast, is a joint regional project supporting Uganda's oil exports. The pipeline strengthens energy security, regional integration, and export logistics. Thousands of Ugandans benefited from jobs, skills transfer, and local procurement. As completion nears in 2026, EACOP is expected to unlock oil revenues, boost foreign exchange earnings, and support long-term economic transformation.

## Tourism Excellence Award Win



On November 1, 2025, Uganda won the Swiss Tourism Excellence Award in the "Natural Paradise" category at the Swiss International Holiday Expo in Lugano. This marked Uganda's debut win at the prestigious global tourism platform. The award recognized Uganda's biodiversity, conservation efforts, and sustainable tourism practices. It showcased destinations such as national parks, wildlife reserves, and cultural heritage sites. The recognition boosted Uganda's international profile, strengthened destination branding, and reinforced confidence among global tour operators, positioning

tourism as a major driver of jobs, foreign exchange, and community livelihoods.

### Sustainable Tourism Awards

On December 10, 2025, during the Ekkula Festival in Kampala, eco-tourism champions such as Nkuringo Safaris were recognized for sustainable practices. The awards celebrated conservation, community engagement, and responsible tourism. Honorees demonstrated how tourism can protect ecosystems while generating local benefits. The recognition reinforced Uganda's commitment to green tourism and positioned sustainability as a core

principle in tourism development.

### Tourism Recovery and Growth

By 2025, Uganda's tourism sector had fully recovered from COVID-19 disruptions, with earnings exceeding USD 1.5 billion, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Recovery was driven by improved infrastructure, aggressive destination marketing, and events such as World Tourism Day celebrations in Arua on September 27. Visitor arrivals increased across wildlife, cultural, and conference tourism segments. Tourism growth supported hotels, transport, artisans, and community enterprises nationwide. The sector reasserted itself as



one of Uganda's top foreign exchange earners, contributing to employment creation, regional development, and economic diversification.

## Mountain Gorilla Conservation Success

In 2025, Uganda strengthened conservation of its endangered mountain gorillas, which make up over half of the world's population. Efforts focused on Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga National Parks, combining eco-tourism, habitat protection, and community benefit-sharing. Revenue from regulated gorilla tourism funded conservation activities and local livelihoods. Improved monitoring and veterinary interventions enhanced gorilla survival rates. These initiatives preserved biodiversity while promoting sustainable tourism. Uganda's success demonstrated how conservation, tourism, and community development can coexist, reinforcing global confidence in the

country's environmental stewardship.

## Athletics Achievements at World Championships

Between September 13 and 21, 2025, Uganda competed at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, qualifying 17 athletes. Ugandan runners excelled in long-distance events, reflecting years of investment in training programs, coaching, and sports infrastructure. These performances strengthened national pride and Uganda's reputation as a distance-running powerhouse. Athletics success also inspired youth participation in sports and reinforced the role of athletics in

talent development and international representation. The achievements highlighted sports as a soft-power tool that promotes unity, discipline, and global visibility.

## Basketball Victory in AfroBasket Qualifiers

In 2025, Uganda's women's national basketball team, the Gazelles, won the FIBA AfroBasket Zone 5 qualifiers, securing qualification for the continental championship. The victory reflected growing investment in women's sports, improved coaching, and youth talent development. Matches were played within the East African region, drawing strong



public support. This achievement promoted gender inclusion, elevated women's sports visibility, and encouraged grassroots basketball participation. Uganda's qualification strengthened national pride and demonstrated progress in building competitive, inclusive sports systems beyond traditional athletics.

### **Infrastructure Borrowing for Development**

In December 2025, Uganda secured USD 608 million in loans from international lenders to finance critical infrastructure projects. Approved by Parliament, the funding targeted roads, energy, and transport systems across the country. These investments aimed to improve connectivity, reduce transport costs, and support industrialization. Infrastructure expansion enhances market access for farmers, businesses, and exporters while stimulating job creation. The borrowing aligned with Uganda's development strategy of



using infrastructure as a foundation for long-term economic growth and regional integration.

### **Road Upgrades in Western Uganda**

During 2025, the government launched major road upgrades covering 125 kilometres in districts such as Kamwenge and Kyenjojo. Funded through national development budgets, the projects improved rural mobility, trade access, and tourism connectivity. Better roads reduced travel times, lowered vehicle operating costs, and enhanced access to markets and social services. These upgrades supported agricultural commercialization and

strengthened links to tourism sites in western Uganda. Infrastructure improvements contributed directly to regional economic inclusion and balanced national development.

### **Education Budget Increase**

For FY2025/2026, Uganda increased its education budget to UGX 5,072 billion, up from the previous year. The allocation supported teacher housing, school rehabilitation, instructional materials, and digital learning initiatives. This investment targeted improved access, quality, and retention across primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Increased funding addressed infrastructure gaps and enhanced learning environments nationwide. Education spending reinforced Uganda's commitment to human capital development, ensuring that a growing youth population acquires skills necessary for employment, innovation, and national development.

### **Green Climate Fund Award**

On November 2, 2025, Uganda received USD 31 million from the Green Climate Fund for forest conservation, marking Africa's first results-based payment under the fund. The award recognized verified reductions in carbon emissions through sustainable forest management. Funds supported community conservation, ecosystem restoration, and climate resilience. This milestone positioned Uganda as a leader in climate accountability and environmental finance, setting a precedent for performance-based climate funding across

the continent.

### **Leadership in Global Environmental Commitments**

In August 2025, Uganda ranked among global leaders in implementing international environmental agreements, according to reports by National Environment Management Authority. Progress was recorded in biodiversity protection, climate action, and environmental governance. Strong coordination across ministries ensured compliance with global commitments while supporting national development goals. Uganda's leadership demonstrated that environmental protection and economic growth can advance together, reinforcing sustainability as a core pillar of national policy.

### **Coffee Production Surge**

For the 2025/2026 crop year, Uganda's coffee production increased by 15 percent, exceeding 7 million bags and generating USD 2.09

billion in export earnings. Growth was driven by maturing coffee trees, improved extension services, and value addition. Coffee remained Uganda's leading export commodity, supporting millions of farmers and rural livelihoods. Higher yields strengthened foreign exchange inflows and enhanced Uganda's competitiveness in global coffee markets, reinforcing agriculture as a cornerstone of economic resilience.

### **Precision Agriculture Innovation**

In 2025, Ugandan farmers adopted digital precision agriculture tools, reducing fertilizer costs by 30 percent and increasing yields by 15 percent. Platforms supported by agricultural partners enabled data-driven decisions on planting, input use, and pest control. These innovations transformed subsistence farming into more efficient, market-oriented production. Precision agriculture improved incomes, reduced environmental impact, and strengthened food security. The

shift demonstrated how technology can modernize agriculture and support sustainable rural development.

### Digital Inclusion Projections

In November 2025, digital economy reports projected that expanded digital access could create 1.79 million jobs by 2030 in Uganda.

Advocated by the GSMA, the findings emphasized affordable connectivity, skills development, and innovation ecosystems. Digital inclusion was identified as a catalyst for youth employment, revenue mobilization, and service delivery. These projections reinforced the importance of ICT investment as a driver of inclusive economic growth.

### SDG Leadership and Partnerships

Between July and September 2025, Uganda advanced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through strong partnerships and innovative programs, as reported by the Office of the Prime Minister. Progress was made

in health, education, climate action, and poverty reduction. Multi-sector collaboration strengthened implementation and accountability. Uganda's SDG leadership demonstrated commitment to inclusive development aligned with global frameworks while addressing local priorities.

### Human Capital Development Review

In July 2025, the World Bank launched Uganda's Human Capital Development Review, assessing gains in education, health, and workforce readiness. The review guided policy reforms aimed at improving productivity, equity, and long-term growth. Findings informed investments in skills, nutrition, and healthcare. By prioritizing human capital, Uganda reinforced the foundation for sustainable economic transformation and competitiveness.

### Uganda Heads to the Polls on January 15, 2026

As 2025 closed, Uganda formally entered a

decisive national campaign period ahead of Presidential and Parliamentary Elections scheduled for January 15, 2026. The Electoral Commission of Uganda intensified voter education, register verification, and logistical preparations nationwide. Campaign activities unfolded across all regions, marked by rallies, media engagements, and manifesto messaging by political parties and independent candidates.

Security agencies deployed early coordination measures to safeguard public order, while civic institutions emphasized peaceful participation. The election period represents a critical democratic milestone, shaping leadership choices and policy direction as Uganda transitions into the next development phase beyond 2025.

# SAFEGUARDING OUR DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

As Uganda approaches another electoral season, the country is also navigating a defining moment in our digital journey. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a distant concept reserved for experts and laboratories. It is here, shaping how we communicate, learn, organise, and participate in civic life. Used responsibly, AI can expand access to information and strengthen democratic engagement. When misused, it can distort truth, inflame division, and weaken public trust.

If you are online, you are already part of Uganda's election conversation. According to the Uganda Communications Commission, internet penetration has surpassed 50% of the population. At the same time, social media use continues to rise rapidly, particularly among the youth, who make up more than 70% of the

Ugandan population. Every post shared, video forwarded, or message reacted to shapes public opinion. This is why the use of AI matters to our democracy, especially among young people who dominate digital spaces and largely determine how information spreads.

As Chairperson of the National Task Force on Artificial Intelligence, established to guide Uganda's safe, ethical, and lawful adoption of AI, I am keenly aware of both its promise and its risks. Those risks become sharper during election periods.

We are already witnessing the misuse of AI to create deceptive content, including deepfake images and videos that falsely portray candidates,



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AI-generated audio that impersonates leaders, and automated accounts that spread false narratives at speed. In some cases, manipulated data is deliberately presented as official election results to undermine confidence in democratic institutions.

This is not just a technology problem. It is a civic responsibility issue. AI itself is not the enemy. The real danger lies in how it can be used to spread falsehoods faster than truth, especially when content

is designed to provoke fear, anger, or confusion rather than inform.

## During elections, such manipulation interferes with citizens' ability to make informed choices.

Democracy does not only happen at polling stations. It happens every day on your phone screen. When unverified content is shared casually, even as a joke or “just for awareness,” it can mislead thousands of others. That is why being digitally smart is now a civic duty. Pause before you post. Ask simple but important questions. Who created this content? Can it be verified through a credible or official source? Is it designed to provoke fear or anger rather than explain facts? Verification is not censorship; it is responsibility.

Citizens must also protect themselves.

Many fake AI platforms collect personal data, clone voices, or track political preferences without consent. Services that demand excessive personal information, promise exclusive political insights, or operate anonymously should be treated with caution. Personal data is valuable and easily misused.

**Political actors must lead by example. Ethical campaigning is not optional. Candidates and parties should avoid circulating deceptive AI-generated material, ensure authenticity in their communications, and respond transparently when clarification is needed. The media, as a trusted public institution, must uphold rigorous fact-checking standards and avoid amplifying unverified or sensational content.**

Although Uganda is still developing a dedicated AI legal framework, existing laws already apply. Election-related misconduct remains unlawful whether committed offline or online, and the misuse of AI to mislead or manipulate carries serious consequences.

Young people are often portrayed as vulnerable to misinformation, yet they are also the strongest defence against it. As critical thinkers and influential voices, they have the power to challenge falsehoods, promote verified information, and demand integrity from leaders and institutions.

The future of Uganda's democracy is digital, and it is already in the hands of its citizens. By using AI responsibly, Ugandans can ensure that technology strengthens democratic participation rather than distorts it, and that elections reflect informed choice, not engineered deception.



# EC CONFIRMS READINESS FOR 2026 GENERAL ELECTIONS, WARNS AGAINST MISINFORMATION

By Kenson Bugembe, Uganda Media Centre

**“**All the activities on the electoral roadmap up to this point have been concluded, and the Commission is firmly focused on delivering free, fair, credible, and transparent elections.” Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon, Chairperson, Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission (EC) has confirmed that preparations for Uganda’s 2026 General Elections are firmly on course, following the successful implementation of all scheduled activities on the electoral roadmap up

to this stage. Speaking at the Electoral Commission Headquarters on 31st December 2025, EC Chairperson Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon said the Commission had reached the final lap of

preparations and was focused on ensuring a peaceful, credible, and transparent electoral process.

“Today, the Commission will give an update on the progress of our preparations for the 2026 General Elections and guide the country on expected conduct by all stakeholders as we enter into the New Year and the final lap of the 2025/2026 General Elections Roadmap,” Justice Byabakama said.

Justice Byabakama confirmed that all roadmap activities scheduled up to this point, including voter register updates, display exercises, candidate nominations, and ongoing campaigns, had been concluded.

“All the activities on the Roadmap up to this point, namely campaigns and preparations for polling, have been concluded,” he stated.

He further noted that the Commission had successfully recruited and trained election officials at national, district, and polling-station levels to ensure professionalism and adherence to ethical standards during polling.

The EC has also progressed with the accreditation of both domestic and international election observers, a move the Chairperson said underscores the Commission’s commitment to transparency and accountability.

“This process

underscores our commitment to transparency, accountability, and openness to scrutiny throughout the electoral process,” Justice Byabakama said.

Addressing electoral integrity, the EC Chairperson reiterated that the use of the Biometric Voter Verification Kit (BVVK) during polling is mandatory and legally backed.

**■■■ The use of the Biometric Voter Verification Kit during polling is now mandatory. This measure is critical in safeguarding the integrity of the vote by ensuring that only duly registered voters participate in the elections,” he emphasized.**

The Commission raised concern over the growing practice of sharing alleged voter irregularities on social media, warning that such actions amount to misinformation and violate privacy laws.

“Any complaint about the content of the National

Voters Register should be directly addressed to the Commission through its established offices to avoid causing alarm by sharing unfounded and unverified information,” Justice Byabakama cautioned.

He also urged the public not to publish personal details or photographs of voters without consent, noting that this contravenes data protection laws.

The EC confirmed receipt of ballot papers and declaration of results forms for the Presidential, Direct-elected MP, and District Woman Representative elections from contracted security printers abroad. The process, the Chairperson said, was witnessed by political party representatives, candidates, observers, and the media.

“The Commission has started receiving consignments of ballot papers and declaration of results forms to ensure readiness for polling,” he said.

# Dispatch of transparent ballot boxes, solar lamps, and other election materials to districts and cities has already commenced.

Justice Byabakama issued a strong warning against an unauthorized website, [www.registry.ugtally.com](http://www.registry.ugtally.com), stating that it is not affiliated with the Electoral Commission and may pose risks to the public.

“The Electoral Commission wishes to categorically inform the public that the website is not authorised and is not affiliated with the Commission,” he said, urging voters to rely only on official EC platforms.

In line with the law, the Commission will issue hard copies of the photo-bearing National Voters’ Register to all presidential candidates,

containing details of 21,681,491 registered voters across 50,739 polling stations.

“This issuance should put to rest any concern among stakeholders about the readiness of the National Voters’ Register for the 2026 General Elections,” Justice Byabakama said.

As the country enters the final weeks of the campaign period, the EC Chairperson appealed for restraint, tolerance, and respect for the rule of

law.

“Peaceful conduct before, during, and after polling is essential for credible elections and national stability,” he said, reaffirming the Commission’s commitment to delivering free and fair elections.

He concluded by wishing Ugandans a peaceful New Year and calling on every citizen to play their role in safeguarding the electoral process.

# MUSEVENI'S MEDIATION ROLE IN SUDAN AND THE QUEST FOR REGIONAL STABILITY CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED

In November 2025, the African Union appointed Yoweri Kaguta Museveni to mediate the conflict in Sudan, a war that has plunged the country into one of the gravest humanitarian crises in recent history. Since April 2023, the fighting has claimed more than 24,000 lives and displaced over 13 million people. It pits the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

The African Union's decision reflects confidence in President Museveni's long record in regional diplomacy, particularly after several international initiatives failed to bring the warring parties to meaningful negotiations. Under this mandate, he is expected to press for an immediate cessation of hostilities, facilitate humanitarian corridors,

and promote inclusive political dialogue aimed at restoring peace, stability, and national reconciliation in Sudan.

Earlier, in March 2025, President Museveni authorized the deployment of the Uganda People's Defence Forces to South Sudan at the request of President Salva Kiir Mayardit. The intervention followed deadly clashes after soldiers loyal to then Vice President Riek Machar mutinied and killed troops loyal to President Kiir in Nasir and parts of Juba. At the time, South Sudan teetered on the brink of another catastrophic civil war that could have collapsed the state and destabilized the wider region. The UPDF remains deployed as regional leaders pursue a durable political settlement through dialogue.

South Sudan has lived



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with chronic instability since the death of its founding leader, Dr. John Garang, in a plane crash on July 30, 2005. His successor, President Kiir, has struggled to forge a cohesive leadership with Dr. Machar, whose political ambitions and rivalry have repeatedly ignited internal conflict. Fragile tribal dynamics have compounded these tensions, leaving wounds that may take generations to heal.

Politically, the Dinka community, led by

President Kiir, often views itself as the principal architect of South Sudan's liberation, having borne enormous sacrifices in the struggle against domination from the Arab north. They accuse the Nuer, associated with Dr. Machar, of collaborating with Khartoum during the war. Conversely, the Nuer point to higher levels of education and international exposure, citing Dr. Machar's academic credentials, including a PhD in Strategic Planning, as evidence of leadership suitability. What South Sudan urgently needs, however, is a reconstituted and professional national army anchored in patriotism rather than ethnic or tribal loyalties.

Despite repeated appeals for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union, and the European Union to deploy peacekeeping forces ahead of an eventual UPDF withdrawal, tangible action has been limited. Uganda has

therefore shouldered a disproportionate burden in preventing what could have escalated into genocide. Ironically, instead of recognition, some regional and international actors have accused President Museveni of partisanship in South Sudan. This narrative does not stand up to scrutiny.

Pan-Africanism is woven into President Museveni's political DNA. It is this record of regional leadership and sacrifice that many Ugandans point to as they head toward the January 15, 2026 elections, convinced that his stewardship remains vital for both national and regional stability.

As efforts intensify to stabilize both Sudan and South Sudan, President Museveni deserves the backing of all peace-loving global actors. The two countries remain the "sick men" of the region and require sustained international attention,

resources, and political will.

Beyond the two Sudans, Uganda continues to play a stabilizing role across the region. The deployment of the UPDF in Somalia and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo underscores this commitment. Somalia, once synonymous with state failure and extremist violence, is gradually rebuilding, aided in part by Uganda's sacrifices alongside other partners.

In eastern DR Congo, the UPDF, at the invitation of the Kinshasa government, entered Ituri Province in November 2021 and dismantled cells of the Allied Democratic Forces responsible for mass killings and displacement. Working jointly with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UPDF has helped restore relative stability, enabling displaced communities to return home and revitalizing cross-border trade between Uganda and DR Congo.

# ENKUUKA YO MWAKA TAKES CENTRE STAGE AS UGANDANS WELCOME 2026 WITH PRAYER, CULTURE, AND HOPE

By David Serumaga, Public Affairs Assistant, Uganda Media Centre

**U**gandans ushered in the New Year 2026 with a rich blend of spirituality, cultural heritage, family gatherings, and celebration, reflecting the country's strong Christian traditions alongside deep-rooted cultural pride. While prayers and fireworks marked the transition nationwide, the Enkuuka yo Mwaka at Lubiri Palace stood out as one of the most symbolic moments of the New Year.

Across the country, thousands chose to cross into 2026 in prayer. All-night services were held in churches and cathedrals, with large congregations gathering at Namirembe Cathedral in

Kampala and in churches across cities such as Soroti and Mbarara. Clergy led worshippers in thanksgiving for the year gone by and prayers for renewal, peace, and personal transformation,



The Nnabagereka Sylvia Nagginda exchanges greetings with Katikkiro at Lubiri Palace as Buganda Kingdom ushered in 2026



The Kabaka acknowledges the crowd with a royal wave as thousands gather at Lubiri Palace for Enkuuka yo Mwaka festivities

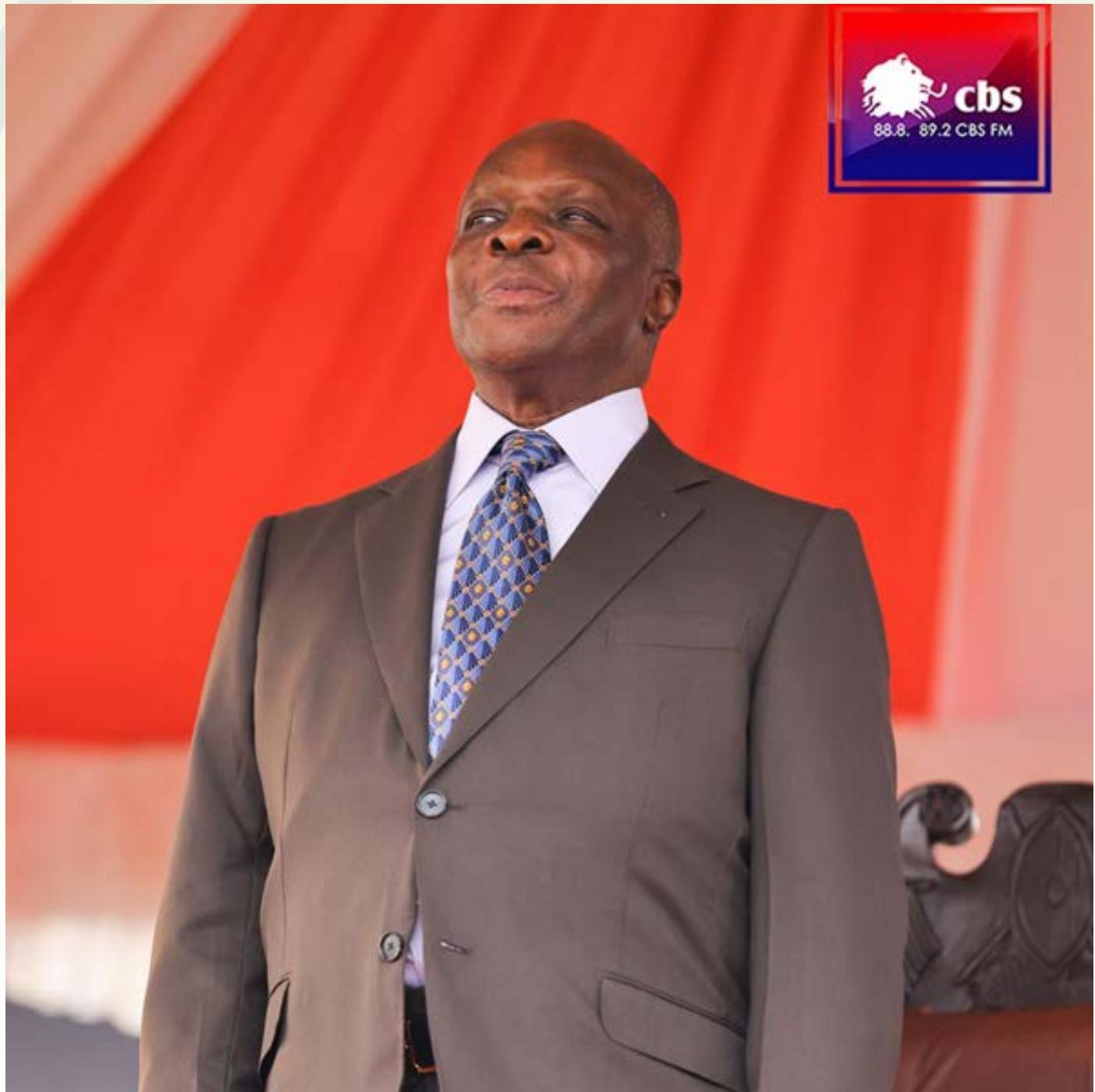
while also calling for positive change at both personal and national levels.

Cultural traditions took centre stage in Buganda Kingdom as thousands gathered at Lubiri Palace for Enkuuka yo Mwaka, the annual cultural event marking the end of the old year and the beginning of a new one. The highlight of the celebrations was the appearance of Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, whose presence reaffirmed unity, continuity, and the enduring strength of Buganda's cultural heritage.



Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II is received by the Katikkiro on arrival at Lubiri Palace during the Enkuuka yo Mwaka celebrations welcoming the New Year 2026

Addressing his people, the Kabaka called on the people of Buganda to remain united and to safeguard their



culture, values, and language. He hailed the organisers of Enkuuka, one of the largest annual cultural events organised by Central Broadcasting Services (CBS FM), for sustaining a platform that brings together

people from across the kingdom and beyond.

The Kabaka also commended traditional wrestlers and winners of the Entanda ya Buganda competition, noting that initiatives that promote the Luganda

language and traditional practices play a vital role in strengthening identity and fostering unity. Reflecting on history, he observed that early colonial visitors praised Buganda's clan systems, leadership structures,



Members of the royal household and attendants escort the Kabaka during the New Year cultural celebrations at Lubiri

and language as signs of a highly organised and civilised society. He urged his people to protect these values and pass them on to future generations.

Encouraging resilience, the Kabaka reminded his subjects that unity itself is a form of victory. He urged them not to lose hope despite current challenges, assuring them that circumstances can change when people remain steadfast and united in purpose. He concluded his address by symbolically turning the key, marking the closure of the old year and the official ushering in of 2026.

Before the Kabaka's address, Buganda's Prime Minister, Charles Peter Mayiga, thanked the Kabaka, the Sylvia Nagginda, and other members of the royal family for celebrating the New Year with the people. He prayed for God's blessings upon the Kabaka and the entire kingdom, wishing them long life, prosperity, and renewed strength in the year ahead.



As midnight struck, regulated fireworks displays lit up skies across the country. Police approved more than 2,000 fireworks displays nationwide, each limited to five minutes to ensure public safety. In Kampala and other urban centres, crowds gathered in open spaces and along major roads to witness the displays.

Entertainment venues also hosted major celebrations. At Speke Resort Munyonyo, revellers enjoyed lakeside festivities featuring live

performances, including by popular artist Sheebah Karungi. Similar concerts and club parties were held across the country, while towns such as Lira City prepared with clean-ups, prizes, and themed events. Many families, however, chose quieter celebrations at home, sharing meals, prayers, and moments of reflection.

Social media buzzed throughout the night with New Year greetings, videos, and reflections. Ugandans shared fireworks clips, messages

of hope, and expressions of anticipation as the country approaches a politically significant election year.

From church pews and royal grounds to concert venues and living rooms, the message that carried into 2026 was one of balance. Ugandans welcomed the new year with faith and joy, culture and celebration, emphasising peace, unity, and renewed purpose for both individuals and the nation.

# FESTIVE SEASON TRAFFIC UPDATE: FEWER CRASHES RECORDED DESPITE HIGH TRAFFIC VOLUMES

As Ugandans celebrated the Christmas festivities, traffic volumes increased significantly across major highways and urban centres. A road safety briefing covering the period 22nd to 28th December 2025 shows that, despite the seasonal surge in travel, the number of road traffic crashes registered was lower than during the same period in 2024.



However, the period was not without tragedy. Lives were lost and several people sustained injuries, reminding all

road users that festive travel continues to pose serious risks if safety is neglected.



**ASP FARIDAH NAMPIIMA,  
HEAD MEDIA MONITOING  
UNIT, UGANDA POLICE  
FORCE**

Data from the Directorate of Traffic and Road Safety indicates that vulnerable road users were most affected. Motorcyclists, including riders and passengers, accounted for 44 percent of all fatalities, while pedestrians made up 34 percent. Crashes involving motor vehicles were largely attributed to careless overtaking (28 percent), speeding (18 percent), and following too closely (10 percent).

One of the most tragic incidents occurred in the early hours of Saturday, 27th December 2025, at



approximately 4:30 a.m., at Njagalakasayi along the Masaka-Mbarara Highway in Lwengo District. A Toyota Fielder travelling from the Masaka side crossed into the lane of oncoming traffic and collided head-on with a Fuso Fighter truck. All seven occupants of the Toyota Fielder a man, his wife, their four children, and the man's brother died at the scene.

During the review period, 154 drivers were apprehended for various traffic offences. These included driving without valid licences, driving under the influence of alcohol, reckless driving mainly through unsafe overtaking and speeding, carrying excess passengers, dangerous

loading, and cases of abandoned vehicles.

The relatively improved safety outcomes are attributed to joint efforts between the Police and key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Works & Transport and the Uganda Professional Drivers' Network. Interventions under the "Arrive Alive" campaign included strict enforcement operations, use of route charts for bus operators, deployment of breath analysers at checkpoints to deter drink-driving, and firm action against unroadworthy vehicles and illegal or modified lights. Public awareness campaigns, supported by the media, also played a vital role.

As the country transitions into the New Year, all road users are urged to observe speed limits, avoid drink-driving and reckless overtaking, maintain safe following distances, limit night travel where possible, and remain alert at all times. Police interventions and enforcement efforts will continue throughout 2026.

Together, through responsible behaviour and collective vigilance, Uganda can achieve safer roads for all.

We wish all Ugandans a crash-free and peaceful 2026.

**STAY ALERT. STAY RESPONSIBLE. STAY ALIVE.**

# KAMPALA SOUTH SUBSTATION UPGRADE COMMISSIONED, BOOSTING POWER CAPACITY TO 34MW

By Jackie Mayega,  
Public Affairs Assistant,  
Uganda Media Centre

The Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited has officially commissioned the newly upgraded Kampala South Substation, increasing its capacity from 20 Megawatts to 34 Megawatts, in a move set to significantly improve power reliability along Entebbe Road and surrounding areas.

The commissioning ceremony was held on Monday, December 29, 2025, and was officiated by Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited Managing Director Paul Mwesigwa, who was accompanied by local leaders and technical teams.

The upgrade involved the installation and



UEDCL Managing Director Paul Mwesigwa (4th L) joins local leaders to officially commission the newly upgraded Kampala South Substation on Monday, December 29, 2025

commissioning of a new 10/14MVA, 33/11kV transformer as part of UEDCL's broader system optimisation and grid enhancement programme aimed at increasing supply reliability and meeting growing electricity demand. Prior to the upgrade, the substation had been operating beyond its designed

capacity, with demand reaching 20.45 Megawatts.

The Kampala South Substation supplies power to more than 650 commercial consumers and approximately 108,000 domestic customers across key feeders including Salama, Najjanankumbi, Kigo,



The newly installed 10/14 MVA, 33/11kV transformer at Kampala South Substation

Makindye, Kisuubi, and Kabowa. The upgrade eliminates capacity strain and introduces transformer redundancy, ensuring continuity of supply in the event of equipment failure or scheduled maintenance.

Speaking at the commissioning, Mr. Mwesigwa said the upgrade marks a major milestone in stabilising power supply in the area.

"We will see improved supply reliability and the introduction of transformer redundancy in the event of failure or maintenance of either transformer. The risk of substation overload has now been eliminated, and the facility can comfortably handle both current and future demand," he noted.

The Salama and Najjanankumbi feeders have already been transferred to the newly installed

transformer, improving load distribution and operational flexibility across the network.

The Kampala South upgrade is part of a wider national infrastructure push by UEDCL following the start of its new mandate. Other substations upgraded within the first eight months include Kakiri, Kabale, Masaka, Kumi, and Mubende. The company has also acquired land within Kampala for the construction of two



A wide view of the Kampala South Substation following its upgrade from 20MW to 34MW

additional substations, as well as another facility in Magigye along Zirobwe Road.

Downstream network upgrades are also planned for several city feeders, including Mutundwe-Mityana, Mutundwe-Nakawuka-Budo, and the Waligo-Namugongo interconnection. Once completed, these projects are expected to guarantee steady power supply across Kampala in

2026.

Mr. Mwesigwa also commended electricity users who responded to UEDCL's "Weterezeeeee" campaign, which encourages the normalisation of electricity connections. Over 32,000 Ugandans have already benefited under the Government of Uganda's free electricity connections programme. However, he cautioned against vandalism of power infrastructure,

noting that over 330 vandalism incidents have been recorded nationwide since April 2025, affecting overall reliability.

The commissioning of the Kampala South Substation upgrade underscores UEDCL's commitment to strengthening Uganda's power distribution network in line with rising urban demand and economic growth.



African Ministers of Finance, senior government officials, and development partners pose for a group photo at the launch of the Pan-African Finance Ministers Forum for Climate Action in Lusaka, Zambia

# LAUNCH OF THE PAN-AFRICAN FINANCE MINISTERS FORUM FOR CLIMATE ACTION IN LUSAKA

Carolyne Muyama, Uganda Media Centre

**“This forum gives Africa a unified voice to integrate climate risk, adaptation, and green growth into our economic planning.” Matia Kasaija, Chair, Global Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action**

Africa has taken a significant step toward aligning economic planning with climate resilience following the launch of the Pan-African Finance

Ministers Forum for Climate Action in Lusaka, Zambia.

Speaking at the opening of the second meeting of African Ministers of Finance, Uganda’s

Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Matia Kasaija, applauded the continent’s collective resolve to place climate-responsive economic transformation at the heart of Africa’s development agenda.

Kasaija, who also chairs the Global Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, said the new forum will enable African finance leaders



Dr. Albert Musisi, Commissioner for Macro-Economic Policy at Uganda's Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, delivers remarks on behalf of Finance Minister Matia Kasaija at the Lusaka forum

to speak with one voice, grounded in the continent's priorities and realities. He emphasized that the platform will promote peer-to-peer learning, strengthen institutional capacities, and ensure that Africa's economic planning fully integrates climate risk, adaptation needs, and opportunities arising from green growth.

His remarks were delivered on his behalf by Albert Musisi, Commissioner for Macro-Economic Policy at Uganda's Ministry of

Finance, Planning and Economic Development, during the opening session in Lusaka.

According to Kasaija, climate action must be viewed not as a constraint but as an economic opportunity. "We see climate action as a catalyst for economic transformation, creation of jobs, enhancement of food security, expansion of clean energy access, and protection of the natural assets on which our communities depend," he said. He noted that



Zambia's Accountant General, Nsandi Manza, delivers remarks on behalf of the Minister of Finance at the Pan-African Finance Ministers Forum for Climate Action in Lusaka, Zambia

the meeting was both timely and urgent, calling on ministries of finance to use their fiscal authority to shape macroeconomic, fiscal, and financial strategies that allow Africa to thrive in a changing climate.

The Global Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action was established to embed climate change action within public finance management systems. Its core objective is to support finance ministries to integrate climate considerations



Delegates from across Africa participate in the second meeting of African Ministers of Finance, focused on integrating climate action into public finance and economic planning

into economic policy, align national budgets with the Paris Agreement, promote carbon pricing, mobilize private sector finance, and share best practices for building low-carbon and climate-resilient economies.

Highlighting progress already made on the continent, Sam Mugume Koojo, a technical coordinator at the Secretariat for Uganda, noted that several African countries have advanced in green budgeting practices. He pointed to strengthened climate tagging systems, the establishment of climate finance units, and the use of innovative

financing instruments such as green bonds as evidence that Africa is building the foundations for climate-aligned public finance.

Representing Zambia's Minister of Finance, Zambia's Accountant General Nsandi Manza underscored the urgency of the forum's mission. She observed that Africa is already experiencing the impacts of climate change with unprecedented intensity, despite the continent's abundance of natural resources, renewable energy potential, and human capital.

“The reality of climate vulnerability and climate opportunity defines

the purpose of our meeting,” she said. Manza warned that droughts, floods, cyclones, and food insecurity are no longer distant threats but present and costly realities that are reducing Africa's gross domestic product, straining public resources, and undermining long-term development gains.

She added that Africa remains central to the global climate solution and that the challenge ahead is to translate the continent's vast potential into bankable, growth-enhancing economic strategies that deliver resilience, prosperity, and sustainable development for future generations.

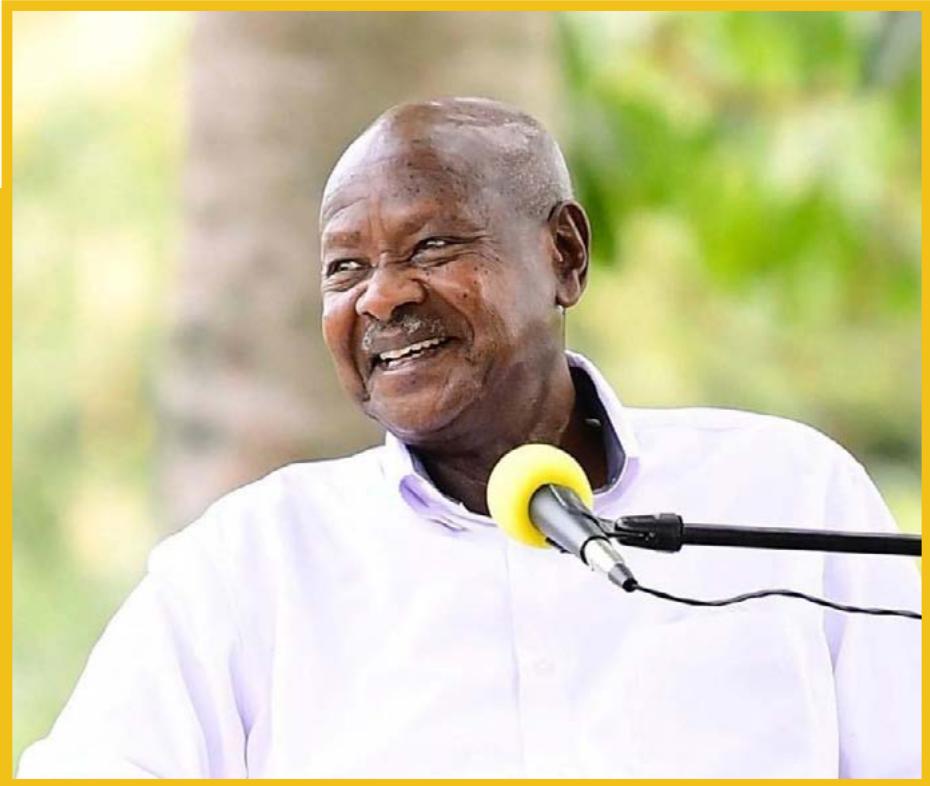
# MUSEVENI'S END-OF-YEAR ADDRESS 2025: ECONOMY EXPANDS, JOBS GROW, AND 2026 OIL OUTLOOK

By Male Solomon Grace,  
GCIC-Uganda

Uganda has firmly exited Least Developed Country status, exports now exceed imports, jobs are growing across production sectors, and with first oil expected in 2026, the future of Uganda is bright." Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has declared Uganda's economy strong, resilient, and firmly on a growth trajectory, announcing that the country has exited Least Developed Country (LDC) status and transitioned into the lower middle-income category.

In his end-of-year address delivered on December 31, 2025, President Museveni



congratulated Ugandans for safely completing the year and extended New Year greetings on behalf of himself and the First Lady, Janet Kataaha Museveni.

The President revealed that Uganda's economy is projected to reach USD 68.4 billion using the foreign exchange rate method and USD 194.2 billion under purchasing power parity (PPP). He added that GDP per

capita is expected to rise to USD 1,399 by June 2026, confirming the country's lower middle-income status.

Museveni noted that Uganda's economy has expanded seventeen times, from USD 3.92 billion in 1986 to its current size, attributing the growth to sustained stability, investment in production, and export-oriented policies.

The President highlighted strong performance

across key productive sectors. Coffee exports increased from 3 million to 8.2 million bags, milk production rose from 200 million litres to 5.4 billion litres, and maize output grew from 322,000 to 4 million metric tonnes. Cement production expanded from 76,000 tonnes to 7 million metric tonnes, while sugar output reached 700,000 metric tonnes.

**Tourism also rebounded strongly, with 1.6 million tourist arrivals annually, supported by a nationwide hotel capacity of 150,000 beds.**

Museveni pointed to visible agricultural transformation in regions including Masaka, Rakai, Kalangala, Teso, Bugisu, Zombo, Bushenyi, Isingiro, Bundibugyo, Mukono, Busoga, Bunyoro, and Lango, citing improved household incomes and

market participation.

For the first time in decades, Uganda's export earnings now exceed imports. Exports stand at USD 13.4 billion, while imports total USD 11.03 billion, resulting in a balance of payments surplus of USD 2.37 billion.

On employment, the President reported significant job creation across the economy. More than 50,000 factories now employ 823,000 workers, while the services sector accounts for 6.03 million jobs. Commercial agriculture employs 3.8 million Ugandans, and the ICT sector provides 2.3 million jobs.

He emphasized that wealth and employment opportunities are available for Ugandans willing to engage in production rather than speculation or subsistence.

Museveni acknowledged persistent challenges, including poverty, unemployed graduates, poor road conditions, and corruption. However, he

noted that 70 percent of households are now part of the money economy, up from 32 percent in 2013 and 9 percent at independence in 1962.

He defended government programs such as UPE, USE, NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation, Emoya, the Parish Development Model, the Youth Fund, and the Women Fund, describing them as deliberate interventions to fight poverty and expand access to education and capital.

The President said Uganda's education system will increasingly emphasize skills development, drawing lessons from traditional productive occupations such as farming, carpentry, blacksmithing, healing, and manufacturing.

He criticized the commercialization of free education by some local elites, saying it has contributed to school dropouts.

Museveni reported improvements in life expectancy, which has risen from 43 to 68 years,

largely due to preventive healthcare measures such as immunization and improved access to clean water.

However, he warned that corruption among public servants remains a serious threat, urging Local Council leaders and elected officials to actively expose misconduct and protect public resources.

On politics, the President cautioned against sectarian and self-serving politics, reiterating

his commitment to patriotism, Pan-Africanism, socio-economic transformation, and democracy. He accused some opposition groups of attempting to create instability through foreign-backed activities, voter intimidation, and crowd transportation.

Museveni urged Ugandans to vote freely, assuring them of adequate security during the electoral process.

While rejecting the use of caning by police

as unacceptable, he defended non-lethal crowd control measures such as tear gas and water cannons, urging security forces to apply them professionally and with advance warnings.

The President concluded by affirming that Uganda remains secure, the economy continues to grow, and first oil production is expected in 2026.

**■■■ The future of Uganda is bright. Uganda and NRM are unstoppable,” Museveni said.**



# 2026 AND BEYOND: OPPORTUNITIES FOR UGANDAN YOUTH UNDER THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IV

By Micheal Woira, GCIC – Uganda

As Uganda steps into 2026, a new five-year national roadmap is already in motion. The Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) is not just a government document; it is a practical blueprint that directly shapes where jobs, skills, funding, and enterprise opportunities will emerge over the next decade. For Uganda's youthful population, which forms the largest share of the country's labour force, NDP IV presents both opportunities and responsibility.

## What Is NDP IV and Why It Matters to Youth

NDP IV runs from FY 2025/26 to 2029/30 and is anchored on the theme of sustainable industrialisation for inclusive growth, employment, and wealth creation. Its overarching goal is to raise household incomes and expand employment opportunities, especially by increasing

productivity and value addition across the economy.

For young people, this means the national focus is shifting away from survival activities and short-term hustles toward skills, enterprise, innovation, and structured employment in productive sectors.

### 1. Jobs and Enterprises in Agro-Industrialisation

Agriculture remains the backbone of Uganda's economy, employing

over 60 percent of the population. Under NDP IV, the focus is no longer on subsistence farming but on commercial agriculture, agro-processing, storage, packaging, and value addition.

For youth, opportunities will arise in:

- ✓ Agro-processing plants and cooperatives
- ✓ Agribusiness start-ups along value chains such as coffee, dairy, fisheries, fruits, and grains
- ✓ Mechanisation services, irrigation management, and post-harvest handling
- ✓ Digital agriculture, extension services, and agri-finance

Young people who acquire technical, business, and cooperative management skills will be well positioned to benefit.

## 2. Industry, Manufacturing, and Industrial Parks

NDP IV prioritises value addition and industrial development as the main drivers of job creation and economic transformation. This includes manufacturing in food processing, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and consumer goods.

As industrial parks are expanded and revitalised, youth opportunities will emerge in:

- ✓ Factory and plant operations
- ✓ Engineering, fabrication, and machine maintenance
- ✓ Quality control, packaging, logistics, and supply chains
- ✓ Small and medium enterprises supplying inputs and services to industries

This shift demands technical skills, discipline, and work readiness, areas that youth are encouraged to intentionally prepare for.

## 3. ICT, Innovation, and the Digital Economy

ICT is identified in NDP IV as both a job creator and productivity accelerator. Government is investing heavily in digitisation of services, innovation ecosystems, and positioning Uganda as a regional ICT-enabled services and business process outsourcing hub.

Youth opportunities include:

- ✓ Software development, data services, and digital content creation
- ✓ ICT start-ups and innovation hubs
- ✓ Digital government services and e-commerce platforms
- ✓ Freelancing, outsourcing, and remote work for global markets

Digital literacy, coding, design, and innovation skills will increasingly determine employability in this space.

## 4. Skills Development, Skilling, and Employment Readiness

NDP IV recognises that Uganda's biggest challenge is not just job availability, but skills

mismatch. The Plan prioritises industry-driven skilling, vocational training, and manpower planning to align education with labour market needs.

Young people should look out for:

- ✓ Technical and vocational education programmes
- ✓ Apprenticeships, industrial training, and certification
- ✓ Entrepreneurship and business incubation initiatives
- ✓ Youth livelihood and empowerment programmes

The emphasis is clear: skills, productivity, and mindset change are essential for long-term success.

## 5. Tourism, Creative Economy, and Sports

Tourism, culture, and the creative economy are recognised as high-employment sectors under NDP IV. The Plan promotes investment in tourism infrastructure, cultural industries, arts, music, film, fashion, and sports.

- ✓ Youth can tap into opportunities in:
- ✓ Hospitality and tourism services
- ✓ Cultural products, events, and festivals
- ✓ Creative content, branding, and digital media
- ✓ Sports development, management, and related enterprises

These sectors offer both formal employment and self-employment pathways.

## 6. Access to Finance and Youth Enterprise Support

To unlock youth potential, NDP IV prioritises financial inclusion, development finance, and affordable credit, particularly through institutions like development banks and government programmes

Opportunities exist through:

- ✓ Parish Development Model (PDM) structures
- ✓ Youth and women livelihood programmes
- ✓ MSME financing and

- entrepreneurship funds
- ✓ Digital financial services and innovation

Youth are encouraged to engage formally, organise into groups, and build bankable enterprises.

## The Youth Responsibility in 2026

NDP IV makes one thing clear: government investment alone is not enough. Transformation requires active, skilled, disciplined, and organised youth who are ready to participate in productive sectors.

The new year calls on young Ugandans to:

- ✓ Acquire relevant skills, not just certificates
- ✓ Shift from survival activities to value creation
- ✓ Embrace discipline, innovation, and long-term planning
- ✓ Participate in national programmes with purpose

As 2026 begins, NDP IV offers a rare window for Ugandan youth to align their ambitions with the country's development direction. The opportunities are real, structured, and growing. Those who understand the Plan, prepare early, and position themselves strategically will not only find jobs but will become builders of Uganda's future economy.

## Key Action Points for Youth Leaders and Student Organisations (NDP IV 2026 Onwards)

Based on the priorities of Uganda's National Development Plan IV (2025/26–2029/30), youth leaders and student organisations should focus on the following practical action points:

### 1. Align Youth Activities to Productive Sectors

- ✓ Reorient clubs, fellowships, and

associations toward agriculture value chains, ICT, manufacturing, tourism, and creative industries.

- ✓ Move beyond talk shows to skills-based and enterprise-focused activities.

## 2. Promote Skills Over Certificates

- ✓ Encourage members to pursue technical, digital, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills.
- ✓ Partner with vocational institutes, innovation hubs, and industry players for practical training.

## 3. Support Youth Enterprise and Cooperatives

- ✓ Mobilise students and youth to form groups, SACCOs, and cooperatives that can access government and private financing.
- ✓ Train members in basic business planning, record keeping, and financial discipline.

## 4. Champion Mindset Change and Work Ethic

- ✓ Lead conversations on discipline, productivity, integrity, and long-term planning.
- ✓ Shift youth mindset from survival hustles to value creation and wealth building.

## 5. Engage Government Programmes

- ✓ Sensitise members on opportunities under the Parish Development Model (PDM), skilling programmes, and youth livelihood initiatives.
- ✓ Act as information bridges between youth and local government structures.

## 6. Embrace Digital and Innovation Spaces

- ✓ Establish or strengthen ICT clubs, digital media teams, innovation labs, and online communities.
- ✓ Promote freelancing, remote work, content creation, and tech-based solutions.

## 7. Leverage Tourism, Culture, and Sports

- ✓ Organise talent development programmes in arts, music, film, fashion, sports, and events management.
- ✓ Link creative talent to markets, exhibitions, and income opportunities.

## 8. Build Partnerships and Networks

- ✓ Collaborate with NGOs, private sector players, faith institutions, and development agencies working in youth empowerment.
- ✓ Avoid operating in isolation; partnerships increase impact and access.

## 9. Promote Civic Participation and Leadership

- ✓ Encourage youth involvement in community development, accountability forums, and local decision-making spaces.
- ✓ Develop informed, responsible leaders who understand national

development priorities.

## 10. Track and Measure Impact

- Set clear goals for employment, skills acquisition, enterprises started, and members supported.

Report outcomes to inspire confidence, attract partners, and improve programmes.

Youth leaders and student organisations are not spectators

under NDP IV. They are mobilisers, trainers, innovators, and builders of Uganda's future workforce and enterprises. The earlier they align with the Plan, the greater their impact in 2026 and beyond.



# Mosquito nets are here!

Distribution starts in **January** in the following districts:

- Amolatar
- Alebtong
- Buyende
- Budaka
- Bugweri
- Lira
- Lira City
- Kaliro
- Kole
- Oyam
- Iganga
- Kamuli
- Apac
- Kwania
- Mbale
- Mbale City
- Dokolo
- Otuke
- Jinja
- Jinja City

## Under the Net

**Get ready to receive your mosquito net**

For more information, visit the nearest health facility or call Ministry of Health toll-free line on: **0800 100066**

# PARLIAMENT IN 2025: UGANDA'S LEGISLATIVE YEAR IN REVIEW

By BillClinton

As 2025 draws to a close, Uganda's 11th Parliament, under the leadership of Speaker Anita Among and Deputy Speaker Thomas Tayebwa, concludes a year marked by intense legislative activity and assertive oversight. This unfolded against a difficult global economic backdrop characterized by reduced aid flows, rising public debt, and increasing pressure on countries like Uganda to strengthen domestic resource mobilization and institutional resilience.

Throughout the year, Parliament focused on laws, budgets, and financing instruments aimed at stabilizing essential services, improving public safety,

and positioning the economy for long-term self-reliance.

One of Parliament's defining achievements in 2025 was the passage of legislation with direct impact on citizens' daily lives.

The Forensic and Scientific Analytical Services Act, 2025 formalized the use of DNA analysis, fingerprinting, and scientific evidence in judicial processes. Long awaited by the justice sector, the law is expected to reduce case backlogs, improve conviction accuracy, and modernize crime investigation, especially in cases where evidence

has traditionally relied on conflicting testimony.

Public safety in the built environment also received attention through the Building Control (Amendment) Act, 2025. Passed in response to recurring building collapses in urban areas, the law tightens regulation of contractors, strengthens inspection regimes, and enforces higher construction standards, offering greater protection for families, businesses, and workers.

Fiscal sustainability was addressed through the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2025, which refined tax administration while introducing a three-year tax exemption for



start-ups. The move was widely seen as an effort to stimulate innovation, support small enterprises, and reduce dependence on external financing. Other assented laws included the Political Parties and Organizations (Amendment) Act, 2025 and the Tax Procedures Code (Amendment) Act, 2025, both aimed at improving regulatory clarity and compliance.

Meanwhile, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Bill, 2024 progressed to second reading, promoting sustainable energy use, while several institutional bills, including the National Drug and Health Products Authority Bill, 2025 and the Human Resource Management Professionals Bill, 2025, were introduced for first reading, reflecting Parliament's broader push for accountability and professional regulation.

Faced with economic pressures and emerging needs, Parliament approved several supplementary budgets during the year.

The Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024 and the Appropriation Bill, 2024 redirected funds to stabilize priority sectors.

On December 19, 2025, lawmakers approved a UGX 7.1 trillion loan for the Uganda National Oil Company to advance national energy security. During the debate, Leader of the Opposition Joel Ssenyonyi cautioned that Uganda's debt-to-GDP ratio had reached 51.3 percent, warning against excessive borrowing to service existing debt.

Health financing featured prominently. Parliament approved a USD 36.5 million loan from the Islamic Development Bank to fund the Arua Oncology Centre and install radiotherapy equipment in Mbale, significantly expanding access to cancer treatment outside Kampala. Minister of State for Finance Henry Musasizi emphasized that the investment would bring life-saving services closer to rural populations, while

National Economy Committee Vice Chairperson Robert Migadde urged timely release of counterpart funding to avoid project delays.

Infrastructure financing continued at pace. Parliament approved a EUR 188.18 million loan under the Uganda Intergovernmental Digital Acceleration Project to expand national connectivity, alongside a EUR 342.5 million facility for the Karuma-Tororo transmission line to stabilize power supply for businesses. Additional approvals covered the South Sudan-Uganda Power Interconnection and the Busega-Mpigi Expressway.

By December 2025, Parliament had approved four loans worth UGX 9.622 trillion, contributing to public debt that stood at UGX 119.4 trillion by September. An UGX 8.104 trillion supplementary package expanded the FY2025/26 budget to UGX 78.631 trillion, funded through a mix of external and domestic borrowing. Budget

Committee Chair Patrick Isiagi outlined these allocations during plenary sittings.

Health received an additional UGX 503.263 billion to address funding gaps created by the withdrawal of USAID support. This included allocations for essential health services, ambulances, and nutrition programs in Karamoja supported by UNICEF.

In education, Parliament received updates on student loan beneficiaries for the 2025–2026 academic year, expanding access to university education for disadvantaged youth. Discussions on Technical and Vocational Education and Training reforms targeted the elimination of substandard institutions and the strengthening of skills development.

With the 2026 general elections approaching, Parliament scrutinized electoral preparedness. Debates on biometric voting systems intensified in December, culminating

in demonstrations by the Electoral Commission to address concerns about system integrity. Earlier in October, MPs approved the Political Parties and Organizations (IPOD) Regulations, 2025, aimed at fostering dialogue and peaceful political engagement.

Parliament also approved significant World Bank financing, including USD 1.341 billion in loans and USD 328.3 million in grants for programs such as NUSAID IV, DRDIP II, ULEARN, and USMID. Deputy Speaker Tayebwa commended the Ministry of Finance for securing concessional terms, noting the relative stability of the Uganda shilling in the region.

Tax waivers sparked debate, with Parliament considering requests for relief from companies facing financial hardship. Meanwhile, MPs raised concerns over undisbursed loans, particularly for road projects, highlighting the need for stronger implementation oversight.

Regionally, Uganda

remained active within the East African Legislative Assembly, while domestically, MPs pressed for greater transparency on media access and public information.

In essence, the 2025 parliamentary session resembled a long-term road repair project. Debates and bills may have caused temporary disruptions, but they were aimed at paving smoother paths for the future. Every law passed, every loan approved, and every debate held was anchored in improving lives by making justice fairer, healthcare more accessible, infrastructure more reliable, education attainable, and democracy stronger.

From village roads to national energy security, Parliament in 2025 demonstrated that it does not work in isolation. It serves as a bridge connecting national priorities to the daily realities of Ugandans, affirming that, at its best, the business of Parliament is truly the people's business.

# PRESIDENT MUSEVENI COMMISSIONS USD 100 MILLION PRO INDUSTRIES ETHANOL PLANT IN LUWERO

By Desire Amanyia,  
GCIC – Uganda

**“Without peace and stability, investors cannot plan, farmers cannot produce, and industries cannot grow. Uganda’s stability has made investments like this possible.” President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**



Luwero District – President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on 30th December, 2025 commissioned the PRO Industries Pte Limited ethanol and extra-neutral alcohol manufacturing plant in Ndibulungi Village, Luwero District, describing the investment as a clear dividend of Uganda’s peace, stability, and consistent pro-industrial policies.

The commissioning marks a major milestone in Uganda’s agro-

industrialization drive and the transition towards cleaner energy solutions. The facility is the largest extra-neutral alcohol (ENA) and ethanol plant in East Africa, reinforcing Uganda’s growing position as a regional industrial hub.

Speaking at the event, President Museveni said the country’s industrial progress is anchored in deliberate policy choices and a stable investment climate.

President Museveni and Maama Janet Kataha Museveni cut the ribbon to officially commission PRO Industries Pte Limited in Luwero

“Industrialization is the backbone of sustainable economic transformation. That is why government continues to focus on lowering the cost of production, improving workers’ welfare, and supporting investors who add value to our raw materials and create jobs for Ugandans,” President Museveni said.



President Museveni and Maama Janet Kataha Museveni interact with PRO Industries officials at the commissioning ceremony

He emphasized that peace and security have been central to attracting large-scale investments such as PRO Industries.

“Without peace and stability, investors cannot plan, farmers cannot produce, and industries cannot grow. Uganda’s stability has made it possible for investments like this to come and thrive,” he added.

Welcoming the President, the Managing Director of PRO Industries Pte



President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is welcomed on arrival at PRO Industries Pte Limited ahead of the commissioning ceremony in Luwero District

Limited, Ms. Ridhi Always, said the company's investment decision was strongly influenced by Uganda's predictable policy environment and security.

**PRO Industries has invested USD 100 million in this Luwero plant, which today stands as the largest extra-neutral alcohol and ethanol facility in East Africa, with a daily capacity of 120,000 litres of ENA and 35,000 litres of ethanol," Ms. Always said.**

She noted that the plant is deeply integrated into the local economy through agriculture.

"We work directly with more than 20,000 farmers in Luwero District and surrounding areas who supply maize to this facility. This model ensures shared growth, increased household incomes, and sustainable livelihoods for farming communities," she explained.

Ms. Always commended Uganda's leadership in clean-energy policy, particularly the ethanol blending mandate set to

take effect in January 2026.

"Uganda's decision to mandate ethanol blending in all petroleum products, in line with Vision 2040 and the Biofuels Act, 2020, demonstrates strong policy foresight. This will reduce the country's USD 2 billion annual petroleum import bill while promoting cleaner and more sustainable energy use," she said.

She attributed the success of the investment to the prevailing peace, security, and policy consistency.

"We are grateful to the Government of Uganda for the peace, security, and consistency in policy implementation,

which have enabled PRO Industries and other investors to operate with confidence and contribute meaningfully to Uganda's socio-economic transformation," Ms. Always added.

**The commissioning of the PRO Industries ethanol plant highlights how sustained peace and stability continue to translate into large-scale investment, job creation, farmer empowerment, and industrial growth, reinforcing Uganda's long-term development trajectory.**



# UGANDA'S ANNUAL INFLATION STANDS AT 3.1% IN DECEMBER 2025 AS FOOD AND ENERGY PRICES RISE

Joellah Anshemeza, GCIC -Uganda

**“**Uganda's annual headline inflation remained stable at 3.1 percent in the year ending December 2025, reflecting mixed price movements across key sectors,” according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics



Uganda's annual headline inflation remained steady at 3.1 percent in the year ending December 2025, unchanged from November, according to the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) released by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

The stability in headline

inflation reflects mixed price movements across key sectors, with notable increases in food crops and energy, fuel and utilities, while core inflation recorded a marginal decline.

Data from UBOS show that annual core inflation eased slightly to 3.1

percent in December 2025, down from 3.2 percent in November. This was largely attributed to a reduction in services inflation, which declined to 4.0 percent from 4.2 percent over the same period. However, annual core goods inflation increased to 2.5 percent, up from 2.4 percent, driven mainly by higher prices for dried fish, live chicken, and new women's clothing.

The annual inflation for food crops and related items rose to 4.4 percent in December 2025, compared to 4.0 percent in November. UBOS attributed this increase to sharp price rises in several food items, including cabbage (35.7 percent), passion fruits (11.1 percent), fresh cassava (8.9 percent), and onions (3.7 percent). Irish potatoes also registered a price increase of 2.3 percent, reversing earlier declines.

On a monthly basis, food crops inflation increased by 0.3 percent in December, following a 0.9 percent decline in November, signaling

renewed pressure on household food budgets.

The annual Energy, Fuel and Utilities (EFU) inflation more than doubled to 1.4 percent in December 2025 from 0.6 percent in November. This rise was mainly driven by higher prices for firewood, which increased by 4.9 percent, and charcoal, which rose by 5.3 percent. Petrol prices also increased by 1.4 percent, while water charges went up by 0.7 percent.

Monthly EFU inflation rose by 0.4 percent in December, compared to a 0.2 percent decline in November, reflecting higher household energy costs during the festive season.

Annual transport inflation declined

sharply to 0.1 percent in December from 1.4 percent in November, providing some relief to commuters. In contrast, health inflation increased to 4.3 percent, while education services inflation remained elevated at 7.6 percent.

Restaurants and accommodation services recorded an annual inflation of 4.7 percent, slightly lower than the 5.2 percent registered in November, indicating easing pressures in the hospitality sector.

Geographical analysis shows that Kampala High Income areas recorded the highest annual inflation at 4.2 percent, followed by Masaka at 3.7 percent. The lowest inflation was registered in Mbale Centre at 1.0

percent, mainly due to declining prices in clothing and household furnishings.

For the full calendar year, average headline inflation for 2025 increased to 3.6 percent, up from 3.3 percent in 2024. Similarly, average core inflation rose to 3.8 percent, indicating sustained but moderate price pressures across the economy.

**UBOS Executive Director Dr. Chris N. Mukiza noted that while inflation remains within manageable levels, rising food and energy prices continue to be key drivers of cost-of-living pressures for households.**



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