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**Tuesday, 23 June 2020**

*Parliament met at 2.22 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala*

PRAYERS

*(The Speaker, Ms Rebecca Kadaga, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon sitting. I have just a few matters to communicate. First is that when we were considering the Administration of Judiciary Bill, 2019, we provided for the existing judges and retired judges. It reminded me that there is another category of people we have not handled, namely the former Speakers of Parliament. They are not many, there is Rt hon. Hajji Kigongo, Rt hon. Francis Butagira and I believe Rt hon. Edward Rugumayo; who are still living.

I would like the Minister of Public Service to advise on what he plans to do for the retirement benefits of those senior citizens who did a commendable job for the country but they are otherwise not catered for. I request that you come back to us by Tuesday next week.

Secondly, I continue to receive petitions. I have a petition here from the National Union of Drivers, Cyclists and Allied Workers seeking support of this House for them to be able to come back to work, especially the boda boda riders. They say that the absence of boda boda cyclists on the streets has affected other employers like motorcycle dealers, mechanics, spare part sellers and services.

They are saying that that has affected the income of the following companies;

1. Verma for Bajaj Motorcycle dealers;
2. Simba Automotive;
3. TVS Motorcycle dealers;
4. Yuvraj Motorcycle dealers;
5. Yamaha; to mention but a few.

They also said that they have already devised a transparent shield screen to put on the motorcycles to protect and separate the rider from the passenger to minimise the spread of the Coronavirus.

Fortunately, I see the Minister of Works and Transport here. I hope that you will be able to deal with this issue because it offends Article 40 (2) of the Constitution, which gives the people of Uganda the right to work. I hope that you will be able to say something about it.

Now, there are a few matters of national concern.

2.22

**MR ABDLATEEF SEBAGGALA (DP, Kawempe North Division, Kampala)**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. On the petition you have talked about that you have received from boda boda cyclists through their various associations, we are also getting various calls and invitations to meetings of boda boda leaders about their plight.

As we speak, the boda boda industry employs one million Ugandans and behind them, are nine million dependants. Initially, when we entered the COVID-19 era, it was understandable for them to carry only luggage. However, when we went on to ease the lockdown, private and public vehicles were allowed to move.

Madam Speaker, the most important luggage for the boda boda is a passenger and without the passengers - right now, the public transport and private cars were released. Many boda boda cyclists are suffering across the country.  They can hardly get anyone to entrust them with their luggage. They may even take a full week without getting anybody asking them to take their luggage because it requires trust and someone that you know.

Madam Speaker, the situation is terrible. *(Interruption)*

**MR KASIBANTE:** Thank you very much, my senior colleague, for giving way. Madam Speaker, the information I would like to give and I believe that Government should come in and be clear about this; in one of the addresses on COVID-19 pandemic by His Excellency the President, he stated, and I want to quote him verbatim; “I have eventually been told that these boda bodas belong to the rich people and they are like a spoon of tea at a dinner.”

Madam Speaker, it means that the problem with boda boda riders is not to do with COVID-19 pandemic but this Government has eventually lost confidence in this kind of business.

The information I would like to give is this; the transport industry in Uganda has a problem. Most of these people would not be riding motorcycles. We no longer have the railway network and UTC. Some of us who grew up -

**THE SPEAKER:** You are now submitting.

**MR KASIBANTE**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the guidance. I would like to say that we cannot condemn boda boda cyclists when we have messed up the economy by ourselves. We should simply find a way of how to have them as we fix the economy because they are only compelled to do this kind of business. Thank you.

**MR SEBAGGALA**: Madam Speaker, as I wind up, there is no justification to allow the buses to transport passengers for 10 hours going to Kisoro and Arua and you deny a boda boda cyclist who is going to transport only one passenger for 20 minutes or an hour without justification.

Madam Speaker, we need justice so that they can also take care of their families.

**THE SPEAKER**: Honourable members, I would also like to add that sometimes, the people who take decisions think only about Kampala. You know that upcountry the boda bodas are the surest means of transport. They are no taxis and buses, but people think of only Kampala.

2.31

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso)**: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. The different categories - you have mentioned boda-boda riders and others – that have not yet been opened. We have teachers in private schools and people who operate salons.

Madam Speaker, I seek your indulgence - can Government come to this Parliament and explain.  The closure was a temporary measure - they have allowed part of the society to go back to work but there are categories that they have not allowed to work at all.

Therefore, can Government explain to Parliament if they have any relief to the categories like boda-boda riders, teachers of private schools, salon workers and those operating in arcades?

Yesterday, the President talked about 95 days of lockdown but the individuals in those particular categories have not been working at all and will not resume work soon. They are not feeding yet they have families.

My prayer is for the Government to come and explain if they have a concrete plan for those categories of people. And it must be immediate, not one that is going to be discussed by all the organs of the State because people are looking for what to eat, including today’s supper.

**THE SPEAKER:** I expect the Prime Minister to come and brief us, during the weekly address on COVID session. On Thursday, come and respond to the issues, which have been raised.

2.33

**MR PAUL AKAMBA (Independent, Busiki County, Namutumba):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The matter of urgent national importance I would like to move is that Government, on its own initiative, moved this honourable House to approve the creation of new lower local Government administrative units in form of sub-counties and town councils. This august House approved the same.

Consequently, many villages and parishes were also created. Government then organised elections in these lower local Government administrative units, whose elected leaders were sworn in.

However, what is surprising is that many district, sub county councillors and chairpersons of LCI now complain that for the last two years, they have not received their allowances and ex-gratia.

Some of the sub-counties have not been codified yet Government conducted such elections. My prayer is that Government should expedite the process of paying allowances to leaders in the new sub-counties. Government must also codify the affected sub-counties.

It is unfair for Government to be paying some leaders while discriminating against others by not paying their allowances and ex-gratia. The country demands an explanation from Government. Those leaders should be paid like their colleagues. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I saw the minister here – has he gone?

2.36

**MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo):** Madam Speaker, I would like to add to what hon. Akamba has said.

Government created new administrative units and gazetted them in the form of sub-counties and town councils. However, even now, many of them keep asking whether they will be eligible to elect leaders in their new administrative units.

There is no creation of a new sub county or town council and members within those communities are willing to go back to the old sub-counties or town councils.

Therefore, it is an issue that has to be taken seriously. People are waiting to be elected in their respective new administrative units. Government should consider harmonising this by paying those who have worked and also preparing all the administrative units that were gazetted to be rolled out, come the next elections.

Of course, in Tororo, we are also waiting for the new district of Tororo County. Thank you.

2.37

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Jenipher Namuyangu):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the colleague for raising the matter.

It is true we have over 300 sub-counties and over 300 town councils that are not financially supported. It is also true that many of these have elected leaders.

We are still engaging the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The problem has been the resource envelope. However, we are hopeful that we shall get the money to make them operational.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

2.38

**MR PAULSEN LUTTAMAGUZI (DP, Nakaseke South County, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The people of Nakaseke appreciate the work you do for this country especially during these hard times.

I am here to seek your guidance. While we are here deliberating on issues concerning our country, there is a habit of some people, who want to compete against us in our constituencies, specifically in Nakaseke South Constituency, going to the Ministry of Works and Transport to hire the road equipment. They then use that equipment to fix roads, which they claim we have failed to fix during our term.

We have tried to raise this issue. One time, the district requested for road equipment from the Ministry of Works and Transport but they were told the ministry did not have them. However, at the moment, they have managed to hire that road equipment to people who are campaigning against us in our constituencies.

So, right now, in Nakeseke South Constituency, there are people campaigning using road equipment from the Ministry of Works and Transport. They go on fixing posters and they don clothes bearing their names and positions they would like to be elected to in the constituency.

Madam Speaker, is it right, at this time, for some people who are campaigning to be using Government road equipment especially from – *(Interruption)*

**MR OKUPA:** Madam Speaker, what the honourable member is talking about is in generalities. Is it in order for the honourable member to talk about people without naming those campaigning using hon. Gen. Katumba’s equipment?

**THE SPEAKER:** I think his concern is the use of Government facilities. I do not know whether he knows the names.

**MR LUTTAMAGUZI:** Madam Speaker, in Nakaseke South Constituency, there is a husband to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) treasurer called Nsereko. He is contesting with me in the same position.

The hon. Gen. Katumba Wamala has hired to him the Ministry of Works and Transport graders to use them to de-campaign me.

Madam Speaker, when did it become a norm that private individuals can hire road equipment from the Ministry of Works and Transport, especially during campaigns?

Yet, in Nakaseke District, we requested for them and he told us that they were not available. At this moment, when campaigns have started, he is hiring to some private individuals.

Madam Speaker, tax payers are always yelling at Parliament alleging that we waste their money, especially at this time when the country is dry in terms of finances. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can the Minister of Works and Transport confirm whether he hired out, lent or gave out Government facilities?

2.42

**THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT** (**GEN. KATUMBA KATUMBA):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, Madam Speaker, you had told me to respond on the issue of the initiative of the boda boda industry. Yes, we have received a sample from one of the fellows who was once a boda boda rider but is now a manufacturer with a firm called Rose Firm that manufactures mattresses.

He has come up with an innovation, which separates the rider from the passenger. We have engaged the Chief Mechanical Engineer and also an officer from the Ministry of Health to examine that innovation and see how it will help to reduce on the proximity of the passenger and the rider because that is the main concern about the way boda bodas operate.

We have given them today and they are already examining this. They will bring a report, first of all, to look at the mechanical aspect but also the medical part. *(Interjections)* They are examining all this to see whether in case of an accident, it causes more injury. All that is being examined.

**THE SPEAKER:** Second question?

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam, Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend and one time boss for answering in relation to boda bodas. However, Madam Speaker, the taxis we have in Uganda never came as taxis. Indeed, they were used for other purposes in Japan. However, when they are brought to Kampala, they are taken to Kisekka and seats are made for those vehicles.

I am seeking clarification. Do you have any information, honourable minister, on how those seats were created and the way people sit in these vehicles so that they do not touch each other as they sit?

These boda bodadrivers have tried to show what they can do to allow them to work; putting glasses but the taxis, which have been changed here in Kampala, have done nothing like that and the proximity between the two passengers is so close. Do you have any information related to that, honourable minister?

**GEN. KATUMBA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, before that vehicle gets a PSV, it is inspected and passed that it qualifies for a PSV. Therefore, even in this case – Actually, the separation is not a glass but something like plastic, which they have put on a frame and that is what is being examined. We will bring back the report once we have a nod from the two members of the team.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of the road equipment, I am sorry to say this. I would be worried and concerned if these machines had gone to somebody’s farm. However, they are doing roads for the community and this has happened because - Most members of Parliament here have been asking for culverts and for this equipment and we have been obliging. The equipment is for doing the road network; it is not just put there for a show.

Hon. Luttamaguzi has never had the courtesy of saying, I have this, can you intervene. Nakaseke District has its own full unit and hon. Luttamaguzi, you are supposed to be a member of the road committee of the district. That is part of your responsibility. I do not see why you are complaining when you can take that whole unit and use it in your constituency. (*Interjections)*

I would be concerned if this equipment had been diverted to work, which is not related to roads. With that one, I have no apology, Madam Speaker, about giving equipment to connect the community.

**HON.MEMBERS**: Order, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER**: There is nobody on the Floor. Hon. Komakech -

2.47

**MR LYANDRO KOMAKECH (DP, Gulu Municipality, Gulu):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of urgent importance regarding pre-conditions for elections. I received a petition from Gulu Municipality. To many who came to the National Council of Higher Education for verification, it is apparent that the Council is demanding Shs 2 million for all those who fall under the category of “equivalents.”.

I find this very prohibitive to citizens of this country as this is on top of other processes like the Shs 3 million for nomination. Therefore, I would like to seek clarification from the authorities concerned. Is this part of the guidelines that have been issued that the National Council of Higher Education asks for Shs 2 million for verification of papers for nomination of those who intend to run for Parliament?

**THE SPEAKER:** I do not know whether he has anything to say about that. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, are you in position to say something

about this?

2.48

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu):** Madam Speaker, I am going to draw the attention of the Minister of Education and Sports to this matter so that you get a comprehensive response to this question.

2.49

**MR MOSES KASIBANTE (Independent, Rubaga Division North, Kampala):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am rising on a matter of national importance. Late last year, the Electoral Commission engaged some stakeholders within Kampala and claimed that it was creating electoral areas that would have representatives to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and other lower urban councils around the city.

I am raising this because of the anxiety it has since created among our constituents. It is already a campaigning period but it has been left hanging. The stakeholders were engaged, the Electoral Commission announced that electoral areas were being curved out of those that were known but it all ended there. We do not know whether they were gazetted, about to be gazetted or whether the idea was since dropped.

Madam Speaker, I would like the Government to come out and clarify on whether it has gazetted new electoral areas in the city so that politicians and voters know where they belong. *(Interruption)*

**MR SSEWANYANA:** Madam Speaker, just to add on the same point, recently, we passed the Local Government Act and we amended some key sections. In those, we added some qualifications, especially in the municipalities for people who are ready to compete or participate as candidates. Our people are still confused over the same; whether to have those qualifications as candidates or whether it was dropped as we head into the next elections. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER**: Was the law assented to? - Not yet? Then there is a lacuna there.

**MR KASIBANTE**: Madam Speaker, I would like to put this clear and have it concluded because when new electoral areas are formed, they come up with new voters out of the old voter’s roll and therefore, they need new representatives.

I would like to thank my honourable colleague because the National Council for Higher Education is calling upon people to go and verify their papers. We do not know as yet who goes because we pass the law here but we do not know whether it was assented to *– (Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER**: Can the minister tell us what has happened to that law?

2.52

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu):** Madam Speaker, you will recall the electoral reforms you passed here in Parliament. There were Parliamentary, Presidential, Local Government and Electoral Commission. All these reform Bills, which you passed, have been submitted to the President for his assent and he has not given the assent yet.

As soon as that assent is given, then we can respond to the question of academic qualifications. However, as of now, it is not yet assented to.

**THE SPEAKER**: Can you prompt him because the electoral roadmap is out and Members are gearing up?

**PROF. KAMUNTU**: Yes, I would like to confirm to you that this matter was raised in Cabinet yesterday and the President is giving it attention. In addition, the equivalents are in the law. If you want to save yourself from Shs 2 million, just bring people who are qualified and they will not need equivalents. (*Laughter)*

2.54

**MR PATRICK KASUMBA (NRM, Bujenje County, Masindi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is in the knowledge of this House that Government committed itself to paying tobacco farmers across the country and that it would sort out itself with the companies that it issued licenses. In the by-elections last year, while in Hoima, the President assured Ugandans that Government would pay off the farmers and thereafter, the Government would sort out itself with Premier Tobbaco Packers and Intercontinental Tobacco Company.

It is almost one year, Government has not complied and farmers are stressed with loans. We are all aware of what people are undergoing, more especially during this COVID-19 period. It is my humble prayer that Government either pays these farmers or assure the public whether it is going to pay. If it is going to pay, when is it going to pay or the farmers should forget about that money? The companies are no longer in existence and it is the Government that issued licenses to them and we have nowhere to get the companies.

I beg to submit, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER**: The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is required to come and explain to us, when they will pay the unpaid tobacco farmers in the country. Unfortunately, this tobacco issue comes every year. It is really unfortunate that it has not yet been resolved.

Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, can you speak on the issue of the unpaid tobacco farmers? Wasn’t that Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives? I think it is the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

2.56

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Mr Vincent Ssempijja):** Madam Speaker, I would like submit that the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives should answer that one because it is not entirely in my docket. The payment is between the companies that are failing to pay my farmers.

In fact, I am also on the side of farmers.

**THE SPEAKER**: The Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives should come urgently and explain to us, when the tobacco farmers will be paid. If she could come on Tuesday next week because this matter has been outstanding for a long time. Thank you.

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, apparently, there are electoral areas in Kampala that have either never been gazatted or concluded. Now, aspirants do not know what to do.

2.57

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu):** Madam Speaker, I am sure the Minister of Local Government is preparing to come and appear before this House, specifically to respond to the questions, which have been pending on electoral boundaries, the creation of counties, local Governments as well as cities, among others.

Therefore, this matter will be answered when the Minister of Local Government comes to respond to these questions. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER**: Can the Clerk write to the minister and include this one? There are those old ones but write about this new one, about electoral areas in Kampala.

LAYING OF PAPERS

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (AMENDMENT OF THE 5TH SCHEDULE) STATUTORY INSTRUMENT, 2020

2.58

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Jenipher Namuyangu):**

Madam Speaker, I am laying a paper for the Local Governments

(Amendment of the 5th Schedule) Statutory Instrument, 2020.

In accordance with Section 175(2) of the Local Government Act, Cap 243, the Minister of Local Government is mandated to amend the schedules under this Act. On the publication of a new Statutory Instrument under this section, the minister is required to lay the new Statutory Instrument before Parliament.

Madam Speaker, in view of the above, the ministry amended the 5th Schedule to the Local Government Act to make a Local Government

Statutory Instrument 2020 to provide for the management and levying of park user fees payable by taxis and buses to local governments and Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).

The principles, key features and clauses of the Local Government Statutory Instrument, are premised on the key resolutions agreed upon through protracted consultations and negotiations with taxis and bus operators, the relevant MDAs, the local Governments, KCCA and other stakeholders.

Madam Speaker, the Local Government Statutory Instrument provides for the levying and allocation of annual Park user fees as follows:

A total of Shs 504,000 shall be levied and allocated to a district, urban authority or KCCA, where a cab taxi or light omnibus originates as indicated *– (Interruption)*

**MR SSEMUJJU**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Our rules are very clear on presentation of statements and laying of documents because a statement by a minister is debatable, under our Rules of Procedure.

The minister you have given permission, according to our Order Paper, the permission was to lay this amendment, but she is making a statement under a different rule. Is she procedurally right to abuse our rules to present a statement instead of laying a document?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, under the Local Government Act, once you have laid that instrument here, Parliament is supposed to consider it. It will be considered and maybe they will invite you to go and defend the proposals to the statutory instrument. For now, just lay it, please.

**MS NAMUYANGU:** Madam Speaker, thank you for your guidance. I, therefore, beg to lay the Local Governments (Amendment of the 5th Schedule) Statutory Instrument, 2020 regarding the management and levying of parker user fees in local governments and Kampala Capital City Authority. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, madam minister. The instrument is sent to the Committee on Public Service and Local Government. Parliament may amend or revoke the instrument. If no amendment or revocation is effected within two weeks of it being laid before Parliament, it shall be deemed to have been approved. So, Committee on Public Service, you have a very short time in which to effect any changes.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGANDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister for General Duties, hon. Karoro – okay, next item.

OVERSIGHT VISIT REPORT ON THE KASESE FLOODS

3.04

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I lay this report, let me say this;

We went for an oversight visit to Kasese. The President found me there *-(Interjections)-* President Museveni found me there and they decided to lock me up in my hotel for one day and stopped me from going to do my work because the President was in the district.

I asked whether he was going to work in the municipality, and if so, that I be allowed to move out since my work was out of the municipality. I was told that Kasese was very special – either because of the killings of people or - I inquired why that is so. Time was wasted for an entire day. As you know, a minute once wasted can never be recalled to be utilised. That was very unfortunate.

When we go to do our work, even when the President is present in a district, we should still be allowed to do our work. We can do our work side by side. If anything, they should have invited me to join his team.

Madam Speaker, I would like to lay this oversight visit report on the Kasese Floods which happened in May and we went to make that assessment. Kasese is suffering. There are long-term recommendations and short-term recommendations. The short-term recommendations were about food, water and sanitary facilities. Some of the people were displaced in church areas with no sanitary facilities. Some were relocated to schools. Bridges should also be handled in the short-term. These should be handled as fast as possible. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable Leader of the Opposition. The report is availableyou’re your information.

REPORT ON OVERSIGHT VISIT TO BUDUDA AND BULAMBULI DISTRICTS ON LAND AND MUDSLIDE AFFECTED VICTIMS AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

3.06

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, thank you. I would like to lay a report on the oversight visit to Bududa and Bulambuli districts focusing on land/mudslide affected victims and resettlement programme.

We all realise that the country is invaded by floods all over. In Teso, Lango, Acholi, Kasese, Bundibugyo and everywhere. Therefore, this is an intervention that should be handled as quickly as possible. Sometimes these people who get displaced, are relocated to very difficult areas. I think there is need to have policies to reinforce what is already in place.

The victims suffer very much. The Office of the Prime Minister is a little far from the people. I do not know why we cannot decentralise disaster management. I used to see district disaster management committees and also sub-county disaster management committees. We need to reactivate those disaster management committees so that our people do not suffer a lot.

In Bulambuli, the resettlement areas have issues of education. The management of education should go to Government. There are primary and secondary schools which are being managed by the people. Their issues – like those of local government, when they want to upgrade health centre II to health centre III –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, you are just supposed to lay.

**MS BETTY AOL:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, the report is now available for your study and use.

PARLIAMENTARY PENSION SCHEME BIANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

**THE SPEAKER:** Is hon. Achia here? He is not here.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO SECTORAL COMMITTEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 183 AND 184 OF OUR RULES OF PROCEDURE

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I propose that we handle this tomorrow. I do not see the coordinator of the independents and I do not see the government chief whip. Oh, there you are! Hon. Ssemujju, are you ready?

3.10

**THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr Ibrahim Ssemujju):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to designate the following to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development;

Hon. Franca Akello

Hon. Nathan Nandala-Mafabi

Hon. Anthony Akol

Hon. Ssemakula Luttamaguzi

Hon. Patrick Ocan

3.11

**MR ANDREW BARYAYANGA(Independent, Kabale Municipality, Kabale):** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate the following members to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development:

Hon. Julie Mukoda

Hon Stella Kiiza

Hon. Francis Mukula

Hon. James Kakooza

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Health, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Gershom Sizomu

Hon. Robinah Ssentongo

Hon. Joy Atim

Hon. Lucy Akello

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate the following members to the Committee on Health:

Hon. Fred Baseke

Hon. Herbert Kinobere

Hon. Kenneth Soyekwo

Hon. Idah Nantaba

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Godfrey Katusabe

Hon. Jack Wamanga-Wamai

Hon. Lyandro Komakech

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate the following members to the Committee on Foreign Affairs:

Hon. Hood Katuramu;

Hon. Peter Ocen;

Hon. Latif Sebaggala

Hon. Fred Mudukoi

3.14

**MAJ. SUSAN LAKOT (UPDF Representative):** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Lt Gen. Pecos Kuteesa to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Natural Resources, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Herbert Ariko

Hon. Roland Mugume

Hon. Jimmy Akena

Hon. Florence Namayanja

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate the following members to the Committee on Natural Resources:

Hon. Andrew Kaluya

Hon. Andrew Baryayanga

Hon. Reagan Okumu

Hon. Oliver Katwesigye

Hon. Kassiano Wadri and

Hon. Yorke Alioni.

**MAJ. LAKOT:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Maj. Gen. Innocent Oula to the Committee on Natural Resources.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Presidential Affairs, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Micheal Kabaziguruka

Hon. Ibrahim Kasozi

Hon. Jackson Mbaju

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Presidential Affairs, I beg to designate the following members:

Hon. Anita Among

Hon. Robert Kyagulanyi

Hon. Ishma Mafabi

**MAJ. LAKOT:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Brig. Flavia Byekwaso to the Committee on Presidential Affairs.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Mubarak Munyagwa

Hon. Gilbert Olanya

Hon. Kaps Fungaroo

Hon. Muhammad Muwanga-Kivumbi

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Francis Zaake

Hon. Lucy Achiro

Hon. Stephen Mukitale

Hon. Paul Kato Lubwama.

**MAJ. LAKOT:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Brig. Felix Kulayigye to the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, I have designated:

Hon. William Nzoghu;

Hon. Elijah Okupa

Hon. Jonathan Odur

Hon. Emmanuel Ssempala Kigozi

Hon. Francis Mwijukye

**MAJ. LAKOT:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Maj. Susan Lakot to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure.

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate the following members to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure:

Hon. Michael Mawanda

Hon. Samuel Okwir

Hon. Lydia Mirembe

Hon. Julius Ochen

Hon. Ann Mary Tumwine and

Hon. Onesimus Twinamasiko.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Public Service and Local Government, I have designated the following:

Hon. Peter Okot

Hon. Betty Nambooze

Hon. Simon Oyet

Hon. Betty Bamukwatsa

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate Hon. Zaitun Driwaru to the Committee on Public Service and Local Government.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Education and Sports, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho

Hon. Allan Ssewanyana

Hon. Joseph Ssewungu

Hon. Joy Atim.

**MAJ. LAKOT:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Brig. Francis Takirwa to the Committee on Education and Sports.

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate the following members to the Committee on Education and Sports:

Hon. Jacob Opolot

Hon. Lydia Chekwel

Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija

Hon. Moses Kasibante

Hon. Gideon Onyango

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, I have designated the following members:

Hon. Santa Alum;

Hon. Veronica Nanyondo

Hon. Francis Gonahasa

Hon. Tonny Muhindo.

**MAJ. LAKOT:** Madam Speaker, I beg to designate hon. Gen. Ivan Koreta to the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.

**MR BARYAYANGA:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, I beg to designate the following:

Hon. Godfrey Watenga

Hon, Kenneth Eitunganane

Hon. Christopher Kipterit

Hon. Julius Mukasa

Hon. Lilly Adong and

Hon. Silas Aogon.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development, I have designated hon. Angelline Osegge and hon. Winfred Kiiza.

**THE SPEAKER:** UPDF, do you have any?

**MAJ. LAKOT**: Madam Speaker, I beg to designate Maj. Evarlyne Asiimwe to the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. I beg to designate.

**MR BARYAYANGA**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development, I beg to designate:

Hon. Wilson Nokrach

Hon. Sarah Wekomba Nambozo

Hon. Joshua Anywarach

I beg to designate.

**MR SSEMUJJU**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on East African Community Affairs, I beg to designate:

1. Prof. Morris Ogenga-Latigo
2. Hon. Nabilah Naggayi Sempala

**MR BARYAYANGA**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on East African Community Affairs, I beg to designate:

1. Hon. Veronica Babirye Kadogo

2. Hon. Gerald Karuhanga

**MR SSEMUJJU**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry, I have the following members:

1. Hon. Cecilia Ogwal Atim
2. Hon. Mary Kabanda Babirye
3. Hon. Samuel Odonga Otto
4. Hon. Centenary Robert Franco

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you. Hon. Aja -

**MR BARYAYANGA**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry, I beg to designate the following:

1. Hon. Jane Nabulindo Kwoba
2. Hon. Robert Ntende
3. Hon. David Kalwanga Lukyamuzi

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you very much. Next -

**MR SSEMUJJU**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, I have the following:

1. Hon. Abdu Katuntu
2. Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju
3. Hon. Medard Sseggona Lubega
4. Hon. Matthias Mpuuga
5. Hon. Paul Mwiru
6. Hon. Asuman Basalirwa.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. UPDF none. Hon. Aja -

**MR BARYAYANGA**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, I beg to designate the following:

1. Hon. Jacob Oboth
2. Hon. Paul Akamba
3. Hon. Edward Otto Makmot
4. Hon. Wilfred Niwagaba
5. Hon. Muhammad Nsereko
6. Hon. Anna Adeke Ebaju

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you. The next one -

**MR SSEMUJJU**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Information, Communication and Technology, I have:

1. Hon. Lee Oguzu Denis
2. Hon. Fred Tumuheirwe Turyamuhweza
3. Hon. Maxwell Akora

**MR BARYAYANGA**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Information, Communication and Technology, I have the following:

1. Hon. Annet Nyakecho
2. Hon. Bernard Atiku

I beg to designate.

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you. Next -

**MR SSEMUJJU**: Finally, Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Science and Technology, I have:

1. Hon. Charles Abacacon Angiro Gutomoi
2. Hon. Deogratius Kiyingi

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you. UPDF none. Hon. Aja -

**MR BARYAYANGA**: Madam Speaker, on the Committee on Science and Technology, I have:

1. Hon. Rosemary Nauwat
2. Hon. Waira Majegere Kyewalabye
3. Hon. John Bagoole
4. Hon. Jacklet Atuhaire
5. Hon. Okin P.P. Ojara

I beg to designate.

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you very much. Honourable members, I put the question that those who have been nominated do form those committees.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE SPEAKER**: We shall receive the NRM list tomorrow.

**MR SSEKIKUBO**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I belong to the side of the NRM. I have been scanning through our website but I have not seen any intention to have the designation of members.

Madam Speaker, rules 184 and 184 enjoins the formation of committees of Parliament. For our side to cede the mantle to the Opposition, the Independents and the UPDF with total silence on the part of NRM and yet we are the side that is supposed to be the leader of government business - I find this very strange.

Unless there is a formal communication to that effect, it is doing us badly as members. We cannot come second and last. We cannot lose the initiative. What happened to us? Has your office been formally communicated to? Can we just sit and look on when designation is going? All members are looking down at their feet without an appropriate response. This is perturbing. I thought this item was on the agenda –

**THE SPEAKER**: I had already said that we shall allow the NRM to nominate their people tomorrow. Item five.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE FAILURE BY GOVERNMENT TO PAY UGANDAN TRADERS IN SOUTH SUDAN AS RESOLVED BY PARLIAMENT AND MONEY ACCORDINGLY APPROPRIATED IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/2020

**THE SPEAKER**: Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development? I do not know who is taking charge of the Government side. Honourable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, I think you are the senior one here. Can you ensure that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development comes tomorrow? Otherwise, this is long outstanding.

3.27

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS** **(Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu)**: Madam Speaker, I oblige. I will make sure that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is here tomorrow. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER**: Okay. Item 5(2) -

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE 2020/2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS ROADMAP

**THE SPEAKER**: Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs -

3.28

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS** **(Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu)**: Madam Speaker, I am making this statement in response to the concern raised in this House by hon. Ronald Mugume Kaginda, Member of Parliament for Rukungiri Municipality, which he raised in May, that Electoral Commission should consider revising the electoral roadmap for the 2021 General Elections due to the disruptive effects of COVID-19. This was in May and the Electoral Commission has already revised this roadmap.

In addition, Madam Speaker, in your communication last Tuesday, you directed me to formally come to this House and brief Parliament on the same matter. I would like to therefore take this opportunity to update Parliament on this very important matter of revising electoral roadmap for the 2020/2021 General Elections following the release by the Electoral Commission of a revised electoral roadmap and the public reaction that followed. It is in compliance with all these requests and directives, Madam Speaker, that I am making this very important and relevant statement.

The background to this is well known. In accordance with Articles 61(2), 77(3), 105 and 181 of the Constitution, the next Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Council Elections are expected to be held in 2021. This is the law. Sometimes you tease me but I have the Constitution for reference.

Accordingly, in December 2018, the Electoral Commission, in preparation for the General Elections and in the performance of its functions under Article 61(1) of the Constitution, issued an electoral roadmap for the General Elections, expected to be held between 10 January 2021 and February 2021. This roadmap was issued before the outbreak of the corona virus of COVID-19.

In March 2020, following the outbreak of COVID-19, Government announced a package of preventive and protective measures to fight and contain the spread of corona virus in the country. The measures included closing of educational institutions, places of worship were affected, banning large political gatherings, cultural groups, large wedding ceremonies and burials, et cetera.

The outbreak of corona virus led to the suspension of electoral map or electoral-related activities, as was scheduled by the Electoral Commission. Prior to the outbreak, the Electoral Commission had commenced the implementation of the electoral roadmap and had completed activities relating to the following:

1. Demarcation of electoral areas and reorganisation of polling stations had been done;
2. The compilation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) registers had been done;
3. The display of the National Voters’ Register and Special Interest Groups registers was done.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country in March 2020, it has not been possible for the Electoral Commission to proceed with the next scheduled activity on the electoral roadmap.

The affected activities included the nomination of candidates for the Special Interest Groups Committees, as well as their elections at the village levels, which were scheduled. All these were scheduled to commence on 6 April 2020. It was not done.

Since Special Interest Groups Committee elections form part of the General Elections’ critical path activities, prior to elections for representation at the local Government councils and national level in Parliament, the affected activities affected the entire roadmap and it has significantly affected the roadmap. It is now three months behind schedule.

Similarly, the elections of political party primaries to identify flag bearers have not been held; they have been affected. Given these circumstances, it was, therefore, necessary that the Electoral Commission revises the roadmap for all the 2020/2021 General Elections.

The legal position is also known, friends. Honourable members, the tenure of office of the President, the tenure of office of Members of Parliament and other elective office bearers at district level is due to expire on 12 May 2021. That is when our term ends.

The Electoral Commission, in exercise of its constitutional mandate under Article 61(2) of the Constitution is, therefore, required to conduct the General Elections by 8 February, 2021. These election dates are derived from the Constitution and therefore, cannot be legally changed without amending the relevant laws or amending the Constitution itself.

Article 60(1) establishes the Electoral Commission and provides for its functions, including ensuring regular, free and fair elections are held. Article 62 provides for independence of the Electoral Commission. Although Electoral Commission is under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the ministry does not direct its work. It is just independent; that is a constitutional provision.

Article 6l(2) of the Constitution as amended by the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2018 provides the following:

“*The Electoral Commission shall hold presidential, general parliamentary and local Government council elections within – and I emphasise this because this is a determinant date - the first 30 days of the last 122 days before the expiration of the term of office of the President, Parliament or local Government Council, as the case may be*.”

The first thirty days - in accordance with this provision - of the last 122 days is the period commencing 10 January 2021 and ending on 8 February 2021. So, the implication of this is we must have elections between these dates.

Article 67 (1) provides that:

“*The Electoral Commission shall ensure that elections are held at times fixed and notified in advance to the public*.” This is what the Electoral Commission is trying to do, to inform you in advance by this electoral map.

Further, Article 105(1) of the Constitution provides for the President to hold office for a term of five years only. This is an entrenched provision in the Constitution and requires a referendum, as well as two thirds of Members of Parliament voting for it, that is in accordance with Article 260 1 (f) of the Constitution.

Before you can amend this, you would have to have two thirds; you would have to have a referendum.

The import of this statement is that because there has been talk about postponing and amending, doing this would also be almost the same as having general elections. So, it would not be very helpful.

Similarly, Article 77(3) of the Constitution establishes the term of Parliament to be five years from the date of its first sitting, after a general election.

Finally, on the legal part, Article 181(4) of the Constitution provides for all local Government councils to be elected every five years. So, the Electoral Commission Act, Cap.140 Section 12(1)(f) and (h), which I quote below, provides that:

1. *The commission shall, subject to and for the purposes of carrying out its functions under Chapter Five of the Constitution and this Act, have the following powers:*

*(f) To take steps to ensure that there are secure conditions necessary for the conduct of any election in accordance with this Act or any other law and*

*h) To ensure that the candidates campaign in an orderly and organised manner*.

In addition, Section 50 of the Act provides for special powers of the Commission as follows:

1. *Where, during the course of an election, it appears to the commission that by reason of any mistake, miscalculation, emergency or unusual or unforeseen circumstances, any of the provisions of this Act or any law relating to the election, other than the Constitution – with the Constition, you cannot do anything about it - does not accord with the exigencies of the situation, the commission may, by particular or general instructions, extend the time for doing any act, increase the number of election officers or polling stations or otherwise adapt – I put an emphasis - any of those provisions as may be required to achieve the purposes of this Act or the law to such extent as the Commission considers necessary to meet the exigencies of the situation.*

Therefore, the Electoral commission is given powers in the Act to take action in unforeseen circumstances that could happen. And this COVID-19 could be one of those circumstances unforeseen.

For the avoidance of doubt, this section applies to the whole electoral process, including all steps taken for the purposes of the election and includes nomination and campaigns.

*“The commission shall, in exercising the special powers under this section, inform all political parties and organisations and independent candidates of any action taken*”. Already, the Electoral Commission is engaging the political parties on these matters.

On the Presidential Elections Act, 2005 section 2(2) of the Act on election of the President requires the election of the President to be held during the first thirty days of the last one hundred and twenty-two days before the expiration of the term of office of the President.

Section 2l (l) of the Act provides that “*Subject to the Constitution and this Act, the Commission may determine the manner and the period during which campaigns shall take place and shall publish that information in the Gazette and forward a copy to each returning officer*.”

The Parliamentary Elections Act, 2005, section 2(1) of the Act states that “*a general election of members of Parliament shall be held in accordance with Article 6l of the Constitution*.”

The Local Governments Act, Cap.243 section 101 of the Act stipulates that *“the Electoral Commission shall organise, conduct and supervise election of the local councils*”. Therefore, all these Acts and laws I have quoted, it is accordingly, in compliance with the requirement of Article 6l (2) and the relevant laws cited above.

The Electoral Commission has revised the 2020/2021 General Election Roadmap as follows - I beg your indulgence because this is a very important. This piece of information is specific and if you bear with me, I will give it to you in full.

Some of the key dates which are very important in the roadmap in the revised Roadmap are as follows, I want to highlight them:

1. Political Party and Organisations to identify, flag bearers for special interest groups. This should have started yesterday, but it will run until 21 July 2020.
2. Deadline for resignation by public servants wishing to

Participate in Special Interest Groups Committee Elections should tender in their resignation by 29 June 2020.

1. Nomination of Village Special Interest Groups, Women Committees Candidates that should be by 5 August 2020.
2. Deadline for establishment of academic papers with Electoral Commission by aspiring candidates for Local Government by 5 July 2020, this should be done.
3. Deadline for establishment of academic papers with Electoral Commission by those aspiring for Parliamentary Elections should be by 11 August 2020.
4. Deadline for establishment of academic papers with Electoral Commission by candidates aspiring for Presidential Elections, if you are aspiring to be President, your papers should be in by 1 September 2020.
5. Deadline for resignation- this is also important for public interest- deadline for resignation by public servants aspiring to contest for Parliamentary Elections their papers should be in by 12 July 2020
6. Deadline for resignation by public servants aspiring to contest for Local Government Councils Elections should have their papers in by 6 August 2020.
7. Deadline for resignation by public servants aspiring to contest for Special Interest Groups representatives to Parliament should have submitted their papers by 7 August 2020.
8. Deadline for resignation by public servants aspiring to contest for Presidential Elections - if any public servant wants to become a President, he should have tendered in resignation by 31 October 2020.
9. Period for nomination of candidates for Local Governments, including Special Interest Groups, it is going to run between 7th to l7 September 2020.
10. Nomination of Candidates- this affects you- nomination of candidates for Parliamentary Elections is between 12 and 13 October 2020.
11. Nomination of Candidates for Presidential Elections is between 2nd and 3 November 2020.
12. Harmonisation of Campaign Programme -, there will be harmonisation of campaign programmes for all those contesting by signing a memorandum scheduled between 4th and 9 November 2020.
13. Conduct of candidates’ campaigns digitally for Local Government; it is for 28 September 2020 up to 8 January 2021.
14. Conduct of candidates’ campaigns digitally for Parliamentary Elections, it will start on 20 October 2020 to 8 January 2021.
15. Conduct of candidates’ campaigns digitally for Presidential Elections will start on l0 November 2020 to 8 January 2021.
16. Polling period for General Elections- the exact polling dates- friends the exact poling date is not fixed but it will be fixed in the due course.

For those who want details because this is a summary; a detailed Roadmap can be obtained from the Electoral Commission website which is www.ec.or.ug or you can go their offices and the offices of political parties and organisations have got this information.

The Basic Considerations in Drawing this Roadmap:

Madam Speaker, given the impact of corona virus on our economy and our society, three fundamental considerations were taken into account in drawing up the revised electoral roadmap for the next elections. The first consideration, I am sure you will agree was;

1. Security and safety concerns of the population; the prevailing health situations in the country, posed a question on how safe it is to hold elections in the usual traditional manner? If you pose that question, there will be people who say “Yes, rain or shine, we must have them conventionally.”

However, you should remember that protecting the lives of the citizens and their property is the first duty of Government. This is a major consideration. According to the Ministry of Health and the scientific advisory committee, the restrictions on political gatherings should be maintained. The situation is not yet normal for normal conventional campaigns.

The second consideration was the legal and constitutional requirements. I have been at pain to elaborate all these provisions I have quoted. It was done specifically to put minds of the members at ease that indeed every provision of the law is followed.

Therefore, the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda is the supreme law of the land and must be protected, defended and respected.

Accordingly, the country is compelled to hold presidential, general parliamentary and local government council elections within the first 30 days of the last 122 days before the expiry of the term of Government; that is between 10 January and 08 February, 2021.

The third consideration was the public expectations. Since 1996, Uganda has consistently held periodic elections after every five years. Periodic elections are part and parcel of the country's now historical mission of sustainable peace, security and stability. It has also now become normal for the public to expect, after every five years, for the people of Uganda to choose their leaders through elections.

The Electoral Commission has done a risk analysis of - I would like to confirm to members that the EC did not just come to these figures out of their imagination – the Coronavirus impact, and instituted mitigation measures in line with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health. These decisions are informed by science; they are not just out of the blue.

It has also considered the need to preserve the health of the citizens against their constitutional and democratic right to elect leaders of their choice as guaranteed under the Constitution.

Therefore, the Electoral Commission has come up with a plan, which I have read to you, that ensures minimal person-to-person contact during the implementation of the electoral process. For example, as a result of this analysis and study, the Electoral Commission will avail nomination forms on its website that can be printed though hard copies will also be availed.

What is important to note is the fact that only the aspiring candidate, with only two people - the nominator and a seconder - will execute the nomination process. We might have to skip the normal process of having a procession accompanying the candidate to the nominated centre, which people have enjoyed in the past.

The Electoral Commission has also stated that mass rallies will not be allowed but that campaigns will be conducted mainly through media platforms.

Madam Speaker, I would like to emphasise that the Electoral Commission will issue specific guidelines –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we asked for this statement. You will have time to comment.

**PROF. KAMUNTU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, the Electoral Commission will issue specific guidelines for each electoral activity under this revised roadmap in due course. The EC is already engaging the various stakeholders on the same matter. The guidelines will have information on the specific requirements for nomination for a candidate, access to nomination forms, nomination fees and venues and the conduct of campaigns and the polling process. The Commission is committed to doing this and it has already started.

The above protective measures are not only for safety reasons but are also cost effective, in my judgement, because they enhance election security especially regarding the implementation of the laws on political gatherings and assemblies.

I am saying this because I have seen the Public Order and Management Act causing so much trouble. If we go digitally, all those who have been talking about people being harassed at gatherings will have no chance.

The Electoral Commission, in consultation with the Ministry of Health, considered and adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to facilitate safe and secure participation by all stakeholders in the electoral process.

The emphasis is on safety practices, which have been customised to elections and they include the following:

1. Practicing social distancing; and
2. Wearing face masks in public; and – of course I could see some wearing and others not.

Accordingly, Government calls upon all stakeholders in the electoral process - Madam Speaker, this is an appeal - to take note of the various activities that will be conducted under the roadmap and especially the respective timelines for them to participate accordingly, effectively and safely.

The Electoral Commission also is appealing to political parties and organisations as well as individuals aspiring to contest as independent candidates to utilise the time provided in the revised roadmap and prepare to participate in the respective activities.

More appeal goes to media owners to avail equal opportunities to all the candidates for fair press coverage.

In this regard, the Electoral Commission has started engaging the stakeholders on the implementation of the revised roadmap for the general elections of 2020/2021 since last week when the roadmap was released.

I would like to assure you that the Electoral Commission has already started and it is very willing and keen to engage and consult the stakeholders in the implementation of that revised roadmap.

In conclusion, Government advises political parties and aspiring independent candidates to ensure safe practices during primaries and other preparatory activities.

Candidates, their agents and supporters are urged to strictly follow the guidelines as issued by the Ministry of Health.

Finally, I would like to call upon all honourable members and Ugandans at large to work together with Government to ensure safety and a healthy participation in the elections.

Good governance entails regular, free, fair and credible elections to contribute to political stability, peace and security, which are now essential for the sustainable social economic transformation of the country. We need to adapt and be creative.

Madam Speaker, I could add by thanking you. You have been very effective in adaptation, improvisation and creativity. That is why the supreme law-making body of the land, instead of meeting in the House or suspending its work, has agreed to meet in a tent, which could have been a car park, just to allow the work of Parliament to continue. It is the same reasoning with the electoral roadmap. Thank you for listening.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister.

**MS NANTABA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, you issued new guidelines to reduce on congestion of this Parliament. One of the new guidelines you issued was to change the venue and reduce on the number of Members of Parliament at each sitting.

Personally, I am supposed to attend Parliament in tomorrow’s sitting. However, because of the Order Paper and the paper that has just been presented by the minister, I had to come here because it touches each and every Member of Parliament and affects everybody.

However, what you have here, Madam Speaker, is a third of the Members of Parliament and yet everybody would want to present their response because the paper touches everybody. Are we therefore proceeding well, Madam Speaker, if we do not give others a chance to be here and get to know the details in that paper so that they are given a chance to discuss this paper thoroughly? You could arrange one sitting where all of us can attend, this week or next week, so that we discuss this paper. Everyone is not here. Are we therefore proceeding well, Madam Speaker?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, I think you are behind the times. We have a virtual Parliament. Those who cannot sit here will speak online. Take your seat. But are you going to adopt this paper? You are not going to adopt this paper. It is just for information. It is not for adoption but for information and for your comments.

4.02

**MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs for the presentation.

However, Madam Speaker, the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs has quoted Articles in the Constitution that relate to a normal election. Unfortunately, what the Electoral Commission is proposing does not relate to a normal situation.

Madam Speaker, the framers of the 1995 Constitution anticipated

that at one time, there would be coronavirus in this country, that at one time, there would be floods or war and as a result provided answers to such situations. They provided Articles 77, 103 and 110. There is no way, Madam Speaker, you are going to issue guidelines that relate to exceptional circumstances and apply them to a normal situation. I would like to find out from the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs why Government is finding it extremely difficult to declare a state of emergency to have some time so that we have an enabling legal framework to guide the elections.

Madam Speaker, I will give three scenarios. First, we have lost three months for those who want to contest to be President. The Presidential Elections Act is very clear in section 2. Anybody who wants to contest for presidency notifies the Electoral Commission a year towards nomination. People did notify the Electoral Commission but they have not been able to traverse the

country because of this situation. What are you going to do about the three months that have been wasted?

Secondly, we are aware that the Electoral Commission is giving guidelines that contravene electoral laws. For example, every candidate is supposed to have two agents at the polling station. That is what the law says. How are you going to stop candidates from deploying agents simply because of these regulations without amending the law? If a constituency has, for example, 20 candidates, that means you have 40 agents that are supposed to be at the polling station as a matter of law. What are you going to do about that without addressing the legal framework?

Thirdly, we are supposed to verify academic documents; those whose academics documents are not very straight and clear but that verification is done with consultation with institutions of higher learning. Those institutions, as we speak, are closed. How is the verification going to be undertaken, Madam Speaker? What is the minister going to do about that?

Finally, Madam Speaker, under what legal framework is the Electoral Commission issuing that road map? Madam Speaker, the Electoral Commission, under the law, has no right to ban public meetings. That responsibility is an exclusive preserve of the Minister for Health under the Public Health Act. I would like to ask the honourable minister; has the Minister for Health banned public meetings till January of next year? Where is the legal framework? Where is the enabling instrument?

I have been on this floor asking the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs to avail to Parliament a legal framework that governs this country during this COVID-19. Even the guidelines they are talking about have never been gazetted and do not appear anywhere in the statutory instruments. How are you going to run the country on guidelines when you have a very clear framework of coming to this Parliament and ensuring that there are enabling laws to guide the country?

As a senior lawyer in this country, I foresee that we are most likely to have petitions either before or after this election for something we can avoid. It is better to do it the way Parliament did. When we were faced with COVID-19, Madam Speaker, you directed our rules committee to come up with rules to guide a hybrid arrangement. This Parliament did amend our Rules of Procedure and we now have a virtual Parliament. The Electoral Commission wants to conduct elections without amending the law. That is going to be a recipe for disaster. We are likely to have a lot of legal challenges and I do not think it is good for the country.

It is only wise, Madam Speaker, that as a Parliament, we demand that without the necessary legal framework, we should not be hurrying to have an election. After all, even the President himself is on record to have said, if the disease escalates then it is useless to have an election. Has he backtracked on his position? Is the disease escalating or not? Those are the circumstances, Madam Speaker, we must be looking at.

I do not think it is wise to stampede this country with an election where the Electoral Commission is not ready and Ugandans are not ready. Thank you.

4.08

**MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndorwa County East, Kabale):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for

giving us a statement that selectively quotes the law to justify

the Commission’s omissions.

Madam Speaker, the conduct of elections is not only constitutional but is also governed by Acts of Parliament passed here. If you heard the minister’s statement, particularly in what he calls digital campaigns, I shudder. I would request the minister to first scrutinise Article 1 of the Constitution, particularly sub-articles (1) and (4), proceed to read Articles 60 and 61 and subsequently go to the Electoral Commission Act, particularly Section 12, which provides for the manner in which campaigns and electoral processes are supposed to be conducted.

Although the law gives the Commission, under the Electoral Commission Act, the discretion to determine how campaigns are supposed to be conducted, the same law says, “subject to the Constitution and this Act”.

When you read the Electoral Act, the Presidential Elections Act as amended, the Parliamentary Elections Act as amended, even the Local Government Act as amended, all these talk about campaigns and candidates’ meetings. Yes, I know the law does not define campaigns and candidates’ meetings but if you go to the simple dictionary on the definition of “campaigns” and “meetings”, you will realise the involvement of the public in the electoral process.

Therefore, there is no way you are going to outlaw the public from the electoral process, unless you amend the law. Now, you are quoting guidelines passed by the Minister of Health, since when did statutory instruments passed under a delegated authority usurp the Acts of Parliament? There is no way political players are going to respect statutory instruments, which directly contravenes the Acts of Parliament.

Honourable minister, the only thing you may have to do is to go back to the drawing table, bring amendments to the law that will specifically provide for digital campaigns for this particular campaign. Short of that be ready yourself to fight running battles with all political players because they are not going to allow to be suffocated. Go to the political actors and even the citizens. The question of democracy is paramount and I also know that the question of health is paramount but let us follow the law in whatever we do. Do not completely rely on the guidelines allegedly made by Electoral Commission. Incidentally, even under the Electoral Commission Act although we do provide them, they have never come up with statutory instruments and laid them before this House, and this should be your responsibility.

Therefore, let us not look at these inferior regulations to usurp the principal laws passed by this Parliament. Let us do things that will enhance participatory democracy of course, bearing in mind acts of safety but let us not be seen to be usurping and overthrowing the legal regime in the name of satisfying the conditions set by statutory instruments. I beg to lay.

4.12

**MR HASSAN FUNGAROO (FDC, Obongi County, Obongi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. First, I associate myself with the views presented by my predecessors who have just spoken here. I would like to take it forward from there.

Madam Speaker, what is the difference in figures and numbers between machinery and a political meeting as referred to in the guidelines provided by the Electoral Commission? This needs to be specified. Meetings can be between two people and those are political meetings. Rallies can be a thousand people. So, when you say “mass meetings”, what do you mean? We need numbers.

Secondly, as a country, we must also be cognisant of the situation in which we live. Where are the televisions, radios, broadcasters and receivers going to be placed? We know that there are people in constituencies like Obongi, where there is no electricity and therefore, television sets may not even be able to function for those who are able to afford. Now, rural constituencies which do not have access to radios, televisions and other means of communication, how are they going to receive the information from those who will be able to speak from wherever they will be speaking from?

Thirdly, it is on record that some people in this country particularly political leaders from the Opposition like Dr Kizza Besigye, the party President for Forum for Democratic Change Eng. Patrick Amuria Oboi and some of us, including me, we have ever been sent away from radio stations even when we were allowed to talk, we paid and there was no coronavirus. For example, the Resident District Commissioner of Adjumani issued a letter saying, “We have stopped you from talking on the radio”. What is going to happen this time, when the RDCs are in charge or sensibly of the safety of the people of Uganda during this COVID-19 period? The RDCs are functionaries of the President. President Museveni appointed them and they will be working during the campaigns for their candidate President Museveni. Will they allow hon. Ssemujju, Sseggona and Asuman Basalirwa, to speak giving facts to the people on a television even when he has access to the television? No, it cannot happen. They will switch off power.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, the late Nelson Mandela said: “It is very important for every human being to have values to live for and values to die for if necessary.” For us we are aware of the fact that the current Government led by Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni took these values. He had values to die for in order to access political power. He took up arms, went to the bush, survived death while other people with whom he went died. Other people who supported him also died in the process; they were killed by those who opposed him. We have not yet reached that position of taking a decision of whether we live for or die in the process of accessing political power.

However, Ugandans must not forget this; we are all equal players in this. We are here because you have agreed to the principle that we should sit together and govern Uganda like this.

The people who work with RDCs must be guided. They must remain within their limits of power and authority. They must not threaten people like what I see in Moyo, Obongi, West Nile and Arua. When they see hon. Fungaroo going to the radio station, they deploy the police and Army.

Honourable members, you are lucky to be in Kampala. What happens to my colleagues here in Kampala, you can see on television. However, some of us who live in the rural areas, we are molested, witch-hunted and beaten up without you seeing. What is going to happen in the darkness of this thing coming next? We are ready, let us wait and see what is coming next. I thank you.

**MR KIBALYA**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The procedural point I am raising, we have listened to the statement of the minister. In the statement, the minister said his ministry has no power over the programme for Electoral Commission and Government cannot change the roadmap for Electoral Commission. We are debating so that we see that there could be change but the minister said his ministry and Government has no powers over the roadmap and the programme for Electoral Commission.

Therefore, can we know from the minister to whom we shall report so that we know the person with powers to change what we are debating?

4.18

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira municipality, Wakiso):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy this statement is given by a key actor in the UPC Government. The person who lost elections in Mbarara North, went to Luweero causing the death of more than half a million people but he had lost an election. Elections can cause death. I have seen how sweet Prof. Kamuntu feels as he delivers this statement. The same way they were feeling after the 1980 elections and you know what happened.

Madam Speaker, I have two issues. First, we have reports and the minister should allay our fears that the printing of ballot papers, the provision of voter identification machines and transmission of results, have already been given to a Germany Company called Veridos by the NRM sole candidate. We are also aware that the Electoral Commission announced and called bids for those who wanted to supply those services and actually, the bids came and Electoral Commission sought legal clearance from the Attorney-General.

However, as the bids are stuck with the Attorney-General, the sole candidate has taken over not only printing of ballot papers but also the provision of voter identification machines and transmission of results.

In fact, the Electoral Commission is being told to surrender the voters register because these machines have to be fed with this information. We want to know, Prof. Kamuntu, having been part of the UPC Government and you saw what elections cause, whether in your own judgement, you think this election – my colleagues who are lawyers have told you how it offends the principles of the Constitution. Also, elections are not just about candidates and Electoral Commission. They are about the entire country. That is why the first exercise was not to register candidates, but to register the citizens to participate.

The Constitution envisages active participation. You are telling a candidate to speak to no audience. He would just have to imagine that people are listening, even when they are not. So, there are two questions I am asking. Why has the sole candidate of NRM has taken over these roles of the Commission that you have told Parliament is independent? Finally, do you think this election will not cause problems like the one of 1980?

4.21

**MR MEDARD SSEGGONA (DP, Busiro County East, Wakiso):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, I do not intend to do the conventional thing of saying, “Thank you minister”. Why? It is because that “thank you” is unwarranted and pretentious. First, you have a Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs who thinks he has nothing to do in the situation when it is his responsibility to bring laws to perfect what appears to be an imperfect election.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, in addition to associating myself with my colleagues that have spoken, in particular, hon. Niwagaba and hon. Basalirwa, the duty of the Electoral Commission is to organise, among others, a free and fair election. The minister concentrates on what he called a regular election. Is it the opinion of this minister, therefore, that you can conduct a free and fair election where voters have no access to the candidates and the candidates have no access to the voters, an election that is devoid of transparency?

We have been accompanying our results from the polling stations to the district to avoid what the Kamuntus did in 1980. A curfew starts at 7.00p.m., and these elections cannot be followed. Is that a free and fair election? That question cannot only be answered in the affirmative by a skewed common sense that is not common to everybody.

Madam Speaker, whereas the Electoral Commission has the power to regulate the conduct of elections and campaigns, who advised the Electoral Commission that they can make and change the laws in this country? This is where the confusion starts. Instead of issuing a roadmap, the Electoral Commission proceeded to issue guidelines in the same roadmap. These are entirely two different things.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is something we need to understand. It is not about hon. Sseggona of DP. It is not about Mr Kasaija of People Power. It is about all of us. The scheme can only *–(Hon. Waluswaka rose)–* the gentleman thinks he has the register of People Power with all the names –

**THE SPEAKER:** But honourable members –

**MR SSEGGONA:** I think you had better be guided, my brother – *(Interruption)*

**MR WALUSWAKA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As we debate this very important statement from the minister, is it in order for hon. Sseggona, who is a lawyer, to refer to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development who is a senior member of NRM that he is a member of People Power when he knows that the minister is in this Parliament on NRM ticket?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I did not hear whether he meant George Kasaija, Philip Kasaija or Stephen Kasaija. He just said “Kasaija”. Please conclude, hon. Sseggona.

**MR SSEGGONA:** I thank you, Madam Speaker. The difference between me and my young brother is that I only speak after understanding. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, this scheme can only assist those that are required to regulate what we call public campaigns, and these will include the RDCs, police, and electoral officials who will turn it into a field day of soliciting and corruptly receiving money from candidates in order to have freedom to campaign.

My view is that common sense dictates that if the state and Ugandans are not ready for elections, we cannot go for elections.

Madam Speaker, there are election campaigns going on in the US. There is voting today in Malawi, and things are operating normally. How can the Electoral Commission say we have banned what we call “massive campaigns” when they have not defined them, and when they do not have that law-making power so as to provide definitions for an instrument that has the force of law?

May the minister, therefore, undertake the noble, but natural obligation to bring laws in this House so that we can make laws to regulate this particular election, being an election that is special in character other than running away from the responsibility?

Let me finally conclude with this warning to him. His predecessor, Gen. Otafiire, is a minister who failed to bring laws in this House for close to nine years. Where is he? Is he an elected Member of this House? You can be defeated through machinations *-(Interjections)-* of course I can hear order from somebody who has never won an election. *(Laughter)*

4.27

**MR JAMES KAKOOZA (Independent, Kabula County, Lyantonde):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have listened carefully to what the minister read to us. He stated that the situation we are in is not normal. Kevin Scholz, a scholar of management said in his book that each and every environment dictates the trend of the day. If we are in pandemic or in war, then we are in a war. The environment is not normal. So, should you operate in a normal way? You cannot operate in a normal way. Why don’t you bring the environment to operate in those laws that enable you to do what you want to do? Bring the legal framework. Nobody is avoiding it; we are here.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, if history is forgotten, the future is lost. Politics can never be quantified and played around with. In the public’s opinion, they are saying, “We are locked up in houses; we do not have food; we do not have anything, and yet you are telling us to go and vote for leaders. Which leaders?”

Some districts are under lockdown up to now; do you mean others are going to vote and others are not going to vote? What is going to happen?

Honourable minister, nobody says that the Electoral Commission is not a referee. What does it cost to sit down with the players to determine what to do in such a situation instead of dictating terms? (*Applause*) Even if you are a referee, you go on the playground to preside over a match but the players do not show up, will that match be genuine? That is why when a referee goes to a playground, they call the captains and ask: “What should we do? Which sides did you take?” It is about generating consensus.

Nobody is against having elections but - and we know that we are in a war-like situation and so, things cannot be normal but we should not go on to do abnormal things? The best way to go about it is for the Electoral Commission to go and say the situation -in fact, the Electoral Commission has changed its roadmap three times. Even now, it can change.

Supposing a war breaks out between January and February next year, shall we still have elections because there is a law? It can be postponed - *(Interjections)* – yes, we can have a war in January or February. Will you have elections during that time? Already, we are in war-like situation and you are saying others should go and be free, while others should not. You are telling them go and – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER**: Hon. Asamo, hon. Aogon, hon. Sebunya and hon. Waluswaka.

4.31

**MS HELLEN ASAMO** **(NRM, PWD Representative, Eastern)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to appreciate the minister’s report.

I know that interest groups are going to be nominated first to conduct their election and I represent an interest group, which is very unique. However, I would like to say that disabled people are not homogeneous. In the law, we have the deaf, blind, Albinos and all the other different kinds of disabilities. If you are going to use the radio and/or television, how will the deaf hear? *(Laughter)* That is important to take note of because not all the deaf know sign language. So, it is bad that we, who represent persons with disabilities, have not been consulted.

We know what happens to our people. People just think: “Let us do special interest groups.”

Right now, there is no civic education. I have just come from the ground and people were asking me questions whose answers I could not give because I don’t work with Electoral Commission. How are they going to do it? Will it be in the districts? Who is going to move all the crawling people?

Madam Speaker, Article 1 of the Constitution states that power belongs to the people. Those disabled persons are Ugandans and we need to respect their rights. We are not going to be taken like bandwagon simply because elections have to happen. Maybe we can elect others but leave us to get prepared.

At the end of the day, honourable minister, a person who is blind will look at the television and not understand what is happening. And so, how do you tell me that the proposals you have brought are all inclusive? We are here promoting Sustainable Development Goals and saying “leave no one behind” yet in these elections, you intend to leave us. It is a deliberate effort to leave out disabled persons because people think that we are few yet we are not few. In terms of votes, we are about four million. You actually do not vote us but we vote you. Disabled persons vote for persons with disabilities, constituency members and the President. Why, then, should they be taken lightly?

Why are you beginning with the elections for the special interest groups without any training or sensitization? Every time I see the chairperson of the Electoral Commission talking on TV and there is no sign language interpreter, I am like: “Oh my God! Whom is he talking to?”

Honourable minister, let us come up with a mechanism, which will help people to appreciate their rights. They should not be locked out.

A deaf or blind person may want to participate in an election to become a member of parliament yet we are regulating them into only being voters. The law says you can either be voted or you can vote. Honourable minister, I am talking for my people with pain – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER**: Hon. Aogon, hon. Sebunya and hon. Waluswaka. You have three minutes.

4.34

**MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi)**: Madam Speaker, it is a very important moment for us; a moment, where we can reflect, respond and make the Government to hear from us directly.

I would like to pick up from where hon. Asamo left. We should not leave anyone behind. Recently, we talked about the one million people – the youth who have not been registered and who need time to do that. Are we now going to leave those behind?

Secondly, it is very clear that the first thing should be life. If churches and schools are on recess, why can’t we also send elections on recess? *(Laughter)*  That is the question I am asking. Why are we dilly-dallying with a critical answer? If life matters, then can dead bodies vote? In my opinion, it is a question of sense from sensible people.

We must all consider one thing, which is to bring here the necessary Bill for enactment into a law. If it is about amending of the Constitution - we did it for the age limit. Those who know; know and they did it. There are people here who are heroes. They can again be heroes. *(Laughter)*  What is the problem? Let us tell the country the truth because people are anxious. They are waiting to hear from their leaders. Are we going to be heroes again or have we declined? That is the question that needs an urgent answer.

The minister is very useful – be useful from now on. I request the honourable minister to go back, bring the papers and organise himself. We are here for action. I know there are few members here because some are doing a virtual sitting. However, we can congregate and pass the relevant laws, if need be. Otherwise, it should be life first; the rest can follow later. What is it that we cannot change?

It is, therefore, important that we speak the truth. People are quiet yet their lives are being affected. Across the country, people are asking these very questions.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I request that we be straightforward. We should not create apathy on democracy. We are not going to have an election that is just ceremonial in nature. We need free and fair elections. That is the first thing – *(Member timed out.)*

4.37

**MR ROBERT KASULE (NRM, Nansana Municipality, Wakiso)**: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for presenting the statement. However, I would like to say that I do not know why people think this election will be easier for one group and not the other. This is because when you are speaking on television or radio, you cannot know whether people are responding or not.

The Electoral Commission issued guidelines and the roadmap and now is the time to consult. However, there are more details that are needed in this campaign because it is an exceptional campaign that needs exceptional actions.

Like others have said, if there are laws that we must amend, especially the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Acts, honourable minister, please bring them here. Otherwise, however small a meeting will be, we need some numbers. We might reach the field and find the overzealous police. You may be in a party meeting in a parish or sub-county teams and the police pounce on you and harass you out of that meeting. Such engagements have swung elections to either side.

Therefore, honourable minister, we need some numbers on this detail. We need exceptional guidelines and proper *- (Interruption)*

**MR SSEWUNGU**: Madam Speaker, I am at pain to put the honourable member to order.

Madam Speaker, these titles are not given for the sake of enjoyment but because of your capacity and management ability. Therefore, is the honourable member in order to call the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs a “Right honourable minister” yet I heard other people outside there calling themselves “Right honourable Secretary General” thereby killing the title of the Speaker of Parliament. Is he therefore in order to continue calling Prof. Kamuntu a “Right honourable minister” yet he has said, in front of us here, that he has no authority over Electoral Commission? Is he in order? *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER**: What did you say?

**MR KASULE**: Madam Speaker, I think we need some guidance. Unless we have a big budget for the Electoral Commission for civic education, there is need to – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER**: Hon. Waluswaka, hon. Ssekikubo, hon. Mungoma, hon. Kiyingi and hon. Isala.

4.40

**MR JAMES WALUSWAKA (NRM, Bunyole West County, Butaleja)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I would like to thank the honourable minister for this statement.

Madam Speaker, in engineering, we design for worst case scenarios. For the engineers here and other members, we are ready for campaigns because that is the worst scenario.

In Butaleja and Uganda in general, even people who appear a lot on television, who have very many posters or who may have money usually do not go through. A case in point is hon. Basalirwa. He did not have enough posters in Bugiri. Our NRM candidate had very many posters but hon. Basalirwa is here. Therefore, it does not matter whether you are on radio. Members, people know the members they want to vote.

Madam Speaker, nominations are voluntary. I would like to advise members that if you think the Electoral Commission is taking you for a ride, do not go for nominations since it is voluntary. They are not forcing you. *(Applause)*

Finally, in case members are aggrieved - *(Interruption)*

**MS JOY ONGOM**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I respect my honourable colleague. We are law makers and nobody is opposing the forthcoming elections. We all appreciate and we are all willing to go for elections. What the House is emphasising is that there is no enabling law, which is why we are calling upon the minister and the Electoral Commission to bring this to the House. Therefore, is the honourable member in order to force members to do what is illegal and unacceptable in this House? Is he in order?

**THE SPEAKER**: I do not know whether he was directing members to do anything. Please conclude.

**MR WALUSWAKA**: Madam Speaker, I did not direct any member. In fact I said, those who are willing should get nominated and those who do not want - I can see hon. Sseggona who is a lawyer. He can go to the law firms. This is what I am saying. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, when we try to say that we should extend elections, people may think that Parliament is giving itself the two years, which the court nullified in Mbale. Therefore, on behalf of the people of Butaleja and on behalf of NRM, I would like to say, let us go for elections otherwise people might think that Parliament is bringing the two years, which was quashed by the court. Members, get prepared for elections. If you do not want, just stay. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER**: Hon. Ssekikubo, hon. Mungoma, hon. Kiyingi and hon. Isala and then I come to the Independents. Can we cut down our debate to two minutes?

4.44

**MR THEODORE SSEKIKUBO (NRM, Lwemiyaga County, Ssembabule)**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I was glad to hear the honourable Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs saying that the Electoral Commission has embarked on the process of consulting stakeholders.

Madam Speaker, it would have been better for the Electoral Commission to have consulted earlier before coming up with a road map. Now you are putting the cart before the horse. In your judgment, which would come – I have seen you as a political veteran. However, honourable minister, do you usually first take decisions and then you consult or do you consult and then come up with a proper and agreeable position?

The supreme law of this land is the Constitution and the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy (II) provides that, *“The state shall be based on democratic principles, which empower and encourage the active participation of all citizens at all levels in their own governance.”* Madam Speaker, this is the guiding principle.

Whatever road map you have in your mind, you must encourage the active participation of all citizens in their own governance. How, therefore, can you have a direct and universal adult suffrage election when you have had indirect campaigns; when the citizens have participated indirectly? The two are incongruous. They do not add up. If it was that, maybe you want to say that we shall have an indirect election in this country. Why don’t you be honest? Why are you desperate? We can have all this, if we have all the stakeholders together. We can forge a way forward for this country.

Honourable minister, you are actually hiding behind the Electoral Commission but the Electoral Commission is not supreme. It is the Constitution and the people. Even within the Constitution, it is the people who must participate in their governance and they are at the forefront. Better still, why are we hiding behind COVID-19? *(Interruption)* I will take the information.

**THE SPEAKER**: Can I invite hon. Mungoma? Honourable members, we do not have enough time and you are donating time. I am coming to the Member for Kampala Central.

**MR NSEREKO**: Thank you very much, hon. Ssekikubo, for giving way. Madam Speaker, this House is on record as having undertaken a measure of looking into amendments of the enabling laws like the Parliamentary, Local Government and Presidential Elections Acts. If all the powers that be deem it fit that there is desire for an election in these abnormal times, we still have room to make all the necessary amendments and accommodate whatever we are doing within the ambits of the law.

Since the President has not assented to these Bills per se, let him go the extra mile and say, “These are my proposals”. He can forward his amendments or proposals to this august House. However, in the absence of the definition of what entails to be a political meeting, there cannot be any direct elections. Therefore, the effects of the elections that we shall have will be similar to the effects of the interventions and the guidelines he has been issuing on COVID-19; zig-zag, never straight and leave everyone confused and consequently, they would need everyone to come back and henceforth to create clarifications.

Elections should be straight forward –

**THE SPEAKER:** Is that information or a submission? *(Laughter)*

**MR NSEREKO:** My point of information, Madam Speaker, to my honourable colleague is that I agree with him entirely and state that if we want to call it a dress, let us sew it as a dress. If we want to call it a trouser, it must be tailored as a trouser. Otherwise, we cannot be ambiguous to call it an election, when it looks like a mere selection.

Madam Speaker, as I wind up, can you envisage a situation where special interest groups - For example, how will the elderly campaign on TV and radios? The youth – *(Interjection)* – No; it is important. It is not about age.

Right now, as the special interest groups are going to nominate and campaign, imagine numbers and numbers at villages –

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Nsereko, now you are abusing the opportunity.

**MR NSEREKO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

4.51

**MR ALEX BURUNDO (NRM, Bulambuli County, Bulambuli):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and thank you very much, hon. Kamuntu, for presenting the Electoral Commission programme. I will allude to what hon. Waluswaka was trying to put across.

Honourable members, we must accept ourselves that we are leaders and are here to represent our people. We must represent our people faithfully.

Electing a leader does not come from heaven. A leader comes from people. Honestly, speaking as a Member of Parliament for Bulambuli, I was elected because people know me. I was born in Bulambuli, I was brought up in Bulambuli and I went to school and here I am as a leader.

I am supporting scientific elections to go on because we love our people honestly. If we really love our people, we must go ahead and implement scientific elections to take place.

Madam Speaker, the reason why I am supporting hon. Kamuntu for scientific elections –*(Interruption)*

**MR ANYWARACH:** Madam Speaker, we have had regular elections every after five years. That is the feature of the law. Everyone of us who contested here got to be known so much in our constituencies even before the election period. But they did not go in the third year of our term or of the previous time to contest. They did not go in the fourth year. They went in the fifth year. That is when the election was conducted. They did not also offer themselves in the way they wanted haphazardly –

**THE SPEAKER:** So, what is your point of order?

**MR ANYWARACH:** They followed the law. Madam Speaker, our colleague is imputing wrong motive on every member who is trying to tell Government and Electoral Commission to do the right thing; that actually they are not known in their constituencies and that they are fearing election, when actually what members are saying is that we do it the right way. The honourable colleague, hon. Asuman Basalirwa was elaborate here on the legality.

Is the honourable Member of Parliament in order to insinuate that actually members are fearing election, members are not known and by advocating for the legal thing to do, members are actually trying to become alarmist? Is he in order?

**THE SPEAKER:** Can you substantiate?

**MR BURUNDO:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am trying to answer my colleague and I will again go back to my point emphasising about people electing us when they have known us.

With or without us going to the people and then moving from village from village amidst COVID-19, we can still be voted because like I said, we were brought up in the villages. We grew up in those villages. People know our characters, people know us and that is the reason and we shall be voted.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, to me, I feel that if we love our people, Electoral Commission should go ahead and conduct scientific elections –*(Interruption)*

**MR OKUPA:** The rules of this House were made by us and I thought the honourable member understands those laws. Maybe that is why he is debating the way he is.

Madam Speaker, hon. Anywarach raised a point of order and you asked the honourable member to substantiate and answer. However, he has continued. Is he in order to defy your ruling and directive for him to respond and clarify and he just continues? Is he in order?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Mungoma, can you substantiate what you said about members not being known?

**MR BURUNDO:** No; I have not forgotten. I am very sober and I listened to hon. Anywarach very carefully. He was asking why am I saying that the members are fearing elections. Yes!

If they have organised scientific elections and having consulted widely through the scientists and they have advised us and given us a go-ahead to have elections, who are you to begin deviating from the advice of the scientists? That means you are fearing elections, according to me -

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us have hon. Kiyingi.

**MR BURUNDO:** Madam Speaker, when I came here – *(Interjections)* – Madam Speaker, I need to be protected from the members.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please conclude.

**MR BURUNDO:** Thank you very much. As I conclude, Madam Speaker, according to me, I thought hon. Kamuntu had brought his – I knew hon. Kamuntu brought here information for us to share and we bring in our input.

My input, Madam Speaker, was that in relation to Electoral Commission and UNEB, UNEB should go ahead and set up centres upcountry, so that we can go there, especially the local governments - the LC5s, the LC3s - and verify their papers, in relation to social distancing, so that we do not promote COVID-19 in Uganda.

Madam Speaker, I submit. Thank you very much.

4.58

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS) (Ms Florence Nakiwala):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank the minister for addressing one of the issues that were of great concern, that is the youths with disabilities.

Earlier, the Electoral Commission had passed an announcement that the elections for the young people had been postponed. So, it seemed as if Parliament would not be properly constituted without those special interest groups.

First of all, I thank you but I have to ask you one thing, that we need to look at the guidelines for the people with disabilities, especially the youth with disabilities because they have double trouble; they are disabled and vulnerable in terms of income. Given the short notice, certainly that might rule out many people who had earlier prepared to participate in these elections.

Madam Speaker, having said that, elections are not an event; they are a process. Therefore, I believe that we are not conducting elections as an event for only 30 days or three months. People here should know that Ugandans are not easy to deal with. Ugandans know, and they have been expecting elections for five years; they have been observing and studying us and deep down, they have been thinking about their next leadership. Therefore, without taking them for granted, however much we go down and shout at them, they know and they will shame some people who think that elections are an event.

Madam Speaker, I would like to mention three aspects that were highlighted in the electoral roadmap. First, they talk about radio, television and then door to door campaigns. To me, it seems as if it is a package - door to door campaigns, house to house, home to home. Therefore, according to me, it gave us a wide spectrum that if you fell out on the radio, you can go to television and if you fell out on television, you can go home to home. Again, to me, honourable minister, that gives us three alternatives to look at.

I also want to mention that as we are here, the residents have always told us, and they are asking about their Members of Parliament, that they need to hear you speak over the radio. That was one of the fundamental principles according to the voters. This means - *(Member timed out.)*

5.01

**MS VERONICA BICHETERO (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido)**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to speak in support of most of my colleagues who said that the underlying words are “free and fair elections”.

I also would like to also speak on Article 62, which has been quoted by the honourable minister, saying that the Electoral Commission is independent and therefore he will neither touch nor guide them. That article is very clear; it is talking about the Electoral Commission in performance of their functions -*(Interjection)-* No, the article is clear. The functions are listed, honourable minister, and we know from the roadmap that the Electoral Commission came up with that this goes beyond the functions. That has already been enumerated here by my colleague and I cannot repeat it.

What I am trying to say is that the minister should not misguide anybody that the Electoral Commission is independent and can do anything without being regulated. The Electoral Commission should be guided to do the right thing.

What the colleagues are saying is, if there is need to enact laws, it is your responsibility, honourable minister, to bring those laws here. However, let us not raise our hands and say that the Electoral Commission is independent and therefore should not be interfered with. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER**: Honourable minister, I noted that section 50 may not be applicable here; that is on page 4. It says, “during the course of an election.” It envisages that an election has already started. It is not for this situation. You need to look at it again.

5.04

**MR KENNETH LUBOGO (NRM, Bulamogi County, Kaliro)**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Together with my colleagues who have submitted, I would like to appreciate that we are in times, which we did not anticipate, especially during this period. It has been said here by my colleagues that we are headed for a time where we are going to have litigations and petitions during or after the campaigns.

Madam Speaker, I would like to state here that even our Constitution foresaw that we were likely to have these situations where we may be asking ourselves whether the actions taken are in line with the Constitution. For that matter, under Article 137 (3), the Constitution provided that where any person feels that any act or omission by any person or authority – and this authority can actually be the Electoral Commission - is not in line with the Constitution, this matter can be petitioned to the Constitutional Court for guidance. I am not saying this for any reason other than getting guidance from the court.

I think it is proper that once we have a matter like this, which is contentious and we do not know what exactly we are going into, if it is going to be sustained and we are even spending money on it, it would be right for some Members to try and get an interpretation of this Act. A decision has been taken by the Electoral Commission and it can be challengeable. Therefore, it is something that can be done so that we are guided.

Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the schedule that the Electoral Commission put forward. It is also surprising that campaigns for presidential elections were given less than 60 days yet those for local government elections were given more than 120 days. You really wonder why a local leader would need three or four months to campaign yet the President is only going to campaign for 58 days. It is not logical.

I would like to, however, disagree with my colleagues who were submitting on elections in America, Malawi and so on. We should not just copy what they are doing. We have heard the President of the United States of America advising his citizens that they should be drinking sanitizers and they would get well. Should we also say that Ugandans do that because it is being said somewhere? We are looking at a risk; the point is, how do we go ahead and make sure that we mitigate the effects of this. The best thing that can be done, Madam Speaker *– (Member timed out.)*

5.07

**MS SARAH WEKOMBA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bulambuli)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to thank the minister for the statement he has brought before us. However, I stand to seek clarification from the honourable minister.

You will allow me, Madam Speaker, to read the dictionary definition of “scientific method”. A scientific method is, *“a method of procedure that has characterized natural science since the 17th century, consisting in systematic observation, measurement and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses. ‘Criticism is the backbone of the scientific method.’”*

Madam Speaker, with this definition, I stand to challenge the method of scientific elections. Already, with our electorate out there, we are getting criticism about this election. We do not know what to tell them, we do not have answers, and yet they expect us to tell them what they are supposed to do. We are out of order with this scientific method.

Recently, I heard the Secretary General of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), hon. Kasule Lumumba, saying that how we would have these elections would be decided mostly by the scientists. I would like to know when scientists carried out these experiments and investigations to tell Ugandans to go the scientific way in the coming elections.

South Korea held scientific elections but they managed to observe the rights of the quarantined citizens who were in their homes, in public places and hospitals. They all managed to go and vote. Under the Electoral Commission’s revised roadmap, I do not see how Ugandans are going to exercise their rights. Thank you.

5.10

**MS JOY ATIM (UPC, Woman Representative, Lira):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand to comment on the issue of the scientific elections. It is good we have been given the definition and I think that at an opportune time, maybe the Electoral Commission will also have to pick this and explain to the people.

Power belongs to the people. They have the power to elect their representatives. That means they have to see the person’s capabilities. Somebody can be so perfect in speaking over the radio or television but very different when seen physically.

We are violating the rights of our people. How I wish the Electoral Commission gave us a chance to consult with at least 50, 100 or 200 people on this issue of a scientific election. The ground shall not be levelled and it shall call for going to court.

The Electoral Commission has just released the electoral roadmap. The NRM is consulting and its Central Executive Committee (CEC) has already met, but other parties that are going to consult are being arrested by the police. Who is fooling whom? This is not okay.

Let us talk about the media campaigns. We only have Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) but they will not allow the Opposition to access it up to tomorrow! They will only allow Government officials. The other television and radio stations are private, but even then, security operatives write to them saying, “This person is not allowed on this radio station.”  Because they fear that their stations will be closed, they would rather not allow to host the Opposition members.

This country needs both Government and the Opposition. Can you stop violating the rights of the people? Please, give us a levelled ground. Unless the Electoral Commission or the minister comes up with a law to regulate the private radio and television stations, this may not work.

Secondly, there is the issue of poor network. Much some people may not be able to access television and radio stations, we can call them. However, some areas have very poor network. How shall this be feasible? I think we have to evaluate this.

Honourable minister, you have this in your plan but I feel that you should do the right thing at the right time. You have served in the Government of Uganda People’s Congress – *(Member timed out.)*

5.14

**MS STELLA KIIZA (Independent, Woman Representative, Kyegegwa):** Thank you. Madam Speaker, I have this to say to our good minister: Some two months back when the President was asked about the situation we are living in *vis-à-vis* the elections, he gave us this proverb: “When the house is burning and the head of the house tells the wife to go and make a bed, would that person be normal?”

During this pandemic, where the social, economic and political environment has been distorted, what is the hurry about for Ugandans? Why not first fight the war, end it and then go for peaceful and fair elections?

Secondly, there is room for us - The makers of the Constitution knew that there will always be Members of Parliament drawn from the public to make changes or additions to the existing law, in order to fit the existing conditions and govern society in a harmonious and peaceful manner. We are mandated by the public to amend any law, which suits them, to govern them harmoniously and effectively.

Honourable minister, I support all the other speakers who have been on the Floor saying that this is the right time; run around, consult us and every one, so that we get the relevant laws that can suit the prevailing situation. There is no need to hurry and panic over this. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. I remember there was a time when Government was very fast in creating Bills.

5.16

**MS FRANCA AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Agago):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity.

On behalf of the people of Agago District, whom I represent here, I would like to say that I really want to get the elections off our backs. However, I would like the Government to come out clearly on this matter. Most Members have already stated very clearly that nobody fears the coming elections. However, we would like Government to bring the enabling laws to conform to what the Constitution demands us to do in order to have the said scientific elections. So, either the Government does that or they close their eyes and say that the economy is unlocked and everybody can go and fully participate freely in the campaigns.

I see no reason for us to hold a scientific election when down town in Kikuubo, there are many people who are not practising social distancing; life is normal everywhere. Therefore, since there is no crisis in this country, let the Electoral Commission go back to holding a normal election the way we had planned before. Much as we have lost time, we shall carry out normal elections instead of using radio and/or television sets, which you have not given to the people. Are you going to give smart phones to everybody to allow them access internet in order for them to participate in the elections?

Finally, the people of Uganda would like to vote *–(Interruption)*

**MR ABALA:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, hon. Franca Akello, for giving way.

We are talking of campaigning using radio stations but there are so many people, including some in Parliament here, who have applied for transmission frequencies in Uganda but who, unfortunately, up to now, have not been allocated those frequencies. Even our place the other side applied but up to now, there is nothing, yet I am told there that there are 40 companies and individuals that are holding those frequency modulations that are not functioning. That is the information I wanted to give so that we proceed in an organised way. *(Laughter)*

**MS FRANCA AKELLO:** Thank you, honourable member, for the information. I was concluding by saying that from the time the roadmap came out, the people of Agago have been calling asking us to represent them in this House and tell Government that they are willing to elect their next set of leaders but they would like to know the people they are going to vote for. They do not have radio sets and not all of them have TVs or smart phones. Not everybody will be able to reach down to the villages to be seen.

Therefore, unless Government is ready to address that, they are not willing to accept scientific elections. They are only willing and able to participate in an election that is provided for in the Constitution of this country. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, concerning the frequency of Parliament, I asked the Auditor-General to audit those idle frequencies. Believe me, he has not audited them. They are auditing other things but not auditing issues of democracy.

5.20

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU GONZAGA (DP, Kalungu County West, Kalungu):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. At least I am here for the second term and I am happy that I am not among those Members who will have a lot of battles in primaries against other members of my party.

Madam Speaker, in section 20 of the Parliamentary Elections Act, the Electoral Commission demands that Members who are going to stand must hand in their programmes after nominations so that they can synchronise them with other candidates. Now, when you tell hon. Ssewungu, hon. Ssempijja and ten others who are contesting to go with a programme based on the programmes of the radio and TV stations, will you be able to manage the stations to have those programmes? Who will conduct them? NTV has *Mwasuze Mutya* in the morning. Simba has *Simba Taxi*. That means you have to get all these programmes - There is a radio station in Masaka and CBS in Kampala - *(Interruption)*

**MR GAFABUSA:** Thank you, honourable, for giving way. The information I would like to give is that actually, a majority of the radio stations in this country are privately owned. Also, some of the owners of these radio stations are political leaders and they can decide to deny you access to their radio stations. There is no law that compels them to give space on their radio stations to their opponents or to people they do not like. That is the information I would like to give.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Thank you, honourable member. Madam Speaker, remember what happened to the Shs 20 million here. The President

said, “take the money to the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs)” and a judge in court said, “take the money to the court.” Recently, the President said, “I am going to buy radios”; the following day, the Electoral Commission said, “we shall use radios for campaigns”.

I would like to warn Members here. You might get excited but the battle is against you and not many of us. Money will be used against you. I have no problem with RDCs because I am in the Opposition and I have always been battling them. However, I was in Kabale one time and we were stopped from going on radio. It was a Sunday and they had invited us, but the RDC said we could not attend a radio programme in Kabale.

You might think you are strong and you are thinking about scientific elections. Maybe the President can no longer move around the whole country, but can’t you move around the country? You are still making posters after having attained five or two terms here in Parliament because people demand for them; they want to see you.

What is happening, honourable members, is that money is going to hit you left and right. It is my first time to see RDCs getting money from the President directly. They will hit you and you will feel them. We who are used to the battle shall continue with our usual behaviour. Hon. Kamuntu has five candidates standing against him and he will have the largest noise after his scientific elections.

I pray we meet in the field but let us be careful. If there are

legislations - Members here have given you all the legislations. Why don’t we bring these laws here and we get better elections? We heard the Chairman of the Electoral Commission on Saturday last week rotating on every radio station trying to defend himself. I rang him and said, “Mr Chairman, this is impossible. Let us use Parliament because that is where you came from. You went through the Appointments Committee, you promised us heaven on earth saying that you are independent, but you are not fully independent because Parliament must monitor you.” Therefore, if you think that it is a matter of going for an election –

Who has more advantage on the radio stations than Ssewungu as we talk now? However, I am saying, let an NRM member who is contesting against me or a DP member come, we go to the field and explain to the people. Let them hear what we are saying, we campaign, we hit you left and right and we get a new government out of NRM. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on page 8 of the minister’s statement, he says the Electoral Commission is conducting a stakeholders’ engagement. I wanted to propose that we ask our Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to study this thing

further so that they give us a position. However, what is clear, honourable minister, is that the way is not yet clear. I think there are legal hurdles to this issue.

5.25

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (FDC, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was moved by hon. Asamo’s presentation, especially regarding people with disabilities. I would like the honourable minister to confirm that he has nothing to do after hon. Asamo’s presentation regarding people with disabilities.

Madam Speaker, in the election law that we amended and passed, we provided for elections to end at 4.00 p.m. Now, with social distancing, where there is going to be time for taking your temperature, washing hands, keeping four metres apart and sanitising, honourable minister, what do you have to say? Only a half of the people will have voted by 4.00 p.m. because a lot of time is going to be eaten up by those preparations. I would like your comment on that, honourable minister.

Honourable minister, Burundi held elections but you heard and saw what happened. Do we want a situation where at the end, after voting, hon. Kamuntu has been infected with COVID-19? No, we do not want that. We do not want a situation where after primaries, a half of the population is infected.

Politics is an emotional thing; it causes a lot of excitement. Right now, you can only try to control Kampala but even in Kampala, you have failed; that is why you still see *boda bodas* carrying people in Kampala. In the village, it is normal. What about when we cause excitement because of politics? Will you have the capacity to control people and stop them from moving when hon. Kamuntu has come singing, dancing and campaigning? Can you stop that?

I liked it when the President said that life is more important than anything else. That is why he has kept saying that churches and schools should not open and *boda bodas* should not operate. What is so special with this that we cannot amend the law, adjust or postpone the elections?

The President saved this country when HIV/AIDS hit, because of that straight talk - even during this COVID-19 pandemic; that is why up to now, we have not lost anyone. It is because he kept pushing and telling people that life is more important than anything. When people were pushing him to open schools, he said, “I do not even mind if the children spend the whole year without going to school; let me stay with my *bazukulu*.” *(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** We have not heard from the young people. Let us hear from the youth MP before the minister comes up.

Honourable members, what I find interesting is the four metres; is there a car, which has four metres inside it? We sit in cars, which do not have four metres inside them, and here they tell us to keep a distance of four metres.

5.28

**MS SARAH BABIRYE** **(NRM, Youth Representative, Central):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Electoral Commission for the roadmap they have brought. However, I would like to also request them to clarify and assure us about the young people who are supposed to vote through electoral colleges.

Normally, these young people gather together and come up with committees from the village up to the national level. At the point of voting, we normally gather in the same electoral area; for example, in the central region, the 25 districts will all come together at the same venue and vote. If we are going for primaries, we normally gather at Namboole Stadium. All the youth from different regions and districts come together and we choose who should be our representative and leaders at the National Youth Council. How is all this supposed to be managed?

The National Youth Member of Parliament is a representative of the entire country. Most of the districts do not even have networks of any telephone companies. In Buvuma, for instance, it is really hard to reach out to a young person in Bugaya Subcounty. It is hard to reach out to someone in Kalangala. That is only in central region; what about in other parts of the country? How is this supposed to be managed? I would like the honourable minister and the Electoral Commission to throw more light on that. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER**: What hon. Babirye has said applies also to the persons with disabilities. They have to assemble. There is no other way they can vote without assembling. So, would that be a mass gathering or a small gathering?

**MR JOHNSON MUYANJA**: Madam Speaker, I wanted to give hon. Babirye information. Very few youth pay attention to radio and television programmes. We were surprised that the Electoral Commission was referring to the radios that His Excellency the President talked about. His Excellency the President confirmed that the radios and televisions are for academic purposes. What radios are you talking about? If you go to Koome Island in my constituency, for people to watch television, they go to one room called a *kibanda -* social gathering - and that is the only opportunity they have.

Therefore, honourable colleagues, some of the things you are talking about cannot be applicable in some areas. That is why, honourable minister, you have to visit some of these unique areas like the islands. You have never been there and you do not know how people survive there. Out of 100 people, only one person has a television set. Even when people tune in to radio programmes, they gather together. Youth actually prefer games and musical programmes.

Therefore, we cannot emphasise the issue of radio and television alone; we should also emphasise the issue of a certain number of people whom we can talk to physically. Those people are looking forward to meeting us as individuals. That is what they are interested in. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER**: Honourable members, Government has not considered it necessary to adjust the curfew time. We are now approaching curfew time.

5.33

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION** **(Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, the minister has heard about the illegality of all the roadmaps and guidelines they have issued. So, he will have to tell us very clearly -

Secondly, we are talking about scientific elections and by definition, we are here in a scientific parliament. However, when it comes to members of the Opposition - In Omoro District, some four days ago, they went and arrested our people who were having their own meeting and they were observing social distancing. Therefore, unless you people open up, this election will not be free and fair.

When you move deep in the villages, you will always find people gathered in homes, in rooms, drinking together. Go to *Kikuubo* here, you will always find people gathered. Why don’t we open up and have free and fair elections?

Observe very keenly what has been read by our legal experts here. Honourable minister, the legal experts have proved you completely wrong. Why are you the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs when you have brought a lot of illegalities into this House? Please, take your work seriously. Do not let us go back to war. We can also go back to war because Uganda is for all of us and all of us are equal. There is nobody who is more important than the other. We are all Ugandans and we deserve better. Thank you.

**PROF. KAMUNTU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank Members for their contributions. I would like to pledge to you that your constructive criticisms, through the *Hansard* and the debate on the Floor of the House, have been taken into account and they will be used as we progress. It is not an event; as we go through this exercise, we shall use what you have contributed to improve the roadmap.

Secondly, these are not normal times. I would like Members to appreciate that. As we are battling with the coronavirus outbreak, there is another outbreak, which is election fever *– (Laughter).* The election fever has caught. We have a combination of outbreaks, which tend to make people impatient, intolerant and abusive. I would like to appeal to you; the reputation of this House is at stake and we have to be sober when debating these matters.

Let me clear a number of issues. I have been listening to a social media programme by the President of Uganda Law Society. If you listened to the President of Uganda Law Society, you would realise how important it is for us to be sober when we are debating matters that affect us as Members of Parliament.

If you postpone elections even for one day - outside there, there are so many people who want to come in and they want some of us out. The political mortality rate for Members of Parliament is, of course, sometimes worrying. Despite all that, listen to the following:

One, I would like to quote from the Constitution and make this point very clear; the Constitution states:

*“Independence of the commission.*

*Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the commission shall be independent and shall, in the performance of its functions, not be subject to the direction or control of any person…”*

This is a commission under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and that is why I am speaking for them. I do not direct them. This is a constitutional provision. I am sure if I were to direct them, some of you would scream – *(Interjections)-* Secondly, Madam Speaker, -

**THE SPEAKER**: Honourable members, you had the opportunity to speak; let the minister answer the questions quickly.

**PROF. KAMUNTU**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your ruling. I would like Members to know that the Speaker of this House, together with hon. Roland Mugume Kaginda, raised questions for which you required me to provide a solution and brief to Parliament. Madam Speaker, that is exactly what I have done in compliance with your directive; nothing more. I, however, also added something.

I want Members to appreciate that these are very difficult times. A country with the motto, “For God and My Country” has suspended religious services. I am attending services on social media. We are here meeting in a tent. This is a very difficult situation for which we must adjust. That is why I credited you, Madam Speaker, for innovation, adaptation and improvisation. This is what is required of us.

For the case of elections, Ugandans have had elections since 1996 and they expect elections in 2021. We must do *–(Interjections)-* I am responding to your questions. We will look at all the questions you have raised regarding the legal framework. Secondly, I listened carefully to all these questions that have been raised by the people with disabilities; they have a point and we are going to take them into account.

This, however, should not make Members of Parliament be intolerant. You can imagine a whole Member of Parliament, whom I know is a friend, hon. Sseggona, could not even say, “thank you very much for this presentation” - *(Laughter).* *[Hon. Sseggona: Order.]* What point of order?

**THE SPEAKER:** Please, conclude.

**PROF KAMUNTU:** You see, he wants to seize the microphone without being allowed. You do not need to be impatient, hon. Sseggona – *(Interruption)*

**MR SSEGGONA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If there is anything that must be defended by this House, like in any civilised Parliament, it is the freedom of expression. I did express myself that this time round, I will defy the conventions of our democracy not to make a pretentious statement of “thank you” to the minister. I was playing within my right of expression. Is it in order for the experienced and aged minister, therefore, to character assassinate me for my art of speech?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, there is expected decorum in the House. That is what the minister expected from you.

**PROF. KAMUNTU:** Fantastic! Madam Speaker, I hope hon. Sseggona listens because I respect him and I expected him, as a matter of courtesy and decorum of Parliament, to say “thank you very much for your statement”.

Let me add that you have people *–(Interjections)–* This is the point. I have taken into account the issues you have raised about the timing, people with disabilities, youth, and the legal framework required to make the operation work. That, however, does not give a licence to a distinguished honourable member to refer to a whole –

At the time the President was being praised for taking timely actions to save your people from dying of coronavirus, the man did not even want to refer to the President as President; he called him “sole candidate”. You do not need to do this. This is a man who moves a vote of displeasure when the rest of the people are praising the President. It is unnecessary. Just take it that a sense of humility is virtue. We will look at the issues and see how to improve them.

I am appealing to you - You want to make reference to UPC. Yes, a man who does not know his history does not even know the present and that man has no future. I cannot deny my past. I was a member of Uganda People’s Congress, just like you had been in UPM, DP and so on. I do not deny it. That, however, should not be used to intimidate me when I am giving a presentation of a statement you have asked for. I think I am entitled to respond to this.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, unless the situation warrants, unless there is a war as provided for in the Constitution or there is an insurgency or external aggression for the country to declare a state of emergency, the elections will be held under modified conditions as we have presented. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay. Thank you, honourable minister. Honourable members, I will send the text to the committee so that they can also have their input and advise the minister especially on the particular areas to handle.

Honourable members, there are matters we wanted to handle today, but now it is a quarter to 6.00 p.m. Unfortunately, Government does not think we should adjust the hours of curfew.

**MS OPENDI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know you have made a ruling on the report of the minister. However, you realise that there are several issues that have not been considered because everybody has not spoken. If I refer to what the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission had said, these guidelines are just statements. Guidelines are not rules, and elections are several months away from now *-(Interjections)-* Yes, the elections are several months away from us now.

Madam Speaker, wouldn’t it be procedurally right for us to send this statement of the minister to the relevant committee. This committee will interface with the Electoral Commission and some Members can also go to the committee and give their views. We can later debate its report in the House and we move forward rather than going straight to the minister –

**THE SPEAKER:** That is what I had already proposed. I said I was sending this statement to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs so that they can engage the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders. That is where it is going.

Honourable members, it is 13 minutes to 6.00 p.m. Should we really continue doing anything? The House is adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

(*The House rose at 5.46 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 24 June 2020 at 2.00p.m.*)