

**EASTERN AFRICA STANDBY FORCE (EASF) ELECTION OBSERVER  
MISSION (EOM)**

**GENERAL ELECTIONS OF JANUARY 2021**

**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

# **Final Report**

January 2021

**Table of Contents**

List of Abbreviations/Acronyms ..... 3

Acknowledgement ..... 4

Executive Summary ..... 5

Brief History ..... 6

Introduction ..... 7

    Objectives of EASF EOM Uganda 2021 ..... 7

        • Methodology ..... 8

Preliminary Findings and Observations ..... 9

    • Political context ..... 9

    • COVID 19 Pandemic ..... 10

    • Legal framework ..... 10

    • Election Administration ..... 11

    • Electoral Technology ..... 13

    • Electoral System ..... 14

    • Electoral Campaign ..... 14

    • Voter registration ..... 15

    • Media ..... 16

    • Civil society ..... 17

    • Role of Security personnel ..... 17

    • Participation of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) - SIGs ..... 18

    • Nomination of Candidates ..... 18

Election Day observation and findings ..... 19

    • Opening of polling stations ..... 19

    • Election materials ..... 20

    • Turnout ..... 20

**Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

- Gender Participation ..... 20
- Election personnel..... 20
- Voting ..... 21
- Accessibility of Polling Station ..... 22
- Party agents (representation of candidates in polling stations) ..... 22
- Security..... 22
- COVID-19 Protocols..... 23

Conclusion ..... 23

Post-Election Findings and Observations ..... 24

Recommendations ..... 25

Appendices ..... 27

Photos ..... 31

Annexures ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

### List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance
AU	African Union
BVVS/K	Biometric Voter Verification System/Kits
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHoM	Deputy Head of Mission
EAC	East African Community
EASF	Eastern Africa Standby Force
EASF EOM	Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission
EC	Electoral Commission Uganda
ECA	Electoral Commission Act
ERTDS	Electronic Results Transmission and Dissemination System
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
HoM	Head of Mission
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUP	National Unity Platform
OAU	Organization for African Unity
PPC	Probation Police Constables
PPOA	Political Parties and Organizations Act
PWD	Person with Disability
SIG	Special Interest Groups
SPC	Special Police Constables
UCC	Uganda Communication Commission
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
UPF	Uganda Police Force
WSR	Women Situation Room

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

### Acknowledgement

The Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission (EASF EOM) is grateful for the support it received from a number of individuals and institutions that helped ensure its Mission in the Republic of Uganda was a success.

The Mission first and foremost expresses appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uganda and the Electoral Commission of Uganda (EC Uganda), for extending an invitation to the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF). This clearly demonstrated their openness and willingness to subject the electoral process to regional and international scrutiny.

The EASF EOM wishes to express special gratitude to the Head of Mission (HoM) His Excellency Ambassador Ahamada Hamadi from the Union of the Comoros and Head of EASF Civilian Component (who was also the Deputy Head of Mission - DHoM) Mr. Dawit Assefa who provided leadership for the Mission. We are grateful to Brig. Gen. Getachew Shiferaw Fayisa, The Director of the Eastern Africa Standby Force for his support throughout the Mission period. The EASF EOM also acknowledges the contribution of all its Observers drawn from seven (7) of ten (10) EASF Member States namely; Comoros, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles and Sudan. The Team comprised of Election Management Experts and Support Component from the EASF civilian roster. Their contribution towards the success of the EASF EOM was commendable having worked long hours traversing the Country visiting different Districts. Their observation toolkits and checklists formed the basis of the EASF EOM public statements and observations about the elections.

The Mission's work in the Republic of Uganda would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of its technical staff and the EASF Secretariat who collectively, were the primary drafters of this report and other statements issued by the Mission.

EASF EOM also wishes to thank the people of Uganda and stakeholders for their hospitality and willingness to share information that went on to assist the Mission in fulfilling its mandate and objective in observing the conduct of the 2021 General Elections in the Republic of Uganda.

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

### **Executive Summary**

The Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to the Republic of Uganda following the invitation by the Government of the Republic of Uganda in December 2020. The EOM's objective was to observe and assess the conduct of the General Elections especially the Presidential elections. EASF EOM was on the ground from 9 to 16 January 2021.

The Mission was composed of twenty (20) officials from seven (7) of ten (10) EASF Member States namely; Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles and Sudan. The EOM Team comprised of Election Management Experts and Support Component from the Secretariat and the EASF civilian roster.

The EASF EOM deployed observers with the objective of providing a critical and impartial assessment of the preparations and conduct of the 2021 Presidential elections and the extent to which they are compliant with regional, continental and international principles for democratic elections to which the Republic of Uganda has committed itself. To achieve this, EASF EOM observers closely followed the electoral process and held consultations with several stakeholders and interlocutors in the Country. The leadership of the Mission also held consultations with key stakeholders in the country.

The EASF EOM assessed the 2021 General Elections in the Republic of Uganda in conformity with relevant regional, continental and international principles governing democratic elections, as well as the national legal framework for elections.

### **Brief History**

Uganda is named after the Buganda kingdom, which encompasses a large portion of the south of the country, including the capital Kampala.

It has a population of 45,741,007 (UN 2020), covers 241,038 km<sup>2</sup> (93,065 sq/m) and is a landlocked Country in East Africa.

The first elections in Uganda were held on 1 March 1961 with Benedicto Mugumba Kiwanuka becoming the First Prime Minister and was one of the persons that led the country in the transition between colonial British rule and independence. He was in office until 30 April 1962 following the elections held.

Uganda gained independence from the United Kingdom on 9 October 1962, and in October 1963 became a Republic. Kabaka Edward Fredrick Muteesa, King of the Buganda kingdom became the first President and Milton Obote Prime Minister and Head of Government.

Uganda's immediate post-independence years were dominated by the relationship between the central government and the largest regional kingdom, the Buganda. It was followed with a turbulent political history that led to a military coup in on 25 January 1971 that ushered in a brutal regime of Idi Dada Amin, then commander of the Ugandan Army. Amin dominated government as the legislative and executive functions and powers of government were unified in him. During his tenure he was the president who decreed what laws would be used to govern the country. His reign lasted eight (8) years in which no elections were held and many Ugandans lost lives and properties while others were displaced until 11 April 1979 when he was deposed.

The years that followed the Country plunged into the **Ugandan Bush War** leading to National Resistance Army (NRA) capturing Kampala in January 1986 and subsequently establishing a new government of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

The Republic of Uganda is a member state of the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), The Common Wealth, East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) among others.

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

### **Introduction**

The Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to the Republic of Uganda following the invitation by the Government of the Republic of Uganda in December 2020. The EOM's objective was to observe and assess the conduct of the 2021 General Elections.

The Team was led by H.E. Ambassador Ahamada Hamadi from the Union of Comoros. The Senior Mission leadership team comprised of the Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Dawit Assefa (who's also the Head of Civilian Component), supported by a Management Team.

The Mission was composed of twenty (20) officials from seven (7) of ten (10) EASF Member States namely; Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles and Sudan. The EASF EOM Team comprised of Election Management Experts and Support Component from the Secretariat arrived in Kampala on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 respectively.

The assessment of the EASF Mission was based on the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966), the African Union Declaration on the principles of democratic elections (2005), African Union Guidelines for Election Observations and Monitoring Missions (2002), the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance (ACDEG 2007), Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of conduct for International Election Observers as well as the current legal framework governing elections in the Republic of Uganda.

This report presents the EASF EOM overall and final assessment of the 2021 electoral process in the Republic of Uganda, and comprises details of the Mission's observations, findings and recommendations. The EASF EOM assessment of the elections is based on the principles and standards for the conduct of democratic, credible and transparent elections as enshrined in the aforementioned AU instruments.

EASF EOM undertook the following objectives and methodologies in its observation:

#### **Objectives of EASF EOM Uganda 2021**

As per EASF mandate to enhance peace and security in the Eastern Africa region, the EASF EOM undertook the following objectives;

1. To observe, assess and provide an impartial opinion of the electoral process in relation to regional and international standards;



## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

2. To promote the conduct of credible elections and contribute to the consolidation of democracy, good governance, peace and stability in the country;
3. To project the presence of EASF in solidarity with the Member State during the Election process within the region.

- **Methodology**

To achieve the above objectives, the EASF EOM undertook the following activities:

- EASF received invitation to observe the 14 January 2021 General Elections invitation in December 2020 and commencement of planning for the Mission began. The planning exercise included recruitment, mission logistics, setting of objectives, drawing out an engagement plan during the Mission among others;
- Three (3) EASF Secretariat members arrived in Kampala on 9 January 2021 as part of the advance Team to set up the EASF EOM Secretariat and attend to other logistical arrangements;
- On 10 January Observers from seven (7) of the ten (10) EASF member states arrived in Kampala;
- EASF EOM issued an Arrival Statement on 11 January in Kampala in a Press conference well attended by members of the fourth estate, the Media. The statement informed on the methodologies and objectives of the Mission. The statement also called for peace, calm and stability as the Country went for the election. The Statement urged all Leaders and Citizens to restrain from any violent activities that could threaten peace in the Country;
- Briefing sessions for Observers was done with a focus on use of tools for the collection and compilation of electoral data. The Observers underwent two (2) days training from 11 to 12 January on EASF EOM observation methodology and also received briefings from stakeholders and interlocutors;
- EASF EOM deployed 10 observer teams in 9 Districts namely; Mbarara, Lira, Gulu, Kampala, Mbale, Masindi, Wakiso, Mpigi and Mityana;
- EASF EOM also interacted with stakeholders involved in the electoral process, notably the Government of the Republic of Uganda, Electoral Commission of Uganda (EC

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

Uganda), political actors, Media, political parties and independent Candidates/representatives, Coalition of CSOs, local domestic observer groups and International Observer groups like IGAD and EAC;

- The leadership of the EASF EOM held high-level consultations with key election stakeholders, including the EC Uganda, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leaders of political parties, civil society organizations, representatives of regional and international organizations. The high-level consultations held formed part of the preventive diplomacy strategy for the Mission to reduce tensions and promote transparent, credible and peaceful elections;
- On Election Day the EASF EOM Team visited a total of 133 polling stations in 9 Districts in Mbarara, Lira, Gulu, Kampala, Mbale, Masindi, Wakiso, Mpigi and Mityana;
- On 15 January, EASF EOM issued a preliminary statement on its observation findings and recommendation on the concluded election.

### Preliminary Findings and Observations

- **Political context**

The Presidential and Parliamentary elections of 14 January 2021 in the Republic of Uganda were conducted as the 4<sup>th</sup> multiparty elections since the return to multi-party politics in 2005. The Mission observed that there were 11 Presidential Candidates; 5 from Political parties whilst 6 were Independent Candidates.

The 2021 elections were held in the backdrop of handling the COVID19 in the Country whilst ensuring the pandemic does not spread further during the campaign and nomination period.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) party of President Yoweri Museveni has been in power since February 1986. The first election held under his regime were held in 1996 and subsequently elections held every five years. The constitution allowed for the existence of political parties but prohibited parties from fielding candidates directly. Candidates could belong to parties but essentially contested elections as independents candidates. Three (3) Candidates vied for the Presidential elections in the 1996 elections.

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

In 2005, the 1995 Constitution was amended removing presidential term limits and also ended the 19 years of one-party rule thus introducing multipartyism. The first multipartyism Presidential elections were held in 2001 in which six (6) Presidential Candidates vied.

In December 2017 Parliament voted to remove Presidential age limits, previously it was 75 years age limit.

- **COVID 19 Pandemic**

The first COVID 19 case in Uganda was reported on Saturday 21 March 2020. The Government had initially on 18 March banned and suspended all public gatherings including places of worship, bars, weddings, music shows, rallies and cultural meetings for initial 32 days with immediate effect. Reviews for the ban on public gatherings among other functions have continued to be reviewed by the Government on advice by the Ministry of Health. Foreigners and Ugandans arriving in the country were put under 14-day mandatory quarantine in hotels designated by the Government. Air transport and international border points were also closed for more than 6 months. International travel resumed on 1 October 2021.

However, the Government has been reviewing the restriction measures and relaxed some of the measures but in strict conformity to the Ministry of Health standard operating procedures and protocols.

- **Legal framework**

The assessment of the EASF EOM was based on the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966), the African Union Declaration on the principles of democratic elections (2005), African Union Guidelines for Election Observations and Monitoring Missions (2002), the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance (ACDEG 2007) and Code of conduct for International Election Observers as well as the current national legal framework governing elections in the Republic of Uganda.

This included;

- The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 (as amended),
- The Electoral Commission Act Cap. 140 (as amended),
- The Political Parties and Organizations Act, 2005 (as amended),

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

- The Presidential Elections Act 2005 (as amended),
- The Parliamentary Elections Act 2005 (as amended)
- The Local Governments Act Cap 243 (as amended),
- The National Women Councils Act, Cap 318 (as amended) with the attendant rules and regulations,
- The National Youth Councils Act, 319 (as amended) with the attendant rules and regulations,
- The Persons with Disability Act, 2020 with the attendant rules and regulations,
- The National Council for Older Persons Act, 2013 with the attendant rules and regulations,
- The Labour Unions Act, 2006 with the attendant rules and regulations, amongst others.

The Constitution provides for universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage, existence of political parties, the right of women to equitable representation; and the rights to the freedoms of expression and assembly.

All election results shall be announced and declared within 48 hours after the closure of polls as Article 103 (7) of the Constitution and in accordance with the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Electoral Laws.

- **Election Administration**

Article 60 of the Constitution of Uganda establishes the Electoral Commission (EC) for the management of electoral processes.

The EC comprises a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and five other Commissioners who are appointed by the President with the approval of Parliament. The tenure of office for each member is seven (7) years and can be renewed for one more term. The current Commission is presiding their first General Elections having come to office in November 2016 and subsequently sworn into office on 17 January 2017. The current office bearers include:

1. Simon Mugenyi Byabakama      Chairperson
2. Hajjat Aisha Lubega              Deputy Chairperson
3. Peter Emorut                      Commissioner
4. Justine Ahabwe Mugabi          Commissioner

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

5. Stephen Tashobya                      Commissioner
6. Mustapha Ssebagala Kigozi      Commissioner
7. Nathaline Etomaru                    Commissioner

The day-to-day execution of the Commission's mandate is carried out by a Secretariat headed by a Secretary who is a public officer appointed by the EC in consultation with the Public Service Commission. The terms and conditions for holding office are determined by the appointing authority. The Secretary serves as the accounting officer and is in charge of the day-to-day running of the Commission.

The government funds the Electoral Commission. According to Section 9 of the Electoral Commission Act (ECA), all monies required to defray all expenses that may be incurred in the discharge of the functions of the Commission or in carrying out the purposes of this Act are charged on the Consolidated Fund. The Act further provides that, the funds of the Commission may, with the prior approval of the Minister responsible for finance, include grants and donations from sources within or outside Uganda to enable the Commission to discharge its functions.

The Electoral Commission Act sets out the Commission's mandate and makes provisions for its financing and operations. The Presidential Elections Act and the Parliamentary Elections Act outline the procedures for the conduct of National Assembly and Presidential elections during all the stages of the electoral process from nomination of candidates to election petitions. The Political Parties and Organisations Act (PPOA) provides for the regulation, financing and functioning of political parties and organisations. The Local Government Act regulates the conduct of elections in municipal, county and sub-county councils held every five years.

The 2021 electoral units include;

- 146 Districts;
- 353 Constituencies;
- 10,595 Parishes;
- 2,184 sub counties/towns/municipal divisions;
- 70,626 villages; 34,684 polling stations;
- 18,103,603 registered voters of which 9,501,809 (52.48%) are Females while 8,601,794 (47.51%) are Males.

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

Parliament has 529 Representatives distributed as follows;

- 353 Parliamentarians representing Constituencies
- 146 District Women Representatives
- 5 Representatives elected for the Youth;
- 5 Representatives elected for Persons with disability (PwDs);
- 10 Representatives elected for the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF);
- 5 Representatives elected for Workers
- 5 Representatives elected for the older persons.

- **Electoral Technology**

EC Uganda acquired 38,500 Biometric Voter Verification System/Kits (BVVS/K) machines which were to be used to verify voters on all polling days. These machines would be deployed at all the 34,684 Polling Stations, countrywide.

The system assists during the search of a voter's details by reading the unique barcode on the Voter Location Slip (VLS) and provides information about the location of the right polling station, within that District, in case one is at the polling station where they are not registered. The EC chair informed that only persons appearing on the National Voter Register will be eligible to vote, irrespective of whether they do or do not possess a National Identity Card or the voter locator slip (VLS). The VLS can only ease identification of a voter but it is not a prerequisite for the polling exercise.

The BVVS uses fingerprints to match voter details that the Presiding Officer uses to confirm the identity of the voter as being the one on the Voters' Register of a particular polling station.

EC Uganda will use the Electronic Results Transmission and Dissemination System (ERTDS) for results transmission from the polling station all the way to the national tallying centre in Kampala.

The presidential elections results will be announced at polling stations and at District Tally Centres and then be transmitted to the National Tally Centre which will be Kyambogo University Playground in Kampala.

- **Electoral System**

Uganda is a multiparty democracy and presidential republic in which the President is both the Head of State and Head of Government.

Uganda's presidential election is a two-round majoritarian system of 50% plus 1 vote cast. In the event that none of the candidates reaches the threshold, a run-off between the top two candidates is held within 30 days from the official declaration of the results of the previous election on a simple majority basis.

The election of Members of the National Assembly for a five-year term follows the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral system.

- **Electoral Campaign**

In June 2020 EC Uganda released the election roadmap with activities and timelines, the roadmap issued highlighted campaigns would be conducted on radio, television, newspapers and on the internet. This was referred to as Scientific election in which social distancing guidelines were to be enforced to curb the spread of COVID-19.

As election date neared Candidates were allowed to conduct in person campaigns with campaign timetable released by the EC Uganda in conformity to the COVID-19 SOPs. However, most campaigns observed did not comply to the COVID-19 protocols.

Candidates complained that EC Uganda favored the ruling party National Resistance Movement (NRM) at the expense of other Candidates/Parties. EC Uganda has since denied these allegations. Heavy presence of security personnel was seen in NRM campaigns whilst none or few were observed in the opposition rallies.

On 26 Dec 2020 Campaigns were suspended in 12 Districts namely; Mbarara, Kabarole, Luwero, Kasese, Masaka, Wakiso, Kabale, Jinja, Kalungu, Kazo, Kampala & Tororo by EC Uganda citing MoH directive as spreading COVID-19. The opposition protested citing these Districts were their strongholds and the suspension was meant to prevent them from accessing their supporters and voters.

Campaigns period began on Nov 9 2020 and end on Jan 12 2021 i.e., 2 days before elections. Campaign times are from 7am to 6pm, while the nationwide curfew begins 9pm ends 6am

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

- **Voter registration**

18,103,603 voters were registered and spread out in a total of 34,684 Polling Stations across the Country.

Soft and Hard copies of the National Voters' Register were handed over to the Presidential candidates after presidential nominations in November 2020. The Presiding Officers and Agents of Political Parties/Independent candidates will be having copies of the voter register at the Polling Stations.

EC introduced Voter Locator Slips (VLS) for voter identification during polling. The VLS is meant to minimize time spent by voters locating their polling stations. The VLS bears voters photograph, names, date of birth, location (District, Constituency, Sub County, Parish and Polling Station), has a barcode which will be read by the Biometric Voter verification machines which will be deployed across the Country. EC began issuing the VLS from 3 to 12 January in respective Parish and Sub County by Supervisors. The EC Chair however advised that, only persons appearing on the NVR will be eligible to vote, irrespective of whether they do or do not possess a National Identity Card.

Voter registration commenced on Thursday 21 November 2019, and was scheduled to end on 11 December 2019 but was extended for an additional five (5) days (12 December to 16 December 2019, and a further extension of seven (7) days, from 17<sup>th</sup> December to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019. EC Uganda informed the extension was done due to unfavorable weather conditions in many parts of the Country and the high numbers of applicants in registration centres.

There was no voter registration for Ugandans living in the diaspora done. EC informed there will be no diaspora voting.

Voter registration was closed more than one year to the 2021 elections locking out many of the young people who had turned 18 years during the year. EC Uganda informed this was to enable and give them ample time to clean the voter register.



## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

- **Media**

Uganda has a diverse media sector in which there are nearly 300 licensed radio stations and 30 (free to air) TV stations with a wide coverage across the Country. However, Radio is more popular medium of communication with a wide coverage of about 87% of the population.

EASF EOM noted that the state media provided more coverage to the incumbent president and his party. This was at the expense of candidates from the opposition and independent candidates who received lesser coverage compared to the main opposition parties and candidates. It was further reported that private media provided a fairly balanced reporting on all parties and candidates.

Besides the mainstream print and electronic media, campaigning was carried out through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp. This could be attributed to the Government directive that no physical meetings would be held in an effort to curtail COVID-19 in the Country. The majority of voters were young people use the social media to communicate. EASF EOM notes with satisfaction the active role of journalists and the media houses in covering the election process and in voters' education however, we noted unbalanced reporting in the state funded media and lack of clear editorial policy.

Candidates and opposition Members complained of the high fees they are being charged to make media/radio appearances to the listeners and viewers. One Presidential Candidate was charged UGX 6,000,000 (USD 1,621) for a two (2) hour radio show in a local radio station<sup>1</sup>.

In July 2018 the Government introduced social media tax (For UGX 200 (\$0.05, €0.04) for all social media platform users, the Government in a directive informed this would curtail the spread of misinformation and gossip which had become rampant. This led to decrease of internet users by almost 2.5 m subscribers according to Uganda Communications Commission as many users could not afford to pay amounts.

In Sept 2020 Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) issued a directive that all bloggers and online content creators must be licensed.

In Dec 2020 the UCC wrote to Google requesting that 14 YouTube channels associated with NUP Candidate Bobi Wine be blocked on National Security grounds

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 5

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

EASF EOM observed widespread misinformation and unverified reports on social media platforms especially Twitter and Facebook. Users were quick to share unverified reports which in turn, turned to be untrue and malicious. One incident was shared by NUP Presidential Candidate Hon. Robert Kyagulanyi on his twitter page, he claimed Journalists covering his rallies were being arrested and tortured by the Police. He shared a photo of a camera claiming it belonged to one of the arrested Journalists, on verification the photo was found to belong to a Journalist in Iraq and the photo had been taken in Iraq in 2007<sup>2</sup>.

EASF EOM noted general concerns following the shutdown of social media platforms and internet by the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) on the eve of election day, during and after election day citing security concerns. This action was criticized by most national and international stakeholders and observers, as an infringement of freedom of information. Internet was shut down on the evening of Wednesday 13 January and restored back on Monday 18 January midday.

- **Civil society**

The Mission noted a very active Civil Society with presence in most areas across the Country. They provided a wide range of programs with a view of educate voters on the electoral process.

A number of CSOs deployed Observers on the ground to observe the General elections across the Country.

- **Role of Security personnel**

Security is considered a critical element before, during and after elections.

The Uganda Police Force (UPF) are responsible for security during campaigns, elections and protection of elections materials at all the Electoral Commission warehouses. The Police are also responsible for the protection of the election materials and the electoral personnel during transportation to various election centers and polling stations countrywide.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 6

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

The Inspector General of Police informed EASF EOM that they had further recruited 10,000 Probation Police Constables (PPC) and 50,000 Special Police Constables (SPC) for the electoral purposes and they'll be stationed in all polling stations, EC Uganda premises across the Country.

The Mission further noted that sufficient security personnel were deployed to safeguard peace and security during elections.

Reports of police brutality was reported with use of excessive force, live bullets, detention without trial for political activists amongst other vices. However, the police in a rejoinder informed that the perpetrators were indeed law breakers and violators and the full force of the law would be taken against them

- **Participation of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) - SIGs**

The Ugandan Constitution recognizes the principle of equality of all citizens before the law. The EASF EOM noted the efforts by the Ugandan government to include the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in the political sphere through the establishment of quotas in different institutions.

There was one (1) female candidate among the eleven (11) presidential candidates and several Women, Youth and PwDs contested in the parliamentary and other elections.

There are also reserved seats in Parliament for Special Interest Groups (SIGs) namely;

- 146 District Woman Representative to Parliament;
- 5 for the Youth;
- 5 for Persons with disability (PwDs);
- 10 for the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF);
- 5 for Workers;
- 5 for the older persons.

- **Nomination of Candidates**

Presidential nominations were done on the first week of Nov 2020 out of which 11 Candidates were cleared to vie.

Of the 11 Candidates cleared by EC 6 are Independent Candidates, 5 from political parties, 1 Woman candidate and a 25-year-old youth.

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

On Nov 27 2020 Packing of Presidential ballot papers/materials was done by EC in Kampala and dispatch of polling kits to all EC warehouses across the Country was done on Jan 10 2021.

### **Election Day observation and findings**

The EASF EOM deployed 20 observers in teams of two in the four (4) Regions of Uganda namely; Central, Eastern, Northern and Western to observe Election-Day activities. EASF EOM Team composed of 10 Teams visited a total of 133 polling stations in 9 Districts namely;

#### **1. Central Region**

- Kampala 2 Teams
- Wakiso 1 Team
- Mpigi 1 Team
- Mityana 1 Team

#### **2. Eastern Region**

- Mbale 1 Team

#### **3. Northern Region**

- Gulu 1 Team
- Lira 1 Team

#### **4. Western Region**

- Mbarara 1 Team
- Masindi 1 Team

Based on observations and consultations held before, during and after the 14 January 2021 General elections, the EASF EOM made the following findings and conclusions:

- **Opening of polling stations**

EASF EOM observed opening in 10 polling stations, and noted that 88% of them opened late. This late opening was attributed to delays in organizing, delivering and arranging of electoral materials at polling stations. The Biometric Voter Verification System/Kits (BVVS/K) jammed in some of the polling stations delaying the opening of polling. Some polling stations opened past 10am due to the above.

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

Large queues were observed in most polling stations on opening and opening protocols were followed by the polling officials. All polling stations observed the requisite 5 voters on the queue for opening to commence was met. EASF EOM noted in some polling stations ballot boxes lacked seals, however there were sufficient voting materials.

The polling stations were alphabetically labelled making it easier for voters to access theirs and the polling constables present were able to guide voters to the right voting area.

- **Election materials**

The Mission observed that election materials were available in sufficient quantities in all polling stations visited. However, some ballot boxes did not have seals on them whilst in other polling stations visited the same were generally well sealed.

- **Turnout**

EASF EOM observed that the election turnout was generally average in most polling stations visited.

EC Uganda projected voter turnout to be 59.35% as per the votes cast.

- **Gender Participation**

EASF EOM observed a satisfactory gender presence and participation in most of polling stations visited.

The EASF EOM noted that women were the majority amongst the electoral personnel and representatives of political parties at the Polling stations.

There was also a large number of young people working as polling officials.

- **Election personnel**

The EASF EOM observed that in some of the polling stations visited, the required number of 6 polling personnel was met though others had only 5.

An average of 55.5% of the Presiding Officers were women, 50% women were polling officials and 75% were youth.

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

In most of the polling stations visited the Presiding Officers looked overwhelmed as they were part of the polling staff and had little time or none at all to know what was going around the polling station. In some polling stations observed in Kampala party/candidate agents were seen assisting polling clerks in verifying voters' details on the voter register and even issuing ballot papers.

The Personnel were aware in most cases of the electoral processes and conducted in a professional manner ensuring the smooth conduct of the voting process.

- **Voting**

The EASF EOM observed that the vote was generally conducted in a calm atmosphere in most parts of the country. The polling stations were properly managed by the officials to guarantee the secrecy of the vote.

In most of the polling stations observed, priority was given to persons with disability, the aged, expectant and nursing mothers. The EASF EOM notes that assistance was given to persons unable to vote.

In Gulu, Mbarara and Wakiso districts EASF EOM observed some polling stations voting was interrupted by rains, prompting voting to stop and resume after the rains subsided. Polling stations were set up outside on open ground/field.

In Mbale a polling station was in a police ground; in Kampala a polling station was in a police post (Kitintale police post) and another in a prison (Luzira prison). At Luzira prison Observers were denied entry by the prison officers, they were advised that the Commissioner of Prisons had to authorize and grant them written permission to access the premises.

Most polling stations were properly managed by the officials to guarantee the secrecy of the vote. Secrecy of the ballot was observed in almost all of the polling stations visited.

In most of the polling stations observed, priority was given to persons with disability, the aged, expectant and nursing mothers. The EASF EOM notes that assistance was also given to persons unable to vote.

In Mbale a voter presented with a Voter locator slip (VLS) but could not be found on the voter register prompting the Presiding Officer to turn them away, others presented in the wrong polling station.

Many polling stations visited there was a queue as voters awaited to cast their votes.

- **Accessibility of Polling Station**

EASF EOM observed most of the polling stations visited were accessible to persons with disabilities. Most of the polling stations were located in open ground and public places and accessible to persons with disabilities (PWDs).

For Voters requiring special assistance, this was given to them by either the polling staff or person of their choice.

For voters with visual impairment no tactile ballots were available, this prompted for the voter to be assisted by either the polling staff or person chosen by them.

- **Party agents (representation of candidates in polling stations)**

The Mission observed huge presence of candidate representatives in polling stations visited. Some parties/candidates had almost five (5) party agents per polling station throughout the polling process. This was against the EC approved number of 2 Agents per polling station. Most of them did not have accreditation/identification badges however, during opening of the polling station most party/candidate agents presented their authorization letters from their parties/candidates.

In most polling stations visited the party/candidate agents were more than the polling staff.

In Kampala central party/candidate agents were seen assisting polling staff in voter identification and issuing ballot papers in a polling station.

The party agents were present in 100% of the polling stations visited. Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), National Resistance Movement (NRM), and National Unity Platform (NUP) had party agents in all polling stations visited as well as independent candidate had representation.

- **Security**

The EASF EOM also observed visible presence of security forces at the polling stations, maintaining law and order. EASF Election Observer Mission notes with satisfaction the presence of the security officers in all polling station visited however, we noted numerous

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

reports from stakeholders about police brutality and excess use of force by law enforcements personnel during the electoral process.

Many polling constables assisted voters in finding their right voting station, managed queues and ensured voters sanitized.

- **COVID-19 Protocols**

In many polling stations visited there were no handwashing places however sanitizers were present.

The polling constable was mainly the one sanitizing the voters in the queues. They also made effort to enforce the COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Social distancing was not observed in all the polling stations visited and queues, however in the voting areas social distancing was well observed during voting due to the spacing of the voting area.

Voters had masks on at the polling station though many did not wear them properly (some were either worn on the chin or not properly covering the nose and mouth).

### **Closing and counting**

It was observed that voters who were on the queue at closing time were allowed to vote. The closing and counting procedures at most polling stations were adhered to.

Most of the polling stations that opened late compensated the time however in others no compensation was done thus closing by 4pm.

The Election Day operations were generally administered in a manner that allowed the free expression of the will of the voters.

### **Conclusion**

At the end of observation, the EASF EOM Team concludes that the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 14 January 2021 in the Republic of Uganda was conducted in calm and generally peaceful manner. EASF commends the voters for level of respect and tolerance however, expresses concern over the conduct of the police and law enforcement agencies in some instances during the electoral process.



## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

The EASF EOM Team wishes to express its appreciation to the authorities in the Republic of Uganda for the measures put in place to facilitate its work throughout its stay in the country.

EASF EOM also applauds Ugandans for their patriotism and determination to go to the polls January 14 2021 and to accept to subject the polls to international scrutiny.

EASF EOM calls for continued inclusive dialogue and the commitment of all parties to embrace peaceful means of governance that promotes peace and democracy in the Country.

### **Post-Election Findings and Observations**

Following the Thursday 14 January 2021, EASF EOM did not observe the post-election environment as the Mission came to an end of 15 January however as we wound up the Mission, the following was noted:

- NUP Presidential Candidate Hon Robert Sentamu Kyagulanyi had been detained (since 14 January) in his house in which his Party had indicated he has been under house arrest since casting his vote in his home in Magere, Kasangati Town Council in Wakiso District. His lawyer in a petition to Court indicated that his client and his wife could not leave their home to go out and their visitors including his lawyers and doctors can't access their home. The Police indicated that the measure was part of a preventive arrest. The Uganda Police Force (UPF) Spokesperson said the MP had planned to disrupt public order; hence his movement will be restricted until further notice.

As per media reports the NUP Candidate was released from house arrest as per the High Court ruling on Tuesday 26 January.

- Internet which had been previously shut down on the evening of 13 January had not been restored.
- Heavy presence of armed military and police officers was observed in many parts of Kampala and outskirts as the EASF EOM observes returned to Kampala on the morning of 15 January.
- Results in 83 polling stations in 16 Districts were nullified because of various reasons. These range from allegations of ballot stuffing, grabbing of polling materials, missing Declaration of Results Forms, total votes cast exceeding the number of registered voters and acts of hooliganism during the counting period. These included the

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

following Districts; Kampala, Mukono, Bukomansimbi, Kyotera, Jinja, Gomba, Wakiso, Rakai, Sembabule, Lamwo, Kole, Lyantonde Isingrio, Kotido, Sironko and Bundibugyo with 54,357 collective registered voters. Kampala had 22 polling stations making it the District with the highest number of results nullified.

- Presidential results were due on 16 January by 4pm as enshrined in the Constitution that final results be done within 48 hours after polls close.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the above, the EASF EOM wishes to make the following recommendations:

#### **To the Government:**

- maintain and intensify efforts of open dialogue aimed at promoting an atmosphere of confidence building between all the stakeholders including actors of the society in the Republic of Uganda;
- Strengthen an inclusive approach in the adoption and application of constitutional, institutional and electoral reforms;
- Give priority to the creation of a conducive environment for dialogue between all political actors.

#### **To Electoral Commission (EC) Uganda:**

- Consider indoor polling in order to create order around the stations and to protect the polling officials, voters and materials from weather elements.
- Consider adopting voting booths that are conventionally used in the region and continent, to protect the secrecy of the ballot.
- Make provision for recording names of people who have been turned away from voting.
- Ensure full autonomy and independence of EMB without interference from government and other stakeholders.
- Increase civic awareness and voter education
- Ensure a level playfield for all political parties and candidates

## **Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

### **To Political actors:**

- Contribute to the permanent framework for political dialogue for all political parties and candidates;
- Place the interest of national cohesion above all partisan considerations and engage more often on building a just and equitable political environment;
- Have a more robust political parties/candidates liaison committees/platforms in which all political actors meet regularly to discuss further on political issues and matters.

### **To Civil Society:**

Regular and meaningful engagement with CSOs in the electoral process notably: -

- In conducting continuous and nationwide civic and voter education
- encourage non-partisan and impartial election observation from CSOs
- promote the concept and practice of citizen's observers
- capacity building of observer groups in areas of democracy and good governance

### **To Security Forces:**

Encourages Security Forces to enforce the law equally on all parties and candidates.

- Ensure that law enforcement agencies adhere to the principles' human rights
- Discharge their functions in a professional manner without use of excessive force
- Special forces including military to act in a professional manner. Such forces should not be used to intimidate citizens and candidates or infringe on the right of the citizens and voters.

### **To Media and communication:**

The shutdown of social media and internet on the eve of Election Day, during and after Election Day violated the rights of citizens to access information and free dissemination of information.

Thus,

- Respect the rights of citizens to access information and allow citizens accessibility to internet
- Adopt clear editorial policies to prevent media especially state media from bias reporting and ensure fair and equitable coverage to all political parties and candidates;

## Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

- The Uganda Communications Commission need to come up with clear guidelines on the use of social media platforms with a view of curbing the rise of misinformation especially during the electoral period as observed in this Elections.
- Requirement for the public broadcaster for provision of equal coverage to all candidates as prescribed by law to ensure that each candidate is given an equal and fair chance to compete and express their views to the citizenry.

### Appendices

#### Appendix 1 Voter turnout

Year	Registered Voters	Votes	Voter Turnout%
2001	10,775,836	7,576,144	70.3
2006	10,604,402	7,230,456	69.2
2011	13,954,129	8,272,760	59.3
2016	15,277,198	10,329,131	67.6
2021	18,103,603	10,744,319	59.3

Data Source: EC Uganda

#### Appendix 2 2021 Presidential Election Candidates

No	Name of Nominated Candidate	Political Party/Symbol
1	Amuriat Obol Patrick	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)
2	Kabuleeta Kiiza Joseph	Independent (Chair)
3	Kalembe Nancy Linda	Independent (Ball)
4	Katumba John	Independent (Table)
5	Kyagulanyi Ssentamu Robert	National Unity Platform (NUP)
6	Mao Norbert	Democratic Party (DP)
7	Mayambala Willy	Independent (Pot)
8	Mugiisha Muntu Gregg	Alliance for National Transformation (ANT)
9	Mwesigye Fred	Independent (Radio)
10	Tumukunde Henry Kakurugu	Independent (Clock)
11	Yoweri Museveni Tibuhaburwa Kaguta	National Resistance Movement (NRM)

Source: EC Uganda

### Appendix 3 Presidential Election Results



#### PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2021

##### FINAL RESULTS

Registered Voters: 18,103,603  
 Total No. of Polling Stations: 34,684  
 Total No. of Polling Stations Received: 34,601 (99.76% of total polling stations)

Candidates' Names	Votes	Percentage	
AMURIAT OBOI PATRICK	337,589	3.26%	of valid votes cast for candidates
KABULETA KIIZA JOSEPH	45,424	0.44%	*
KALEMBA NANCY LINDA	38,772	0.37%	*
KATUMBA JOHN	37,554	0.36%	*
KYAGULANYI SSENTAMU ROBERT	3,631,437	35.08%	*
MAO NORBERT	57,682	0.56%	*
MAYAMBALA WILLY	15,014	0.15%	*
MUGISHA MUNTU GREGG	67,574	0.65%	*
MWESIGYE FRED	25,483	0.25%	*
TUMUKUNDE HENRY KAKURUGU	51,392	0.50%	*
YOWERI MUSEVENI TIBUHABURWA KAGUTA	8,042,898	58.38%	*
Valid Votes	10,350,819		
Invalid Votes	393,500	3.66%	of Total Votes Cast
Total Votes	10,744,319	59.35%	of Registered Voters
Spoilt Votes	29,913		

Note: 83 Polling stations were nullified. See attached list.

Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon  
 Chairperson, Electoral Commission

Date: .....

Source: EC Uganda

### Appendix 4 Election Calendar

Apart from the Presidential, Parliamentary and District Woman Representative the other elections were held on different dates as follows;

No.	Elective Position	Polling Date
1.	Election of Councillors for Older Persons to the Sub County/Town/Municipal Division	11 Jan 2021
2.	Elections of Councillors for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to the Sub County/Town/Municipal Division	11 Jan 2021
3.	Elections of Youth Representatives to the Sub County/Town/Municipal Division	11 Jan 2021
4.	Election of Councillors for Older Persons to the Municipality/City Division	12 Jan 2021
5.	Elections of Councillors for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to the Municipality/City Division	12 Jan 2021
6.	Elections of Councillors for Youth to the Municipality/City Division	12 Jan 2021
7.	Elections of the President and Members of Parliament (Directly-elected MP and District Woman Representative to Parliament)	14 Jan 2021

**Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**

8.	National Conference for Election of Older Persons Representatives to Parliament	17 - 18 Jan 2021
9.	National Conference for Election of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) Representatives to Parliament	17 - 18 Jan 2021
10.	National Conference for Election of Workers Representatives to Parliament	17 - 18 Jan 2021
11.	Elections of District Local Government Councils: (District/City Chairpersons, Lord Mayor, Mayors, and Councillors)	20 Jan 2021
12.	National Conference for Election of National Female Youths Representative to Parliament	21 - 22 Jan 2021
13.	Elections of Municipality/City Division Chairpersons and Councillors	25 Jan 2021
14.	Elections of Councillors for Older Persons to the District Local Government Councils	27 Jan 2021
15.	Elections of Councillors for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to the District Local Government Councils	27 Jan 2021
16.	Elections of Councillors for Youths to District Local Government Councils	27 Jan 2021
17.	Elections of Workers Representatives to District Local Government Councils	27 Jan 2021
18.	Elections of UPDF Representatives to Parliament	29 Jan 2021
19.	Regional Conferences for Election of Regional Youths Representatives to Parliament	31 Jan - 1 Feb 2021
20.	Elections of Sub County/Town/Municipal Division Chairpersons and Councillors	3 Feb 2021

**Appendix 5 Radio Station appearance receipt by NUP Presidential Candidate**

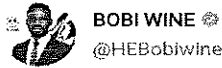
**RADIO O-FM 94.3 LIRA**  
 (Radio O-FM 94.3 LIRA)  
 20th April 2020

PROFORMA  
 20th April 2020

Qty	Particulars	Rate	Amount
02	Two hour Radio Talkshow (Sole and Justice, Etc. Segments)	3,000,000	6,000,000
TOTAL			6,000,000

*Signature*  
 Six Minutes Slotting Only

Appendix 6 Misinformation on Social Media



Journalism is not a crime! The ferocious attack on journalists by the police and the military in Uganda must be condemned by all people of good conscience!

#WeAreRemovingADictator



1:46 PM · 28 Dec 20 · Twitter for Android

2,597 Retweets · 118 Quote Tweets



PHOTO TAKEN IN 2007 FROM IRAQ



Journalists are being increasingly targeted in Iraq (file photo) (AFP) June 15, 2007 (RFE/RL) -- Iraqi journalists have been targeted for kidnappings and assassinations at an alarming rate in recent weeks. Though journalists have been targeted routinely since 2003, attacks and threats by insurgents are on the rise.

Appendix 7 Parliamentary Election by Party

4. PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION – BY PARTY

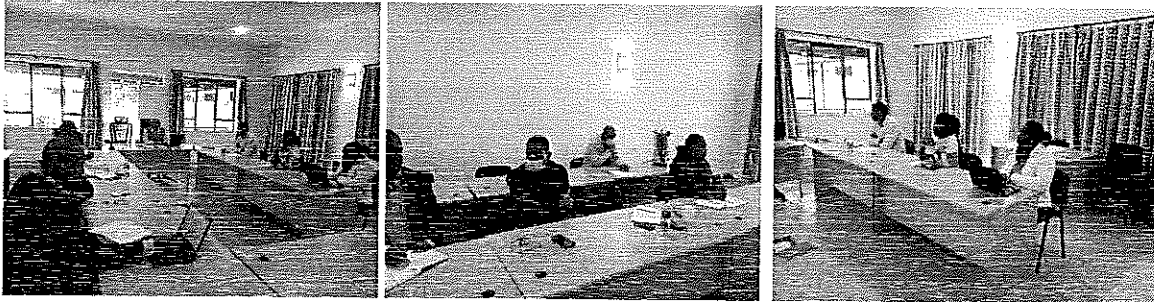
Below is the performance of political parties in the parliamentary elections

Item	Party	No. of Seats	%
1	NATIONAL RESISTANCE MOVEMENT (NRM)	316	63.5
2	NATIONAL UNITY PLATFORM (NUP)	61	12.2
3	FORUM FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (FDC)	28	5.6
4	DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP)	08	1.6
5	UGANDA PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (UPC)	10	2.0
6	JUSTICE FORUM (JEEMA)	01	0.2
7	PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP)	01	0.2
8	INDEPENDENTS	73	14.7

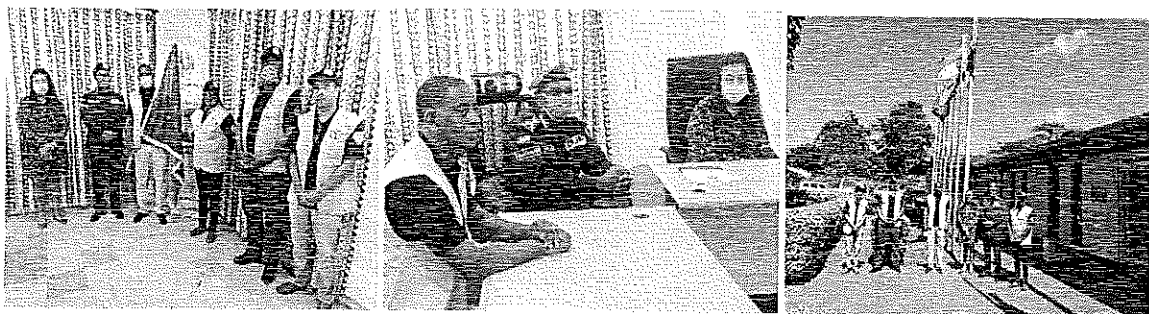
Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021

Photos

EASF EOM Uganda 2021 in Pictorials



Inception planning meeting for EASF EOM Uganda 2021



Official Launch, Flag hand over in Nairobi from EASF Senior Leadership to EASF EOM Uganda DHoM



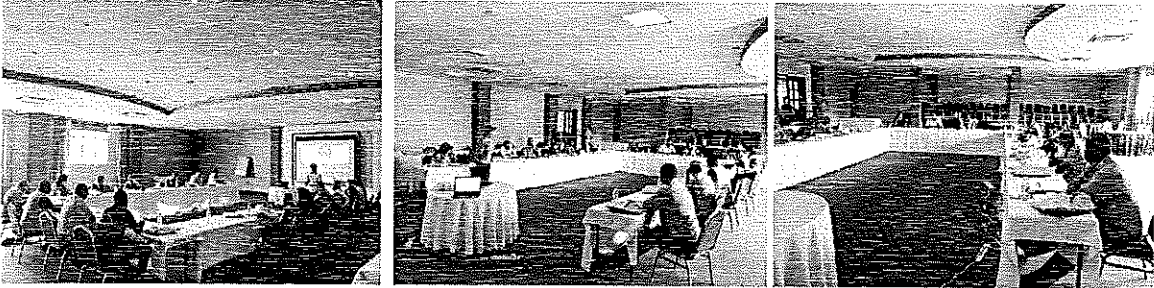
EASF EOM Uganda Observers in Kampala



**Eastern Africa Standby Force Election Observation Mission Report: Republic of Uganda 2021**



**Hom/DHoM meeting EC Uganda Chair and Commissioners**



**Observers debriefing session in Kampala**