

National News

The lineup reflects a struggle between historical legacy and a youthful population ready to add fresh perspectives and new energy to the country's political arena.

BY FRANKLIN DRAKU

As the swearing-in of Members of the 12th Parliament draws to a close, Uganda's new legislature has revealed a striking generational contrast; youthful lawmakers and veterans in their late 80s.

The lineup reflects a struggle between historical legacy and a youthful population ready to add fresh perspectives and new energy to the country's political arena.

Across the House, President Museveni's long-standing reliance on senior political and military figures remains visible.

At the same time, a wave of youthful entrants has secured seats, reflecting a gradual but notable shift in Uganda's political participation landscape.

At the centre of this contrast stands the Adjumani West Constituency MP, Gen (Rtd) Moses Ali, who, at 87, is the oldest legislator in the 12th Parliament. On the opposite end is Vurra County MP Lenia Charity Kevin, aged 24, the youngest Member of Parliament. Both hail from the West Nile Sub-region.

Gen (Rtd) Moses Ali

Born on April 5, 1939, Gen Ali remains one of Uganda's longest-serving political and military figures.

Despite visible health challenges during the campaign period, including difficulty walking and occasional speech strain, he was re-elected by his constituents in Adjumani West.

His continued political relevance, observers say, is anchored in deep historical ties with his constituency and decades of public service stretching across multiple regimes, from the Idi Amin era to the current administration.

Gen Ali's early education began at Erep Church of Uganda Primary School in Moyo District, where he completed his Primary Leaving Examination before proceeding to Church of Uganda Junior Secondary School.

Gen Ali has consistently insisted that leadership is not defined by physical strength but by experience and service.

"True leadership is not measured by age, but by the wisdom and experience one carries. Elect me for a 6th term in Parliament, and I will steer this nation into its next phase of transformation," he was quoted as saying during campaigns.

He added: "The people of Adjumani know me, and they have stood by me for years. I won't let them down and I am still strong."

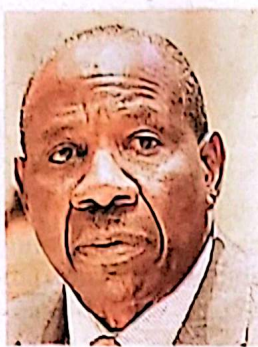
Close contenders in age

Just five years younger is Finance Minister Matia Kasajja, who continues to represent Buyanja County in Kibaale District. Born on May 28, 1944, Mr Kasajja brings a blend of academic and political experience dating back to the 1960s.

Meet the oldest, youngest MPs in 12th Parliament?



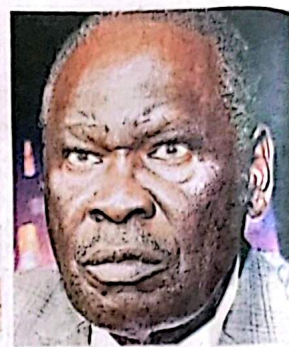
Gen (rtd) Moses Ali, 87, Adjumani West



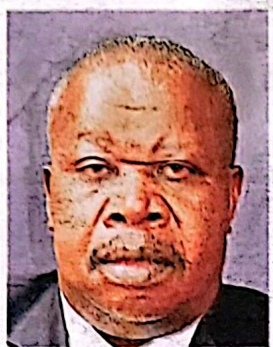
Matia Kasajja, 82, Buyanja County



Catherine Akumu Mavengina, 78, Older Persons for Northern



Hilary Onek, aged 78, Lamwo County MP



Maj Gen (rtd) Kahinda Otafiire, 75, Ruhinda County



Gen Abubaker Jeje Odongo, 74, Orungo County in Amuria District



Lenia Charity Kevin, 24, Vurra County MP



Robert Maseruka, 25, Mukono South in Mukono District

bi, then University of East Africa, graduating in 1967 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree.

He entered Parliament in 1980 and has served in multiple ministerial roles over the decades. Mr Kasajja's political journey includes a brief stint in the Obote II government before joining the National Resistance Army (NRA) during the Bush War, after which he held several strategic government positions, including at the NRM Secretariat and public service institutions.

Another senior legislator is Lamwo County MP Hilary Onek, aged 78.

Born on May 5, 1948, Mr Onek first entered Parliament in 2001 and has since held several ministerial portfolios, including Energy and Mineral Development, Agriculture, and currently Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees.

Also 78 is Ms Catherine Akumu Mavengina, the Older Persons MP for Northern Uganda, born on October 9, 1948. She has served intermittently in Parliament and previously held positions, including Minister of State for Public Service and Resident District Commissioner.

Ruhinda County MP Maj Gen (Rtd) Kahinda Otafiire, aged 75, remains another prominent figure in the House. A veteran of the Bush War, he currently serves as Minister of Internal Affairs

Sciences from Makerere University.

Close to him in age is Gen Abubaker Jeje Odongo, 74, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, born on July 9, 1951. He has been active in Ugandan politics since 1979 and has held multiple senior military and diplomatic roles. He represents Orungo County in Amuria District.

The youngest MPs

At the other end of the spectrum, two young legislators share the spotlight as the youngest members of the 12th Parliament: Mr Robert Maseruka of Mukono South and Ms Lenia Charity Kevin of Vurra County.

Both defeated seasoned politicians in closely contested races, signalling

a growing appetite among voters for youthful representation and new political voices.

Robert Maseruka

Born on February 24, 2000, Mr Maseruka was elected MP for Mukono South on January 15, defeating incumbent Fred Kayondo in a tightly contested race.

He studied at Bugema Adventist Secondary School and later White Star Bright Secondary School before joining Makerere University, where he pursued a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communication.

His rise to prominence accelerated when he was elected the 89th Guild President of Makerere University for the 2023/2024 academic year. He later served as National Unity Platform (NUP) Secretary for Mukono District before securing the party ticket for Parliament.

In his vision for Parliament, Mr Maseruka emphasises service delivery and youth empowerment.

"We are looking at how best service delivery can be as far as our constituencies and the people that trust us is concerned, including those that do not actually vote for us, probably don't actually come from the same constituency. The issues of the roads, the issues of the health facilities, the issues of education," he said.

He also stressed the need to address youth unemployment. "There are a number of people, especially the youths that are in need. They're not employed, they're not educated and they're not ac-

Mr Maseruka added that leadership must focus on long-term planning. "It should be so thoughtful of the environment that we start planning for a country where their grandchildren are also going to exist," he said.

Lenia Charity Kevin

Born on July 1, 2001, to Asedri Fred and Draru Asunta, Ms Lenia Charity Kevin was sworn in as the youngest Member of Parliament at 24 years and 318 days old.

Her education journey began in Adjumani before progressing through Gulu and Kampala schools, culminating in a procurement degree from Makerere University Business School in 2024.

While at university, she made history as the first female Vice Guild President of MUBS, elected on the NUP ticket.

However, she later switched allegiance to the NRM party, a decision she attributes to guidance from elders and her desire to work closely with government structures.

"I need to make myself clear: It was about the intention to serve my people," she said, adding, "If I had stayed with the National Unity Platform, I wouldn't have been able to diligently serve my people."

She defeated eight opponents in the NRM primaries before going on to win the General Election against five other contenders.

Ms Lenia maintains that leadership is not defined by age but by ideas and service delivery. "I don't think it's about age when it comes to leadership. It's far from that. They say experience and knowledge

529
TOTAL NUMBER
OF MPS

THE KEY ISSUES

- The oldest MP is Gen (rtd) Moses Ali (87), representing Adjumani West Constituency.

- The youngest MP is Lenia Charity Kevin (24), representing Vurra County in Arua District.

- The House includes several veteran lawmakers aged over 70, many with decades of service in government and military roles.

- Younger MPs are largely first-time legislators, many emerging from student politics and youth leadership platforms.