Calm. Leaders of international election observer missions have called for calm and urged candidates to refrain from any acts of violence.

Poll observer mission heads appeal for calm

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KAMPALA. As Ugandans go to polls, the eighth since Uganda attained independence, leaders of international election observer missions have called for calm and urged candidates to refrain from any acts of violence.

In a joint statement issued on Tuesday, the heads of missions, including Mr Yufnalis Okubo for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Igad), ex-presidents Olusegun Obansanjo for the Commonwealth, Ali Hassan Mwinyi for the East African Community (EAC), and Rupiah Banda of Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), noted with concern last Monday's episode in which FDC presidential aspirant Dr Kizza Besigye's rally in the city centre was violently halted by police.

"While appreciating preparations by political parties and personalities concerned with the election, noting some events that could raise tensions that happened on February 15, 2016, [we] hereby appeal to all functionaries, Electoral Commission, political parties and candidates to refrain from any act or dissemination of information that may cause tension," the observers said in a statement. They pointed out that such acts could "adversely affect the peaceful and orderly" conduct of elections. We, therefore, urge voters to turn out to perform their civic responsibility peacefully, orderly and lawfully."

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ELECTION OBSERVER MISSIONS

The statement comes on the heels of another advisory issued by the US Department of State warning candidates to "refrain" from any provocative rhetoric that might plunge the country into anarchy.

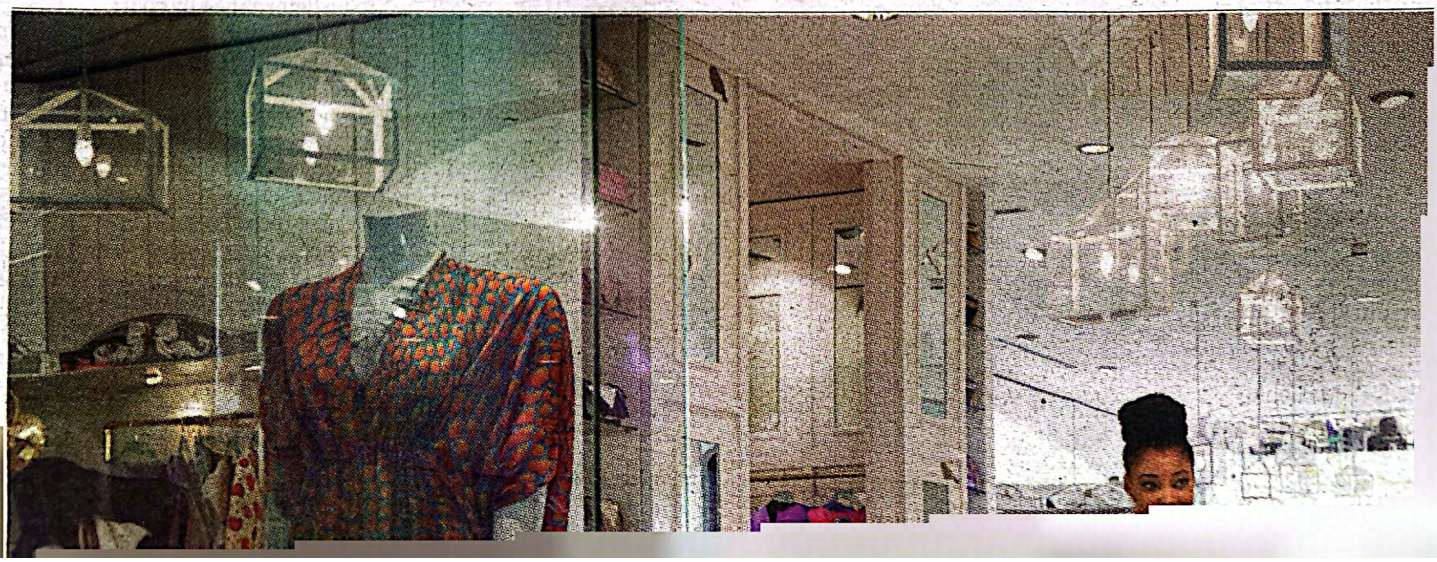
Presidential candidates ended campaigns on Wednesday, ahead of voting today.

The campaigns have been largely peaceful, save for a few skirmishes, markedly the Ntungamo incident in which President Museveni's supporters clashed with those of presidential candidate Amama Mbabazi's security.

Police last week enlisted help of the military and deployed widely to calm eightening concern over the post- election atmosphere.



(L-R) Ex-presidents Olusegun Obansanjo (Nigeria), Rupiah Banda (Zambia), and Ali Hassan Mwinyi (Tanzania).



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