

Sovereignty Bill: Why NRM members and everyone else should be bothered

On March 27, many of our friends in the NRM Parliamentary Caucus sat at State House Entebbe and were guided to endorse the Protection of Sovereignty Bill, 2026. I am told that in the spirit of party discipline, many of you unanimously passed it. You think this is a necessary shield for Uganda—a law aimed at NGOs and the Opposition. Because you were misled into thinking it wouldn't affect you, you didn't care much. But a close look at the Bill suggests that you, could be its very first victims.

The manner in which this Bill has been introduced is a clear indicator of bad faith. It comes at a time when the 11th Parliament is profoundly vulnerable, with many members having already lost their seats and being on their way out.

To bring such a monumental law at the 11th hour, in your final weeks, is disingenuous. With barely two weeks left to deal with all pending parliamentary business—including critical tax bills and the National Budget—ignoring the legally required 45-day scrutiny period is a deliberate attempt to bypass public oversight. This follows a period where the regime has sent NGOs into 'silent mode' by re-

includes "Ugandan citizens residing outside Uganda." This means the sanctity of your king's palace could be violated by inspectors at any 'reasonable time' based on mere suspicion of 'foreign agent activity' simply because he receives support from subjects in London.

This directly contradicts Article 37 of the Constitution, which protects the right to culture. Your bishop, sheikh, pastor, or reverend could be arrested for trying to stop an invasion of the sanctity of the altar or sacred place of worship. Under Clause 22, contributions for church development or orphans could be held by your bank and seized by the government if you do not have written permission from the Minister for Internal Affairs to receive that money. For the 'crime' of providing for the vulnerable, your religious leaders could face 20 years in prison.

Clause 1 is a betrayal of the Ugandan family. It strips your sons and daughters studying or working abroad of their domestic status the moment they cross the border. This breaches Article 10 (citizenship by birth) and Article 15 (dual citizenship) of our Constitution. If you, an MP, receive upkeep from a child in the diaspora without registering as a 'foreign agent' you risk the 'banking trap' of Clause 25, where funds are seized and you face a Shs4 billion fine or 20 years in prison—a violation of your Article 26 right to property.

When I read this Bill the first time, I kept wondering how someone could hate their own citizens so much as to suggest that once they leave the country, they should be declared foreigners and thus lose their citizenship rights to participate in government and the economy. It contradicts our Constitution and our Dual Citizenship Law.

The drafter does not care that Uganda could become a global pariah, isolated like Hungary was in the EU for similar laws.

My friends in the 11th Parliament, please read this Bill before you consider doing any surgery on it. It is coming for you, for your son or daughter, for your wife or friend. One day you will travel and you yourself will be declared a foreigner and your people back home foreign agents.

Do not be the ones to rubber stamp a law that will one day declare you a foreigner the moment you travel. This Bill is unnecessary, draconian, and unconstitutional. It must be withdrawn entirely or thrown out by Parliament before it reverses all the gains made in our economy, development, rights, and democracy.

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voking permits of the most vocal and cutting off their funding. The claim that foreign money is currently hijacking politics through NGOs is fundamentally flawed; over the past two decades, funding for the sector has plummeted by 80 percent.

It is dishonest to make this claim when most NGOs now struggle just to survive, having shifted their work to merely complementing government programmes rather than advocacy.

This law has grave implications for every pillar of our society. Under Clause 1, the definition of 'foreigner' is so broad it

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