LIRA

After polls: Lango leaders rally for unity, healing

By Hudson Apunyo

In the hushed hall of the newly renovated Lango Cultural Centre, hundreds of leaders sat shoulder to shoulder; politicians who had bruised one another on the campaign trail, clergy who had preached peace to divided congregations, security commanders who had braced for unrest and elders who had watched the cycles of Lango's politics for decades.

At the centre of it all was the Won Nyaci me Lango, Michael Moses Odongo Okune, who summoned the extraordinary meeting with one message: the 2026 general election is over; now Lango must heal.

PHOTO BY HUDSON APUNYO

Bishop Emeritus John Charles Odurkami prays for the politicians who won as well as those that were defeated during the last elections. Inset is the Won Nyaci

RIVALRY TO RECONCILIATION

The gathering – drawing incoming and outgoing political leaders, resident district commissioners, religious figures, academia, business leaders and clan heads – was framed as a reconciliation forum after an election season that left visible wounds.

"Our investigation showed that after the election, peace was still missing," Okune said, acknowledging bitterness among winners and losers. Some candidates, he noted, were nursing financial losses after mortgaging property to fund campaigns; others were struggling with the emotional toll of defeat.

In a rare personal reflection, he recounted how his late father twice lost parliamentary bids in Maruzi County and how the debt and disappointment weighed heavily on the family. "That is not the end of life," he told those who fell short in 2026. "Be patient. Stay with the people without segregation. The future is bright."

He extended an olive branch even to those who have challenged his own leadership in court, urging dialogue over litigation.

"JEALOUSY MUST STOP"

The spiritual tone of the day was unmistakable.

Bishop Emeritus John Charles Odurkami urged leaders to ensure the resolutions of the meeting reach the President before key national appointments are made so that "the voice of Lango" is heard in unity.

He lamented a history of internal sabotage, recalling instances where Lango leaders allegedly undermined their own. "Let us abandon the heart of segregation, hatred and jealousy," he said. "Stand as a tribe and do what brings dignity and builds Lango."

Bishop Emeritus Tom Ibrahim Okello, speaking on behalf of the Lango Religious Leaders Forum, was even more direct: "Jealousy divided our people, undermined leadership and crippled development. As religious leaders, we declare with one voice – jealousy must stop."

The sermon by Sanctus Lino Wanok of Lira Diocese anchored the day in scripture, drawing from the story of Joseph and his brothers. "Forgiveness does not deny the wound; it redeems it," he said. "A reconciled society is born when pride yields to compassion."

A UNITED FRONT TO STATE HOUSE

The meeting resolved that a 17-member committee will refine the deliberations into a formal document to be forwarded to the President.

Repeatedly, speakers emphasised that Lango must present its demands in one voice when engaging the central government, not as fragmented delegations rushing individually to State House.

Among the priorities outlined were increased representation of Lango sons and daughters in top government positions – ministers, permanent secretaries, judges and ambassadors, as well as expanded anti-poverty interventions.

The Won Nyaci pushed for the scaling up of the coverage of the Parish Development Model, cattle distribution, agro-processing facilities, road construction and the elevation of Lira Regional Refer Hospital to national status.

SECURITY CONCERNS

Security concerns were also laid bare. Maj Gen Keith Katungi, the commander of the 5th Division, warned of a recent spike in murder cases and persistent livestock theft. While crediting improved regional security operations, he called for a greater Police presence at sub-county level and the establishment of a remand home for juveniles in conflict with the law.

Security officials admitted that the election period had stretched nerves thin, but credited both leaders and voters for averting large-scale violence.

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