After polls, Busoga tasks leaders on service delivery

From Jinja City to Namutumba, Iganga and Bugiri districts, voters interviewed say leadership should not end at the ballot box.

BY TAUSI NAKATO

As the dust settles after the elections in Busoga Sub-region, residents are shifting focus from campaign rhetoric to long-standing challenges they say demand urgent action from elected leaders.

From Jinja City to Namutumba, Iganga and Bugiri districts, voters interviewed say leadership should not end at the ballot box. Instead, they want leaders who are visible, accountable and responsive to the everyday struggles faced by communities across the region.

Many Basoga say while elections come and go, persistent problems such as youth unemployment, poor road networks, unreliable healthcare services, weak education outcomes and widespread poverty remain largely unresolved.

Between January 15 and yesterday, Ugandans went to the polls to elect the President, Members of Parliament and local government leaders, including district and sub-county officials. In Busoga, the vote has raised expectations that newly elected leaders will turn campaign pledges into tangible development outcomes.

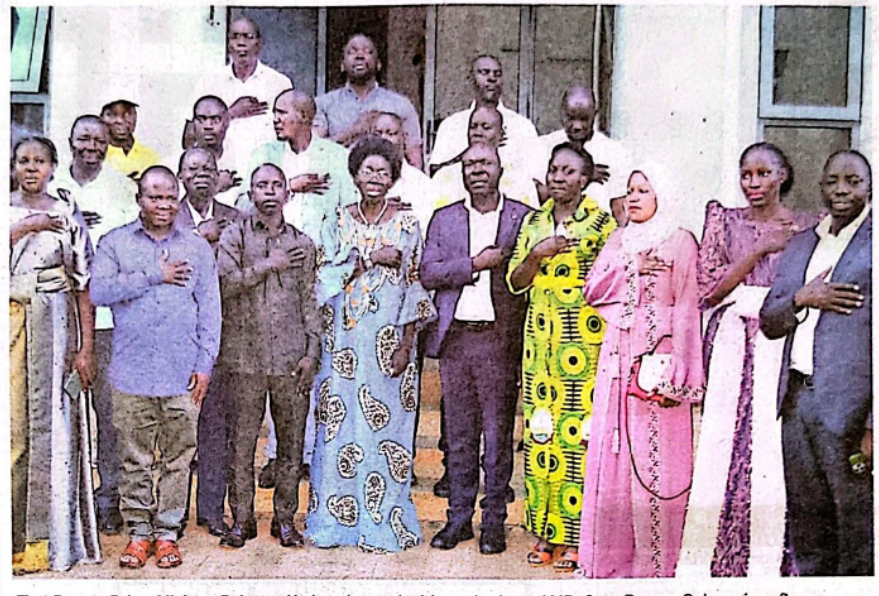
Residents now warn that public trust will depend on visible service delivery rather than political speeches, urging leaders to maintain engagement with communities beyond election periods.

In Jinja City, traders and boda boda riders say job creation and support for small businesses should be prioritised.

"We voted with hope, now we want leaders who listen to us and create opportunities, especially for young people," says Ms Justine Naigaga, a market vendor in Jinja.

Ms Annet Matama, the chairperson of the Ladies Boda Boda Riders Association, calls for improved street lighting to curb night attacks targeting female riders.

"Poor lighting has made us easy targets. Female boda boda riders are attacked and killed for their motorcycles. New leaders must prioritise street lights to improve safety," Ms Matama says.



First Deputy Prime Minister Rebecca Kadaga (centre) with newly elected MPs from Busoga Sub-region after a meeting in Jinja City on January 18. PHOTO/DENIS EDEMA

Mr Patrick Kayemba, the director for mobilisation and mindset change at the Busoga Consortium for Development, urges leaders to focus on unity, saying divisions have weakened the region's bargaining power.

"In the 11th Parliament, Busoga had two parliamentary caucuses, which created disunity. Leaders must now work together and bury their differences," he says.

Mr Kayemba calls for the establishment of an industrial park similar to those in Namanve and Mbale to create jobs and stimulate economic activity. He also urges the government to reopen Busoga University as a public institution.

Busoga University was closed in 2017 over irregularities, including fraudulent degrees. In January 2018, President Museveni directed the government to take over Busoga and Mountains of the Moon universities.

Traders and Infrastructure

Mr Henry Mujimba, the chairperson of Jinja Central Market, says traders expect leaders to address poor working conditions and infrastructure.

"Some markets are in a sorry state and need reconstruction. Even the central market, though constructed, now requires rehabilitation," he adds.

He also calls for improved road networks to ease the transportation of goods.

The former Namutumba Woman MP, Ms Florence Mutyabule, urges leaders to prioritise poverty reduction, noting that Busoga contributes about 14 percent of Uganda's poor population.

"This can change if leaders unite and effectively implement programmes like the Parish Development Model and Emyooga," she says.

Education stakeholders also want urgent intervention. Namutumba District Education Officer Mohammed Isiko says leaders should lobby for more resources to improve education standards.

"We need better teacher-pupil ratios, more classrooms and teachers' houses, and stronger parental involvement, especially in providing meals and reducing absenteeism," he says.

Jinja District Kadhi Sheikh Ismael Basoga calls for urgent improvements in healthcare, road infrastructure and education.

"Our health facilities and roads are in poor condition, and our performance in recent Primary Leaving Examinations was worrying," he says.

KEY ISSUES CITED

- Jobs through industrial parks, skills training and support to small businesses.
- Better roads to ease transport of farm produce to markets.
- Improved healthcare with functional facilities, drugs.
- Stronger education system through more classrooms, teachers' houses.
- Poverty reduction using programmes such as PDM.
- Public safety, including street lighting, especially in urban areas.
- Revival of institutions such as Busoga University.

Youth leaders across Busoga call for greater investment in vocational skill training to address unemployment.

"Politicians remember us during campaigns and disappear afterward," says Mr Kiduma Abubakari, a youth leader in Iganga District.

He says training in carpentry, tailoring, ICT and modern agriculture would help young people secure sustainable livelihoods.

Ms Edith Tibenkana, the chairperson of Ndigakweya Women Groups, urges leaders to improve healthcare, access to clean water and response to gender-based violence. She also calls for better access to government programmes such as the GROW fund to improve women's livelihoods.

Mr Christopher David Mwombe, the chairperson of Busoga Sugarcane Growers Association, urges leaders to unite in addressing exploitation in the sugar industry.

"Leaders must stabilise prices, make agriculture profitable and operationalise the Sugar Industry Stakeholders Council," he says.

The council, inaugurated in October 2025 under the amended Sugar Act, brings together farmers, millers and government to regulate and stabilise the sector.

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