

...gany's candidature were driven by the police to support the FDC candidate as the remaining

him alive or dead. Up to now, the police have hunted for him

became baffled as to who to believe; police, or Aine's relatives.

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**Bernard Tabaire** Inside Source

## My big voting lesson: I'll borrow my neighbour's baby next time

Circumstances had dictated that I would vote late in the afternoon. Those same circumstances meant I was not active on social media, blocked or not. I was in splendid isolation.

That's why I found it curious when I saw a speeding pickup truck turn sharply off Ggaba Road at Kansanga Market and down toward the valley at about 2:30pm. It was loaded with several ballot boxes, guarded by police.

And the part of Ggaba Road around the market had been blocked with perfunctory stuff: paper boxes, old tyres, pieces of timber, this and that. That too seemed odd when I saw the van drive right through as it made the turn.

Farther up Ggaba Road, I stopped by my polling station, Jack and Jill Nursery/Primary School in Kabalagala/Nsambya. I looked down and saw quite a queue. Actually two. I was disheartened. I returned at 3.30, sure to be one of the very last voters and to vote hustle-free.

The queues were undiminished. I nonetheless joined one that appeared shorter. My eyes darted about. I discovered I was actually in the right queue, the N-Z one. I had just seen obscure writing, in ink, on a small piece of paper hanging several metres away on a pillar of an incomplete building at the start of the voting process proper.

This meant that for a voter to know which

queue was A-M or N-Z, he or she had to stand in whichever line until the end. Many did, only to be sent away to the right queue. Only once did I see a police constable come toward the tail end of the queues to tell people about the A-M and N-Z split.

I have no idea why such information was not distinctly displayed for all to see as soon as one entered the school's compound. Most voters ended up in N-Z because it was the queue that started closest to the entrance.

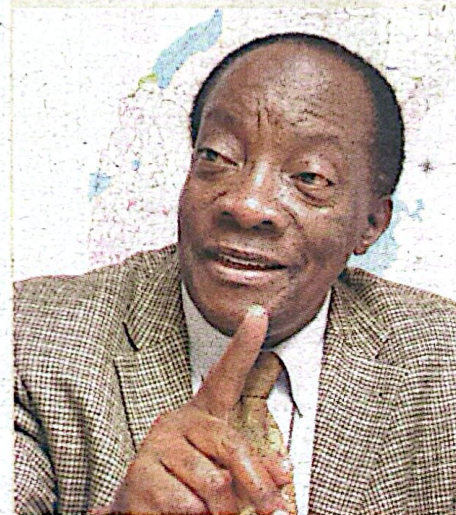
### Good Samaritans

Besides, there was no one to help those unable to read even if the display had been prominent. They had to rely on Good Samaritans who themselves had figured out the queues after several minutes of often lining up in the wrong place.

Surprisingly, the voters, most of whom were returning having encountered zero voting materials earlier in the day, were incredibly orderly. The sun hammered hard at our scalps. We stayed standing. Voting is serious business.

Then I got to the first point. I produced my national ID. An official looked my name up in the paper register, read out my voter number. Another official punched the number into the biometric voter verification machine. It was legit. I was thumb-printed. Then someone else

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wrote down my name manually into some book.

Things were a lot quicker if one had a voter location slip. The handheld biometric verification gadget read the barcode on it, then it was the thumb and off to the first ballot box.

An hour and 30 minutes later, I was done. The young man manning the biometric machine was adept at it. He was jolly too, cracking jokes with a wee bit pissed off voters. He was impressive.

What I am not sure of is whether the votes were counted properly because I was unable to return to protect my vote, make it count. But I can say I voted wisely.

If voting materials had not arrived about 1pm, I would have enjoyed my first voting day out. Next time, I will be sure to borrow a neighbour's toddler. Everyone who arrived at the polling station with a baby was done within 10 minutes! Uganda is still a kind place.

Meanwhile, EC chief Badru Kiggundu should tender his resignation right away. His failure to deliver voting materials in his backyard on time is inexcusable. President Museveni won't fire him, of course. That's why I am appealing to his conscience. You can do it, Dear Engineer Doctor Chairman Kiggundu.

As I was completing writing these musings, reports were coming in of a massive police raid on the FDC headquarters in Kampala in a case of "defiance" being met with "defiance 100 times over".

By the time this piece hits the street, Dr Kiggundu, if he will still be in the big EC chair, will have announced a winner in the presidential election. And, in my view, we will embark on a most intriguing five years yet in our history of the last 30 years. Let's watch this space as it shifts shapes.

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