

Regional News

By the end of his seventh term in 2031, Mr Museveni would have led Uganda for 45 years, making him one of the longest-serving presidents in Africa.

BY MONITOR TEAM

It was a day of mixed emotions countrywide after President Museveni, 81, was sworn in to serve his seventh term in office.

The President was sworn in at a momentous function attended by heads of state from various countries, among other dignitaries, on Tuesday.

By the end of his seventh term in 2031, Mr Museveni would have led Uganda for 45 years, making him one of the longest-serving presidents in Africa.

In Jinja, the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) supporters celebrated at the party offices on Lubas Road.

Donning the party's branded yellow t-shirts, an estimated 200 supporters gathered, sang, and danced in jubilation. Some chanted, "You [Opposition figures] said he would not be sworn in, but he has finally taken the oath."

The NRM administrator for Jinja City, Mr Asuman Akamba, thanked voters for backing President Museveni, enabling him to secure 71 percent of the vote in the January 15 election.

"We are going to fight tooth and nail to ensure the NRM becomes an even stronger party," Mr Akamba said.

Jinja City NRM Chairperson Magidu Musongola urged supporters to sustain mobilisation efforts.

However, security was tight across parts of Busoga Sub-region, including Jinja, Kamuli, Bugiri, and Iganga districts.

In Bugiri District, Opposition leaders called for calm among supporters as President Museveni begins his seventh term in office.

National Unity Platform (NUP) member Mustafa Mwendha urged party members to remain patient, saying leaders are working on an alternative course of action.

Mr Mwendha said the party refrained from organising demonstrations due to the continued detention of some of its members.

"We would have prepared a serious demonstration, but we did not do it because many of our colleagues are still in prison without justice being served. As party leaders, we are planning the next step," he said.

The People's Front for Freedom (PFF) Chairperson in Bugiri, Mr Abdallah Magumba, urged supporters to focus on improving household incomes rather than engaging in political activities.

"I urge our members to concentrate on productive work that can improve their livelihoods," he said.

Mr Museveni received 7,946,772 votes (71.65 percent), while his main challenger, NUP's Robert Kyagulanyi, alias Bobi Wine, garnered 2,741,238 votes (24.72 percent) of the valid votes cast.

At least 52.5 percent of the 21.6 million registered voters participated in the election, which Opposition and human rights groups said was marred by violence that claimed the lives of 20 people.

In Teso Sub-region's Soroti, a fraction of NRM supporters dressed in yellow party T-shirts briefly rode around the



Ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party supporters celebrate President Museveni's victory and swearing-in at Independence Park in Mbarara on Tuesday. PHOTO/COSLINE NAKAHIRIA

Mixed reaction as Museveni takes oath for seventh term

heart of the city as several residents stayed at home or went for work.

Mr Samuel Esolu, a mechanic on Gw-eri Road, said his focus was to attend to his clientele.

He said the day did not add any value to his hustle.

The mechanic said he has lived to witness President Museveni being sworn in for many terms, but every time he takes the oath, things remain pretty much the same.

"Those who feel they have reason to celebrate, it is their freedom. For me, my hustle takes precedence, and I have a Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) background. Joining such a celebration is a slap on the face of my grandparents," Mr Esolu said.

In Arua City, Ms Selsa Angutoko, a resident of Awindiri, said: "Those who have time to celebrate are called to Kololo. But for some of us who are hustlers, the day doesn't carry any meaning because there is poverty after the trade order."

"Seven terms are enough for celebrating their NRM achievement. But for some of us who are still in poverty, with high taxes being levied on goods and exorbitant school fees, we can never be in celebratory moods. It is for the few," she added.

In Nebbi Town, there were pockets of NRM supporters who gathered at the GAF Hotel for celebrations. The day was marked with eating and drinking at the function, which was organised by the district NRM leadership.

IN GREATER MASAKA

Mr Francis Sseebaale, the chief executive officer of Goodzone Cars and Trucks Ltd in Masaka, said for Greater Masaka, the President's swearing-in is not just a Kampala event, it echoes directly in the banana plantations of Bukomansimbi, the coffee farms of Lwengo, and the markets of Nyendo, the Mutukula Border in Kyotera, and the hills of Rakai District.

"To residents here, the oath signals the start of the next contract between the State House and the ordinary citizen. Will feeder roads to Kyotera finally get tarmacked? Will coffee prices be stabilised? Will hospitals like Masaka Regional Referral Hospital get more drugs and staff? In a region that has historically swung between loyalty and protest, every presidential term is judged by one measure – self-financial empowerment," said Mr Samuel Ssempala, a businessman in Kyotera Town, Kyotera District.

NRM supporters in Mbale City and Sironko District held celebrations after President Museveni took the oath of office and allegiance.

Mr Abbas Nafabi, one of the NRM supporters who marched in the procession,



It was business as usual for residents and traders at Elgin Street Junction in Masaka City on Tuesday. PHOTO/MALIK FAHAD JUINGO

Mr Patrick Luwaga, the NUP chairperson for Rakai District, said the swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday did not reflect the will of the majority of Ugandans.

"The swearing-in of Mr Museveni is not worth celebrating. Many

Ugandans did not vote him into power as it is portrayed. For those who believe in change, this is not a moment of honour or legitimacy, and it does not end the demand for political change," Mr Luwaga said.

told *Daily Monitor* that Mr Museveni has presided over peace in the country.

"We celebrate because President Museveni is our saviour who brought peace and stability in this country," he said.

Ms Idah Nambozo, another NRM supporter, said President Museveni introduced policies that have emancipated women and promoted economic growth.

"As women, we are proud of Presi-

Regional News



dent Museveni. We have benefited from many poverty alleviation programmes, including the Parish Development Model programme," he said.

Mr Joseph Wasukira, a resident of Sironko Town Council, applauded Mr Museveni's leadership for fighting poverty in the district and country at large.

"We celebrate because we have seen economic growth and access to free education," he said.

The Kabale District NRM Administrative Secretary, Mr Amos Rwansheja, said some supporters gathered at the party offices in Kabale Town to celebrate their presidential flag bearer's victory.

"The swearing-in ceremony for President Museveni is worth celebrating because of his tested and visionary leadership that has led to visible developments in the country," Mr Rwansheja said.

Mr Johnson Ndyabanawe, the UPC mobiliser in Kigezi, said the swearing-in ceremony was not worth celebrating because some members of the different Opposition parties were in prison while others went into exile shortly after the winner in the January 2026 general elections was announced.

The NUP chairperson for Kanungu District, Mr Moses Arineitwe, who doubles as the NUP coordinator for Kigezi Sub-region, claimed that resources spent on the swearing-in ceremony for President Museveni went to waste since the election was allegedly rigged.

"After showing interest in contesting for Kinkiizi West parliamentary seat in Kanungu District, I was arrested in Mbarara as I drummed up support for my NUP party president, thus denying me the opportunity to participate in the parliamentary elections," Mr Arineitwe said.

The PFF General Secretary for Kabale Municipality, Ms Claire Ahimbisibwe, said celebrating the NRM presidential flagbearer's swearing-in ceremony was not worth it because his victory was al-



NRM supporters celebrate in Jinja City. PHOTO/ISAAC KINTU



There was much fanfare for NRM supporters in Mityana District on Tuesday. PHOTO/ENOCK MATOVU

legedly not the will of the people.

"The money that was used in organising such celebrations should have been injected into the health and education sectors to boost service delivery," Ms Ahimbisibwe said.

Little fanfare in Lira, Wakiso

Meanwhile, as President Museveni took the oath for his seventh term, celebrations unfolded unevenly across Uganda's Lango Sub-region.

In Apac, supporters flooded the streets, donning yellow T-shirts and dancing through the morning.

NRM grassroots mobilisers could be seen mobilising people through a road drive initiative. An entertainment event was later organised at Mebos Lounge, Apac Municipality.

"We fought for this victory, and I'm celebrating our collective effort," said Mr Patrick Oruk.

For Mr Alex Adimo, the joy stemmed from peace dividends: "These days, I sleep in my house, move freely, and my kids are in school."

But in Lira City and other Lango districts, the mood was subdued. No public gatherings, no fanfare. The contrast was stark.

Mr Bonny Omara, a boda boda rider, said there was nothing to celebrate.

"The majority of Ugandans are wallowing in poverty, yet some leaders are living as if they're in Heaven. So, why should I celebrate if Museveni is sworn in?" Mr Sam Barker Okec, a farmer in Oyam, said.

For Mr Museveni's new term, Apac's enthusiasm is a boost, but the silence elsewhere hints at a complex political landscape. As the President embarks on his next chapter, bridging these divides will be key.

Elsewhere, it was business as usual in many townships around Wakiso District, with shops open, without any visible excitement as if nothing big was taking place in the country.

Security was not too tight, but more security personnel were deployed in areas such as Nansana, Wakiso Town Council, Kakiri and Kayunga.

Some local leaders said the outcome of the January 15 General Election explained the quiet mood among residents of Nansana Municipality.

Mr John Bosco Sserunkuma, the Nansana Municipality mayor-elect, decried irregularities in the General Election.

"Innocent people were beaten, and some of their businesses were destroyed. People are not excited at all be-

cause the government organised the election, and Gen Museveni was declared the winner against the will of the majority of Ugandans.

"If people were genuinely happy, we would not see a fleet of vehicles paraded to transport them to Kololo Ceremonial Grounds. Everyone would be finding his/her means there," Mr Sserunkuma said.

Mr Henry Kibirige, the chairperson of Kona East Village in Wakiso Town Council, said several residents lost their businesses due to the ongoing trade order enforcement and were, therefore, not in a celebratory mood.

"I know more than 60 people who were operating businesses on Wakiso Central Market Road who were evicted. Even up to now, I don't know where they are," he said.

However, supporters of the ruling NRM party in Kyotera District prepared day-long celebrations to mark both President Museveni's inauguration and four decades of NRM leadership.

The State minister for Microfinance and Kyotera County MP-elect Haruna Kasolo reportedly mobilised party loyalists across the district to participate in the festivities.

For Sheikh Taimia Kamyuka, a resident of Bunjakko Island and a vocal supporter of NUP, President Museveni's swearing-in ceremony is far from a day of national merry-making.

He said the ceremony is a hollow ritual that fails to reflect the democratic aspirations of the electorate.

To him, it does not mask the deep-seated grievances of a population that feels its voice was silenced during the recent electoral process.

"A leader's legitimacy should be found in the ballot box rather than the strength of the security forces patrolling the streets. The continued incarceration of Opposition activists and the militarised environment surrounding the polls are primary reasons why Gen Museveni's inauguration remains a day of mourning for the Opposition, rather than a milestone for the nation," he said.

Many residents of Butambala District went about their normal activities, saying there was nothing to celebrate about.

They demanded the unconditional release of their outgoing MP, Mr Muhammad Muvwanga Kivumbi, and their sons from prison.

Prosecution alleges that Kivumbi and 24 co-accused persons orchestrated attacks on Kibibi Police Station and the Butambala Electoral Commission tally in the aftermath of the January 15 elections.

Local businesses in Buwama Town Council, Kayabwe Town Council, and several trading centres in Mpigi District went on normally throughout the day, and several residents shunned the televised event.

Mr Herman Muwulya, the NRM Masaka District chairperson, said celebrations were organised at Kyanjovu playground in Buwanga Sub-county.

"The function was organised to help those who did not manage to go to Kolo-lo at the main function not to miss any step in the inauguration ceremony," he said.

A similar function was also organised in Lwengo, Kalungu, and Sembabule, among other districts in Greater Masaka.

In Masaka City, businesses were operating smoothly amid tight security.

A group of NRM supporters marched from Miro Two on the Mbarara-Masaka highway to Mbarara Independence Park to celebrate after President Museveni took oath on Tuesday.

Mr Peter Mpaka, an NRM supporter, said: "We are here celebrating the swearing-in ceremony of President Museveni because he is a symbol of steady, fast progress, continuity, and good stability for the future. And I can assure you that a fundamental change for Uganda, which he promised in 1986, today is the climax of the testimony."

Ms Penelope Kembabazi, also an NRM supporter, said: "I want to congratulate our dear President upon achieving this. We are glad we walked the journey with you. In Mbarara, we are challenged with roads we would like you to work on."

"I want to congratulate the NRM fraternity for partnering with us in the celebrations of our father, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The love has been too much today [Tuesday]. We congratulate the President and pray that he addresses the challenges that we are facing as a country," NRM supporter Patrick Kaweesa said.

Compiled by Simon Peter Emwamu, Tausi Nakato, Asuman Musobya, Isaac Kintu, Felix Warom Okello, Fred Wambede, Robert Muhereza, Naume Biira, Bill Oketch, Santo Ojok, Al Mahdi Ssenkibirwa, Ambrose Musasizi, Noeline Nabukanya, Malik F Jingo, Sadat Mboogo, Cosline Nakahiira & Felix Ahimbisibwe

2031
WHEN CURRENT
TERM WILL END