

National News

Buganda region gets the lion's share

Experts say ministerial appointments are often viewed as a way of "sharing the national cake." They, however, warn that the slots do not reflect uniform development.

BY ELIZABETH KAMURUNGI
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Buganda has emerged as the biggest beneficiary in President Museveni's newly unveiled Cabinet, taking 21 ministerial positions, according to an analysis of the regional distribution of appointments.

President Museveni, on May 26, announced an 83-member Executive comprising the vice president, prime minister, Cabinet ministers, and ministers of state, whose appointments now await vetting by Parliament's Appointments Committee.

The analysis shows that Buganda accounts for about 25 percent of the appointments, making it the most represented sub-region in the new government.

According to the latest figures from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Buganda is also Uganda's most populous sub-region, with an estimated population of 12.9 million people.

Kigezi emerged as the second highest represented sub-region with seven ministers, followed by West Nile, Acholi, and Ankole with six ministers each.

Busoga, Bunyoro, and Tooro secured five slots each, while Bukedi and Langi received four appointments apiece.



Karamoja and Rwenzori each produced three ministers, Bugisu got two, while Sebei secured one appointment. Out of the 30 full Cabinet ministers, Buganda produced five ministers, while Ankole, Kigezi, and Busoga each secured four Cabinet positions. Bunyoro received three Cabinet slots,

President Museveni named his Cabinet on Tuesday. PHOTO/FILE

while Tooro, Acholi, Langi, and Bukedi each obtained two.

Karamoja and Rwenzori each secured one Cabinet minister, while Bugisu, Sebei, and West Nile did not get any full Cabinet positions.

President Museveni retained Jessica Alupo from Teso as vice president and

Robinah Nabbanja from Bunyoro as prime minister.

Constitutional role

Under the Constitution, the Cabinet is the Executive arm of government responsible for formulating and implementing government policy.

Political observers say regional balancing has increasingly become an important factor in Uganda's politics, with appointments often interpreted as rewards to regions and political constituencies.

The Secretary General of the Patriotic League of Uganda, Mr Daudi Kabanda, criticised the composition of the Cabinet, arguing that some regions received more influential positions than others.

"You can't tell me that this Cabinet is balanced. It was drawn recently after some of these people stood for the speakership and deputy. We are not happy as PLU and Buganda," Mr Kabanda said.

"Of the Cabinet ministers, the West Nile took 16, while West Nile had none. Busoga were given most of the posts, which are non-influential," he added.

However, political analyst Mwambutsya Ndebesa said the debate should focus less on numerical representation and more on the influence and effectiveness of appointed ministers.

"Cabinet is the topmost decision-making space. So sometimes when you have people in the top decision-making space, there is some inclusivity in terms of resource allocation," Mr Ndebesa said.

"However, what is important to me is not numbers. It is the weight in the numbers. Do they have a ministry that is relevant and the person appointed there

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in Cabinet

has the power to influence?" he added. Mr Ndebesa said while he personally does not strongly support politics based on regional balancing, Uganda's current political environment makes the issue difficult to ignore.

He further argued that representation should be viewed algebraically, not arithmetically, explaining that some ministers carry more political weight and control over national resources than others.

"You find that some ministries have more weight in terms of resource allocation and value it than others," he said.

83

The total number of ministers in the new Cabinet.

Ms Perry Ariha, the executive director of Women's Democracy Network-Uganda, described the issues of regional balancing as largely political without any impact on regional development.

"This regional balance is really just politics, but what Uganda is looking for is that anyone who is given a mandate to serve the population must deliver on their mandate. So it's our politics that causes this sentiment," Ms Ariha said.

Mr Ariha explained that there is little evidence showing that regions with

many ministers necessarily get better services and development.

"I think it is important to do an analysis to see whether having all those ministers leads to delivery of services because I see, like now, if we look at the regions where they have specific ministers, like Karamoja, Bunyoro, and others, how have their lives changed?" she questioned.

She also questioned the size of the Cabinet, noting that she expected a smaller-sized Cabinet that is effective, adding that a bigger Cabinet drains public resources.

Gender inclusion

Similarly Ms Sarah Bireete, executive director for the Centre for Constitutional Governance (COG), said that regional and gender inclusion should be based on merit and competence.

Ms Bireete explained that no region in Uganda appears completely excluded from the government appointments, but also criticised the continued expansion of Cabinet beyond constitutional recommendations.

What we are most uncomfortable with is maintaining the large size of the Cabinet. Because if you include the prime minister, we have an 82-person Cabinet. We need to go back to include the Cabinet as provided for in the Constitution of 23 Cabinet ministers and 23 ministers of state, so that we have a manageable public administration budget as we can," Ms Bireete said.

She explained that the issue of regional

balance is irrelevant, adding that apart from ministers appointed for special regions such as Luweru, Karamoja, and Bunyoro, the rest are supposed to serve the national interests.

"Ministers are not regional leaders, and they should make sure that they do a good job that would serve the common good of Uganda," Ms Bireete said.

Political analyst Yusuf Serunkuma, however, argued that regional balancing has become central to Uganda's political system.

According to Serunkuma, appointments are less about performance and more about rewarding loyalty and creating perceptions of inclusion among ethnic and regional groups.

"People are taking positions to eat. And so eating somehow translates into eating on behalf of your constituency or your ethnic community. I think the beginning part is that ministerial positions are not meant to do anything serious," Mr Serunkuma said.

He argued that at the regional level, people with many ministers may gain informal advantages such as access to jobs, scholarships, government tenders through political connections, donations, among others, but not necessarily broader transformation or development.

"The broader picture of things is that regions do not benefit because they have many ministers. There are small things like having somebody in power that you can call when you're in trouble, a Gamba ng'u (knowing an important person), 'if you want a scholarship, government tender, and church donations,'"

Mr Serunkuma emphasised that it's a responsibility of the government to provide services like hospitals and schools, regardless of whether they have a minister from the region or not.

National News

NRM's CEC to pay more attention in Cabinet

BY OUR REPORTER

KAMPALA. More than at any time before, the new Cabinet will feature the largest concentration of the NRM's Central Executive Committee (CEC) involvement in ensuring the party agenda is fulfilled.

In the past, the NRM's top policy-making and strategic organ had two or three members of its leadership in Cabinet.

This time, the organ, features eight members including the chairperson President Museveni. Ordinarily this committee dictates the party's political direction and supervises its daily activities.

That position is bound to be more forcefully seen in the Cabinet's activities, going forward.

Following his inauguration, President Museveni indicated that this would be the term in which he would be more emphatic about getting his agenda through.

He cited his work in getting more Ugandans into the money economy, though the Parish Development Model scheme, as well as other moves including the GROW

scheme. These schemes are planned to encourage more rural based Ugandans to embrace agriculture and value addition moves, as a way of lifting themselves out of poverty.

"This is Kisumu no sleep," he said emphatically. "Do not blame me if you are still poor after all these years, because I have showed you what to do."

The NRM party CEC Leadership in Cabinet

National Chairperson:

Yoweri Museveni

Eastern Region:

David Calvin Echodu

Central Region:

Haruna Kyejume Kasolo

Western Region:

Jonard Asimwe

Karamoja Sub-Region:

John Baptist Loku

CEC Member (Historical):

Rebecca Kadaga

CEC Member (Historical):

Jim Muhesi

CEC Member (Historical):

Kahinda Otufire

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

THE CAPITAL MARKETS ACT
(Chapter 485A, Laws of Kenya)

Regulation 5 of The Capital Markets (Take-overs & Mergers) Regulations, 2002