

Women open call centre to report poll violence

Contact. Victims of violence will call 08003311 to report incidents of violence in 15 selected districts.

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KAMPALA. Women civil society groups have set up a toll-free call centre to help female voters report violence and conflicts in today's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Dubbed Women Situation Room (WSR), the victims of violence will

call 08003311 to report incidents of violence in 15 selected districts where the activists have deployed 30 observers.

Calls to the above telephone line will be answered by prominent women in the country, including former Uganda Investment Authority executive director Maggie Kigozi and Justice Julia Sebutinde.

After receiving reports of the violence, the women will quickly contact either the police or party officials involved in the fracas.

The selected districts, according to Ms Sophie Kyagulayi, the WSR

THE BACKGROUND

The idea of the Women Situation Room (WSR) arose out of the realisation that violence before, during and after elections has become the norm in elections in many countries. WSR was first implemented in Liberia during the 2011 presidential election and has been replicated in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria.

coordinator, include Sembabule, Bukomansimbi, Kampala, Luweero, Kamuli, Mbale, Soroti, Lira, Gulu, Arua, Kanungu, Rukungiri, Kabale, Ntungamo and Isingiro, all listed as hotspots of violence witnessed during NRM primaries last year. The said districts, according to Ms Kyagulayi, are likely to experience the same violence due to anxiety among the competitors and their supporters.

"We set up these centres because violence affects women most and when it occurs, it reduces women's

participation in politics," Ms Kyagulayi, said yesterday.

The statistics

The UN Women Uganda Country Representative, Ms Hodan Addou, told this newspaper on Tuesday that according to a 2014 UN study, 60 per cent did not participate in elections due to fear of violence.

"Almost 90 per cent of women in those countries felt that violence broke their resolve to join politics," she said.