



Museveni bags victory with 60%

Criticism. The FDC party condemns the election as a fraud while EC chairman Badru Kiggundu says even the untallied results would not change the outcome.

BY MONITOR TEAM
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NAMBOOLE. After a tense campaign and a jumbled election, President Museveni was yesterday declared winner of the February 18 presidential contest, which earned him a fifth elective term until 2021.

Although Mr Museveni, 71, secured a big victory, his popular vote margin in several battleground districts was very thin and results from 1,787 polling stations with 1,051,720 voters were left out of the tally.

Results from an election described by leaders of the main Opposition party—the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) as “a fraud” gave Mr Museveni 5,617,503 votes, representing 60.75 per cent of 9,246,563 valid votes cast.

Dr Kizza Besigye, a four-time presidential contender and the FDC candidate, garnered 3,270,290 votes, representing 35.37 per cent of the valid votes cast.

Independent Go Forward candidate Amama Mbabazi came a distant third with 132,574 (1.4 per cent), Abed Bwanka of People's Development Party obtained 86,075 (0.93 per cent), Independent presidential candidates Venansius Baryamureeba got 51,086 (0.55 per cent) and Ms Maureen Waluube Kyalya 40,598 (0.44 per cent). Maj Gen Benon Biraaro of Farmers Party of Uganda got 24,675 (0.2 per cent) and Independent candidate Joseph Mubirizi 23,762 (0.26 per cent).

Out of the 15,277,198 registered voters, only 9,701,738 took part in the exercise, representing 63.50 per cent. This means that 5,575,460 voters either chose to stay home or were disenfranchised as a result of the irregularities that marred the elections.

Glitches

There was delayed arrival of voting materials at polling stations, especially in the populous Kampala and Wakiso districts, pockets of violence and reports of ballot stuffing in some parts of the country.

The valid votes were 9,246,563 and the invalid were 455,175, representing 4.69 per cent of the total votes cast. The number of people who did not vote (5,575,460) is almost the same number who voted Mr Museveni (5,617,503), highlighting the endemic problem of voter apathy in the country.

In the 2011 elections, 5.6 million registered voters did not turn up to vote, representing a higher figure than the 5.4 million voters who voted President Museveni for a fourth elective term.

In the past four elections, voter turnout has been decreasing from 72 per cent in 1996 to 69.7 per cent in 2001, 69.2 per cent in 2006 before hitting a record low in 2011 with 57.1 per cent, according to figures computed by the Electoral Commission (EC).

Explaining why some results from 1,787 polling stations were not tallied, Mr Badru Kiggundu, the Electoral Commission chairperson, said yesterday: “Even if all the untallied results were added to the second candidate [Dr Kizza Besigye] the leading candidate will still get more than 50 per cent and this is provided for in the law.”

Mr Museveni's contested win gives him a fifth elective term, setting the incumbent on course to lead Uganda for a cumulative 35 years of uninterrupted reign since 1986.

With 60.75 per cent of the valid votes, Mr Museveni's popularity has dropped from 68.38 per cent votes he polled in 2011.

Dr Besigye, who had the backing of Inter-Party Cooperation (IPC) flag, a loose coalition of Opposition parties in 2011, obtained 2,064,963 (representing 26 per cent) votes then.

Makes gains

With 35.37 per cent of the valid votes in the Thursday elections, it means that in spite of the fourth loss to the incumbent, his popularity increased by 9.37 per cent.

This is the second best result for Dr Besigye since 2006 elections when he scored 37 per cent.

Describing Uganda as “a young democracy”, Mr Kiggundu appealed for tolerance in his farewell message and asked international observers to handle Uganda with kid gloves.

“We are serving our last term as a commission and we are proud for having served you for 14 years because it's the law. It's a thankless service with a lot of criticism... the output of an election can either tear or build a country.”

Mr Kiggundu promised to improve on the black spots in the electoral process, adding that: “There is no country in the world that conducts an error-free election.”

“Yoweri Museveni, who has obtained the highest number of votes in the election and the votes cast in his or her favour being more than 50 per cent of the valid votes cast at the Presidential Elections held on the February 18 2016,” was the winner of the contest.

As the EC tallied votes from across the country yesterday, the FDC party issued a statement rejecting the results, citing what they called “unacceptable fraud”.

In a press release sent to different media houses, the FDC president, Maj Gen Mugisha Muntu (Rtd) urged all Ugandans and the international community to “reject and condemn the fraud that has been committed and to expose it to the fullest extent possible.”

Gen Muntu also condemned the military presence on the streets and the intimidation of people but said the situation can be turned around to favour the pro-change voice.

The ruling NRM party agents described the election as a triumph of democracy.

Reported by Yasin Mugerwa, Stephen Kafeero and Emmanuel Alnebyoona



Electoral Commission chairperson Badru Kiggundu (C) hands over the declaration forms to NRM secretary general Kasule Lumumba (R) after announcing the election results at Namboole stadium yesterday. PHOTOS BY RACHEL MABALA, DOMINIC BUKENYA & STEPHEN WANDERA



Left: Electoral Commissioners at the announcement of the results.



L-R: NRM officials Mike Ssebalu, Moses Byaruhanga, Kasule Lumumba, Lydia Wanyoto and Ouwono Opondo celebrate their candidate's victory at Namboole yesterday.

CORRECTION

The State minister for Public Service Sezi Mbaguta (Below) did not lose the Rukungiri Woman parliamentary race because she did not contest for the position, contrary to what we reported in yesterday's edition. We regret the error. Editor



The Monitor endeavours to get everything it publishes correct. When mistakes are made, we want to know, and a correction will be published as soon as possible. Please notify us of any needed correction at

corrections@ug.nationmedia.com, or by writing to Opinions Editor, Plot 29-36, 8th Street Industrial Area, Namuwongo, P.O. Box 12141, Kampala-Uganda, or by calling the News Editor at 0417744100. Thank you.