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...the Secretariat would know and plan for the people who would attend.

...The topics will centre on NRM party ideology, governance, regional geopoliti-

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BY BUSEINSAMILU

KAMPALA. Newly elected Members of Parliament (MPs), with majority from the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, yesterday kicked off a week-long orientation at the National Leadership Institute (NALI) in Kyankwanzi.

The induction that will end on Wednesday next week, aims to acquaint the fresh MPs with issues that will guide President Museveni's next five-year term in office.

The mix of presentations will range from the economy, party issues, defence, regional and international relations, among others.

The MPs will then deliberate on the topics and come up with a set of resolutions.

The ruling NRM party has over the years used the NALI retreat to discuss and resolve key political decisions to guide both the party and nation over the years.

President Museveni delivers a keynote address today, centred on the broad theme of the retreat, namely, "aligning the NRM leaders on protecting the gains and making a qualitative leap to the higher middle-income status society."

About NALI

NALI, also commonly referred to as the Kyankwanzi Leadership Centre, is a premier Ugandan government training centre, used for ideological orientation, patriotic education, and leadership development for military, police, prisons, and other public officials in Uganda.

Since the NRM has, over the years enjoyed majority presence in Parliament, Mr Museveni, who took power in 1986 after a five-year guerrilla war, has used NALI to bring order to his party and foster consensus on key contentious national issues that have required parliamentary sanction.

In September 2011, President Museveni, who had just won his fourth elective term in office, summoned all ministers and NRM party MPs to NALI to discuss some of the contentious issues that

Retreats: Precedents, highs and lows over the years



Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs Norbert Mao (centre) at the National Leadership Institute (NALI) in Kyankwanzi yesterday. PHOTO/ABUBAKER LUBOWA

had rocked Parliament and the country that year.

Mr Museveni at the time was faced with strikes by teachers, skyrocketing inflation, the weakening of the Shilling against the dollar, and a spike in prices of consumer goods that had triggered the Walk-to-Work protests.

The country was also faced with allegations of bribery in the emerging oil and gas sector, besides the push by the government for the unpopular Public Order Management law. The retreat discussed and made some resolutions on managing the divisive issues.

A year later, another retreat was called in 2012 after two of Museveni's then ministers, including Syda Bbumba (Gender) and Prof Khiddu Makubuya (General Duties in the Office of the Prime Min-

SWEARING IN

The new MPs, meanwhile, will take oath between May 14 and 15, and subsequently pick among them, a Speaker and Deputy for the 12th Parliament.

ister), appeared before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament in connection with allegations of inflating figures for money paid out in compensations to businessman Hassan Basajjala.

The two ministers had informed the House Committee that they approved the compensation based on the Presi-

dent's directive, which the principal immediately denounced. Although the retreat agreed to first wait for the PAC report, some MPs went ahead and pushed for the censure of the duo.

NRM MPs also convened in February 2013 to resolve the then-brewing leadership tension between President Museveni and his then Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi after the latter moved to challenge the leadership of his boss.

The retreat was dominated by the outspoken criticism from a group of radical NRM lawmakers, who were often referred to as rebel MPs, and included Theodore Ssekikubo (Lwemiyaga), Barnabas Tinkasiimire (Buyaga West), Muhammad Nsereko (Kampala Central), and Wilfred Niwagaba (Ndorwa East), who challenged the party's steward-

ship, arguing that Museveni and Mbabazi could no longer offer new direction to the country.

The retreat led to moves against the dissenting MPs, resulting in recommendations for them to face the NRM disciplinary committee, which forced their brief expulsion from the party.

Another NRM Caucus retreat on the same matter was convened in March 2014 and the members unanimously endorsed Mr Museveni as the NRM sole candidate for the 2016 presidential polls.

This prompted Mr Mbabazi, who also formerly served as NRM party secretary general, to decamp and form the Go Forward pressure group, a political vehicle he used to challenge his boss in the 2016 polls.

Ahead of the debate on the 2017 Constitutional Amendment that popularly became known as Togikwatako (don't touch it), the NRM MPs met in Kyankwanzi in March 2017 and endorsed the proposal to amend Article 102b of the Constitution to remove the 75-year age cap for anyone who wishes to stand for president.

The Article, which was later amended in December the same year, allowed Mr Museveni to run for office for as long as he wished. Indeed, Mr Museveni went on to run and win the subsequent 2021, and the recent January 15, 2026 presidential polls.

The NRM MPs held a seven-day retreat in March 2019 at NALI and focused on political strategy ahead of the 2021 elections and economic development initiatives and endorsed Mr Museveni as the sole party candidate for the 2021 elections and beyond.

After the 2021 polls, the NRM members again met in Kyankwanzi, this time with the objective of instilling party ideology among new members. The current retreat comes ahead of preparations for the swearing-in of President Museveni on May 12 for his seventh elective term in office.