WHY MINISTERS ARE STILL IN OFFICE

As President Yoweri Museveni swears in for a seventh term in office today, more focus is being drawn to the incoming Cabinet. The reality of this transition is more nuanced than many Ugandans assume, write **Nelson Mandela Muhoozi** and **Eddy Ssejjoba.**


Nabbanja


Nakyobe


Ssemujju

With President Yoweri Museveni's seventh inauguration today, many Ugandans assume that ministers immediately lose office since the Presidential term has officially expired. However, constitutional experts and senior government officials say the reality is more sophisticated.

President Museveni dissolved Cabinet last week ahead of his new term, but the ministers were directed to remain in office, until formal handover arrangements are concluded.

This arrangement has created a rare moment where politics, constitutional interpretation and administrative continuity intersect.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Uganda's Cabinet ministers and their juniors are established under the 1995 Constitution, specifically under Articles 111, 113 and 114.

Article 111 provides that the Cabinet shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and "such number of ministers as may appear to the President to be reasonably necessary for the efficient running of the State."

Article 113(1) states that Cabinet Ministers are appointed by the President, with the approval of Parliament, from among Members of Parliament or persons qualified to be elected MPs.

State ministers, meanwhile, are provided for under Article 114, which allows the President, with Parliament's approval, to appoint other ministers to assist Cabinet Ministers in the performance of their duties.

The Constitution further provides that State Ministers perform responsibilities assigned by the President and may act in place of Cabinet Ministers in their absence.

EXPERT COMMENT



Constitutional lawyer Peter Walubiri says legally, ministers derive their authority directly from the President and, therefore, their tenure is tied to his. "They are still in office, until they hand over. And if they hand over the office before a new cabinet and state ministers are appointed, then the President assumes all the portfolios. He becomes the all-embracing minister at that time," Walubiri explained. He added that although ministers may continue carrying out administrative functions during transition, their constitutional mandate is effectively tied to the lifespan of the presidency under which they served. However, Walubiri acknowledged that Uganda's Constitution leaves room for interpretation.

"It is not specific in the Constitution when Cabinet is dissolved. But there are many things that we assume and this issue is one of them," he noted.

"Once the President swears in, his Cabinet expires with his swearing in and whoever has been holding office in the old government ceases to," he said.

Constitution explicitly spell out the exact moment Cabinet ceases to exist during a Presidential transition. That gap has, over the years, created a convention rather than a strictly defined legal process.

GOVT OFFICIALS' TAKE

"Cabinet remains in service, until the President swears in. Basically, the old cabinet remains in office, until midnight [today]," Lucy Nakyobe, the Head of Public Service and the Secretary to Cabinet, said.

That position was subdued by Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, who announced on Friday last week that President Museveni had directed all ministers to remain active and continue performing their duties, until proper handover.

"Those who will not feature in the new Cabinet will wait, until they hand over to the new office-bearers, while those who retain their offices will hand over to themselves," Nabbanja said.

The directive effectively ensures continuity of government business during the transition period, particularly as ministries continue handling budgets, contracts, security operations.

Ruling National Resistance Movement party director of information Emmanuel Lumala Dombo defended the arrangement, saying: "Even when the President dissolves Cabinet, the ministers still hold their positions, until they are called to hand over office officially. This is because they are still in possession of government vehicles, for instance. So, when the swearing-in ceremony is done, they are called to hand over the office," Dombo said.

"It is important to note that executive powers are vested in the President and he chooses his ministers to assist him. So, when his term of office expires, then theirs expires too," said renowned law professor Frederick Jjuuko.

EXIT MUST BE ORGANISED

For many ministers, the transition involves more than political departure. It includes preparing accountability reports, surrendering official documents, clearing with accounting officers and handing over government property.

Outgoing Kira Municipality said the process often includes informal political rituals as well.

"Sometimes the President will allow his cabinet ministers and state ministers to go and he remains because usually these act on his behalf," Ssemujju said.

As President Museveni takes the oath today, the fate of many cabinet ministers remains uncertain; some are expected to return, others could be dropped entirely, while new faces may emerge, one of the most historically anticipated decisions of every new term.

Until then, ministers remain in a constitutional waiting room, still working, but aware that the political clock on the current Cabinet and their tenure is ticking towards its final hours.

ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE 2021-2026 TERM

Today's inauguration also spotlights major government achievements under the 2021-2026 term. Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja said her office co-ordinated the implementation of the National Resistance Movement manifesto in line with the National Development Plan III and IV, as well as Presidential and Cabinet directives.

According to Nabbanja, the Government fully implemented 434 commitments, representing 54% of the 809 manifesto pledges. Another 265 commitments, representing 34%, are still under implementation, while 109 commitments, equivalent to 12%, were not implemented. Nabbanja said Uganda's economy expanded from sh128.5 trillion (about $34.7b) in 2019 to sh226.3 trillion (about $61.3b) in the 2024/2025 financial year. "By the end of June 2026, the size of the economy is projected to expand to sh251.4 trillion (about $68.4b)," Nabbanja said.

She added that Uganda had graduated from the category of Least Developed Countries to lower-middle-income status after surpassing the required Gross National Income threshold of $1,136 per capita. She reported that poverty levels declined from 21.4% in 2016 to 16.1% in 2025.

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Age: 25-35 years.
Experience: Must have a working experience of 2-3 years in debt collections preferably with microfinance institutions or SACCOs.
Male candidates are encouraged to apply.
Key Skills
Possession of relevant computer skills is a must.
Credit management, or banking.
High integrity to manage delinquent accounts effectively.
Credit control, or lending within a financial institution.

Credit Officers – 3(Three) positions.
Reports to: Branch Manager
Qualifications:
Bachelor's Degree in any in any Business related courses.
Age: 25-30 years
Experience is an added advantage.
Male candidates are encouraged to apply.
Key Skills
Possession of relevant computer skills is a must.
Strong analytical abilities for evaluating creditworthiness.
Detailed knowledge of lending procedures.
Skills to manage client relationship and risk.

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