

Insurance mergers: The making of new giants

Insurance.

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In a span of less than a year, the insurance sector has undergone one of its most dramatic transformations in recent history.

What had long been a fragmented market, characterized by many mid-sized players competing for incremental gains, has rapidly consolidated into a landscape dominated by two merger-generated giants.

At the center of this shift is the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA), whose steady but deliberate push for mergers and capital strengthening is now bearing visible results.

For years, IRA has signaled its intent to build a stronger and more resilient insurance sector through mergers and consolidation.

The policy direction, anchored on higher capital requirements, stricter supervisory frameworks, and improved governance standards, has increasingly made it difficult for smaller, undercapitalized firms to compete independently.

Rather than forcing exits, IRA has nudged companies toward strategic mergers, creating entities capable of underwriting larger risks and expanding market penetration.

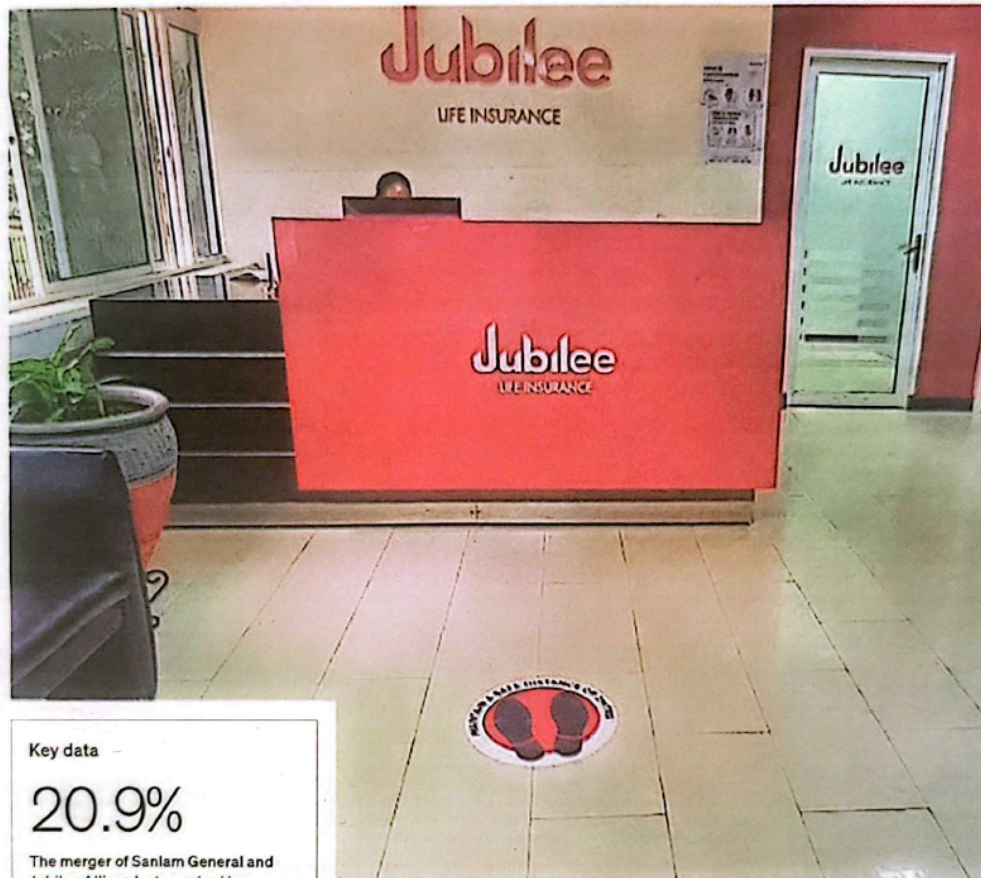
And the push seems to be nudging the right codes – creating two giants in both non-life and life segments.

By the close of 2024, in the non-life segment, Old Mutual stood firmly as the market leader, commanding an 18.9 percent market share with gross written premiums of Shs184.96b.

Sanlam General followed with 11.5 percent (Shs112.6b), while Jubilee Allianz held 9.1 percent (Shs88.4 billion). The gap between the leader and its closest competitors was clear, and the market remained relatively dispersed.

However, the seeds of a major consolidation have produced a new non-life giant.

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Key data

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The merger of Jubilee Life and Health businesses resulted into Jubilee Life, which had by the close of last year, emerged as the new market leader under life insurance, with a market share of 25.9 percent.

The insurance sector is rapidly consolidating, with major mergers reshaping competition and creating new giants in both life and non-life markets. PHOTO / FILE

chuted the insurer at the way to the top with a commanding 20.9 percent market share and gross written premiums of Shs209.46b, overtaking Old Mutual, which had for years held a superior market share, but now holds 20.7 percent and Shs207.17b in premiums.

Of course, the gap is largely negligible, but what were once fragmented mid-tier entities have been fused into a single dominant force, effectively redrawing the competitive map overnight.

In life, the segment has also gone through a major transformation, albeit with a different protagonist.

In 2024, Prudential firmly held the market with a 26.4 percent share and gross written premiums of Shs196.29b. Jubilee Life at 15.5 percent (Shs114.8b) and Jubilee Health at 11 percent (Shs107.1 billion) were a distant second and third.

But by December 2025, a new leader had emerged after the merger of Jubi-

lee Life and Health businesses.

The merger resulted in Jubilee Life, which had, by the close of last year, emerged as the new market leader, with a market share of 25.9 percent and gross written premiums of Shs253.32b.

Prudential, though still strong, has slipped to second place with 24 percent and premiums of Shs234.86b.

The shift reflects not just organic growth but the broader consolidation dynamics encouraged by IRA, where scale, integration, and capital depth are becoming decisive advantages.

"The changes within the industry are a direct result of the new supervisory requirements," notes Badru Bengali, senior officer for life, medical, and pension at Uganda Insurers Association.

"This particular shift is largely driven by the strategic consolidation between Jubilee Health and Jubilee Life, given that Jubilee Health was the leading medical insurance underwriter."

His observation captures the essence of the transformation, where consolidation has not only increased scale but also combined complementary strengths, bringing together Jubilee Health's dominance in medical insurance with Jubilee Life's broader life portfolio. IRA market performance fourth quarter reports for 2024 and 2025 underscore this transition, pointing to a sector that is not only growing in absolute premiums but also concentrating market power among fewer, stronger entities.

The data reveals accelerated premium growth among merged or strategically aligned firms, validating the regulator's thesis that consolidation can unlock efficiency and scale.

Thus, the rise of the two new giants – Sanlam Allianz and Jubilee Life – raises new questions. Will further consolidation follow? Can smaller players survive in a market increasingly defined by scale? And how will IRA balance competitiveness with stability as the sector evolves?

From the look of things, however, the era of fragmentation is giving way to consolidation, and at its forefront stand two newly forged giants, reshaping the future of insurance in the country.