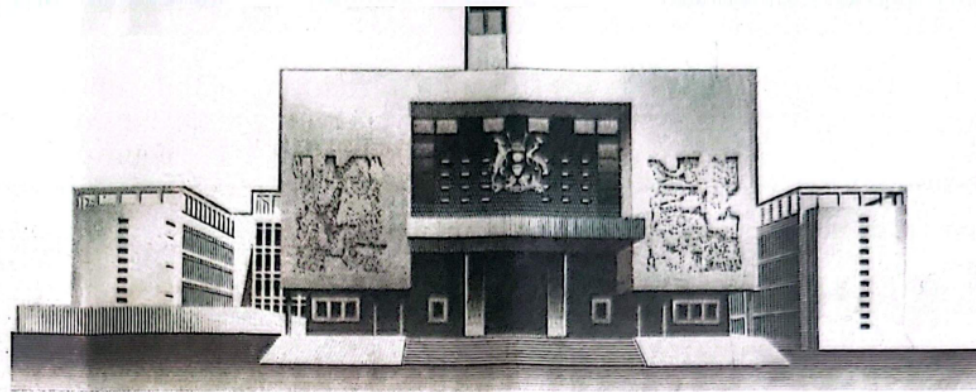




Laws > An abiding criticism is that the 11th Parliament did not push through progressive laws.

What is the legacy of 11th Parliament?

BY ARTHUR WADERO

As the clock ticks ever so fast to May when the 12th Parliament will be fully constituted, the question remains: What is the legacy of the 11th Parliament?

The 556-strong 11th Parliament represents seven political shades. The ruling party has an unmatched 336 lawmakers under its cap. The Independents in the House, most of whom are NRM-leaning, total 74. The National Unity Platform (NUP) is the biggest Opposition party, with 57 legislators. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) with 32 lawmakers, the Democratic Party with nine lawmakers, the Uganda Peoples Congress also with nine lawmakers, as well as the Justice Forum (Jeema) and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) with one apiece.

Stain of corruption

As session breakdown shows that there was a high legislative output from the 11th Parliament. The First Session that played out from 2021 to 2022 saw 23 Bills passed. From 2022 to 2023, when the Sec-

took centre-stage, 24 Bills were passed. The Third Session, 2023 to 2024, brought with it 47 Bills that were duly passed. The Fourth Session, from 2024 to 2025, saw 35 Bills passed.

But do numbers tell only half of the story? Mr Julius Mukunda, the executive director of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CS-BAG), seems to think so.

"The Act of Parliament not providing an opportunity and space to debate the state of corruption in this country is a betrayal to the citizens of Uganda," he said, adding, "It shows that Parliament is also part and parcel in promoting corruption in this country. And one of the ways is that Parliament has promoted budgeting for corruption."

Corruption in Uganda continues to be widespread and entrenched, with the country polling a 2024 score of 26 percent on the Corruption Perceptions Index. A year before, in 2023, the Transparency International index ranked the East African nation 141st out of 180 countries. The ombudsman says as much as Shs9.1 trillion is lost to the vice on an annual basis, an astonishing figure by any measure.

Yet when the country's Gen Z anti-corruption crusaders attempted to march to Parliament to protest the perfect storm of greed, a feeble oversight, and political interference that keeps corruption levels high, they were ruthlessly stopped in their tracks.

That was in July 2024 just when the 11th Parliament was at the backend of its most productive session when as many as 47 Bills were passed. Responding to Parliament of Uganda's May 27, 2024 X post that seemed to take great delight in the fact that "47 Bills were passed", Lawrence Oliver Yasona, the president of the International University of East Africa's Law Society, said thus, in an X post of his own: "Most of the Bills were passed, targeting how to get money from the citizens."

More public outrage

Little wonder, months later, Mr Jonathan Odur, the Shadow Constitutional Affairs minister, mouthed his misgivings. This was during a July 23 sitting presided over by Mr Thomas Tayebwa, the Deputy Speaker.

"There are questions that have been asked before we go outside by virtue of the political offices that we hold. Ugandans want answers, that is why people were matching to get answers because we, the representatives, can't give them answers that they want. We are being accused as Parliament that we are corrupt. I am an MP and I am not corrupt," Mr Odur said.

"In fact, I don't know Luganda but this one hurt me a lot, when I was moving around and I saw people pointing at me calling me *owe kitwira* and I thought it was something nice. Later I was told, it means I am a thief. I am not.

As people who are holding office in trust of the people, can we take an initiative to explain to the people of Uganda the questions they ask from us, even before they take the drastic step of coming to the streets," he added.

One does not need to be a rocket scientist to figure out why the Gen Z anti-corruption crusaders had lawmakers in their crosshairs. A Shs1.7b service award that parliamentary commissioners split among themselves particularly left a bitter taste in the mouth. Mr Mathias Mpuuga (Nyendo/Mukungwe) pocketed Shs500m while his colleagues in the ruling NRM party—Solomon Silwany (Bukooli Central); Esther Afayochan (Zombo Woman MP); and Prossy Akampurira Mbabazi (Rubanda DWR)—each bagged Shs400m. This would later be settled by Justice Douglas Singiza decision in which he ruled that there was no illegality.

A viral online social media campaign and accountability initiative carried out on X under the auspices of Agora Discourse identified many pain points as regards financial (mis)management in the House. The so-called exhibition illuminated misuse of public funds, extravagant spending, and bouts of nepotism in a hugely successful name and shame campaign.

Quality of legislative output

Yet the 11th Parliament proceeded to act as if nothing earth-shattering had come to light. It instead opted to polish its badge, pointing at an unprecedentedly high legislative output. Some of the key legislations that the 11th Parliament says it managed to get under its belt include the Competition Bill, 2023. The legislation was passed on August 31, 2023. It was ratified by President Museveni on

February 2, 2024. The Act applies to anti-competitive practices, anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position, mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures with an adverse effect on competition.

The 11th Parliament also points to the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Bill as a feather in its cap. Passed by the House on August 22, 2023, it was assented to by President Museveni on February 2, 2024. While the legislation criminalises both trafficking and individual possession of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and imposes heavy penalties.

An abiding criticism is that the 11th Parliament did not push through progressive laws. Draconian legislations like the Computer Misuse (Amendment) Bill, 2022 come up for mention. The Anti-Homosexuality Act, enacted in March 2023, also split debate. The legislation proposed, among other things, harsh penalties such as life imprisonment for persons that indulge in the homosexual acts. It also imposed a 20-year term on persons who promoted that same sex act.

So back to the question: What is the legacy of the 11th Parliament? While a final cumulative count for the entire five-year term is not yet finalised as the Fifth Session concludes in May 2026, the Parliament passed more than 127 Bills across four sessions. While this is no mean feat, the quality of the legislative output has come in for a lot of criticism. Legislations like the National Coffee (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (Amendment) Bill, 2025 showed, critics further contend, how the legislative branch of government does the bidding of the Executive, if not the presidency.



Composition. The number of MPs in the 11th Parliament, representing seven political shades - NRM, NUP, UPC, FDC, Jeema, PPP, and DP.