

How Museveni's 1986 Cabinet

The President's first post-war ministers reflected regional balancing and broad-based politics, but offered little room for women in leadership.

BY MONITOR REPORTER

The emancipation of women in Uganda has been a source of pride for the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party. During celebrations to mark International Women's Day on March 8, 2022, President Museveni proudly stated that his party has consistently advocated for women's rights. He highlighted the introduction of affirmative action, which has increased the number of women participating in politics.

"When you look at Parliament, if we were to look for only constituency MPs, the number of women would be smaller than it is now. We would have only 26 women in Parliament out of the 300 MPs or so. Because of our knowledge of society, we said let women compete with men, but we also have a portion of theirs. We said for each district, there should be a seat for women," Mr. Museveni said.

He added: "What you are celebrating now when I appoint some of the women vice president or prime minister, etc., is an outward sign that women can manage."

No female Cabinet ministers

However, a look at the Cabinet of 30 substantive ministers and 10 deputies, named in April 1986, suggests the idea of involving women in politics and management came much later in Mr. Museveni's administration. The number of females at the time was insignificant, with all the Cabinet ministers being men, with the women only featured on the list of deputy ministers, and were only two.

Those were Ms Victoria Ssekitooleko, the deputy minister for Agriculture, and Gertrude Njuba, the deputy minister for Relief and Social Rehabilitation.

While the NRM was given credit for putting together a government of national unity, one that could be seen in the broad-based nature of the Cabinet, which had representatives from the main political parties, namely the Democratic Party (DP), the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC), the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM), the Conservative Party (CP), the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) and the NRM/A itself, it was very much in terms of women's involvement.

Central dominance

The 1986 Cabinet was notably dominated by people from the Central region, with 14 of the 30 ministers. The Eastern region got the second biggest number of positions, with seven out of the 30 Cabinet ministers.

The Western region held 6 of the 30 positions in addition to the President, while the Northern region and West Nile had only two representatives in the Cabinet. However, the Central region's dominance in the Cabinet was broken



Dr Samson Kisekka, Prime Minister



Bidandi Ssali, Minister of Labour



Gen Moses Ali, Minister of Tourism



Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, Minister of Health



Chango Machyo W'Obanda, Minister of Minerals and Water Development



Prof Shem Masaba, Minister for Animal Industry and Fisheries



Dr Crispus Kiyonga, Minister of Cooperatives and Marketing



Ali Kirunda Kivejinja, Minister of Relief and Social Rehabilitation

when it came to appointing deputy ministers, with the largest number of appointees coming from the East, which provided 6 of the 10 deputy ministers.

Ms Njuba was the only deputy minister from the central region among the 10, while appointees from the Western region dominated the group.

Taking stock

A review of the 1986 Cabinet reveals that many have either fallen out with Mr Museveni or have since passed away, while others have retired from politics.

The list of those who fell out with Museveni includes late Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere, Mr Jaberi Bidandi Ssali, Col Dr Kizza Besigye and Seebaana Kizito. All of them went on to challenge Mr Museveni for the presidency.

Dr Ssemogerere, who had served as minister of Internal Affairs, minister of Foreign Affairs, and later deputy prime minister and minister of Public Service in the NRM, resigned on June 13, 1995.

The resignation, which he said had been due to "ideological grounds", came a month before the four-day debate on political pluralism that took place in the Constituent Assembly (CA) in July 1995 to decide the fate of political parties.

Prior to the debate and vote, which culminated in the outlawing of political party activity for as long as the Movement system was in force, proponents of multiparty politics had worked together in the CA. In that spirit, they fielded Dr Ssemogerere as the candidate of the Inter-Party Cooperation Forces (IPCF) in the 1996 General Election.

IPFC brought together the Democratic Party (DP), the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and the National Liberal Party (NLP) of Tiberio Okenyikwa.

Kizza Besigye

Dr Besigye's fallout with Mr Museveni started in 1999 when he authored the paper, 'An Insider's View of How the NRM Lost the Broad Base', for which he was nearly dragged before the General Court Martial for airing his views in the wrong forum.

On October 28, 2000, matters reached a point of no return when he announced he would challenge Mr Museveni for the presidency. He subsequently contested the 2001

MINISTERS FROM CENTRAL REGION

- Dr Samson Babi Mukulu Kisekka, Prime Minister
- Mr Ibrahim Mukibi, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Dr Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere, Minister of Internal Affairs
- Prof Ponsiano Mulema, Minister of Finance
- Evaristo Nyenzi, Minister of Commerce
- Sam Kalega Njuba, Minister for Constitutional Affairs
- Abubakar Kakyama Mayanja, Minister of Information
- Andrew Lutakome Kayira, Minister of Energy
- Jaberi Bidandi Ssali, Minister of Labour
- Mayanja Nkangi, Minister of Education
- David Lwanga, Minister of Environmental Protection
- John Seebaana Kizito, Minister of Agriculture
- David Kibirango, Minister of Public Service and Cabinet Affairs
- Daniel Kigozi, Minister of Works

election on the Reform Agenda ticket. In 2005, 2011, and 2016, he contested for the presidency on the ticket of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party, which was formed after Ugandans voted in a referendum to allow for a return to a multiparty political dispensation.

Dr Besigye has since been arrested and jailed on several occasions and is currently on remand in Luzira Prison pending trial for treason.

Bidandi Ssali

The fallout of former Local Government Minister Jaberi Bidandi Ssali with Mr Museveni commenced with moves to amend Article 105(2), which provided that "A person shall not be elected under this Constitution to hold office as President for more than two terms as prescribed by this article" to allow Mr Museveni to continue contesting if he so wished.

Mr Bidandi was joined by fellow ministers Maria Mulema, Sarah Kyinyi, and Eria Kategaya, and army officers such as Maj Gen Henry Tumukunde and Col Fred Bogere, in opposing the plans.

During a May 2003 meeting of the Movement Parliamentary Caucus, Mr Bidandi asked Mr Museveni why he was bent on amending the constitution, even though he had promised to leave office in 2006.

Mr Museveni then shot back, "Who are you? You are just a mere spoke in the wheel! You can go!"

Mr Bidandi and his colleagues were subsequently fired from the Cabinet during a reshuffle that was announced on May 28, 2005.

Although he stayed in the NRM and was part of Mr Museveni's campaign task force for the 2006 elections, Mr Bidandi later quit to form the People's Progressive Party (PPP), which he led into the 2011 General Election.

Seebaana Kizito

Seebaana Kizito was also among those who challenged Mr Museveni for the job. He contested the 2006 presidential election on the ticket of the opposition Democratic Party (DP).

Some members of that first Cabinet have, at different times, left the NRM only to remain associated with it and with Mr Museveni.

One such person is Mr Amanya Mushega. He is believed to have left as part of the group that protested the decision to scrap presidential term limits. He briefly hobbled with Dr Besigye in the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC).

The former Secretary General of the East African Community has since been appointed to head the Education Policy Review Commission (ESPC). It is not clear whether he has since returned to the NRM fold.

The deceased

The list of members of the 1986 who are dead is quite long. Dr Samson Kisekka, who was the first prime minister before he was appointed on January 22, 1991, and named Mr Museveni's first vice president, died on October 25, 1999, at the University College Hospital in London, Britain.

He had been dropped and replaced by Dr Speciosa Windida Kazibwe as vice president and was instead appointed a Senior Presidential Advisor.

The other deceased former ministers are Ponsiano Mulema, Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere, Robert Kitariko, Sam Njuba, Abubakar Kakyama Mayanja, Evaristo Nyenzi, and Andrew Lutakome Kayira. Kayira was gunned down on March 6, 1987, in the home of BBC stringer, Mr Henry Gombya, in Kampala.

evolved from allies to critics



Gertrude Njuba, Deputy Minister for Relief and Social Rehabilitation



Dr Kizza Besigye, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs



Kahinda Otufire, Deputy Minister of Local Government



Nuwe Amanya Mushega, Deputy Minister of Defence

Also deceased are Joseph Mulega, Chango Machyo W'Obanda, Jehoash Mayanja Nkangi, James Wapakhabulo, Seebaana Kizito, Prof Yoweri Kyesimira, Stanislaus Okurut and Kirunda Kivejinja.

Deceased deputy ministers

Deceased former deputy ministers include Mawumbe Mukhwana, Dr Ronald Bata, Robert Ekinu, John Ntimba, Dr James Batwala and Balaki Kibba Kurya.

Mr Jaberi Bidandi Ssali, Prof Edward Kakonge, Stanley Tumwine, Prof Shem Masaba, Dr Rugunda and Ms Victoria Ssekitooleko have since retired from active politics.

Only three left standing

That means only three members of the 1986 Cabinet remain active in politics. They are Maj Gen Kahinda Otufire, Dr Crispus Kiyonga, and Gen Moses Ali. All of them have won seats to represent their constituencies in the 12th Parliament.

In January 2026, Dr Kiyonga made a political comeback, recapturing the Bukonzo West parliamentary seat after a decade out of Parliament.

Maj Gen Kahinda Otufire recaptured the Ruhinda County parliamentary seat, while Gen Moses Ali also won back the Adjumani West parliamentary seat. Dr Kiyonga, who had earlier been moved from the Ministry of

Cooperatives to the Ministry of Finance, was, in a surprising move, dropped from the Cabinet in 1992. The real reason for being dropped has never been established, but he remained loyal to the NRM.

Gen Otufire, too, has remained loyal to Mr Museveni and the party despite having been forced out of Cabinet on two occasions.

The first time was in November 1988, when he was forced to resign after he had drawn a gun a month earlier during an altercation with late Jennifer Kuteesa. Mr Museveni

accepted the resignation, saying that the NRM would not tolerate indiscipline regardless of who was involved. Gen Otufire bounced back in 1996 when he was named State Minister in the Ministry of Local Government, but was shown the exit in an April 1999 reshuffle. He did not take it lying down.

He protested. "Having worked with the President for the last 27 years, I felt a chord of comradeship had developed between us. I am very unhappy that he announced my sacking in such a

manner. When one is appointed, he is told, and that's how it should be when he is sacked," he was quoted to have said.

In another interview with the state-owned The New Vision newspaper, he talked up his capacity to cause trouble.

"I would like to know why he dropped me. I will ask him what happened because I just do not know what is going on. I have the capacity to cause trouble because I am a soldier," he said.

Mr Museveni, who was presiding over an NRM retreat in Jinja, played down the threat, but later appointed him as Military Advisor on DR Congo before he was returned to Parliament after the 2001 General Election.

He has since been a mainstay in the Cabinet despite the defeat he suffered at the hands of Capt Donato Kabwada during the 2016 parliamentary elections.

Gen Moses Ali's story is different. He is the only one of the three who has ever been to jail.

He was arrested in April 1990 and charged with treason stemming from illegal possession of arms and ammunition.

He was released in 1992. Like Maj Gen Otufire, Gen Ali has remained in the Cabinet even after he lost his seat in Parliament during the 2006 elections.

He reclaimed the seat in 2011 and retained it in all subsequent elections, which makes him one of the longest-serving legislators.



MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Aggrey David Kibenge
PERMANENT SECRETARY



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Background
Uganda is experiencing rapid urbanisation, with waste generation projected to increase by 70% by 2050. Current waste management systems remain fragmented, under-resourced, and poorly coordinated. In Kampala alone, only 40% of waste is collected, with the remainder openly dumped or burned, leading to public health crises, environmental degradation, and climate-related risks such as methane emissions and landfill collapse (e.g., the recent 2023 Kibuli disaster). Despite a growing number of policies, regulations, and institutional mandates, Uganda lacks a unified national framework to coordinate waste management actors who are quite many. Institutional roles and efforts remain disjointed, data systems are siloed, and collaboration between government, private sector, civil society, academia, and informal waste workers is minimal.

Recognising that effective policy implementation requires more than regulation, the Government of Uganda, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has come up with an idea of establishment of a digitally enabled multi-stakeholder collaboration platform under the programme "promoting circular economy and waste management in cities in Uganda". This platform will serve as the central coordination hub by Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), bringing together government ministries, municipalities, private sector operators, regulators, academia, development partners, and informal waste actors. It is anticipated that with the digital revolution and growth in technology, digital collaboration platforms can help enhance collaborative and information sharing.

Crucially, the platform will not duplicate existing data systems; instead, it will integrate with the NEMA SWIMS data platform (which tracks waste flows and generation), thereby providing duplication of effort and public resources. The contractor will develop a system that will bridge the gap between raw waste data (SWIMS) and active stakeholder collaboration, enabling MoLG to build its coordination mandate effectively.

Furthermore, the platform will directly support the implementation of Uganda's draft National Waste Management Policy by creating practical tools for information exchange, innovation sharing, circular economy market insights, and citizen transparency. The contractor will build a secure, role-based digital hub where government local points, private sector operators, waste pickers, academia, and development partners can interact, share updates, and trade recyclable materials. The platform needs to be piloted in seven municipalities (Jinja, Mtaka, Gulu, Arua, Homa, Masaka, Mbarara) and priority in development should be focused on utilising well-efficient open-source technologies to minimise long-term government costs; the contractor's work will deliver a sustainable, government-owned asset.

For full details of the Request for proposal, please visit the link below:
<https://procurement.unep.org/uganda/procurement/2024/05/08/2024-05-08-2024-05-08>
Submission is online in e-procurement (UNEP's tendering platform) please visit the link above.

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