

Easy haul. Garden City auctions Uchumi assets



Shoppers at Uchumi Supermarkets, at Garden City Mall in Kampala use a half-closed door to access the supermarket. The Uchumi chain is under liquidation. However, the management of Golf Course Holdings, the landlords of the shopping mall, have since started selling off the assets to recover rent arrears. PHOTO BY RACHEL MABALA

Judiciary readies for election petitions

BY ANTHONY WESAKA
awesaka@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. The Judiciary has begun preparations to effectively adjudicate election petitions that may arise after the February 18 polls.

The training for judicial officers from the rank of Chief Magistrate to Justices of the Supreme Court is being conducted at the Judicial Studies Institute in Nakawa, Kampala.

The training opened yesterday with more than 40 Chief Magistrates in session. The next lot to be trained this week will be judges of the High Court, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

Principal Judge Yorokamu Bamwine while opening the training urged them to act with impartiality on election-related illegalities.

Justice Bamwine, in justifying the importance of the training exercise, explained that many of the Chief Magistrates were appointed after the 2011 elections, meaning that such officers have not had experience in dealing with election petitions.

"Drawing from the 2006 and 2011 experiences, one gets the impression that many Ugandans are not aware of what it means to have fair elections. Some voters and even the candidates take it as fun, others as time to earn quick money and others as a matter of life and death. They

feel they must win at all costs and in the end, losing candidates oppose the results and come to courts for remedies," Justice Bamwine said.

He added: "We therefore must be ready to act firmly, fairly and impartially on all acts of illegalities in the electoral process."

Chief magistrates usually conduct a recount of votes especially in narrowly contested electoral results that are in a range of about 30 votes.

Objectives

The purpose of training the chief magistrates is to widen their knowledge on the law relating to elections and promote respect for the law.

A firm judicial process is expected to prevent future electoral offences and malpractices, especially through appraising the judicial officers on the legal test required in overturning an election result.

Justice Bamwine cautioned the chief magistrates against issuing one-sided orders legally referred to as ex-parte while handling election petitions.

According to electoral laws, election appeals stop at Court of Appeal unlike before when the appeals would be pursued until the Supreme Court. The electoral laws also demand that only presidential election petitions be contested before the Supreme Court.

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PRINCIPAL JUDGE

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