

THE PASSED BILL WAS AMENDED TO REMOVE CONTENTIOUS PROVISIONS

MUSEVENI COMMENDS NRM MPS FOR PASSING SOVEREIGNTY BILL

By Vision Reporter

President Yoweri Museveni has congratulated the National Resistance Movement (NRM) legislators for passing the Protection of Sovereignty Bill, 2026.

To him, the legislation means: 'Let us do our things by ourselves just as you do your own things without anybody interfering with you'.

"How shameful and disgusting to see people arguing otherwise! Foreigners interfering in our internal issues, is very dangerous," the President said in a statement released by his press team yesterday morning.

NRM HARMONISED POSITION

On Tuesday, the NRM Parliamentary Caucus resolved to support the harmonised position of government regarding the Bill in Parliament. This was during a meeting at the Office of the President in Kampala.

Later the same day, after a lengthy plenary debate, a filled Parliament chaired by Speaker Anita Among passed the Bill, adopting amendments that significantly narrowed its scope, removed contentious provisions and introduced safeguards aimed at aligning the law with the Constitution and existing regulatory frameworks.

REFORMS

The legislation had drawn a lot of public debate over divisive clauses in its original form.

Nyabushozi county MP Wilson Kajwengye, who chairs Parliament's Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs presented the majority report.

He said more than 200 stakeholders across government institutions, civil society, the private sector, academia and the diaspora were consulted during the critical studying of the Bill.

One key outcome of the amendments is the restriction of the law strictly to agents of foreigners, with earlier provisions that applied to any person deleted.

MPs overhauled key definitions narrowing the meaning of "foreigner" and excluding Ugandan citizens living abroad.

REVISED DETAILS

The definition of an "agent of a foreigner" was revised to cover only those who formally and knowingly act on behalf of foreign interests to influence policy, elections or national security. Parliament also deleted the definition of "person" and introduced clearer terms, including "political activities", to enhance legal precision.

MPs also removed provisions that allowed the minister to declare any person a foreigner and replacing broad discretionary authority with more structured, rules-based mechanisms.

The amended law also introduces wide-ranging exemptions to protect key sectors.

Financial institutions, academic and research bodies, health

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE NOTED

In his congratulatory statement, President Museveni gave an example of "dangerous" foreign interference with Ugandan issues.

"It is how the Israelis, led by one Barak and the British supported Idi Amin's coup in 1971 because Obote was vocal in opposing their policy on Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Indeed, Edward Heath, the British prime minister, recognised Amin after only 10 days," he said.

"Many of us had problems with Obote ever since 1962. However, by this time we were beginning to work together, especially for the realisation of the East African Federation and Co-operation and for the liberation of the whole of Africa- Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Sao Tome, Guinea-Bissau, etc."

"Bazilio Batarigaya, the former DP strongman, was now with Obote. Indeed, the economy of Uganda in 1969 grew by 11%. Now these foreigners brought in Idi Amin, who had no idea about all these issues. We had to spend eight years and a lot of deaths to solve the problem created for us by others. Therefore, as you discuss these issues, remember some of these tragedies. Congratulations, the NRM MPs."

facilities and individuals receiving funds for legitimate commercial or domestic purposes are excluded. Lawful financial flows, such as diaspora remittances, foreign direct investment, trade and humanitarian assistance are explicitly protected.

CRIMINAL PROVISIONS

MPs revised criminal provisions, introducing clearer definitions of offences and requiring proof of intent, while reducing penalties from 20 years' imprisonment to a maximum of 10

years. Additionally, a number of controversial provisions were removed, including mandatory mental and physical health examinations for applicants and inspection powers without court orders.

A section of lawmakers tabled dissenting reports opposing the Bill. For instance, Ndurwa East legislator Wilfred Niwagaba said the Bill criminalises free speech while his Kilak South counterpart Gilbert Olanya argued that the legislation poses risks to civil liberties, the economy and Uganda's global standing.

President Museveni