

Winning without legitimacy is no victory at all, says Kofi Annan

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KAMPALA. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan yesterday joined many other international stakeholders to appeal for peaceful elections today, with hopes of an "election with integrity."

The Ghanaian diplomat who served as the seventh secretary general of the United Nations, said an election with integrity will bestow legitimacy upon the winner and secures stability for the country.

"Legitimacy is the crucial currency of government in our democratic age. Only elections that are transparent and fair will be regarded as legitimate, both by the people of Uganda and by the international community," he said in a statement issued by the Kofi Annan Foundation, a forum which mobilises political will to overcome threats to peace, development and human rights.

Mr Annan, who last year was at the centre of talks between four-time presidential candidate Kizza Besigye and former premier Amama

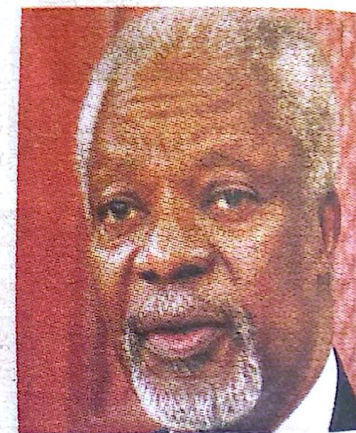
Mbabazi under The Democratic Alliance Forum (TDA) coalition, added: "I urge the government and the electoral authorities of Uganda to ensure a level playing field for all candidates, including the right to campaign free of intimidation."

"I encourage the candidates and their supporters to exercise restraint in their deeds and in their rhetoric so as to ensure credible and peaceful elections, which the people of Uganda demand and deserve," he said.

Ugandans will today elect the next president and 403 members of parlia-

ment. The presidential election campaigns, which started last year in November, were concluded on Tuesday with the main candidates in the race, incumbent President Museveni, Dr Besigye and Mr Mbabazi campaigning around Kampala.

Last October, Mr Annan met with the two principal Opposition heads in London to chart a way forward on a transitional government of two years headed by the President and with an Executive Prime Minister after agreeing on a simple candidate but the arrangement later suffered a stillbirth.



Mr Kofi Annan