

Govt to stock fuel reserves ahead of Kenyan polls

BY JOHN MASABA

GOVERNMENT has moved to stock fuel reserves as neighbouring Kenya goes to the polls in case of a crisis.

A statement from the energy ministry said Uganda will stock up to 10 days of fuel as a precautionary measure in case coming elections are not smooth.

General elections are scheduled for August 8 in a hotly contested election where incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition candidate Raila Odinga are front runners.

"... The stocks will be available to mitigate any supply disruption. In addition, the Jinja Storage Tanks will be stocked with fuel to cover an extra six days by July 31. The total stocks for 16 days would be sufficient to avail room for mobilisation of other stocks should there be a disruption," said a statement released by the ministry yesterday.

In 2007/2008, Kenya was thrown into a crisis after violence erupted there when former president Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the presidential election held on December 27, 2007. Supporters of Kibaki's opponent, Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement, alleged electoral manipulation.

■ SCORES KILLED

About 1,400 people were killed while about 600,000 were displaced. Following that violent poll, many countries, including Uganda, which rely on Kenyan routes for their imports, were affected after business in the country came to a halt.

Being land locked, Uganda relies heavily on the Kenya port of Mombasa for most of its imports such as fuel. Currently, Uganda consumes an average of 162 million litres of petrol, diesel, kerosene and Jet-A1 per month. The daily average stands at 5.4 million litres of fuel, with 92% imported through Mombasa Port, while the reminder goes through the Dar es Salaam port.

"The strategies to keep the country well supplied, therefore, hinge on the effectiveness of the import routes and the in-country storage facilities," the statement said.

The ministry said should the situation go out of hand, the country is prepared to look to other supply routes, with Dar es Salaam port touted as the best alternative.

The ministry, however, warned that resultant pump prices would be slightly higher in such a scenario given that the unit cost of importing through the Dar es Salaam route is relatively higher than Mombasa.

Currently, average prices per litre in Uganda stand at sh3,000 for diesel, sh3,450 for petrol and sh2,600 for kerosene.



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