

June 3 public holiday will remain – govt

This comes after President Museveni postponed the annual pilgrimage and celebrations at Namugongo due to the Ebola outbreak.

BY KARIM MUYOBO

The government has clarified that June 3 will remain a public holiday despite the postponement of this year's Uganda Martyrs Day celebrations over Ebola concerns.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Executive Director of the Uganda Media Centre, Mr Allan Kasujja, said all institutions, schools, and both public and private offices will remain closed in observance of the national holiday.

"Martyrs Day, observed on June 3, 2026, remains a public holiday," Mr Kasujja said.

The clarification follows President Museveni's announcement on Sunday postponing the annual pilgrimage and celebrations at Namugongo Martyrs Shrine

due to the ongoing Ebola outbreak linked to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

According to the President, the decision was reached after consultations with the National Epidemic Response Task Force and religious leaders.

The annual celebrations, which attract millions of pilgrims from Uganda and neighbouring countries, have been postponed indefinitely, with a new date yet to be announced.

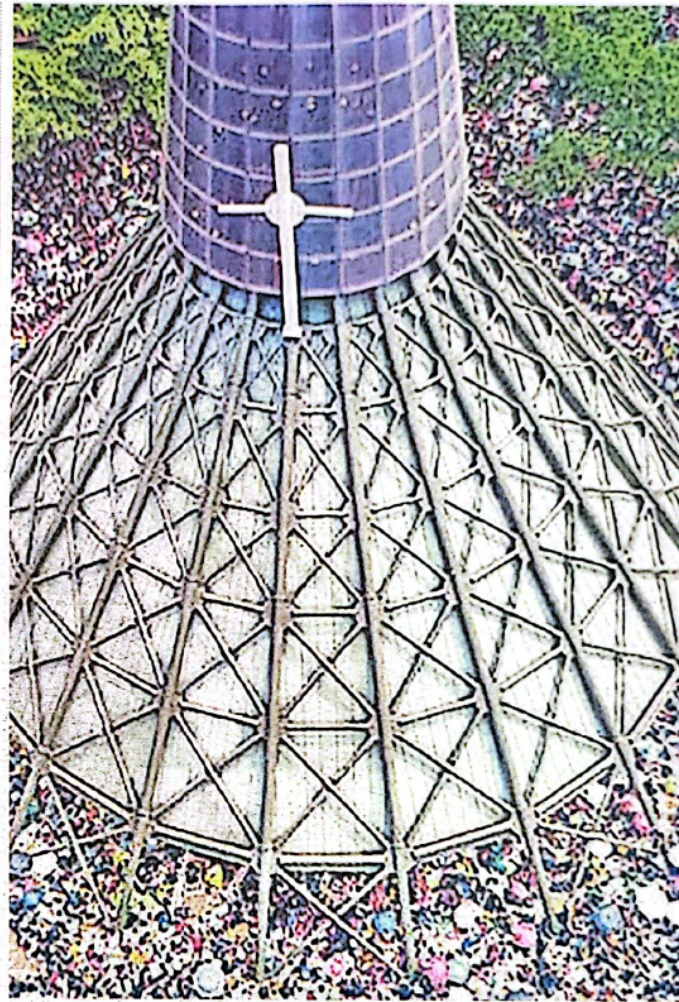
"This decision was made because Uganda receives thousands of pilgrims annually from eastern Congo, which is currently experiencing an Ebola outbreak," Mr Museveni said in a statement.

"To safeguard everyone's lives, it is essential that this event be postponed," he added.

The President urged pilgrims who had already started travelling to Namugongo to return home and continue observing preventive health measures.

"I encourage those who have begun their journey to return home, continue observing the precautionary measures, and report anyone who is sick," he said, adding that "protection of life must come first."

This is not the first time the annual re-



Celebrations at Uganda Martyrs shrine Namugongo. PHOTO/FILE

WHAT CHURCH SAYS

In a press statement issued on yesterday, the Catholic bishops said although the national gathering at Namugongo scheduled for June 3 has been postponed, dioceses and parishes should commemorate the day under the guidance of diocesan bishops and government authorities.

ligious commemoration has been disrupted by a public health emergency.

In 2020 and 2021, the celebrations were either held virtually or restricted to limited virtual gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The latest development follows the declaration by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of the current Bundibugyo strain Ebola outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

By May 17, 2026, authorities in the DRC had reported more than 240 suspected cases and at least 80 deaths, mainly in Ituri Province.

Uganda has also confirmed Ebola cases in Kampala involving travellers from the DRC, including one fatality reported on May 14.

Martyrs Day is one of Uganda's largest religious events, attracting Catholic, Anglican, and other Christian faithful from across Africa to commemorate the Uganda Martyrs killed for their faith in the 19th century.

Pilgrims usually travel from countries including the DRC, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Sudan to attend the annual celebrations at Namugongo.

