

BUGANDA GAINS MORE MEMBERS IN CABINET

By John Masaba

An analysis of the latest Cabinet appointments shows that the central region (Buganda) has increased its representation in the Government, even as other regions recorded mixed gains and losses.

According to the figures, Buganda now has 21 ministers, up from 14 in the previous Cabinet, marking a significant increase in its share of executive appointments.

While Buganda registered gains, the eastern region saw a decline in representation, dropping from 23 ministers to 17. Despite the changes, the region retained a strong presence in the Cabinet.

The analysis covers eight regional blocs, including Buganda, Karamoja, West Nile, Bunyoro, Toro-Rwenzori, Ankole-Kigezi, West Nile and eastern region.

West Nile maintained its position with seven ministers, unchanged from the previous Cabinet, even after the exit of long-serving figures such as Gen. Moses Ali, Evelyn Anite (Investment) and Obiga Kania (internal affairs).

Similarly, both the northern and Karamoja regions retained their previous numbers, with eight ministers each, according to the analysis.

In the Toro-Rwenzori bloc – comprising districts such as Kabarole, Kamwenge, Kyenjojo, Bunyangabu, Ntoroko, Kasese, and Bundibugyo – the number of ministers remained stagnant at eight.

Bunyoro, which includes Hoima district, Hoima city, Buliisa, Kikuube, Kagadi, Kibaale, Kiryandongo, and Masindi, also recorded a decline in some categories, but later gained an additional minister, bringing its total from four to five.

New entrants from the region include Eng. Jonard Asiimwe, who was appointed minister in charge of science, technology and innovation.

For the Ankole-Kigezi bloc, representation increased from 10 to 13 ministers. The southwestern region – comprising districts such as Bushenyi, Mbarara, Rukungiri, Ntungamo, Kanungu, Kabale, Kiruhura, Kisoro, Mitooma, and Rubirizi – remains one of the key contributors to Cabinet composition.

According to the list released by President Yoweri Museveni on Tuesday, the Cabinet will have over 80 ministers.



Mercy Faith Lukisa, state minister for children and youth affairs



Adonia Ayebare, minister for foreign affairs



Justine Ndebesa, state minister for local government



Tom Alero Aza, state minister for trade, industry and co-operatives



Lillian Aber, state minister for relief and disaster preparedness



Simon Mulongo, state minister for employment and industrial affairs

BUGANDA'S GAINS EXPLAINED

Veteran journalist John Kakande attributed Buganda's increased representation in the newly announced Cabinet to the improved performance of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) in the region during the recent elections.

"My guess is that Buganda was given more ministers than the other time because more NRM MPs were elected in Buganda this time round," Kakande said.

However, he cautioned that an increase in the number of ministers does not automatically translate into greater political influence or improved service delivery for a region.

"You notice that eastern Uganda has effectively taken the Speaker and the Vice-President – the second and third in the hierarchy," he said.

According to Kakande, Buganda's expanded Cabinet representation may, therefore, reflect a political balancing strategy, especially after the region missed out on some of the highest offices in government.

"Probably it is some kind of consolation. You didn't get the Vice-President, you didn't get the Prime Minister, so let me give you more ministers so you don't complain," he said.

He urged observers to examine the weight and influence of the specific ministries allocated to different regions.

"One needs to look at what kind of ministries they have been given and the responsibilities the people are taking over," he said, pointing out that portfolios, such as finance remain among the most powerful in government.

Kakande further argued that ministerial appointments do not necessarily translate into direct control over resources for home districts.

He cited several areas represented by senior ministers that continue to face poor infrastructure and weak service delivery, despite their leaders holding high office.

Kakande also suggested that Cabinet appointments are shaped by a combination of factors, including political loyalty, regional balancing, religious considerations and recommendations from influential figures.

"There are people the President wants for some reason – people who have been supportive politically," he said.

Kakande added that some appointments may also be intended to address concerns from particular communities, especially in areas facing persistent service delivery challenges.

He argued that influential religious and political actors sometimes recommend individuals for Cabinet positions as a way of strengthening ties with government and fostering a sense of inclusion.

Women occupy 30 of the 51 state ministerial slots. There are 32 Cabinet-level positions and 51 for state ministers.

When asked for his

interpretation of the President's considerations in the latest Cabinet appointments, Simon Mulongo, one of the newly appointed ministers, said the

Head of State appeared to have taken a more cautious approach in selecting his team.

"I think the President has tried to be more cautious with

the selection," Mulongo said.

He added that the appointments appear to be anchored on an agenda to address persistent challenges of corruption and weak service delivery, which have remained key concerns at the start of the new term.

During the inaugural sitting of the 12th Parliament at Kololo Independence Grounds on May 25, 2026, Museveni issued a stern warning to Cabinet ministers, saying he would dismiss any official who fails to drive economic transformation in their respective regions.

The President expressed frustration over persistent poverty levels despite substantial government funding, stating that he was "in a very bad mood" over the slow implementation of wealth-creation programmes.

"He wants to walk the talk of his address during the swearing-in at Kololo and subsequent appearances where he stated his agenda for the new term," he said.

Mulongo said the President appears to be focused on consolidating his legacy through more deliberate implementation of government programmes.

"I think he is trying to consolidate his legacy; that means building sustainable impact. That means ensuring that what is delivered is not undermined by corruption tendencies," he said.

He further noted that the President's recent emphasis on a "no sleep" working culture suggests an intention to push ministers and Parliament toward more hands-on implementation.

POWER BALANCE

Prof. Mwambutsya Ndebesa, a lecturer of history at Makerere University, said political appointments in Uganda should not be assessed purely through "arithmetical numbers," but rather through what he described as an "algebraic arrangement" that takes into account the strategic value of ministries.

"I think mainly those are his considerations – regional balance and political repair," Ndebesa said.

Ndebesa cautioned against placing emphasis solely on the number of ministers appointed from each region.

"The issue is not the numbers which matter. What matters is the positions that somebody from that place holds," he said.

According to him, ministries that control major public

resources and government expenditure carry significantly more influence than what he termed "peripheral portfolios."

"You could have five ministers for one region, having no minister that allocates resources and you find another region has a minister that allocates resources," he said.

He cited key sectors such as finance, education, transport, and health as examples of portfolios with substantial influence due to their control over national budgets and development programmes.

Ndebesa argued that West Nile may, in fact, have experienced a decline in real influence despite maintaining representation in government, as it lacks a substantive Cabinet minister.

"All of them are ministers of state," he said of leaders from the sub-region. "They are missing a Cabinet minister who is very central in allocation of resources and value."

He further observed that many of the most influential ministries appear concentrated in western Uganda and Buganda.

"That might enhance the traditional north-south divide," he said.

Ndebesa also linked Cabinet appointments to what he described as Uganda's "politics of patronage," where communities often expect tangible benefits when one of their own holds a powerful office.

"In the politics of patronage, client-patronage relations, people have a point referring to regional balance, ethnic balance and religious balance," he said.

"Because when somebody gets a ministry that allocates resources, some of his people might benefit."

The academic noted that debates around representation are likely to continue, with various religious and regional groups expected to raise concerns about their share in government.

However, he insisted that influence in the Cabinet cannot be measured purely in numerical terms.

"We need to go from arithmetic to algebra," he said. "You may find that 2A is greater than 4B, depending on the value attached to A and B."

Ndebesa emphasised that the real measure of regional influence lies in the type of ministries held and their roles in decision-making and resource allocation.