

Give Museveni more time – NRM bosses

By Henry Sekanjako

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) leaders at the district level, from different sub-regions across the country have resolved to have President Yoweri Museveni, the national chairman of the party, rule until he is 99 years old.

According to the leaders, the country needs stable leadership under the guidance of Museveni, to accomplish projects like the oil refinery and the standard gauge railway and the construction of power dams for poverty eradication and the economic development of Uganda.

"If Queen Elizabeth of England is 94 years and still has a sound mind and is still consulted, how about Museveni? Museveni can go up to 99 years and a new leader takes it up from there," Captain Yahaya Buga, an NRM National Executive Committee (NEC) member from Arua district, said.

Meeting at the office of the national chairman of the party in Kampala on Thursday last week, the leaders from Buganda, Busoga, Bukedi, Bugisu, Sebei, Teso, Karamoja, Lango, West Nile, Acholi and Bunyoro, among others, resolved to step up their activism in the interest of the party agenda and plan to win the 2021 elections.

"We need more time in office under the leadership of Museveni. There are many big projects at infant stage, which need to be brought to completion," Milly Babirye Babalanda, the senior presidential political advisor and personal



Babalanda (centre, wearing a yellow dress) with NRM district leaders at a meeting to assess achievements in the implementation of the NRM manifesto last week. Photo by Martin Kitubi

assistant to the President, said.

The resolution of the NRM leaders comes at a time when Parliament is scrutinising the Constitution Amendment Bill 2017, to lift the presidential age limit, currently capped at 75 years.

Addressing members of the parliamentary committee on legal and parliamentary affairs, which is scrutinising the Bill, at state House Entebbe on Tuesday, Museveni opposed the age limit, saying the presence of age limits for any elective

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office goes against Article 1 of the 1995 Constitution, the bedrock of that supreme law, which says "Power

belongs to the people".

Museveni, who is 73 years, would not be eligible to seek re-election in the next general election of 2021, as he would have hit the presidential age limit.

Babalanda, who chaired the meeting for NRM district leaders, noted that her office had taken action so as to give confidence to the party membership and the country at large in the strength of the party and to identify problem areas.

At the meeting, the leaders

resolved to ascertain the status of implementation of the party's manifesto in their respective areas. This would be an audit of the one-and-a-half years since the swearing-in of the President, in preparation for a general manifesto assessment programme.

During their deliberations, the members concurred that a lot has been achieved and that they should go out and make it known widely.

Haji Haruna Kibirige from Mityana challenged fellow leaders to work for the party, regardless of their status, adding: "I am ready to love Museveni till death".

The leaders praised Museveni and the NRM party for instilling security in the country, especially in areas like Karamoja.

"I pray that Museveni remains in power, until he is 99 years old. NRM is the strongest party in Africa. It should strategise to win the 2021 elections," Tokori Lotem, the NRM chairperson of Amudat district, said.

Nester Larry from Tooro decried the habit of Opposition setting the agenda for the NRM, yet they were the majority.

"Several NRM MPs supported independents in the last elections and the whole of Amudat is now in the hands of independents and NRM members are being sidelined in government projects," Simon Okwee from Karamoja said.

NRM's Central Executive Committee (CEC) co-ordinator for Kampala, Godfrey Nyakana, decried the intrigue in the party and called for better interpersonal relations.