

Mbale, Mukono voters shun polls

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MBALE/MUKONO. The Local Councils elections in Bugisu sub-region drew a low voter turnout during the early hours of the morning. Polling stations visited by *Daily Monitor* had recorded few voters as compared with presidential and parliamentary elections.

Mr Ahmed Babu, a polling agent of one of the candidates at Link Road polling station in Mbale District, told *Daily Monitor* that although voting at the station started on time, few voters turned up.

"I believe the turnout will be pathetic because this is visible from the start," Mr Babu said in the morning.

At Busamaga polling station in Mbale Town, the polling assistants also complained of low voter turnout. At Bugema Barracks polling station, voters said they were finding it hard to vote candidates they did not know.

"We turned up massively to vote in presidential elections because at least we knew them but these local leaders, we do not know them," Ms Sandra Angayika, a voter, said.

Ms Angayika explained that some of the voters were frustrated by the irregularities in the presidential elections. She also claimed officials in the barracks had questioned soldiers and their wives after they found out that Dr Kizza Besigye had obtained 26 votes at the polling station where they did not expect him to get any. The claim could not be independently verified.

Mukono

In Mukono District in the central region, the elections suffered a similar fate of poor voter turnout.

Voting materials were delivered in time at most polling stations, but polling officials remained idle for hours as the first voters arrived in small numbers later on.

At Lwanyonyi, Mukono Boarding, Mulago, Butebe, Kikooza, Mt Lebanon and Town Academy polling stations, all was set by 7.30am, but no single voter had turned up.

Several voters were heard complaining of voter fatigue, while others said they could not go to vote because they were given a raw deal in the presidential elections.

"We close our businesses to vote but some of the candidates who win at most of the polling stations cannot be announced winners. It really discourages us from appearing at polling stations," Mr Moses Kaweesi, a businessman, said.

In Lwanyonyi village, Nama Sub-county, some voters who were still at their homes said they would only go to vote upon receiving free transport to the polling stations.

"We cannot walk this long distance to Lwanyonyi Primary School and stand in sunshine as if we are going to be given food. The presidential candidate I voted for did not go through apart from only the MP for Mukono North," Ms Ruth Nantume, a voter, said.

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