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Pomp as MPs take oath, outline their priorities



Emmanuel Ilukol, the MP for Bokora County in Napak District celebrates after swearing in. PHOTOS/IBRAHIM KAVUMA

Excitement, colourful fashion and celebration marked the first day of the swearing-in ceremony for members of the 12th Parliament in Kampala yesterday, as newly elected legislators officially began their five-year term.

More than 500 MPs are expected to take oath over the next three days at the Parliament of Uganda. On the opening day, 184 legislators took the Oath of Allegiance and Oath of Member of Parliament.

Security remained tight throughout the day around Parliament and nearby access roads, including Parliamentary Avenue, Dewinton Road and areas near City Hall. Access was restricted to MPs-elect, invited guests, media and authorised personnel.

The first batch of legislators included both first-time MPs and seasoned politicians, many arriving with relatives, spouses and supporters hours before the ceremony began. Among the notable figures sworn in were former Speaker of the 11th Parliament Anita Annet Among, former Second Deputy Prime Minister Gen Moses Ali and former First Deputy Prime Minister Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga.

Legislators arrived in colourful gome-sis, tailored suits, kanzus and other traditional attire, with many outfits reflecting party colours and cultural identity. Outside Parliament, supporters travelling in buses gathered at the gates cheering and waving at their leaders as they arrived.

Not visible groups were affiliated with the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), while others belonged to the People's Front for Freedom (PFF), National Unity Platform (NUP), independents and other political groups.

Parliamentary procedures, however, limited each legislator to only three escorts into the venue, leaving many sup-

porters outside the grounds throughout the exercise.

Inside Parliament, camera flashes and photo sessions dominated the corridors and waiting areas as legislators paused for selfies and group photographs before taking the oath. National flags lined the entrance from the gate to the tent prepared for MPs and their guests facing the swearing-in podium situated on the Parliament stairs.

The Clerk to Parliament administered the oath in sessions running from morning until evening. After taking oath, legislators registered and received copies of the Constitution and Rules of Procedure ahead of the start of parliamentary business.

Outside the venue, dancing groups and entertainers accompanying some legislators broke into celebration shortly after their candidates exited the ceremony. Music and chants continued as supporters boarded buses and vehicles to leave the area. Others carrying flow-

THE NUMBERS

The swearing-in exercise for members of the 12th Parliament will continue until May 15. Of the 529 MPs expected to take oath, 353 are directly elected constituency MPs, 146 are District Woman Representatives, while 30 represent special interest groups, including the youth, elders, workers, persons with disabilities and the Uganda People's Defence Forces.

ers and bouquets congratulated legislators, while photographers around Parliament recorded brisk business throughout the day.

The priorities

Several legislators described the occasion as emotional and historic, say-

ing they looked forward to representing their constituents in the 12th Parliament.

Vice-President and Katakwi District Woman MP Jessica Alupo Epel said her focus in the new term would be improving service delivery, particularly in healthcare.

"We want to strengthen healthcare services and improve the livelihoods of our people. The trust Ugandans have placed in us must translate into better services," she said shortly after taking oath.

Rukiga County MP Patrick Katabazi Kiconco said his priority would be improving services in the young district.

"Rukiga still faces major challenges in health, education and infrastructure. Some sub-counties still do not have health centres, and we want to ensure government services reach every parish," he said.

Emmanuel Ilukol Gult, the MP for Bokora County in Napak District, said

he was committed to fulfilling campaign pledges aimed at improving household incomes and agricultural productivity.

Mawogola South MP Dez Oswald Byuma said his focus would be reconciling divisions that emerged during the election period.

"The constituency experienced political tensions during the campaigns, but now the election is over. My role is to unite the people and focus on development," he said.

The fashion statements

Away from politics, fashion also took centre stage as legislators made colourful red-carpet entrances.

Former Speaker Anita Annet Among wore a crisp white self-portrait two-piece outfit with a round neckline, accessorised with a structured handbag, an emerald green brooch and a fascinator. Clearly, this outfit could have done just fine without the fascinator, as the rest of the accessories were already doing an excellent job of elevating the ensemble.

Kitgum Woman Representative Lillian Aber appeared in an aubergine-coloured metallic dress paired with a nude clutch, matching fascinator and silver heels. The outfit featured peplum and bow detailing that added a youthful touch. We especially loved the colour coordination in this outfit, and she wore it effortlessly.

Anne Adeke Ebaju, the Soroti District MP, opted for a blue dress detailed with kente fabric and accented with silver accents, including earrings, a metallic clutch and matching shoes. The look was polished, elegant and perfectly balanced.

Lira City Woman MP Jane Ruth Aceng delivered another all-white look in a matching set featuring a Tang suit-inspired jacket with a mandarin collar and frog-button detailing associated with traditional Chinese tailoring. She paired it perfectly with black pointed heels and a midi-length skirt.

Linda Agnes Auma, the Woman MP for Lira District, also wore white, choosing a dress with a dramatic train and structured shoulder detailing. A printed over-the-shoulder feature added contrast and character to the outfit.

Overall, the opening day of the swearing-in ceremony combined politics, celebration and fashion as legislators formally began the work of the 12th Parliament.



Parisa County Ibrahim Aisu MP with his family at Parliament Avenue after the ceremony.



Former Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago and Gulu City Woman MP Betty Aol Ochan celebrate at PFF's party headquarters in Katonga, Kampala after the swearing-in ceremony.



Supporters of Emmanuel Ilukol, the MP for Bokora County in Napak District smartly donned in their tradition wear.