

EC wants MPs to expedite electoral amendments

By Martin Kitubi

The Electoral Commission (EC) has called for urgent amendments in the election guidelines for proper management of the 2021 general election.

According to Steven Tashobya, a commissioner at the EC, adoption of new amendments early, enables them educate the electorate on time, other than have amendments during or toward election period.

He said one of the challenges to the EC, has been release of new guidelines toward the elections and yet there was enough time to prepare the masses.

"It is important for electoral laws to come on time. Therefore, MPs and the Executive play their roles, other than blaming the EC during elections," Tashobya said.

He made the remarks during the Citizen's Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) membership platform meeting at Democracy House in Nsambya, a Kampala suburb.

He also revealed that EC is embarking on the development of a strategic roadmap for the 2021 elections and updating of the voters register.

"If there are any amendments, they should be done now, it will enable us educate Ugandans and also for proper implementation," he explained.

The proposal was supported by Godber Tumushabe, an associate director at Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies, an independent policy think tank.



Tashobya

"All recommendations were deemed indispensable to safeguard the electoral and political process from manipulation in the country." Tumushabe

Tumushabe accused Parliament of failing to address issues of electoral reforms and only talk about them towards elections.

"Amendments should be done now so as to avoid the blame game towards and during election period," he said.

In the 2017 post-election forum, CCEDU had several recommendations to be addressed by EC, including independence of EC, integrity of the electoral process and role of security agencies in the electoral process.

Others included addressing the monetisation of politics and code of conduct for political parties during and after elections.

"All these recommendations were deemed indispensable to safeguard the electoral and political process from the susceptibility of manipulation in the country," he said.

Crispin Kaheru, the CCEDU co-ordinator, said with the consideration and enactment of the above proposals, it will provide a building block to the reversal of the current widespread citizen apathy in elections.

He added that it will also reverse suspicion and general loss of confidence in elected leaders and electoral process.

"The Supreme Court in its ruling on the 2016 presidential election petition alluded to the recommendations made by the civil society asking the Government to consider electoral reforms, in order to guarantee free, fair and credible elections," Kaheru said.

He also challenged the Executive and the Legislature to heed to calls by the Supreme Court and Ugandans to consider electoral reforms that have been on table for long.