



Friday September 5, 2025

## **H.E THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON THE NRM'S TIME-TESTED STRATEGY OF PRINCIPLED UNITY**

Fellow Ugandans and, especially the Bazzukulu.

Greetings.

Further to my missive of the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 2025, when I shared with you the ideological and strategic viewpoints about the issue of the old and new members of a Political Party, I would now like to give historical examples.

By 1962–Independence time, Ugandans had been politically fragmented into the 3 sectarian groups. These were: DP for the Catholics; UPC (Protestants and some moslems); Kabaka Yekka (Buganda Protestants and some moslems). As a consequence of fragmenting our People, none of these opportunistic groups could get majority in the Country.

UPC got 37 MPs with quite a bit of cheating; DP 24; and KY 21. To have majority MPs, you needed 42 because all the MPs were 82. That is how the UPC had to form the unprincipled alliance with KY. KY hated Kiwanuka because he had warned them about the dangers of Federo they were clamouring for. Within two years, the

unprincipled alliance had collapsed, and we entered into the disastrous conflicts of 1966 (Obote-Muteesa) and 1971 (Obote-Amin).

By 1979 when we defeated Idi Amin, 500,000 Ugandans had been killed extrajudicially and the economy had collapsed so much that People had no soap, no salt, no clothes, no paraffin, etc.

The population had learnt the hard way on account of the mistakes of their leaders. Now the main task was not to allow Obote to come back on account of his mistakes.

All the former Kabaka Yekka and the Nadiope-Ibingyira wing of UPC, now rallied around DP. That is how Professor Lule had joined DP but was stopped from coming to attend the DP conference as a consequence of collusion between DP and UPC.

Unfortunately, their consensus was for a short time. On account of not listening to FRONASA, their victory was robbed by UPC. When I was returning to Kampala from the rigged elections of December 10th, 1980, I stopped to put fuel in my Isuzu at Kyazaanga. Immediately, the crowd gathered around me and started saying: “bbakko kyokola”, (you must do something). I told them: “You did not vote for UPM. Why did you vote for the incapable DP?” Their answer: “Vva Kubyobuluulu. Bbakko kyokola” (forget about the elections. Do something).

Of course, we had long ago decided to fight. This massive consensus for “doing something” beyond peaceful politics was okusiindika asitamye (pushing somebody squatting that will easily fall- or preaching to the converted). When we launched the

Kabamba attack on the 6th of February, 1981, 80% of the Ugandans were with us. All the former DPs, UPC Nadiope-Ibingyira, Kabaka Yekka etc., joined the NRM.

When Aggrey Awori was killing the LCs in the Busia area after 1986, many of them had been former DPs. After Kabamba, it would have been irresponsible for anybody to talk of DP, UPC, Kabaka Yekka, UPM, Nabudere group, etc. We were all NRM with equal rights, risks and responsibilities.

This 80% consensus has persevered. That is how the NRM got 76% in the elections of 1996 in spite of People like Ssemwogerere trying to subvert this consensus when he abandoned the broad-based Govt in 1995. The consensus of this majority has persisted up to today, although, sometimes, the percentage reduces on account of our own internal mistakes, cheating by the opposition, etc.

We have been able to put together this broadest possible consensus because of the correct ideology of the 4 ideological principles of patriotism, Pan-Africanism, socio-economic transformation and democracy and the strategy of uniting the many to defeat the few and isolate the enemy to the maximum.

We did not only maintain the majority of the 80% that rallied around the NRA in 1981, but we even brought in the elements of the UPC that had separated themselves from the broad consensus in 1979-80 by executing their coup.

Especially in the NRA, we absorbed most of the former UNLA. By the 17th of January, 1981, when we started the offensive for the

capture of Kampala, the NRA had the following battalions (in reality Regiments because of size).

These were:

1. 1st Battalion- Pecos Kuteesa and Fred Mugyisha;
2. 3rd Battalion- Lumumba;
3. 5th Battalion- Stephen Kashaka;
4. 7th Battalion- Matayo Kyaligonza and Stanely Muhangyi;
5. 9th Battalion- Kyihaanda;
6. 11th Battalion- Chefe Ali;
7. 13th Battalion- Ivan Koreta;
8. 15th Battalion-Samson Mande;
9. 17th Battalion- Adam Wasswa;
10. 19th Battalion- Peter Kerim;
11. 21st Battalion- Benon Tumukunde.

Elly Tumwiine was the Army Commander, Fred Rwigyema Deputy Army Commander and Salim Saleh was the Commander of the Mobile Division that comprised of these battalions. There were also zonal forces that kept the areas we had liberated.

It is at this stage, that the effort for integration and expansion started. Some of the UNLAs had peacefully joined us in Fort Portal, led by Major Okwera. We, then, besieged the UNLA troops in Masaka and Mbarara for 3 months. When they surrendered around December, 1985, we integrated them.

That is how the NRA now expanded by creating additional forces from our armed opposition (not just political opponents but armed

ones who had killed some of us and we had also killed many of their colleagues).

We now created the following battalions from these previous opponents:

1. 23rd Battalion- UNLA;
2. 25th Battalion- UNLA;
3. 27th Battalion- Fedemo (Nkwanga);
4. 29th Battalion- Teso UPC militia- Eroborot;
5. 31st Battalion- UNLA;
6. 33rd Battalion- UNLA;
7. 35th Battalion- UFM-Kayiira;
8. 37th Battalion- UNLA, etc., etc.;
9. 71st Battalion- FUNA (Former Amin soldiers);
10. 73rd Battalion and 75th Battalion- Rescue Front-Moses Ali, etc., etc.

Some of the prominent commanders from the previous armed groups opposed to the NRA include People like Oketta, Ochola, Tolit, Eroborot, Olanya, Oula, Hussein Adda, Mark Kodili, Joshua Masaba, Ali Kiiza, etc., etc. Katumba and Jeje were in UNLA but were working with us. Katumba, for instance, assisted in liberating Saleh from the jail in Moroto, I think working with Dora Kuteesa.

That is how we built a very strong Army, did not frustrate genuine Ugandans that were interested in soldiership, took advantage of their different skills, regardless of the political groups that had mobilized them.

Many of the senior officers and ordinary soldiers are now retiring honourably. No single soldier has died on account of intra-UPDF conflicts on account of sectarianism- unlike what used to happen between 1962 and 1986- West Nilers killing Acholis and Langi (1971), Acholis and Langis persecuting West Nilers and the Bantu (1981), etc.

Therefore, principled unity, around the 4 principles, without discrimination is a time-tested strategy that is correct.

Finally, on ideology, again, in the recent NRM conferences at Kololo, there were some isolated sectarian sentiments when it came to the CEC Vice-Chairpersonship for Buganda. In the contest between Kasolo, Kiwanda, Karangwa, etc., there was talk of Karangwa having come from Rwanda originally. This is not correct. As a matter of fact, Karangwa is one of the most active NRM cadres and Buganda is a multi-cultural unit.

Even if the population in Buganda was mainly Baganda, you should look for capacity and dedication. The issue I have been intending to sort out with Karangwa is the signed letter I got from the Kayunga area accusing him of being involved in land-grabbing; but not ethnicity.

Next time, I will deal with the organizational issue.

Thanks.

Signed:

**YOWERI K. MUSEVENI.**

**SSAABALWANYI**

**-ENDS-**

