

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (pronunciation (help·info)) (born c. 1944,[1] Ntungamo, Uganda)[2] has been the President of Uganda since 29 January 1986.

Museveni got involved in a war that deposed Idi Amin, ending his rule in 1979, and in the rebellion that subsequently led to the demise of the Milton Obote regime in 1985. With the notable exception of northern areas, Museveni has brought relative stability and economic growth to a country that has endured decades of government mismanagement, rebel activity and civil war. His tenure has also witnessed one of the most effective national responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, Museveni was lauded by the West as part of a new generation of African leaders. His presidency has been marred, however, by involvement in the Second Congo War (the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and other conflicts in the Great Lakes region. Rebellion in the north of Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army continues to perpetuate one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Recent developments, including the abolition of presidential term limits before the 2006 elections and the harassment of democratic opposition, have attracted concern from domestic commentators and the international community. One-third of Ugandans remain in poverty under the current government.

Early life and career (1944–1972)



Museveni was born probably in Rwanda and came to Uganda with his mother, grew in Ntungamo in south-west Uganda, shown here in red.

Probably born in Rwanda, Museveni came to Uganda with his mother and grew up in Ntungamo in the western part of the country. Museveni grew up among the Banyankole, became a member of the Nyankole ethnic group and was given his surname, Mu**seven**i, which means "Son of a man of the Seventh", in honor of the Seventh Battalion of the King's African Rifles, the British colonial army in which many Ugandans served during World War II.

Museveni's middle name was adopted from his stepfather, Amos Kaguta, a cattle herder whom his mother, Esteri Kokundeka, married when she arrived in Ntungamo. Amos Kaguta is also the stepfather of Museveni's brother Caleb Akandwanaho, popularly known in Uganda as "Salim Saleh",[3] and sister Violet Kajubiri.[4]

Museveni attended Kyamate Elementary School, Mbarara High School, and Ntare School. It was while at high school that he became a born-again Christian. In 1967, he went to the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. There, he studied economics and political science and became an unreconstructed Marxist, involving himself in radical pan-African politics. While at university, he formed the University Students' African Revolutionary Front activist group and led a student delegation to FRELIMO territory in Portuguese Mozambique, where he received guerrilla training. Studying under the leftist Walter Rodney, among others, Museveni wrote his senior thesis on the applicability of Frantz Fanon's revolutionary violence to postcolonial Africa.[5]

In 1970, Museveni joined the intelligence service of Ugandan President Milton Obote. When Major General Idi Amin seized power in a January 1971 military coup, Museveni fled to Tanzania with other exiles, including the deposed president. The power bases of Amin and Obote were very different, leading to a significant ethnic and regional aspect to the resulting conflict. Obote was from the Lango ethnic group of the central north, while Amin was a Kakwa from the northwestern corner of the country. The British colonial government had organized the colony's internal politics so that the Lango and Acholi dominated the national military, while people from southern parts of the country were active in business. This situation endured until the coup, when Amin filled the top positions of government with Kakwa and Lugbara and violently repressed the Lango and their Acholi allies.[6]

[edit] FRONASA and the toppling of Amin (1972–80)

The exile forces opposed to Amin, who were predominantly Lango and Acholi, invaded Uganda from Tanzania in September 1972 and were repelled, suffering heavy losses. The situation of the rebels was compounded by a peace agreement signed later in the year by Tanzania and Uganda, in which rebels were denied the use of Tanzanian soil for aggression against Uganda.[7] Museveni briefly worked as a lecturer at a co-operative college in Moshi, in northern Tanzania, before breaking away from the mainstream opposition and forming the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) in 1973.[8] In August of the same year, he married Janet Kataha, a former secretary and airline stewardess with whom he would have four children.

Main article: Uganda-Tanzania War



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In October 1978, Amin ordered the invasion of Tanzania in order to claim the Kagera province for Uganda. From 24 to 26 March 1979, Museveni and FRONASA attended a gathering of exiles and rebel groups in the northern Tanzanian town of Moshi. Overcoming ideological differences, for the time being at least, the various groups established the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF). Museveni was appointed to an 11-member Executive Council, chaired by Yusuf Lule. This was accompanied by a National Consultative Council (NCC) with one member for each of the 28 groups represented at the meeting. The UNLF joined forces with the Tanzanian army to launch a counter-attack which culminated in the toppling of the Amin regime in April 1979. Museveni was named the new Minister of State for Defence in the new UNLF government. He was the youngest minister in Yusuf Lule's administration. The thousands of troops which Museveni recruited into FRONASA during the war were incorporated into the new national army. They retained their loyalty to Museveni, however, and would be crucial in later rebellions against the second Obote regime.

The NCC selected Godfrey Binaisa as the new chairman of the UNLF after infighting led to the deposition of Yusuf Lule in June 1979. Machinations to consolidate power continued with Binaisa in a similar manner to his predecessor. In November, Museveni was reshuffled from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Regional Cooperation, with Binaisa himself taking over the key defence role. In May 1980, Binaisa himself was placed under house arrest after an attempt to dismiss Oyite Ojok, the army chief of staff – in what was a de facto coup led by Paulo Muwanga, Yoweri Museveni, Oyite Ojok and Tito Okello. A Presidential Commission, with Museveni as Vice-Chairman, was installed and quickly announced plans for a general election in December.

Now a relatively well-known national figure, Museveni established a new political party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), which he would lead in the elections. He would be competing against three other political groupings: the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), led by former president Milton Obote; the Conservative Party (CP); the Democratic Party (DP). The main contenders were seen to be the UPC and DP. The official results declared UPC the winner with Museveni's UPM gaining only one of the 126 available seats. A number of irregularities compromised the credibility of the poll. In the planning of the election, the leader of the ruling commission, Paulo Muwanga, supported the UPC's view that each

candidate should have a separate ballot box. This was fiercely opposed by the other parties, which maintained that it would make the poll easier to manipulate. The configuration of political boundaries may also have aided the UPC. Constituencies in generally pro-UPC northern Uganda contained proportionally less voters than the anti-UPC Buganda, giving more power to Obote's party. Suspicions of fraud were compounded by Muwanga's announcement on the day of the election that all results should be cleared by him before they were announced publicly. The losing parties refused to recognise the legitimacy of the new regime, citing widespread electoral irregularities.

[edit] The war in the bush (1981–86)

Main article: Ugandan Bush War

[edit] Obote II and the National Resistance Army

Uganda

This article is part of the series:
Politics and government of Uganda

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Museveni returned with his supporters to their rural strongholds in the Bantu-dominated south and southwest to form the Popular Resistance Army (PRA). There they planned a rebellion against the second Obote regime, popularly known as "Obote II", and its armed forces, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). The insurgency began with an attack on an army installation in the central Mubende district on 6 February 1981. The PRA later merged with former president Yusufu Lule's fighting group, the Uganda Freedom Fighters

(UFF), to create the National Resistance Army (NRA) with its political wing, the National Resistance Movement (NRM). Two other rebel groups, the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) and Former Uganda National Army (FUNA), formed in West Nile from the remnants of Amin's supporters, engaged Obote's forces.[9]

The NRM/A developed a "Ten-point Programme" for an eventual government, covering democracy, security, consolidation of national unity, defending national independence, building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining economy, improvement of social services, elimination of corruption and misuse of power, redressing inequality, cooperation with other African countries and a mixed economy.[10]

By July 1985, Amnesty International estimated that the Obote regime had been responsible for more than 300,000 civilian deaths across Uganda, although the CIA World Factbook puts the number at over 100,000.[11] The human rights organisation had made several representations to the government to improve its appalling human rights record from 1982. Abuses were particularly conspicuous in an area of central Uganda known as the Luweero Triangle. Reports from Uganda during this period brought international criticism to the Obote regime and increased support abroad for Museveni's rebel force. Within Uganda, the brutal suppression of the insurgency aligned the Buganda, the most numerous of Uganda's ethnic groups, with the NRA against the UNLA, which was seen as being dominated by northerners, especially the Lango and Acholi. Until his death in 2005, Milton Obote blamed the Luwero abuses on the NRA.

[edit] 1985 Nairobi Agreement



Museveni and Okello sign the fated peace deal.
Main article: Nairobi Agreement, 1985

On 27 July 1985, subfactionalism within the UPC government led to a successful military coup against Obote by his former army commander, Lieutenant-General Tito Okello, an Acholi. Museveni and the NRM/A were angry that the revolution for which they had fought for four years had been "hijacked" by the UNLA, which they viewed as having been discredited by gross human rights violations during Obote II.[12] Despite these reservations, however, the NRM/A eventually agreed to peace talks presided over by a Kenyan delegation headed by President Daniel arap Moi.

The talks, which lasted from 26 August to 17 December, were notoriously acrimonious and the resultant ceasefire broke down almost immediately. The final agreement, signed in Nairobi, called for a ceasefire, demilitarisation of Kampala, integration of the NRA and government forces, and absorption of the NRA leadership into the Military Council.[13] These conditions were never met.

The prospects of a lasting agreement were limited by several factors, including the Kenyan team's lack of an in-depth knowledge of the situation in Uganda and the exclusion of relevant Ugandan and international actors from the talks, inter alia. In the end, Museveni and his allies refused to share power with generals they did not respect, not least while the NRA had the capacity to achieve an outright military victory.

[edit] The push for Kampala

While supposedly involved in the peace negotiations, Museveni had courted General Mobutu of Zaire in an attempt to forestall the involvement of Zairean forces in support of Okello's military junta. On 20 January 1986, however, several hundred troops loyal to Idi Amin were accompanied into Ugandan territory by the Zairean military. The forces intervened in the civil conflict following secret training in Zaire and an appeal from Okello ten days previously.[14] Mobutu's support for Okello was a score Museveni would settle years later, ordering Ugandan forces into the conflict which would finally topple the Zairean leader.



Museveni was sworn in as president on 29 January 1986.

By this stage, however, the NRA had developed an unstoppable momentum. By 22 January, government troops in Kampala had begun to quit their posts en masse as the rebels gained ground from the south and south-west.[13] On the 25th, the Museveni-led faction finally overran the capital. The NRA toppled Okello's government and declared victory the next day.

Museveni was sworn in as president three days later on 29 January. "This is not a mere change of guard, it is a fundamental change," said Museveni after a ceremony conducted by British-born chief justice Peter Allen. Speaking to crowds of thousands outside the Ugandan parliament, the new president promised a return to democracy and said: "The people of Africa, the people of Uganda, are entitled to a democratic government. It is not a favour from any regime. The sovereign people must be the public, not the government."[15]

[edit] Museveni in power (1986–96)



Museveni meets with President Ronald Reagan at the White House in October 1987.

[edit] Political and economic regeneration

The post-Amin regimes in Uganda were characterised by corruption, factionalism and an inability to restore order and acquire popular legitimacy. Museveni needed to avoid repeating these mistakes if his new government was not to befall the same fate. The NRM declared a four-year interim government, composing a broader ethnic base than its predecessors. The representatives of the various factions were nevertheless hand-picked by Museveni. The sectarian violence which had overshadowed Uganda's recent history was put forward as a justification for restricting the activities of the political parties and their ethnically distinct supporter bases. The non-party system did not prohibit political parties, but prevented them from fielding candidates directly in elections. The so-called "Movement" system, which Museveni said claimed the loyalty of every Ugandan, would be a cornerstone in politics for nearly twenty years.

A system of Resistance Councils, directly elected at the parish level, was established to manage local affairs, including the equitable distribution of fixed-price commodities. The election of Resistance Councils representatives was the first direct experience many Ugandans had with democracy after many decades of varying levels of authoritarianism, and the replication of the structure up to the district level has been credited with helping even people at the local level understand the higher-level political structures.

The new government enjoyed widespread international support, and the economy that had been damaged by the civil war began to recover as Museveni initiated economic policies designed to combat key problems such as hyperinflation and the balance of payments. Abandoning his Marxist ideals, Museveni embraced the neoliberal structural adjustments advocated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Uganda began participating in an IMF Economic Recovery Program (ERP) in 1987. Its objectives included the restoration of incentives in order to encourage growth, investment, employment and exports; the promotion and diversification of trade with particular emphasis on export promotion; the removal of bureaucratic constraints and divestment from ailing public enterprises so as to enhance sustainable economic growth and development through the private sector; the liberalisation of trade at all levels.[16]

[edit] Regional relations and conflict



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After January 1986, Museveni continued in his role as Commander-in-Chief of the NRA. The Kenyan government of Daniel arap Moi was initially suspicious of the new NRM government's alleged support for Kenyan dissident groups. Tensions culminated in a non-violent military standoff at Busia on the Kenya-Uganda border in late 1987. Any closure of borders with Kenya would have been extremely damaging to landlocked Uganda's economy, whose access to the Indian Ocean via the port at Mombasa depends upon Kenya.

During their guerrilla war against the government of Milton Obote, the National Resistance Army recruited anyone who was willing to fight, regardless of nationality. Persecution at the

hands of the Obote regime encouraged many Rwandan exiles living in Uganda to join the ranks of the NRA. Several years into the Museveni government, the Ugandan army still had several thousand Rwandans on its payroll. On the night of 30 September 1990, 4,000 Rwandan members of the NRA left their barracks in secrecy, joining other forces to invade Rwanda from Ugandan territory. It transpired that the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) was operating a large membership within the NRA using a clandestine cell structure.

The RPF was a movement of Rwandan exiles opposed to the government of Juvénal Habyarimana who were linked to Museveni and the NRM. It must be remembered that Museveni was also trying gain roots to his ancestors in Rwanda. Being a Tutsi himself he played a key role in ensuring that his brothers and sisters find solace at home.RPF leaders included Fred Rwigema and Paul Kagame, both Rwandan exiles and founder members of the NRM. During the initial stages of the invasion, Museveni and Habyarimana were both attending a UN summit in the United States. It has been claimed that the date for the RPF mobilisation was set to allow Museveni to distance himself from their actions until it was too late to stop them. The Rwandan army managed to expel the invasion only after extensive reinforcement from Belgium, France and Zaire.

Museveni was blamed for complicity in the September 1990 invasion and/or not having control of his army. The RPF melted away into the Virunga Mountains straddling the Rwanda-Uganda border. The Habyarimana government accused Uganda of allowing the RPF to use its territory as a rear base, responding by shelling Ugandan villages on the border. Uganda is widely believed to have returned fire, which would probably have protected RPF positions.[*who?*] These exchanges forced more than 60,000 from their homes. Despite the negotiation of a security pact, in which both countries agreed to cooperate in maintaining security along their common border, a resurgent RPF had occupied much of the northern territory of Rwanda by 1992.

In April 1994, a plane carrying President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down over Kigali airport. This precipitated the Rwandan genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people perished. The Rwandan Patriotic Front overran Kigali and took power with the help of the Ugandan army.



Ugandan children displaced by the war in the north

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In April 1995, Uganda cut off diplomatic relations with Sudan in protest at Khartoum's support for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group active in northern Uganda. Sudan, in turn, claimed that Uganda was providing support to the Sudan People's Liberation Army. Both groups were suspected of operating across the porous Uganda-Sudan border. Disputes between Uganda and Sudan date back to at least 1988. Ugandan refugees sought

shelter in southern Sudan during the Amin and Obote II regimes. After the NRM had come to power in 1986, however, many of these refugees joined the Ugandan rebel groups including the West Nile Bank Front and later the LRA. For a significant period, the Museveni government viewed Sudan as the most significant threat to Ugandan security.

[edit] Internal security and human rights

The NRM came to power promising to restore security and respect for human rights. Indeed, this was part of the NRM's ten-point programme, as Museveni noted in his swearing in speech:

> *The second point on our programme is security of person and property. Every person in Uganda must [have absolute] security to live wherever he wants. Any individual, any group who threatens the security of our people must be smashed without mercy. The people of Uganda should die only from natural causes which are beyond our control, but not from fellow human beings who continue to walk the length and breadth of our land.*

Although Museveni now headed up a new government in Kampala, the NRM could not project its influence fully across Ugandan territory, finding itself fighting a number of insurgencies. From the beginning of Museveni's presidency, he drew strong support from the Bantu-speaking south and southwest, where Museveni had his base. Museveni managed to get the Karamojong, a group of semi-nomads in the sparsely populated north-east that had never had a significant political voice, to align with him by offering them a stake in the new government. However, the northern region along the Sudanese border proved more troublesome. In the West Nile sub-region, inhabited by Kakwa and Lugbara (who had previously supported Amin), the UNRF and FUNA rebel groups fought for years until a combination of military offensives and diplomacy pacified the region; the leader of the UNRF, Moses Ali, gave up his struggle to become Second Deputy Prime Minister. People from the northern parts of the country viewed the rise of a government led by a person from the south with great trepidation. Rebel groups sprang up among the Lango, Acholi and Teso, though they were overwhelmed by the strength of the NRA except in the far north where the Sudanese border provided a safe haven. The Acholi rebel Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) failed to dislodge the NRA occupation of Acholiland, leading to the desperate chiliasm of the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM). The defeat of both the UPDA and HSM left the rebellion to a group that eventually became known as the Lord's Resistance Army, which would turn upon the Acholi themselves.

The NRA subsequently earned a reputation for respecting the rights of civilians, – although Museveni later received criticism for using child soldiers. Undisciplined elements within the NRA's soon tarnished a hard-won reputation for fairness. "When Museveni's men first came they acted very well – we welcomed them," said one villager, "but then they started to arrest people and kill them."[17][18]

In March 1989, Amnesty International published a human rights report on Uganda, entitled *Uganda, the Human Rights Record 1986–1989*. It documented gross human rights violations committed by NRA troops. In one of the most intense phases of the war, between October and December 1988, the NRA forcibly cleared approximately 100,000 people from their homes in and around Gulu town. Soldiers committed hundreds of extrajudicial executions as

they forcibly moved people, burning down homes and granaries.[19] However, there were few reports of the systematic torture, equivalent to those committed during Amin and Obote's regimes. In its conclusion, the report offered some hope:

> *Any assessment of the NRM government's human rights performance is, perhaps inevitably, less favourable after four years in power than it was in the early months. However, it is not true to say, as some critics and outside observers, that there has been a continuous slide back towards gross human rights abuse, that in some sense Uganda is fated to suffer at the hands of bad government.*

[edit] A new democratic mandate (1996–2001)



Crowds throng the convoy of Museveni during the 1996 presidential election.

[edit] Elections

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The first Elections under Museveni's governance were held on 9 May 1996. Museveni defeated Paul Ssemogerere of the Democratic Party, who contested the election as a candidate for the "Inter-party forces coalition", and the upstart candidate, Mohamed Mayanja. Museveni won with a landslide 75.5 per cent of the vote from a turnout of 72.6 per cent of eligible voters. Although international and domestic observers described the vote as valid, both the losing candidates rejected the results. Museveni was sworn in as president for the second time on 12 May 1996.

The main weapon in Museveni's campaign was the restoration of security and economic normality to much of the country. A memorable electoral image produced by his team depicted a pile of skulls in the Luwero Triangle. This powerful symbolism was not lost on the inhabitants of this region, who had suffered rampant insecurity during the civil war. The other candidates had difficulty matching Museveni's efficacy in communicating his key message. Museveni seemed to have a remarkable ability to relate political messages by using grass-roots language, especially with people from the south. The metaphor of "carrying a grindstone for leadership", referring to an "authoritative individual, bearing the burden of authority", was just one of many imaginative images he created for his campaign. He would often deliver these in the appropriate local colloquial language, demonstrating respect and

attempting to transcend tribalistic politics. Museveni's fluency in English, Luganda, Runyankole and Swahili often helped him forward his message.

Until the prospect of presidential elections, Ssemogerere (Museveni's concurrent political rival) had been a minister in the NRM government. His decision to challenge the record of Museveni and the NRM, rather than claim a stake in Museveni's "movement", was seen as naive opportunism, and regarded as a political error. Ssemogerere's alliance with the UPC was anathema to the Baganda, who might otherwise have lent him some support as the leader of the Democratic Party. Ssemogerere also accused Museveni of being a Rwandan, a statement often repeated by Museveni's opponents because of his birthplace near the Uganda-Rwanda border, and his supposedly Rwandan origins (Museveni is an ethnic Munyankole, kin to the Banyarwanda of Rwanda), and his army of being dominated by Rwandans, which included current Rwandan president Paul Kagame.

The second set of elections were held in 2001. President Museveni beat his rival Kizza Besigye as he sailed through with 69% of the vote. Dr Besigye had been a close confidant of the president and he was his bush war physician. They however had a fallout shortly before the 2001 elections, when Dr Besigye decided to stand for presidency. The 2001 election campaigns were a heated affair with president Museveni threatening his rival to put him "six feet under".

The election culminated into a petition filed by Dr Besigye at the Supreme Court of Uganda. The court ruled that the elections were not free and fair but declined to nullify the outcome by a 3:2 majority decision. It was held that the many cases of election malpractice did not however affect the result in a substantial manner. Justices Benjamin Odoki (Chief justice), Alfrerd Karokora, and Joseph Mulenga ruled in favor of the respondents while Justices Aurthur Haggai Oder (RIP) and John Tsekoko ruled in favor of Dr Besigye.

The most recent presidential elections were held in 2006 where again Museveni prevailed over Dr Besigye scoring 59% of the vote. The election petition in this case had more evidence of election malpractice but by a 4:3 decision, the result was upheld. As before, the judges ruled as they ruled in the 2001 petition. the additional two judges were Justice George W. Kanyeihamba ruling in favor of Dr Besigye and Justice Bart Katureebe in favor of President Museveni and The electoral commission. Dr Besigye predicted that that could be the last presidential election petition filed in the then constituted Supreme court.

President Museveni had always indicated that he was not willing to handover power to his opponent.

[edit] International recognition

Museveni has won praise from Western governments for his adherence to IMF Structural adjustment programs, ie. privatising state enterprises, cutting government spending and urging African self-reliance. Museveni was elected chairperson of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1991 and 1992. He permitted a free atmosphere within which the news media could operate, and private FM radio stations flourished during the late 1990s. Perhaps Museveni's most widely noted accomplishment has been his government's successful campaign against AIDS. During the 1980s, Uganda had one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, but now Uganda's rates are comparatively low, and the country stands as a rare success story in the global battle against the virus (see *AIDS in Africa*). One of the

campaigns headed by Museveni to fight against AIDS was the ABC program. The ABC program had three main parts "Abstain, Be faithful, or use Condoms if A and B are not practiced.[20] In April 1998, Uganda became the first country to be declared eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, receiving some US$700 million in aid.[21] Museveni was lauded for his affirmative action program for women in the country, he was served by a female vice-president, Specioza Kazibwe, for nearly a decade, and has done much to encourage women to go to college. On the other hand, Museveni has resisted calls for greater women's family land rights (the right of women to own a share of their matrimonial homes).[22]

From the mid-1990s, Museveni was seen to exemplify a new breed of African leadership, the antithesis of the "big men" who had dominated politics in the continent since independence. This section from a *New York Times* article in 1997 is illustrative of the high esteem in which Museveni was held by the western media, governments and academics:

> *These are heady days for the former guerilla who runs Uganda. He moves with the measured gait and sure gestures of a leader secure in his power and his vision. It is little wonder. To hear some of the diplomats and African experts tell it, President Yoweri K. Museveni started an ideological movement that is reshaping much of Africa, spelling the end of the corrupt, strong-man governments that characterized the cold-war era. These days, political pundits across the continent are calling Mr. Museveni an African Bismarck. Some people now refer to him as Africa's "other statesman," second only to the venerated South African President, Nelson Mandela.*[23]

In official briefing papers from Madeleine Albright's December 1997 Africa tour as Secretary of State, Museveni was called a *"beacon of hope"* who runs a *"uni-party democracy,"* despite Uganda not permitting multiparty politics.[24]

These generous statements have since been re-evaluated.

[edit] Regional conflict

In Uganda, there were significant numbers of ethnic Rwandan Tutsi immigrants – who comprised a significant numbers of NRA fighters. The Uganda-based Tutsi-dominated Rwandese Patriotic Front rebel group were close allies of the NRA, and once Museveni had solidified his hold on central power, he lent his support to their cause. Unsuccessful attacks were launched by the RPF against the Hutu government of Rwanda in the first half of the 1990s from bases in southwest Uganda. It was not until the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 that the RPF took power and its head, Paul Kagame (a former soldier in Museveni's army), became president.

Following the Rwandan Genocide, the new Rwandan government felt threatened by the presence (across the Rwandan border in Congo - known then as Zaïre) of former Rwandan soldiers and members of the previous regime. These soldiers were aided by Mobutu Sese Seko – leading Rwanda (with the aid of Museveni) and Laurent Kabila's rebels to overthrow him and take power in Congo. (*see main article: First Congo War*).[25]

In August 1998, Rwanda and Uganda undertook to invade Congo again, this time to overthrow Museveni and Kagame's former ally - Kabila (*see main article: Second Congo*

War). Museveni and a few close military advisers alone made the decision to send the UPDF into Congo. A number of highly placed sources indicate that the Ugandan parliament and civilian advisers were not consulted over the matter, as is required by the 1995 constitution.[26] Museveni apparently persuaded an initially reluctant High Command to go along with the venture. "We felt that the Rwandese started the war and it was their duty to go ahead and finish the job, but our President took time and convinced us that we had a stake in what is going on in Congo", one senior officer is reported as saying.[27] The official reasons Uganda gave for the intervention were to stop a "genocide" against the Banyamulenge in DRC in concert with Rwandan forces,[28] and that Kabila had failed to provide security along the border and was allowing the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) to attack Uganda from rear bases in DRC. In reality, the UPDF were not deployed in the border region but more than 1,000 kilometres (over 600 miles) to the west of Uganda's frontier with Congo[29] and in support of the Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC) rebels seeking to overthrow Kabila. As such, they were unable to prevent the ADF from invading the major town of Fort Portal and taking over a prison in Western Uganda.

Troops from Rwanda and Uganda plundered the country's rich mineral deposits and timber. The United States responded to the invasion by suspending all military aid to Uganda, a disappointment to the Clinton administration, which had hoped to make Uganda the centrepiece of the African Crisis Response Initiative. In 2000, Rwandan and Ugandan troops exchanged fire on three occasions in the Congolese city of Kisangani, leading to tensions and a deterioration in relations between Kagame and Museveni. The Ugandan government has also been criticised for aggravating the Ituri conflict, a sub-conflict of the Second Congo War. In December 2005, the International Court of Justice ruled that Uganda must pay compensation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for human rights violations during the Second Congo War.[30]

In the north, Uganda had supported Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the Second Sudanese Civil War against the government in Khartoum even before Museveni's rise. The continued support for the SPLA, led by Museveni's old acquaintance John Garang, led Sudan to support the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and other anti-Museveni rebel groups in the mid-1990s. The resulting insecurity and conflicts have caused widespread human displacement, death and destruction in southern Sudan and northern Uganda. Subsequent warming of relations with Sudan led to a pledge to stop supporting hostile proxy forces (from both sides) and the granting of approval to the UPDF to attack the LRA within Sudan itself.

A second term (2001–2006)

2001 elections

In 2001 Museveni won the presidential elections by a substantial majority, with his former friend and personal physician Kizza Besigye as the only real challenger. In a populist publicity stunt, a pentagenarian Museveni travelled on a bodaboda motorcycle taxi to submit his nomination form for the election. Bodaboda is a cheap and somewhat dangerous (by western standards) method of transporting passengers around towns and villages in East Africa.[31]

There was much recrimination and bitterness during the 2001 presidential elections campaign, and incidents of violence occurred following the announcement of the results –

which were won by Museveni. Besigye challenged the election results in the Supreme Court of Uganda. Two of the five judges concluded that there were such illegalities in the elections, and that the results should be rejected. The other three judges decided that the illegalities did not affect the result of the election in a substantial manner, but stated that "there was evidence that in a significant number of polling stations there was cheating" and that in some areas of the country, "the principle of free and fair election was compromised."[32] Besigye was briefly detained and questioned by the police, allegedly in connection with the offense of treason. In September he fled to the USA claiming his life was in danger.

[edit] Political pluralism and constitutional change



Museveni in Washington D.C, June 2003

After the elections, political forces allied to Museveni began a campaign to slacken constitutional limits on the presidential term to allow him to stand for election again in 2006. The 1995 Uganda's constitution provided for a two-term limit on the tenure of the president. Given Uganda's history of dictatorial regimes, this check-and-balance was designed to prevent a dangerous centralisation of power around a long-serving leader. This period witnessed the removal of key and influential Museveni supporters from his administration, including his childhood friend Eriya Kategaya and cabinet minister Jaberi Bidandi Ssali.

Moves to alter the constitution, and alleged attempts to suppress opposition political forces have attracted criticism from domestic commentators, the international community and Uganda's aid donors. In a press release, the main opposition party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), accused Museveni of engaging in a "life presidency project", and for bribing members of parliament to vote against constitutional amendments, FDC leaders claimed:

> *The country is polarized with many Ugandans objecting to [the constitutional amendments]. If Parliament goes ahead and removes term limits this may cause serious unrest, political strife and may lead to turmoil both through the transition period and there after ... We would therefore like to appeal to President Museveni to respect himself, the people who elected him and the Constitution under which he was voted President in 2001 when he promised the country and the world at large to hand*

over power peacefully and in an orderly manner at the end of his second and last term. Otherwise his insistence to stand again will expose him as a consummate liar and the biggest political fraudster this country has ever known.[33]

As observed by some political commentators (eg. Wafula Oguttu), Museveni had previously stated that he considered the idea of clinging to office for "15 or more" years ill-advised.[34] Comments by the British anti-poverty campaigner Bob Geldof sparked a protest by Museveni supporters outside the British High Commission in Kampala. "Get a grip Museveni. Your time is up, go away," said the former rock star in March 2005, explaining that moves to change the constitution were compromising Museveni's record against fighting poverty and HIV/AIDS.[35] In an opinion article in the *Boston Globe* and in a speech delivered at the Wilson Center, former U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Johnnie Carson heaped more criticism on Museveni. Despite recognising the president as a "genuine reformer" whose "leadership [has] led to stability and growth", Carson also said, "we may be looking at another Mugabe and Zimbabwe in the making".[36] "Many observers see Museveni's efforts to amend the constitution as a re-run of a common problem that afflicts many African leaders – an unwillingness to follow constitutional norms and give up power".[37]



Satirical cartoon commenting on attempts to change the constitution. The Movement is depicted here as a puppet controlled by Museveni, writing "third term" into the Ugandan constitution.

In July 2005, Norway became the third European country in as many months to announce symbolic cutbacks in foreign aid to Uganda in response to political leadership in the country. The UK and Ireland made similar moves in May. "Our foreign ministry wanted to highlight two issues: the changing of the constitution to lift term limits, and problems with opening the political space, human rights and corruption", said Norwegian Ambassador Tore Gjos.[38] Of particular significance was the arrest of two opposition MPs from the Forum for Democratic Change. Human rights campaigners charged that the arrests were politically motivated. *Human Rights Watch* stated that "the arrest of these opposition MPs smacks of political opportunism".[39] A confidential World Bank report leaked in May suggested that the international lender might cut its support to non-humanitarian programmes in the Uganda. "We regret that we cannot be more positive about the present political situation in Uganda, especially given the country's admirable record through the late 1990s", said the paper. "The Government has largely failed to integrate the country's diverse peoples into a single political process that is viable over the long term...Perhaps most significant, the political trend-lines, as a result of the President's apparent determination to press for a third term, point downward."[40]

Museveni responded to the mounting international pressure by accusing donors of interfering with domestic politics and using aid to manipulate poor countries. "Let the partners give advice and leave it to the country to decide ... [developed] countries must get out of the habit of trying to use aid to dictate the management of our countries."[41] "The problem with those people is not the third term or fighting corruption or multipartism," added Museveni at a meeting with other African leaders, "the problem is that they want to keep us there without growing.".[42]



Museveni meeting British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in January 2004.

In July 2005, a constitutional referendum lifted a 19-year restriction on the activities of political parties. In the non-party "Movement system" (so called "the movement") instituted by Museveni in 1986, parties continued to exist, but candidates were required to stand for election as individuals rather than representative of any political grouping. This measure was ostensibly designed to reduce ethnic divisions, although many observers have subsequently claimed that the system had become nothing more than a restriction on opposition activity. Prior to the vote, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) spokesperson stated "Key sectors of the economy are headed by people from the president's home area... We have got the most sectarian regime in the history of the country in spite the fact that there are no parties."[43] Many Ugandans saw Museveni's conversion to political pluralism as a concession to donors – aimed at softening the blow when he announces he wants to stay on for a third term.[44] Opposition MP Omara Atubo has said Museveni's desire for change was merely "a facade behind which he is trying to hide ambitions to rule for life".[45]

Death of an ally

On 30 July 2005, Sudanese vice-president John Garang was killed when the Ugandan presidential helicopter crashed while he was travelling to Sudan from talks in Uganda. The incident was acutely embarrassing for the Ugandan government and a personal blow for Museveni – Garang had been a political ally since their days together at university. Garang had only been Sudanese vice-president for a matter of weeks before his death, which damaged hopes of a regional order based on a Uganda-South Sudan alliance.

Widespread speculation as to the cause of the crash led Museveni, on 10 August, to threaten the closure of media outlets which published "conspiracy theories" about Garang's death. In a statement, Museveni claimed such speculation was a threat to national security. "I will no longer tolerate a newspaper which is like a vulture. Any newspaper that plays around with regional security, I will not tolerate it – I will close it."[46] The following day, popular radio station KFM had its license withdrawn for broadcasting a debate on Garang's death. Radio presenter Andrew Mwenda was eventually arrested for sedition in connection with comments made on his KFM talk show.[47]

February 2006 elections

Main article: Ugandan general election, 2006

On 17 November 2005, Museveni was chosen as NRMs presidential candidate for the February 2006 elections. His candidacy for a further third term sparked criticism, as he had promised in 2001 that he was contesting for the last term. The arrest of the main opposition leader Kizza Besigye on 14 November – charged with treason, concealment of treason and rape – sparked demonstrations and riots in Kampala and other towns. Museveni's bid for a third term, the arrest of Besigye, and the besiegement of the High Court during a hearing of Besigye's case (by a heavily armed Military Intelligence (CMI) group dubbed by the press as "Black Mambas Urban Hit Squad"), led Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to withhold economic support to Museveni's government due to concerns about the country's democratic development. On 2 January 2006 Besigye was released after the High Court ordered his immediate release.[48][49][50][51]

The 23 February 2006 elections were Uganda's first multi-party elections in 25 years, and was seen as a test of its democratic credentials. Although Museveni did less well than in the previous election, he was elected for another five-year tenure, having won 59% of the vote against Besigye's 37%. Besigye, who alleged fraud, rejected the result. The Supreme Court of Uganda later ruled that the election was marred by intimidation, violence, voter disenfranchisement, and other irregularities. However, the Court voted 4-3 to uphold the results of the election.[52]

The Third Term (2006-2011)

In 2007, Museveni deployed troops to the African Union's peacekeeping operation in Somalia. Because of the proxy war in Somalia fought by Ethiopia and Eritrea, this move provoked a hostile reaction from the Eritrean government.

Another significant issue in Museveni's third term is his decision to open the Mabira Forest to sugarcane planting. While Museveni argues that new plantations are important for Uganda's economic development, environmental activists worry about the loss of ecosystems and biodiversity that will result.