



Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) is concerned that the Kyadondo East by-election is eclipsed by three key issues: voter bribery, campaigning past the regulated time and defacing of election posters. These issues tantamount to electoral malpractices and CCEDU urges concerned authorities to respond to them as such; with a view of preventing them from re-occurrence as the polling date of June 29th 2017 draws closer.

CCEDU's vision is to realize a Uganda where the principles and practices of electoral democracy are upheld. Its mission is to advance integrity and citizen participation in Uganda's electoral processes; through election observation, electoral reform advocacy and raising civic awareness on electoral democracy.

Campaign time: According to guidelines issued by the Electoral Commission, candidates are permitted to hold campaign meetings up to 6:00pm. The regulation on campaigning time is intended to ensure that campaigns take place during broad daylight. CCEDU has however noted with concern that some candidates are campaigning beyond the stipulated time. On June 17th 2017 for instance, CCEDU observed NRM candidate William Sitenda Sebalu campaigning at 7:15pm in Kyetume, Gayaza Parish. While CCEDU urges candidates to respect campaign guidelines, it also calls upon the Electoral Commission to hold those who violate campaign regulations accountable. This will not only ensure a level-playing field for contenders but will also partly guarantee a free, fair and transparent campaign process.

Voter Bribery: Under section 68(1) of the Parliamentary Elections Act 2005, bribery is an offence in the electoral process; and upon conviction one can be liable to "seventy two currency points or imprisonment not exceeding three years or both". The act of bribery is defined by the Parliamentary Elections Act, as providing money or gifts to influence voters. CCEDU has noted with concern acts of voter bribery involving: candidate William Sitenda Sebalu (NRM), Apollo Kantinti (FDC) and Robert Kyagulanyi (Indep). The three candidates have been observed giving out money and other material gifts during their respective campaign events. On June 17th for instance, candidate William Sitenda Sebalu gave voters at Kyetume Gayaza to share sh200,000 immediately after his campaign. CCEDU implores the Police to remain keen on such acts that violate provisions of the electoral laws as well as bring the culprits to book.

Defacement of Posters: Section 82 (2) of the Parliamentary Elections Act, prohibits the defacing of election posters. Tearing or manipulation of the posters is punishable by a fine or imprisonment or both. CCEDU has observed that posters of FDC candidate Apollo Kantinti were defaced in Kitetikka, Wampewo, Katadde and Kitti areas in Kyadondo East. In Bulamu, independent candidate Nkunyingi Muwada's posters were torn. In other instances, CCEDU noted that candidate Robert

Kyagulanyi's posters had been placed on top of other candidates' posters. CCEDU, therefore urges candidates and supporters to respect each others' views and remain civil even on Election Day.

Women Participation: The Ugandan constitution and international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the African Protocol on Women's Rights to which Uganda is a signatory all provide for women participation in electoral processes. But these provisions largely remain on paper, as the right of women to participate in politics both as voters and candidates remains low. CCEDU is particularly concerned that on the issue of women participation, women continue to be marginalized in electoral processes despite their numerical strength; even in Kyadondo East the only female candidate was withdrawn from the race. The DP and only female candidate who was in the race Lillian Babirye Kamome, was convinced to withdraw from the by-elections by her party president, in favour of the opposition. This as well as incidents of violence towards women for participating in the by-election have undermined cardinal principles in the electoral process. In Watubba parish, Rose Nansamba an FDC supporter was brutally assaulted in her home for supporting candidate Kantinti. The assault was meant to forcefully silence her, and attack her right to freedom of expression and association..

Kyadondo East is comprised of the following parishes Bulamu, Gayaza, Katadde, Kabubbu, Kiteezi, Masooli, Nangabo, Wampeewo and Watuba. CCEDU will utilize its vast network of 850 civil society organizations to observe the Kyadondo East Election on June 29, 2017. CCEDU recruited and trained observers on 24th May 2017, at Comfort Cottages Kasangati.

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