



Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda

STATEMENT ON THE RUKUNGIRI DISTRICT WOMAN MP BY-ELECTION

For Immediate Release – 31st May 2018

Introduction

The by-election held on May 31st 2018 was a result of Court of Appeal nullifying the 2016 election of NRM's Winfred Matsiko on grounds of voter bribery.

To track the day's activities, CCEDU deployed a team of 27 stationary and mobile observers who sampled 67 out of the 270 polling stations in all the 16 Sub Counties that comprise Rukungiri district.

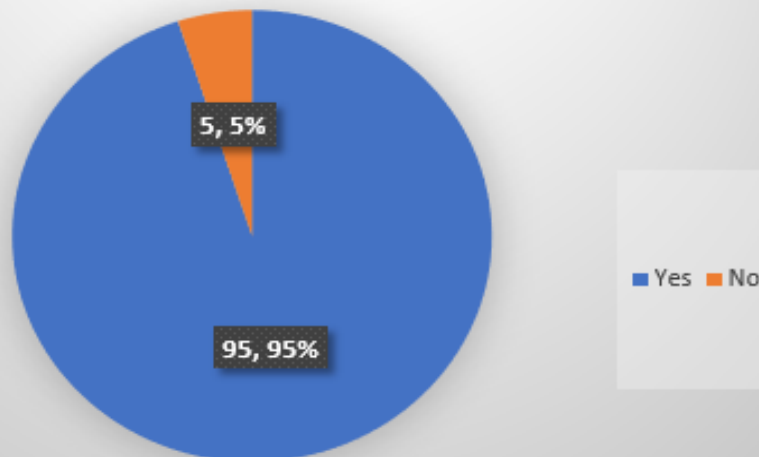
Preliminary findings of the observation team were:

Opening of the Poll:

In an unprecedented move to ensure that polling materials arrive at the polling stations in time, the Electoral Commission dispatched materials to the furthest four (4) sub counties of Bikurungu Town Council, Nyakishenyi Sub-county, Bwambara Sub-county and Nyarushanje Sub-county on 30st May 2018 at 7:00pm. The rest of the polling materials were dispatched to the remaining 12 Sub Counties between 4:00am and 7:00am on the polling day (May 31, 2018). Despite EC's resolve to have polling stations open in time, some of the polling stations, especially those around Rukungiri town received polling material as late as 8.00am. Rukungiri stadium, Rwakabengo Health Centre3, are some of the polling stations that delayed to commence voting due to late receipt of polling materials.

CCEDU also observed that at some polling stations, the mandatory 5 voters required to allow for the opening of a polling station were not present. Polling stations such as Kinyasano Cathedral Polling station in Western Division voting delayed to start due to lack of the 5 mandatory voters required to commence polling.

Had any officials arrived your assigned polling station by 6:30am?



CCEDU observers reported that by 6:30am 95% of the polling stations deployed, Officials from the Electoral commission has already arrived to set up and prepare the polling stations for elections. Only 5% of the polling stations observers reported that officials had not arrived by 6:30am

Polling Process:

Polling at most polling stations visited appeared organized. Voting queues were long in the afternoon; mostly made up of female youth.

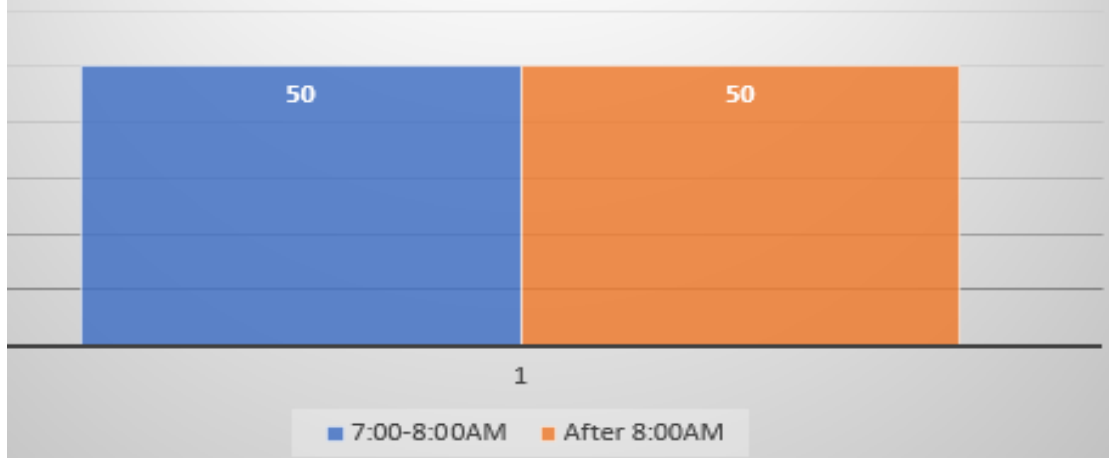
CCEDU noted with concern incidents of voter bribery and 'suspicious assisted voting' in Buyanja, Kebisoni, Nyakishenyi, Nyarushanje, and Nyakagyeme. At BwangaMuluka Head Quarters and Nyamakukuru Primary School polling stations both in Nyarushanje sub-county, cliques of between two and five people had assisted over 40 voters by 3:00pm on voting day.

Police carried out a number of arrests mainly involving FDC candidate agents including the former LCV Athanasius Rutaro, Hon. Vincent Kyamadidi. Most of those arrested were detained at Rukungiri Police station and at Kebisoni Police station. Police intimated to CCEDU that most arrests were in connection with allegations of voter bribery.

CCEDU noted with satisfaction the level of vigilance demonstrated by the voters. Voters remained camped at polling stations even after they had finished voting. Those that CCEDU spoke to, indicated that they were protecting their vote against any form of manipulation.

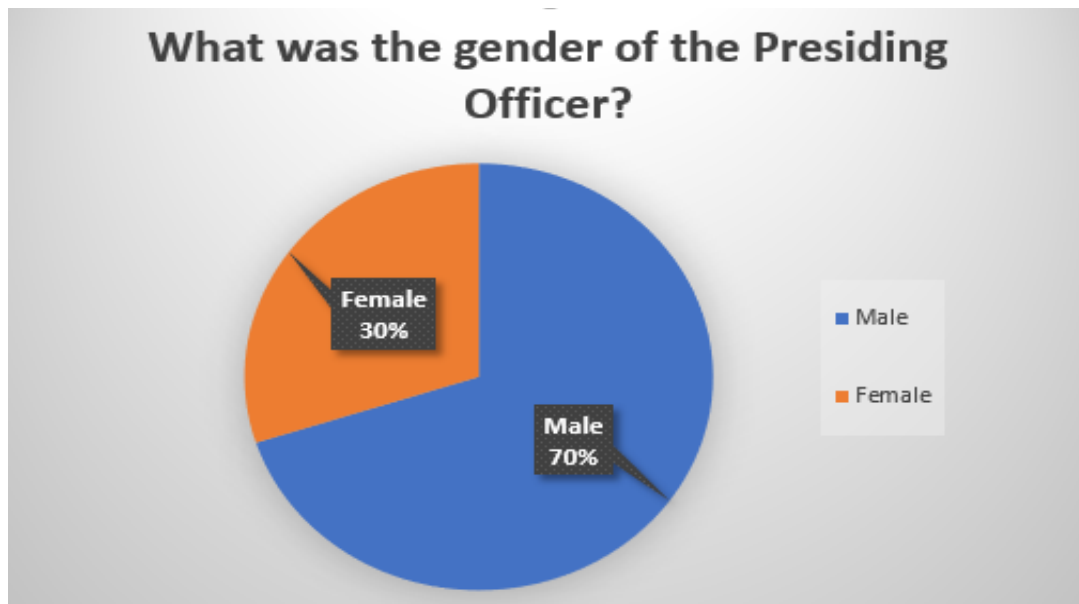
CCEDU observed with satisfaction that polling officials generally conducted the process in accordance with the electoral law and the guidelines provided by the Electoral Commission.

At what time did voting commence at your assigned polling station?



CCEDU observers reported that 50% of the polling stations had commenced voting between 7:00am to 8:00am and the rest of the polling stations voting commenced after 8:00am. This is an area where the EC needs to make improvements so that all voting commences on time.

GENDER OF PRESIDING OFFICIALS:

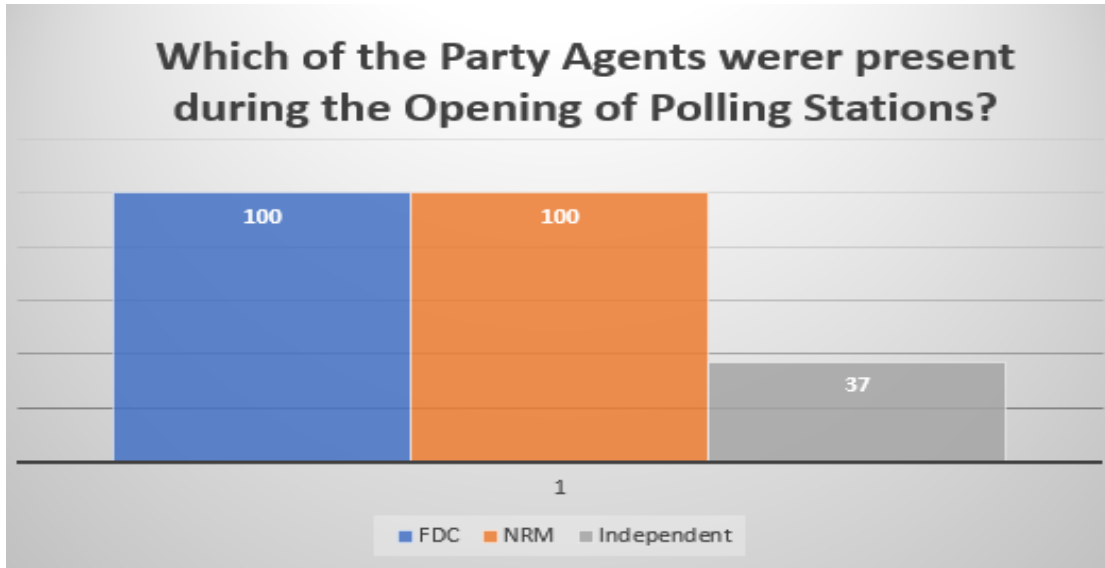


Observers reported that 30% of Presiding officers are women and 70% of the presiding officers were men.

Candidate Agents:

CCEDU observed the presence of NRM and FDC candidate agents at almost all the polling stations visited. The agents were allowed to undertake their responsibilities freely. CCEDU also noted that most of the candidate agents at the stations visited were female.

PRESENCE OF PARTY AGENTS AT POLLING STATIONS:



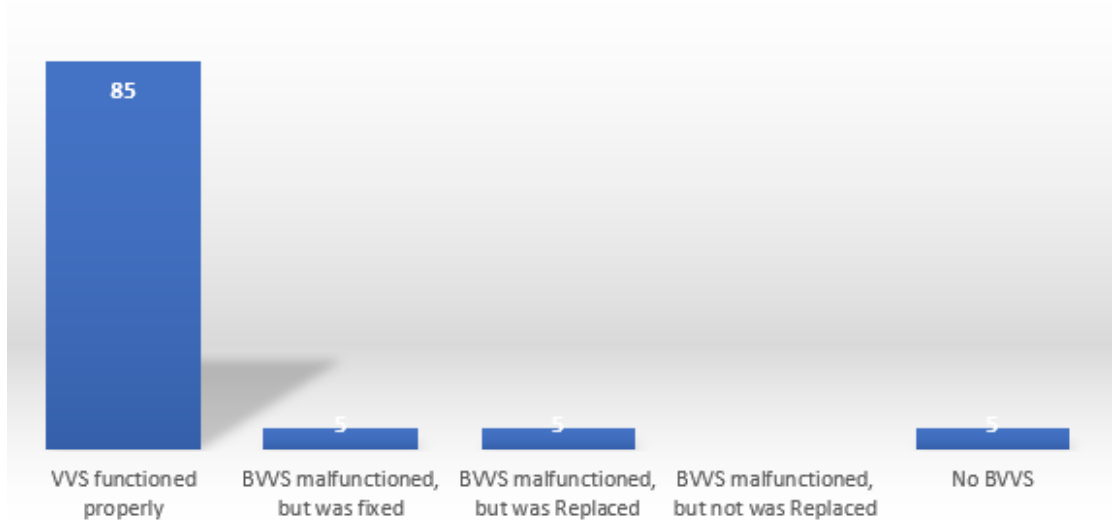
CCEDU observers reported that in all polling stations deployed, the two major parties had 100% of party agents present and Independent party agents were only 37%

Observers also reported that most of the strategic materials where present in all the polling stations where observers were deployed.

Polling:

- ✚ CCEDU observers reported 95% of polling officials cross checked the fingers of voters before they voted to ensure that they have not already voted.
- ✚ 89% of Polling officials scanned voter slips that were issued to the voters as a method of voter identification.
- ✚ Observers too reported that 89% of polling officials scanned the voters fingers for biometric verification in the polling stations were observers were deployed.
- ✚ 95% of the polling officials were sufficiently able to use the biometric voter machines.

BVVS Performance Assessment



CCEDU observers reported that 85% of BVVS machines functioned properly while 5% malfunctioned and was fixed, 5% malfunctioned and were replaced during the polling process.

Closing of the Polls:

Most polling stations closed on time (4:00pm). Polling officials generally adhered to procedures of closing polling stations.

Counting of votes:

CCEDU noted with satisfaction that counting and declaration of results at polling stations was done within the set guidelines.

Voter Turnout:

CCEDU noted the general enthusiasm of the electorate towards the by-election. In at least 10 of the 16 sub counties, voters were at polling stations as early as 6:00am to cast their vote. Voters increased in number as 4:00pm, the time for closing polls approached.

Security:

CCEDU observed presence of polling constables at all stations visited. They were observed to execute their duties as prescribed by the law.

The election was conducted in a generally calm atmosphere with no reports of serious security breaches.

Incidents:

There were unverified reports of voter bribery at Sayuni SDA Church.

CCEDU received reports of clashes between supporters of FDC and NRM at the same polling station.

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