



CCEDU STATEMENT ON THE KASESE DISTRICT WOMAN MP BY-ELECTION – 8th Aug, 2012

For Immediate Release

On behalf of our entire membership, the Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) takes this singular opportunity to congratulate Ms. Winnie Kiiza of FDC on winning the Kasese District Woman bye-election in a closely fought contest.

CCEDU also wishes to commend Ms.Rehema Muhindo of NRM and Ms.Rosemary Masika of DP for their spirited performance, the Electoral Commission (EC) for successful conduct of the election and most of all to the voters Kasese District for their vigilance and exemplary behavior during the entire process.

On the same note, CCEDU also wishes to express its worry and concern about the behavior of the security personnel on the eve of the election.

Below is the summary report filed by the CCEDU observer mission in Kasese District.

CCEDU Observer deployment

The Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) deployed 37 election observers to monitor the Kasese District Woman MP by-election. Kasese District has a total 437 polling stations.

Cause of by-election

The Kasese woman MP seat fell vacant after court nullified the election of Winnie Kizza over election irregularities. The contestants in this race include FDC's Winnie Kizza, NRM's Rehema Muhindo, and DP's Rosemary Masika.

Opening time of polling stations

CCEDU observers witnessed the opening of most polling stations and generally reported that voting started after 7:30am contrary to 7:00am as required by the laws of Uganda. The late start was mainly occasioned by the lack of the required presence of five (5) voters in the queue to witness the opening of the polling station. In other polling areas, election officials reported late arrival of voting materials.

Political party agents

While both the National resistance Movement (NRM) and the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) deployed agents at all the polling stations visited, deployment by the Democratic Party (DP) was relatively low and sparse.

Electoral Commission

- **Logistics**

At the Rwenzori Square B polling station, the appointed presiding officer Ms. Grace Muhindo was summarily dismissed for late coming and opening of the polling station and a polling assistant Mbusa Edson appointed to take her place.

CCEDU noted the overall improved logistical organization on the side of the Electoral Commission (EC). Apart from deploying relatively well trained officials to manage the polling exercise, the EC introduced and popularized a complaints reporting toll free line at its Kasese office which was a welcome step to the electorate in Kasese.

- **Registration glitches**

At various polling stations including Kamulikwizi Market, Rwenzori Square B and Saluti Church of Uganda, there were reports of voters who failed to their names missing in the voters roll while others found their ballots already cast.

- **Tallying at polling stations**

Polling officials in Nyamwamba division sealed the result declaration forms in the ballot boxes. The specific polling stations affected included: Kamulikwizi market, Nyakasanga Lower (L-Z), Rukoki Dispensary, Kizungu Malisere, Nyakasanga Upper, Kisagazi Church of Uganda, Kihara Trading Center and West Pentecostal Church. This could have been potentially occasioned by late or ineffective training for the election officials specifically in Nyamwamba division.

Voter turn-out

Out of a total of 303,127 voters in Kasese district, 161,174 voters turned up to cast their votes. This represents a voter turn-out of 53% which is a relatively high turnout for a bye election. Rains disrupted the voting process in many parts of Kasese district. Gender demographics indicate that more women turned up to vote.

Security deployment

Security deployment remained very heavy around polling stations. At Rwenzori square B, Bishop Masereka clinic Polling Station in Kasese town for instance there is a contingent of over thirty (30) armed UPDF soldiers were deployed hardly 20 meters from the Polling Station. CCEDU was concerned about the potentials of such irrational military deployment in the electoral process.

Phantom polling station

One polling station, Nyakasanga Kizungu market was subject to two interesting incidents. In one, the police were apparently duped into responding to a false report that there was ballot stashing in a nearby house. The police search revealed nothing.

Yet in another, vigilant citizens discovered a ghost polling station, the “Upper Nyakasanga Kizungu market polling station” had been set up complete with “registers and electoral officials”. Upon confirmation that it was a phantom polling station, citizens dismantled it and confiscated the “voting material.”

Violence

Cases of pre voting day violence were widely reported with arrests of many opposition supporters. No cases of violence were observed on voting day – the voting process went on devoid of any violence incidents. CCEDU would like to express concern about the escalating levels of pre-election violence in by-elections.

CCEDU Observer Mission – Kasese By-Election

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