



ISSUE 44 | *It's West Nile to the World* | 27TH JAN - 3RD FEB 2026



# PRESIDENT MUSEVENI PLEDGES INCREASED FUNDING AND TRANSPARENCY IN PDM AS UGANDA MARKS 40 YEARS OF LIBERATION

PAGE 23

# CONTENTS

25-Year-Old Lawrence Alionzi Declared Arua City Mayor in Overwhelming Victory | **5**

Gbalala Parish Sensitises Residents on Local Revenue Mobilisation To Improve Service Delivery | **6**

Independent candidate takes Nebbi Municipality as NRM retains Padyere seat in the recently concluded parliamentary race | **8**

Hidden Giants of Moyo: Why Mount Buce and Mount Otce Are Calling Adventurers | **10**

Nebbi District Leaders launch construction of UGX 371 Million Climate-Resilient Valley Dam in Kucwiny Sub-county | **11**

Nebbi District Partners with G4CA to Empower Out-of-School Girls With Climate-Smart Skills | **14**

NRM Dominates Greater Nebbi LC V Chairperson Races in the 2026 election | **16**

From Conflict to Growth: West Nile Residents Celebrate 40 Years of NRM/A Leadership | **17**

Obongi LCV Race Concludes as Leaders Call for Unity and Stability | **20**

Peace and Progress Propel NRM to Victory in Arua District Local Government Elections | **21**

President Museveni Pledges Increased Funding and Transparency in PDM as Uganda Marks 40 Years of Liberation | **23**

Liberation Day pictorial | **25**



# Editor's Note

## Chief Editor



**Diana Ayikoru,**  
Communication Officer, Arua  
District Local Government  
✉ dianeayiko@gmail.com  
👤 +256 773 192362

## 44th Edition

### Contributors

- ▶ Diana Ayikoru
- ▶ Dorothy Anguparu
- ▶ Moses Atule
- ▶ Alex Kayola
- ▶ Kenega Kenedy
- ▶ Odiya Godfrey
- ▶ Ociru Beatrice
- ▶ Capt DK Kamya



### Dear Esteemed Readers,

Welcome to the 44th edition of West Nile Today, your trusted platform for stories that capture the heartbeat, resilience, and steady transformation of the West Nile region.

As the nation marks the 40th NRM/A Liberation Anniversary today, we honour and salute the heroes whose sacrifices secured Uganda's liberation and laid the foundation for the peace, stability, and socio-economic transformation we continue to enjoy.

In this edition, we bring you comprehensive coverage of key developments shaping our region and country, including President Museveni's pledge to strengthen funding and transparency under the Parish Development Model (PDM) as Uganda commemorates 40 years of liberation. We also report on how peace and progress propelled the NRM to victory in the Arua District Local Government elections, alongside the historic election of 25-year-old Lawrence Alionzi as Arua City Mayor in an overwhelming victory.

Our features reflect both legacy and opportunity—from West Nile residents celebrating four decades of NRM/A leadership and the region's journey from conflict to growth, to the untapped tourism potential of Mount Buce and Mount Otce. We also highlight grassroots development efforts, including Gbalala Parish's sensitisation of residents on local revenue mobilisation to improve service delivery, and Nebbi District's partnership with G4CA to empower out-of-school girls with climate-smart skills.

These and many more stories emphasize a region on the move, anchored in unity, driven by development, and committed to sustainable progress.

Thank you for reading West Nile Today and for continuing to journey with us as we tell the stories that matter.

# 25-YEAR-OLD LAWRENCE ALIONZI DECLARED ARUA CITY MAYOR IN OVERWHELMING VICTORY

*By Dorothy Anguparu,  
Senior Communication  
Officer-Arua City*

The 25-year-old NRM flag bearer, Lawrence Alionzi, has been officially declared the elected Mayor of Arua City following a decisive win in the recently concluded mayoral elections held on Thursday 22nd January 2026.

According to the results released by the Electoral Commission on Friday 23rd January, Alionzi polled 32,663 votes, placing him far ahead of his rivals. Draecabo Trinity Ceasor, who contested as an independent candidate, came second with 3,197 votes, while Piriyo Gasper of the Democratic Party (DP) garnered 1,712 votes.

Election statistics indicate that a total of 37,572 valid votes were cast. Invalid votes stood at 927, bringing the total number of ballot papers cast to 38,499.

The election was largely peaceful, with voters turning up in significant numbers across polling stations in the city's divisions. Electoral officials commended the electorate for their calm and orderly conduct throughout the voting and tallying process.

Alionzi Lawrence Dangote, a youthful and vibrant leader, rose to national prominence



Alionzi with the Bishop of Madi and West Nile Diocese Rt. Rev. Collins Andaku in front of Emmanuel Cathedral.

during his tenure as Guild President of Makerere University, where he earned recognition for student advocacy, mobilization, and leadership. His transition into city politics has been closely watched, with many residents viewing his victory as a sign of growing confidence in young leaders to drive urban transformation.

In his post-election remarks, Alionzi thanked the people of Arua City for the trust bestowed upon him and pledged to serve inclusively, regardless of political affiliation. He emphasized his commitment to improving service delivery, strengthening urban infrastructure, creating opportunities for youth and women, and fostering transparent governance.



25 year old Arua City Mayor Elect Lawrence Alionzi

"I extend my utmost gratitude to God Almighty, the resilient people of

Arua City, and the tireless team that stood with me throughout this journey.

Together, we move forward in unity."

Political analysts describe the results as a clear mandate, noting that the wide margin reflects both effective grassroots mobilization and strong public appeal.

As Arua City embarks on a new five-year political term, residents and stakeholders have expressed optimism that the incoming mayor will deliver on his pledges to improve infrastructure, governance, and socio-economic opportunities for all.

## GBALALA PARISH SENSITISES RESIDENTS ON LOCAL REVENUE MOBILISATION TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

By Kenega Kenedy

Gbalala Parish in Laropi Sub-county, Moyo District, is strengthening efforts to improve local service delivery by deepening community understanding of Locally Raised Revenues (LRR) and their role in decentralised governance. As Uganda continues to shift away from heavy dependence on central government transfers, local leaders are emphasizing revenue mobilisation as a foundation for sustainable development.

To advance this goal, Laropi Sub-county conducted a revenue sensitisation exercise aimed at helping residents understand the relationship between taxes paid and services delivered within their communities.

The sensitisation brought together the Community Development Officer for Laropi Sub-county, Parish Chiefs, police officers, the accounts assistant, and residents of Gbalala Parish.

Addressing participants on behalf of the Sub-county Chief, the Community Development Officer, Mr.

Lagu Vincent, welcomed the community and outlined the objectives of the exercise including key revenue sources, and challenges faced in revenue collection and mobilisation.

The sensitisation aimed to bridge the gap between local government and taxpayers, as many residents often perceive taxes as a burden rather than a collective investment.

The initiative seeks to increase transparency by clearly showing how much revenue is collected and how it is spent, boost



Section of participants during the sensitization

compliance through voluntary payment of Local Service Tax (LST), market dues, and business licences, and promote accountability by empowering citizens to demand better services after meeting their tax obligations.

Despite facing challenges such as harsh climatic conditions that affect agriculture, Laropi Sub-county has both existing and untapped revenue sources. These include market and gate charges that support the maintenance of trading centres and hygiene in public spaces, Local Service Tax (LST) levied on gainful employment and business earnings within the parish, animal and crop husbandry levies collected from the movement and sale of livestock and produce, and business licences paid by shop owners and artisans operating in Gbalala.

Revenue performance in Gbalala Parish has been constrained by limited awareness among taxpayers about payment rates and deadlines. Policy changes requiring locally collected revenue to be remitted to the National Consolidated Fund before being returned to districts have also, at times, delayed local project implementation, contributing to taxpayer fatigue. In addition, poverty levels and climate change—particularly erratic rainfall affecting agricultural production—continue to influence the community's ability to meet tax obligations.

One community member, Mr. Tako Richard, appreciated the sub-county team for engaging directly with residents and providing accountability for previously collected revenue.

***‘I want to take this opportunity today to thank the team from the sub county for coming on ground to talk to us about revenue and the need to collect it as many of us do not know why we should pay but now we know, also giving accountability to the community on what the revenue collected previously was used for, thank you.’ Tako said***

Local leaders noted that sustaining services such as the maintenance of rural feeder roads depends on building a shared sense of responsibility between the local government and the community.

By fostering a revenue-conscious mindset, Gbalala Parish is positioning itself to support improved service delivery and long-term development in Laropi Sub-county and Moyo District.

# NRM CLAIMS TOTAL VICTORY IN GREATER NEBBI LCV CHAIRPERSON RACES



*Supporters of Emmanuel Ongiertho marching on the streets of Nebbi Municipality on their way for the celebrations at congoronya cell in Nebbi Municipality*

**By Odiya Godfrey  
,Communication Officer-  
Nebbi District**

Nebbi District witnessed mixed political fortunes in the recently concluded parliamentary elections held on 15th January 2026, with an Independent candidate clinching the Nebbi Municipality seat while the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) retained Padyere County, highlighting shifting voter dynamics in the area.

According to results officially declared by Denis Obong,

the Returning Officer for the Electoral Commission in Nebbi District, Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho Jor, running as an Independent candidate, emerged victorious in the hotly contested race for Member of Parliament for Nebbi Municipality. Ongiertho defeated the incumbent and NRM flag bearer Hon. Hashim Sulaiman in a tightly fought contest.

Ongiertho garnered 6,042 votes, while Hashim secured 5,168 votes. Other contenders included Olarker Ronald Alfred, who obtained 387 votes, and Jaruva Denis, who

polled 82 votes. A total of 11,679 votes were cast in the municipality, with 219 votes declared invalid.

The results marked a major political shift in Nebbi Municipality, as voters opted for an Independent candidate over the ruling party's flag bearer. Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho Jor previously served as Member of Parliament for Jonam County in Pakwach District from 2016 to 2026, before making the bold decision to contest in Nebbi Municipality.

Following the announcement



*Hon. Jackline Opar the candidate for the seat of Mayor Nebbi Municipality and NRM flagbearer (with national flag) and Hon. Emmanuel Ongieretho (on the left of Jackline) being blessed by traditional leaders from Ker Alur during their campaigns.*

of the results, Nebbi town erupted in celebration. Supporters of Ongieretho filled the streets with music and jubilation that stretched late into the night. However, the celebrations were not without tension, as some rival supporters played campaign songs mocking the defeat of the incumbent, reflecting the intensity of the electoral contest.

During a victory celebration held on Saturday, 17th January 2026, at Congoronya Cell in Nebbi Municipality, Hon. Ongieretho thanked voters for entrusting him with the leadership of Nebbi Municipality. He called for unity and reconciliation, urging residents to put aside political differences that emerged during the campaign period.

*“I thank the people of Nebbi Municipality for believing in me. Elections are now behind us. Let us unite and focus*

*on development, service delivery, and improving the lives of our people,”* Ongieretho said amid cheers from supporters.

**Meanwhile, in Padyere County, the NRM maintained its stronghold as the incumbent Member of Parliament and party flag bearer Hon. Isaac Otimgwu successfully defended his seat. Otimgwu defeated former MP Hon. Anywarach Joshua Carter in a competitive race.**

Otimgwu polled 32,073 votes out of 59,191 total votes cast, while Joshua, who served as Padyere MP from 2011 to 2021, received 25,725 votes. Another contender, Denis Oryema Olyeko, came third with 1,393 votes.

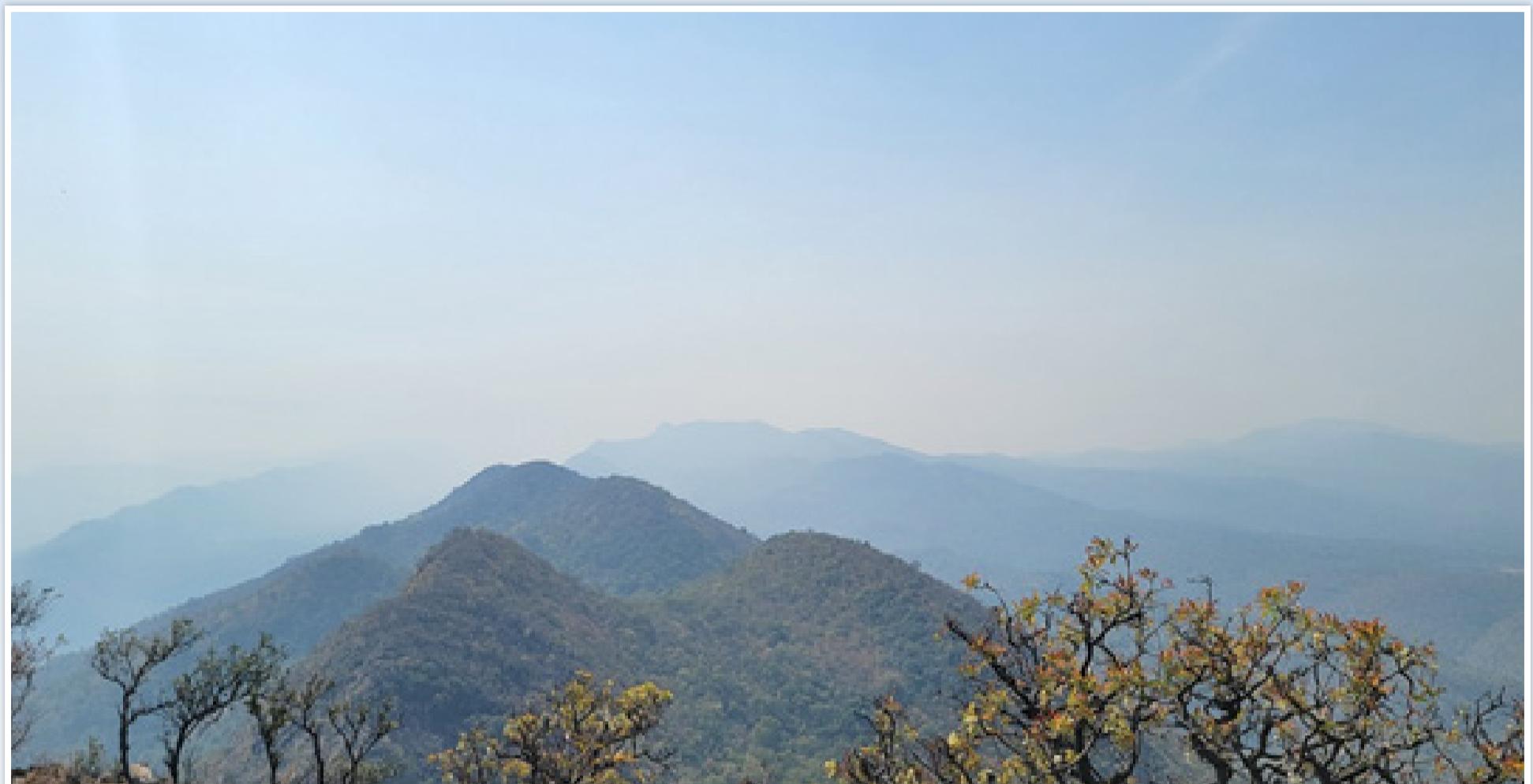
*This victory cements*

Otimgwu’s continued influence in Padyere, where he has served since reclaiming the seat from Joshua in 2021. Supporters of the NRM hailed the win as a vote of confidence in Otimgwu’s leadership and development agenda.

In the presidential race, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni dominated the polls in Nebbi District, securing 80.5 percent of the total votes cast, defeating his challengers by a wide margin.

The election outcomes in Nebbi District reflect a diverse political landscape, with voters demonstrating both loyalty to the ruling party and openness to independent leadership, signaling evolving democratic participation in the region.

# HIDDEN GIANTS OF MOYO: WHY MOUNT BUCE AND MOUNT OTCE ARE CALLING ADVENTURERS



*Above the peaks of mountain Buce*

**By Alex Kayola, Tourism officer- Moyo**

**M**oyo District is home to one of West Nile's most remarkable natural landmarks Mount Buce. Renowned for its unique triple-hill challenge, the mountain offers an exciting and culturally rich hiking experience in Otce Sub County.

The first peak, Mount Amu Kaari a Madi dialect term meaning "where visitors can get stuck" tests endurance and determination.

This is followed by Dari, the second peak, named for its flat, table-like summit with a descent. The final ascent

leads to the Buce Peak itself, a rewarding climax that draws adventure seekers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Located near the border with South Sudan, Mount Buce rises to an impressive 1,617 meters above sea level, making it

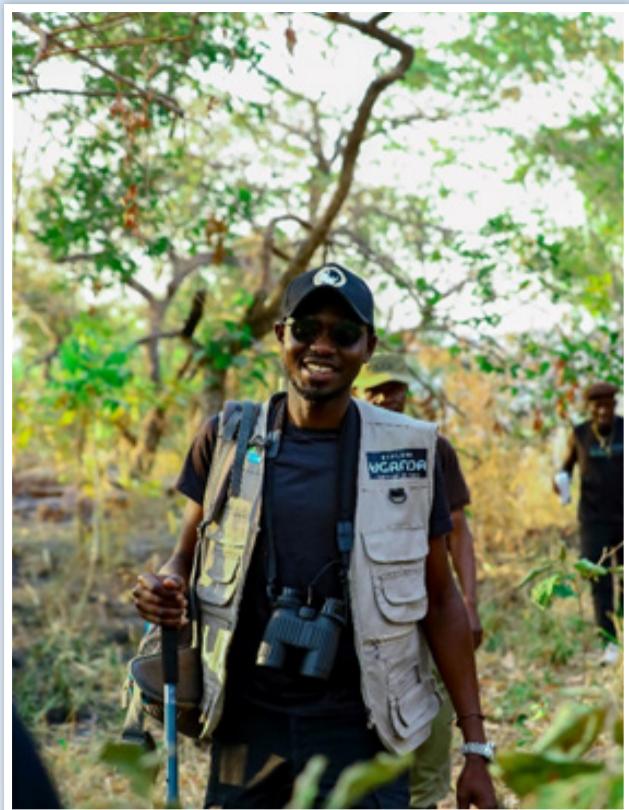
The highest mountain in the West Nile region. Along the trail, hikers encounter a rich variety of bird species and diverse indigenous trees.

One of the mountain's most unique features is an underground stream that provides safe, cold natural drinking water for hikers. From the higher elevations, visitors are also treated to scenic views of Fula Falls in

South Sudan. A full hike to the summit of Mount Buce typically takes about seven hours and is recommended



*Revelers at the Peak of Mt. Buce*



Alex Kayola Tourism Officer Moyo Trekking

for experienced or professional hikers.

Nearby, stands Mount Otce, the second-highest peak in the region at 1,563 metres above sea level. Overlooking the majestic Albert Nile as it flows toward South Sudan, Mount Otce offers breathtaking panoramic views. The mountain features two hiking trails: a shorter, beginner-friendly route from Eremi that takes approximately one hour, and a longer, more challenging trail from Dufile, which takes

between five and seven hours.

Together, Mount Buce and Mount Otce showcase the rugged beauty, cultural depth, and untapped tourism potential of Otce Sub-county. Their diverse landscapes and hiking experiences position Moyo District as a rising destination for hiking, exploration, and eco-tourism in the West Nile region.

## NEBBI DISTRICT LEADERS LAUNCH CONSTRUCTION OF UGX 371 MILLION CLIMATE-RESILIENT VALLEY DAM IN KUCWINY SUB-COUNTY

**By Odiya Godfrey,  
Communication Officer-  
Nebbi District**

Nebbi District leaders have officially launched the construction of a UGX 371 million valley dam at Jupala Central North Village in Kucwiny Sub-county, a project aimed at addressing persistent water shortages, enhancing climate resilience, and improving livestock and household livelihoods in the area.

The launching ceremony was held on Tuesday, 20th January 2026, and brought together district leaders, technical officers,

community members, and representatives of the contractor, PEGOSA Engineering and Construction Company Limited.

The Assistant District Water Officer (Civil), Brian Chothembo, while briefing leaders ahead of the launching explained that the valley dam has been



*The view of the location of the valley dam to be constructed in Jupala in Kucwiny Sub County*



Abak Robert Resident District Commissioner (Left) accompanied by Muluuta Mugagga, Deputy Chief Administration and Emmanuel Urombi District Chairperson (on right of the DCAO) handing over the contact documents to Samuel Omara, Director PEGOSA Engineering and Construction Company Limited

designed with climate resilience and sustainability in mind. He noted that the project will consist of eight check dams intended to slow down surface runoff, reduce soil erosion, and minimize silting.

**“The check dams will temporarily hold water before it flows into the main structure, which is an earth dam. This design will ensure the dam remains functional for a long time,” Chothembo said.**

He further explained that the dam will include gabions for reinforcement, animal troughs for cattle and goats, and properly designed spillways to prevent flooding and structural failure. The entire facility will be fenced to improve safety and protect the infrastructure.

Chothembo cautioned community members, especially children, against

swimming in the dam to avoid drowning accidents. He added that the dam, with a capacity of 10 cubic meters and a catchment area of approximately three kilometers, and is expected to be completed within five months.

The Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Muluuta Mugagga, reminded residents that the project comes at a critical time when climate change has significantly disrupted weather patterns, leading to prolonged droughts and destructive floods that have negatively affected livelihoods.

“Government approved this project to help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. I urge you to closely monitor the works and protect the materials of the contractor to avoid shoddy work. Stealing materials will only hurt the community,” Mugagga said.

Hon. Kisa Lawrence Ojok, the Area Councilor for Kucwiny Sub-county and Secretary for Finance at the district, commended the District Council for prioritizing the sub-county for the project. He called for unity and teamwork among residents to ensure the dam benefits everyone.

**“This dam will help reduce water stress and control the spread of animal pests and diseases. I also appeal to the district to consider supporting other communities with similar water projects,” Ojok added.**

He urged the community to safeguard the project to ensure quality work that will serve future generations. Urombi also encouraged residents to use the economic benefits from the dam wisely to improve household incomes and standards of living.



Community members gather to witness the handover of the site for construction of the dam in Jupala

The Resident District Commissioner, Robert Abak, used the occasion to criticize environmental degradation in the area, blaming poor land-use practices for worsening climate impacts.

**“You must allow the environment to regenerate. This project must give value for money, and that starts with protecting the environment around it,” Abak said.**

Doreen Fualing, the District Natural Resources Officer, emphasized community involvement during implementation and encouraged residents to cooperate with the contractor. She also advised the community to explore fish cage farming, noting that the dam is large and deep enough to support appropriate aquaculture activities.

“This project can also be used for irrigation and fish

farming, which will increase household incomes,” Fualing said, adding that the project is funded by the Government of Uganda with support from the United Kingdom under a climate resilience program.

The valley dam is expected to significantly improve access to water for livestock, reduce conflicts over water resources, support irrigation, and strengthen the community’s resilience to climate change in Kucwiny Sub-county.

**“Government approved this project to help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. I urge you to closely monitor the works and protect the materials of the contractor to avoid shoddy work. Stealing materials will only hurt the community,” Mugagga said.**

# NEBBI DISTRICT PARTNERS WITH G4CA TO EMPOWER OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS WITH CLIMATE-SMART SKILLS



Nebbi District Leaders during an inception meeting with a team from Girls for Climate Action in the Council Boardroom

**By Odiya Godfrey ,  
Communication Officer-  
Nebbi District**

**G**irls for Climate Action (G4CA) is set to train 50 out-of-school girls in Nebbi District in practical climate-resilient and livelihood skills aimed at promoting self-reliance, environmental protection, and improved household incomes.

The initiative was unveiled during an inception meeting

held on Thursday, 8th January 2026, at the Nebbi District Headquarters, where district leaders were briefed about the scope and objectives of the project. The meeting brought together political and technical leaders whose support was sought to ensure effective implementation and community ownership.

Addressing the leaders, G4CA Project Manager, Serumaga Howood, said the project is designed to

empower vulnerable girls who dropped out of school by equipping them with hands-on skills that respond to climate change while creating income-generating opportunities.

According to Serumaga, the beneficiaries will be trained in mushroom growing and nursery bed management, both of which are climate-smart agricultural practices that require minimal land and capital but offer sustainable returns.

The girls will also acquire skills in making clay stoves, an environmentally friendly technology that reduces deforestation and household fuel costs. In addition, the training will include the production of organic fertilizers to promote sustainable farming and soil conservation.

***“This project is coming with resources meant to skill girls in Nebbi District. We are targeting 50 out-of-school girls and we need the support of district leaders to help us reach the right beneficiaries who can champion climate protection within their communities,” Serumaga said.***

Beyond livelihood skills, the project will also integrate health and social empowerment components. Serumaga noted that the girls will be supported to know their HIV status and receive guidance on sexual and reproductive health, which he described as critical to enabling them live healthy, productive, and meaningful lives.

The project will run until April 2026, and applications from interested out-of-school girls are already open. Serumaga encouraged local leaders, especially at parish and village levels, to intensify mobilization so that eligible girls are informed and able to apply.

To ensure sustainability, the trainees will receive mentorship after the training. Serumaga explained that the girls will be attached to experienced practitioners in their respective fields to gain practical experience and confidence, enabling them to establish and manage their own livelihood ventures successfully.

Girls for Climate Action is a youth- and young women-led organization working to advance climate justice, strengthen community resilience, and support inclusive, locally driven climate solutions. The organization implements programs that focus on climate education, environmental governance, green livelihoods, and the protection and empowerment of environmental human rights defenders, particularly women and youth.

The project is funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Spotlight Initiative Joint Programme through Gender for Development Uganda (G4DU) and the Defenders Project. The initiative aims to enhance access to green livelihood opportunities for out-of-school youth, especially young women, while strengthening the capacity of environmental human rights defenders and youth- and women-led civil society organizations to engage in coordinated

climate and environmental justice actions at both community and district levels.

**The Nebbi District Vice Chairperson, Geoffrey Okello Anecho, pledged the district's commitment to support its successful implementation. He urged leaders to use the initiative as a tool to transform the lives of girls who are often marginalized because they are out of school.**

***“Being out of school does not mean failure in life. Dropping out of school does not mean the end of the world. Some people leave school but later find success and meaning in other aspects of life,” Geoffrey said.***

He called upon leaders to mobilize out-of-school girls to express interest in the training and encouraged transparency in the selection process. He emphasized that only committed beneficiaries should be admitted to ensure that the skills acquired are put to good use and contribute meaningfully to household incomes, environmental protection, and the overall development of Nebbi District.

# NRM DOMINATES GREATER NEBBI LC V CHAIRPERSON RACES IN THE 2026 ELECTION

**By Odiya Godfrey**  
**Communication Officer -**  
**Nebbi District**

The ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party has firmly consolidated its political dominance in Greater Nebbi after sweeping all Local Council Five (LC V) Chairperson positions in the recently concluded general elections held on Thursday, 22nd January 2026.

Greater Nebbi comprises of three districts—Nebbi, Pakwach, and Zombo—which were originally part of the former Nebbi District before administrative separation. Results declared by district electoral officials show that NRM candidates emerged victorious across all three districts, reinforcing the party's stronghold in the region.

In Nebbi District, the Electoral Commission Returning Officer, Denis Obong, officially declared Mr. George Othuba, the NRM flag bearer, as the winner of the LC V Chairperson seat. Othuba garnered 28,526 votes, overwhelmingly defeating his closest rival, Mr. Alex Oyirwoth, the current Chairperson LCIII for Kucwiny Sub County who contested as an independent candidate and secured only 3,728 votes. The landslide victory gave Othuba a vote

margin of 24,798.

Othuba's victory marks a major political breakthrough after a long and persistent political journey. He has previously contested for the Nebbi District chairperson seat four times without success. He first entered the race in 2011, losing to Mr. Robert Okumu. In 2016, he was again defeated by the late William Esrom Alenyo. Othuba later lost the 2018 by-election and the 2021 general elections to the incumbent Chairperson, Mr. Emmanuel Urombi.

Notably, Othuba had previously contested as an independent candidate before recently crossing over to the NRM. He successfully won the party primaries and contested the 2026–2031 term as the NRM flag bearer, a move that appears to have significantly boosted his political fortunes.

Speaking after announcing the results, Returning Officer Denis Obong described the election process as generally free and fair.



**George Othuba, District Chairperson elect for Nebbi District**

However, he expressed concern over the low voter turnout recorded during the LC V elections compared to the presidential and parliamentary polls held earlier on 15th January 2026.

**“The turnout was relatively low. Many voters participated actively in the presidential and parliamentary elections, but the numbers dropped significantly during the District Chairperson races,” Obong noted.**

Some voters attributed the low turnout to the absence

of voter mobilization tactics seen in previous elections.

Mr. Elvis Ogen, a voter in Nebbi Municipality, observed that during the presidential and parliamentary elections, some mobilizers supporters called voters from one home to another, a practice that was largely absent during the LC V elections.

In Pakwach District, NRM's Shabban Ofoi Kinobe was declared the winner of the LC V Chairperson race after securing 17,961 votes. He defeated independent candidate Gibiriel Oriekwun, who obtained 13,325 votes, giving Kinobe a winning margin of 4,636 votes.

Meanwhile, in Zombo District, NRM's James Oyulu Orona

who is also the incumbent was elected unopposed and is now awaiting official swearing-in.

The results highlight NRM's continued political influence in Greater Nebbi as the region prepares for the next five-year term of local government leadership.

## FROM CONFLICT TO GROWTH: WEST NILE RESIDENTS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF NRM/A LEADERSHIP



A section of the Vurra-Arua-Koboko-Oraba road

**By Moses Atule,  
Communication Officer  
Maracha District**

Monday, 26th January 2026, marked the 40th anniversary of the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A)

liberation struggle, a milestone that ushered in the current government. To mark the occasion, the Coordinator of the Office of the National Chairman (ONC) in Maracha District, Hon. Dicky Alema, shared his reflections on the NRM/A's impact and what the

anniversary symbolizes for the West Nile region.

**Q: What is your personal assessment of West Nile, 40 years under the NRM rule?**

One notable thing the NRM government has done is

the issue of peace, you are aware in West Nile, there have been a lot of cases of uncertainty, where people used to have restless lives, and there were rampant cases of killing, gunshots everywhere, many of our parents went to exile in DR-Congo, others took refuge in Sudan. It really negatively impacted on our people.

That explains why there's still biting poverty in this sub-region. When the NRM government came in power, things began changing slowly but surely, and then you even know there is the Joseph Kony war. It also took time for this current government to flush Kony out of this region, the thing the NRM government has done, ushering into this nation, particularly the West Nile sub-region is peace.

***Q: Do you think the people of West Nile have been able to utilize the prevailing peace to grow the sub-region?***

There have been programs centered on wealth creation, ranging from NAADs, Operation Wealth Creation, somebody can now even talk about Emyoga, things to do with PDM, which is now the talk of the season. But the biggest challenge we have with our people is the issue of mindset which is still a very big problem for us here in the sub-region.

Some people still think that whatever the government gives to them belongs to the government. They spend it the way they want; they

don't plan it well. But those who are wise, who are able to know that this money is given for them and it is an opportunity, they're able to invest it very well and have progressed. If I even see the example of Arua City, many people are able to get a livelihood, others bought cars, which they were able to put on the road, those who ventured in things to do with the welding and all that, you can see.

***Q: How do you think West Nile should be strategically best positioned to draw in additional resources from government?***

First of all, the location of West Nile sub-region, we actually have the advantage, because we border at least two countries: South Sudan and the DR-Congo. One key thing our people, or our leaders in West Nile, need to push the government to do is to ensure that the government of Uganda has talks with the government of DR-Congo so that we have a very direct link between Uganda and DR-Congo, in terms of, maybe, a road which can connect, especially from Arua or Maracha, to the border here up to Kinshasa, the capital city of Congo.

That can give an opportunity for our goods to move there, and business opportunities for our youth, and all that. Even South Sudan, you are aware, ours is now from Kampala up to Oruba. The road is now fairly good; I am grateful for that. And

in between here, we have challenges. The government is now working on roads. If the government can also convince South Sudan to enter into an agreement so that the road from Kaya up to Juba is also worked on.

I think that would also be a very big opportunity for us. We already have power with high voltage. Why some of these other sub-regions are developing is because of the issue of industrialization, which is very key. We need to attract industries here in West Nile.

***Q: Do you think the fruits of decentralization can be seen in the sub-region?***

Well, the initiative of decentralizing the governance is very good. But our biggest challenge is the issue of corruption, which all of us, the leaders of West Nile, need to bring our heads together to collectively fight. The fragmentation of these units here is actually so good that services are brought closer to the population. They will know where to get assistance in case of any gap, and monies will reach the grassroots directly.

That is the beauty of decentralization. People are also given the opportunity and privilege to manage themselves within that locality, and then they will feel the power of governance in their community. But what is biting us now is the issue of corruption, which is actually across the country.

**Q: The majority of the young people in West Nile have been born in this regime, how we bring them on board so that they are part of the conversations that drive the region,**

One error I've seen with us, especially in the sub-region we have lost our parental responsibility completely. Why have most of the youth gone on the road, or they in the trading centers, and not doing constructive things that can generate income for them and all that? It's because parents have abandoned their responsibility.

Then, secondly, the mindset that after finishing a certain level of education, I am supposed to, as a youth, get to an office and then start working, doing paperwork. One fact we need to understand as Ugandans is: our population is now big. We are 45 million plus people. And looking at the available resources, we now need to

think outside, actually, the available number of jobs in this country.

We can't all be accommodated in those white-collar jobs. We need to bring the minds of our young people together; as leaders, we need to design programs which we can align with the young people in order to see that they are accommodated.

**Q: You mentioned something about poverty, and the message at President Museveni's heart is that of improving household income, how do you get this message into the hearts and the minds of the grassroot people in West Nile.**

Well, the President has been emphasizing the issue of the four-acre model. But now, unfortunately, with the population we have in West Nile, especially Maracha district, you may not find a family, like even me as

a person; it is very rare that someone has two or three acres of land now in Maracha.

Practicing the four-acre model the way he has designed it practically may not be possible. But you can scale down. You can start with things like poultry farming, goat rearing on small scale.

Eventually you will expand it. But it is unfortunate that this PDM, money has been mismanaged by very many of our people. The issue here is just the mindset.

Once this money is obtained, others go directly and start buying household items. Our people are just in the present. I also sometimes blame our technical officers, although they're doing a lot, you know, the issue of sensitization. We need that cooperation between the political and technical people and then also from the communities.

**NRM/A day is more than a commemoration of the liberation struggle, it is a celebration of peace, stability, and opportunities for national development. For West Nile, the 40-year journey under NRM rule symbolizes the transition from conflict and insecurity to stability, economic empowerment, and community-led progress. The anniversary is a reminder that the achievements of peace and growth are the foundation upon which future generations can build, and it emphasizes the ongoing responsibility of leaders and communities to protect these gains and ensure inclusive development.**

# OBONGI LCV RACE CONCLUDES AS LEADERS CALL FOR UNITY AND STABILITY



Left Hon Haj. Abibu Buga Khemis LCV elect Obongi in NRM shirt and cap, Mbinbaza Hasaka Samuel (centre in African print shirt) RDC Obongi together with supporters during recent campaigns in Obongi.

**By Ociru Beatrice-  
Communication Officer  
Obongi**

The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Obongi, Samuel Mpimbaza Hasaka, has called for calm, reconciliation, and restraint among candidates and their supporters following the recently concluded parliamentary and district elections, warning that rising political tensions are threatening community security.

Hasaka said the political environment in Obongi had become heated and,

in some instances, chaotic, with reports of insecurity emerging among supporters of rival candidates.

He cautioned that his office would not condone any unlawful acts by individuals seeking to disrupt peace, noting that some unruly supporters were turning parts of the district into battlegrounds simply because of election outcomes.

The RDC made the remarks on Wednesday, 21st January 2026, while addressing candidates for Local Council V (LCV) and District Local Councillors (DLCs) at the Electoral Commission

offices in Obongi, ahead of the upcoming local council elections. He urged candidates to take responsibility for their camps and exercise control over supporters who at times engage in violent or disorderly conduct.

He commended residents who remained peaceful during the presidential and parliamentary elections and encouraged them to maintain the same level of discipline and calm throughout the remainder of the political season.

However, Hasaka raised concerns over reported irregularities in the electoral

process, noting that in some parts of the district, individuals were found in possession of multiple voter location slips. He warned that the issue was already breeding mistrust in the electoral system, as some people allegedly voted more than once using different polling locations.

The RDC further revealed that intelligence reports had indicated that some refugees in Palorinya Refugee Settlement had been registered on the national voters' register and were in possession of National Identification Cards.

He described this as a criminal act, stressing that non-nationals are not legally entitled to vote or hold national IDs. He called upon the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to investigate the matter and ensure that refugees do not unlawfully participate in citizens' political activities.

Responding to the concerns,

the Obongi District Returning Officer, Mr. Innocent Akena, acknowledged that the issue of multiple voter slips was an administrative error for which the Electoral Commission would take responsibility. He said the commission would verify and clean the data ahead of the remaining polls. Akena also appealed to the public to remain vigilant and report suspected cases to authorities, warning that anyone caught voting multiple times would be prosecuted as a deterrent to others exploiting the system.

Meanwhile, in the Obongi LCV race, the incumbent chairperson, Hon. Haj Buga Abibu Khemis, the NRM flag bearer, retained his seat after defeating four contenders. Abibu secured 5,984 votes, followed closely by Akuma Francis Agandru with 5,467 votes. Rashid Khalili Azabo Kenyingopi, an independent candidate, garnered 1,665 votes, Siraji Karala received 501 votes,

while Taibo Muzamil of the FDC obtained 201 votes.

**Akena Innocent, the District Returning Officer, subsequently declared Buga Abibu the LCV Chairperson-elect for the 2026–2031 term. An emotional Abibu expressed gratitude to the people of Obongi for renewing their trust in his leadership, saying the victory reflected confidence in his previous performance.**

He pledged to intensify efforts to fight poverty in his second term, emphasizing that improving livelihoods and community welfare would be his top priority upon assuming office in June. He also identified education as a sector requiring urgent intervention, promising it would be among the first areas he would address.

## PEACE AND PROGRESS PROPEL NRM TO VICTORY IN ARUA DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

*By Diana Ayikoru,  
Communication Officer-  
Arua District*

**A**rua District voters have overwhelmingly reaffirmed their support for the national Resistance Movement Party

(NRM) party in the recently concluded local and national elections.

Ayikobua Cosmas the NRM flag bearer, won the local government seat decisively securing 14,000 votes, defeating his closest rival, an independent candidate, who

polled 6,000 votes.

In the recently concluded presidential elections, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Tibuhaburwa secured 84 per cent of the total votes cast in Arua, outperforming all opposition and independent candidates.



Arua District NRM LC5 flag bearer Hon. Osmas Ayikobua

At parliamentary level, the incumbent Woman Member of Parliament for Arua District, Hon. Paparu Lilian, retained her seat unopposed on the NRM ticket. Meanwhile, Lenia Charity Kevin, the NRM flag bearer for Vurra Constituency, emerged victorious after polling 20,000 votes, defeating independent candidate and former State Minister for Finance, Aridru Gabriel Ajedra, who garnered 12,000 votes.

Interviews with members of the local community reveal strong support for the NRM government, largely attributed to peace and

security achieved over the years.

**“NRM government has brought security and peace that has seen us raise our children in one place. It was so painful to escape to Congo with hot pot of food on your head, recalled Ndribaru Betty.”**

She urged the younger generation not to be swayed by calls for change of power, recounting her personal experiences during the conflict:

**“I remember I had given birth to one of your big brothers Tom, but at the cross of the river, two people stand in the river as I threw the baby to Eyoma in the river, Eyoma passed the baby to Candia and Candia threw him like a ball to your aunt Sunday like a ball. We had to comeback in the night to harvest food in the night and return before daybreak.”**

The enthusiasm among residents of Vurra turned

the NRM campaign slogan “Protecting the gains” into a household phrase. Many young voters, having grown up hearing accounts of war and displacement, expressed firm support for continuity, with some saying, “I will vote for Mzee because I am not ready to run”.

Notably, several independent candidates at various levels continued campaigning for their individual positions while openly urging voters to support H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for president.

**Residents of Arua District say they have high expectations from the president in the next term, including the upgrading of health centres, creation of additional administrative units, construction of roads, and improvement of other social amenities.**

Records further indicate that all councillors in Arua District are NRM-affiliated, emphasizing the party's overwhelming dominance in the district.



# PRESIDENT MUSEVENI PLEDGES INCREASED FUNDING AND TRANSPARENCY IN PDM AS UGANDA MARKS 40 YEARS OF LIBERATION



President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni arriving at the Kololo ceremonial grounds to commemorate the 40th NRM/A Liberation Day

**By Capt DK Kamya, 4 Infantry Division-Public Information Officer**

The Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) joined the rest of the country to commemorate the 40th Liberation Day at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds in Kampala, marking four decades since the National Resistance Movement/Army ushered in what is widely described as a fundamental change in Uganda's political and socio-economic trajectory.

Held under the theme "Tribute to Our Patriots Who Ushered in the Fundamental Change," the ceremony attracted national leaders, senior military officers, religious and cultural leaders, and members of the public.

In his address, the President and Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency Gen (Rtd) Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, said Uganda's economy is currently growing at about seven percent, attributing the progress to deliberate policy choices aimed at strengthening domestic

production.

"Our economy is now growing at about seven percent, and Ugandan supermarkets are stocking almost 75 percent locally produced goods. In the past, it was nearly 100 percent imported," President Museveni said.

The President noted that significant progress had been made over the years. He said that by 2019, only 39 percent of households were not yet participating in the money economy, a situation that informed his decision



*H.E the President and CIC of Uganda inspecting the parade during the 40th NRM victory day anniversary celebrations at Kololo ceremonial grounds on 26th Jan 2026*

to introduce direct financial support to citizens through the Parish Development Model (PDM).

“That is when I decided we should give money directly to the people,” he said, adding that while most beneficiaries had used the funds appropriately, some had diverted the money.

President Museveni stressed that access to PDM funds must be guided by inclusivity and transparency, calling for decisions to be made through general parish meetings.

“PDM must be discussed in a meeting of the whole parish, especially for those who want to fight poverty, as long as he or she is above 18 years,” he said.

He announced plans to amend the PDM guidelines to allow for increased funding,

particularly in urban areas.

“We are going to amend the rules, and more money will be added. In towns, between Shs 400 million and Shs 500 million will be allocated,” he said.

The President issued a stern warning to parish officials accused of frustrating the programme and urged citizens to actively join parish SACCOs.

**“Go and be members of the parish SACCO. Any parish chief who does not cooperate with this programme should be arrested. Some parish chiefs have already been arrested because of selfishness,” he said.**

President Museveni warned National Resistance Movement members

involved in the misuse of PDM funds that they would face severe consequences. He said such individuals would be removed from leadership positions and compelled to refund the misappropriated funds, reiterating the government’s policy of zero tolerance for corruption.

The President further said government efforts are focused on shifting Uganda’s economic model towards inclusive growth, with targeted interventions for unemployed university graduates and vulnerable groups. “We want everyone to benefit from the economy, including graduates who have stayed unemployed for two years,” he said,

Museveni cited initiatives such as ghetto funds, road rehabilitation on both murram and tarmac roads,



Members of the public celebrating the 40 years of liberation at Kololo

which have expanded access to education where resources permit, and strengthened health services.

He reaffirmed that

Uganda's development priorities remain agro-industrialisation, tourism, and value addition, noting that these sectors hold the greatest potential for job

creation and income growth.

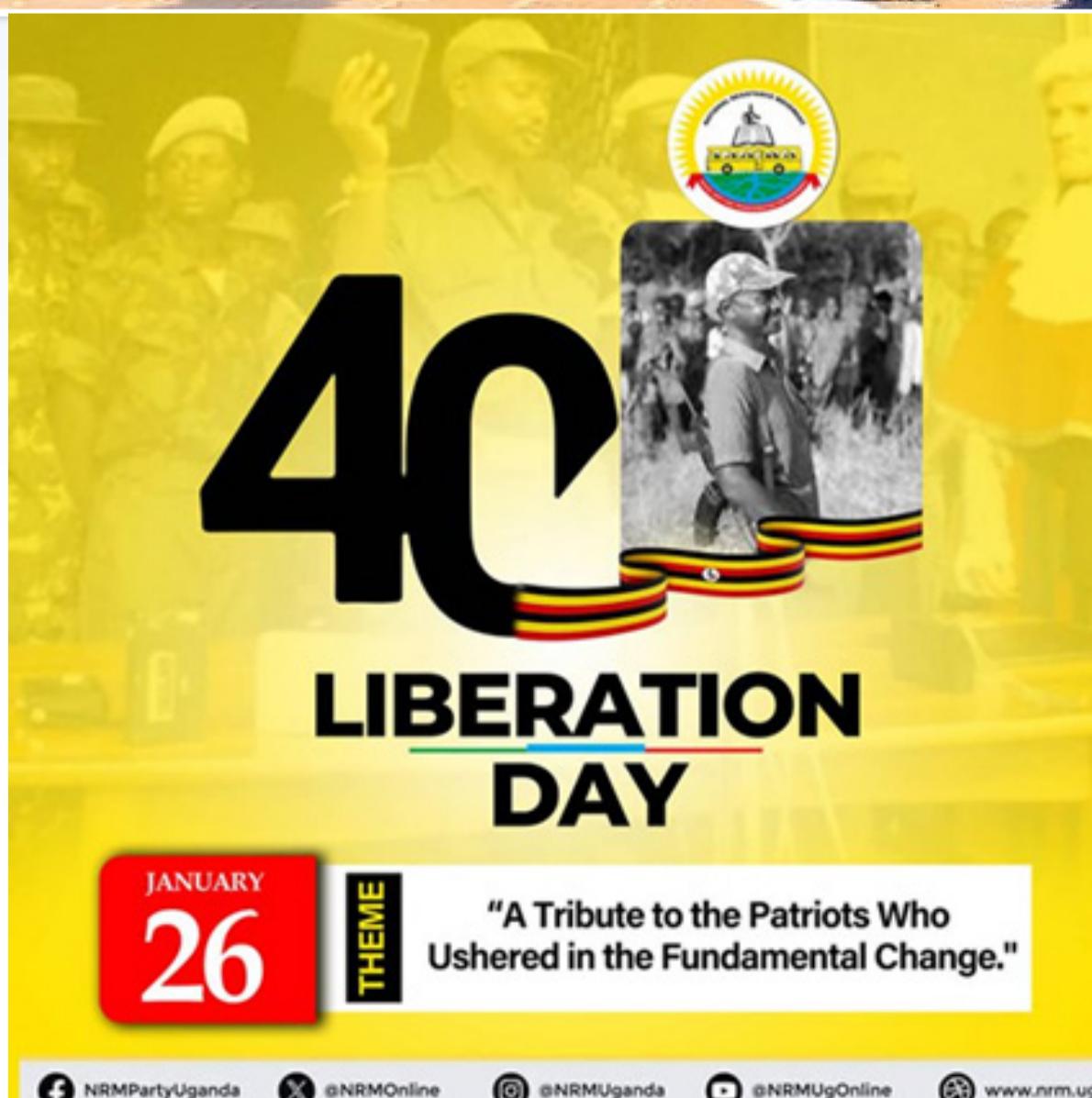
**“These are the sectors that will create jobs, raise incomes, and move more Ugandans into the formal economy,” he said.**

The ceremony was attended by Vice President Jessica Alupo, Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, Speaker of Parliament Anita Among, Deputy Chief of Defence Forces Lt Gen Sam Okiding, Chief of Joint Staff Lt Gen Jack Bakasumba, senior and junior UPDF officers, religious and cultural leaders, and other dignitaries.

## LIBERATION DAY PICTORIAL







**WEST NILE TODAY**  
is published by the District Communication  
Officers of West Nile Sub-Region.

**Contact Us**

**Ayikoru Diana**  
dianeayiko@gmail.com  
+256 773 192362

**Paraa Bridge | 520m | Murchison Falls N.P**



**UGANDA**