



PRESS RELEASE

CSOs Demand Concrete Anti-Corruption Measures and Campaign Finance Reforms

Kampala, Friday 20th June 2025

We, the **undersigned civil society organisations** – Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM), Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), ActionAid International Uganda (AAIU), Transparency International Uganda (TIU) and Uganda Debt Network (UDN) - reaffirm our commitment to advancing transparency, accountability and efficient use of public resources in Uganda.

During the recent national budget address, President Yoweri Museveni rightly condemned the use of money to gain political support that is not grounded in principles or policies. We welcome the government's state intentions to combat corruption through measures such as penalizing tax evasion, punishing corrupt officers and taxpayers who collude with URA staff, enhancing digital systems to minimize human discretion, investing in forensic audits, expanding judicial infrastructure and improving access to justice.

However, we remain concerned that entrenched political patronage and selective enforcement continue to undermine anti-corruption efforts. The justification of presidential gifts – commonly referred to as “kaki envelopes” – on budgetary grounds is a flawed rationale. Such informal disbursements perpetuate irregular campaign financing, weaken institutional performance, and contribute to inflated project costs and misallocation of critical resources. The “kaki envelopes” are a threat-multiplier to political accountability.

Election **campaign financing** remains a primary driver of corruption. Evidence from studies published by ACFIM and other research institutions on the cost of politics, confirm a direct link between unchecked campaign spending and corrupt practices, including voter bribery which despite being forbidden by the Presidential Elections Act 2005 (as amended) and the Parliamentary Elections Act 2005 (as amended), continues to be practiced. In a political system dominated by monetised campaigns, electoral contests are often funded by illicit means.

Corruption-driven fiscal pressure within electoral spending threatens budget execution and debt sustainability in Uganda. As of June 2025, Uganda's public debt has surged to UGX 116 trillion, with UGX 27 trillion allocated to debt servicing in the FY2025/26 budget—consuming nearly half of domestic revenues and limiting critical development spending. Additionally, UGX 73 billion in commitment fees on undisbursed loans highlights inefficiencies in project execution, largely due to bureaucratic delays and governance gaps.

Corruption remains a key structural driver of these fiscal pressures. Irregular procurement, inflated project costs, and diversion of funds—especially during politically sensitive periods—have led to systemic losses and stalled development. As the 2026 elections approach, the risk of

election-related corruption, including vote buying, misuse of state resources, and politically motivated budget reallocations, is expected to intensify. These practices exacerbate borrowing needs and weaken enforcement mechanisms, deepening a cycle of wasteful expenditure and public mistrust.

While we commend the increased budget allocation to the Administration of Justice - rising from UGX 481.4 billion in FY2024/25 to UGX 602.7 billion – we note that a disproportionate share of 72% is allocated to the Judiciary, while the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) receives only UGX 98.7 billion, representing 16.4%. This imbalance hampers the prosecutorial process and weakens the integrity of the justice system.

The ODPP's ability to fulfill its constitutional mandate under article 120(3) of the constitution of the Republic of Uganda, is severely constrained by inadequate funding and systemic inefficiencies. According to the Auditor General's Report for FY2023/24, the ODPP failed to meet its annual performance targets:

Description	Target	Actual
Criminal cases prosecuted	200,000	195,656
New criminal cases pursued	120,000	97,993
Cases sanctioned for prosecution	80,000	61,009

Contributing factors include weak investigations, high case dismissal rates and poor data systems.

Additionally, a 26% case backlog – far above the third National Development Plan (NDPIII) target of 10% - reveals the strain on Uganda's justice sector. The absence of a functional witness protection law further discourages victims and witnesses from coming forward, undermining prosecutions and consequently eroding public confidence.

Key Demands

To enhance the fight against corruption and ensure meaningful electoral reform, we call for the following:

1. Urgent Legislative Action:

- Enact a comprehensive Campaign Finance Law** to ensure transparency, set spending limits, guarantee reporting on campaign spending, and impose penalties for illicit campaign funding.
- Pass a Witness Protection Law** to safeguard individuals participating in criminal and anti-corruption proceedings as witnesses.

2. Institutional Strengthening:

- Allocate sufficient, equitable funding to anti-corruption and prosecutorial agencies such as IG and ODPP.
- Guarantee the legal and operational independence of these institutions to act without political interference

3. Fiscal and Governance Reforms:

- i. Adhere strictly to public investment protocols, especially during electoral cycles.
- ii. Uphold debt ceilings and protect development project funding from political interference.
- iii. Depoliticize fiscal decisions to ensure macroeconomic stability and continuity in public service delivery.

4. Civic Responsibility: We call upon citizens of Uganda to reject vote-buying acts of political opportunists who offer money and gifts, report corruption, demand transparency, and vote for candidates with integrity.

5. CSOs and Media: Step up monitoring public finances and election campaigns, engage in civic education and use investigative journalism to expose corruption and demand accountability.

6. Political parties:

- i. Commit to conduct clean campaigns by rejecting illicit donations and “dirty money”, and the misuse of state resources during campaigns.
- ii. Promote internal democracy and reduce monetisation of the process of selecting flag-bearers.

We stand united in calling for a political culture grounded in accountability, transparency, and the public interest. Without decisive reforms and robust enforcement, the fight against corruption will remain an elusive ideal.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

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