

**PRESS STATEMENT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Kampala, Thursday 16th October 2025**

**CSOs Demand Bold Action to Stop Monetised Elections and Restore Electoral Integrity in Uganda**

We, the undersigned Civil Society Organizations—Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM), Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), Action Aid International Uganda (AAIU), Transparency International Uganda (TIU), and Uganda Debt Network (UDN)—extend our congratulations to Justice Aisha Naluzze Bataala on her appointment as Inspector General of Government (IGG). Her leadership marks a pivotal moment for Uganda’s anti-corruption crusade.

But Justice Naluzze also stands at a crossroads: will she continue the tradition of ignoring electoral corruption, or will she break the cycle and confront the elephant in Uganda’s political room—the **commercialisation of politics**?

**Uganda’s Democracy Is on Sale—and Everyone Knows It**

With only six months to the 2026 General Elections, political campaigns are already awash with unregulated money. Flagbearers are being auctioned off, voters bribed in broad daylight, and campaign budgets bloated by illicit and opaque funds. This is not just bad politics—it is political corruption, and it’s eroding public trust, distorting competition, and breeding violence.

**Recent Party Primaries revealed the Scale of the Crisis:**

- In the National Resistance Movement (NRM), children were used to distribute bribes. Voter registers were altered. Results were falsified. President Museveni himself ordered investigations after public outcry.
- In the National Unity Platform (NUP), party loyalists walked out, accusing leadership of “selling flags” to the highest bidder.
- Across political parties, internal democracy is collapsing under the weight of cash handouts and vote buying.

Uganda is not alone. According to the **UNCAC Coalition** and **ACFIM’s 2024 Political Finance Watch**, Africa’s democracies are increasingly held hostage by “dark money.” Without urgent reforms, illicit financing of elective politics will turn the 2026 elections into a transaction, not a transformation.

**The Time for Lip Service Is Over. The Time for Legal Action Is Now.**

Uganda must enact a Comprehensive Campaign Finance Law as soon as the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament is constituted. Such a law must:

- **Set clear limits** on campaign spending.
- **Ban anonymous** donations.
- **Mandate real-time disclosure** of all campaign funds.
- **Require public audits** of political party finances.
- **Enforce serious penalties** for electoral bribery and illicit funding.

These reforms align with Uganda's obligations under **Articles 7 and 8 of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)** and regional best practices under the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption.

## JOINT CALL TO ACTION

### 1. To the Electoral Commission:

Launch a public civic campaign focused on “**Clean Campaigns, Clean Country**” — educate citizens, political actors, and aspiring candidates about the dangers of vote buying and the power of transparency.

### 2. To Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; and Parliament:

Immediately table and pass a **Campaign Finance Reform Bill** those mandates:

- Transparent campaign reporting,
- Annual party financial audits,
- Penalties for candidates who violate campaign finance rules.

### 3. To the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development:

Fast track the completion and ensure the publication of Pre Election Economic and Fiscal Report. Section 19 of the PFMA, 2015 requires that the minister of Finance publishes a pre-election economic and fiscal update not earlier than four months before the polling day for a general election. These reports detail all the election related spending including the expenses of the Electoral Commission for the cost of the general election and any other expenses of a vote related to the election; and accompanied by a statement highlighting economic and fiscal implications and policy decisions. With just 3 months to the election's day, this must be expedited.

### 4. To Citizens:

Reject “cash-for-votes.” Your ballot is not for sale and should never be. Demand accountability. Vote for leaders of substance, not sponsors of handouts. Expose crude vote buying using your smart phones like you always do as “citizen journalists”.

### 5. To CSOs and the Media:

Ramp up **real-time election finance monitoring**. Expose the vote bribery schemes. Expose dirty money. Use journalism to shine a light where secrecy thrives. Collaborate with watchdog agencies and provide voter education grounded in rights—not rations.

### 6. To Political Parties:

Lead by example. Stand out as islands of integrity. Publish your campaign budgets, donor lists and report on campaign spending. Discipline members involved in bribery. Build trust through clean and fair internal processes.

**SIGNED:**

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