

**Political Sentiments among Ugandans ahead of
January 15th Polls**

Opinion Poll

BY

DEVELOPMENT WATCH CENTER

January 6, 2026

(Contact Email: info@dwcug.org / opinions@dwcug.org)

List of Abbreviations

ANT	Alliance for National Transformation
CP	Conservative Party Common Man's Party
CMP	Common Man's Party
DWC	Development Watch Center
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
NPP	National Peasants' Party
NM	National Resistance Movement

Report Summary

On January 15th 2026, Uganda will be holding general elections in which registered voters will vote their leaders - President and members of parliament. According to the Electoral Commission, 21,681,491 Ugandans are registered voters and therefore will be eligible to participate in January's polls. Of the 21,681,491 million voters, 11.3million are female.

To understand and test Ugandans political sentiment ahead of these polls, the DWC conducted a poll to assess Ugandans readiness for these elections and map support and perceptions of the citizens ahead of the polls which culminated into this report. The fieldwork was done from 19th November to December 16th 2025, and data processing and analysis as well as report writing were accomplished between Thursday, 18th December, 2026 and January 05th.

The study adopted Survey Research as our core design and data was collected through interviews done in **42 districts** randomly selected from the **12 sub-regions** of Uganda.

The studied respondents included ordinary Ugandans, politicians, academics, young and old people among others.

Findings
<p>1. Readiness to vote</p> <p>The political sentiment and pulse of Ugandans toward the 15th January elections, many Ugandans are ready and a big percentage will participate. Indeed, of the 3758 respondents, 3260 said they would vote representing 86.74% of the polled people.</p>
<p>2. Who will be voted/win</p> <p>The National Resistance Movement (NRM) or the ruling party's candidate Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who is also the incumbent will win the polls with double digits. Of the 3,758 respondents we interviewed, 2,290 (60.94%) said had elections occurred on that day they would vote for him as opposed to 1,325 (35.26%) who said they would vote for opposition's National Unity Platform candidate Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu (Bobi Wine).</p> <p>The poll saw Museveni leading in 11 out of 12 subregions the study polled. NUP's Robert Kyagulanyi led in Kampala sub-region.</p>

3. Demographic base/ support

The survey revealed Bobi Wine has slightly higher support among the younger demographics. Among respondents who indicated their age as between 18 and 35 years (youth¹), Bobi Wine records 53 percent against Museveni's 43.93 percent with the rest of the votes going to other candidates.

Support for Museveni, on the other hand, grows with the age of the voter. Among respondents who indicated their age as between 46 and 56 years, Museveni records 61 percent against Bobi Wine's 35 percent. In the age bracket of 57 years and above, Museveni's support shoots up to 72 percent, with Bobi Wine recording 25 percent.

Museveni also leads among the female gender across all regions. Among the women respondents, 62.27 percent indicated support for Museveni, 34.09 percent for Bobi Wine, 1.53 percent for Mugisha Muntu and 1.82 percent for Mafabi. Other candidates had insignificant support.

4. Key Issues of voters:

Voters listed service delivery as their main concern with 1,393 (37.06%) of polled 3,758 saying it was key and would influence how they will vote. Next was unemployment where 1,232 (32.8%) out of 3,758 respondents said they were concerned with unemployment in the country, especially among youth. Other listed issues were: corruption, security and rule of law in that order.

¹ While Uganda's electoral laws describe youth as someone aged 15-30, this poll took the definition of African Youth Charter that defines youth as those aged 15-35 years. This is partly because Uganda electoral laws allow 18 and above years for one to vote. See African Youth Charter https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-treaty-0033_-_african_youth_charter_e.pdf

1.0 Introduction

On January 15th 2026, Uganda will be holding general elections in which registered voters will vote their leaders - President and members of parliament. According to the Electoral Commission, 21,681,491 Ugandans are registered voters and therefore will be eligible to participate in January's polls. Of the 21,681,491 million voters, 11.3million are female.

To understand and test Ugandans political sentiment ahead of these polls, the Development Watch Centre (DWC) conducted an opinion poll covering 42 districts randomly selected from Uganda's 12 sub-regions.

1.2 Purpose

The main purpose of this study was to test and understand Ugandans political sentiments and their readiness to participate in electing their leaders. Focusing on the three objectives, the study sought to understand Ugandans readiness to participate in elections, to map support and perceptions of voters and to identify their key concerns, to know Ugandans views in regard to issues such as corruption, employment, governance and service delivery, and security.

1.3 Objectives:

The study had three major objectives namely;

1. To test Uganda's political sentiments ahead of the 2026 general elections;
2. To understand, map support, and perceptions by region and age demographics;
3. To identify voter concerns on issues like corruption, governance, service delivery, unemployment, security.

1.4 Design

The study adopted Survey Research as our core design and data was collected through interviews done in **42 districts** randomly selected from the **12 sub-regions** of Uganda.

1.5 Methodology

The study used one method of data collection: **interviews**, administered to a sample of 3,758 out of the 4,000 targeted respondents in **41** districts randomly selected from **12** sub-regions of Acholi, Ankole, Bukedi, Busoga, Buganda, Bunyoro, Kampala, Karamoja, Kigezi, Lango, Rwenzori and Teso regions.

1.6 Scope

Thematically, the study was limited to testing and understanding Ugandans readiness to vote; respondent's choice; mapping support and perceptions, issues respondents considered key in this election; and voting pattern in terms of age and sex.

1.7 The Respondents

The study had targeted 4,000 respondents, but was able to access 3,758 from the sampled 41 districts which were randomly selected from the 12 sub-regions of Uganda. The response rate of 93.95% was deemed highly acceptable by all scientific-research standards, and far above Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb according to which, a sample of 30-500 items, is appropriate for social scientific research. The 3,758 respondents included 2,385 men and 1,373 women distributed as shown in Table 1 below. Respondents were aged between 18 and 79 years.

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Table 1: Distribution of respondents by location and sex

S/N	Location		Sex			
			Female		Male	
	Sub-Region	District	Freq.	% age	Freq.	% age
1	Acholi	Nwoya	32	39.5	49	60.5
		Gulu	30	34.5	57	65.5
		Kitgum	33	37.9	54	62.1
2	Ankole	Mbarara	42	38.5	67	61.5
		Bushenyi	40	40.0	60	60.0
		Isingiro	26	31.7	56	68.3
		Ntungamo	30	35.3	55	64.7
3	Bukedi					

		Busia	32	35.6	58	64.4
		Tororo	28	33.3	56	66.7
		Pallisa.	24	28.6	60	71.4
4	Busoga					
		Kamuli	33	34.4	63	65.6
		Iganga	32	35.2	59	64.8
		Jinja	33	33.7	65	66.3
5	Buganda					
		Masaka	32	33.7	63	66.3
		Luwero	33	36.3	58	63.7
		Mityana	36	39.1	56	60.9
		Mubende	31	34.1	60	65.9
		Kayunga	25	31.2	55	68.8
		Kiboga	30	34.9	56	65.1
6	Bunyoro					
		Kagadi	33	36.7	57	63.3
		Hoima	33	36.3	58	63.7
		Masindi	30	33.7	59	66.3
7	Kampala					
		Kampala,	35	33.0	71	67.0
		Wakiso	38	37.6	63	62.4
		Mukono	40	38.8	63	61.2
8	Karamoja					
		Kotido	36	40.4	53	59.6
		Moroto	31	33.3	62	66.7
		Napak	44	43.6	57	56.4
9	Kigezi					
		Kabale	30	33.0	61	67.0
		Kisoro	36	39.6	55	60.4
		Rukungiri	34	35.8	61	64.2
10	Lango					
		Kwania	31	35.6	56	64.4
		Apach	28	34.1	54	65.9
		Lira	32	35.6	58	64.4
11	Rwenzori					
		Kasese	44	41.9	61	58.1
		Fort Portal City	35	37.6	58	62.4
		Bundibugyo	28	39.4	43	60.6
		Kyenjojo	37	38.1	60	61.9
12	Teso					
		Soroti	39	42.9	52	57.1
		Kumi	36	38.3	58	61.7
		Katakwi	41	41.4	58	58.6
Total			1373	36.5	2385	63.47

Source: Based on our polled data

2.0 Findings

Thematically, this section presents the findings of the study, based on the three objectives of the study. Specifically, it looks at Ugandans' political sentiments ahead of the 2026 general elections specifically asking them; 1. “*will you vote in January 15th presidential elections*”?; Secondly, we look at the respondent's preferred presidential candidate. Without mentioning any name of the presidential candidate, the second question to respondents was ; “*who will you vote for as President on January 15th.*” Further, the third question to respondents was; *what are your concerns or major issues* in 15th January elections and if their concerns were/ will likely influence how they will vote/ their voting choice?

2.1 Will you vote in the January 15th presidential elections?

As table 2 below shows, of the 3,758 respondents who answered the question regarding whether or not they will vote for their choice in Presidential elections on January 15th, 3,260 or (86.7%) answered affirmatively while only 498 (13.25%) answered negatively. In terms of sex, of the 1,373 (36.53) females interviewed, 1,123 responded affirmatively while only 250 (18.8) responded negatively. For males, of the 2,385 interviewed, 2137 (89.6%) responded affirmatively while only 248 (10.40%) said they would not vote. By all measures, 86.7% is a good number which implies that a big number of Ugandans are ready to participate in January 15th general elections as per this poll.

Table 2: Distribution of responses of to question of “*Will you vote in January 15th presidential elections*”

S/ N	Sub- Region	District	Female Freq.	Male Freq.	Female Yes	Female No	Male Yes	Male No	Female yes % age	Female No % age	Male yes % ge	Male No % ge
1	Acholi	Nwoya	32	49	23	9	38	11	71.88	28.12	77.55	22.45
		Gulu	30	57	23	7	44	13	76.67	23.33	77.18	22.81
		Kitgum	33	54	27	6	47	7	81.82	18.18	87.04	12.96
2	Ankole	Mbarara	42	67	42	00	58	9	100	0.00	86.57	13.43
		Bushenyi	40	60	33	7	53	7	82.50	17.50	88.33	11.67
		Isingiro	26	56	25	1	47	9	96.15	3.85	83.93	16.07

		Ntungamo	30	55	28	2	48	7	93.33	6.67	87.27	12.73
3	Bukedi											
		Busia	32	58	29	3	46	12	90.67	9.38	79.31	20.69
		Tororo	28	56	28	00	56	00	100	0.00	100	0.00
		Pallisa	24	60	20	4	57	3	83.33	16.67	95.00	5.00
4	Busoga											
		Kamuli	33	63	27	6	50	13	81.82	18.18	79.37	20.63
		Iganga	32	59	31	1	54	5	96.88	3.12	91.53	8.47
		Jinja	33	65	29	4	58	7	87.88	12.12	89.23	10.77
5	Buganda											
		Masaka	32	63	28	4	51	12	87.50	12.50	80.95	19.05
		Luwero	33	58	25	8	58	00	75.76	24.24	100	0.00
		Mityana	36	56	30	6	56	00	83.33	16.67	100	0.00
		Mubende	31	60	28	3	53	7	90.32	9.68	88.33	11.67
		Kayunga	25	55	19	6	38	17	76.00	24.00	69.09	30.91
		Kiboga	30	56	19	11	47	9	63.33	36.67	83.93	16.07
6	Bunyoro											
		Kagadi	33	57	29	4	50	7	87.88	12.12	87.72	12.28
		Hoima	33	58	24	9	55	3	72.73	27.27	94.83	5.17
		Masindi	30	59	23	7	47	12	76.67	23.33	79.66	20.34
7	Kampala											
		Kampala,	35	71	35	00	70	1	100	0.00	98.59	1.41
		Wakiso	38	63	36	2	61	2	94.74	5.26	96.83	3.17
		Mukono	40	63	38	2	63	63	95.00	5.00	100	0.00
8	Karamoja											
		Kotido	36	53	27	9	49	4	75.00	25.00	92.45	7.55
		Moroto	31	62	18	13	55	7	58.06	41.94	88.71	11.29
		Napak	44	57	35	9	44	13	79.55	20.45	77.19	22.81
9	Kigezi											
		Kabale	30	61	28	2	61	00	93.33	6.67	100	0.00
		Kisoro	36	55	23	13	50	5	63.89	36.11	90.91	9.09
		Rukungiri	34	61	31	3	60	1	91.18	8.82	98.36	1.64
10	Lango											
		Kwania	31	56	22	9	53	3	70.97	29.03	94.64	5.36
		Apach	28	54	23	5	47	7	82.14	17.86	87.04	12.96
		Lira	32	58	20	12	57	1	62.50	37.50	98.28	1.72
11	Rwenzori											
		Kasese	44	61	41	3	61	00	93.18	6.82	100	0.00
		Fort Portal City	35	58	22	13	53	5	62.86	37.14	91.38	8.62
		Bundibugyo	28	43	23	5	39	4	82.14	17.86	90.70	9.30
		Kyenjojo	37	60	26	11	53	7	70.27	29.73	88.33	11.67
12	Teso											
		Soroti	39	52	26	13	43	9	66.67	33.33	82.69	17.31
		Kumi	36	58	29	7	55	3	80.56	19.44	94.83	5.17
		Katakwi	41	58	30	11	52	6	73.17	26.83	89.66	10.34
Total			1,373	2,385	1123	250	2,137	248	81.79	18.21	89.60	10.40

Source: Based on our polled data

2.3 Distribution of responses “who will you vote for as President on January 15th”

As shown in the table 3 below, without giving them names of presidential candidates, respondents were asked “*who will you vote for as President on January 15th 2026?*” Respondents answered the question providing names of the candidate of their choice as indicated in the table 3 below. Candidate(s) who were not mentioned by any of respondents are included in the table but scoring zero (0), while the number of votes scored by each candidate represent the number of times the name(s) were mentioned as choice of respondents they would vote for that very day when interviews were conducted.

From the table below, Candidate Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who is also the incumbate and candidate of the ruling party the NRM, our poll shows he will win January 15th presidential elections with 60.94%. In second position is the National Unity Platform, Uganda’s main opposition party candidate Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu commonly known as Bobi Wine with 35.26%.

The two (Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu) are the top contenders in this election. The other six candidates namely; Retired. General Mugisha Muntu of Alliance for National Transformation, Nathan Nandala Mafabi of Forum for Democratic Change follow in distant positions with 2.21% and 1.33% respectively.

Other candidates were barely mentioned in different districts where the poll was conducted with many of them not only being mentioned once as indicated in table 4. Indeed, their percentage score of: Mubarak Munyagwa of Common Man’s Party at 0.16%, National Peasants’ Party (NPP) Robert Kasibante at 0.05% and Revolutionary People’s Party Frank Bulira and Conservative Party’s Joseph Mabiriziwho both polled with 0.03% shows their minimal support in country, according to this poll.

Table 3 showing response of interviewd people on who they will vote for

S/ N	Sub- Region	District	freq.	Names of Presidential Candiadates							
				Museveni	Bobi	Mafabi	Muntu	Mubarak	Mabirizi	Frank	Robert
1	Acholi										
		Nwoya	81	57	21	02	01	00	00	00	00
		Gulu	87	46	37	02	02	00	00	00	00
		Kitgum	87	51	32	01	03	00	00	00	00
2	Ankole										
		Mbarara	109	67	33	02	07	00	00	00	00
		Bushenyi	100	71	24	01	04	00	00	00	00
		Isingiro	82	62	16	01	03	00	00	00	00
		Ntungamo	85	55	21	00	09	00	00	00	00

3	Bukedi										
		Busia	90	53	34	02	01	00	00	00	00
		Tororo	84	56	23	03	02	00	00	00	00
		Pallisa.	84	50	30	02	02	00	00	00	00
4	Busoga										
		Kamuli	96	53	38	03	01	01	00	00	00
		Iganga	91	56	32	01	00	02	00	00	00
		Jinja	98	54	37	02	02	03	00	00	00
5	Buganda										
		Masaka	95	52	40	01	02	00	00	00	00
		Luwero	91	55	35	00	00	00	00	01	00
		Mityana	92	53	37	00	00	00	00	00	02
		Mubende	91	60	30	00	01	00	00	00	00
		Kayunga	80	47	31	01	01	00	00	00	00
		Kiboga	86	54	31	00	01	00	00	00	00
6	Bunyoro										
		Kagadi	90	66	23	00	01	00	00	00	00
		Hoima	91	63	27	01	00	00	00	00	00
		Masindi	89	60	26	02	01	00	00	00	00
7	Kampala										
		Kampala,	106	44	57	02	02	00	01	00	00
		Wakiso	101	47	53	01	00	00	00	00	00
		Mukono	103	40	61	01	01	00	00	00	00
8	Karamoja										
		Kotido	89	61	27	01	00	00	00	00	00
		Moroto	93	64	25	03	01	00	00	00	00
		Napak	101	70	30	01	00	00	00	00	00
9	Kigezi										
		Kabale	91	56	27	00	08	00	00	00	00
		Kisoro	91	63	25	00	03	00	00	00	00
		Rukungiri	95	46	37	00	12	00	00	00	00
10	Lango										
		Kwania	87	67	20	00	00	00	00	00	00
		Apach	82	51	28	02	01	00	00	00	00
		Lira	90	56	33	01	00	00	00	00	00
11	Rwenzori										
		Kasese	105	43	54	03	05	00	00	00	00
		Fort Portal	93	52	37	02	02	00	00	00	00
		Bundibugyo	71	42	29	00	00	00	00	00	00
		Kyenjojo	97	64	32	00	01	00	00	00	00
12	Teso										
		Soroti	91	57	31	03	00	00	00	00	00
		Kumi	94	59	32	02	01	00	00	00	00
		Katakwi	99	67	29	01	02	00	00	00	00
Total			3,758	2,290	1,325	50	83	06	01	01	02
Percentage			100%	60.94%	35.26%	1.33%	2.21%	0.16%	0.03%	0.03%	0.05%

Source: Based on our polled data

From above table 4, candidate Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has/had higher support across all subregions but Kampala signifying his popularity and support across the country with Oposition's Bobi Wine following in second space. President Museveni has a commanding lead in almost all regions and in 4 of 12 sub-regions, his support is higher than his main challenger by double digits that is in Bunyoro sub-region where his support is 70 compared to Bobi Wine's 28.15%, in Ankore sub-region Museveni leads with double digit of 67.39% comapred with Bobi Wine's 28.15%. In Lango and Karamoja, Museveni leads with double digits of 67.18 and 68.90 compared to Bobi Wine's 31.27% and 68.90% respectively. Bobi Wine only led Museveni in the Kampala sub-region by 55.16% against Museveni's 42.26% according to the response of respondents we interviewed if voting was that day. See table 5 below for details of the 8 candidates' support in the 12 sub-regions the study sampled.

Table 4, Shows candiadates support in the 12 sub-regions of Uganda

Sub-region	Museveni	Bobi	Mafabi	Muntu	Mubarak	Mabirizi	Frank	Robert
Achooli	60.39%	35.29%	1.96	2.35	00%	00%	00%	00%
Ankole	67.39%	25.00%	1.06	6.12	00%	00%	00%	00%
Bukedi	61.63%	33.72%	2.71	1.94	00%	00%	00%	00%
Busoga	57.19%	33.54%	2.11	1.05	2.11%	00%	00%	00%
Buganda	60.00%	38.13%	0.37	0.93	00%	00%	0.19%	0.37%
Bunyoro	70.00%	28.15%	1.11	0.74	00%	00%	00%	00%
Kampala	42.26%	55.16%	1.29	0.97	00%	0.23%	00%	00%
Karamoja	68.90%	28.98%	0.00	0.35	00%	00%	00%	00%
Kigezi	59.57%	32.13%	1.16	8.30	00%	00%	00%	00%
Lango	67.18%	31.27%	1.37	0.39	00%	00%	00%	00%
Rwenzori	54.92%	41.53%	1.37	2.19	00%	00%	00%	00%
Teso	64.44%	32.39%	2.11	1.06	00%	00%	00%	00%

Source: Based on our polled data

2.4 Sample Characteristics

Out of the 3,758 respondents that took part in the survey 2,182 or 60.98 per cent were rural and 1,576 or 39.02 per cent urban dwellers. The third position on the national tally was taken by General Mugisha Muntu with 2.21 per cent. Forum for Democratic Change candidate Nathan Nandala Mafabi came fourth in the race with 1.33 per cent. Candidates who polled marginal support in the survey include Mubarak Munyagwa who scored 0.16 per cent, Robert Kasibante with 0.05 per cent and Joseph Mabirizi and Frank Bulira who polled 0.03 per cent each. Unforeseen circumstances led to no respondents being sampled from West Nile and Bugisu sub regions. The researchers point out that had Bugisu sub region been covered, support for Mafabi would have gone up due to his home region. But coverage of the two sub regions left out would not have made a huge difference on the poll results.

2.5 Voter Readiness

Respondents were also asked if they would vote on 15 January 2026. The large majority said they would. Among women, 81.79 percent said they would vote. The percentage was higher among men, where 89.60 percent said they would vote.

3.0 Demographic Support Patterns

The survey revealed Bobi Wine has slightly higher support among the younger demographics. Among respondents who indicated their age as between 18 and 35 years (youth²), Bobi Wine records 53 percent against Museveni's 43.93 percent with the rest of the votes going to other candidates.

Support for Museveni, on the other hand, grows with the age of the voter. Among respondents who indicated their age as between 46 and 56 years, Museveni records 61 percent against Bobi Wine's 35 percent. In the age bracket of 57 years and above, Museveni's support shoots up to 72 percent, with Bobi Wine recording 25 percent.

Museveni also leads among the female gender across all regions. Among the women respondents, 62.27 percent indicated support for Museveni, 34.09

² While Uganda's electoral laws describe youth as someone aged 15-30, this study took the definition of Africa Youth Charter that defines youth as those aged 15-35 years. This is partly because Uganda electoral laws allow 18 and above years for one to vote. See African Youth Charter https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-treaty-0033_-_african_youth_charter_e.pdf

percent for Bobi Wine, 1.53 percent for Mugisha Muntu and 1.82 percent for Mafabi. Other candidates had insignificant support.

3.0 Key Voter Concerns

Respondents were also asked to select the issues they considered were most likely to determine their vote at the elections scheduled for 15 January. They were most concerned about service delivery (mentioned by 1,393 respondents, or 37.06 percent of the total number of respondents). Youth unemployment was second most-cited issue (1,232, or 32.8 percent of respondents) followed by corruption (973 or 25.9 percent of respondents). The respondents were fourth and fifth most likely to indicate security and the rule of law as their most important voting consideration (2.58 percent and 1.67 percent respectively).

Table 5: Respondents Key Concerns

SN	Key Concerns	Freq	%
1	Service delivery	1,393	37.06
2	Unemployment	1,232	32.8
3	Corruption	973	25.9
4	Security	97	2.58
5	Rule of law	63	1.67

Source: Based on our polled data