

Cabinet, Parliament, Judiciary: Uganda’s Accountability Crisis in the Seventh Term

An integrity audit of Uganda’s new Cabinet, Parliamentary leadership and Chief Justice

(27 May 2026)

Prefatory Note

“*Mbulira gw’oyita naye, nkubulire empisa zo*”. (Tell me your friends, and I will tell you your behaviour). — Luganda proverb

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni just released his proposed Cabinet for the 2026–2031 term. This note examines the integrity record of selected Cabinet appointments, the leadership of the Parliament constituted to vet them, and the Chief Justice appointed to head the Judiciary. When each is held to the light of the public record, what emerges is not a series of isolated failures but a shared governance environment in which accountability operates selectively, protecting those with sufficient proximity to power while proceeding against those without it. The Luganda proverb above is not rhetorical adornment. It is the organising principle of what follows.

The note draws exclusively on public record. The note does not purport to be a comprehensive assessment of the whole Cabinet.

1. State Minister for Education and Sports (Higher Education), Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo

Muyingo’s situation raises a concern of a different character from the others in this note: not a specific episode of alleged misconduct, but a structural, institutionalised conflict of interest that has persisted across multiple Cabinet terms and which is, a breach of the Leadership Code Act.

Dr. Muyingo is the proprietor of the Seeta Group of Schools, a substantial chain of private educational institutions spanning secondary, primary and pre-primary levels, with a combined enrolment estimated at over 6,500 students. These schools compete for pupils and university places against other private and public schools across Uganda.

Dr. Muyingo has been reappointed to the docket of State Minister for Higher Education. His ministry’s remit encompasses the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), which administers the PLE, UCE and UACE examinations that determine the competitive standing of his schools; the Public Universities Joint Admissions Board (PUJAB), which controls university placement; and the broader regulatory framework governing private schools and tertiary institutions. Every significant regulatory decision in his docket either affects the competitive environment in which his schools operate or directly determines the outcomes that his schools sell to parents.

This is an express violation of the Leadership Code Act. The Act defines ‘conflict of interest’ as a situation where a leader must make a decision between personal interest and public interest. Under the Act, a leader who has a personal interest in a matter before a public body is required to declare that personal interest to the appropriate body and refrain from participating in any deliberation on the matter. The obligation is not to exercise good judgment despite the conflict, it is to remove oneself from the process entirely.

Muyingo cannot discharge his statutory duties as Higher Education Minister without continuously making decisions that affect the commercial interests of schools he owns. This is not an occasional conflict requiring a one-time recusal: it is permanent and pervasive. The conflict has been publicly documented since at least 2021, when an open letter to the President catalogued the concern in detail, naming UNEB and PUJAB specifically.

The practical dimension of this conflict was illustrated sharply in early 2026, when Seeta Junior School-Mukono, owned by the Minister, emerged as the top performer in the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations, with all 140 candidates passing in Division One and 56 achieving the maximum aggregate 4 score, while several long-established elite Kampala schools recorded zero aggregate 4 scores. The disparity generated widespread public debate and direct allegations of interference with the marking system. Dr. Muyingo attributed his school’s results to rigorous standards. No formal investigation has been announced.

Enforcement of the Leadership Code Act lies exclusively with the Inspector General of Government, who may refer a matter to the Leadership Code Tribunal. To date, the IGG has not initiated proceedings in respect of Muyingo’s position despite its longstanding and public nature. His reappointment for a further term extends and compounds the breach.

2. State Minister for Finance (Planning), Hon. Amos Lugolobi

Lugolobi’s case is qualitatively the most serious among those retained in the Cabinet, because he did not merely appear in an administrative list of recipients of the infamous Karamoja mabati, in which iron sheets procured for the Karamoja Community Empowerment Programme were diverted to politicians. He was formally prosecuted.

According to court records, Lugolobi received 400 pre-painted iron sheets marked ‘Office of the Prime Minister’ and used a portion of them to roof a goat shed at his farm in Kayunga District. He subsequently apologised and returned the materials. He was charged with two counts of dealing with suspect property contrary to Section 21(a) of the Anti-Corruption Act.

Following a full prosecution in which the State called eleven witnesses, Justice Jane Kajuugo of the Anti-Corruption Court ruled in November 2024 that a prima facie case had been established and ordered Lugolobi to open his defence. The significance of this ruling

must not be understated: a case to answer ruling means the court found that the evidence adduced by the prosecution, if unrebutted, was sufficient to sustain a conviction. It is the standard that separates cases which survive to trial from those which do not.

Thereafter, in November 2025, the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) wrote to court citing 'loss of interest' and withdrew all charges. Lugoloobi was acquitted by operation of law. No explanation of what changed between the case-to-answer ruling and the withdrawal was offered by the DPP. The timing, charges withdrawn after a court found sufficient evidence to convict, months before a general election, against a sitting minister who was subsequently reappointed, raises questions about the independence of the prosecutorial decision that the DPP's brief statement did not address.

Agnes Nandutu, a former junior minister, also received Karamoja mabati in the same scandal. She was tried, convicted and sentenced to 4 years imprisonment.

Lugoloobi now returns to the Finance Ministry in the State Minister for Planning role. He administers public funds in a ministry whose procurement systems and fiscal controls he is expected to help oversee. The combination of his recorded conduct, the court's case-to-answer finding, and the unexplained withdrawal of charges produces a public record that is, on any fair reading, troubling.

3. Vice President, Hon. Jessica Rose Epel Alupo (Maj. Rtd)

Vice President Alupo has been retained in office. Her name appears prominently in the Karamoja mabati scandal. According to official records and parliamentary committee proceedings, Alupo received iron sheets from the Office of the Prime Minister stores. Her stated position was that an aide received the iron sheets unsolicited, and that she donated them for use in roofing schools and churches in her constituency.

Following investigations by the police and the State House Anti-Corruption Unit, the DPP dropped her file, citing lack of sufficient evidence. No formal finding of guilt has been made against her. However, it is notable that the DPP's decision to clear the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker and other senior officials, while proceeding against junior ministers, was widely criticised as selective prosecution, including by civil society and legal commentators. The pattern of return-and-exoneration for the most senior officials named in the scandal attracted significant public censure.

4. Prime Minister, Hon. Robinah Nabbanja

Prime Minister Nabbanja was similarly implicated in the Karamoja mabati scandal. Iron sheets were traced to her office, and she was named among the recipients in internal Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) documentation. Her position was that the iron sheets

she received derived from the OPM's Affirmative Action programmes, not from the Karamoja docket specifically. She returned the materials, or an equivalent value, following President Museveni's directive of March 2023 in which he characterised the ministers' conduct as 'theft' if applied to personal use.

The DPP dropped her file for lack of sufficient evidence. She was not charged. Her retention as Prime Minister, in circumstances where her office was the conduit through which the iron sheets were distributed to politicians, has attracted sustained criticism. The fact that the materials were only returned after a presidential directive, and not proactively, is itself a matter of public record.

Beyond the mabati scandal, Prime Minister Nabbanja carries into her continued tenure a graver unresolved accountability. John Bosco Kibalama, an accountant, NUP activist, and aspiring parliamentary candidate for Busiro North, was abducted on 3 June 2019 and has not been seen in public since. For nearly four years his whereabouts were entirely unknown. Then, on 2 February 2023, Prime Minister Nabbanja made a public statement at Parliament in which she confirmed that Kibalama was in government custody, accused of killing police officers in Kiboga, Wakiso and other places. The statement shocked his family, who had spent years visiting every gazetted prison in the country without result. It also raised immediate constitutional concerns: Kibalama had by that point been held, without charge and without being produced before any court, for over three years, in direct violation of Article 23 of the Constitution, which requires any person arrested or detained to be brought before a court within 48 hours.

Following Nabbanja's statement, his wife attempted repeatedly to contact the Prime Minister for further information. Nabbanja did not respond. Kibalama has never been produced before a court, never been formally charged, and has not been seen by his family to this day. Habeas corpus applications filed on his behalf have been ignored. The Uganda Human Rights Commission closed his file along with those of 17 other missing persons, citing lack of cooperation from next of kin, an explanation his family has publicly disputed. Prime Minister Nabbanja is the only senior government official to have publicly acknowledged that the State holds Kibalama. That acknowledgment, made without any subsequent accountability, makes her the official with the greatest public duty to account for his fate. She has not done so. Her reappointment as Prime Minister means that duty remains entirely unmet.

5. First Deputy Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga

Kadaga was identified in the Parliamentary Committee on Presidential Affairs report as yet another recipient of the Karamoja mabati. She was listed as a recipient of 500 iron sheets under voucher 8,519 from the OPM stores. She was among those described by the parliamentary committee report as having 'got off lightly.' No charges were brought against her and her file was among those the DPP did not pursue.

She now takes the 1st Deputy Prime Minister position, a role she also held in the previous term. Her retention in the most senior tier of government despite her named involvement in the mabati scandal is consistent with the broader pattern discussed in this note: that seniority and political proximity have functioned as effective shields against accountability in this episode.

6. The Leadership of Parliament: A Mirror of the Same Problem

The integrity concerns documented in this note do not arise in a vacuum. Under Article 114(1) of the Constitution, Cabinet appointments proposed by the President require parliamentary approval. Parliament is therefore the constitutional check on Executive appointments. It is accordingly material to ask what kind of Parliament will perform that vetting function, and the answer, on the public record, is not reassuring. The disregard for integrity standards visible in the Cabinet appointments is replicated, with equal candour, in the election of Parliament's own leadership.

The 12th Parliament recently elected Jacob Marksons Oboth-Oboth as Speaker. According to official OPM records and Parliamentary Committee proceedings reported extensively in the press, Oboth-Oboth was among the officials listed as having received 300 iron sheets from the OPM stores under the Karamoja Community Empowerment Programme (voucher 8,521). He was not among those charged by the DPP, and publicly threatened to sue former Minister Kitutu for naming him. Nevertheless, his name appears in the same distribution records that formed the foundation of criminal prosecutions against others. Parliament has therefore elected, as its presiding officer and the Republic's third-highest constitutional officer, a man whose name features in the very mabati scandal over which Parliament is constitutionally expected to exercise oversight. He will now chair the approval of Cabinet ministers whose integrity records are reviewed in this note, several of whom appear in the same distribution records as himself.

Thomas Tayebwa has been re-elected as Deputy Speaker. Tayebwa served as Deputy Speaker throughout the entire 11th Parliament under Speaker Anita Among, who has since stepped aside from public life and is under active investigation by the Inspector General of Government for corruption, illicit enrichment, abuse of office, and money laundering. Tayebwa was initially dropped from the Patriotic League of Uganda's endorsement list alongside Among amid corruption allegations, before being publicly restored with a declaration by the Chief of Defence Forces that he was "protected." His survival was therefore a matter of political arrangement, not a determination of clean hands. He has since publicly apologised for "lapses" in the 11th Parliament without specifying them. The public record shows a Deputy Speaker who served throughout a Parliament now defined by profligate expenditure of its Speaker, whose retention was secured by executive patronage, and who offers a general apology as a substitute for specific accountability.

The constitutional architecture assumes that Parliament will act as a meaningful check on Executive integrity. That assumption requires Parliament to be, in some relevant sense,

cleaner than the Executive it scrutinises. Where the Speaker appears in the same mabati distribution records as several of the ministers he will vet, and the Deputy Speaker served throughout the Parliament of a Speaker now under criminal investigation, the vetting process becomes a formal exercise without substantive content. The question presents itself plainly, can the pot call the kettle black?

7. The Chief Justice: Judicial Independence from Within

If the Cabinet raises questions about Executive accountability and Parliament raises questions about legislative oversight, the third arm of the State, the Judiciary, is not above scrutiny either. Chief Justice Flavian Zeija, appointed by President Museveni in January 2026, carries into his tenure a finding made against him in a judgment of the High Court while he served as Principal Judge. That finding goes to the most fundamental attribute a head of the Judiciary must possess: respect for judicial decisional independence.

The facts, as they appear in the court record, are as follows. In 2023, the Deputy Registrar of the Commercial Court issued a garnishee order nisi in favour of John Imaniraguha against the Uganda Revenue Authority, entitling the litigant to recover huge monies from the tax body. Three days later, the same Deputy Registrar issued a contrary order recalling the garnishee order. Her reason, stated on the record, was that she had been directed to do so by the Principal Judge, then Flavian Zeija, by letter. The litigant challenged the recall.

Justice Stephen Mubiru allowed the challenge. In *Imaniraguha v Uganda Revenue Authority*, Justice Mubiru set aside the recall order and stated that the interference by the Principal Judge presented “a prima facie affront on decisional independence as a key element in the exercise of judicial power which, if accepted in future cases, would constitute significant delusion of the protection afforded to decisional independence.” He reminded judicial officers that they must be free from control in making decisions not only from the Executive and Legislature, but also from within the Judiciary itself, including from those holding powers of supervision over them.

This finding did not stand alone. In a second, separate episode, then Principal Judge Zeija recalled a court file from acting judge Shamira Bukirwa, who had allowed a meeting of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council that voted to impeach the Mufti. Zeija suspended implementation of those resolutions. Bukirwa was subsequently the only one among sixteen acting judges not to be confirmed to permanent judicial appointment by President Museveni. Whether those two facts are connected has not been adjudicated. But their conjunction, on the public record, raises precisely the kind of concern about decisional independence that Justice Mubiru’s judgment had warned against: that judicial officers who are directly under the supervision of the Principal Judge may not feel free to decide as the law requires when powerful interests are engaged.

It is also on record that in both the URA garnishee matter and the Mufti case, the losing parties were represented by K&K Advocates, the law firm whose principals include

Attorney General Kiryowa Kiwanuka, himself now appointed Minister of Defence in the Cabinet under review. The convergence of these institutional connections in two separate cases is a matter of public record. Its significance is for the reader to assess.

The Chief Justice is the administrative head of the Judiciary and the guardian of its independence, from the Executive, from the Legislature, and from internal interference. A Chief Justice who, as Principal Judge, was judicially found to have issued an administrative directive that a court described as a prima facie affront to decisional independence carries into the nation's highest judicial office a question that Parliament, in vetting his appointment, chose not to press. The Judiciary's capacity to act as the ultimate check on the accountability failures documented in this note must be assessed against that background.

Concluding Observation

The pattern across the five Cabinet appointments examined in this note is consistent. The Karamoja mabati scandal produced a single criminal conviction for a junior minister. For the senior officials involved, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the First Deputy Prime Minister and, critically, the one minister actually prosecuted and against whom the court found a case to answer, the outcome has been exoneration by prosecutorial withdrawal, followed by reappointment or retention. The case of Dr. Muyingo illustrates a complementary dynamic where the breach of integrity is structural rather than episodic, it attracts no enforcement at all.

What the Cabinet appointments, the constitution of Parliament's leadership, and the appointment of the Chief Justice together reveal is a governance environment in which each arm of the State reflects the character of the others. The Cabinet is led by figures the mabati scandal touched. The Parliament that vets them is led by a Speaker whose name appears in the same distribution records and a Deputy Speaker who served throughout the Parliament of a Speaker now under criminal investigation. The Judiciary that underpins the rule of law is headed by a Chief Justice whom a fellow judge of the High Court found, in a judgment, to have issued a directive constituting a prima facie affront to decisional independence.

The Luganda proverb that opens this note asks us to read character from company. The three arms of Uganda's governance in the seventh term keep, on this record, very similar company. What that tells us about the governance of Uganda, and what hope it leaves for those who depend on these institutions, is a question every citizen is entitled to ask.