

## **Press statement for Heroes Day celebrations**

Good Morning members of the press,

Uganda will on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Heroes' Day anniversary, an annual event to pay tribute to people who exemplified and defended the highest values of patriotism and sacrifice for the wellbeing of the country and its citizens.

Among others, heroic values to be celebrated include proven integrity, patriotism and sacrifice, acts of bravery, setting a good example, truthfulness, and love for others.

We owe a great debt to the sons and daughters of this country and all the other heroes who fought for Uganda to be free. The tree of our liberty was watered by their blood. It is a debt we can neither repay, nor ever forget.

And so, Ugandans, will on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019 gather to remember Heroes both living and departed. The idea behind such a national gathering is to celebrate, preserve, protect and propagate the precious inheritance in the name of liberty our Heroes / Heroines left us.

This year's celebrations will be held at Kasanje Town Council in Wakiso District. Our theme is... **“Celebrating the Courageous Heroes that brought the peace and prosperity we are enjoying”**

Basing on facts related to the arms struggle, Kasanje was a fighting corridor against the fascist regime of UPC in 1980s and was at first dominated by the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) led by the late Dr. Andrew Kayiira before they joined hands with another fighting group FEDEMU of the late George Nkwanga. These two later merged with the NRA en-route to liberating Uganda in 1986.

Prominent fighters of the UFM/FEDEMU include Maj. Gen. Kasirye Gwanga, late George Nkwanga, Brig Adda Hussein (rtd), Brig. Mark Kodili (rtd) Col. Kalyesubula (rtd), Capt. Kiwanuka, Maj. Rwamiti Nyago, Capt. Kanya Nkima, Capt. Paul Kavuma, Maj. Nsubuga, Lt. Nansera Lubega etc .

What is critical about Kasanje and Mpigi areas is that they suffered brutal arrests and death of the citizens especially after the botched attack on the Lubiri barracks by the UFM forces in early 1982.

In Mpigi District, hundreds of lives were lost to the whims of these state agents of the ruling Uganda People's Congress (UPC) government as they "assisted" the army in hunting down anti-government rebels. Mpigi of the time encompassed today's Districts of Mpigi, Wakiso, Butambala and Gomba.

Between 1980 and 1985, Kasanje was represented in Parliament by Hon. Dr. Paulo Kawanga Ssemogerere, President-General of the Democratic Party. The Uganda Freedom Movement rebels and later the Federal Democratic Movement (FEDEMU) considered this predominantly DP district a natural haven for their activities. In reaction, the UPC government apparently condemned Mpigi as a rebel territory and unleashed state forces without mercy.

We therefore remember those patriotic countrymen and women with pride because they did not die in vain. As a country we have deliberately decided to focus on the youth as Heroism is no longer a thing only for the old. The youth are the ones largely working and capable of developing and defending this nation. The NRM Government, on its part, has made commendable efforts to uphold these principles as a strategic foundation of Uganda's development.

We are compatriots in the struggle of making Uganda a better country to live in, which was the major spirit behind their Heroic deeds. It is the cardinal duty for every Ugandan therefore, to protect, develop and sustain this spirit.

The NRM Government further recognizes that, the spirit of Heroism can only be meaningful if we uplift our motherland Uganda into a modern stable industrialized country that will make every citizen happy and proud to live in. This can only be realized if we sustain the impressive economic growth, entrench our democratic values and jealously maintain peace and stability we are currently enjoying.

Certainly, there is still much to be done, but there is also much more to cause a celebratory mood in the progress made towards bringing Uganda to the ideals for which both living and dead Heroes sacrificed themselves.

These achievements are exemplified in some key sectors below:

### **Government Revenue**

The Uganda Revenue Authority hit its target for the first three quarters of the financial year 2018/19. Shs. 12,557.76 trillion was collected as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 against the target of shs. 11.872.82 trillion. This implies that, we are progressively taking strides in the right direction of self-financing our national budget.

### **Growth**

According to the Monetary Policy Statement released by Bank of Uganda on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2019, it was indicated that the Economy is projected to attain its potential Economic growth of 6-6.5 percent. This growth rate puts Uganda well ahead of the of the Continental economic growth rate of 4.0%<sup>1</sup> as projected by the African Development Bank for the year 2019.

### **Inflation**

The March 2019 Consumer Price Index (CPI) Data released by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) indicates mixed inflation development. On the one hand annual headline inflation remained unchanged at 3.0 percent as in February, 2019 while annual core inflation rose from 3.7 percent to 4.6 percent, approaching the Bank of Uganda's medium term policy target of 5 percent. This figure is well under the East African convergence criterion of 8% required, among others, for a monetary Union.

In conclusion, as we celebrate this 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Heroes' Day, all Ugandans are called upon to reflect deeply and seriously on the sacrifices these gallant sons and daughters of Uganda made. Let each Ugandan get committed by celebrating the courageous Heroes that **brought** the **peace** and **prosperity were are enjoying**. Besides, let these celebrations also rejuvenate our collective commitment as a country in: consolidating the values laid down by our Heroes and the achievements registered; while at the same time, focusing our resolve to bravely face the new challenges into the future as we work to complete the NRM Government five year term and look ahead to the next term 2021 – 2026.

Wishing you many happy returns of our 30<sup>th</sup> Heroes' Day Celebrations!

**Hon Esther Mbayo**

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**Minister for Presidency**

**Member of Parliament Luuka District**