

**EARLY WARNING SIGNS FOR VIOLENCE
IN UGANDA'S 2021 ELECTIONS AND
STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES FOR
MITIGATION**

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Acknowledgments

This report presents the research by Women's Democracy Network- Uganda Chapter (WDN-U) and Innovations for Democratic Engagement and Action (IDEA).

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Foreword

Uganda has made strides in entrenching electoral democracy since the promulgation of its 1995 constitution. However, Uganda's violent history has continued to undermine the dividends of democracy in the country. The practice of continued accession to power through violent means, with coups and counter coups dominating Uganda's transitions have been destructive to Uganda's democracy process. All past governments have been changed through coups and armed struggle, violence has almost become the means through which power is captured and retained in Uganda.

This study by Innovations for Democratic Engagement and Action (IDEA) and Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter (WDN-U) comes in handy in as far as understanding the perceptions of election actors, citizens and their organizations is concerned with regard to election violence and mitigation strategies and structures in Uganda. Accordingly, this report finds that Uganda has made some gains in putting in place a mechanism for management of elections. It however comes out clearly that the mechanism cannot guarantee credible free and elections, thereby creating room for violence. The findings also reveal that women are the main victims of violence while the youth (male) were reported to be the main perpetrators, suggesting that actors need to target them in planning for the elections. That, the Uganda Police Force is pointed as the most important actor in averting election violence suggests the possibility that citizens and other election actors are willing to work with the force to avert violence. However, that election actors consider security forces including the police to not have done their job very well is a sign of diminished confidence. While this report cannot be conclusive in what needs to be done to guarantee violent free elections, it provides a good foundation for different actors to start discussing, planning and acting on election violence triggers in the build up to the 2021 elections and beyond.

Therefore, acting on these findings will build the confidence of a cross section of actors to overcome several challenges in prevention and management of election violence. Effective engagement with mass media to communicate the positive messages is critical for setting the tempo for peaceful elections in Uganda. There is thus need to consolidate the existing infrastructure for peace where different activities should be implemented by various state and non-state actors to mobilize and coordinate government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), traditional and religious leaders, reputable individuals and other organizations and individuals. This will contribute to defusing and mitigating election-related tensions and violence, and protecting the credibility of electoral processes. The most desirable thing at this point thus is for all actors to take keen interest in this report, and consider acting on the recommendations there in.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTY

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Note: Cover photo by Reuters

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABIC	Angie Brooks International Centre
BVVS	Biometric Voter Verification System
CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CCEDU	Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda
CEON-U	Citizens Election Observers Network – Uganda
CoC	Code of Conduct
EC	Electoral Commission
EMB	Election Management Body
EU EOM	European Union Election Observation Mission
IDEA	Innovations for Democratic Engagement and Action
IIDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIR	National Identification Register
NRM	National Resistance Movement
SSAs	Security Sector Agencies
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VLS	Voter Location Slip
VR	Voters Register
WDN-U	Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter
WSR	Women's Situation Room

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Uganda's democracy journey has for a long time been pockmarked with electoral violence. Since the first election to the Legislative Council in 1961, no election has delivered a universally acceptable outcome, with majority being contested in courts of law and sometimes street protests. Amidst these elections and processes, there has always been one constant, election violence. The manifestations have varied, in the pre, during and post-election epoch and attracting varied responses from different actors. While some episodes of violence have conclusively been addressed, many have reemerged in different forms and in subsequent elections, leading to destruction of the social, economic and political strata. To make a contribution towards the mitigation of election violence in Uganda's elections, the Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter (WDN-U), working with the Innovations for Democratic Engagement and Action (IDEA) set out to conduct a study on mechanisms for mitigation of election violence in Uganda, with a view of identifying strategies and structures for early warning mechanisms in the build up to the 2021 elections in Uganda.

The study was conducted between March and July 2019, using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The study respondents were selected purposively given their role in elections and mitigation of election violence. This study was conducted in 13 districts in Uganda drawn from the different geographical sub-regions of Uganda. A total of 261 primary respondents participated in the study. These mainly included: representatives from the ruling party NRM; representatives from the opposition political parties including: Alliance for National Transformation, Democratic Party, Forum for Democratic Change and Uganda People's Congress; District Election Returning Officers; the Police officers in-charge of elections at the district; Religious leaders; private sector representatives; media practitioners that covered the most recent elections, and Non-Governmental Organizations which participated in the 2016 elections as observers and voter educators among others. There were also national level interviews conducted among key stakeholders involving government institutions, political parties, media practitioners and NGOs. In addition, a total of 11 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted during this study. Each FGD comprised a minimum of 12 people. The study also conducted literature review in order to inform the findings about previous research findings which may have some similarity with the WDN-U and IDEA research, the legal and policy framework and to provide lessons from international best practices. The Data Collection tools used included: Semi-Structured Questionnaires; Key Informant Guides, Focus Group Discussion Guides and an Observation Checklist.

2. Main Findings

The study revealed the following main findings:

2.1 Voting in the Previous Election

- Of the respondents, 93.9% had participated in elections at various levels in 2016. In addition, 90.4% of the respondents who participated in the study indicated that they would vote in the next (2021) elections (See Figure 3). This shows a decline of 3.5% in interest to participate in next general elections.
- 89.3% of the respondents considered past elections, specifically the 2011 and 2016 to have been violent.
- Majority of the respondents (81.5%) indicated that they had witnessed violence in by-elections in their constituency, while 78.5% indicated that they had witnessed violence in the General/Presidential elections
- Physical violence was found to be the most common form of violence (58.4%) followed by intimidation (21%) and Brutality by state agents (21%).
- The main tools of violence used were verbal words to incite violence at 44.2% and use of guns or firing bullets at 42.9 %.
- The three main triggers of violence during elections were reported to be: election malpractice at 33%, collision of candidates and supporters at 19.3% and intimidation at 12.9%.

2.2 Management of Violence

- Majority of the respondents (52.2%) indicated that violence in their locations was managed by the Uganda Police Force, followed by Religious Leaders at 14.1%, the Electoral Commission at 13.3% and NGOs at 8.9%.
- Civic education and implementation of electoral reforms were reported by 29.6% and 29.6% respectively as

the most appropriate measures to prevent violence in elections in future.

- Majority of the respondents (89.7%) indicated that episodes of election violence are likely to re-occur in the next general election in their localities (constituencies, districts and sub-counties).
- Also, 32.6% of the respondents held that the prevalence of political intolerance is the major indicator that violence is likely to re-occur in the 2021 elections; while 26.8% cited the lack of electoral reforms and un-levelled playing ground for Political candidates at 24.5%.

2.2.1 Participation of Women and Youth in Violence Mitigation

- Lack of information (as reported by 187 out of 261 respondents) was the most outstanding barrier to youth participation in the interventions for election violence mitigation. This was followed by lack of platforms to participate (172 respondents out of 261) and side-lining of the youth by older persons (134 out of 261 respondents) respectively.
- On the side of women, Lack of information was the biggest hindrance to their participation (210 out of 261), followed by lack of platforms to participate (184 out of 261), and side-lining by men.

2.2.2 Major Actors in Election Violence

- Male youth are cited as the top most actors in election violence (as reported by 171 out of 261 respondents). The Uganda Police Force was in second position cited by 134 out of 261 respondents; followed by NRM campaign agents in the 3rd position (132 respondents). ; men in the 4th position (115 out of 261 respondents) and opposition campaign agents in the 5th position (101 out of 261 respondents).
- Further, 81.6% of the respondents noted that youth will be very involved in election violence in 2021 elections, compared to 19.4% who cited women.

2.2.3 Main Victims of Election Violence

- Women were reported to be the main victims of election violence reported by 128 out of 261 respondents. They were followed by the youth who were reported by 121 respondents.

3. Strategies for averting violence in 2021 Elections

- A National dialogue with various stakeholders to build consensus on a number of national issues was reported to be the most important strategy for ensuring peaceful elections (42.9% of respondents).
- Majority of the respondents (52.5 %) suggested that implementation of electoral reforms would be key in curbing violence in the 2021 elections
- The Uganda Police Force is cited as the most important government institution that is well placed to avert election violence (228 out of 261 respondents). The Electoral Commission was cited as 2nd, followed by the Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces in the 3rd position as reported by 201 and 153 respondents respectively
- In order of priority it was reported that Uganda Police Force was the most helpful institution in averting election violence as cited by 49.8% of the respondents, followed by the Electoral Commission (37.2%).
- The findings also revealed that security organs including the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda People's Defense Forces have not performed to Citizens expectations in averting and mitigation of election related violence as reported by 45.6%, The main reason given by respondents in this regard is that the UPF and UPDF are partisan in handling election related matters.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Pre-election Interventions

- Due to their vulnerability, youth and women need to be deliberately targeted by actors in election violence mitigation programming by all actors. Targeted activities where the live and work need to be considered to encourage their active involvement. These may include training, peace messaging and timely availability relevant information.
- Government needs to put in place meaningful skills development programs for young people. The study found

that idle and unemployed youth are most prone to participate in election violence.

4.2 During Elections

- The Electoral Commission through an inclusive process involving political parties and CSOs and academia should develop a code of conduct to guide political parties and actors on how to behave during the campaigns to guard against involvement in violence. This could be incorporated in the fourth schedule proposed in the Political Parties and Organizations Act amendment bill.
- More stringent penalties need to be put in place; for candidates found to have sponsored or enabled election violence, disqualification should be considered; for citizens, prosecution should be considered.
- Government officials, including those in the armed forces found to have caused, abated or even contributed to the escalation of violence should be held individually culpable for their actions and inactions, consistent with the Human Rights Enforcement Act.

4.3 Prevention and mitigation actions: Legal and Institutional framework

- There is need for government to implement electoral reforms as defined by the Supreme Court during the ruling of the 2016 Presidential Elections Court Petition, and by the Citizens COMPACT for Free and Fair Elections.
- Civic groups and Electoral Commission need to conduct continuous Voter Education to ensure that ordinary citizens are aware of what constitutes election violence, its impact and how to avoid it.
- Government should be open to integration of alternative conflict resolution mechanisms into the electoral legal framework, and consider working with non-state actors.
- Address impunity which often breeds bribery, ballot stuffing and rigging, as they have been found to take the lion's share in triggering violence. This should be done through effective application of relevant laws.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should fast-track the process of development of guidelines for the implementation of the POMA to end its misapplication.

4.4 Improved electoral security

- The legal framework on elections should clearly define the role of security agencies in elections, particularly that of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), the national army.
- There is need for a coordinated collaborative approach to monitoring and response to election violence. Local level task forces need to be set up for early detection and response, building on the local council structures.

4.5 Prevention and Mitigation actions: Planning and Implementation

- Government working with non-state actors needs to put in place a mechanism for structured dialogue between different political actors and election management agencies to ensure continuous engagement on issues affecting elections.
- A robust mechanism for capacity building for CSO actors in data capture and analysis on risk levels and make informed and conflict sensitive decisions.
- The Electoral Commission should ensure that the introduction of information technology-based electoral solutions is timely and manageable.

4.6 There is need to strengthen the Infrastructure for Peace. This should include the following:

- Training the faith based infrastructure for peace messaging across the country and ensure that the religious institutions act as peace builders.
- Building local alternative structures for dialogue and mediation given that mediation and dialogue are being looked at as a very successful strategies for election violence mitigation
- The Executive and other relevant institutions including the Uganda Human Rights Commission, Electoral Commission and non-state actors should seek to address un-resolved conflicts emerging from previous elections in order to avert this reported possibility of re-occurrence of violence in forthcoming elections.
- The Electoral Commission should establish discussion forums for participatory dialogues with SSAs and non-state actors in the planning phase of electoral processes.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

An election, according to the Collins English dictionary, is a process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold an official position. While electoral democracy has overtime been embraced on the African continent as the means of accession to leadership, the enjoyment of its dividends is time and again negated by election violence. Uganda has not been spared, to the extent that since the first election (to the Legislative Council) in 1961, all elections have been violent. Different efforts have been undertaken by a myriad of actors to contribute towards prevention, mitigation and management, with mixed results. Numerous studies show that election violence has greatly influenced voter behavior, bred apathy, and thus majority citizens preferring to keep away from the electoral processes. With a reduction in violence or threats of violence, it is possible to increase citizen participation in the electoral processes. It is thus important to study the structures and strategies that are most effective in preventing and mitigating election violence.

Election violence-understood as coercive force directed towards electoral actors and/or objects, that occurs in the context of election competition- can occur before, during or after elections and it can target a variety of actors, including candidates, activists, poll workers, election observers, journalists and voters. Recent analysis of patterns and trends of electoral violence have found that it is a global phenomenon affecting mainly electoral authoritarian or hybrid States, particularly those in Asia, the Middle East and Africa¹.

Election-related violence takes many shapes and forms, from burning ballot boxes and intimidation between opposing sides, to mass violent protests and state crackdowns on peaceful demonstrations. In some cases, it is more extreme, such as assassinations of election candidates or mass killings. Tensions often rise long before voters head to the polls—during party nominations and the process of voter registration, and throughout the campaign period—so efforts to prevent election violence need to start early. Yet, despite best efforts, the question remains: how can election violence be most effectively prevented?²

Interventions designed to prevent and/or mitigate electoral violence include a range of activities targeted at electoral actors³ including:

- Police training and security planning;
- Electoral management and administration;
- Peace messaging;
- Codes of conduct;
- Stakeholder fora and grassroots peace advocacy by civil society groups; and
- Youth and women programming.

Most strategies for election violence prevention in Uganda emerge during the election cycle. In spite of some of the interventions that government institutions, religious leaders and civil society organizations have used to prevent election violence in the past, there is limited information on the strategies that work best, based on research on previous election prevention strategies and structures that have been used to prevent election violence in Uganda. This study identifies through Action Research, key elements for an effective early warning mechanism on election violence prevention in Uganda. Importantly, this report relies on perceptions of local residents in different parts of Uganda and thus allows us to establish which interventions actually reached local communities and how locals perceived them. The study also identifies possible structures and strategies that drew on women and youth leaders and community organizations participation in election violence prevention in previous elections and the strategies that worked best in a bid to enhance their participation to prevent election violence in 2021 elections in Uganda. The findings will be relevant for understanding the mechanisms of election violence prevention that have worked best in previous elections and the actors best placed for this. In addition the findings will inform the prioritization of election programming to improve the effectiveness of the peace building community in shaping environments conducive to peaceful elections.

1 Birch and Muchlinski, "The Dataset of Countries at Risk of Electoral Violence"; Birch and Muchlinski, "Electoral Violence."

2 Ibid 1

3 Jonas Claes and Inken von Borzyskowski (2018)

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to identify key elements for an early warning mechanism on election violence in Uganda. With a focus on structures and strategies used by state and non-state actors that are effective in preventing election violence, as well as picking out early warning signs on election violence in the build up to the 2021 General Elections.

1.2 Methodology

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. The study respondents were selected purposively given their role in management of elections and mitigation of election violence. The determination of this sample was further influenced by previous studies that have examined election violence prevention in Uganda. Most of the evaluations are project based and focus on specific organizations or institutions involved in election violence prevention. A collation of structures and strategies that are most effective in election violence prevention have not been examined. As a result, the same methods are used for election violence prevention in every election cycle regardless of whether the strategies and structures were effective or not.

1.2.1 Selection of Districts

The study used the experiences in 2016 elections and by-elections after 2016 Elections to map out geographical areas of study. A mapping of violence prone hotspots in Uganda based on past elections was done. In addition, districts where election violence prevention structures and strategies were used were considered during mapping of the hotspots. The country was zoned into 12 regions of Uganda; one district was selected from each region. The districts were selected based on:

- districts that were hotspots in the 2016 elections in Uganda and in subsequent by-elections following the 2016 elections;
- districts that are prone to violence in the next elections; and
- Districts where structures and strategies for mediating conflicts were effective.

Table 1 shows the geographical distribution of Respondents.

Location	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Arua	23	8.8
Gulu	16	6.1
Hoima	17	6.5
Jinja	17	6.5
Kabale	20	7.7
Kampala	7	2.7
Kasese	20	7.7
Kumi	22	8.4
Lira	20	7.7
Mbale	22	8.4
Mbarara	33	12.6
Mukono	21	8.0
Tororo	23	8.8
Total	261	100.0

1.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

A total of 11 Focus Group Discussions were conducted during this study. Each FGD comprised 12 people from each of the 12 districts where the study was conducted. Each Focus Group Discussion included: at least 2 women who participated in the election or subsequent by-election in their constituency; 2 youth (one male and one female) who participated in the election in their constituency; 2 men who participated in the election in their constituency; 2 representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) including one who participated in promoting violence free elections; 2 vigilante group members, and 2 media representatives.

1.2.3 Interviews

As shown in table 1, 261 interviews were conducted for this study. These interviews targeted:

- a) Representatives from the ruling party NRM;
- b) Representatives from the opposition political parties including: ANT, DP, FDC and UPC;
- c) District Returning Officers;
- d) The Police officers in-charge of elections at the district;
- e) Religious leaders;
- f) Private sector;
- g) Media practitioners that covered the most recent elections

At national level, interviews covered respondents from: Uganda Human Rights Commission; Political parties and media. Interviews were also conducted with National Election Observers and Peace Advocacy Groups for violence free elections that included: Women's International Peace Center formally ISIS-WICCE which hosted the Women's Situation Room Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Femme Forte, CCEDU, among others.

1.2.4 Literature Review

Available data on election violence prevention was reviewed to establish the kind of information available on election violence prevention structures and strategies used around the world; structures and strategies that have been used by different state and non-state actors to prevent election violence in previous elections in Uganda. Previous election observation reports from International, Regional and Domestic Observers, reports of the Citizens Election Observation Network-Uganda (CEON-U), statements from the Women's Situation Room during the election and the Electoral Commission were also reviewed to inform the study.

1.2.5 Data Collection Tools

The Data Collection tools used included: Semi-Structured Questionnaires; Key Informant Guides, Focus Group Discussion Guides and an Observation Checklist.

1.3 Data Management

Quantitative Data from the questionnaires was coded, open ended questions post coded and processed, and analyzed using epi-data analysis, and excel. The qualitative data from Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

The study was regionally representative. Districts and respondents were selected purposively: evaluating the effectiveness of prevention instruments. As a result, the descriptive statistics (such as the percentage of respondents trusting the police) cannot be simply extrapolated to the national level. However, it is indicative given that almost all the regions except Karamoja were represented in the study. Other limitations of the research included: Some key informants were not at their duty stations during the period scheduled for the research and were therefore not interviewed for the study, others did not want to speak on the subject of elections and gave excuses and declined to be interviewed. Some of the literature reviewed on actions taken to prevent or mitigate election violence in Uganda did not show the impact of the mechanisms deployed.

Section 2: REVIEW OF MECHANISMS FOR MITIGATION OF VIOLENCE

2.1 Election violence in Uganda

In 2016, CEON-U observers reported significant ethnic tensions in the Rwenzori region before elections, which eventually led to the outbreak of violent clashes between the Bakonjo, Basongora, and Bamba after the elections. Using CEON-U findings, the Electoral Commission could have increased on voter information in good time because reports continuously revealed the low level of voter education and urged the Commission to address this concern⁴. In 2015 during nominations, CEON-U observer reports indicated violent clashes between supporters of different candidates⁵; denial of access to campaign venues was reported thereby leading to violent clashes between supporters of candidates⁶. Intimidation and hate speech created hostility among supporters of the targeted candidates, eventually erupting into violence during rallies⁷. Contrary to the electoral laws, hate speech based on ethnicity, gender, and religion was reported in 10% of constituencies observed⁸. Election violence thus remains a common denominator of Uganda's elections.

2.1.1 Violence against women in elections

A report by Forum for Women in Democracy (2018) on violence against women in the 2016 elections indicated that women encountered different forms of violence in the 2016 general elections. Psychological violence was highest at 40%; physical violence at 18%, sexual violence at 7% and other forms of violence at 35%. Forms of psychological violence included: verbal abuse, insults, being booed while on stage. Some voters and women candidates did not see this as a form of violence against women in elections. They thought this was how politics works. Other forms of violence included: economic violence, witchcraft and sorcery, intimidation and harassment of voters and poll agents. The increased level of political violence further hampered the participation of women in the 2016 elections.

2.1.2 Security Agents

Security agencies can either cause insecurity or foster peace by the nature of their involvement in the electoral process. In fact, observation of the 2016 general elections revealed that there were instances where security agencies deliberately interfered in elections in one way or the other. In other cases their performance fell below expectations leading to the loss of public confidence⁹. There was an increase in deployment of security agents in advance of the elections, as reported by 28% of observers. Eight percent of CEON-U observers reported acts of violence by crime preventers, while 17% reported harassment by other security agents¹⁰. Whilst they were perceived by all key stakeholders in the process, except perhaps those associated with the NRM party, as biased in favor of those in power, security agencies saw the suspicion from the others as unfair, unjustified, and sometimes too harsh. This atmosphere led to tensions between the security agencies and other stakeholders¹¹.

2.1.3 Campaign violence

The campaigns were largely peaceful but for specific incidents which affected the presidential and parliamentary campaigns in the districts of Ntungamo, Jinja, Kampala, Gulu, Mbarara, Mitooma, and Mukono. The clashes between supporters of candidates and use of excessive force by the police, especially against the FDC presidential candidate and his supporters, affected the campaigns. In some instances, presidential candidates of FDC and Go Forward were denied access to campaign venues, thereby fuelling animosity by their supporters towards the police. These incidents restricted their freedoms to campaign freely. For example the detention of the FDC presidential candidate during campaigns was contrary to the right of candidates to campaign¹².

4 Final report, Citizens Election Observation Network-Uganda-Page 36

5 Ibid 4-page 37

6 Ibid 4-page 37

7 Ibid 4-Page 39

8 Ibid 4-page 39

9 Ibid 4-page 69

10 Ibid 4-page 39

11 Ibid 4-page 65

12 Ibid 4-page 51

On a number of occasions, opposition candidates, particularly from the FDC and Go Forward were denied access to campaign venues, restricting their ability to campaign freely. EU EOM received reports and observed extensive use of force by police including teargas and assault rifles to disperse crowds during Kizza Besigye's and Amama Mbabazi's rallies in Bukwo, Kasenge, and Ntungamo among others. On 15 February, police detained Besigye twice, preventing him from addressing scheduled rallies in Kampala Central and used teargas and live ammunition against his supporters, resulting in one death and several injured¹³.

The campaign was polarized and marred by use of violent rhetoric that became prominent prior to election day. The incumbent's high-ranking NRM cadres and Police officials repeatedly stated in public that they would use force against anybody opposing state power. At the same time, the FDC reinforced its 'campaign of defiance,' aimed at challenging any action or decision taken by the state authorities that could be considered to be outside the legal framework¹⁴.

2.1.4 Voter education

According to CEON-U's Long Term Observers, there was no adequate voter education carried out by the Electoral Commission between September 2015 and January 2016. This bred a situation where myths, misperceptions, and fears about the elections thrived. The gaps in information flow on elections can lead to violence.

2.1.5 Intraparty politics and violence

There was party in-fighting that led to factions such as Norbert Mao's faction versus Lukwago's Platform for Truth and Justice in Democratic Party (DP), Museveni's faction versus Amama's Go Forward in NRM, and Olara Otunnu's faction versus Jimmy Akena's faction in UPC. Consequently, several violent incidents erupted between rival camps, including use of machetes and other weapons as well as destruction and burning of property as it happened when the Sembabule District NRM offices were set ablaze¹⁵.

2.2 Election Management and Administration-capacity gaps

2.2.1 Capacity gaps of the Electoral Commission and inefficiency in election administration.

The failure by the EC to convene the Inter-Party Liaison Committees at the national level and the District Election Security Committees at the lower levels as constitutionally provided for negatively affected consensus building and resolution of disputes among stakeholders. The inaccessibility of the EC website for several weeks during the period December to January 2016 left the public without accurate information regarding the electoral process¹⁶. The objective to have a comprehensive voter information programme was not met, as was not the consolidation of the procedures and guidelines. Those failures casted further doubts on the EC's efficiency¹⁷.

The EC planned some other safeguards to enhance the integrity of the process, such as introduction of a biometric voter verification system (BVVS) and a voter location slip (VLS). However, the late introduction of new technology into the process combined with the lack of communication to both the electorate and political parties created an atmosphere of mistrust among all stakeholders¹⁸.

The EC and the courts both have jurisdiction to adjudicate election complaints. Provisions for the complaints and appeals process largely respect the right to effective remedy as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). However, a lack of procedures for the EC's activities and the absence of specific timelines for issuing decisions undermined the timely and effective remedy of electoral disputes. The hearings on candidates' nomination petitions remained ongoing until the election day, failing to provide a timely remedy¹⁹.

13 Preliminary Statement of the EU-EOM to Uganda (2016)

14 Ibid 13

15 Ibid 4-page 67

16 Ibid 13

17 Ibid 13

18 Ibid 13

19 Ibid 13

The number of complaints submitted to the relevant authorities in the field was low, highlighting the lack of trust in the judiciary at the district level and the slow review of complaints. Court fees and corruption are reported obstacles to those seeking legal remedy. Thus, in most cases aggrieved persons preferred to resort to mediation. At the national level the EC presented to the EU EOM a list of 160 cases mainly related to candidate registration and only a few on the violations of campaign regulations. Comprehensive information on the total number of complaints submitted either to the EC, to courts or to the police, was not available to the public²⁰.

The EC lacks independence, transparency and the trust of stakeholders. The EC narrowly interpreted its mandate by limiting it to the organisation of the technical aspects of the elections. Moreover, the EC lacked transparency in its decisions and failed to inform the voters and contestants on key elements of the electoral process in a timely and comprehensive manner²¹. In certain areas the voting material arrived late and the EC failed to communicate effectively the steps that would be needed to calm the growing frustration and tensions among voters deferred from voting. The EC chairman only announced the three-hour extension of voting in Kampala and Wakiso shortly before the official closing of the polling stations. Additionally, this was poorly communicated to the polling staff in affected areas. Counting was generally assessed as transparent, however one in five the numbers in the result forms did not reconcile. The tallying process was described as slow and lacking transparency²².

20 Ibid 13

21 Ibid 13

22 Ibid 13

Section 3: LEGAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING ELECTION VIOLENCE MITIGATION MECHANISMS

3.1 Legal Framework for Election Violence Mitigation

The legal framework is composed of the constitutional provisions, legislation relevant to elections in Uganda including the Electoral Commissions Act, the Presidential Elections Act 2005 as amended, the Parliamentary Elections Act 2005 as amended, the Local Governments Act Cap 243, the Political Parties and Organizations Act 2005 as amended, the Press and Journalists Act, The Electronic Media Act, Public Order Management Act 2013, rules, regulations and procedures that govern the electoral system design, the formation of electoral institutions and bodies, and the implementation of electoral activities.

3.1.1 Uganda's Legal and Policy Framework and its application in elections

A constant issue of concern prior to the 2016 general elections was the enactment of laws widely regarded as restrictive of the enjoyment of fundamental human rights such as those related to freedoms of association and expression as well as the right to media and information. These restrictions arise from the Public Order and Management Act (POMA) 2013. This law, considered draconian in as far as it limits the freedom of association, requires that a meeting of three or more people must be approved by an authorized police officer or the Inspector General of Police. Pre-election observer reports whose findings are herein contained show that public order law was extensively used to curtail opposition party activities in a way that disadvantaged the opposition's political objectives²³.

Other laws that came into place prior to the elections and are restrictive of the enjoyment of basic human rights are the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Act, 2015. This law curtails the operations of civil society organizations (CSOs) in as far as it accords the Minister of Internal Affairs considerable powers to license and de-license NGOs. It is argued that the government is suspicious of NGO activities some of which are considered to run parallel to government's objectives. For example, in November 26, 2015 the Electoral Commission threatened to ban a voter education campaign by a national coalition – Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU). The electoral commission had banned what it termed as a biased voter education “TOPOWA Campaign”. A letter dated November 26 2015 addressed to the government argued that some of the voter education messages being disseminated were anti-NRM and, therefore, partisan. The “*Topowa Campaign*” was a voter mobilization campaign that was meant to encourage Ugandans to turn-out in large numbers and vote²⁴.

The Computer Misuse Act, 2011 was meant to regulate computer usage by citizens. However, it has been castigated for granting the government power to determine what citizens can post online especially on social media platforms. Blogger Robert Shaka was charged with, among other offences, posting information, which according to the police, undermined national security, while Dr. Stella Nyanzi and Evangelist Joseph Kabuleta have been charged under the same law. This law is viewed as yet another tool available to the government to control civic action²⁵.

3.1.2 Codifying the Duties and Powers of the Electoral Commission

It has been recommended that the roles, duties, and powers of the Electoral Commission should be better defined by the law through enactment of relevant regulations or by amending existing legislation. As it stands, the very generic nature of the laws in which the powers and duties of the Electoral Commission are enshrined are a source of confusion in the administration of elections. For example, it was evident in the 2016 elections that because of the lack of clearly defined roles, there were incidents where state organs such as the police and the army appeared to overstep their mandate. This arose largely because the laws in place do not go a step farther to describe in sufficient detail the duties of the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission, therefore, finds itself legally unable to restrain other state agencies from assuming its roles and duties leading to potential abuses of power by these agencies²⁶.

23 Ibid 4-page 20

24 Ibid 4-page 20

25 Ibid 4-page 20

26 Ibid 4-page 22

The Role of Security Agencies in Elections

There is need for a clear definition of the role of security agencies in elections, particularly that of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), the national army. Section 42 of the UPDF Act 2005 mandates the military to assist a civil power such as the police whenever the circumstances necessitate its involvement. This is a provision of the law that has seemingly been misused leading to accusations of the intrusion of the UPDF into matters that do not require their intervention such as elections²⁷.

Administration of Elections

The Electoral Commission is set up by Article 60 of the Constitution of Uganda 1995, which authorizes it to conduct and supervise all elections and referenda in Uganda. Save for a few critical aspects such as the printing of ballots which the commission allowed key stakeholders to witness, the commission was generally not transparent in the conduct of its processes throughout the electoral period. For example, The Electoral Commission performed poorly too in voter education. Most of the voter education work was led by CSOs that the Commission accredited for that purpose. The Commission also failed to issue clear guidelines on election processes despite this having been set as a target in its strategic plan for the 2016 general elections. Various candidates were confused about the procedures to follow such as with regard to campaigns schedules.²⁸

3.2 Provisions in the Legal Framework that can Mitigate Election Violence-Best Practices and Uganda's context

According to the International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) an inclusive, fair, concise and uncontested legal and institutional framework constitutes in itself a milestone towards successful and peaceful elections. In addition to electoral legislation and institutions, responsibilities, rules of engagement and coordination between the Security Sector Agencies (SSAs) should also be detailed in relevant legislation which governs their electoral engagement.

3.2.1 Improved electoral management and justice

According to International IDEA, reform of the legal and institutional electoral framework should draw on the evaluation of previous electoral processes. Such evaluation is conducted in the post-election phase to identify disputed, deficient or ambiguous legal provisions and acts which have had a negative impact on the conduct of the previous electoral processes. The reform, among other things, needs to take into consideration: (a) the appropriateness of the electoral system; (b) the credibility of the Election Management Bodies (EMBs); (c) the effectiveness of the electoral dispute resolution mechanisms; (d) the integrity of processes for the registration of voters, political parties and candidates; (e) the quality of the legislation that regulates the roles and responsibilities of political parties; (f) the existence of mechanisms for the replacement of elected representatives; (g) the existence of mechanisms for information exchange with security sector and other relevant agencies and citizens' groups; and so on. EMBs are in a good position to initiate, advise on and influence these changes.

- a) ***Advise political stakeholders about an appropriate electoral system that takes into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of different design options***

The specific choices in the electoral system may affect participation, representation, the stability of government, the accountability of elected officials, the complexity of electoral processes, and political pluralism (International IDEA 2005). In particular, provisions relating to the formula for translating votes into seats, district magnitude, the votes-to-seat ratio, and boundary delimitation require careful consideration. An EMB is well positioned to advise legislators about the practical implications of different electoral systems in a given national and electoral context. Uganda's winner takes it all electoral system creates a situation where opposition votes are regarded as wasted. Proportional representation in key government positions would go a long way to reduce polarization as well as post-election tension and conflict²⁹.

27 Ibid 4-page 23

28 Ibid 4-page 25

29 Ibid 4-page 16

b) Advise adoption of a legal framework which will allow for the establishment of credible EMBs

Careful consideration needs to be given to what type of EMB will perform best in a given country context and what will contribute to its credibility. Three major organizational modalities exist: independent, governmental and mixed (International IDEA 2006: 7–9). The legal framework should establish the fundamental principles that will ensure the credibility of the EMBs. These principles include independence, impartiality, integrity, transparency, efficiency, professionalism and service-mindedness. (International IDEA 2006: 22–25). An EMB should advise the legislator about legal reforms needed to improve an EMB's capacity to organize credible elections. A balanced composition, for example, geographical, ethnic, gender, linguistic, religious and other, will increase the credibility of an EMB.

With regard to the Independence of the Electoral Commission in Uganda, there are serious doubts and relentless questions about the independence and overall integrity of the Electoral Commission. As such, for years, there has been a recurring call for reform of the laws establishing and governing the operations of the Electoral Commission. Calls for reform include instituting a more transparent and participatory process of appointment of members of the Electoral Commission³⁰. This calls have largely gone unheard by the Executive arm of government which is partly responsible for introducing bills to Parliament.

c) Establish trusted and efficient electoral dispute resolution mechanisms and introduce mechanisms to sanction perpetrators of electoral offences

The legal framework for electoral dispute resolution should ensure that electoral actions, procedures and decisions throughout the electoral cycle are in conformity with the law and based on the right to an effective remedy (International IDEA 2010: 20, 37). Electoral dispute resolution mechanisms can take on four separate types of challenge: (a) administrative, (b) judicial, (c) legislative and (d) international. In Uganda, the Presidential Elections Act, 2005 and its attendant regulations govern the process of disputing the results of a presidential election. A controversy underlying presidential election petitions is the standard of proof required of a petitioner under the law. There is a need for dialogue about the substantiality test and the general legal reforms to figure out the way forward³¹.

d) Design legal provisions which facilitate credible processes for the registration of voters, political parties and candidates

The legal framework for voter registration should establish legal clarity and be conflict- sensitive in order to generate preventive potential (Höglund and Jarstad 2010: 3). Laws regulating voter registration must ensure that there are no disfranchised categories. Article 61 (e) of the Constitution of Uganda 1995, mandates the Electoral Commission to compile, maintain, revise, and update the voter register. However, since the 1996 general elections, scrutiny of the register has revealed a host of flaws ranging from illegitimate voters on the roll to legitimate ones missing³².

With regard to registration of voters, the multi-agency National Security Information Systems (NSIS) was established in 2013 in Uganda to serve a dual role of registering Ugandans for issuance of national identity cards and creating a broad database for use by the different agencies seeking comprehensive data on Ugandans. Clause 65 (2) of the Registration of Persons Act, 2015 allows the commission to use the information contained in the national ID register to compile, maintain, revise, and update the voter register. However, lack of a clear legal framework under which the NSIS mass enrollment exercise was undertaken undermined the credibility of the process. Efforts to explain the legal framework were inadequate. The guiding law, the Registration of Persons Act, 2015 was not in place by the time the exercise started. Also, the exercise was beset by poor turn up in the initial days. Inadequate and often times malfunctioning equipment was a major drawback. At the beginning, staff was also inadequately prepared both technically and professionally, though significant improvements had been registered by the end of the first phase³³.

e) Introduce regulations that defines the roles and responsibilities of political parties in the electoral processes

The electoral legal framework should include provisions defining the roles and responsibilities of political parties in the electoral processes. In particular, it should provide political parties with incentives to resolve political conflicts through institutional frameworks and in a democratic way (Reilly and Nordlund 2008: 11). One widely-used mechanism for defusing the risk of an outbreak of election-related violence is political parties' own codes of conduct (CoCs). These are defined as a set of rules of behaviour for political parties and their supporters relating to their participation in an election

30 Ibid 4- page 21

31 Ibid 4-page 24

32 Ibid 4- page 28

33 Ibid 4- page 29

process (International IDEA 1999).

The process leading to the formulation of a CoC may be initiated, driven and facilitated in cooperation with civil society representatives or negotiated in party liaison committees. However, there are a number of challenges in terms of implementation and enforcement of such codes, in particular when political parties use violence as a political instrument (Mehler 2007: 208). Stakeholders' public declarations and commitments to respect a CoC can reinforce implementation, particularly if they are made jointly. Institutionalized monitoring of the codes of conduct, as well as public and civil society pressure directed at parties which disregard them, may also facilitate implementation. In addition, regulations against illegal financing are of great importance to avoid illicit party funding and thus keep violent criminal groups out of electoral processes. In this regard, legal obligations for political parties may include obligations for the disclosure of income and expenditure limits and bans on contributions, as well as monitoring and enforcement systems.

If an elected representative resigns, dies or is convicted of a legal offence, and if the process for replacing her/him is not clearly regulated, her/his replacement may become contested and contribute to rising tensions. It is important that such mechanisms are defined in the legal framework in a way which will create certainty (Höglund and Jarstad 2010: 3).

There was no clearly spelt out code of conduct for political parties in the 2016 elections. The ambiguity in some of the electoral laws which were supposed to provide guidance on how political parties and their candidates were supposed to conduct themselves during elections were insufficient in some instances. As a result this led to violence as highlighted in 2016 election observation reports of both International election observers and domestic election observer group CEON-U.

f) ***Define collaborative mechanisms and information exchange with security sector and other relevant agencies and citizens' groups***

Cooperation with SSAs will help EMBs ensure that electoral security arrangements are put in place to protect electoral stakeholders, including election officials, facilities, events and materials. The establishment of collaborative mechanisms that facilitate information exchange and joint action will be beneficial to both electoral and security organizations. If collaboration structures and procedures are defined in the electoral legal framework, this will ensure that coordination is structured and not left to chance. There needs to be a clear definition of the role of security agencies in elections, particularly that of the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), which is the national army.

3.2.2 Improved electoral security

SSAs are mandated to provide safety to electoral actors, events, materials and information throughout the electoral cycle. In doing this, SSAs may follow regular rules of engagement. However, practice shows that, due to the specific dynamics of political and social mobilization and conflicts during elections, the SSAs may benefit from specific legal provisions referring to their electoral duties. These provisions can define the responsibilities of different SSAs, rules of engagement when securing electoral actors, events and facilities, enforcement of sanctions, and forms of collaboration between different SSAs and other relevant actors during elections. In some instances, SSAs benefit from an EMB being mandated to direct their work when they are engaged in electoral processes.

Thus, the roles, duties, and powers of the Electoral Commission in Uganda should be better defined by the law through enactment of relevant regulations or by amending existing legislation. As it stands, the very generic nature of the laws in which the powers and duties of the Electoral Commission are enshrined are a source of confusion in the administration of elections. For example, it was evident in the 2016 general elections in Uganda that because of the lack of clearly defined roles, there were incidents where state organs such as the police and the army appeared to overstep their mandate. This arose largely because the laws in place do not go a step farther to describe in sufficient detail the duties of the Electoral Commission³⁴.

a) ***Define rules of engagement for SSAs during elections***

The conventional routines for engagement of law enforcement agencies, usually found in 'rules of engagement' or 'use of force' frameworks, guide the conduct, rights and obligations of security sector personnel in certain circumstances. In some contexts, these frameworks may need to be reviewed ahead of elections to ensure that the engagement of law enforcement agencies does not interfere with democratic processes and practices. In particular, it is important to ensure that security forces are not 'baited into actions that may later be politicized' (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network 2012d). Specific rules of engagement for electoral security, based on professional standards, may also be developed (Creative Associates International 2010: 26).

34 Ibid 4-page 22

b) ***Define sanctions and enforcement mechanisms against perpetrators of electoral fraud and violence***

Researchers point to the increased importance of sanctions and enforcement mechanisms directed against perpetrators of electoral violence. Höglund and Jarstad (2010: 3–4) argue that ‘more attention needs to be directed at measures which can support the implementation of the legal framework. Without sanctions against those breaking the electoral law, including violence makers, a culture of impunity is upheld’.

c) ***Formalize collaborative mechanisms for coordination and information exchange with EMBs, other relevant agencies and political parties***

Enhanced information exchange and coordination between SSAs and other electoral actors is required during elections. Practice shows that these collaborative mechanisms require flexibility and the commitment of the organizations involved. Given the mandate of SSAs to provide electoral security, they represent a key interlocutor to different stakeholders, including EMBs, political parties, and other relevant agencies and citizens’ groups. In particular, the responsibilities of SSAs to collaborate with an EMB and other state agencies should be formalized within the relevant legal framework or through intra-institutional collaboration agreements. Collaboration will improve information exchange and allow holistic analysis and coordination of prevention and mitigation efforts.

3.2.3 Improved infrastructure for peace

Improved infrastructure for peace (I4P) relates to putting in place standing capabilities for peace building and conflict prevention from the community to the national level. These strategies may include mobilization and coordination of state and non-state actors, including CSOs, traditional and religious leaders, reputable individuals and other organizations and individuals that have the capacity to contribute in preventing and defusing social conflicts. The value of the infrastructures of peace in the prevention and mitigation of election-related violence in different national contexts is well documented (van Tongeren and Brand-Jacobsen 2012: 18–21). The initial electoral phase, in which legal and institutional frameworks for the organization and conduct of elections are discussed, provides an opportunity for early engagement of various state and non-state actors. On the one hand, they can engage in facilitation of a national consensus relating to electoral legal frameworks; on the other hand, they can promote and advocate for the acknowledgement of the role that civil society groups and traditional leaders may have in resolving electoral disputes.

a) ***Mobilize and involve non-state actors in discussions on the electoral framework in order to achieve citizens’ participation and national consensus***

The involvement of multiple stakeholders, who share a mandate and an interest in contributing to peaceful elections, in the discussion on the reform of the electoral legal framework may be crucial for avoiding legal controversies at later stages. When formal processes are not inclusive and trusted, non-state actors can take initiatives to convene cooperative forums aiming to bring together relevant stakeholders, including EMBs, political parties, SSAs, traditional or customary governance structures and civil society organizations. These forums may create an environment of ownership and trust, and ensure the involvement of minority groups and balanced gender representation. They can work to secure the commitment of the organizations involved to adhere to, or implement, conclusions resulting from the discussions. If political actors are unwilling to agree on reforms, national and international specialists and reputable individuals may be involved to mediate and help align processes with international standards and obligations.

In the months prior to the 2016 general elections in Uganda, building on past initiatives, stakeholders in the electoral process came up with several proposed electoral reforms which were tabled before Parliament for consideration. The hope was that they would be adopted into law in a bid to strengthen electoral legislation to guarantee free and fair elections. These wide-ranging proposals came from civil society and political parties, but Parliament adopted almost none of the suggested electoral reforms³⁵.

b) ***Promote understanding of the role of non-state actors in contributing to peaceful elections, and advocate for the integration of alternative conflict resolution mechanisms into the electoral legal framework***

The effect of the efforts of formal institutions, such as EMBs and SSAs, to prevent and mitigate election-related violence may be maximized if they are combined with existing peace building and conflict prevention initiatives. These may include national mediation panels, peace councils, traditional and religious leaders, and reputable institutions and individuals, including women’s organizations and activists that work to promote gender equality and participation.

35 Ibid 4- page 21

Formal recognition and integration of these actors in the electoral legal framework, as part of dispute mediation and resolution, may be an effective strategy to prevent and mitigate election-related violence.

3.3. Structures and strategies for EWMs for Prevention of Violence in 2016 Elections

3.3.1 Election Administration and Management

Election management and administration is a core domestic responsibility of the Electoral Commission that involves regulating campaign financing, registering candidates and voters, locating and staffing polling stations, administering the vote, and counting ballots. These technical tasks can provide fertile ground for politicization, error, and fraud. Adequate election administration can prevent violence by improving the quality and legitimacy of the process, alleviating frustrations and suspicion, and enhancing awareness and respect for election laws and procedures. Electoral, institutional, or even constitutional reform may be necessary to enhance the transparency of the electoral process and ensure a fair distribution of political power. Mistakes, delays, and real or perceived fraud can trigger violent conflict, especially in the absence of credible dispute resolution mechanisms. A well-run election, for example, would reduce the risk of unruly crowds at voting stations or tense disagreements between political candidates and their supporters over the voting process³⁶.

In Uganda, the Electoral Commission is responsible for the administration of elections. The EC is widely regarded as not independent, not transparent and is not trusted by stakeholders³⁷.

Voter registration: The EC compiled a new voter register for the 2016 general elections by extracting data on voting age citizens from the National Identification Register (NIR), changing the voter registration system from an active to a passive one. This change was reportedly not sufficiently communicated, leaving many stakeholders without an understanding of the connection between the ID registry and the VR³⁸. The final VR contained 15.277 million voters, extracted from the NIR database of about 16.46 million citizens aged 16 years and above at the time of registration in 2014.

The creation of a new VR extracted from the NIR data did not conform to the established legal framework as the EC is mandated by law to independently compile, maintain, revise and update the VR. Despite changing the voting system from active to passive, necessary legislative changes, determining relevant procedures for the new registration exercise were not enacted³⁹. Instead, the EC issued press releases and acted upon provisions in the ECA, which were not fully consistent with the new system. The establishment of the cut-off date of 11th May 2015 for inclusion in the voter register *de facto* disenfranchised potential voters who turned 18 years after this date⁴⁰. Again, the EC employed provisions that were not mandatory for the current system, for which data extraction is continuous. Thus, people who turned 18 between the cut-off date and 18th February 2016 should have been included in the voter register.

Handling election complaints: The EC and the courts both have jurisdiction to adjudicate election complaints. Provisions for the complaints and appeals process largely respect the right to effective remedy as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR). However, a lack of procedures for the EC's activities and the absence of specific timelines for issuing decisions undermined the timely and effective remedy of electoral disputes. The hearings on candidates' nomination petitions remained ongoing until the election day, failing to provide a timely remedy⁴¹.

Polling day: In certain areas the voting material arrived late and the EC failed to communicate effectively the steps that would be needed to calm the growing frustration and tensions among voters deferred from voting. The EC chairman only announced the three-hour extension of voting in Kampala and Wakiso shortly before the official closing of the polling stations. Additionally, this was poorly communicated to the polling staff in affected areas. Counting was generally assessed as transparent, however one in five the numbers in the result forms did not reconcile. The tallying process was described as slow and lacking transparency⁴².

3.3.2 Security Sector Engagement

Security sector engagement is another election violence prevention responsibility. It encompasses the existing

36 Ibid 3

37 Ibid 13

38 Ibid 13

39 Ibid 13

40 Ibid 13

41 Ibid 13

42 Ibid 3

regulatory frameworks that structure the security forces' operations during elections, the performance of security forces throughout the electoral cycle, and the external support the security forces receive⁴³. A well-trained and well-equipped police or military force can provide a domestic guarantee for election security if it prioritizes protecting the electoral process over elite interests, is held accountable for abuses, and conducts itself professionally⁴⁴. The police, commonly responsible for election security, can deter violence or mitigate its spread by operating in a nonpartisan, visible manner and in accordance with clear rules of engagement. When poorly trained, biased, or ill-equipped, however, the police may instead function as active perpetrators, provocateurs, or passive bystanders, neglecting their role in public order management, the apprehension of culprits, and the investigation of incidents⁴⁵.

The police, which is the body mandated with the primary responsibility of keeping law and order in Uganda, procured high-tech anti-riot equipment and took on an unprecedented recruitment of some 150,000 new officers ahead of the 2016 general elections in Uganda⁴⁶.

During the pre-election phase in the 2016 general elections in Uganda, there was an atmosphere of mistrust between citizens and the security agencies. This mutual suspicion seriously complicated the involvement of the security agencies in the electoral process⁴⁷. The suspicion was further consolidated when security agencies took sides in the election process. The illegal and/or unwarranted repression of opposition politicians and activists under the guise of POMA undermined the relationship between security agencies and citizens. EU EOM preliminary statement on the 2016 election in Uganda indicated that their observers received reports and observed extensive use of force by police including teargas and assault rifles to disperse crowds during Kizza Besigye's and Amama Mbabazi's rallies in Bukwo, Kasenge, and Ntungamo among others⁴⁸. On 15th February 2016, police detained Besigye twice, preventing him from addressing scheduled rallies in Kampala Central and used teargas and live ammunition against his supporters, resulting in one death and several injured⁴⁹.

3.3.3 Election Monitoring

Election monitoring involves observing and evaluating an electoral process against domestic and international standards for democratic elections. Election observers can confer legitimacy and transparency by evaluating the quality of the electoral process, confirming victory or defeat, and backing the election management body in the event of allegations of fraud⁵⁰. If access is granted by the host government, international missions composed of neutral, short-term observers can arrive, often close to Election Day, accompanied by political party observers or accredited NGOs⁵¹. In some instances, organizations often deploy a smaller number of long-term observers to complement the core observation team for up to two or three months. International monitors may effectively deter violent actors or instigators, which is why they depend on their neutrality and access to polling sites⁵².

The domestic election observation report on the 2016 elections by CEON-U did not document the role played by observers in preventing election violence. However, during the 2016 elections, the Women's Situation Room (WSR) was established a few weeks to polling day, deployed observers in 15 districts of Uganda specifically focused on preventing violence in the election through a system of sending information to a central base of the WSR. The information collected would then be shared with relevant stakeholders like the EC and police for action. Apart from the Statements released by the WSR, the results of the work of the WSR in Uganda was not available for analysis. It is therefore not possible to comment on the effect WSR had in averting or mitigating election violence in the 2016 general elections in Uganda.

3.3.4 Civic and Voter Education

Voter education campaigns can encourage citizen participation, help introduce new voting technology, and explain where to vote and how to file a complaint. Civic education campaigns have broader objectives beyond the election

43 Ibid 3

44 Ibid 3

45 Ibid 3

46 Ibid 4

47 Ibid 4

48 Ibid 13

49 Ibid 13

50 Ibid 3

51 Ibid 3

52 Ibid 3

in question, in that they inform citizens about the political system and their democratic rights and responsibilities. Voters provided with civic education may be less apathetic and more likely to participate in elections, readier to criticize politicians' performances, or feel more empowered to counteract violence. Education campaigns are the responsibility of the government administration or election management body, although in practice governments often do not provide enough information, leaving local media and civil society to fill the vacuum. Empowering the electorate in a weak democratic system, however, is not without risks: informed citizens may develop unrealistic expectations; an engaged electorate may be mobilized for violence more easily; and larger turnouts may place voters at risk in hazardous environments⁵³.

The Electoral Commission and Uganda Human Rights Commission are mandated by the Constitution to formulate and implement voter education and civic education programmes respectively. These programmes are intended to enable citizens understand and appreciate their duties, roles, rights, obligations, and responsibilities as citizens of Uganda. The government is expected to support the implementation of these programmes⁵⁴.

Although the Electoral Commission is mandated to provide voter information, civil society shouldered most of this responsibility by disseminating voter information through the media and a wide range of materials. Most of CEON-U's observers (94%) reported voter information campaigns in their constituencies⁵⁵.

Despite the laudable efforts of various actors to keep the citizens informed, a number of limitations were identified. These included limited funding which restricted the efforts of voter education and information providers such as CSOs to urban and peri-urban areas while neglecting the rural majority. Other organisations were also limited to covering the content within their scope of work like voter mobilisation. There was also a lack of guided voter education due to the Electoral Commission's failure to release the authorised voter education handbook until a few weeks to Election Day. To make matters worse, the handbook was not translated into different indigenous languages spoken in Uganda for the benefit of the majority of citizens who do not speak or understand the English language. Until the final release of the Voter Education Guide by the EC, CSOs were not at liberty to carry out voter education and information as doing so without the Commission's authority could lead to unpleasant consequences for the offender⁵⁶.

All this contributed to the inadequacy of voter education and information which ultimately impacted the way polling was carried out. Findings showed that barely three months to the February 2016 elections, voter education was so low that 39% of observers did not report any voter education activities in their constituencies. However, in the week before elections, (February 8 – 14), CEON-U noted an improvement in voter information and education. The introduction of the Biometric Voter Verification System just 14 days to the polling day added to the avalanche of information that voters were bombarded with. This added to the confusion and paved the way for myths that persisted up to polling day⁵⁷.

For instance, the lack of clarity about the voter locator slips and voter cards at the polling station caused uncertainty among voters who could not readily figure out which document to use on polling day. Similarly, some voters were duped into believing that the biometric machine was harmful and that it would affect the voter's health⁵⁸.

3.3.5 Peace Messaging

Peace messaging campaigns aim to influence the attitudes and behaviors both of the electorate as a whole and of vulnerable groups or possible perpetrators of violence. Sports events, cultural activities, social media, and public communications (such as radio broadcasts and SMS blasts) have been used to counter hate speech or persuade potential perpetrators as well as average voters to reject violence. Peace messaging campaigns are often combined with civic education programs. Ideally, the messages are crafted by locals, are broadcast beyond urban centers (depending on the areas deemed at risk), and begin to be delivered before election campaigns are in full swing. Organizers typically include religious, youth, and women's organizations, local media, election commissions, and even political parties. An effective peace campaign that targets communities vulnerable to violence or likely to pick up arms may enhance popular

53 Ibid 3

54 According to the Constitution, one of the key functions of the electoral commission is to formulate and implement civic educational programmes relating to elections. Under this, the Commission is expected to provide voter education and voter information. The mandate of the Commission includes the promotion and regulation of information to the citizens regarding the purpose and procedures of voting. For every electoral cycle, the electoral commission formulates and issues voter information and voter education materials.

55 Ibid 4

56 Ibid 4

57 Ibid 4

58 Ibid 4

eagerness to engage peacefully in elections, foster a general rejection of violence, and enhance the perceived legitimacy of the polls. Peace messaging can also help counter toxic messaging by political leaders and their supporters⁵⁹.

3.3.6 Religious leaders during the 2016 elections issued various messages for peace in the elections.

In the week prior to the 2016 elections, bishops seemed to be everywhere. We met one in a bank for instance, speaking from the television pinned to the corner of the room to an attentive crowd of some 30 people on behalf of the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC). The bishop's message – that it was important to vote, to vote wisely, to stay calm, and to pray for peace – was repeated in the pre-election weeks on TV screens, front pages of newspapers, on radio stations, and in churches and mosques, across the country. We argue that this lobbying, particularly its most prominent forms; the arranging of the presidential debates, and the UJCC's election monitoring activities; both politicised the elections by expanding the space for public debate, and de-politicised the elections by shutting down debate through an over-emphasis on peace, similar to what was witnessed in Kenya's 2013 elections⁶⁰.

Pentecostal pastors in Kitgum hosted a radio debate for local candidates, and gathered religious leaders from different churches for a call-in show focusing on voter education, and for daily prayers for peace in the week prior to the election. It would appear that at a local level, local initiatives may have been far more significant than national-level networks, the impact of which reaches grassroots clergy largely in the same way it does other Ugandans: through national media⁶¹.

The Council of Presidents of Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) organized the weekend of February 12-14, 2016 to conduct national prayers for peace, unity and stability as the country prepares for the General Elections due February 18, 2016.

3.3.7 Youth programming

Youth are often excluded from the political process and vulnerable to recruitment by political actors eager to incite or commit violence. They also typically experience high levels of unemployment. Consequently, programming that engages youth in the election process, educates on democratic values, and creates economic opportunities can reduce the appeal of violence. In addition to offering youth a voice to express their needs and concerns, efforts should be made to engage them directly in election administration as monitors, or even as political candidates, through recruitment fora. This approach is more likely to succeed when informal groups—such as militias and gangs, rather than police—are expected to perpetrate the violence⁶².

In the 2016 elections in Uganda focus on the youths was intense by candidates, CSOs and media partly due to the demographic dividend of the youth in Uganda. 78% of Uganda's population is comprised of youth⁶³. [In the 2016 elections, youths ideas about electoral democracy in Uganda were often trending all over social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. Several youth dialogues, conferences and meetings created space for youths to discuss the country's state of affairs. Across the country youths stood for political positions and majority of them won these positions](#)⁶⁴.

[Some programs to promote peace in the 2016 elections were led by the youth. For instance,](#) a coalition of a youth-led program, [#IChoosePeaceUG](#), that was dedicated to elevating messages of peace during the election cycle enhanced youth voices for peaceful elections in Uganda. The goal of the program was to convince citizens to engage in the election campaign in non-violent ways rather than getting involved in the kind of violence that already has broken out during the primary season.

The impact of these programs was not readily available in the literature that was reviewed.

59 Ibid 3

60 Kasozi, Ephraim. "Museveni Promises Funding to Churches." Daily Monitor. 2016, 2 January edition. <http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/specialreports/elections/Museveni-promises-funding-churches/-/2471424/3018126/-/format/xhtml/-/ivgad2z/-/index.html>. [Google Scholar]

61 Henni Halava & Jimmy Spire Ssentongo(2017)-Religious (de) politicization in Uganda's 2016 elections <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2016.1270043>

62 Ibid 3

63 Uganda Population report (2013)

64 Badru Walusansa and Deborah Namirimu (2016) <https://ccedu.org.ug/index.php/programs/voter-education/youth-and-women/2-uncategorised/20-leaving-beyond-2016-a-focus-on-the-future-of-youths>

3.3.8 Women's programming

Women, despite the role they play in violence prevention are often excluded from programs to promote peace. Limited attention is paid to the skills and knowledge that women bring to peace building partly due to their marginalization in decision making. Research in countries like Liberia has proven that when women are involved in peace building initiatives they bring unique qualities that can prevent election violence.

The Women's Situation Room (WSR) was first initiated in Liberia by the Angie Brooks International Centre (ABIC) during the Liberian Elections in October and November 2011. It started amid growing awareness that violence had become a norm of African elections and the need to ensure that women play key roles in ensuring peaceful elections. Since its adoption, it has been recognized as a best practice by the African Union and has been successfully replicated in Senegal (2012), Sierra Leone (2012), Kenya (2013), Malawi (2014) and Nigeria (2014)

On February 18, 2016 and as part of efforts towards peaceful elections, the women of Uganda established a Women's Situation Room; an early response and conflict mitigation mechanism that directly engages women and youths to play active roles in preventing and mitigating electoral violence in line with UNSCR 1325 that calls for active participation in peace building and conflict prevention. Feedback to the WSR was collected from 15 districts of Uganda where women and youth groups were trained to document and share incidences of electoral violence.

The WSR also had a team of selected Eminent Women from Uganda and other African countries, who were involved in advocacy for peace, observation of the polling process and mediation with political and legal experts. The Eminent women were tasked with responding to electoral violence incidents instantly and contacting the right authorities to resolve matters in a timely manner. The physical Women's Situation Room with a fully functioning call centre opened on 15th February 2016 to receive real time reports and information on incidents from the trained election observers in the districts. The impact of the work of the WSR in Uganda was not readily available for analysis in the literature reviewed.

The seven prevention tools highlighted here are used by a broad range of State and non-State actors. As Ugandans prepare to vote again in the 2021 elections which by all indicators from by-elections following the 2016 elections may be affected by violence and increased vote buying, it is important to assess which structures and strategies seemed to work and which appear to have had little or no impact. To what extent did peace building efforts help prevent an escalation of tensions in Uganda? Were police and Electoral Commission efforts effective, or did election observation play a critical role?

3.4 What Works to Prevent Election Violence?

The use of force during the electoral process has been an increasing focus of electoral assistance activities undertaken by international agencies. However, there is little systematic analysis of whether electoral violence prevention is effective, and if so, which strategies work⁶⁵. The study assesses the strategies highlighted in the previous section and discusses which ones are most effective based on research findings. For the purposes of this analysis, EVP will be defined as any type of electoral assistance activity that aims to prevent or mitigate some form of electoral violence⁶⁶.

We also know that violence is more likely if major groups' experience or fear exclusion from political decision-making due to ethnic discrimination, electoral fraud or other deviations from democratic norms. The perceived risk of exclusion raises the stakes of elections and makes groups more willing to resort to violence. It follows that the risk of violence at elections can be lowered by increasing political inclusion through, among other things, improving electoral conduct and also by altering perceptions of likely exclusion and of the intentions of actors in the electoral process. Building the capacity of electoral institutions and transforming popular attitudes about the electoral context are therefore both potentially viable means of addressing electoral violence⁶⁷.

Election management and administration: Bolstering confidence in electoral institutions is thus a powerful means of ensuring that electoral procedures remain the sole mechanism for resolving political differences. Typical of this view is the claim, made by Darnolf and Cyllah in a handbook published by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, that "the most valuable asset any EMB can possess is credibility, which can significantly increase election security. The credibility of the electoral process often leads to increased legitimacy of the government and, thereby, reduced risk of political turmoil". Increasing the technical skills and capacity of electoral actors to run credible elections and to cope with potentially conflictual situation sought therefore to reduce both election-related tensions and the likelihood that

65 Ibid 1

66 Ibid 1

67 Ibid 1

such tensions will result in violent outbreaks⁶⁸.

A recent collection of qualitative studies edited by Jonas Claes provides a systematic assessment of the success of different types of EVP strategy in preventing electoral violence. On the basis of the cases assessed in this volume, the most fruitful types of EVP appear to be based on the capacity building of state actors such as security sectors and electoral management bodies. Other promising approaches include activities whose target reaches beyond the state, such as long-term voter education activities. By contrast, many of the initiatives undertaken by civil society groups to change attitudes towards electoral violence proved less successful. In their conclusion to the volume, Claes and Macdonald note: “Despite the theoretically compelling logic, the measurable impact of citizen- or community-oriented instruments, like peace messaging, voter consultations, and even youth programming, remains small or unclear⁶⁹. We can potentially explain this divergence by noting that many of the motives of the elites who orchestrate violence as part of the electoral process are associated with underlying power relations and the high stakes that electoral outcomes entail. These factors are associated with deep-seated interests that cannot easily be swayed by messaging campaigns and similar activities; though of course this does not mean that such interventions cannot be successful in certain contexts and with certain groups⁷⁰.

Other studies have found that interventions based on attitude-transformation are effective at reducing violence. In a Nigerian experiment carried out in 2007, Collier and Vicente found that community campaigns by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – including town meetings, street theatre, targeted printed materials – reduced voter tolerance of violence and increased voters’ ability to resist intimidation⁷¹. It appears better to have stronger civic education and monitoring efforts than, for example, peace messaging or youth programming⁷². Not only does training make such state bodies more adept at EVP, it also provides them with the skills needed effectively to communicate their competence and their commitment to maintaining the electoral peace. This helps to overcome the coordination problems that often trigger sporadic violence in contexts of high uncertainty⁷³.

Likewise, long-term voter education increases citizens’ understanding of the electoral process, and in so doing it can enhance confidence in electoral conduct and reduce uncertainty as to what voters can expect at different points in the electoral cycle. Knowledge of registration and polling station procedures, vote-to-seat conversion formulae and the timetable for announcing results can be expected to allay fears and address misunderstandings⁷⁴. Yet, there are contexts where mediation and the initiation of dialogue between groups have been found to be effective at diffusing tensions and engendering pre-commitment on the part of actors to refrain from violence. In an analysis of southern African elections, Opitz, Fjelde and Höglund found that when EMBs adopted inclusive practices that involved working together with other electoral actors to discuss problems and build trust, less violence resulted⁷⁵.

68 Ibid 1

69 Ibid 1

70 Ibid 1

71 Ibid 1

72 Ibid 1

73 Ibid 1

74 Ibid 1

75 Ibid 1

Section 4: PRESENTATION OF FIELD FINDINGS

This section presents findings from the field. It shows respondents' characteristics; participation of respondents in previous general elections; prevalence of violence in elections; management of election violence; mitigation of election related violence; possibility of election violence in 2021 elections and conclusion and recommendations among others.

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. These include age, gender, geographical location, and profession among others. The section also presents data on the respondent's ownership of national identity cards; and registration status as voters.

4.1.1 Age

Under this demographic characteristic, a number of age groups participated in the study and the lowest age was 16 years.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Per cent (%)
16-21	2	0.8
21-35	105	40.2
Above 35	154	59.0
Total	261	100.0

As shown in table 1, majority of the respondents were 35 years of age and above. There were also a significant proportion of respondents between the age group of 21-31 years.

4.1.2 Gender

Under gender, data on the participation of male and female respondents is disaggregated in table 2.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

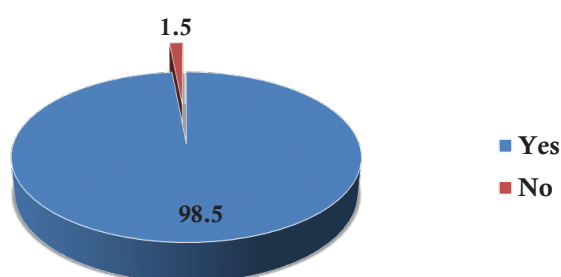
Gender	Frequency	%
Male	181	69.3
Female	80	30.7
Total	261	100.0

With regard to gender participation in the study, 69.3% of the respondents were male while 30.7% were female as indicated in table 2.

4.1.3 Status of Registration as a Voter

The respondents (N=261) were asked whether they are registered voters or not. The findings are presented in figure1.

Figure 1: Are you a Registered Voter?



The study results show that 98.5% of the respondents who participated in the study are registered voters.

4.1.4 Ownership of National Identity Card

Further, respondents were asked whether they own a National Identity Card. The findings are presented in table 4.

Table 3: Ownership of a National Identity Card

Ownership a National ID	Frequency	%
Yes	258	98.9
No	3	1.1
Total	261	100.0

According to table 3, 98.9% of the study respondents own a National Identity Card.

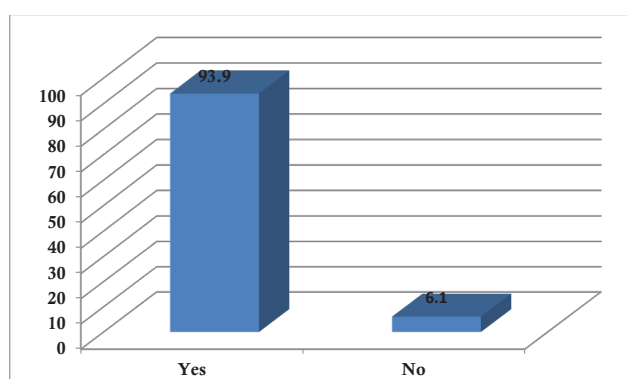
4.2 Participation in Voting

Citizen participation in the electoral process has an intrinsic value for the citizens. It is also important as a means of civic education, a process in which citizens learn civic values. Participation is an educational process that teaches basic civic values – through participation, people are taught to take responsibility.⁷⁶ During the study, respondents were asked about their participation in the voting process in the previous election and interest to participate in the next election.

4.2.1 Voting in Previous Election

The respondents were asked whether they voted in the 2016 elections. The findings are presented in figure 1.

Figure 2: Voting in the Previous Election



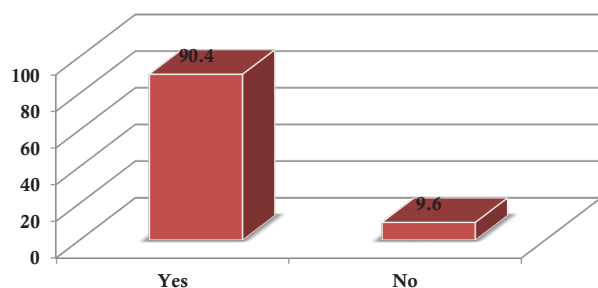
According to results in figure 2, 93.9% of the respondents participated in elections in at various levels in 2016. This is an indicator that majority of the citizens still believe in the electoral process as a way of selecting their leaders.

76 Šiber, I. (2004). Interest in Elections and Electoral Participation. *Politička misao*, Vol. XLI, (2004), No. 5, pp. 3–27 (available at: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/33304>)

4.2.3 Interest to Vote in 2021 Elections

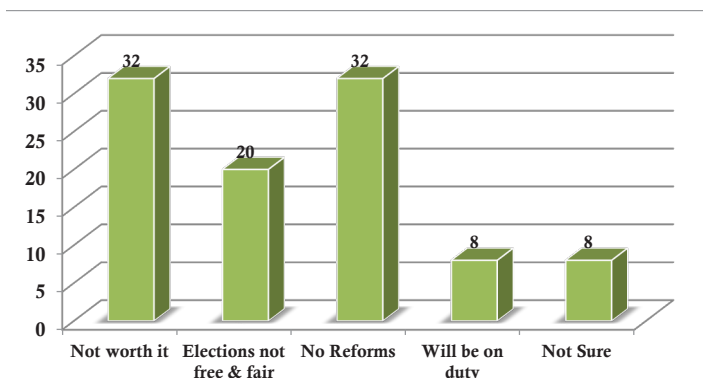
The respondents were also asked whether they were interested in voting in the upcoming 2021 elections. The results are presented in figure 3.

Figure 3: Interest to Vote in 2021 Elections



Findings in figure 3 show that 90.4% of those who participated in the study still have an interest in the upcoming 2021 elections. Those that reported not to be interested in the elections were further asked about the reasons for this disinterest. Their responses are presented in figure 4.

Figure 4: Reasons for Disinterest in 2021 Elections



According to figure 4, some of the respondents reported that they were not interested in the 2021 elections because they are not worth it; there were no electoral reforms as proposed by Courts of Law that have not been implemented; while others believed that elections would not be free and fair.

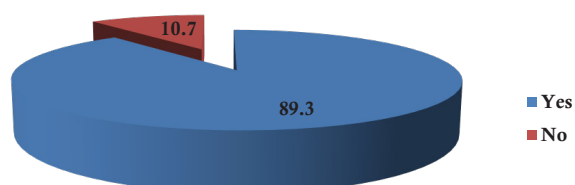
4.3 Violence in Elections

The study sought to understand the prevalence of violence in elections in Uganda, how it manifests, the main actors; the perpetrators, victims and tools used to mete out this violence as indicated in the sections below.

4.3.1 Prevalence of Violence in the Previous Elections

The respondents were asked whether there was violence in 2011 and 2016 elections in Uganda. Figure 5 presents the findings.

Figure 5: Prevalence of Violence in Previous Elections



On whether there was violence or not in the 2011 and 2016 elections in Uganda, 89.3% responded in affirmative as shown in figure 5. These findings resonate with Focus Group Discussion (FGD) findings in Arua, Mbarara, Kabale, Mukono, Gulu, and Lira Districts among others. For instance, in an FGD Mukono District, it was revealed that:

“Yes, we have witnessed a lot of violence especially in the NRM party primaries, for instance in Mukono South. This happened even before campaigns had been officially launched the candidates(Mayanja and Bakaluba Mukasa) contesting for flag bearer used buses to ferry young people who on arrival at the registration ground started fighting like they had been coached. Violence has become the norm in the municipality....one cannot win without a kiboko squad. The squads are facilitated with alcohol and drugs to make them more lethal..”
FGD, Mukono District.

Further, the FGD discussions in Lira District also revealed existence of episodes of violence in elections at various local government and administrative unit levels. It was noted for instance that:

“The LCV Chairperson of the Division and the District Councilor for Ojwina were forcing the EC officials to declare their candidate as the winner. This caused violence and the police shot live bullets to disperse the crowd. The UPC District Councilor declared their candidate for LC 1 Juba Road village as the winner. The EC officials never performed their role in this case and the man declared the winner by the UPC District Councilor is the LC 1 Chairman of Juba Road village. The UPC District leaders showed their party muscle over the NRM party in an NRM dominated village”.

4.3.2 Type of Election with Violence

The respondents were further asked about the type of election that had violence.

Figure 6: Types of Elections with Violence

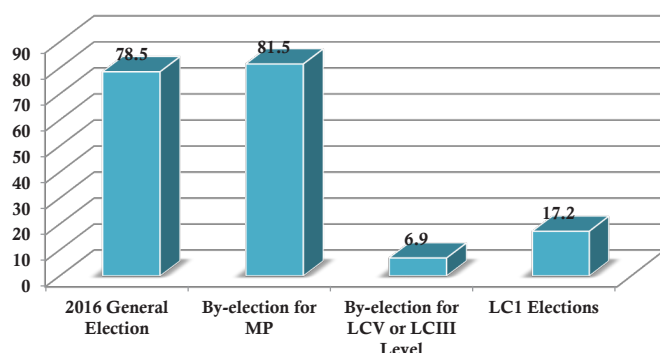
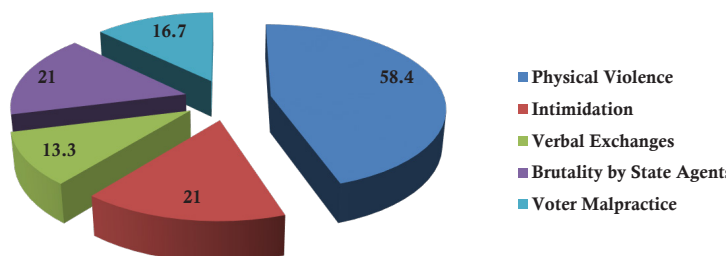


Figure 6 reveals that violence has permeated elections at every level from Local Council 1 to the presidential elections. Majority of the respondents (81.5%) reported that by-elections for members of parliament have the highest level of violence; followed by the general presidential elections (78.5%).

4.3.3 Nature of Violence in Elections

Figure 7: Nature of Violence



According to figure 7, physical violence is the most common form of violence reported to manifest in the 2016 general elections by 58.4% of the respondents followed by intimidation (21%) and Brutality by State Agents (21%). With regard to nature of violence the FGDs revealed that there were several including those listed in figure 6. A case in point, in Arua, it was reported that there was a lot of intimidation of voters from the State, Candidates and Candidates’ Agents. It was noted for instance that:

“There was a lot of intimidation of voters. Candidates and their Agents distributed items such as soap, salt, money and food especially to women, and intimidated them to vote for them, and promised them serious consequences if they did otherwise.” FGD, Arua District.

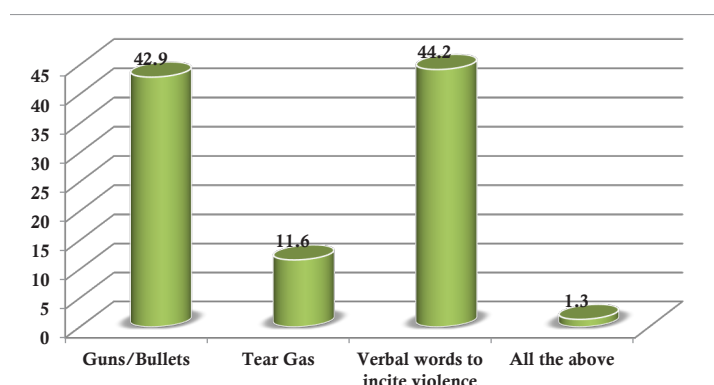
Another FGD participants in Arua noted that:

I witnessed supporters being kidnapped in the by-election of Arua Municipality MP by SFC and Uganda Police Force. Hon. Kyagulanyi Sentamu (Bobi Wine), Hon. Zaake and others were detained in military barracks yet they are not army men. The driver of Bobi Wine was killed and no conclusive report from police...the Arua 33 are still reporting to court in Gulu. Even some people who were not part of campaign were beaten, shot and maimed by security operatives. Guns, bullets, slaps, kicks, batons, Knives, pliers and tear gas were used in meting out the violence". FGD, Arua District.

4.3.6 Tools used in Election Violence in Previous Elections

The respondents were also asked about the tools of violence that perpetrators use during elections in the study areas. Figure 8 presents the results.

Figure 8: Tools used in Election Violence



According to figure 8, the main tool of violence used was verbal words to incite violence (44.2%), followed by guns or firing bullets (42.9%).

4.3.7 Triggers of Election Violence in Previous Elections

Figure 9: Triggers of Election Violence

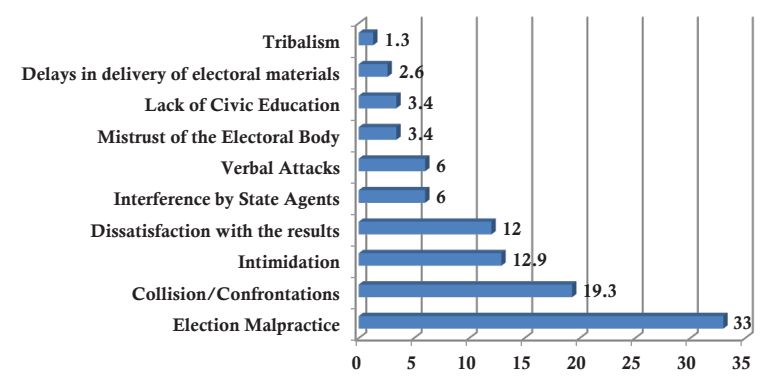


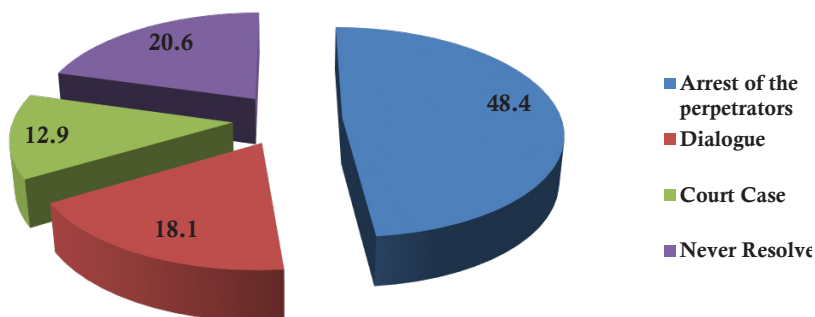
Figure 9 shows that the main trigger of violence during elections was reported to be election malpractice (33%). This implies that election violence mitigation programming should largely target minimizing or eliminating election malpractice among other issues. 4

4.4 Management of Election Violence

Further, this study sought to establish how violence in elections has been managed, the actors, as well as suggestions on how election violence can be prevented.

4.4.1 Management of Incidences of Violence

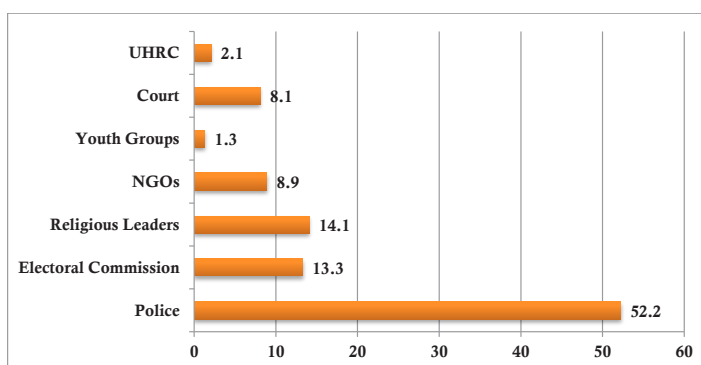
Figure 10: Management of Incidences of Violence



The findings in figure 10 revealed that the last episodes of violence were largely managed by arrests of the perpetrators as reported by 48.4% of the respondents. It should also be noted that a significant proportion of respondents (20.6%) revealed that the violence was never resolved at all. This therefore implies that in areas where the causes of violence was never resolved, there are higher chances of re-occurrence in the upcoming 2021 elections given that there are unresolved issues being carried forward.

In situations where violence was effectively handled, the respondents were asked to reveal who handled the violence. The results are presented in figure 11.

Figure 11: Who handled the Violence

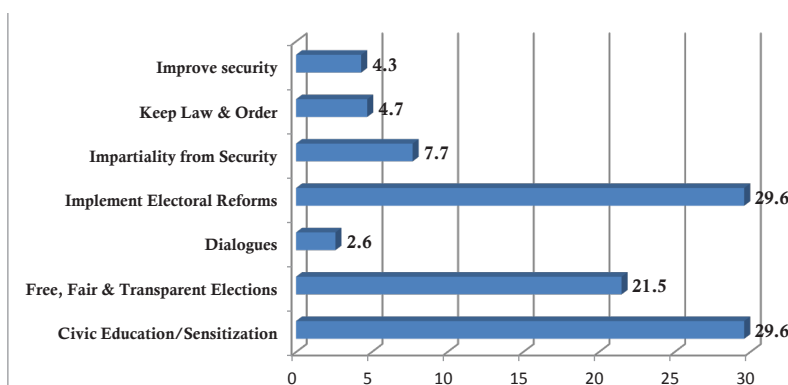


As shown in figure 11, majority of the respondents (52.2%) of the respondents indicated that the Uganda Police Force handled or managed the episodes of violence. This response is consistent with the response in figure 10 on management of violence which indicated that violence was managed by arrest of perpetrators.

4.4.2 Prevention of Incidents of Violence

The study endeavored to find out how best the incidence of violence during elections can be prevented from the perspective of the respondents, as seen figure 12.

Figure 12: Prevention of Incidences of Violence

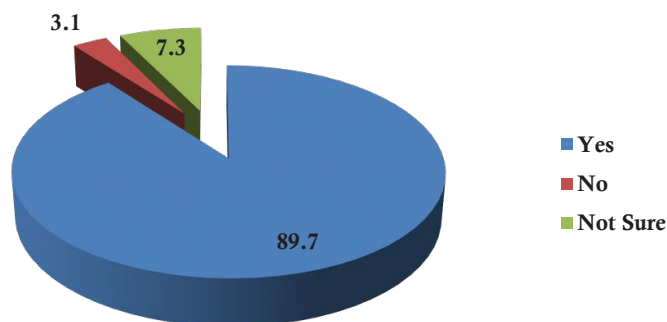


As presented in figure 12, civic education and implementation of electoral reforms were reported by 29.6% each as the most appropriate measures to prevent violence in elections in future.

4.4.3 Possibility of reoccurrence of Violence

The study sought to establish whether election violence is likely to re-occur in future elections as seen in figure 13.

Figure 13: Possibility of Re-occurrence of Violence



The results in figure 13 show that majority of the respondents (89.7%) felt that episodes of election violence were likely to re-occur in the next general election in their localities (constituencies, districts and sub-counties). This finding demonstrates that there are issues that have not been resolved or are prevailing yet that are likely to trigger violence. Paying attention to and addressing these issues by various stakeholders would be critical in averting this reported possibility of re-occurrence of violence.

4.4.4 Indicators for re-occurrence of Violence

The respondents who reported about the re-occurrence of violence in their areas were further asked about the existing indicators that of the likelihood of more episodes of violence. Figure 14 presents the results.

Figure 14 : Indicators for re-occurrence of Violence

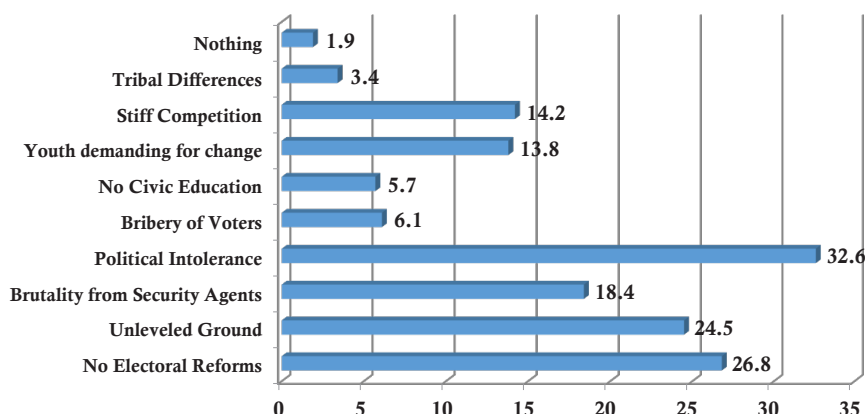


Figure 14 shows that prevalence of political intolerance (32.6%) was reported as major indicator for re-occurrence of election violence in 2021 general elections. The second and third indicators were reported to be lack of electoral reforms (26.8%) and uneveled ground for the political candidates (24.5%).

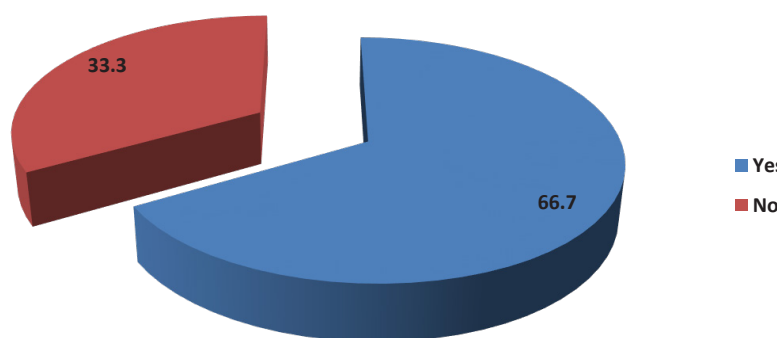
4.5 Prevention of Election Violence

This section presents findings on existing efforts to prevent election violence, roles of stakeholders like women and youth, and factors limiting participation of women and youth in interventions geared towards prevention of election violence.

4.5.1 Existing Efforts to Prevent Election Violence

The respondents were asked whether there are efforts in their localities advocating against election violence. The results are presented in figure 15.

Figure 15: Existing Efforts to Prevent Election Violence

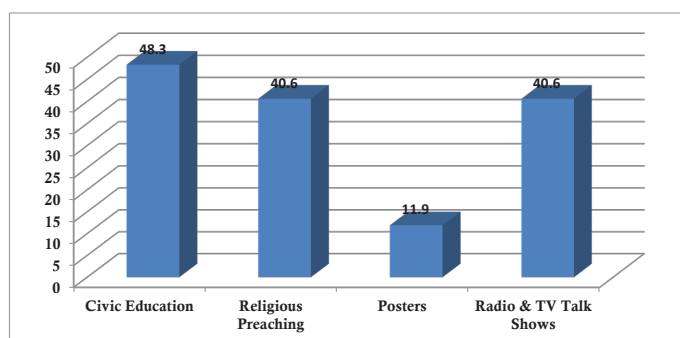


According to results in figure 15, majority of the respondents (66.7%) acknowledged existence of efforts that advocate against election violence in their localities.

4.5.2 What Actors are doing to Prevent Violence

With regard to what actors are undertaking to prevent violence, the results of the study are presented in figure 16

Figure 16: What Actors are doing to prevent Violence



According to figure 18, the notable interventions from actors to prevent re-occurrence of violence include: civic education, religious preaching and radio and Television talk shows.

4.5.3 Role of the Youth in Election Violence Prevention

The study endeavored to establish how involved were the youth in on-going efforts to prevent re-occurrence of election violence in different localities, as presented in figure 17.

Figure 17: Level of involvement of the Youth in Election Violence Prevention

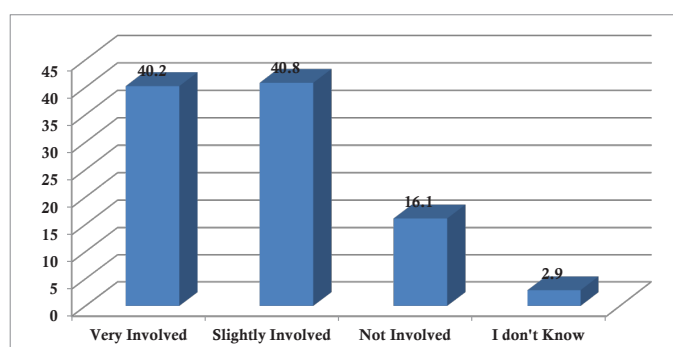
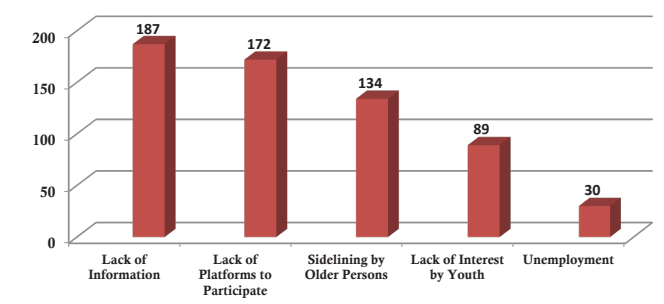


Figure 17 shows that 40.2% of the respondents revealed that the youth are very involved in election violence prevention. On the whole, these findings demonstrate that there is a gap on the level of youth involvement that needs to be addressed. Thus, making interventions more youth specific would be a step in the right direction.

4.5.4 Barriers to Youth Participation in election violence mitigation

In light of the findings in presented in figure 17, the respondents were further asked to name the barriers to youth participation in interventions for mitigation of election violence. The results are presented in figure 18.

Figure 18: Barriers to Youth Participation in Election Violence Mitigation Interventions

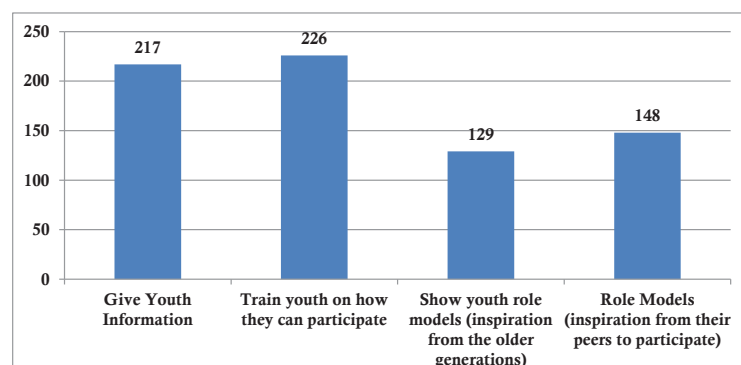


The results presented in figure 18, show that lack of information was the top most barrier for youth participation in election violence mitigation. The second barrier was reported to be lack of platforms to participate while the third was reported to be sidelining by older persons. It would therefore be important that the existing and new election violence mitigation interventions should deliberately target providing requisite information to the youth to empower them; provide platforms for youth participation and ensure that the youth are mainstreamed in the design and redesign of new and existing interventions.

4.5.5 Strategies for Youth Participation in election violence mitigation

Of the findings in section 5.3, the respondents were further asked about strategies that can promote or enhance participation of the youth in violence mitigation undertakings in their localities. Figure 19 shows the results.

Figure 19: Strategies to ensure Youth Participation in Violence Mitigation Interventions

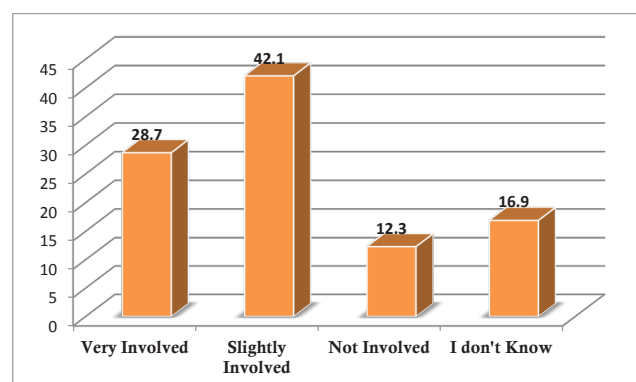


As shown in figure 19, training youth on how they can participate in election violence mitigation (as suggested by 226 out of 261 respondents) was the reported to be the most important strategy to ensure that the youth are empowered enough to play their role in election mitigation activities.

4.5.6 Women Participation in Election Violence Prevention

With regard to women participation, the study sought to establish the extent of their involvement in efforts to mitigate election violence. Findings are presented in figure 20.

Figure 20: Level of women involvement in Election Violence Mitigation



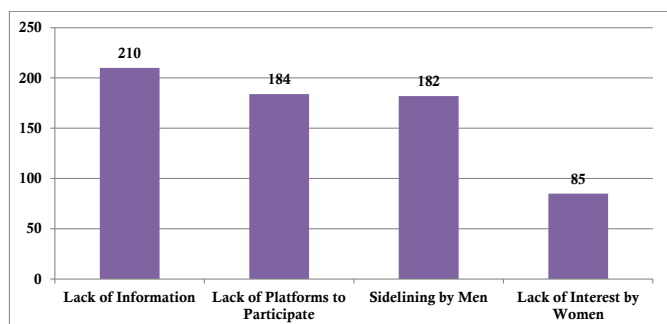
According to figure 20, 42.1% of the respondents reported that women are slightly involved in efforts to mitigate election violence while 28.7% reported that they are very involved. These findings suggested that the participation or involvement of women in election violence and mitigation is still limited. Also the FGDs revealed that women have played a critical role in some areas in mitigating election violence. In the FGD in Kasese District for instance, it was noted that:

“Women have played a very important role by using their groups in the communities and in churches and mosques. These groups have been used to unite women and advocate against any form of violence. –FGD, Kasese District.

4.5.7 Barriers to Women’s Participation in election violence mitigation

The participants were further asked about the barriers to women participation in election violence mitigation. The results are presented in figure 21.

Figure 21: Barriers to Women’s Participation in Election Violence Mitigation



The findings in figure 21 show that lack of information is the single most factor that hinders women from participating in efforts geared towards election violence prevention. Therefore, efforts to enhance participation of women in prevention of election violence should among other things ensure that women are able to receive information on the need to participate; how to participate and the existing opportunities in efforts to prevent election violence. Further, discussions in the FGDs revealed other barriers to women’s participation in election violence mitigation. These included;

- a) **A lot of Domestic Work for Women.** It was noted that in the districts of Kabale, Lira and Hoima that women are engaged in a lot of domestic work that does not give them space to engage in other activities of this nature. In Hoima District for example, it was noted that: *“Too much domestic work for women cannot allow them to engage in this political activities. They already have a lot on their hands with home chores”*
- b) **Violence in Politics.** As a result of the violence that women see during and after elections, some women have feared to get involved in violence mitigation for fear of being caught in between antagonistic actors. It was noted in Jinja District that; *“Women fear to engage in politics because it has been made to look dangerous. The streets are always full of army men and big guns, this cause fear among women and they do not want to participate because they fear. Men/husbands also tell their women to stay at home and not go to participate in matters that involve politics”*.
- c) **Fear of Exploitation by elites.** The women who fear to be exploited by elites have not found it attractive to participate in violence mitigation interventions. This was mainly reported in Arua, Gulu and Lira Districts. It was for example revealed in one of the FGDs in Arua District that; *“Uneducated and idle women are taken advantage of during campaigns by candidates and some these peace activities. Women are made to walk the whole day with candidates in exchange of a meal and as little as UGX. 500”*.
- d) **Religious and Cultural Barriers.** As a result of religious barriers some women have not been able to participate in public affairs’ activities like violence mitigation interventions. For example it was reported in an FGD in Arua District that; *“there is sidelining of women by men that is made worse by cultural barriers. Like women are not expected to talk to people in public and become leaders. This culture has continued to play key role in undermining the education of girls and women in societyReligion bars women from participating in leadership and public affairs. For example Islam does not allow women to stand in front of men and address men. Even if a woman has issues to bring up, she is gagged”*
- e) **Low Education Levels.** Low levels of education among women were also reported to be impending women from actively participate in election violence mitigation. In Gulu District for example, it was reported that *“Women lack confidence because of the low level of education which is coupled with negative cultural norms that only allow men to make decisions. As such, most women in rural areas are ignorant of the fact that, as human beings, women and men have the right to make decisions on their own and participate in community programs”*.
- f) **Unsupportive husbands.** It was also established that husbands play a critical role in ensuring that their wives participate or don’t participate in election violence mitigation interventions. It was noted that men have the

last word on whether their wives will participate or not. In Gulu District, it was reported that; *“Many women fear that their husbands will beat them if they participate in any activity without getting permission from them to do so. So, women usually participate in activities that their husbands approve of.* In Kabale District it was revealed that patriarchy is still a huge impediment to women’s participation in election violence mitigation. It was also revealed that; *“Women have no information. The patriarchal society and culture keeps them down. The women largely act on the orders of their husbands. They don’t have an independent mind.*

- g) **Lack of Confidence and Esteem.** Further, field reports indicate that some women do not have the confidence and self –esteem to participate in these public activities. In Hoima District, it was reported that *“because of lack of confidence/self-esteem, women are generally underrated by men in the society and their opinions will barely be considered”* In Kasese District it was also reported that; *“Women have an inferiority complex; they think they cannot be heard or listened to. There are less interested in anything politics. They are restricted by their husbands. They are sidelined by organizers who are normally men.*

4.5.8 Strategies to enhance Women’s Participation in Election Violence Mitigation

Furthermore, the respondents were asked about ways or strategies that can enhance women’s participation in averting election related violence. The results are shown in figure 22.

Figure 22: Strategies to Enhance Women Participation in Election Violence

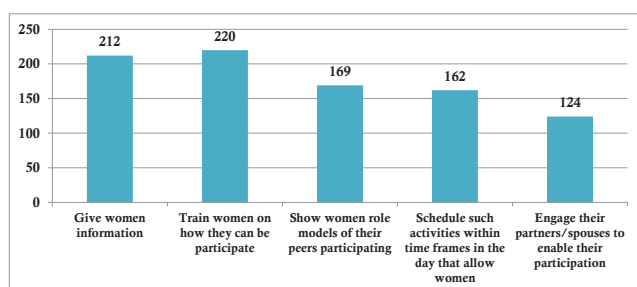
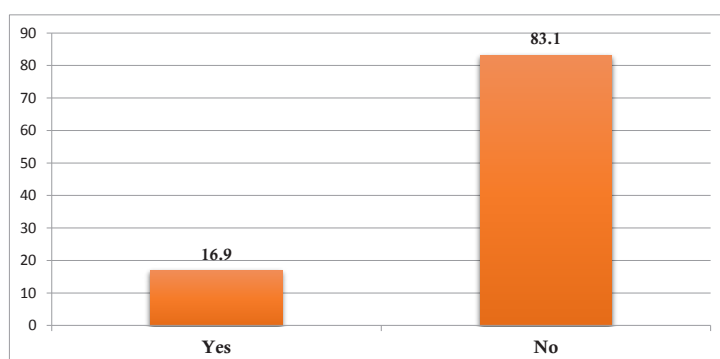


Figure 22 shows that 220 out of 261 respondents who participated in this study suggested that there is need to train women while 212 respondents suggest that women should be given information respectively to actively participate in election violence mitigation interventions.

4.6 Possibility of Peaceful elections in 2021

Considering their experience in their own localities, the respondents were asked about the possibility of peaceful elections in 2021. Figure 23 shows the results.

Figure 23: Possibility of Peaceful Elections in 2021.

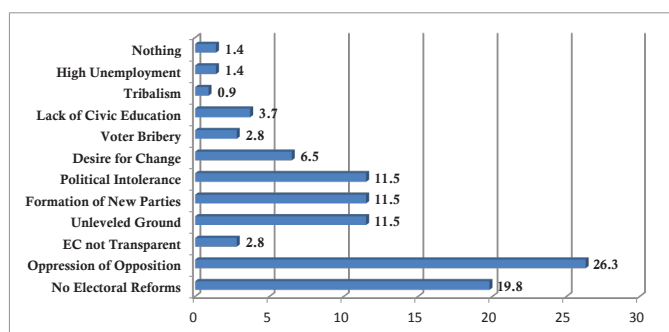


According to figure 23, majority of the respondents (83.1%) reported that that the 2021 elections will be violent.

4.6.1 Indicators for Violence in 2021 Elections

The respondents who reported that the 2021 elections will be violent were further asked to mention reasons why they thought so. Figure 24 shows the indicators revealed by the respondents.

Figure 24: Indicators for Violence in 2021 Elections



The main reason or indicator identified by majority of the respondents for violent elections in year 2021 was oppression of the opposition. Also, lack of electoral reforms was identified as the second indicator for the likelihood of violence in 2021 elections. Other reasons included: unlevelled ground for candidates; formation of new political parties and political intolerance among others. The FGDs also revealed a number of indicators that included the following:

- a) **Intimidation of Voters and Potential Candidates.** There were reports of intimidation of voters and potential candidates in some districts like Kabale, Mbarara, and Arua. In Kabale for example, it was revealed that; *“the chances of violence in the next election are very high. Some well-connected individuals interested in taking up elective political positions in the municipality have started intimidating people. There is already a lot of pressure yet it is not yet campaign period”*.
- b) **Restriction of Activities of Opposition Political Parties.** Restriction of activities of the opposition political parties is believed to be a likely cause of violence in 2021 elections. In Kabale District, the FGD participants revealed that; *“the denial of space for the opposition on radios especially upcountry is likely to cause election violence”* Also in Jinja District, participants in the FGD expressed similar concerns like those in Kabale and Gulu Districts, thus; *“Already there are restrictions against the opposition leaders, police does not want them to hold meetings and their supporters are intimidated by the RDC and police. Last week they stopped Besigye from holding meetings here and teargased people who had come to see him. Opposition cannot organize meetings due to suppression.”*

In Gulu District it was reported that; *“Public Order Management Act is enforced only on opposition and not the ruling party. Opposition politicians have been banned on radios, some have been physically removed from studios by police, and meetings for opposition politicians have been blocked and or dispersed using tear gas. The NRM, especially the president is busy campaigning country wide, being endorsed as a sole candidate from one region to another; the police are not interested in blocking his rallies”*.
- c) **Local Militias.** It was reported in some districts that the Local Defense Unit (LDUs) have already started arresting and torturing people. It is reported that these work hand in hand with the crime preventers. In Jinja District, it was reported in an FGD that; *“They have brought Local Defense Units (LDU) which is already torturing people and this will be working with crime preventers and police to cause violence”*.
- d) **Unresolved Conflicts from Previous Elections.** It was also noted that unresolved conflicts arising from the previous elections are a precursor to more violence in some districts as reported in Hoima, Mukono and Kasese Districts. A case in point, in Kasese it was divulged that *“There will be election violence in Kasese. There is deep seated anger among those who lost in elections and those whose loved ones were massacred at the Palace of the Obusinga. The procrastination of the return of Omusinga and his continued incarceration and of those who were arrested with him is major point of contention...Many politicians especially on the opposition side (FDC) are using the return of Omusinga as campaigning message and those on the NRM side do not want the Omusinga to return and that group is led by the RDC of Kasese”*.

In addition Mukono District, it was noted that; *“There will be election violence in Mukono, mainly because people (voters and candidates) are still holding anger from the previous violence that occurred in the last party primaries and general election. Most of the incidents and causes of violence were not solved and the people are in a high spirit of revenge for the next election. There are already hostilities against particular political leaders especially NRM leaders during the local council meetings, most of the young participants do not want these leaders speaking in the meetings. Young people have lost hope in the electoral systems and are promising to take matters in their*

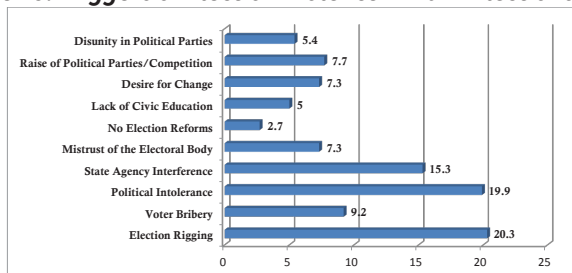
own hands in the next election through whatever means, including having street protests”.

Furthermore, FGD results from Arua revealed that; *“The wounds created by the recent violence have not been healed. People are still very bitter with the government. Unless the culprits are arrested and prosecuted, the NRM and the President will have to deal with an opposition bloc that will not back down”.*

4.6.2 Triggers of Violence in 2021 Elections

With regard to the triggers of election violence, the respondents were asked to reveal what they considered to be the possible triggers of election violence in the forthcoming 2021 elections. The responses are presented in figure 25.

Figure 25: Triggers of Election Violence in 2021 Elections



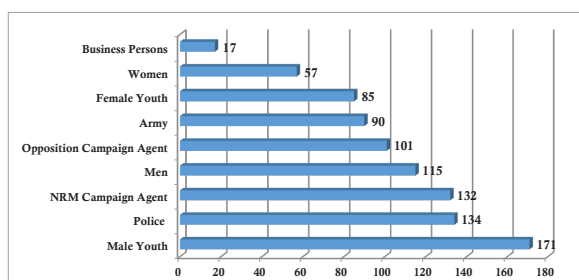
According to figure 25, the most likely triggers of election violence reported in this study was election rigging (20.3%). The second most likely trigger of violence in the 2021 elections was political intolerance (19.9%) while the third was state agencies' interference (15.3%). Other triggers of violence in the FGDs that included:

- Tribalism.** In Hoima District, there were reports of ethnic tensions between Bakiga, Banyoro and Banyarwanda. These tensions were reported to be one of the major triggers of violence in this district. It was revealed that; *“We have identified violence in every election from the general elections to local council elections. Tribalism has triggered most of the violence and it has involved hacking each other with pangas at times use of stones and stick, this has been mainly in Kibale district which has a Bakiga, Banyoro and Banyarwanda”.*
- Vote Rigging.** Another trigger for violence was reported to be vote rigging. For instance in Jinja District it was reported that; *“At tallying centres for LC5 and MP level, an individual like Titus Kisambira while using police officers beat up his opponent’s supporters, and Electoral commission announced the wrong person as the winner. In the 2016 general elections, Paul Mwiru had won on most of the polling stations but when people went to the tally centre the opposite was being announced. Fighting then began and people were sprayed with tear gas, dispersed until the wrong candidate was announced. The LC1 elections also had violence in some areas, for example there was fighting in Mafubira zone B when a different candidate was announced as winner”.*
- Arrest of Candidates and their Polling Agents.** This was also reported to be to a key trigger for violence. In Mbarara District, FGD participants reported that; *“Arrests of candidates’ campaign agents happened a lot in Mbarara and taken to safe custody as it is referred to by the police. And there were no charges preferred upon those arrested. This kind of intimidation weakened the camps of those opposed to the ruling party NRM. The arrests were deliberate and done by state operatives who are untouchable and feared by the citizens”*

4.6.3 Main Actors in 2021 Election Violence

The respondents across the geographical study areas were asked about whom they thought would be the main actors in election violence. The findings are presented in figure 26.

Figure 26: Main Actors in Election Violence (responses)



According to figure 26, it was reported that the male youth would be the top most actors in election violence (as reported by 171 out of 261 respondents). The Uganda Police Force was reported to be the 2nd most reported actor (134 out 261 respondents) in election violence; followed by NRM campaign agents in the 3rd position (132 respondents); men in the 4th position (115 out 261 respondents) and opposition campaign agents in the 5th

position (101 out of 261 respondents).

4.6.5 Main Victims in Election Violence

Further, the respondents were also asked to reveal whom they considered to be the main victims of election violence in their localities. Figure 27 presents the results.

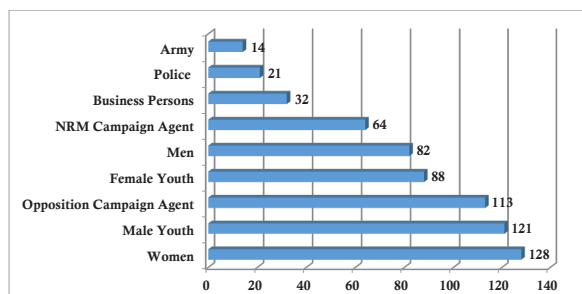


Figure 27: Main Victims in Election Violence

Results in figure 9 show that women and youth were reported to be the main victims of election violence as reported by 128 and 121 respondents respectively. Data from the FGDs conducted in Arua, Mukono, Mbarara, Gulu, Jinja, Kasese, Kabale and Lira among other districts also echoes the same finding. For instance in Gulu, it was revealed that:

Some women candidates were abused during the last general elections. Verbal abuse has discouraged many women from contesting in elections. The media have also played a negative role in inciting the people to act violently by siding with some candidates and the listeners follow what the media promotes. –FGD, Gulu District.

4.6.6 The role of Youth in Election Violence

It respondents were also asked about the role of the youth in election Violence. A number of responses were generated from the study including:

- a) **Using youth to cause Violence.** It was noted that candidates use young people to instigate violence against their opponents. In a Focus Group Discussion in Jinja District for example, it was noted that; “Political candidates trained youth groups that instigate violence, these young people are paid by candidates due to lack of employment. Youth were the main perpetrators and victims in the last bye election and general election and they will be the main perpetrators in the next election because they are poor. They are easy to manipulate”
- b) **Youth as Victims of Violence.** It was reported that in some districts like Arua and Kabale Districts, youth have been more of the victims of election violence. It was noted that because they are very active, they are usually brutalized and arrested during elections. In Kabale District for instance; *“Many youth were members of power ten and were supposed to protect votes for the opposition. They were also given money by candidates they supported but most of them were arrested and beaten by security.”*
- c) **Youth as Perpetrators of Violence.** In some other districts, like Hoima, Arua, Kabale and Kasese the youth have been seen as perpetrators of violence. In Hoima, it was reported in an FGD that; *“Young people have been the major perpetrators of violence for instance the violence witnessed between Team Obama and team Hon Kajura that happened throughout the campaigning and elections period. They were also involved in looting”*. In Kabale District it was also reported that *“Power 10 youth while defending their votes were paid by some candidates to be violent. The youths were involved in elections violence because some candidates with money used them to indulge in violent activities”*.

In Arua District it was revealed that *“In all elections candidates and other actors interested in the outcome of the election simply use the youth by offering them some money and free alcohol that makes the youth very aggressive ending up causing violence and hurting people with divergent views”*.

It was also reported in Mukono District that; *“Young people, both male and female are used by politicians to fight during rallies and polling day. They are given alcohol and most act out of the influence of drugs. Young people are ferried to cause trouble from one rally to other especially boda- boda riders and other idle youth”*

In Gulu, there were also similar reports that; *“The youth are idle in the streets, they have played major role in perpetrating violence in past elections because they are used by candidates who give them booze. The youth beat*

and abused people in the last election”.

4.6.7 Tools that will be used in Election Violence in 2021 Elections

With regard to the tools that are likely to be used in election violence in 2021, the findings are presented in 28.

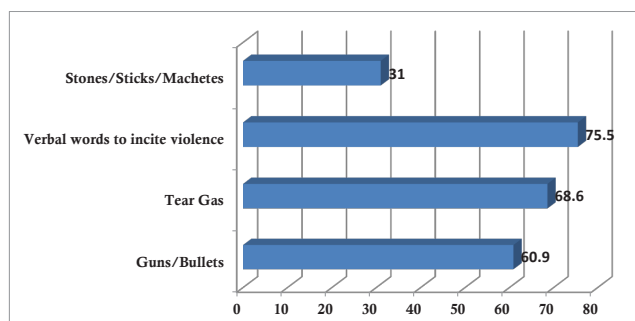


Figure 28 Tools to be used in Election Violence in 2021 Elections

Figure 28 shows that, 75.5%, 68.6% and 60.9% of the respondents anticipate that verbal provocation or intimidation; tear gas; and guns /bullets respectively will be used to mete out violence in the forthcoming 2021 elections. These findings tally with those from the Focus Group Discussions where for instance, in Jinja it was revealed that *“there will be violence in the next general elections. Teargas, bullets, stones and sticks will be used in the violence. Potential candidates are already bribing voters, taking photocopies of their National*

Identity Cards to coerce them to vote particular candidates. There is already suppression of opposition by using the Uganda Police and the military.

4.6.8 Extent of Youth and Women Involvement in the 2021 Election Violence

The study also intended to establish the level of the likely involvement of women and youth in the 2021 election violence. Figure 29 presents the findings.

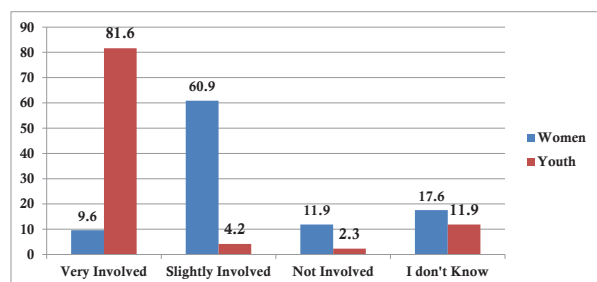


Figure 29: Women and Youth Involvement in 2021 Election Violence

According to figure 29, the results show that youth will be very involved in election violence as reported by 81.6% of the respondents. On the other hand 60.9% reported that women will be slightly involved in election violence. These results tend to suggest that youth are more likely to engage in election violence in 2021 than women.

4.7 Mitigating Election Violence in 2021 Elections

The study also set out to find out from respondents the available election mitigation strategies that can be used to prevent violence in 2021 elections. The findings are presented in the sections that follow.

4.7.1 Strategies to ensure Peaceful 2021 Elections

With regard to strategies that can be used to mitigate violence or ensure peaceful elections in 2021, the results are presented in figure 30.

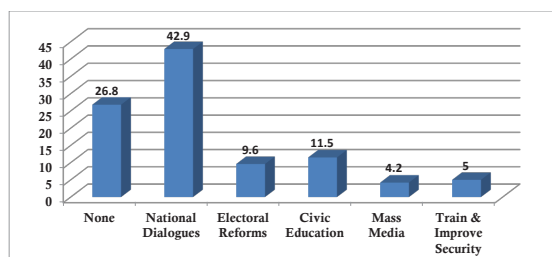


Figure 30: Strategies to ensure Peaceful Elections in 2021.

Figure 30 show that national dialogues with various stakeholders to build consensus on a number of national issues would be the most important strategy for ensuring peaceful elections. On how effective this strategy and other strategies would be, details are presented in figure 31.

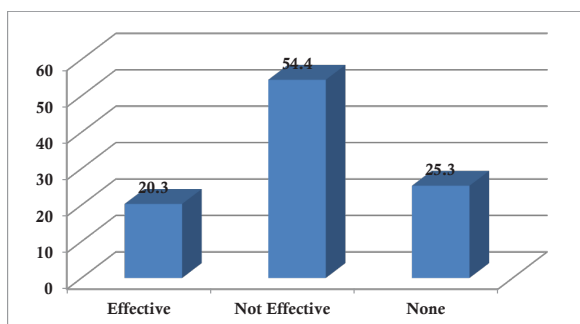
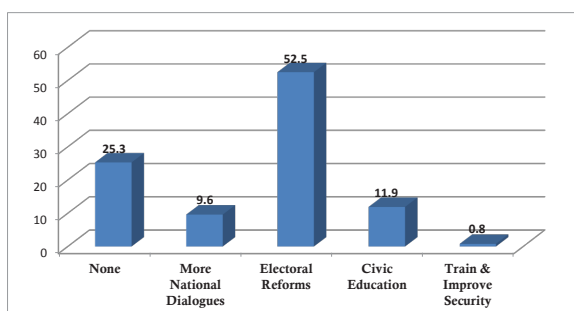


Figure 31: Effectiveness of the strategies

When asked about the effectiveness of the strategies mentioned in figure 31, 54.4% of the respondents reported that there is no single strategy that can guarantee peaceful elections in 2021 alone. This implies that a number of strategies have to be employed in an attempt to ensure peaceful elections.

4.7.2 Other Interventions that should be implemented to curb violence



Other than the strategies mentioned in section 4.7.1, the respondents were also asked to divulge other interventions that can be implemented to curb violence in 2021 elections. The findings are presented in figure 32.

Figure 32 Other Interventions to curb Election Violence.

According to the results in figure 32, majority of the respondents (52.5 %) suggested that implementation of electoral reforms would be key in curbing violence in 2021 elections. In addition 11.9% proposed that there should be civil education of stakeholders with in the electoral cycle.

During the focus group discussions, a number of suggestions regarding interventions to curb violence were suggested. These included among others

- a) **Economic Empowerment of Youth.** During the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in the districts of Kasese, Arua, Mable, Kabale, Mbarara, it was noted that economic empowerment of youth would be a strong intervention to prevent the young people from participating in election related violence. In an FGD in Kasese District, it was noted that: *“...The young people need to be economically empowered so that they get engaged in economic activities and personal development matters. This will change their lives. Also youth councils should be empowered so that they are able empower the youth and transform their lives across the country. When they busy and engaged in constructive income generating activities, the youth will have no time for violence...”*

“...There is need to increase the budget allocation of Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to appropriately deal with issues of youth such as unemployment and lack of skills to earn a living...” -Focus Group Discussion, Arua District

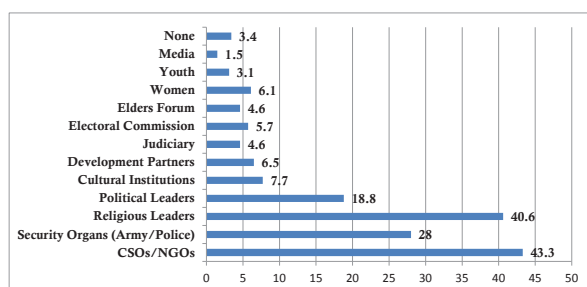
- b) **Skills Development for Youth.** A number of participants in the FGDs in the districts of study suggested that skills development of the youth is very key in mitigating election violence. It was noted that youth who have acquired various sets of skills we seek for employment or be absorbed in the local enterprises or start-up their own enterprises and thus be unable to participate in causing violence or lured into violence by self interest groups. In an FGD in Arua District for instance, it was noted that:

“...Skillng of the youth is key. With new skills the youth will become productive members of society and themselves. Their esteem will be boosted making it possible for them to participate in economic activities in the community and even start their own businesses. These young people can even be employed in our local industries like the girls who

were employed by the AGOA Project”

- c) **Use of the Existing Local Council Structures to Monitor and Report.** Respondents in FGDs felt that the local council structures can play a fundamental role in curbing election violence. In Gulu District, it was reported that, *“The LC 1 Chairpersons should be given mobile telephones and responsibilities to report triggers of violence and signs of violence at the grass root level to the police”.*
- d) **Continuous Voter Education.** It was also reported that continuous voter education critical issues during election cycles is necessary. In Gulu District, it emerged from the FGD that; *“The Electoral Commission needs to embark on continuous civic education of the masses so that roles and responsibilities of all actors in the electoral process is known and understood by all. Music Dance and Drama is a good method to pass the messages at grassroots”.*
- e) **Appropriate Enforcement of Laws without discrimination or being selective.** It was noted that there is selective implementation of the Public Order Management Act especially when it comes to opposition political groupings. The FGD Participants noted that in order to curb violence, *“the Public Order Management Act needs to be implemented fairly. So that it applies to the all the players in the same way. Because now, it seems it was made for the opposition politicians only”*

4.7.3 Structures with Credibility to cause calm in the next Election



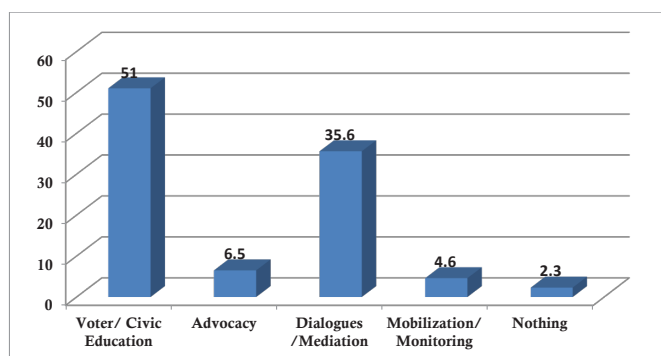
In addition, it was important to establish what the respondents considered to credible structures that can bring about a peaceful environment in case of violence in 2021 elections. Results are presented in figure 33.

Figure 33: Structures with Credibility to cause calm in the next Election

According to Figure 33, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (43.3%) are the most credible institutions that can cause calm in case of an eruption of violence in 2021. In addition, Religious Leaders (40.6%) were rated the second while

Security Organs (28%) rated the third most credible institutions that can cause calm in case of an eruption of violence in 2021 elections. The findings imply that there is need to further build the capacities of the local CSOs and religious leaders to ensure that they actively participate in election observation, monitoring, documentation of episodes of violence and report in a timely manner.

4.7.4 Roles Women can play in the existing credible structures to mitigate election violence

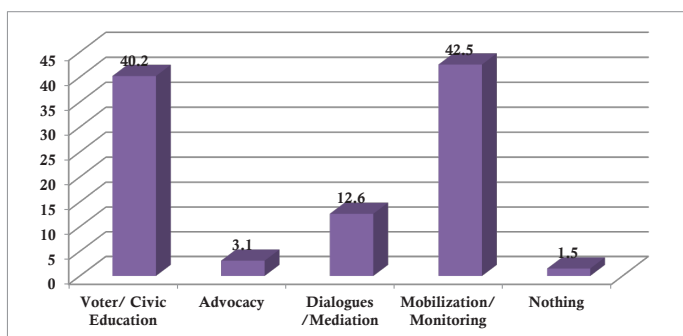


With regard to the role of women in mitigating violence, the respondents were asked to disclose what roles they thought women can play within these existing credible structures. The results are presented in figure 34.

Figure 34: Role of women in existing credible structures to mitigate violence

Figure 34 shows that 51% and 35.6% of the respondents reported that within the existing credible structures women can largely be engaged in

voter or civic education; and mobilization and monitoring violence respectively.

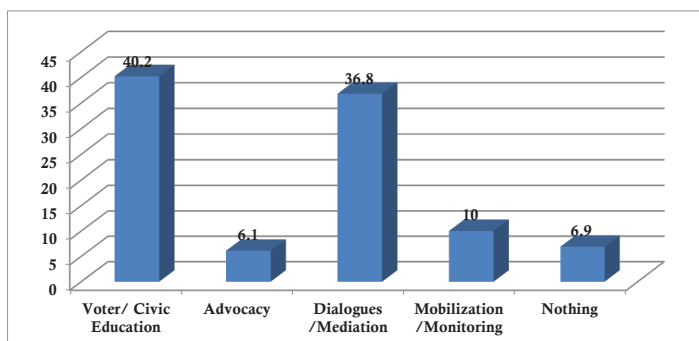


4.7.5 Roles that Youth can play in the existing Structures to mitigate election violence

With regard to the role the youth can play in mitigating violence within the existing credible structures, the results are presented in figure 35.

Figure 35: Roles Youth can play in existing credible structures to mitigate violence

The findings in figure 35 indicate that 42.5% and 40.2 % of the respondents feel that youth can largely be involved in mobilizing voters and monitoring and voter or civic education respectively. These findings also reveal that the study participants think that women and youth can play similar roles within these existing credible structures.

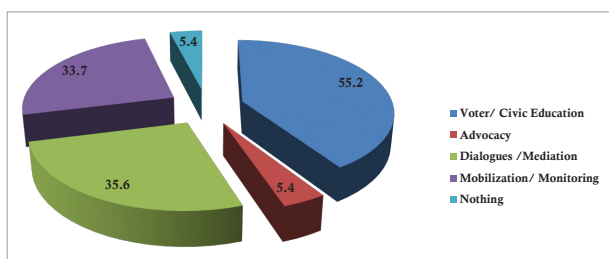


4.7.6 Best strategies used by Women to Prevent Election Violence

With regard to the best strategies used by women to prevent election violence in the previous elections the findings are indicated in figure 36.

Figure 36: Best strategies used by Women to Prevent Election Violence

Figure 36 shows that 40.2% and 36.8% of the respondents reported that the best strategies were voter education and dialogues or mediation interventions respectively.

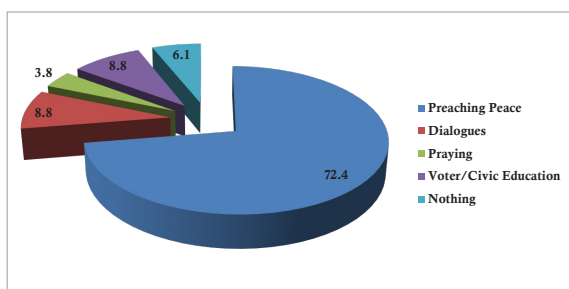


4.7.7 Best strategies used by Youth to Prevent Election Violence

Respondents were also asked to reveal the best strategies used by youth to prevent violence in the previous elections. The findings are shown in figure 37.

Figure 37: Best strategies used by Youth to Prevent Election Violence

Figure 37 shows that 55.2% of the respondents revealed that the best strategy that can be used by youth to prevent election violence voter /civic education. In addition, dialogues or mediation and mobilization /election monitoring were other strategies that were identified as presented in figure 37 above.



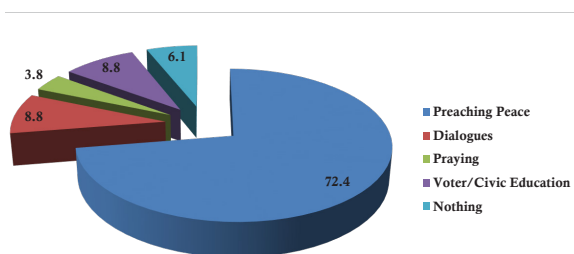
Prevent Election Violence

According to findings in figure 38, the best strategy commonly reported on to have been used by the religious leaders was preaching peace as reported by 72.4% of the respondents. Other strategies reported about were dialogues, prayers and voter education among others.

4.7.8 Best strategies used by Religious Leaders to Prevent Election Violence

With regard to religious leaders, respondents were further asked to report about the best strategies for election used to prevent election violence in the previous election. The results are presented in figure 38.

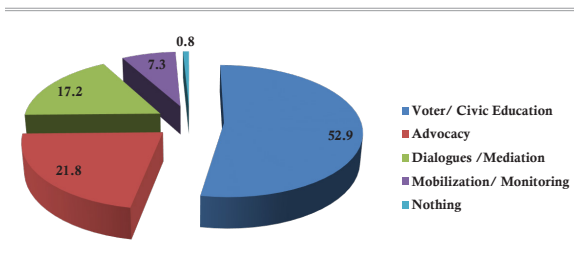
Figure 38: Best strategies used by Religious Leaders to



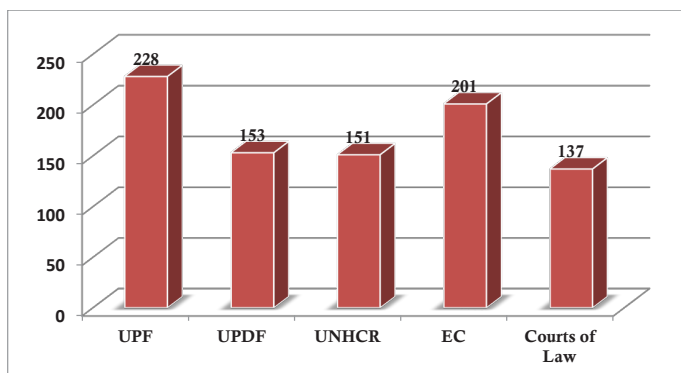
4.7.9 Best strategies used by CSOs to Prevent Election Violence

Further, respondents were also asked about the best strategies used by the civil society organizations in preventing election related violence in the previous elections and the results are presented in figure 39.

Figure 39: Best strategies used by CSOs to Prevent Election Violence



The best strategy that was reported to have been used the Civil Society Organisations to prevent violence in the previous elections as indicated in figure 39 was voter/civic education (52.9%). The other strategies were reported to be: advocacy for electoral reforms (21.8%); and dialogues or mitigation (17.2%) among others.



4.7.10 Most Important Government Institutions to avert Election Violence

The study also sought to establish the most important government institutions to avert election violence. The responses are presented in

figure 40.

Figure 40: Most Important Government Institutions to avert Election Violence

The findings indicate in figure 40 that the Uganda Police Force, Electoral Commission and Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces are the most important government institutions that are well placed to avert election violence as reported by 228, 201 and 153 respondents respectively. These findings suggest that there should be interventions for training or engaging these institutions to enhance their capacities in handling election related violence.

4.8 Most Helpful Government Institutions in Averting Election Violence

The study respondents were asked to divulge information about the government institutions that they considered to be most helpful in averting election relating violence. The results are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Institutions that have been most helpful in averting election violence

Institution	Frequency	Percent (%)
Uganda Police Force	130	49.8
Electoral Commission	97	37.2
Courts of Law	75	28.7
Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)	65	24.9
Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF)	52	19.9
Religious Institutions	14	5.4
Nothing	10	3.8
CSOs/NGOs	10	3.8
Local Government	7	2.7
Legislature	6	2.3
Judiciary	6	2.3
Media	5	1.9
Parliament of Uganda	3	1.1
Local Councils	3	1.1
Cultural Institutions	1	0.4

In order of priority it was reported that Uganda Police Force was the most helpful institution in averting election violence reported by 49.8% followed by the electoral commission as reported by 37.2% of the respondents.

4.9 Entities that have not performed to Expectation

Further, the study sought to establish from the perspective of the respondents the institutions that have not performed to their expectations. The results are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Entities that have not performed to Expectation

Entity	Frequency	Percent
Security Organs (Police & Army)	119	45.6
Electoral Commission	100	38.3
UHRC	16	6.1
Judiciary	9	3.4
All	7	2.7
Parliament	5	1.9

Not Sure	5	1.9
Total	261	100.0

Table 5 shows that security organs including the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda People's Defense Forces have not performed well in averting elections related violence to the expectations of the respondents as reported by 45.6%. This was followed by the electoral commission reported by 38.3% that it was able to meet the expectations of respondents in averting election violence. It should be noted however, that results in table 4 show that the UPDF; UPF and Electoral Commission are trusted that they can avert election violence.

4.10 Reasons for the Responses above

The study participants who responded to the question as indicated in 4.9 were further asked to divulge the reasons they considered to have caused these institutions to perform below expectation. The results are presents in table 6.

Table 6: Reasons for Performance below Expectation

Reason	Frequency	Percent
They are partisan	107	41.0
Electoral Mismanagement	46	17.6
Brutality by the Security Agencies	37	14.2
They are corrupt	23	8.8
No Civic Education	16	6.1
Unclear Roles	13	5.0
No Electoral Reforms	12	4.6
Voter Rigging	7	2.7
Total	261	100.0

According to table 6, being partisan was reported to be the major reason why these public institutions under performed in averting election violence.

4.11 Changes that should be made for entities to deliver better on their mandates

In addition, study sought to establish from the respondents, the changes they thought needed to be made in these institutions named in table 4. The results are presented in table 7.

Table 7: Changes that should be made in institutions

Changes needed	Frequency	Percent
Transparency/Neutrality	118	45.2
Electoral Reforms	65	24.9
Trainings/Civic Education	34	13.0
Keep Law & Order	24	9.2
Professionalization of Structures	9	3.4
Improve Funding	7	2.7
Community Dialogues	4	1.5
Total	261	100.0

According to table 7, findings indicate that the institutions need to be more transparent and neutral in discharge of their duties and that there is need for electoral reforms as reported by 45.2% and 24.9% respectively.

Section 5: KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study reveals that there are a number of gaps in the legal and institutional framework that need to be plugged in order to guarantee peaceful elections, as the current legal framework does not guarantee the conduct of credible, free and fair elections. What this means is that in order to achieve violent free elections, more effort needs to be invested in reforming the election management system. While electoral amendment bills were tabled in Parliament, a critical review of the same finds that they are not substantive enough to guarantee peaceful, credible free and fair elections. Government needs to consider the concrete electoral reform proposals made by different actors. These include the Supreme Court in the ruling on Presidential Election petition Number 1, 2016 (Amama Mbabazi Vs Museveni and others), civil Society in the Citizens COMPACT for Free and Fair Elections, and the CCEDU Electoral Reform Hand Book, recommendations of different domestic and international Observers such as CEON-U and European Union among others. Aware that some of the reforms would require constitutional amendments, government needs to build on the Private Members Bill tabled by some members of Parliament to fast track this. It is however notable that electoral reforms alone will not guarantee a credible election management system, as impunity has time and again been the key stumbling block. Government should thus consider the full application of the law without any discrimination or prejudice.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Pre-election Interventions

- Due to their vulnerability, young people and women need to be deliberately targeted by actors in election violence mitigation programming by all actors. Targeted activities where the live and work need to be considered to encourage their active involvement. These may include training, peace messaging and timely availability relevant information.
- Government needs to put in place meaningful skills development programs for young people. The study found that idle and unemployed youth are most prone to participate in election violence, while those that have acquired various skill sets seek employment and/or get absorbed in the local enterprises.

5.2.2 During Elections

- The Electoral Commission should develop a code of conduct to guide political parties and actors on how to behave during the campaigns to guard against involvement in violence. This could be incorporated in the fourth schedule proposed in the Political Parties and Organizations Act amendment bill to enact a code of conduct for the same.
- More stringent penalties need to be put in place; for candidates found to have sponsored or enabled election violence, disqualification should be considered; for citizens, prosecution should be considered.
- Government officials, including those in the armed forces found to have caused, abated or even contributed to the escalation of violence should be held individually culpable for their actions and inactions, consistent with the Human Rights Enforcement Act.

5.2.3 Prevention and mitigation actions: Legal and Institutional framework

- There is need by government to implement electoral reforms as defined by the Supreme Court during the ruling of the 2016 Presidential Elections Court Petition, and by the Citizens COMPACT for Free and Fair Elections.
- Civic groups and Electoral Commission need to conduct continuous Voter Education to ensure that ordinary citizens are aware of what constitutes election violence, its impact and how to avoid it.
- Government should be open to integration of alternative conflict resolution mechanisms into the electoral legal framework, working with non-state actors.
- Address impunity which often breeds bribery, ballot stuffing and rigging, as they have been found to take the

lion's share lion's share in triggering violence. This should be done through effective application of relevant laws

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should fast-track the process of development of guidelines for the implementation of the POMA to end its misapplication

5.2.4 Improved electoral security

- The Chief of Defence Forces working with other state and non-state actors needs to embark on a process of clarifying to all armed forces on their boundaries in as far as involvement in elections is concerned as enshrined in the laws of Uganda.
- There is need for a coordinated collaborative approach to monitoring and response to election violence. Local level task forces need to be set up for early detection and response, building on the local council structures.

5.2.5 Prevention and Mitigation actions: Planning and Implementation

- Government working with non-state actors needs to put in place a mechanism for structured dialogue between different political actors and election management agencies to ensure continuous engagement on issues affecting elections.
- A robust mechanism for capacity building for CSO actors in data capture and analysis on risk levels and make informed and conflict sensitive decisions.
- The Electoral Commission should ensure that the introduction of information technology-based electoral solutions is timely and manageable.

5.2.6 There is need to strengthen the Infrastructure for Peace through:

- Training the faith based infrastructure for peace messaging across the country and ensure that the religious institutions act as peace builders.
- Building local alternative structures for dialogue and mediation given that mediation and dialogue are being looked at as a very successful strategies for election violence mitigation
- Paying attention to and addressing unresolved issues emerging from previous elections would be critical in averting this reported possibility of re-occurrence of violence.

Establishment of discussion forums for participatory dialogues between EC, SSAs, and non-state actors in planning for electoral processes.

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