

By Vision Reporters

At first glance, one could be forgiven for thinking that the Kiryandongo district khadi, Sheikh Sulaiman Abdul Bwayo, had a happy childhood growing up in Mirima village, Kiryandongo sub-county.

However, that is actually not the case. Sheikh Bwayo had a challenging journey from a difficult background to becoming a figure in his community, thanks to a scholarship offered by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) party in 2001.

He got the scholarship through the late Dr Wasswa Hassan Galiwango, who had four years earlier established Mbale Progressively Academy, now known as Mbale Progressive Secondary School in Mbale.

The 46-year-old Muslim cleric, dressed in his long robes and hat, told of how he struggled with poverty, which nearly prevented him from completing his education until the NRM provided a full scholarship, covering his studies through university.

"My late father, a peasant farmer, had failed to raise school fees for my education after I completed Senior Three. So, I was here in Kiryandongo struggling to survive. We were seven children, but one died," he told *New Vision* in an interview yesterday.

After graduating from the Islamic University in Uganda with a bachelor's degree in economics and Islam, Bwayo struggled, but eventually started his own secondary school. He later became a district khadi, appointed because of his qualifications and Islamic knowledge.

"I'm the only one who completed my studies in the family. The rest dropped out of school due to lack of school fees," he said.

The sheikh said this at Karagalya grounds in Kiryandongo, where the NRM presidential candidate and the incumbent, Yoweri Museveni, held his first rally of the day before proceeding to Masindi district for the second and final political event.

He was among the religious leaders who set the tone for the rally by leading a mammoth crowd in a word of prayer.

#### NRM SCHOLARSHIP

When it was his turn to pray, Bwayo used the occasion to inform the President that he studied on the NRM scholarship.

"President Museveni, I am your son who studied on an NRM scholarship, and for sure, we have helped and continue to protect our party. We ask Allah to accept [our deeds]," he told Museveni, who was listening very intently to what he was saying.

He then requested for a vehicle to ease his movement, saying Kiryandongo is too big. He also petitioned the President to appoint one of their elected parliamentary candidates to the cabinet, enabling residents to channel their issues through them.

"Allah [God] chose for us President Museveni as a focused and patriotic leader. We ask Him to continue protecting him, give him good vision and good continuous programmes that are beneficial to our Ugandans,"

# MUSEVENI PROMISES MORE POWER,



President Museveni carrying a shield and spear donated to him after a rally at Karagalya Grounds in Kiryandongo yesterday. He was accompanied by his daughter, Natasha Karugire (third-right). Prime Minister, Robinah Nabbanja (foreground, fourth-left) was in attendance

the district khadi prayed.

#### MUSEVENI RESPONDS

When he reached the rostrum at 2:00pm, Museveni, accompanied by his daughter, Natasha Karugire, started by greeting the people in the local dialect.

"I am happy to be in Kiryandongo, especially here in Katulikire and Bweyale, because I remember these areas were bushes. In Katulikire, there were only two small shops and in Bweyale, there were like three small shops," he said.

Museveni then recalled how he once went to Anaka internally displaced persons (IDP) camp, then in Gulu, and found there Acholi people who had fled the war.

"I asked them why they were in the Anaka IDP camp and requested them to cross the [River] Nile and go to where there is peace. They listened to me and moved here. Now that is the big town of Bweyale you are talking about," he said.

Museveni also said he was happy to see many Ugandans and Africans in Kiryandongo in peace. "I'm also happy that when I reached here, you sang the Bunyoro traditional song [anthem], which means you are all united now," he told the people.

He presented the NRM manifesto for the next general election, which he said contains seven bricks the party has put on the house of Uganda over the last 40 years.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

The President said NRM was able to usher in an era of peace because of its ideology of opposing sectarianism of religion and tribe and the marginalisation of women and children, which enabled them to unite the politics of Uganda, but also to create institutions such as the army



The Speaker of Parliament, Annet Anita Among (second-right), introducing local NRM leaders to President Yoweri Museveni (right) at Karagalya Grounds in Kiryandongo district, yesterday

# 23

The number of parishes in Kiryandongo district with at least one government-aided primary school.

and the Police to guard the country, comprising all Ugandans.

He also highlighted several achievements of the NRM government in economic infrastructure, including roads, mobile communications, electricity and safe water.

"The second NRM contribution is development. You see the roads, the electricity, the water, the telephones [you all have the phones in your pockets], schools, health centres — all you raised in your manifesto. I will focus on them," he said.

Museveni also welcomed the request to establish A-level government-aided schools in the district, describing it as "very good".

Kiryandongo has 43 parishes, with 23 hosting at least one government-aided primary school, while 20 do not have any. It also has seven government-aided secondary schools.

The Government is currently constructing three seed secondary schools. When completed, the sub-counties without government-aided secondary schools will reduce from seven to four.

On the issue of health, out of 13 sub-

counties in Kiryandongo, one has a hospital, one has a health centre IV, and six have health centres III. Five sub-counties do not have any health facilities.

However, the Government plans to upgrade Kichwambungo Health Centre II to a health centre III, Kiigya Health Centre II to a health centre III and Karuma Health Centre II to a health centre III. It also plans to construct new health centres III in Kyankende and Nyamahasa sub-counties.

On access to safe clean water, out of 323 villages in Kiryandongo, 258 have access to a safe water source, representing an average coverage of 80%.

#### SHOCKING POWER SITUATION

Museveni, however, said he was shocked to hear that rural Bweyale,

# INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MASINDI, KIRYANDONGO

PHOTOS BY PPU, SIMON PETER TUMWINE AND EDDIE SSEJJOBA



Speaker of Parliament Anita Among (centre) introducing Masindi leaders to President Museveni (right) as he arrived for a rally at Boma Grounds in Masindi Municipality yesterday

which is home to many refugees and more than 50 tribes living in harmony with the residents, does not have electricity.

"Now, the electricity of Bweyale, I am surprised to hear that you don't have electricity and yet the high-voltage line passes overhead. So, Prime Minister [Robinah Nabbanja], work on that issue of stepping down. Your daughter, the Prime Minister, will work on that," he said.

Stepping down involves using transformers to reduce high voltage from the power grid to a safe level for consumers.

## WEALTH CREATION

Regarding wealth creation, Museveni emphasised that development alone is not enough without increased household incomes. He reiterated the importance of the four-acre model introduced in the 1996 election manifesto, urging small landholders to adopt the seven recommended enterprises while those with larger land can venture into tea, cotton, ranching and other activities.

He implored the residents to pick a leaf from people who embraced the four-acre model, such as the transport state minister, Fred Byamukama, who hails from Bunyoro sub-region.

Byamukama, who is also an MP, earns sh700m annually from poultry, coffee, bananas and dairy. He employs 26 people.

Museveni reaffirmed that programmes such as the Parish Development Model (PDM) and Emyooga are designed to lift citizens out of poverty.

The President condemned the illegal deduction from PDM funds, insisting that every beneficiary must receive the full shm.

"We shall deal with anyone



Supporters cheer President Museveni while he was campaigning at Boma Grounds in Masindi municipality yesterday

reducing PDM money. That money is for the poor," he said.

Kiryandongo, with 43 parishes, has cumulatively received sh15.3b. This includes the last disbursements of the financial year 2025/26, which were sent to local governments last month.

Out of this, sh13.1b (85.9%) has been disbursed to 13,242 beneficiary households.

On job creation, the President said employment opportunities stem from four sectors – commercial agriculture, industry, services and information and communications technology.

He cited individuals like Johnson Basangwa in Kamuli district, a poultry farmer employing 300 workers, as examples of job creation through enterprise.

## Museveni directed the Prime Minister to address land-grabbing cases.

He encouraged urban dwellers to utilise skilling hubs offering training in areas such as hairdressing, bakery and welding, noting that the goal is to ensure every Ugandan joins the money economy.

## SHEIKH'S REQUEST ACCEPTED

The President accepted the khadi's

request to appoint some of the people in Kiryandongo to the Government. He, however, did not elaborate on this.

## MASINDI TO BENEFIT FROM USMID

Museveni later proceeded to Masindi and held his second and final rally at the golf course grounds.

Here, he reassured the people of Masindi that the Government will fast-track their urban development needs, especially the long-awaited roads and market infrastructure.

He noted that Masindi district was left out of the earlier Uganda Support to Municipal and Infrastructure Development (USMID) programme, but under the new initiative, it will be considered.

The USMID-Additional Financing, a \$369m World Bank-funded programme, came after the success of the first phase that started in 2013 and ended in December 2018.

It was implemented for five years from the 2018/2019 financial year to that of 2022/2023, to enhance the institutional capacity of selected municipal local governments to improve urban service delivery.

Museveni also directed the Prime Minister to address land-grabbing cases and enforce the Sugar Act to protect cane farmers.

He also promised that the Government would provide more tractors and a new ferry on Lake Albert to boost trade and ease movement.

Museveni said Uganda's oil production, beginning in 2026, will support major national infrastructure such as roads, schools and electricity.

He, however, said they must not rely too much on oil, noting that petroleum is exhaustible, while commercial farming will be here forever.

"Families should focus on sustainable enterprises that secure their household incomes," he said.

In the last general election, Museveni polled 38,083 (69.2%) votes in Kiryandongo while his main rival, Robert Kyagulanyi of the National Unity Platform party, garnered 13,893 (25.3%).

In Masindi, Museveni got 55,604 (67.66%) votes while Kyagulanyi received 20,879 (25.41%).

Gilbert Nyadru, a farmer from Kisarabwire in Masindi, decried corruption in the country. He said the next president should address it because it is undermining efforts to develop the country.

Alex Apenduma, a resident of Kichwabugingo parish in Kiryandongo, said the next president should help reduce road carnage, especially in the district.

Filed by Umaru Kashaka,  
Yosam Guwaki  
and Simon Tumwine

## WHAT OTHERS SAID

The second NRM national vice-chairperson (female) and Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among, thanked President Museveni for his open-door policy to refugees fleeing insecurity from their home countries.

"We thank you for the policy on refugees, for accommodating them in this area. We also want to thank you for the DRDIP (Uganda Development Response to Displacement Project) II, which is supporting this area under the Prime Minister's office," she told Museveni.

DRDIP is a World Bank-funded multi-regional project covering four countries in the East African region.

The DRDIP-Uganda, a five-year project implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister, provides development and direct income support to the poor and vulnerable within refugee-hosting districts in Uganda.

Among, who is also the Bukedea Woman MP, informed the President that the land where the Karagalya grounds are located was offered for free by a certain old woman whose only dream was to take a picture with him.

She also said they should acquire that land since the old woman was selling it and use it for their functions.

Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja also praised the President for bringing lasting peace, which she said has spurred development in Bunyoro.

"I want to thank the President for bringing peace that has enabled the development of many areas of Bunyoro. We thank you for developing Bunyoro and for giving us tarmac roads," she said.

Nabbanja, who hails from Bunyoro, asked the President for more funding to improve a major road linking the district to the Acholi sub-region.

"I also want to thank you for the campaign. You have run the campaign more than the youth. You have overshadowed all the youths. Mzee, you play 90 minutes," she said to cheers.

Kiryandongo NRM chairperson, Linos Ngopek, described the district as cosmopolitan and united by the peace ushered in by the Government and pledged the district's continued support for the party.

Ngopek also applauded the President for situating the Karuma power station in Kiryandongo. However, he decried the limited electricity access in the district, posing challenges for businesses in the busy and refugee-hosting Bweyale.

He also requested the establishment of a modern market in Bweyale and the upgrading of Kiryandongo Hospital to a highway referral hospital to meet the district's growing needs.