

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL UNITY PLATFORM (NUP) 2026-2031

MANIFESTO

BY



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1.0 INTRODUCTION: THE NUP'S CALL FOR "A NEW UGANDA NOW"

This brief provides an objective analysis of the [National Unity Platform's \(NUP\) 2026](#) manifesto, intended for professional stakeholders interested in Uganda's political and developmental trajectory. The manifesto is framed as a "solemn contract" and a "covenant" with the Ugandan people, presented against a backdrop of the nation's "*turbulent political history*" and a legacy of unfulfilled promises. The document's overarching argument is a call for a "*complete reset*" to address what it diagnoses as systemic failures in governance, the economy, and social services under the [NRM regime](#).

2.0 FOUNDATIONAL REFORMS: GOVERNANCE, RIGHTS, AND THE RULE OF LAW

The [NUP manifesto](#) is strategically predicated on a foundational premise: that Uganda's chronic economic and social crises are symptoms of a deeper institutional decay. Consequently, the NUP dedicates its most detailed proposals to governance reform, positing that without first restoring constitutionalism, eliminating systemic corruption, and securing fundamental rights, any subsequent economic or social interventions are destined to fail. The party's diagnosis of this decay and its proposed remedies for institutional reconstruction are presented in its 11 priority areas.

2.1 Restoring Constitutionalism and Human Rights

The manifesto frames its governance reforms around a central diagnosis of severe *democratic decline*, substantiating this claim with data from independent global indices. It cites the country's classification as a *defective democracy* by the [Bertelsmann Transformation Index](#) (BTI) and its rank of 126th out

of 142 countries in the World Justice Project's 2024 Rule of Law Index. The document details specific examples of constitutional erosion, including the removal of presidential term and age limits, a move a 2017 survey found 85% of Ugandans opposed, illustrating the regime's disregard for popular will. Further examples include the trial of civilians in military courts in defiance of Supreme Court rulings and the systemic suppression of media freedoms through arbitrary internet shutdowns during critical political periods.

The [NUP's proposed](#) solutions are structured around three core areas of reform:

- **Constitutional and Electoral Reform:** Commitments include reinstating presidential term and age limits, requiring broad public participation for any future constitutional amendments, and reforming the entire electoral framework to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections. This includes transferring the power to appoint [Electoral Commission](#) members from the president to Parliament and an independent vetting body.
- **Judicial and Security Sector Reform:** Key proposals involve amending the [UPDF Act](#) to explicitly prohibit the trial of civilians in military courts, transferring all pending civilian cases to civilian courts, and criminalizing enforced disappearances and torture. The party also plans to guarantee judicial independence by reforming the appointment process for senior judicial officers.
- **Civil Society and Media Freedoms:** The manifesto pledges to outlaw arbitrary internet and social media shutdowns, restructure media councils into independent professional bodies,

and reverse restrictive laws targeting NGOs. It promises to re-register previously banned civil society organizations and create structured platforms for their engagement in public policy.

2.2 Combating Corruption and Wasteful Expenditure

In its evaluation of Uganda's fiscal state, the manifesto posits a direct causal link between endemic corruption, institutionalized waste, and the nation's deepening debt crisis. It quantifies the scale of the problem by citing an estimated **UGX 10 trillion** lost annually to corruption, an amount it notes is *equivalent to the money needed to constructing and retooling 82 districts in Uganda without a single public general hospital; 1,112 parishes without a public primary school and 115 sub counties without substantial public secondary schools*. This fiscal drain contributes to a per-capita debt of **Shs3.5 million**. To illustrate the critique of wasteful government spending, the document contrasts the presidential convoy's **600+ vehicles** with the mere **178 ambulances** available in public health facilities nationwide.

The NUP proposes a multi-pronged anti-corruption strategy, which includes the following key actions:

- Implementing a zero-tolerance policy on corruption.
- Digitizing all government payments and revenue collection systems to eliminate leakages.
- Empowering anti-corruption bodies like the Inspectorate of Government (IGG) and Auditor General with full autonomy, prosecutorial powers, and guaranteed budgets.
- Establishing a dedicated *Public Integrity Court* to fast-track corruption cases and recover stolen public assets.
- Slashing extravagant and non-essential public spending, starting with the cabinet, the number of MPs, and redundant political appointments such as RDCs.

2.3 Securing Land Rights and Empowering Local Governance

The manifesto identifies land grabbing and insecure tenure as critical barriers to food security and wealth

creation, noting that only *30.7% of adults* in Uganda have secure land rights. To address this, the NUP proposes comprehensive land reforms, emphasizing a plan to secure customary land rights through a National Customary Land Registry. This initiative would be supported by the use of blockchain technology to create a fraud-proof registration system and the promotion of Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs).

The manifesto argues that securing land rights cannot be achieved by top-down decrees alone, linking the issue directly to its critique of over-centralization and proposing a radical empowerment of local governance structures as the primary enforcement mechanism. This includes a commitment to progressively increase the local government share of the national budget from the current 7.6% to 40% by 2030. The party also plans to abolish the politically appointed and duplicative offices of [Resident District Commissioners](#) (RDCs) and Resident City Commissioners (RCCs) to strengthen local democratic structures.

Having laid out the foundational governance reforms, the manifesto turns to its agenda for economic transformation.

3.0 ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT: JOB CREATION AND MODERNIZATION

Confronting Uganda's acute youth unemployment crisis which the manifesto frames as both a demographic dividend at risk and a potential source of instability, the NUP's economic blueprint shuns broad-based stimulus in favor of a targeted, sectoral approach. The strategy aims to create a modern, inclusive economy by channeling investment into high-potential sectors, leveraging technology to leapfrog developmental stages, and systematically integrating the Ugandan diaspora as a core economic asset.

3.1 A Strategy for 10 million New Jobs by 2032

The manifesto diagnoses Uganda's employment crisis with stark statistics, referencing that 50.9% of youth are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), while **85% of the workforce** remains trapped in the low-productivity informal sector. The NUP's central economic promise is to create 10 million new jobs by 2032 by lowering the cost of doing business and investing in key growth sectors.

The job creation strategy is outlined as follows:

Sector	Projected Job Contribution	Key NUP Initiatives
Tourism	25.3%	Increase tourism funding threefold, streamline visa processes using technology, develop iconic infrastructure, and improve road access to tourism hotspots.
Manufacturing	60%	Develop at least 30 new industrial parks by 2030, support firm clustering to enhance linkages, and enforce a local content strategy in public procurement.
Sports & Creative Economy	14.7%	Establish a National Creative Industries Development Fund, boost public investment in regional sports infrastructure, and rebrand Uganda as a global talent hub.

3.2 Leveraging Technology and the Diaspora

The manifesto outlines a plan to transform Uganda into a tech-driven economy. Core proposals include halving the cost of internet access within five years, making digital literacy a core competence in all schools, and establishing regional Tech-Skills Hubs to offer training in coding, AI, and digital entrepreneurship.

In parallel, the NUP presents a strategy to engage the Ugandan diaspora as a core strategic asset for national development. Key proposals to unlock this potential include:

- Creating a regulated and government-guaranteed *Diaspora Investment Fund (DIF)* for contributions to national infrastructure and agribusiness projects.
- Issuing high-yield *Diaspora Bonds* with sovereign guarantees to fund key priorities like energy and ICT.
- Enacting legislation to guarantee the diaspora's *right to vote from abroad*.
- Enforcing land ownership protection for diaspora members through a digitized land registry and fraud tribunal.

The party's economic vision is complemented by proposed investments in social services and national cohesion.

4.0 SOCIAL CONTRACT: PUBLIC SERVICES, AGRICULTURE, AND NATIONAL UNITY

This component of the manifesto represents the NUP's *social contract* with the Ugandan people. The policies outlined aim to rebuild the country's human capital through universal access to quality public services and transform the agricultural sector. Concurrently, they seek to heal historical divisions as a prerequisite for sustainable national development.

4.1 Universal Access to Quality Public Services

The manifesto delivers a sharp critique of Uganda's public service delivery, citing a low Human Capital Index score of 0.39, a deficit of 82 *district hospitals*, and an education budget allocation of only 2.9% of the national budget far below international recommendations. In response, the NUP makes several core commitments:

- **Healthcare:** Progressively increase health spending to 15% of GDP, place a fully equipped Health Centre III in every parish, and recruit significantly more health workers to match population needs.
- **Education:** Make primary education completely free and compulsory, covering meals, scholastic materials, and uniforms. The plan also includes making Early Childhood Development (ECD) free in all public primary schools and focusing on a practical, skills-based curriculum.
- **Water & Sanitation:** Ensure universal access to safe drinking water through free piped water and solar-powered boreholes, and cut urban water costs to as low as *Shs 10 per 20-liter jerrycan* through targeted subsidies.

4.2 Transforming Agriculture through a School Feeding Program

The manifesto proposes a nationwide *Home-Grown School Feeding Program* as its central policy instrument for agricultural transformation. This program is designed to simultaneously improve education outcomes by addressing hunger among learners, guarantee a stable market for smallholder farmers who will supply the food, and enhance national food security. The broader agricultural reform agenda includes re-establishing and modernizing farmer cooperatives, investing in both small and large-scale

irrigation, and promoting climate-smart agricultural practices to boost productivity and resilience.

4.3 Fostering National Unity and Climate Resilience

To address historical grievances and heal post-conflict wounds, the NUP proposes mechanisms for national reconciliation. Key among these is the plan to establish a *National Truth, Reconciliation, and Accountability Commission* to document past atrocities and a *War Victims' Reparations Fund* to provide compensation to survivors in affected regions such as Luwero, Acholi, and Rwenzori. The party also commits to ending sectarianism in public service through merit-based and blind recruitment processes.

To build climate resilience, the manifesto outlines a strategy that includes establishing a dedicated *National Adaptation Fund* to support community-level projects and adopting a climate-responsive budgeting framework to integrate and manage fiscal risks arising from extreme weather events. This agenda sets the stage for the manifesto's concluding vision.

5.0 DOWNSIDE

However, certain areas typically found in the manifesto are not explicitly detailed or addressed;

5.1 Monetary Policy and Central Banking Reforms

While the manifesto dedicates an entire priority to *ending corruption and wasteful government expenditure* and extensively covers the national debt crisis and fiscal discipline, it does not articulate specific policies concerning *monetary policy management*, the *structural reform of the Bank of Uganda (the central bank)*, or detailed strategies for *managing inflation* beyond general economic stabilization efforts related to job creation and lowering costs.

5.2 Specific National Defense and Military Policy

The manifesto focuses heavily on reforming the military's role in governance, specifically promising to *amend the UPDF Act to prohibit the trial of civilians in military courts* and ending the use of security forces to stifle dissent. However, the NUP's Manifesto does not outline a comprehensive national defense policy, a strategy for military modernization aimed at external security, or Uganda's policy regarding its involvement in regional military or peacekeeping operations. The discussion of the military is focused solely on internal constitutional and human rights violations.

5.3 Retirement and Social Security System Reform

The manifesto highlights the need for *expanded social safety nets* like in-kind transfers and food subsidies to reduce poverty and notes the low national budget allocation for social protection. However, there is no dedicated discussion or detailed plan within the eleven priorities regarding the *structural reform of Uganda's formal social security systems*, such as long-term pension schemes or the National Social Security Fund (NSSF).

5.4 Specific Tax Policy Details (Beyond General Reform and Exemptions)

Priority Two outlines major *fiscal and tax reforms*, including simplifying the tax system, eliminating taxes on essential items (like scholastic materials and menstrual products), introducing a PAYE tax-free threshold of UGX 1,000,000 for low-income earners, and aiming to raise the tax-to-GDP ratio by at least 6 percentage points. However, the manifesto does not detail comprehensive policies regarding *corporate tax structures*, *capital gains tax*, or the *progressive taxation of high-income earners* beyond the low-income PAYE threshold.

CONCLUSION: ASSESSING THE NUP'S TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

The National Unity Platform (NUP) Manifesto provides a bold and roadmap for a "New Uganda Now", anchored by eleven core priorities aimed at combating endemic corruption, restoring constitutionalism and human rights, guaranteeing quality public services, and fostering job creation through technology and key sectors. While the platform details aggressive fiscal discipline goals, including reducing the national debt burden and ending wasteful spending, a key recommendation for the NUP is to bolster its strategic framework by publishing complementary policy papers detailing the mechanics of *monetary policy and central banking reform* to stabilize the economy; articulating a clear, external-facing *national defense and military doctrine* beyond the crucial internal reforms aimed at amending the UPDF Act; and outlining specific, *structural reforms for Uganda's comprehensive retirement and social security system* to ensure long-term financial protection for all citizens, extending beyond the current promise of expanded social safety nets.