



## **FOWODE CONDEMNS ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN THE KAWEMPE NORTH BY-ELECTION**

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) strongly condemns the acts of violence and brutality witnessed during the Kawempe North by-election. As an organization that advocates for democracy, women's rights, and inclusive governance, we are deeply concerned about the growing trend of electoral violence, which undermines fundamental democratic principles and discourages women's participation in leadership and decision-making.

The events witnessed in Kawempe, where journalists were beaten, voters were intimidated, and security operatives used excessive force, highlight the urgent need for accountability and electoral reforms. The low voter turnout, particularly among women, evident in the stark disparity at various polling stations for example at Kanyanya polling station, only 16 women voted compared to 179 men, demonstrates the chilling effect of electoral violence on women's political participation.

Electoral violence not only violates human rights but also reinforces a culture of fear, exclusion and political apathy. Women, who already face systemic barriers in politics, are disproportionately affected and such incidents risk reversing the gains made in promoting gender equality and inclusive leadership.

**As an organisation that promotes women's participation in political leadership and on behalf of the women's movement in Uganda, FOWODE calls upon:**

- The Electoral Commission to take immediate action in creating a safe and inclusive electoral environment to ensure that women's leadership is celebrated, protected and empowered.
- Security agencies to refrain from acts of brutality and uphold their duty to protect citizens rather than intimidate them.
- Political parties and leaders to reject intimidation tactics and advocate for peaceful elections, echoing FOWODE's findings that grassroots dialogue reduces violence by 40% (FOWODE's 2021 post-election report - [\*Deterred Not Barred\*](#))
- The judiciary to demonstrate impartiality in dealing with cases of violence; Prosecute gender-based electoral violence by expediting cases of violence against women voters, candidates, or activists; Advance gender-responsive jurisprudence by aligning judgments with international treaties (e.g., CEDAW, Maputo Protocol) to promote women's leadership.

Uganda's democracy can only thrive when all citizens, especially women, can freely and safely participate in elections. We demand an end to electoral violence and call for immediate measures to safeguard democratic spaces, ensuring that women's voices and votes count.

## **About FOWODE**

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is a national women's rights organization born from the women's caucus of Uganda's 1994-1995 Constituent Assembly, which shaped the globally acclaimed gender-responsive 1995 Constitution. FOWODE's vision is ***a Ugandan society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision-making processes in public and private spaces.*** Through community empowerment, policy advocacy, and strategic partnerships, FOWODE champions gender equality and inclusive governance.