



Does power belong to the people? Timeline of the TOGIKWATAKO CAMPAIGN



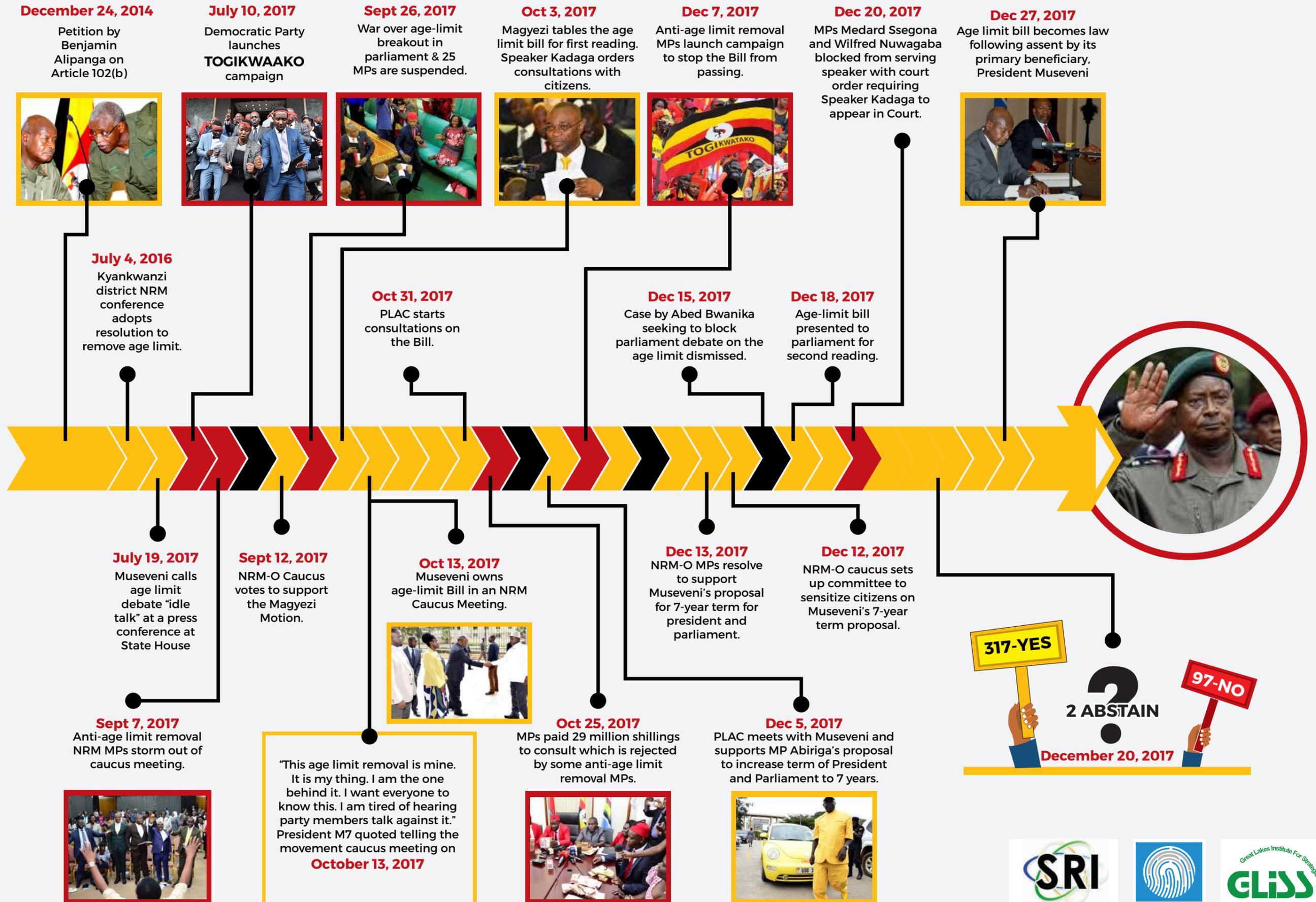
Mzee Bashasha of Bushenyi prays for MP Rapael Magyezi the sponsor of the Age Limit bill

Uganda is one of the few countries in the world that has never witnessed peaceful transition of power since its independence on October 9th, 1962. There has not been any president or political party that has handed over power to another peacefully. All the transitions have been by use of arms as one group shoots the other out of power only to be shot out by other group(s).

In 1966, the Dr Obote government attacked the Kabaka's palace at Lubiri, forcing Kabaka Mutesa into exile. In 1971 Idi Amin overthrew president Obote in a bloodless coup and subsequently declared himself the life president of Uganda. He was later overthrown on April 11th, 1979 by a combined force of Tanzania Peoples' Defense Forces and Ugandan exiles. After his overthrow, short-lived governments followed there on paving way for the December 1980 elections that ushered Dr. Obote back to office for the second time.

The 1980 election results were contested by Yoweri Museveni whose political party - Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) - had only secured one parliamentary seat. Yoweri Museveni established the National Resistance Army (NRA) that went on to fight a 5-year insurgency in which over half a million innocent Ugandans lost their lives. In 1985 when the NRA rebellion was at its peak, Milton Obote was then overthrown by his army generals led by Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa. The National Resistance Army (NRA) later overthrew Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa's government on 26th of January 1986 and Uganda has since then been ruled by President Museveni, the leader of the NRM now turned National Resistance Movement (NRM-O). His leadership has majorly been characterized by a series of constitutional amendments and contested elections.

Age Limit Timeline: Denial - Anxiety - Resistance - Violence - Money



In 1989, a 21 member commission was established and tasked to frame the Constitution which was later enacted and became the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Many of the members of this commission had been witnesses to Uganda's history of instability, the armed change of governments, and Amin's attempt to become the life president. The commissioners and subsequently the constituent assembly provided three important constitutional safeguards to ensure that Uganda can enjoy peaceful political transition.

First, they ensured that the Constitution provides for regular, credible free and fair elections. Unfortunately, most of the elections held since then have been characterized by episodes of violence, obscene use of money and gross malpractices. The general elections are conducted by an Electoral Commission whose legitimacy is undermined by its mode of appointment and its lack of authority to call to order contending political groups.

Secondly, "Presidential Term Limit" enshrined in article 105 made it ineligible for any person to contest for presidency for more than two 5-year terms. This article was amended in July 2005 by law makers in order to pave way for the then incumbent president Yoweri Museveni to re-run for the presidency after having served for more than two terms and needed more terms. The then Members of Parliament were paid about Uganda Shillings five millions (5,000,000/=) as an inducement to agree and vote to amend this article as reported by one of Uganda's leading daily newspaper, the Daily Monitor on the November 16th, 2004.

The third and only remaining constitutional safeguard against a potential life presidency was enshrined in Article 102(b) forbidding anybody who had attained the age of 75 from contesting for the presidency of Uganda. This article was also amended on December 20th, 2017 when the 10th Parliament voted to enact the "age limit bill" into law. 317 votes for removal and 97 votes against the removal with 2 members abstaining were registered. The only remaining safeguard against a potential life presidency was removed paving way for President Museveni, the primary beneficiary of the law to contest for presidency indefinitely.

On December 27, 2017, Mr. Museveni assented to the law and the Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 2017 became law. Given the contestations that characterized the process of the amendment, the basis for a constitutional battle was laid. Effectively, the battle over the removal of age limit moved from Parliament to the Constitutional Court. In the next edition of ALAT, we bring you the state of the Constitutional Court and the men and women who will adjudicate the age limit dispute.

85%

Percentage of Ugandans opposed to removal of age limit according to a survey of 100 constituencies by a consortium of Civil society organisations

3,695,355

Number of first time young voters disenfranchised by the extension of term of MPs and President from 5 to 7 years

2 YEARS

Additional years MPs gave to themselves and the president without the consent of Uganda Voters

75 YEARS

Age limit for president removed by the amendment of Article 102(b)

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