Ugandan Presidential hopeful Mubarak Munyagwa has vowed to abolish Swahili as a national language if elected, proposing that Uganda adopt French instead.

In a video circulating on social media, Munyagwa argued that Swahili is not widely spoken and limits Ugandans' international opportunities. He said French, widely used across Africa and internationally, would better serve the country.

"We shall ban Swahili as our national language… we need French instead. French has a wider coverage: Burundi, Congo, Rwanda, Gabon, and the Central African Republic speak French. We need English and French," he said.

English is Uganda's official language used in government, education, and legal systems. Swahili was made an official language in 2005 to promote regional integration within the East African Community.

French is widely spoken across Africa, particularly in West, Central, and parts of East Africa, as well as Indian Ocean islands. In Rwanda and Burundi, French has historically been an official language, though both countries have also elevated English and Swahili in recent years.

Uganda is preparing for general elections in 2026. The Electoral Commission has cleared eight candidates to contest the presidency, including incumbent Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (NRM), Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu aka Bobi Wine (NUP), Elton Joseph Mabirizi (CP), Robert Kasibante (NPP), Nathan Nandala Mafabi (FDC), Mugisha Muntu (ANT), Munyagwa Mubarak Sserunga (CMP), and Bulira Frank Kabinga (RPP).

Earlier this year, 220 individuals submitted nominations to contest the presidency, but only eight were cleared by the commission.