

In a significant move to protect citizenship rights of Ugandans, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has signed an Executive Order aimed at addressing concerns related to passport and identity document issuance in the country.

The Executive Order, signed on January 24, 2025, seeks to address long-standing complaints about the treatment of Ugandan citizens, particularly members from the Kinyarwanda speaking community, when applying for passports and other official identification.

“By virtue of the authority vested in the President by Article 99 (1) and (4) of the Constitution, this Executive Order is made today,” said President Museveni in a statement.



*President Museveni in a group photo with members from the Kinyarwanda speaking community in Uganda*

The move comes after numerous reports of discrimination and human rights violations by authorities, particularly against individuals born and raised in Uganda but who have faced barriers when attempting to obtain essential documents like passports and national identity cards. Many of these complaints were raised by the Banyarwanda, a group claiming Ugandan citizenship based on birthright.

The President emphasized that the issue was not one of legal gaps but rather concerns over the administration of the law. He pointed out that Uganda’s Constitution clearly defines citizenship through three channels: citizenship by birth, citizenship by registration, and citizenship by naturalization.

“The issue is not the law, but how the law is applied. The process of proving citizenship for passport or identity card applicants must be fair and transparent,” President Museveni explained.

To address these concerns, the President issued several directives. First, he reaffirmed that every Ugandan citizen has the right to a passport and to travel freely in and out of the country. He further instructed the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control to adhere strictly to the provisions of the Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, which requires only the National Identification Number (NIN) as proof of citizenship, alongside other standard requirements.

The President's order stressed the importance of upholding the dignity of all applicants during the citizenship verification process, stating that no additional requirements should be imposed beyond what is outlined in the law.

"Citizenship by birth is an inherent right, and immigration officers must presume citizenship unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary," Museveni stated.

In addition to the directive on passports, the President highlighted a gap in the law regarding automatic citizenship for children of Ugandan citizens by birth or naturalization. He called on the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Attorney General to address this issue promptly.

Finally, the President issued a stern warning to immigration authorities, stressing that National Identity cards issued by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) should not be confiscated or canceled without following proper legal procedures.

This Executive Order is expected to bring clarity and fairness to the administrative processes surrounding Uganda's citizenship and identity documentation, ensuring that all citizens are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.