Uganda Program Summary
In 2006, Uganda held multi-party elections for the first time since President Yoweri Museveni took power in 1986. These elections were seen as a turning point in Uganda's political history that had previously suffered from two authoritarian regimes followed by single-party rule for nearly two decades. Subsequent national elections were held in 2011 and the next scheduled elections are planned for 2016. However, despite the legalization of opposition political parties through a popular referendum in 2005, President Museveni and the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) remain in power, continuing a de facto one-party state in Uganda.

As compared to the ruling NRM, opposition political parties in Uganda generally lack the functional capacity to effectively compete in elections or offer effective, issue-based alternatives to the ruling party. Furthermore, party identity in Uganda is more often associated with the personality of the leadership rather than ideological vision. A representative political system that promotes effective governance and peaceful political competition has yet to take root.

Political Party Strengthening
The International Republican Institute (IRI) re-launched its political party work in Uganda in 2013 with a focus on increasing the organizational and policy-making capacity of political parties at the national and sub-national level. To achieve this, through the support of the United States Agency for International Development, IRI works with political parties to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that will inform parties on how best to increase their outreach and operational abilities. IRI will engage in a multi-faceted approach that includes political party workshops, leadership schools, policy roundtables and university debates, with an emphasis on the inclusion of youth and women within political party structures.