Gulu Service Commission warned against nepotism

BY JAMES OWICH

GULU. The Chief Magistrate of Gulu, Mr Augustine Alule Koma, has cautioned members of the Gulu City Service Commission against engaging in nepotism and corruption while recruiting public servants.

Speaking during the swearing-in ceremony of the commission members on Wednesday, Mr Alule warned that recruiting relatives or unqualified individuals into public offices undermines professionalism and erodes public trust in government institutions.

"For the country to have a competent workforce, the service commission should recruit individuals based on competence, academic credentials and their ability to deliver," Mr Alule said.

He urged the officials to exercise wisdom and fairness when selecting candidates, noting that poor recruitment decisions could damage the credibility of public institutions.

"Do not be tribalistic; it will ruin your reputation. My prayer is that it does not happen in Gulu City or even the country. If it does, you will be setting a bad precedent," he added.

Those sworn in included the chairperson, Mr Michael Ochora, alongside members Ms Jenneth Nyeko, Ms Jolly Joyce Piloya and Mr Sabastian George Obwona.

Mr James Onen, the Principal Human Resource Officer for Amuru District, will serve as secretary to the commission after one of the previous members secured employment with the city council.

Mr Alule also warned that officials who abuse their authority during recruitment processes risk prosecution.

"Your work is more or less like what a judicial officer like me does. You must listen to all evidence, evaluate it and make decisions based on the truth," he said. His caution comes amid growing scrutiny of district and city service commissions across the country over allegations of bribery, corruption and irregular recruitment practices.

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Recently, seven members of the Mubende District Service Commission were arrested and charged with corruption following investigations by the Inspectorate of Government.

Mr Innocent Ahimbisibwe, the town clerk of Gulu City, said the commission had been granted a second term after performing well during its first tenure.

"The council gave them another term because they performed exceptionally well. We pray that you maintain the good name in the new term. Please mitigate corruption and influence peddling," Mr Ahimbisibwe said.

Meanwhile, the Gulu City mayor, Mr Alfred Okwonga, urged the commission to prioritise competence during recruitment to improve service delivery.

"Whatever decision you make not only affects the job applicant but also families and the country. The person recruited will earn a salary and eventually become pensionable," Mr Okwonga said.

He emphasised that the commission's work should be guided by competence, professionalism and service to citizens.

The city plans to recruit 98 civil servants in the current financial year after receiving more than 1,100 applications. However, the recruitment exercise had been put on hold after the previous commission's term expired on January 30, 2026.

Following the renewal of their term by the Ministry of Public Service, the commission can now proceed with the recruitment process.

Mr Ochora pledged that the recruitment exercise would be guided by transparency, fairness and integrity.

"We will conduct recruitment based on qualifications, merit and competence," he said, warning that attempts by job applicants to bribe commission members would not succeed under his leadership.

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