

District Woman MP Florence Asiimwe Akiiki, and Aringa South MP Alioni Yorke Odria, quit the race in favour of Mr Oboth Oboth.

In his remarks, President Museveni who is also the party's National Chair-

...being greedy, which he said is a root cause of unnecessary competition. He urged aspiring leaders to begin from lower responsibilities and gradually grow into more significant positions while avoiding unnecessary burdens.

"When we were fighting, people did

The NRM party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) had reportedly endorsed the duo on Friday but allowed other prospective candidates to apply for the same positions. Yesterday, Mr Richard Todwong, the party's Secretary

...tensive experience in par... procedures and management of legislative affairs.

The CEC also cited his ability to organise and mobilise party structures and

...ould party unity... of parliamentary leaders during the first sitting of the 12th Parliament at the lolo Ceremonial Grounds.

BY SIMON PETER EMWAMU & STEPHEN OTAGE

BUKEDEA. A section of politicians who were blocked from contesting in Bukedea District have accused outgoing Speaker of Parliament Anita Among of orchestrating intimidation, electoral manipulation, and abuse of state institutions, demanding that she apologise to the people of Teso.

The aggrieved politicians, drawn from different political parties, claim they were unlawfully denied nomination and subjected to intimidation during the 2021 and 2026 electoral processes.

Ms Mercy Marion Alupo, a member of the National Unity Platform (NUP), said she and other aspiring candidates were unfairly blocked from contesting for the Bukedea Woman MP seat.

"I was not only denied my birthright, but by denying me the freedom and right to participate in national elections, they denied me my citizenship as a Ugandan," Ms Alupo said.

She alleged that Ms Among, working through her assistant, used the Elec-

toral Commission and courts of law to frustrate her candidature by claiming she was neither a resident nor a registered voter in Bukedea.

"Using baseless allegations and money, they bulldozed both the Electoral Commission and the court to make unjustifiable decisions that barred us from being nominated," she alleged.

Ms Alupo further called for fresh elections in Bukedea, claiming the majority of the political positions in the district were influenced by the former Speaker.

Another former aspirant, Ms Norma Suzan Otai of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), claimed her appeal challenging the Electoral Commission's decision to block her candidature was dismissed without the knowledge of either her or her lawyer.

"Our sister had become so powerful that she had pocketed the Electoral Commission, police, and courts of law to always play cards in her favour," Ms Otai alleged.

She claimed that the past two years had been characterised by intimidation targeting her family and supporters in an attempt to force her to abandon legal challenges against Ms Among.

"We thank God that someday Bukedea may witness competitive politics free from torture, intimidation, and coercion," she said.

Ms Hellen Akol Odeke, an NRM member who says she was blocked from contesting in the NRM primaries after her name was allegedly removed from the party register, described the troubles

facing the former Speaker as "the hand of God". "All she can do now is ask for forgiveness from God if she wants to avoid more wrath from the creator," Ms Odeke said.

Mr Charles Ongelech, the NUP flag bearer for Kachumbala County, also accused security agencies of intimidating his supporters during the nomination process.

"My seconders were picked, tortured, and forced to denounce me. Eventually, they could not withstand the pain, and I was disqualified," Mr Ongelech alleged.

He called for investigations into both the Electoral Commission and the Judiciary, claiming the alleged manipulation extended beyond Bukedea to the wider Teso Sub-region.

Former Bukedea County MP John Bosco Ikojo similarly claimed that voters in Bukedea were disenfranchised.

"We didn't have elections in Bukedea. The people were disenfranchised,"

Among's barred rivals demand apology

POLITICAL WOES

The aggrieved politicians, drawn from different political parties, claim they were unlawfully denied nomination and subjected to intimidation during the 2021 and 2026 electoral processes.

Mr Ikojo said, adding that the former Speaker allegedly used her influence over the Electoral Commission, police, and courts to shape political outcomes in the district.

Another former contestant, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisals, claimed several women who contested against Ms Among in 2020 continue to face obstacles in pursuing election petitions before the Court of Appeal.

The source alleged that some aspirants faced threats of arrest during nominations and accused sections of the security establishment and judiciary of shielding the former Speaker.

She further alleged that Ms Among feared open political competition because her popularity in Bukedea declined.

Ms Among could not be reached for comment by press time. Efforts to get comments from the EC, police and judiciary were also futile by press time yesterday. However, Ms Among and the three entities have previously denied any wrongdoing in the buildup to a new election after the Bukedea Woman MP election.