

Detectives sealed off the Speaker's office "to avert any attempts to destroy or tamper with evidence" in the ongoing probe.

BY YASIN MUGERWA

As the sun dipped below the horizon and the weight of the day began to lift, the Speaker of the 11th Parliament, Ms Anita Annet Among, quietly packed all her personal belongings and vacated the official office of the Speaker of Parliament.

Ms Among, according to multiple sources, used a cleaner (names withheld) to retrieve unidentified documents packed in boxes and other belongings. This was, however, done without involving the relevant authorities in Parliament.

This was done at about 7pm on Monday, the same day the detectives raided her multi-million-dollar Kigo home and impounded two luxurious vehicles, including the contentious Rolls-Royce Phantom 2025 model valued at Shs3.4b.

The cleaner, who was allegedly acting on the instructions of the outgoing Speaker, removed all her belongings a day before the detectives raided her office yesterday and labelled it a crime scene.

The Clerk's office is also under scrutiny, as the corruption investigation continues to expand, targeting Ms Among and what sources called her inner circle members, including ministers and MPs.

Sources close to the ongoing probe told *Daily Monitor* last evening that after detectives intercepted one of the Parliament cleaners with what auditors called "crucial documents", they immediately moved the search to Parliament, sealing off Ms Among's office and that of the Clerk at night. The detectives, according to sources, sought to avert "any attempts to destroy or tamper with evidence" in the ongoing probe.

The Speaker's official chambers are on the 6th floor of the North Wing, while the Deputy Speaker's chambers are on the 5th floor of the East Wing. But after the death of former Speaker Jacob Oulanyah in March 2022, Ms Among, who was his deputy, chose to operate from the 5th floor when she replaced him.

Ms Among, once a devoted member of the Opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party, rose from humble beginnings to Number Three in the

How cleaner delivered Among's documents



A joint security team of investigators at Parliament yesterday. The team later labelled the office of outgoing Speaker Anita Among as "scene of crime" as they probe corruption allegations. PHOTO/IBRAHIM KAVUMA

country, sitting just after the President and Vice President, only to find herself battling serious corruption accusations.

As the trappings of power began to fade, Mr Museveni met Ms Among last week at State House and sanctioned a deeper investigation codenamed "Operation *Maliza Ufisadi*". *Maliza Ufisadi* is a Swahili catchphrase that directly translates to "end and, or finish corruption".

Official figures from the Inspectorate of Government (IG) show Uganda loses between Shs9.144 trillion and Shs10 trillion annually due to corruption. This accounts for about 44 percent of the nation's total domestic revenue.

The detectives and auditors are looking into a string of corruption accusations targeting Ms Among's wealth accumulation as the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party leader and his son, Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the Chief of Defence Forces, crackdown on graft under his seventh elective term he dubbed "Kisanja No Sleep".

The cleaner in the mix

Sources said the Executive Secretary (ES) to the Speaker was not informed. However, after the cleaner contacted the secretary, he directed that all the official documents be left in the office and the Accounting Officer, who is the Clerk to Parliament, be notified, as he was already home.

While the ES and Mr Adolf Kasaija Mwesige, the Clerk to Parliament, were unavailable to explain what exactly happened, a senior official at Parliament told *Daily Monitor* that Ms Among would have notified the Clerk to Parliament in writing, listing all the personal items she needed to remove from the Office of the Speaker.

The Clerk, the source said, would, in consultation with the Sergeant at Arms, make arrangements through the relevant officers to have Ms Among's personal belongings removed and delivered to her residence.

The Clerk also functions as the chief executive officer of the Parliamentary Service, providing essential administrative

ABOUT AMONG

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and procedural guidance to the Speaker.

However, the Sergeant at Arms is the chief law enforcement, security, and protocol officer in Parliament. He or she is primarily responsible for maintaining order, enforcing rules, and protecting members.

Asked whether the outgoing Speaker required special permission to retrieve her personal belongings from her Office in Parliament, Mr Chris Obore, the Director of Communications and Public Affairs at Parliament, said the issues at hand were beyond him.

"Those are issues way beyond me now, and I do not want to make speculative statements because I know nothing," Mr Obore told *Daily Monitor* last evening.

Ms Among, who late Sunday withdrew from the race for Speaker of the 12th Parliament amid the investigations, ostensibly took her belongings without informing the ES, the Clerk to Parliament, and the Sergeant at Arms.

Her documents and other personal belongings packed in boxes were later intercepted by detectives at one of her residences in Kampala on the same

day (Monday night). Details of what Ms Among removed from the Speaker's chambers have not been disclosed, and the authorities in Parliament remain tight-lipped.

Sources said by last evening, Ms Among had not returned the 13 vehicles associated with her previous position as House Speaker. The Clerk reportedly plans to reach out to her this week, requesting the return of the vehicles and seeking clarification regarding the documents the cleaner took from the office.

Tattered transition

Mr Emmanuel Lumala Dombo, the director of information and publicity at the NRM Secretariat, highlighted the distinct differences between the 11th Parliament and its predecessors when asked about the awkwardness of an operation that turned the Speaker's Chambers into a crime scene on account of corruption allegations.

"The times and situation have changed. During our time, Parliament was hardly a crime scene, save for suspected sexual offences," Mr Dombo, who represented Buryole East for 20 years (1996-2016), said.

He added: "There has never been a time in the history of Uganda, where a transition at Parliament was conducted amidst an [ongoing corruption] investigation. There is, therefore, no precedent. This is now a precedent that may be referred upon in the future as the first of its kind."

Opposition reacts

The outgoing Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Nakawa West MP, Mr Joel Ssenyonyi, yesterday criticised the embattled outgoing Speaker for removing documents from her office in the middle of an ongoing investigation. Mr Ssenyonyi labelled the move "shameless attempts to hide or potentially destroy evidence".

He also questioned the integrity of the investigations.

"At the NRM retreat in Kyankwanzi, Gen Museveni said he had forgiven some MPs of corruption, and the charges were dropped. How do they determine who to forgive and who to prosecute? That's why it ought to be institutions and not individuals to take up these matters."

But Mr Faruk Kirunda, the deputy presidential press secretary, accused Mr Ssenyonyi of playing politics.

"Anyone suspected of corruption should be referred to the Inspectorate of Government for investigation and prosecution, as these institutions operate independently and are fully funded."