

ROAD TO CEC: NRM GIVES EMBATTLED

As the race to determine the next Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 12th Parliament heats up, President Yoweri Museveni has summoned two meetings that will seal the fate of the old guard and usher in the new. However, as **Simon Peter Tumwine** writes, it is the Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting that will give outgoing Speaker of Parliament Anita Among options as she jumps into a political precipice.

Ahead of two crucial meetings that will shape the speakership race and elections scheduled for Monday next week, the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) has given the outgoing Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among, three options.

"In our party constitution, schedule four, there are penalties. There is suspension. There is reprimand and then dismissal," the NRM secretary-general, Richard Todwong, told *The Weekend Vision* in an interview.

The options for Among have come at a time when President Yoweri Museveni, who is also the NRM party national chairperson, has summoned two decisive meetings this weekend – the Central Executive Committee (CEC), which is the party's politburo, and the NRM parliamentary caucus at State House, Entebbe.

However, Todwong said the options for Among will be triggered into



Former Speaker Anita Among during plenary. Among is under investigation over allegations of corruption

motion once evidence is tabled before CEC.

"These options come on condition that there is evidence. But the party can also ask the leader under investigation to step aside until investigations are concluded," he said.

Concerning the ongoing corruption probe on Among, Todwong said all the crimes allegedly committed by the outgoing Speaker were not committed on behalf of the party or institution, and she should, therefore, carry her own cross.

"The crimes that the Police are investigating regarding her were not committed on behalf of the party, and this is why it is Among being investigated and not the party," Todwong said.

He noted that while the party's disciplinary committee remains active, the alleged crimes for which Among is under investigation are beyond the party's internal disciplinary mechanisms.

Last week, joint security operatives mounted investigations into allegations of corruption against Among. Security agencies descended on all her homes in Nakasero, Kigo, Ntinda and Bukedea and confiscated property, including money and vehicles, among other items. Among's office at Parliament was also searched by detectives.

CONCERNING THE ONGOING CORRUPTION PROBE ON OUTGOING SPEAKER ANITA AMONG, TODWONG SAID ALL THE CRIMES ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED BY AMONG WERE NOT COMMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE PARTY.

Following the investigations, 30 MPs and 20 Parliament officials have been red-flagged and barred from leaving the country. The

replacement for Among, who is also the party's second national vice-chairperson and a top CEC member, will be determined on Monday next week as the 12th Parliament conducts its first sitting.

Already, the Patriotic League of Uganda (PLU), headed by Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), has endorsed defence minister and West Budama South MP Jacob Oboth-Oboth for the position of Speaker and Ruhinda North MP Thomas Tayebwa as his deputy.

However, Todwong said CEC, which is the top organ of the party, has the final say.

"Yes, the party chairman, who is also our President and leader, has summoned the party CEC for a meeting, and the agenda will be communicated, but I believe that what we are going to discuss is what is already in the public domain," Todwong said.

"Although CEC had endorsed Among and Tayebwa, the party national chairman has all the powers to come and change the recommendations and the endorsements," he added.

This week, Among withdrew from the race, saying: "After wide consultations and deep introspection, and to maintain harmony and clarity in my beloved party, the NRM, I wish to categorically and unequivocally state that I will not be offering myself for the speakership race of the 12th Parliament."

Todwong said following the ongoing investigations on Among, it was in her own interest to withdraw from the speakership race.

"The speakership race is not a do-or-die matter. It was in Among's interest to withdraw from the race because of the ongoing investigations, and Among's withdrawal from the race, despite being the second national vice-chairperson [female], does not damage our image as CEC," he said.

Other candidates who have already declared their intentions for Speaker include NRM leaders such as Bukono County

MP Persis Namuganza, Mbale City Woman MP Lydia Wanyoto, Masindi Woman MP Florence Akiki Asimwe, Jinja South East MP Paul Mwiru of the National Unity Platform

AMONG OPTIONS

(NUP) and justice minister Norbert Mao of the Democratic Party (DP).

Aringa South MP Yorke Odria Alioni of NRM pulled out last week, noting that he will support Oboth-Oboth for the position.

For the Deputy Speaker position, NRM contenders who have declared their intention include Kyaka South MP Jackson Kafuuzi, Sheema District Woman MP Adrine Mwebesa Katusime, Ibanda District Woman MP Jovrine Kyomukama Kaliisa, Buyaga West MP Dennis Namara, Mwenge South MP Mary Kamuli Kuteesa, and Gomba West MP Robinah Rwakoojo.

Sources say that going by previous NRM procedures, these contenders would have already collected expression of interest forms from the party electoral commission offices in Nakasero.

Asked about the matter, Dr Tanga Odoi, the party's electoral commission boss, said: "The Rt. Hon. Hamson Denis Obua wrote to His Excellency the President about the need for expression of interest, and even set timelines of May 18-19, 2026 for onward transmission to CEC for endorsement or non-endorsement, and then forwarding to the parliamentary caucus. We are waiting for that process."

However, by May 18-19 this week, there was no sign of such activity.

"This means that the party has already endorsed Oboth-Oboth and Tayebwa. Those jostling for the positions will be fortunate to interface with CEC and even the parliamentary caucus on Sunday," a source said.

Obua also noted: "As of now, I do not think there is any Member of Parliament of the 12th Parliament who has formally expressed interest, because it must come with a call for expression of interest from the electoral commission of the party."

WHAT OTHERS SAY

GODFREY AINE KAGUTA SODO, MAWOGOLA NORTH

The speakership ticket is not up for debate. As Mzee Museveni's wisdom has consistently shown us, the Movement does not present options – it presents direction. Those who walk with us know the way forward. For those who do not, the Movement has its own memory.

JOHN MULIMBA, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, should establish a secure office where MPs and other individuals can safely provide information related to corruption allegations in the ongoing probe involving former Speaker Anita Among.

GEN. DAVID SEJUSA, FORMER CO-ORDINATOR OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

I doubt she fully understood what was happening. Otherwise, she would not have brought in a Rolls-Royce.

Commenting on the matter, Odoi added that CEC will guide on the issue.

"If CEC says there should be candidates, the new applicants will express interest with the commission, and we shall sieve them and present them to CEC for vetting," Tanga said.

A senior party lawmaker, however, said it is expected that all contenders for the positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be allowed to officially express interest during the party's parliamentary caucus on Sunday.

MAO QUESTION

The other headgear for NRM is the Mao factor.

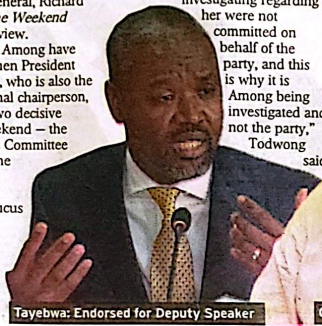
On Mao's speakership bid, Todwong said while DP signed a co-operation

agreement with NRM, Mao needed to join NRM to stand a chance, adding that he has been a good minister.

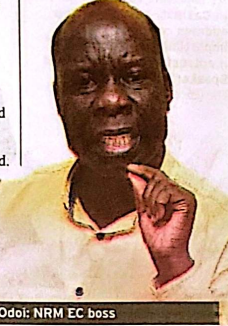
Todwong added that NRM is reviewing the co-operation agreement with DP.

However, Mao said his speakership bid remains alive, adding: "Our agreement with NRM is a dynamic document, not a monument."

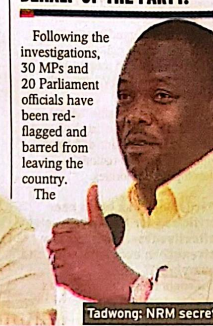
Citing article 7 of the NRM-DP Co-operation agreement, Mao said: "The agreement provides for new areas of co-operation, and speakership is one of these new areas. I have already written to the President notifying him about this new area of agreement."



Tayebwa: Endorsed for Deputy Speaker



Odoi: NRM EC boss



Todwong: NRM secretary-general



Mao: Expressed interest in speakership



Oboth-Oboth: One of the candidates for speaker