

Regional News

The current bishop, Rt Rev Nandaah, will reach the mandatory retirement age of 65 in January 2027.

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As Mbale Diocese prepares for a leadership transition, at least seven clergy have expressed interest in succeeding Rt Rev John Wilson Nandaah, who was enthroned as Bishop on December 5, 2021.

Rt Rev Nandaah, who formerly served as diocesan secretary until he became bishop, is set to retire in early 2027 after attaining the mandatory retirement age of 65 under the Church of Uganda guidelines.

Bishop Nandaah will be making 65 years in January 2027.

Sources within the diocese told *Daily Monitor* at the weekend that those who have shown interest include Rev Milton Shisa, the Vicar of St Andrew's Cathedral; Rev Robert Watsala, the diocesan secretary; Rev Charles John Walyekere; Rev Canon Alloni Mwisaka; Ven Rev Canon Michael Peter Musingo; Ven Rev Kenneth Shaigi, archdeacon of Bubulo in Manafwa District; and Ven Emma Masolo, the archdeacon of Bupoto in Namisindwa District.

Other clerics include Ven Rev Peter Natseli of Bulukheke Archdeaconry in Bududa District; Ven Rev Ivan Khabikula of Bubirabi Archdeaconry; Rev Phillimon Namukongo; Rev Michael Nanyuma; Ven Rev Amos Wafula; Rev Moses Namonyo; Rev Isaac Maliga, the archdeacon of Namunsi; and Rev Patrick Magogo.

In his Easter message early this month, Bishop Nandaah disclosed to the faithful that at least 23 reverends in the diocese qualify to be considered for the position.

"If you have any complaint, raise it now—not after the names have been submitted to the House of Bishops. Late submission of complaints makes it appear as if we have been working with



Rt Rev John Wilson Nandaah (second left), was enthroned bishop of Mbale Diocese on December 5, 2021. He is expected to retire next year. PHOTO/ANDREW WABUSHENDA

7 clerics eye Mbale Diocese bishop seat

the wrong people," he said.

According to the Church of Uganda's constitution, the election of a bishop is a process that begins at the diocesan level and culminates in the selection of one candidate from two nominees by the Provincial House of Bishops.

To qualify, a candidate must be an ordained priest, theologically trained, spiritually mature, and of high moral standing, with a stable family life.

Bishop Nandaah urged Christians to raise any concerns or complaints about clerics who qualify to become bishops at an early stage, rather than wait until the final selection process.

"There is a growing tendency among

THE GUIDELINES

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Mbale Diocese, established in 1961, has so far had eight bishops. Rt Rev John Nandaah will retire in January 2027.

some believers to remain silent during the initial stages, only to raise objections after two names have already been selected and forwarded to the House of Bishops for final consideration," he said.

He further criticised the practice of withholding important information about clergy, such as issues related to moral conduct, until they are shortlisted for higher office.

When Rt Rev Nandaah was elected bishop, his main competitor, Rt Rev Can

Abednego Kaswa Watenga, after defeat, quit the Anglican Church and joined a rival group as the first Bishop of Upper Nile Diocese under the World-Wide Anglican Church.

Rt Rev Nandaah was elected by the House of Bishops of the Church of Uganda on October 27, 2021, succeeding Rt Rev Patrick Gidudu.

A Christian from St Andrew's Cathedral, who preferred anonymity, said Bishop Nandaah's message about the transition is to try to avoid what happened after his election.

"Rt Rev Watenga, who was a senior leader in our church after the loss, quit. It somehow destabilised the diocese," the source said.

However, Rt Rev Watenga, in an exclusive interview with the *Daily Monitor*, at the time said quitting was a spiritual position and was not driven by power.

"It took me almost a whole year to make this decision after praying, fasting, and waiting upon the lord about changing from one denomination to the other after I was approached," he said.

Another Christian from Busui Archdeaconry, who preferred anonymity, proposed that the retirement age be reviewed from 65 to 70 years, arguing that some capable clergy are left due to age, despite having valuable experience.

"Someone gains the necessary experience later in ministry, but by then, they are already nearing 65. The Church should reconsider this," the Christian said.

About the diocese

The Mbale Diocese, established in 1961, comprises nine archdeacons and one deanery. Over the years, it has been led by notable bishops including Lucian Usher-Wilson, Erisa Masaba, John Wasiky, Akisoferi Wesonga, Samwiri Wabulakha, Patrick Gidudu, and Rt Rev John Wilson Nandaah, who became the 8th bishop in December 2021. Bishop Nandaah has focused

on pastoral care, church development, and land management. As his retirement approaches, attention now turns to who will take over and guide the diocese into its next phase.

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RETIREMENT
AGE