

National News

The rivalry between outgoing Speaker Anita Among and former Speaker Rebecca Kadaga has for years shaped the political and social landscape in the Busoga region.

BY DAILY MONITOR TEAM

Political tensions in Busoga have for the past few years revolved around rival camps linked to former parliamentary speakers Ms Annet Anita Among and Ms Rebecca Kadaga. The competition has shaped alliances among local leaders and voters across the sub-region.

Now, as Ms Among faces investigations over alleged corruption and money laundering, questions are emerging over whether the changing political dynamics could help restore unity in Busoga or deepen existing divisions.

Analysts, leaders and residents interviewed by the *Daily Monitor* offered differing views on whether the weakening of one political camp would ease tension or simply create new struggles for influence.

Mr Asuman Nalolo, the Kamuli District Deputy Speaker, said the political challenges facing Ms Among could reduce tensions that have long divided Busoga along rival political camps.

He said her entry into Busoga politics intensified competition between rival groups aligned to her and former Speaker Rebecca Kadaga.

"Her coming created strong political camps in Busoga, and this competition increased divisions among leaders and supporters," he said.

Mr Nalolo also alleged that political disagreements have at times affected development initiatives in the district.

"For example, we had issues around some government projects like tractors meant for chiefdoms, which faced objections due to political differences," he said.

Mr Nalolo added that the current political developments could either weaken or reshape those alignments.

"If these tensions reduce, it can help restore a semblance of unity in the region because most of the conflict has been driven by camps," he said. Nonetheless, he said the changes in the political landscape could have a significant impact on future cooperation among leaders in Busoga.

Mr Pius Mugweri, the LC3 chairperson of Namwendwa Sub-county in Kamuli District, said the political changes surrounding Ms Among could significantly affect Busoga's political dynamics, adding that the emergence of rival camps has shaped both leadership and grassroots mobilisation in the region.

"I think the downfall of Honourable Among means a lot because she has been looking at Busoga as captured. We have been operating under two political camps," he said.

Mr Mugweri added that this competition has influenced how leaders relate with communities and traditional structures. For instance, in some cases elders and local leaders have felt sidelined, as decision-making appeared to be dominated by one group.

"It can feel like one camp controls everything while others are left out," he said.

Mr Mugweri further linked the divisions to recent electoral politics, arguing that the rival camps influenced

Will Anita Among's woes reshape Busoga politics?



Former Speaker of Parliament, Ms Rebecca Kadaga



Outgoing Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Annet Among

Still new.

Among is still relatively new in the region's politics, and many people still recognise the contribution of former Speaker Rebecca Kadaga, who has for years been associated with addressing issues affecting Busoga. — Ms Sarah Nairuba, resident of Nankoma Cell in Nankoma Town Council

voter behaviour even within the ruling party, all the way to the top. He observed that political realignment could follow if leadership structures change, suggesting that "if there is a change in leadership, the President may reorganise the system in the coming Cabinet."

However, he cautioned that unity in Busoga may not automatically return with the exit or weakening of any single political figure, adding that "there are groups that have been influencing these divisions through support and funding." He said lasting stability in Busoga politics will depend on addressing deeper structures of division rather than focusing on individual leaders alone.

Mr Ibrahim Ndhoga, the former Chairperson of Ibulanku Sub-county in Bugwiri District, said divisions in Busoga politics did not begin with the current rivalry between Ms Among and Ms Kadaga, but have long existed within political structures in the region.

"Even before that, there were disagreements involving prominent leaders such as Bageya, Namuganza, Kazibwe and Kivejinja," he said.

Mr Ndhoga added that the current political situation should be understood in the context of long-standing historical rivalries rather than recent develop-

ments alone. He further cautioned residents against quickly embracing new political actors without understanding their track records in leadership and development.

"The Basoga should not easily embrace leaders whose background in development is not well known. Instead, they should focus on verified contributions, not rumours that fuel divisions," he said.

Mr Ndhoga also called for the intervention of the Busoga Kingdom leadership in restoring unity and guiding political harmony in the sub-region.

"The kingdom should step in to ensure unity in Busoga and help reduce political divisionism," he added.

Mr Joshua Buyinza, an economics lecturer at Team University Namutumba Study Centre, said the political challenges facing Ms Among could intensify divisions rather than resolve them.

Speaking in an interview on Thursday, he argued that voting patterns in the recently concluded general elections reflected political loyalties linked to the Among and Kadaga camps more than policy issues or manifestos.

"MPs, both incumbents and new contenders who were backed by Ms Among and lost because they were opposed by Ms Kadaga, may find it difficult to reconcile because political divisions have now become deeply entrenched," Mr Buyinza said.

He said Ms Kadaga's long political relationship with President Museveni has given her a deeper understanding of the country's political system compared to Among. He said political dynamics in Busoga shifted after Ms Kadaga was appointed first deputy prime minister following her removal as Speaker, arguing that the transition al-

WANING INFLUENCE

A Busiki Chiefdom minister also suggested that changing political dynamics could reduce Kadaga's influence going forward and speculated that former vice president Specioza Wandira Kazibwe could re-emerge in national leadership discussions following her role during the recently concluded elections.

tered power relations within the region.

Mr Buyinza further claimed that Ms Kadaga later leaned on institutions such as churches, mosques, cultural leaders and Busoga Kingdom to maintain political relevance, while Ms Among also built her own political networks across the sub-region.

"The rivalry between the two leaders is largely rooted in competition for political influence and control within Busoga," he said.

Mr Buyinza also observed that both camps appear to have mobilised support structures to strengthen their positions in the region, contributing to continued political polarisation.

Ms Juliet Naigaga, a resident of Kizuba Sub-county in Namutumba District, said it was unfair for some leaders to question Among's association with Busoga despite her marriage ties to the region.

She said Kyabazinga William Gabula Nadiope IV and Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muvawala have previously described Busoga as a diverse region united under Busoga Kingdom.

Ms Among is married to Buyende East MP Moses Magogo, who also doubles as

president of the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (Fufa). According to her, the ongoing disagreements surrounding Among's association with Busoga risk deepening political divisions and affecting regional unity.

"We expected Kadaga and Among to work together in the interest of the Busoga community instead of engaging in political disagreements," she said.

One of the ministers in Busiki Chiefdom, who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter, said he believes Ms Kadaga may struggle to regain the level of political influence she once held in Busoga.

"Some people may not know Kadaga closely, but we who have worked with her for years in politics and within Busoga Kingdom have our own experiences with her leadership style," he said.

'Undermined development'

However, Mr Sadam Tenwa, a resident of Kasedere Village in Namutumba Sub-county, said prolonged political divisions are undermining development in Busoga.

"We are tired of political fights. Our communities are not developing because of politics based on camps," Tenwa said.

He argued that reconciliation in Busoga would require reducing political rivalry and influence from competing camps.

Mr James Ouma, a resident of Muteere Sub-county in Bugiri District, said any legal or political challenges facing Ms Among could also affect communities that have benefited from development projects associated with her political allies, including Bukooli Central Solomon Silwany.

He said the constituency got three health centres identifying them as Buwunga Health Centre III, Busoga Health Centre II and Buwuni Health Centre III.

"We are concerned about the actions being taken by security agencies," he added.

Mr Charles Mugoya, a resident of Masongola in Bugiri Municipality, said divisions between supporters of the two camps are likely to continue because both leaders command strong grassroots support.

"I think President Museveni should intervene in this matter because Ms Among is among the leaders who have contributed to the development of Busoga," he said.

Mr Mugoya, however, acknowledged Kadaga's longstanding contribution to advocacy for Busoga, adding that challenges facing Ms Among alone may not necessarily restore unity in the region.

Meanwhile, Ms Sarah Nairuba, a resident of Nankoma Cell in Nankoma Town Council, Bugiri District, said Busoga's development should not depend on a single political figure.

"Among is still relatively new in the region's politics, and many people still recognise the contribution of former Speaker Rebecca Kadaga, who has for years been associated with addressing issues affecting Busoga," she said.

Compiled By Tausi Nakato, Ronald Seebe & Asuman Musobya