

National News

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MPs Oboth, Tayebwa stroll to Speaker coronation race

The National Resident Movement (NRM) Parliamentary Caucus yesterday endorsed Oboth-Oboth and Tayebwa at their meeting at State House in Entebbe for the Speaker positions.

BY BUSEIN SAMILU

Budama West Central MP Jacob Oboth Oboth and his Ruhinda North County counterpart, Thomas Tayebwa are today set for a coronation race for Speaker and Deputy respectively. The ruling National Resident Movement (NRM) Parliamentary Caucus yesterday endorsed the duo at their meeting at State House in Entebbe for the two positions.

Given the NRM party consensus on their candidacy and the party's numerical advantage in the House, the two are expected to sail through unimpeded. The NRM has 372 MPs in the 12th Parliament while the largest Opposition party, the National Unity Platform (NUP) has only 50, with Independents registering 68, with at least 40 of them NRM party-leaning.

Nevertheless, Mr Oboth Oboth is expected to face off with NUP party candidate, Mr Paul Mwiru, also the MP for Jinja City East. Mr Oboth Oboth is the outgoing Cabinet minister for Defence and Veterans Affairs while Tayebwa is the incumbent Deputy speaker of Parliament.

Two other aspirants, the Masindi District Woman MP Florence Asiimwe Akiki, 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-



Mr Jacob Oboth-Oboth (centre) picks forms from the NRM Electoral Commission chairperson, Mr Tanga Odoi, as Mr Thomas Tayebwa (left) and other MPs look on. PHOTO/ABUBAKER LUBOWA

ACCEPTANCE

Both Mr Oboth Oboth and Mr Tayebwa while submitting their expression of interest at the NRM party secretariat on Saturday promised to restore the image of Parliament and weed out maladministration and corruption that has been widely reported in the stewardship of the 12th Parliament.

person cautioned NRM leaders against 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

not express interest by saying they wanted to fight. You went where you were told to go. Today, because there is peace, many people are expressing interest in contesting for positions. Democracy is good, but we should be disciplined," President Museveni said.

He added, "First, you need to be disciplined, start small and avoid debts," he added.

During the meeting, the NRM Central Executive Committee (CEC) presented its recommendations on the leadership of the 12th Parliament to the party parliamentary caucus.

Plaudits for Oboth, Tayebwa

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

General, explained why CEC had endorsed the Defence minister.

"He (Oboth Oboth) has demonstrated exceptional legal acumen and command of parliamentary law and his legal expertise puts him in position to interpret the rules of Parliament to ensure proceedings are done within the law," he said.

The party's top organ also said they had endorsed Oboth Oboth due to his loyalty to the party and adherence to its programmes as well as being a uniting and uncontroversial figure.

Mr Tayebwa won commendations for his previous roles as Government Chief Whip and Deputy Speaker, which the party said had equipped him with extensive experience in parliamentary procedures and management of legislative affairs.

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

communities, saying these qualities would be essential in building consensus and strengthening parliamentary cooperation.

Mr Tayebwa's youthfulness and exposure were also cited as qualities expected to bring energy, dynamism and a fresh perspective to the parliamentary leadership. The NRM Caucus subsequently resolved to adopt the recommendations presented by CEC.

Outgoing Speaker

The outgoing House Speaker, Ms Anita Among, has since Saturday last week been at the centre of investigation as detectives raided her homes in Nakase, Kigo and Bukedea, and her office at Parliament over allegations of corruption.

The endorsements of Mr Oboth Oboth and Mr Tayebwa settles weeks of intense internal consultations and political manoeuvring within the NRM party following the withdrawal of Ms Among from the race amid mounting pressure and ongoing investigations into allegations of corruption.

Yesterday, the party in a statement released after the meeting, said the NRM parliamentary caucus has unanimously elected Mr Oboth Oboth Mr Tayebwa as flagbearers for positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 12th Parliament respectively.

Fifteen contenders in the race for Deputy Speaker bowed out during their interaction with the NRM Central Executive Committee. They included Terego District Woman MP Rose Obiga, Omoro District Woman MP Catherine Lamwaka, Mawokota South MP Suzan Nakawuuki, Mwenge South MP Kuteesa Mary Kamuli, Oyam South MP Patrick Ogwang Obura, and Kinkizi West MP James Kaberuka.

Others were Buyaga West MP Dennis Namara, Mbale City Woman MP Lydia Wanyoto, Jinja District Woman MP Peace Tibyaze, Entebbe Municipality MP Steven Shyaka Gashejja, Kyala South MP Jackson Kafuuzi, Bukwo District Woman MP Evelyn Chelangat, Ik County MP Hilary Lokwang, Agago County MP Edward Makmot, and Rukungiri Municipality MP Lt Gen (rtd) Henry Tumukunde.

Museveni reportedly used the meeting to rally MPs around party unity and discipline ahead of Monday's election of parliamentary leaders during the first sitting of the 12th Parliament at Kolo Ceremonial Grounds.

Among's barred rivals demand apology

Mr Ikojo said, adding that the former

BY SIMON PETER ENWAMILA