ELECTION WATCH X KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE FACTS, THE ARGUMENTS AND THE BEST ANALYSIS IN THE COUNTRY

FIERCE BATTLES FOR KAMPALA

BY UMARU KASHAKA

It is Wednesday and time check is 7:15a.m. I am in Makindye East constituency standing at Kibuli Mutajazi bodaboda stage, opposite Total Petrol Station on Mbogo Road, waiting for a bodaboda to take me to Vision Group offices, my workplace.

I see two young men pinning campaign posters bearing the photo of one of the candidates in the Makindye East parliamentary race on buildings and signposts.

But there is Ismail Matovu, about 31 years old, standing beside me watching cars pass by. Wearing a blue T-shirt with a photo of Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) flag-bearer for the Makindye East MP seat, Ibrahim Kasozi, Matovu tells me why he supports Kasozi.

"He has promised that he will ensure we, the unemployed get jobs if he is victorious," he says.

"I have a bachelor of arts degree in social work and social administration, but I have no job. I heard Kasozi gives out bodabodas on loan, who knows I may also get one and make a living as a cyclist," Matovu adds.

He says he has lived in Kibuli since 2012, when he graduated. He notes that apart from joblessness among the youth, the area has a poor drainage system.

"I expect the winner in the coming elections to address this issue and that of bedbugs that give us sleepless nights. Our leaders also need to put enforcements on general cleaning, especially on those people who damp garbage in drainage channels," Matovu adds.

Kampala is one of the opposition hotbeds that the ruling party wants to capture, but the opposition is fighting tooth and nail to defend its base. With just over a million voters registered out of a population of 1,516,210, the city is promising fireworks in the 2016 polls.


Lukwago, Nakuya (right) and Ssewanyana (second-left) in the scuffle with the Police in Kampala last year

Incumbent MPs and those seeking to unseat them have intensified their *kakuyege* (door-to-door campaigns) with many making regular appearances at social functions in their constituencies and placing their campaign posters in all trading centres to market their political ambitions.

The city has five political divisions, which have exhibited unique voting patterns basing on their social, religious and economic factors.

Kampala central is a commercial and cosmopolitan division, while Rubaga is more of a residential area mainly inhabited by Buganda and conservative Catholic families that have generally thrown their weight behind politicians from the Democratic Party (DP).

Kawempe on the other hand is a Muslim dominated and densely-populated area, while Nakawa is a cosmopolitan, but dominated by northerners and easterners.

MAKINDYE EAST

Makindye East is led by MP John Ssimbwa of the National Resistance Movement (NRM).

> Lukwago reportedly decided to support Kakande after Ruhindi tabled a Bill in Parliament seeking to disfranchise electorates in Kampala, something that rubbed Lukwago the wrong way

Ssimbwa in an interview with *Sunday Vision* said he will address the issues raised by Matovu, if given another term.

"I want to ensure the Government compensates people who settled in wetlands before they were demarcated and those who are in the railway line reserve. I also want to ensure Ggaba Market is constructed and youth and women are empowered through poultry rearing since I bought the machine that hatches 8,000 chicks every month. This will partly solve the issue of unemployment," he says.

Ssimbwa is serving his first term in Parliament and fighting hard to ward off his six opponents.

Ssimbwa's challengers include the current Makindye division mayor, Dr. Ian Clarke (independent), former area MP Michael Mabikke of Go Forward pressure group and Ibrahim Kasozi of FDC. Others are Elijah Ow'busingye, Frederick Walusimbi and Karungi Kirumira, all independents.

Local observers say this is going to be the mother of all battles because most of Ssimbwa's opponents are well-known politicians in the city and they understand the political terrain of the area.

"I am the big shot because my support cuts across the political divide. I have supporters in other parties because I do not segregate in service delivery," Ssimbwa argues.

Clarke, who is viewed as development-oriented, is confident of victory despite joining the race late.

"I want to address issues of health, education and development. I have been a mayor of the division and have a record. I have improved the standards of living, roads, garbage collection, drainage and sanitation in the area," he contends.

But Ow'busingye and Kasozi are also optimistic. The former is the Makindye LC5 councillor and the latter contested in last elections, but lost to Ssimbwa.

Ow'busingye bought an ambulance that offers free transport and has been sponsoring a number of projects in the area.

MAKINDYE WEST

The crowded race for the Makindye West MP seat that is dominated by independents (eight) has made it a stiff battle for the 13 contenders.

Competition is mainly intense between the NRM flag-bearer, Achilles Lubega and outspoken sports analyst, Allan Ssewanyana of DP.

Lubega is a well-known lawyer and politician in the city. In 2012, he participated in the NRM elections for flag-bearer for the Bukoto South parliamentary seat, but was unsuccessful.

The incumbent MP, Haji Hussein Kyanjo, the only MP representing the Justice Forum Party (JEEMA) in the August House, decided to bow out partly on account of ill health.

But there are some observers who say Kyanjo's son, Farouq Kyanjo, might cause an upset. These observers argue that since Kyanjo decided to throw in the towel when he was still popular and his son is likely to ride on his popularity and come to Parliament on a sympathy vote.

Ssewanyana, who represents Kibuye in KCCA, shot to fame when images of him being roughed up appeared in the media, as he attempted to serve a court order that would stop Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago's impeachment.

He had claimed that Kyanjo endorsed him as his replacement. But Kyanjo has on many occasions introduced Farouq to his supporters as the one he wants to replace him.

Farouq says if elected, he wants to revive his father's legacy in the constituency.

NRM would have stood a chance of grabbing the seat since the opposition is divided, but its house too is not in order. Some of the independents such as Mirembe, who lost the NRM primaries to Lubega, have been saying that because of its mismanagement of the primaries, NRM should brace itself for more disappointments.

NAKAWA DIVISION

Nakawa division is the most populated constituency in the country with 208,159 voters.

Analysts say, it is expensive to campaign there for any political seat.

One other unique factor about Nakawa is that despite having a mixture of people in terms of economic and social status, it is always peaceful compared to other constituencies in Kampala.

Observers say Nakawa constitutes several institutions of higher learning occupied by the youth and a candidate who woos them can easily win the race.

The incumbent, Freddie Ruhindi, who has represented the constituency in Parliament since 2001, says peace is a result of the good leadership of the NRM.

"Pope Francis stayed in Nakawa, Mbuya, to be precise, because the constituency is the most peaceful. This is also a clear testimony of the strong leadership in Nakawa," he argues.

Ruhindi says if given another term, he would improve the education and health services in the area and also fix roads like the


Makindye East's incumbent Ssimbwa


Makindye West's Kyanjo bowed out


Ruhindi faces Kakande and Kabaziguruka


Kawempe's Munyagwa


Kamya wants the Rubaga North seat

Have you a news story for us from your area? Do not hesitate to call us on 0414 3370000, follow us on Twitter, Facebook or send an email to sunday@newvision.co.ug

ELECTION WATCH X KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE FACTS, THE ARGUMENTS AND THE BEST ANALYSIS IN THE COUNTRY

MP SEATS


Sempala


Nakiwala


Nsereko speaking to journalists at a past event

Kulambiro Road.

He is facing a number of challengers, including his perennial opponents, Kenneth Kakande of DP and FDC's Michael Kabaziguruka.

"I have never been scared of competition. It (competition) makes me strong. I enjoy it. I will give them a bloody nose," Ruhindi, who is also the Attorney General, says.

Analysts say the competition will be mainly intense between Kakande and Ruhindi, but hasten to add that since Nakawa is an NRM stronghold, and FDC and DP are putting up two strong candidates against Ruhindi, the latter might retain his seat. But the NRM house is also not in order. Ruhindi is not in the good books of Nicholas Arinaitwe, the NRM division chairman and also fell out of favour with supporters of Ben Kalumba, the division mayor, during the recent NRM primaries.

After losing the flag to Jude Mudoma, Kalumba's fans blamed Ruhindi and the resident city commissioner, Jackie Kemigisha, for their candidate's woes and vowed to de-campaign him in the general elections.

Kakande, who is DP spokesperson, is optimistic.

"They (voters) have realised now that they need a Member of Parliament, who can fight for them. I am the one who can do that," he notes.

When residents were evicted from Nakawa-Naguru estates, for instance, Ruhindi was nowhere to be seen, yet he is a lawyer, who could have advised them," Kakande says.

While Kabaziguruka, who is an FDC deputy electoral commission chairman, says: "I am in the race to win."

Both Ruhindi and Kakande are felt on the ground among the electorate and the contest is likely to be hot. Both contestants have lived in Nakawa for a while and have each fought for the interests of the locals.

The decision by Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago to campaign for Kakande is also changing the political dynamics.

Lukwago commands a lot of support in the city and in Nakawa, especially among the market and street vendors.

Lukwago's close associates say the embattled Lord Mayor was forced to throw his weight behind Kakande after Ruhindi tabled a Bill in Parliament seeking to disfranchise electorates in Kampala, something that rubbed Lukwago the wrong way. During the Nakawa municipal development forum meeting in July 2015, residents raised concerns about hygiene and sanitation, security, street lights, drainage and prostitution.

KAWEMPE SOUTH

The seat is currently held by DP's Sebuliba Mutumba, who has been in Parliament since 2001. He is facing a fierce battle against the current Kawempe division mayor, Mubarak Munyagwa of FDC; KCCA councillor Madinah Nsereko of NRM and DP's Daniel Ssali.

Sebuliba, who is this time round standing as an independent, belongs to the platform for Truth and Justice pressure group, a DP faction led by Lukwago.

"I can't lose sleep over any person. They are coming for defeat unless there is rigging or ballot stuffing because I have performed to the best of my knowledge," he stated.

Sebuliba decided to identify himself with the Go Forward independent presidential candidate, Amama Mbabazi, despite the fact that the Lord Mayor supports Kizza Besigye's candidature.

Since Kawempe is a DP stronghold, the main battle is between Sebuliba and Munyagwa.

However, observers say the duo face a crisis of credibility. They note that Sebuliba and Munyagwa came with a lot of promises, but have disappointed residents, who voted for them in 2011 to serve as MP and mayor respectively. Many Kawempe residents criticise them for failing to address the problems of floods and garbage.

Mutumba has propelled himself as a leading agitator for Buganda issues and this is the line he is likely to use to stay in Parliament.

RUBAGA NORTH

This constituency is also promising fireworks because both opposition candidates are strong and have largely promoted Buganda Kingdom interests, which makes them have strong links with Buganda Kingdom, ironically headquartered in their constituency.

Former contestant in the 2011 presidential elections and leader of the Uganda Federal Alliance, Beti Kamya, is seeking to reclaim her seat from the incumbent Moses Kasibante of Lukwago's pressure group.

Kasibante, who is standing as an independent again, says he has stood by his voters and helped them out, especially during evictions.

"I am not scared of anyone. What I know I am unopposed because I have fought for my people and stopped evictions like in Kasubi and Nakulabye markets and those in wetlands. So, my voters will judge," he says.

Kasibante, who supports Besigye and belongs to Lukwago's pressure group, was declared by court in May 2012 as the duly-elected MP for Rubaga North, ending nearly one year's legal battle with his NRM political rival, Singh Katongole.

But Kamya argues that her biggest fear was Singh, who lost the NRM flag to Brian Tindyebwa during the recent party primaries.

"With the exit of Singh, nearly 90% of his supporters have come to my side. Tindyebwa is still struggling to get his feet on the ground because he has not started campaigning. I have mainstream NRM and mainstream DP, although DP also has a flag-bearer," Kamya says.

She has initiated many developmental projects, like piggery and poultry for women and youth. Others are the Lubaga North Development Association that lends money to people to buy boda-boda cycles.

KAWEMPE NORTH

Latif Ssebaggala, the incumbent, has represented Kawempe North since 2001. He is in the House on DP ticket, but is standing as an independent this time.

The DP flag is with Kawempe councillor and deputy Kampala Lord Mayor, Sulaiman Kidandala.

NRM's Andrew Kyambadde and FDC's Ssemindi Asaddullah are also in the race. Ssebaggala portrays himself as one of the tested opposition MPs.

Well-knowing that Buganda is an issue in the constituency, Ssebaggala never wavers in his articulation of Buganda issues. He recently defected from the Go Forward camp to Besigye's side – days after being listed on Mbabazi's campaign taskforce.

He told *Sunday Vision:* "I considered national interests above personal interests and decided to support Besigye, who is well-grounded so that we as opposition consolidate victory."

But this did not surprise many because Ssebaggala belongs to Lukwago's pressure group, who is sticking with Besigye. Kidandala is still with the Go Forward although he is facing a crisis of credibility.

The Inspector General of Police Kale Kayihura's leaked audio tapes had Kidandala, Lukwago's choice for deputy Lord Mayor, speaking uncharitably about Lukwago.

With this revelation, elements in the opposition were upset by Kidandala's actions and cried betrayal. It is probably one of the reasons Lukwago backed Ssebaggala's candidature.

But Kidandala told *Sunday Vision* the tapes are no longer the driving issue of the campaign.

"The issue of the tapes is concluded matter. It was clarified much earlier. It wasn't my voice," he stated.

Asked whether he was optimistic about 2016, Kidandala said: "It is a sure win. On the ground all people are saying the incumbent has overstayed."

RUBAGA SOUTH

Seasoned politician Ken Lukyamuzi, "The Man" as he is popularly called in Parliament, where he represents Rubaga South, is facing renowned city comedian and CBS radio presenter, Kato Lubwama and NRM's Faridah Mayanja.

Faridah has worked for radio stations around Kampala and tried her hand at music. She was the NRM flag-bearer for the constituency in the 2011 parliamentary polls.

Making the constituency an opposition stronghold from 1996 to date, Lukyamuzi continues to confound many political pundits.

Observers say Lukyamuzi's voters are happy with his contributions during parliamentary debates that they have always been willing to forgive him for achieving little on the ground.

His outspokenness on NRM shortcomings and his articulation of Buganda issues, especially federo endeared him to many voters the majority of who are Buganda loyalists, who form the bedrock of his constituency.

He has also protested bad roads in his constituency. Therefore, observers say, those contesting against him must work a notch harder.

But Lubwama argues that Lukyamuzi, who leads the Conservative Party, has overstayed, failed to deliver and no longer has new ideas.

Although Lubwama has also propelled himself as a leading agitator for Buganda issues on Mengo's CBS radio, he does not have the entire DP on his side. He fell out with the mainstream DP led by Norbert Mao. Lukyamuzi seems to be the most powerful candidate, according to analysts.

KAMPALA CENTRAL

Muhammad Nsereko is the incumbent MP and one of the vocal MPs of the Ninth Parliament.

Nsereko, who is standing as an independent, faces NRM's Hajat Aisha Kabanda, the Kisenyi II woman councillor and FDC's Harold Kaija, the party's deputy secretary general for administration.

In 2011, Nsereko contested on the NRM party ticket, but after entering the House, he became a thorn in the NRM government's flesh.

He supports Lukwago's candidature and this might see him pull it off since he is drawing supporters from both the opposition and the ruling party.

KAMPALA WOMAN MP

The race for the Kampala Woman MP has attracted three strong opposition candidates – Nabilah Sempala (incumbent, FDC) Shifrah Lukwago (independent, but DP-leaning) and Florence Nakiwala of DP. Sempala and Shifrah chose to rally behind Besigye, while Nakiwala backs Mbabazi.

There are fears within the opposition ranks that the NRM flag-bearer, Aisa Nabisere, might take advantage of the divided opposition to grab the seat. Observers say Sempala, who is seeking a fourth term, has performed above average as a legislator, although she has fallen out of favour with sections of FDC, who accuse her of being a mole of the ruling NRM.

She has been propelling herself as a pro-woman and pro-people legislator.

Asked whether the issue of being an NRM mole will not affect her candidature, Nabila said: "I am the FDC flag-bearer, so that question is irrelevant. I have done my work well and this will deliver victory."

She contends that she is the only leader in Kampala, who has cared about the plight of children. Observers say her biggest opponent this time is Nakiwala, wife of Bukomansimbi MP Deo Kiyingi. She is also the former Buganda tourism minister. During her tenure as tourism minister, Nakiwala championed the Buganda Annual Expo to boost tourism in the kingdom.

"I believe that I have what it takes to deliver in Kampala," she told *Sunday Vision* in an earlier interview.

Shifrah Lukwago, the Kawempe division councillor, hung around Lukwago as he unsuccessfully battled to have his office opened after he was controversially impeached.

Observers say she managed to build some political capital out of Lukwago's troubles.

However, the presence of Aidah Nakuya, the KCCA councillor, on the ballot paper is giving Shifrah sleepless nights. Both of them enjoy good relations with the Lord Mayor and have been attending his rallies causing drama whenever they stand on the same podium and attack each other. But Shifrah seems not worried.

"People will elect the person they think is strong. It does not matter whether we are 10 opposition candidates; the people will decide," she noted recently.


Shifrah Lukwago

Scanned with CamScanner