

The East African Legislative Assembly has asked their Ugandan counterparts to replace the members who have now joined Uganda's Parliaments as MPs. PHOTO/FILE

Parliament sets dates for EALA by-elections

Two Ugandan members of Eala joined the home Parliament, leaving a vacancy at the regional one.

BY FRANKLIN DRAKU

The Parliament of Uganda has set March 30, and March 31, for the nomination of candidates for the by-election to the East African Legislative Assembly (Eala). Then election day will be on April 15.

The two positions fell vacant after two of the current members were elected to the Parliament of Uganda.

Denis Namara was elected to represent Buyaga West County in the 12th Parliament, while James Kakooza Mutagubya was elected to represent the older persons in the same Parliament.

"In accordance with Article 51(3) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community and Sections 8 and 9 of the East African Legislative Assembly Elections Act, 2012, I hereby notify you as follows: -That the election of Dennis Namara and Kakooza James Mutagubya to the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda has created vacancies in the membership of the East African Legislative Assembly That the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda is required to conduct a by-election within 90 days to elect eligible persons to serve the remaining term of the Hon Dennis Namara and the Hon Kakooza James Mutagubya, which expires in December 2027," a notice of vacancy sent by the Joseph Ntakirutimana, the Speaker of Eala addressed to Ms Anita Among, the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda dated March 17, reads.

On March 19, Ms Among wrote to the secretary general of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), Mr Richard Todwong, ring-fencing the positions to the party, arguing that the two went to the regional parliament on the NRM ticket.

"I have received a notification from the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly to the effect that two seats of the Members of the Assembly fell vacant with effect from January 15, when Hon Denis Namara and Hon Kakooza James Mutagubya were elected as Members of the National Parliament of Uganda," Ms Among wrote.

"Since the above-named members represented the NRM on the nine-member delegation who were elected to Eala, you are expected to organise primaries to identify the candidates to be elected by Parliament," she added.

The members of the Eala are indirectly elected by their respective national assemblies that serve as the electoral college of the EAC Partner States.

According to the Rules of Procedure of Eala, each of the partner states elects nine members, who are not members of their own national parliaments, to represent their country's diverse political views, gender, and special interests for a five-year term.

The rules of procedure also demand that candidates must represent a mix of political parties, shades of opinion, gender, and other special interest groups.

However, in Uganda's case, the ruling NRM party has made it its own by sending a majority and edging out the major Opposition parties with the majority numbers in Parliament.

In the current assembly, out of the nine representatives from Uganda, NRM members sent six representatives, including Rose Akol, Denis Namara, James Kakooza, Stephen George Odongo, Paul Musamali, and Mary Mugyenyi, alongside two independent members, Jacqueline Amongin and Veronica Babirye Kadogo, and DP's Gerald Siranda.

Nominations and elections

According to the roadmap released by Mr Adolf Mwesige Kasaija, the Clerk to Parliament of Uganda, the nomination of candidates for election shall be conducted on March 30 and March 31, at the Parliament of Uganda.

"A political party or organisation represented in Parliament may nominate candidates for election to the Assembly in the format prescribed in Schedule I. The nomination of candidates under sub-rule (I) shall represent as much as is feasible, gender and other special interests," the notice of nomination of candidates signed by Mr Mwesige reads.

NOMINATIONS

Contrary to the assertion by the Speaker of Parliament who had only written to the Secretary General of the ruling party to nominate candidates, the clerk of Parliament, Adolf Mwesige Kasaija said any political organisation represented in the Parliament may nominate candidates for the position if such duly qualify.

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