MAO'S DEPUTY, MBIDDE DISOWNS HIS SPEAKERSHIP BID

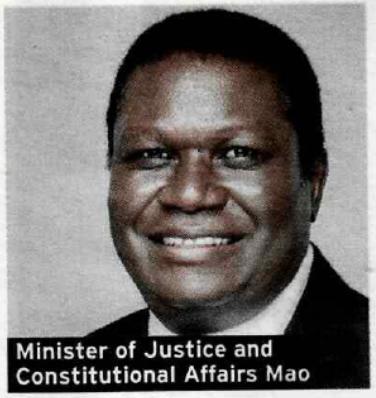
BY CHARLES ETUKURI

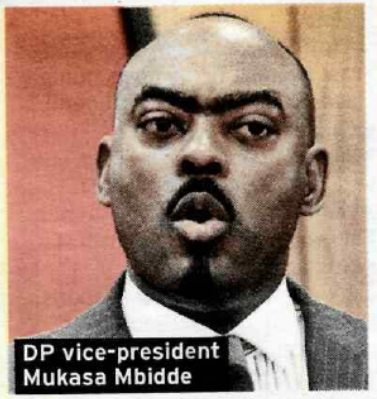
The Democratic Party (DP) did not endorse its president, Norbert Mao's who is also the justice and constitutional affairs minister and the Laroo-Pece Division MP-elect, to contest for the Speakership of Uganda's 12th Parliament and neither was it discussed within party leadership structures, party vice-president Mukasa Mbidde has said.

"We were not consulted. Not at all. That candidature was a shocker to me and I am sure to most of the party members. I do not know the intention, but by estimation, it is intended to push the party into rallying behind a candidature that has been arrived at, the reasons best known to the intending candidate. I was not consulted and neither were other members of the party. I don't know which people he consulted, but if it involved lawyers, they should have told him that he is a minister, under a corporation arrangement by an agreement, whose expiry date is the 11th Parliament," Mbidde said.

Mbidde explained that, "there is no way Mao could have had aspirations for 12th Parliament, unless and until the agreement is extended."


Speaker of the 11th Parliament Among


Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Mao


DP vice-president Mukasa Mbidde

Mbidde explained that the level of co-operation with the National Resistance Movement (NRM) had not yet developed to a state where NRM, except by their own volition, would cede any authority to the DP.

"It was not. It had not developed into an alliance or a merger, which are the provisions under the statute forming political parties. So, clearly ours was an ordinary gentleman's agreement, but they put it in writing. It does not create a necessity for anybody to require anything by force of written agreement. Clearly, for me, it does not make any good sense that we can create loggerheads with the NRM, when all grounds covered by the agreement have not been arrived at," he stated.

Mbidde said the agreement signed on July 19, 2022, had stipulated that there would be a meeting every quarter of the year to discuss the modalities of implementation.

"No meeting set, no implementation was done and you cannot have any claims under the same agreement that was actually shelved. I came up with such a plan and shelved that debate in order to allow the delegates conference seat. I am back. But bottom line, I don't really think we have grown our relationship to a level where we think, we can unseat a seating speaker, whose speakership has not created any reason for removal, whose services have not generated an exception for the NRM to divert from their usual practices of a 10-year term for every deputy and every substantive speaker," Mbidde stated.

His comments come in the wake of Mao, officially unveiling his speakership bid on Tuesday this week, saying the next five years need someone who can "balance the boat" in Uganda's Legislature.

Mao's official declaration of interest in the coveted House job brings the number of MPs in the race to five: Incumbent Anita Among (Bukedea District Woman MP), Yorke Odria Alioni (Aringa South MP), Lydia Wanyoto (Mbale City Woman MP), Persis Namuganza (housing state minister and also Bukono county MP-elect) and Mao (Democratic Party president).

CEC DECISION

On January 27, a Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting chaired by President Yoweri Museveni, who is also the National Resistance Movement (NRM) party chairperson, "unanimously resolved that in line with precedence, the names of the incumbent Speaker Anita Among and Deputy Speaker Thomas Tayebwa, shall be forwarded to the NRM caucus for their adoption as candidates of the party, on the floor of Parliament." The NRM secretary-general, Richard Todwong, said this resolution awaits the NRM parliamentary caucus approval in May, when the newly-elected MPs will be officially sworn in. Out of the 529 seats in Parliament, NRM garnered over 400.