

DP faces uphill task to retain Entebbe



Democratic Party flag bearer for Entebbe Municipality race Michael Kakembo marches through Entebbe with supporters after he was nominated last year.

PHOTOS BY PAUL ADOJE

Challenge. Although the Democratic Party enjoys support in Entebbe Municipality, its unity to consolidate votes is being threatened by Independents for the parliamentary seat.

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ENTEBBE. Even before the incumbent MP for Entebbe Municipality, Mr Muhammed Kawuma, officially declared that he would not seek re-election, almost half a dozen candidates had already made clear their intentions to vie for the seat.

The seat has attracted 13 candidates altogether. In the previous two elections, four candidates participated in the race that saw the incumbent, a Democratic Party (DP) member, win on both occasions.

His 2011 win was, however, annulled after his closest rival, Ms Patience Mubangizi, petitioned the High Court citing irregularities in the tallying of votes and failure to comply with the electoral laws.

Ms Mubangizi, who is running for the post for the second time, said the Electoral Commission was not able to collect and tally results of 18 out of the 74 polling stations in the municipality.

Mr Kawuma, however, trounced her in the subsequent by-election, garnering

13,728 votes against her 6,226 votes.

Entebbe has remained a DP stronghold for the last decade and its leadership swept 90 per cent of all the votes from the grass root positions to the parliamentary level in the 2011 election.

This time, the majority of the candidates are Independents with only three carrying the party flags.

The DP had fronted Mr Michael Kakembo 'Mbwaterkamwa' to tussle it out with NRM's Rosemary Tumusiime and the Forum for Democratic Change's Alex Gitta Mulibanga. Competition is hottest among the trio and Ms Mubangizi.

The 10 Independent candidates include those that were defeated during the party primary elections.

They are Achilles Kiwanuka and Abubaker Walusimbi Mukasa both of who decided to contest as Independents from the DP following disagreements with other party members.

Mr Mukasa was considered ineligible to run going by the party rules on grounds that he had not been active in the party activities ever since he joined Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago's pressure group, the Truth and Justice Forum (TJF).

Ms Mubangizi, Madinah Zalwango Madinah, John White Baleke, Charles Kirumira and Amon Muzooro - all belonging to the NRM party, decided to contest as

THREATS TO DP

The current divisions in DP are, however, threatening to divide the vote since two of its members have opted to run as Independents. DP now faces the task of keeping a united hold on its supporters.

The other dent in the party's ambitions to hold onto the MP seat is its fall-out with former MP Kawuma.

Mr Kawuma is suspected to be hobnobbing with the NRM and is said to be campaigning for Ms Tumusiime, its flag bearer but under cover.

This allegation gained further ground when Mr Kawuma was represented by his wife at an NRM campaign meeting held at Banga-Nakiwogo though she did not address the rally.

Daily Monitor was not able to verify this claim as efforts to reach Mr Kawuma were futile by press time.

But Mr Kakembo believes DP is a family and any individual is free to leave but the party will still remain intact.

Independents after losing in the primaries to party flag bearer, Ms Tumusiime, citing electoral malpractices during the primaries.

Others include Mr Michael Bali Hafi Kale, Arthur Senfuma and Ambrose Katuntu subscribing to presidential aspirant Amama Mbabazi's Go Forward pressure group.

The army too, is a major determinant and their role cannot be underestimated considering their relatively large population in the town.

Mr Kakembo, the DP flag bearer, who was a former youth councillor, commands overwhelming support from the youth in the municipality. He will also rely on developmental projects that have been initiated by the party such as road construction.

He is presenting his candidature to the electorate with promises to handle challenges faced by the youth, women and residents.

"I am going to Parliament to lobby for funds so as to develop the infrastructure in and around Entebbe, to boost tourism and also lobby for better medical facilities and create jobs for people," he says.

He also wants to revive the Technical Training Centre (TTC), which was at one time in the 1990s located at Kiwafu and later transferred to Lugonjo, but has been turned into a secondary school without

"I am going to lobby for funds so as to develop the infrastructure in and around Entebbe to boost tourism and also lobby for better medical facilities and create jobs for people," MICHAEL KAKEMBO, DP FLAG BEARER FOR ENTebbe MUNICIPALITY