Pressure group launched to back Namuganza for Speaker

BY ABUBAKER KIRUNDA

JINJA. A pressure group has been launched in Jinja to mobilise support for State Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development Persis Namuganza in her bid for the position of Speaker of Parliament.

The group, code-named "Uganda Now," said it will traverse the country to rally grassroots support and persuade constituents to influence their Members of Parliament (MPs) to vote for Ms Namuganza when the position falls vacant in May.

Mr Madox Lugada, the Jinja District Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) chairperson is the chairperson of the group.

Speaking at its launch on Wednesday, the group's spokesperson, Mr John Jordan Odunga, said the Speaker is elected by MPs and that public opinion can influence how legislators cast their votes.

"We are set to move across every part of Uganda to engage voters and urge them to ask their elected legislators to support Ms Namuganza," Mr Odunga said.

He added that some MPs remain responsive to their constituents and are likely to heed their views, which he believes could boost Ms Namuganza's chances.

The group coordinator, Mr Shamil Ibrahim Byakika, said the pressure group draws members from across political divides.

"This is not a political pressure group, but a platform for all people who wish Uganda a good future," Mr Byakika said, describing the initiative as broad-based.

He said members were motivated by what they termed Ms Namuganza's track record in public service, noting



Minister Persis Namuganza

that she previously served as Deputy Resident District Commissioner in Luweero before becoming State Minister for Lands.

"All offices she has served in have remained free of corruption. Her name has never appeared in any scandal," Mr Byakika claimed.

Mr Lugada said Ms Namuganza's experience and leadership qualities make her suitable for the top parliamentary seat. "She will shape the leadership of Parliament once elected, setting an example for the entire country to emulate," he said.

Mr Matiya Wakarali, another member of the group, described the minister as a people-centred leader who prioritises the interests of ordinary Ugandans.

He said he would reach out to legislators from the Busoga Sub-region to rally behind her candidature.

However, not all leaders in the region share the same view. A senior Busoga politician, who requested anonymity, dismissed the bid, describing it as an attempt to revive political divisions that emerged during the NRM Central Executive Committee elections, where Ms Namuganza backed First Deputy Prime Minister Rebecca Kadaga against incumbent Speaker Anita Annet Among.

Speakership contenders

Ms Namuganza is among at least five contenders who have declared interest in the Speakership.

Others include Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Norbert Mao, Aringa South MP Alioni Odria, Mbale City Woman MP-elect Lydia Wanyoto Mutende, and incumbent Speaker Ms Among.

The Speaker of Parliament is elected by Members of Parliament from among themselves in accordance with the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

Officials say the op-

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