

By Farooq Kasule

Aspirants in the LC1 polls will have to wait until next year to know their fate after court yesterday extended its earlier order halting the process until January 31.

The adjournment of the case until next year was caused by the Electoral Commission (EC) lawyer Eric Sabiiti, who requested court for more time to explore the option of an amicable settlement of the case.

"I am happy to inform court that the commission and other parties are almost settling the matter. Therefore, we are requesting for ample time to allow the said talks to take effect," Sabiiti said.

Before Justice Steven Musota adjourned the case, he asked

both parties to pick interest in the settlement process to avoid a lengthy trial.

"Since parties in the case are in the process of settling this matter out of court, this case is hereby adjourned to January 31 for further mention. I hope then you will come when the matter settled," Musota ruled. He also extended the interim order on the process until then.

Recently, James Tweheyo petitioned court to have the elections halted until Senior Four and Senior Six candidates complete their exams. He is represented by Caleb Mwesigwa.

Tweheyo said over 131,000 students aged between 18



Tweheyo petitioned court to have LC1 polls halted

and 23 eligible to participate in the LC1 polls either as candidates or voters would be disfranchised if the elections were held on November 21.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Sam Rwakoojo, the EC secretary, said the commission would now need more money to conduct the elections because they had spent over sh4b by the time court halted the process.

LC1 polls were last conducted in 2001.

Sabiiti told court that the moment the case is settled, the commission is ready to organise elections in accordance with the law.

The Government had set aside sh10b for the elections.

However, the EC secretary, Sam Rwakoojo, said the commission would now need more money to conduct the elections because they had spent over sh4b by the time court halted the process.

Meanwhile, the Electoral Commission has petitioned the Principal Judge Yorokamu Bamwine, requesting him to order for the consolidation of the two cases filed in regard to LC1 polls.

Recently, Allan Alibwani, a student, dragged the EC to Jinja court challenging the process during Senior Six and Senior Four national exams, citing disfranchisement. Jinja High Court halted the process

for 60 days.

"The two matters are similar in effect and we request that you implore your administrative powers to cause the Jinja file be transferred to Kampala for a consolidation," Patrick Wettaka, the commission's senior legal officer, said in a letter of December 1.

According to Wettaka, they want the cases consolidated to minimise the burden of filing a formal application for the consolidation of the cases that would take longer yet the process is urgent.

He said the commission has already embarked on the process of preparing the conduct of the said elections to cater for the categories of people who were subject of the two court orders.