

Bad paper > The MP says the *Daily Monitor* is an unpatriotic newspaper.

Why I will forever swear by Muhoozi, PLU – Kabanda

The Kasambya County legislator insists that Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba did not thrust himself into politics but was drawn in by his critics.

BY DERRICK KIYONGA

Kasambya County legislator David Kabanda has come to embody Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba's political outfit, the Patriotic League Uganda (PLU). The outfit is an offshoot of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party.

Mr Kabanda, who swears by Muhoozi, takes great pride in creating what he calls "the first political WhatsApp group in Uganda." After showing this writer the WhatsApp group off his smartphone, he says: "Then it was called Pro-Museveni youth." This WhatsApp group was created on June 3, 2013.

Keen to shake off the Muhoozi stooge construction he grapples with, Mr Kabanda tells *Weekend Monitor* that before there was Gen Muhoozi there was Patrick Nkalubo.

"Nkalubo is now the chairman LC5 for Sembabule. He is the one who picked me up from the village. He didn't hand me over to Sam Kutesa [former Foreign Affairs minister], but he got me a job in one of [Kutesa's] companies, Mbabule FM. It's from there I got to know Hon Kutesa who mentored me. And from there I met Gen Muhoozi through his ADC, Col Christopher Muwumba."

But it was Amama Mbabazi's interests in the presidency that gave Mr Kabanda's political career added impetus. "Actually, it was Hon Kutesa who told me, 'with all these pro-Mbabazi young people, you want to say that the President doesn't have young people! He told me: 'why aren't you also creating any army of young people who are [pro-Museveni].'"

Defending the armed politician

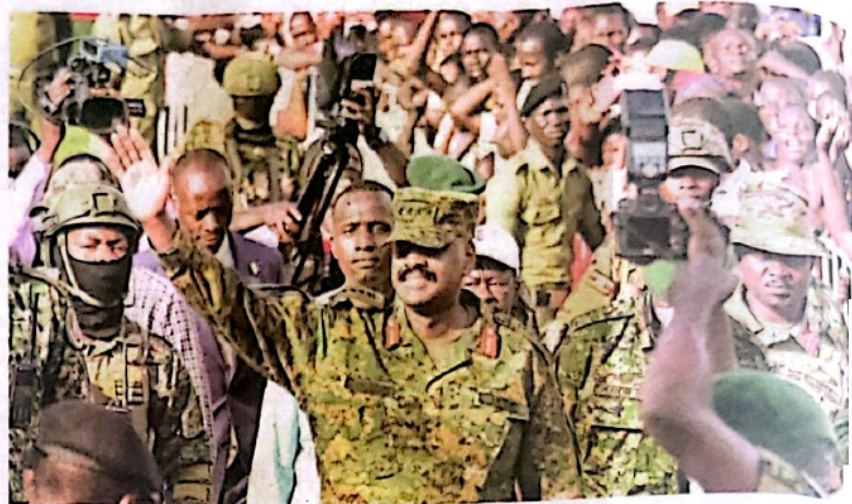
Weekend Monitor met Mr Kabanda at PLU's offices in Naguru, Kampala. The question about why Gen Muhoozi, contrary to the UPDF Act, engages in partisan politics brings out a fire in Mr Kabanda's belly.

"I want you to capture this accurately," he says. "Please capture what I'm going to say: Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba didn't invite himself into politics. Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba was invited into politics by his critics. He wasn't a politician: Initially, the President has always told you that he [Muhoozi] wanted to do business with his uncle [Salim Saleh]."

After learning the ropes of business for one year, Muhoozi chose to become a soldier. In 2000, a year after he married Mr Kutesa's daughter, the first son went to Sandhurst, a military academy in the UK. "He left his wife behind to go and train to become a soldier," Mr Kabanda offers.

"There's no first son who can do that."

"When he," Mr Kabanda says of the first son, "had just



joined the army, that's when people started saying that the President was grooming his son to become a president."

"There was no Project Muhoozi"

In 2013, David Sejusa, now a retired military officer, wrote a dossier saying President Museveni was grooming his son, Muhoozi, to succeed him. Sejusa warned that officials opposing this plan faced threats, including assassination. He described the initiative as turning Uganda into a political monarchy. Mr Kabanda says Gen Muhoozi's only crime is being a "patriot, who left his wife and went to Garamba to fight Kom."

Mr Kabanda still wants to talk about patriotism. This explains why "there is no friction between NRA, NRM and PLU." Yet Gen Kahinda Otafire, an NRA historical, has made it clear that he doesn't support Gen Muhoozi's presidential ambitions, Mr Kabanda scoffs. "You remember in [the] 2016 campaign, Otafire himself was on the podium campaigning and he said in Runyankore: *Nasasira nafakinanyi*. Sam Kutesa *nafakinanyi*. Janet Museveni *nafakinanyi*. (Why is it that Nasasira Kutesa and Janet are fighting me?) In every election Otafire has an excuse."

X is a handy megaphone

The subject shifts to Gen Muhoozi's posts on the microblogging website X (formerly Twitter). Why is the General tweeting, Mr Kabanda asks. To which this writer suggests that it could be the first son's way of communication. "Most of these government officials are just enjoying [themselves] without engaging people. They don't know [that] without the elite forces that Gen Muhoozi created, this government wouldn't be in power. This office where I'm, without the elite forces of Muhoozi Kainerugaba, it wouldn't be there. This peace most of us are enjoying, wouldn't be there," Mr Kabanda says.

"But when he [Gen Muhoozi] is being attacked, none of the people who are enjoying these big offices come out to talk. Ugandans should be asking: 'why does Gen Muhoozi respond to the European Union; to the American Embassy; to the Germany Embassy; to Bobi Wine?' It's because the people who are supposed to talk are not talking. You think it's only Gen Muhoozi who has information that these people are saboteurs of our country. They also know but they keep quiet. They just wait for their salary. If he had kept quiet when PGB was recruiting unprofessional people, we wouldn't be having this great army," he adds.

On the Baryomunsi feud

Is a potshot being fired at Dr Chris Baryomunsi, the

Information minister? Mr Kabanda is dismissive of the suggestion. "I don't want to pay much attention to Baryomunsi. We must separate the two: substance and form. Do Ugandans know that Gen Muhoozi holds two positions or does Chris Baryomunsi know that Gen Muhoozi holds two positions. He is the Chief of Defence Forces, but before that he was appointed by the President as his senior advisor on special operations. Supposing he is communicating in that capacity, as an advisor to his father, who is Baryomunsi to question Gen Muhoozi?" Mr Kabanda protests.

"What if he is executing special operations in line with the appointment given to him by the appointing authority who at the same time appoints Baryomunsi? I can say this: Some of these people aren't government out of conviction; they are government out of convenience. For me when I campaign in my constituency, I tell my people if you don't vote for President Museveni, don't vote [for] me. Can Baryomunsi, who is a government minister, say that? Gen Muhoozi is in the army not out of convenience but out of conviction. So, for Baryomunsi to say that I add no value it's okay, but contribute to his being a minister because in my constituency the President didn't lose at any polling station yet we didn't even rig," he adds.

Eying a role in the cabinet?

About the ministerial position Gen Muhoozi says the Kasambya County legislator has merited, Mr Kabanda chooses to be philosophical. "The President said 'it's not about what I want.' It's about what you are going to solve when you become a minister. That takes me back to your question: When I say I want to become a minister: why? Before wanting to become a minister, what have I done for my people in the constituency? They should base that to say 'okay, he has lobbied for his people so when he becomes president or minister, he can add value.' Even if the President doesn't support me as minister, I can't stop supporting the National Resistance Movement and the President's values."

We cannot end the interview without finding out what Mr Kabanda thinks Gen Muhoozi intended when he posted on X account about *Daily Monitor* in the manner he did. "We, as PLU, don't see *Daily Monitor* as a threat. We take *Daily Monitor* as unpatriotic because when you live in a country, you do your business, nobody is touching you, you do whatever you want. Yet you promote the enemies of that country. Us [PLU] we think you are not being patriotic," he says.

Pressed about the exact identity of the so-called enemies that are hobnobbing with the *Daily Monitor*, Mr Kabanda concludes, "Daily Monitor knows. They know them."

Gen M. Kainerugaba waves to the public at a thank ceremony for Des Obote Toror KAVU

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Politics. Please capture what I'm going to say: Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba didn't invite himself into politics. Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba was invited into politics by his critics.

—David Kabanda, Kasambya County legislator

