

What began as a political contest has evolved into a rivalry that many say is costing Busoga development.

BY ABUBAKER KIRUNDA

When Anita Annet Among was elected Speaker of Parliament in 2021, many people in Busoga Sub-region viewed her rise as a major opportunity for the area to strengthen its influence at the national level.

Ms Among is married to Budioppe West MP and Federation of Uganda Football Associations (Fufa) president Hashim Magogo, making her closely linked to Busoga by marriage. Many residents believed that her position, combined with that of First Deputy Prime Minister and Kamuli District Woman MP Rebecca Kadaga, would give the region unprecedented political leverage.

At the time, expectations were high that the two influential leaders would work together to push development, attract investment and secure key national projects for Busoga.

However, relations between the two politicians soon took a different turn.

The rivalry between Ms Kadaga and Ms Among became more pronounced during the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Central Executive Committee (CEC) elections when the two contested for the position of National Female Vice Chairperson. Ms Among defeated Ms Kadaga in the race.

Since then, the political landscape in the sub-region has increasingly split into camps aligned either with Ms Kadaga or Ms Among.

Residents and political observers say the prolonged rivalry has had far-reaching consequences for Busoga.

Mr Ibrahim Ndoga, the chairperson of Ibulanku Sub-county in Bugweri District, said the rivalry has already cost Busoga several influential political figures.

Mr Ndoga said some legislators who were perceived to be aligned with Ms Among lost political support within the region.

He cited Bugweri County MP Abdu Katuntu, Bugiri Municipality MP Asuman Basalirwa and Bugabula South MP Morris Kibalya among those affected by the divisions.

"Busoga lost some of its best parlia-

mentarians due to the rivalry between these two leaders. Some MPs were seen to belong to Ms Among's camp, and voters were mobilised against them," Mr Ndoga said.

He added that the continued lack of cooperation between the two leaders could deny the region major development opportunities.

Mr Ndoga pointed to Uganda's preparations to host the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) tournament next year, arguing that Busoga could have benefited from sports infrastructure if the region's leaders were united.

"With Ms Among as Speaker and her husband leading Fufa, Busoga would have had a strong chance of securing a stadium or related facilities, especially considering the many national foot-

ball players who come from this region," he said.

Mr Ndoga appealed to both leaders to put aside their differences and work together for the good of Busoga.

Mr Ndoga pointed out that Ms Kadaga had previously reconciled with State Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development Persis Namuganza after years of political disagreement.

Reconciliation calls

"If reconciliation was possible before, it can happen again for the benefit of Busoga," he said.

Mr Andrew Waiswa, a former political assistant to Ms Kadaga, also called for dialogue between the two leaders.

Mr Waiswa said unity between Ms Kadaga and Ms Among would make

it easier for the region to attract development projects and government programmes.

"I worked in Ms Kadaga's office when she was still Speaker and I saw that many initiatives succeed when the Speaker takes interest in them. Cooperation between these two leaders would help Busoga benefit more," Mr Waiswa said.

He noted that even legislators perceived to be close to Ms Among could struggle to secure projects in their constituencies if tensions with Ms Kadaga persist.

Mr Waiswa recalled how Ms Kadaga previously used her influence as Speaker to ensure Jinja was included when government was designating new cities.

"She openly told MPs that no city

Busoga counts cost of Kadaga-Among rivalry



Left to right: First Deputy Prime Minister Rebecca Kadaga, President Museveni and Parliament Speaker Anita Among at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds in Kampala on August 27, 2025. PHOTO/FILE

BUSOGA'S POLITICAL WEIGHT

- 11 districts make up Busoga
- More than 4 million people live in the region
- More than 20 Members of Parliament represent the area
- Two top national leaders linked to Busoga: Speaker Anita Among (by marriage) and First Deputy Prime Minister Rebecca Kadaga

would be approved unless Jinja was included on the list. That shows how powerful the office can be when a leader champions regional interests," he said.

Mr Medi Nturyo, the NRM general secretary for Jinja City, said the divisions between the two leaders have also split district party leaders.

"NRM chairpersons in Busoga are not working together because of the Kadaga-Among politics," Mr Nturyo said.

According to him, NRM chairpersons in Bugiri, Iganga and Kaliro districts are widely perceived to support Ms Among, while those in Luuka, Kamuli and Namutumba are associated with Ms Kadaga.

Political analysts say the prolonged rivalry has also limited opportunities for young professionals and job seekers in the region.

Mr Frujensio Othiano, a political analyst at Jinja-based Baba FM, said Busoga residents could have benefited more from the influence of the two leaders if they had coordinated their efforts.

"Both leaders hold powerful positions nationally. If they worked together, they could recommend many qualified people from Busoga for government jobs," Mr Othiano said.

He added that the lack of cooperation has affected the implementation of projects in the region. "In many cases, it becomes difficult for one leader to advance a project because it may appear as though the credit goes to the other. That power struggle has slowed progress," he said.