WHAT NEXT AS SPEAKERSHIP

The Patriotic League of Uganda's (PLU) emergence in the battle for the Speaker of the 12th Parliament reflects something deeper happening within Uganda's political evolution, write **Umaru Kashaka** and **Mary Karugaba**.



Among, who steered the 11th Parliament, now faces an uncertain political future amid growing pressure from the PLU and the emergence of defence minister Jacob Oboth-Oboth

The Patriotic League of Uganda (PLU) is increasingly positioning itself not merely as a civic mobilisation platform, but as a reform-oriented pressure centre inside the broader ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party ecosystem, analysts have said.

This is after the PLU chairperson, who is also the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, endorsed defence and veterans affairs minister Jacob Oboth-Oboth for the Speaker of the 12th Parliament, in what analysts said was a reflective moment on the energy behind the NRM as a mass movement.

Gen. Muhoozi, who is also the senior presidential adviser on special operations, said in a post on X on Friday that Oboth, 55, has been the best minister in the outgoing Cabinet.

"I want to be the first to endorse him for Speaker of Parliament (2026-2031). God bless Hon. Oboth-Oboth!" Muhoozi posted.

This came a day after President Yoweri Museveni held a meeting with outgoing Speaker of Parliament Anita Among at State House, Entebbe.

The meeting was also attended by the outgoing First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs, Rebecca Kadaga, some members of the NRM's Central Executive Committee (CEC) and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda. During the meeting, sources said, Museveni also reconciled Kadaga and Among, setting a new chapter of peaceful coexistence between the two senior NRM female politicians.

The Museveni-Among meeting also came against the backdrop of PLU's rescinding of support for Among and Tayebwa as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively.

In another X post, Gen. Muhoozi described the outgoing Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Thomas Tayebwa, as "a very good man".

"He [Tayebwa] is my younger brother. He has no problems. He is protected!" he said.

In an earlier post, the CDF said they had already made their decision on the new Speaker, the third most powerful person in the land, adding that men were born to lead.

"That is the natural order of things," he said, warning that those who do not accept their decisions risk arrest.

He called for unanimous approval of Museveni's decisions in Parliament, directing NRM secretary-general Richard Todwong and his PLU counterpart David Kabanda (Kasambya County MP) to work on the issue.

The speakership race has so far attracted five MPs, including outgoing Speaker Among and outgoing justice minister Norbert Mao, the president of the Democratic Party.

Other MPs are: Persis Namuganza (Bukono County), Lydia Wanyoto (Mbale City Woman MP), Florence Asiimwe Akiiki (Masindi Woman) and Alioni Yorke Odria (Aringa South).

All these were elected on the NRM ticket save for Namuganza, the outgoing housing state minister, who stood on an independent ticket after crying foul in the primaries.

However, up until Friday when Gen. Muhoozi brought Oboth-Oboth into the picture, the main contest over this seat was between Among and Mao, who is the Laroo-Pece Division MP, after having made a significant impact on the campaign.

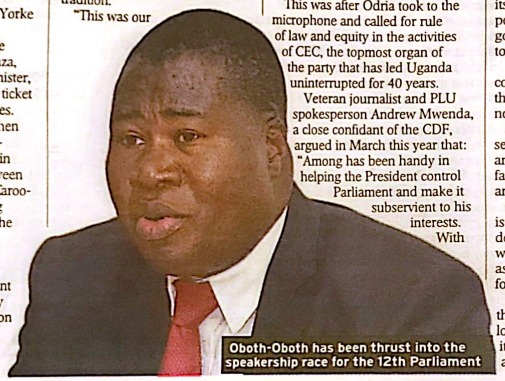
MUSEVENI'S PROMISE

While officially opening a recent seven-day NRM parliamentary retreat in Kyankwanzi district on April 8, President Museveni, who is also the party chairperson, promised that the issue of the speakership race would be discussed at "the right time".

He informed the retreat that CEC "just recommended" on February 20, that Among and Tayebwa retain their seats in the new Parliament, as has been the tradition.

"This was our recommendation. It is not us who decide; we recommend and then we can reason why. So, when the time comes, we shall be able to discuss it and explain why, but we are not the ones who elect. We recommend and we support our recommendation with reasons," he said.

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Oboth-Oboth has been thrust into the speakership race for the 12th Parliament

This was after Odria took to the microphone and called for rule of law and equity in the activities of CEC, the topmost organ of the party that has led Uganda uninterrupted for 40 years.

Veteran journalist and PLU spokesperson Andrew Mwenda, a close confidant of the CDF, argued in March this year that: "Among has been handy in helping the President control Parliament and make it subservient to his interests. With 20% of the money Museveni used to spend on Parliament, she achieves twice his objectives. As the President has grown reliant on her, so has her political clout."

He, however, hastened to add that this makes Among a risky choice as Speaker.

"The question: Can Among be relied upon, during a delicate transition where Museveni is absent, to captain the ship of state to dock where the President would have desired it to?" Mwenda asked.

He had earlier contended in an X-space conversation hosted by Robert Kabushenga, a farmer, that Among has an interest in state power and that she had become a threat to those looking towards a future transition.

Other analysts have also weighed in. Crispin Kaheru, a political analyst and member of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, told *The Weekend Vision* that constitutionally, the Speaker is elected by MPs, but politically, parliamentary leadership in Uganda has always reflected wider currents within the state and governing political party structures.

"What PLU appears to be saying is that Uganda has entered a phase where stability alone is no longer enough – citizens now want efficiency, discipline, accountability and visible restraint in public expenditure. That message resonates strongly with younger Ugandans, especially at a time of economic pressure and rising public scrutiny of institutions," Kaheru said.

He, therefore, said the PLU factor is not simply about personalities, but about whether Parliament itself must now adapt to a new political mood that demands leaner governance and greater sensitivity to ordinary citizens.

"I think PLU is trying to shift the conversation from 'who occupies the chair' to 'what the chair must now represent'," he said.

For his part, Angelo Izama, a senior risk and mitigation analyst and consultant, said PLU is fashioning itself as the youth wing and the future of the party.

He said if Oboth-Oboth, who is also a bona fide member of the defence establishment, prevails, it will signal a major victory for PLU as a pressure group and personally for Gen. Muhoozi.

"As for Among, her path lies with the one taken by Kadaga – as a loyal member of the party serving its interests, probably in Cabinet and as a mobiliser."

RACE TAKES NEW TWIST

Kaheru said Among would not be politically finished if she lost to Oboth, but would be clearly under pressure from a changing political mood.

"She retains networks and political survival skills, but her future now depends less on past victories and more on how she adapts to the emerging reform ecosystem. Her biggest challenge right now is how to navigate a changing political atmosphere," he said.

On Mao's chances, Kaheru said the DP strongman remains intellectually influential and his strength will continue to be less in numerical victories and more in bridge-building processes and shaping the language of reform.

Other analysts said in the event both Among and Mao lost out in this race, the former could be elevated to the position of vice-president and the latter retained as a cabinet minister.

OBOTH-OBOTH'S TAKE

When *The Weekend Vision* spoke to Oboth-Oboth shortly after swearing-in on Friday, he downplayed the speakership tag, noting that: "I am not aware of that. I am not on social media. Who chose me? Are you the one who chose me?"

Oboth-Oboth also heaped praise on the 11th Parliament that was steered by Among.

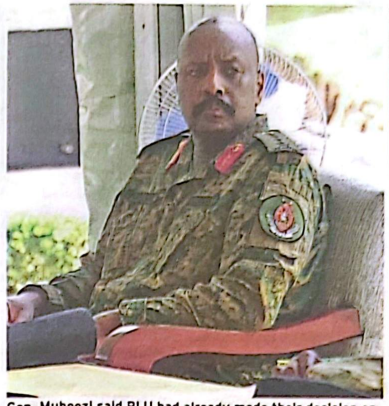
"The 11th Parliament did exceedingly well. And I want to thank the leadership for doing very well and giving priority to government business. I also thank the people of my constituency for the trust they have put in me and the people of the ministry of defence for being on my side all through," he said.

In 2021, Oboth-Oboth expressed interest in the speakership before he was persuaded otherwise by the NRM's CEC.

At the time, Oboth said: "I believe I am the most qualified for the job. There are precedents in this Parliament. You do not just come from nowhere. I have been chairperson of various committees of Parliament."

ROAD TO NRM CAUCUS

Insiders said the NRM parliamentary caucus will be convened next week on Tuesday to debate the proposed names for Speaker and Deputy Speaker.



Gen. Muhoozi said PLU had already made their decision on the new speaker. He made the remarks via his X account

WHAT MPS SAY

EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO, JONAM COUNTY
They had initially endorsed Among and Tayebwa, but I am told that they are now changing that position. It is definitely going to cause some contradictions going forward, because they set a precedent and I thought we would continue with that.

CONSTANTINE OKWI, PALLISA COUNTY
The removal of Among as Speaker must be handled carefully. We are in a democracy. So, if she loses the position through a democratic process, people will understand. But if there is a perception of some arm-twisting, there will be a problem.

GILBERT OLANYA, KILAK SOUTH
The precedent set by the NRM that a Speaker serves two terms is, I think, the worst decision so far. I pray that NRM abandons that, because you may find someone who is not good and you will suffer with that person for 10 years. That is nonsense. So, NRM must break that precedent.

ISMAIL OGAMA, LOWER MADI COUNTY
Anybody who has made it to this Parliament qualifies to be the Speaker. I am a member of the NRM caucus, and the resolution which will be taken in caucus is what will bind me.



Tayebwa: Outgoing Deputy Speaker of Parliament

When asked to explain the roadmap, the NRM party spokesperson, Emmanuel Dombo, said the party secretariat was waiting for official communication from Museveni, who is also the party national chairperson.

"We are going to wait for the guidance of the national chairman because he is the vision bearer of the NRM party in Uganda. But as for us the secretariat, we are going to be on standby to work for the party. So, we shall be guided by the party," he said.

The spokesperson of the NRM parliamentary caucus, Brando Kintu, was equally guarded, noting that: "Let us wait for the official communication from the national chairman, who will call the caucus meeting."

WHO IS OBOTH-OBOTH?

Efforts to get a comment from Oboth-Oboth, who was born 55 years ago in Tororo district, were futile by press time. A lawyer by profession and a family man, Oboth-Oboth attended Nuwafu Primary School, Gaba Senior Secondary School for O'level and Tororo High School for A'level.

In 2001, he graduated with a bachelor of laws from Makerere University. Oboth-Oboth also holds a postgraduate diploma in legal practice from the Law Development Centre, obtained in 2002, and a master of laws from the University of Minnesota Law School in the US, obtained in 2007.

He has been a lawmaker since 2011. In the 10th Parliament, he served as the chairperson of the legal and parliamentary affairs committee, where he oversaw the process of the Bill that lifted the age limit of 75 years for persons seeking to run for the presidency.

His committee presented a report recommending that the entire House pass the Bill, which was eventually passed and signed into law by the President. Oboth-Oboth represented West Budama South in the 10th Parliament before shifting to the newly created West Budama Central constituency.

Before joining Parliament, he served as acting principal state attorney and head at the Mbale regional office under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs from 2003 to 2010, and as a legal assistant at Mugisha & Co. Advocates from 2002 to 2003.

According to his parliamentary records, he has special interests in the provision of legal services to non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, social justice advocacy, and cyberspace law.

Additional reporting by Dedan Kimathi

CamScanner