

Opposition candidates dominate race



DP flag bearer for Kampala Woman MP seat Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi dances at a rally where musician Ronald Mayinja (holding poster) performed recently. Ms Kiyingi is one of incumbent Nabilah Nagayi Sempala's strongest opponents. PHOTO BY JOSEPH KIGULU

Inseating the lioness.
 The incumbent abilahi Nagayi Sempala could fight her way to the top in the 2016 election. She is a very strong opponent in the month's run.

BY MERCY NALUGO
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KAMPALA. She is popularly known as Mama Kampala and she is bidding to represent the women of the city in Parliament again. This very close race is now at its crowning moment with Ms Nabilah Nagayi Sempala, the Forum for Democratic Change candidate's hold onto this seat being threatened by strong contenders also from the Opposition.

Ms Nakiwala Kiyingi, a former Buganda Kingdom youth and tourism minister (the Democratic Party flag bearer), Ms Shifra Lukwago, former city speaker contesting as an Independent and Kawempe woman councillor, Ms Aidah Nakuya, fronted by The Truth and Justice Forum pressure group.

Ms Asia Nabisiere, the NRM candidate, seems to have been relegated to the fringes in this contest.

Random interviews around the city reveal that the closest competition is between the incumbent and Ms Kiyingi. However, both Ms Lukwago and Ms Nakuya are a force to reckon with having both served in Kampala Capital City Authority, which gives them the inside track on how the town works.

Ms Sempala enjoys the visibility, which comes with incumbency. She also

has name recognition and a clear record as a defender of Ugandans' human rights and civil liberties.

She has faced the wrath of police several times. In probably the worst such encounter in 2008, as she was planning to address her supporters in Owino Market, police attempted to undress her as she was being arrested.

During the Walk-to-Work protests of 2011, she was manhandled and her trousers torn as she was trying to leave her home.

Now she is asking voters to allow her another chance to complete her programmes.

"I will vote her because she has empowered us economically. She has taught us how to bake cakes and how to utilise the small spaces we have through growing vegetables and mushrooms. The money realised from the projects [helps] pay school fees for our children," said Ms Jamilah Nakalema, a resident of Kamwanyi Zone in Makindye.

Ms Nabila, a social scientist, joined Parliament in 2006 and has so far served two terms.

She garnered 222,744 votes against former East African Legislative Assembly speaker, Ms Margaret Zziwa's 164,378 votes in the 2011 elections to retain her seat.



NRM candidate Asia Nabisiere.

Ms Kiyingi, the DP candidate, beat two others during the DP primaries, including Ms Stella Nakiryowa and Ms Lukwago. She is running her campaign with the help of popular musicians Mesach Ssemakula and Ronald Mayinja.

At most of her rallies, she emphasises the need to change the lives of the people of Kampala through the creation of women platforms and empowering them economically.

"I heard the outcry of the people of Kampala and indeed they had no meaningful woman leader to meet their challenges. Several people were confronting me that I should not join 'dirty' politics but I rejected their opinion because I believe if someone is good enough to be ap-

preciated then it's better to help others through leadership," she says.

"I believe that people who have set the pace should be the very people to lead; leadership is being an example in all aspects."

The hopeful, who has grand plans of setting up women league right from the parishes, points out that "it's useless to advocate affirmative action / laws at the Parliament level, which benefit the rich and you forget the several poor women in markets and on city streets; the school drop outs, who are helplessly being oppressed by employers and city authorities."

Ms Sempala will be a hard act to follow given her Youth in Action programmes, which have been key interventions in providing life skills to the communities around town.

"Well I can't undermine her (the incumbent's) achievements in the city but she has always been a critic of President Museveni's long stay in power. People will only believe in what she says after she has retired since she has been there for 10 years," says Ms Lukwago.

Ms Lukwago was vocal as speaker of Kampala Capital City Authority.

A lawyer by profession, Ms Lukwago has been offering free legal services to the underprivileged and the business



for Kampala Woman seat

WHAT KAMPALA ELECTORATE SAY...



Incumbent MP Nabilah Nagayi Sempala (C) addresses a rally recently. PHOTO BY JOSEPH KIGULU

THE KAMPALA WOMAN MP CONTENDERS



Nabilah Nagayi. She holds a Master's degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in languages. She was shadow minister for lands and physical planning. She is current information and national guidance minister in the shadow cabinet. She has served on Parliament's committees of tourism, trade and human rights.



Aidah Nakuya. She went to Aunt Rachel Primary School Mataka, Bishops Senior School Mukono for her O-Level studies. Namulyango Senior Secondary School for A-Level. Holds a degree in Business Administration (majoring in banking and finance) Was female youth councillor at KCCA.



Shifra Lukwago. Went to Kawempe Muslim and Moogo High School for her primary and secondary level education. Did a law degree at Makerere University. Served as speaker of Kampala Capital City Authority. Is woman councillor for Kawempe North.



Nakiwala Kiyingi. She is wife of Bukomansimbi MP, Mr Deogratius Kiyingi. Worked in Buganda Kingdom for the last 15 years, serving as minister of works, tourism and youth at different times. She is a businesswoman.

community. She is also campaigning on a pro-Buganda platform, pointing at her active participation in the fundraising exercise (ettofali) to realise money for kingdom causes.

What is likely to impact Ms Sempala's chances are the claims being made by her opponents that she is a gay rights sympathiser - a fact which counts as a negative in conservative Uganda.

She has also been an ardent supporter of FDC president, Maj Gen Mugisha Muntu, who she backed against the very popular Dr Kizza Besigye for party presidential flag bearer.

Ms Sempala seems to have since realised the importance of Dr Besigye's support in Kampala, allying with him on her posters.

Also, at the height of the clashes between Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago and city executive director Jennifer Musisi, Ms Sempala is said to have supported Ms Musisi yet Mr Lukwago enjoys overwhelming support in Kampala.

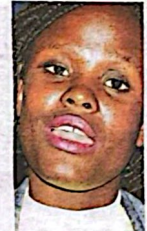
The secondary contest between Ms Lukwago and Ms Nakuya has the subscript of Lord Mayor's shadow. They have both decided to cling onto him for support, making a point to attend all his rallies.

They have put the Lord Mayor in a bit of tricky position since both candidates can be counted as true loyalists, having stood by him through his troubles at City Hall. So, who to endorse has become a problem.

As the rivalry between them has grown, so has the tension between their supporters, resulting in several clashes.

Ms Nakuya says she understands the challenges faced by the people of Kampala since she has been serving as youth councillor in KCCA.

"The current MP has been in Parliament for quite some time but the issues of Kampala have not been ably articulated. We need a representative, who understands the problems of Kampala and is willing to bring them to the attention of Parliament. That is none other than me," she says.



Miriam Nkyene, Business Woman
 The Kampala woman MP should work hand in hand with the Health Ministry so that pregnant women that are due for delivery are well catered for in all hospitals around Kampala.



REBECCA BUKEMBA, BUSINESSWOMAN
 I want the Kampala Woman MP to advocate for the expansion of roads within the city because these narrow roads full of potholes cause a lot of traffic jam in Kampala. She should also advocate for women empowerment in order to increase their daily income.



MARK USAKIRIZA, STUDIO MANAGER
 I expect them to address the problem of unemployment among the youth in the slums around Kampala because wrongdoers come from these areas



NUHUMUNILE, FARMER
 According to me, since President Museveni is winning this presidential race, I want an NRM candidate to go through this time round such that service delivery is improved.



MIREMBE CHARITY, SOCIAL WORKER
 The Kampala Woman MP should sensitise women about their rights and make sure rights are respected in the courts of law.

PHOTOS BY ALEX ESAGALA