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...viting nominations of candidates interested in serving as Speaker of the 12th

Parliament doing an on-site verification of the exact number of eligible vot-

ent and before a candidate's designated agent.

Chair.”

BY DAVID WALUGEMBE

KAMPALA. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) has endorsed National Unity Platform (NUP) candidate Paul Mwiru in today's race for Speaker of Parliament, positioning the Opposition around a common candidate against the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM)'s Jacob Oboth-Oboth.

Mr Mwiru, the Jinja South East MP, will contest against Mr Oboth-Oboth and Democratic Party (DP) president general Norbert Mao in the Speaker election, while the deputy speaker race is expected to pit NRM's Thomas Tayebwa against People's Front for Freedom (PFF) legislator Asinasi Nyakato.

Speaking to *Daily Monitor* yesterday, FDC vice president for northern Uganda Hassan Kaps Fungaroo said the party resolved to support Mr Mwiru because his agenda aligns with FDC's position on constitutionalism, accountability and parliamentary independence.

“FDC will support Mwiru for Speaker because the Opposition has a common constitutional duty to hold govern-

ment accountable. If Parliament is led by someone from the Opposition, it becomes harder for the Executive to manipulate the institution,” Mr Fungaroo said.

He said the endorsement also stems from resolutions adopted during the party retreat held earlier this month, where members agreed to strengthen cooperation with like-minded opposition groups.

Mr Fungaroo warned that Parliament risks losing its independence due to growing Executive influence over legislative processes.

“There is danger when external forces begin influencing parliamentary leadership. Parliament is steadily losing its independence and risks becoming an extension of the Executive if legislators fail to defend the institution,” he said.

Despite Opposition efforts to unite, the NRM enters the race with overwhelming numerical strength in the



Mr Paul Mwiru

House. The ruling party controls at least 372 MPs, alongside 68 independents widely viewed as leaning towards the government. In comparison, NUP has 48 legislators, UPC 12, FDC nine, DP six,

PFF two and ANT one.

Mr Mwiru, who previously served in Parliament under FDC before joining NUP, has anchored his campaign on restoring Parliament's credibility and strengthening oversight.

While unveiling his manifesto at NUP headquarters on Friday, Mr Mwiru accused the outgoing Parliament of presiding over wasteful spending, declining accountability and erosion of public trust.

TOUGH ROAD AHEAD

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“The image of Parliament has been damaged by leaders who prioritised personal enrichment and diversion of public resources. We must restore integrity and accountability in the institution,” he said.

In the deputy speaker race, PFF's Asinasi Nyakato remains the only Opposition candidate after several NRM aspirants stepped down in favour of incumbent deputy speaker Thomas Tayebwa.

Addressing journalists yesterday, Ms Nyakato, the Hoima City Woman MP, pledged to defend Parliament's constitutional independence.

“Many times, we have seen external forces interfering in the work of Parliament. Bills are passed based on party caucus positions even when the public and stakeholders object,” she said.

She cited the National Coffee (Amendment) Bill and the Protection of Sovereignty Bill among laws passed despite criticism from stakeholders.