

Queries as Tayebwa gets CDF's nod for second term

For days, public discourse has been awash with speculation over the Deputy Speaker of the 12th Parliament following PLU's endorsement of Oboth Oboth for Speaker.

BY SYLVIA NAMAGEMBE

Political observers and analysts have raised issues with the endorsement of outgoing Deputy Speaker of Parliament Thomas Tayebwa for a second term of office.

The calls follow a social media announcement by Chief of Defence Forces, Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, that President Museveni had guided that Mr Tayebwa retains the seat.

"On the issue of Deputy Speaker, after getting guidance from the Commander-in-Chief, all PLU (Patriotic League of Uganda) MPs and PLU-leaning MPs will support Rt Honourable Thomas Tayebwa for that position. Congratulations RT. Honourable...", Gen Muhoozi posted yesterday.

Gen Muhoozi is also the chairperson of PLU, a political pressure group.

Responding to the endorsement on X platform, Mr Tayebwa said: "Thank you very much my senior brother and Chairman for your kind endorsement. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Mzee H.E the President for the trust and confidence in me. Looking forward to working closely and harmoniously with my senior brother Hon Oboth Oboth."

This follows investigations linked to allegations surrounding abuse of office and accountability concerns within Parliament being faced by outgoing Speaker Anita Annet Among.

Mr Yusuf Sserunkuma, a political analyst and academic, argues that the endorsement of Tayebwa is proof that corruption is being selectively weaponised rather than consistently punished.

"She is being forced out of office solely because of the nature of her politics. She made herself too important and became embarrassing because she was openly corrupt. Corruption only becomes politically consequential when an individual is no longer useful to the prevailing power structure," Mr Sserunkuma said in reference to Ms Among.

He argued that while allegations have heavily surrounded Parliament, political survival within the ruling system is less determined by accountability and more by continued usefulness to the centres of power.

"Let's not expect anything better because the endorsement of Mr Tayebwa signals institutional reform within Parliament, with Uganda's political system no longer functioning as a genuine parliamentary democracy," he added.

Mr Peter Walubiri, a senior constitutional lawyer and legal



Chief of Defence Forces, Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba

consultant, said the endorsement of Mr Tayebwa by the CDF raises fundamental constitutional questions about the growing role of the military in civilian political affairs.

"The army commander should not be endorsing candidates for public office. This is an ongoing transfer of political authority as Mr Museveni seems to have abdicated and unconstitutionally handed over power to that young man. Whatever is happening is totally out of the rulebook and the Constitution," he said.

Military takeover?

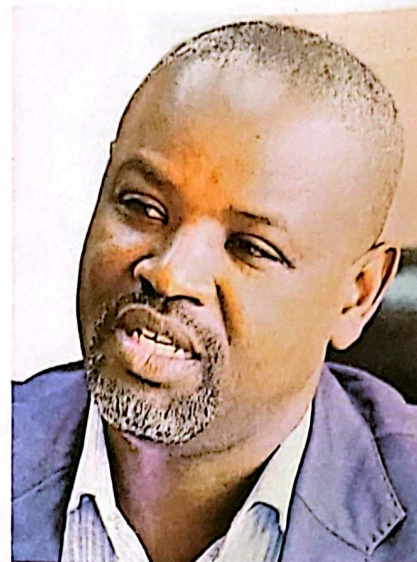
Mr Walubiri argued that many Ugandans were underestimating the significance of the current political developments, warning that the country was witnessing what he called an "effective military takeover."

He pointed to recent public discussions suggesting that Gen Muhoozi could directly influence sectors beyond security, including infrastructure and procurement decisions.

Mr Walubiri further dismissed attempts to separate Mr Tayebwa from the irregularities' allegations and controversial expenditures that surrounded the 11th Parliament leadership.

"If this man is fighting corruption, however illegally, Tayebwa and Anita Among were bedfellows in Parliament. They increased their allowances together, benefited from the same system and amassed wealth together. They are two sides of the same coin," he argued.

Ms Agather Atuhaire, an activist, described the endorsement as "more of a coronation" than a normal political endorsement, arguing that it raises serious concerns about institutional independence, military influence and accountability in Uganda's governance system. She questioned the legal and constitutional basis upon which PLU and its chairman are influencing



parliamentary leadership choices.

"In what capacity is the CDF Gen Muhoozi endorsing? In what capacity is PLU choosing who becomes Speaker or Deputy Speaker? What legal basis do they have? What is worrying is that we are normalising the undermining of institutions, preparing the ground for military rule to take over completely. We are also softening the ground for family rule and succession politics," Ms Atuhaire said.

While acknowledging criticism previously directed at Ms Among, she argued that replacing one controversial figure with another insider from the same leadership structure does not amount to genuine reform.

"Tayebwa has been part and parcel of the leadership of this Parliament. Even if one cannot directly prove he participated in all the decisions, he was certainly a beneficiary. That includes furniture allocations, foreign travel, per diem increments and procurement of generators for officials' private residences," she argued.

Ms Sarah Bireete, the Executive Director of Center for Constitutional Governance, also criticised what she called selective accountability, arguing that anti-corruption campaigns often target a few individuals while shielding others within the same system.

"We saw this selective prosecution during the Karamoja iron sheets scandal where only one minister was seriously pursued out of many. The same is happening with Parliament corruption scandals," she said.

Ms Bireete said accountability should extend beyond individual political figures to include multiple institutions involved in approving and overseeing parliamentary expenditures.

Several legislators had openly declared interest, banking on the possibility that the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) would leave the race open for internal competition.

Some party insiders had argued that

Outgoing Deputy Speaker Thomas Tayebwa.

Mandate.

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- Agather Atuhaire, activist

the party traditionally leaned towards gender balancing in top parliamentary leadership positions.

Ms Lydia Wanyoto, who is eyeing the same position, said on May 18: "My biology, I am a woman, ready to run the caucus and I am flexible, but I will wait for the formalities. I request the President to think about me as a gender equality strategy and merit oriented because I am capable."

However, the public endorsement of Tayebwa appears to have settled the matter before the contest could formally take shape. In an earlier post on May 15, Gen Muhoozi noted that leadership naturally belongs to men.

"We have already made our decision on the new Speaker (a man). Men were born to lead. That's the natural order of

Dumped.

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- Mr Yusuf Sserunkuma, a political analyst and academic

things," he said.

Jonam County MP Marshall Alenyi said he has positioned himself as a vocal legislator to push issues of accountability and fight corruption. He also expressed frustration over what he described as the region's limited presence in government appointments.

"I'm ready to work with Mr Oboth Oboth and bring the West Nile voice into the next Parliament. I believe West Nile deserves to have a role in the next government because my region, which is a very big part of this country, does not seem to have a role," he said.

The decision by PLU to endorse Mr Tayebwa for the Deputy Speaker position of the 12th parliament, however, not gone well among sections of the public, who argue that while he was the "more sober voice" between him and Ms Among, he cannot be said to have been devoid of any blame in what has been going on at Parliament.

Efforts to obtain a comment from PLU administration on why the group endorsed Mr Tayebwa while distancing itself from Ms Among's leadership yet they were heading the House works together, were unsuccessful by press time.

Mr Tayebwa has frequently represented members of the First Family, including President Museveni and Gen Muhoozi, and Vice President Jessica Alupo at official functions, fundraising events and national ceremonies, reinforcing perceptions that he belongs to the inner circle of the State's evolving political architecture.

Gen Muhoozi has also repeatedly used his social media platforms to praise Mr Tayebwa, describing him as "smart," "disciplined," and part of a younger generation capable of steering Uganda into the future.

"Hon Tayebwa is a very good man. He is my younger brother. He has no problems. He is protected!" Gen Muhoozi posted on May 15.

Other MPs who have declared their interest for the Deputy Speaker include Jonam County MP Marshall Alenyi, Mbale City Woman MP Lydia Wanyoto, Sheema District Woman Adina Katusiime Mwebesa, and Agago County MP Edward Maknot Otto.