

Opposition will share two EALA seats – Nankabirwa

By Moses Mulondo

The Government Chief Whip and NRM caucus chairperson, Ruth Nankabirwa, has said despite calls from the Opposition that the ruling party takes five East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) slots, they will take six.

Speaking during the quarterly interface with Uganda Parliamentary Press Association yesterday, Nankabirwa said: “According to our plan, NRM will have six slots, the Opposition parties will have two slots while the independents will have one slot.”

The East African treaty states that the nine members elected to represent each country should reflect various shades of political opinions within each country’s parliament.

It is on that basis that Opposition parties are demanding to take at least three slots, the independents one and NRM five slots.

Asked why the NRM should not take five slots so that each of

the three Opposition parties in Parliament gets a slot, Nankabirwa said: “We are the majority in Parliament and we have to take the majority of seats in EALA. The NRM candidates are balanced. We have women, people with disabilities and the youth. We even balanced regions.”

Nankabirwa said the treaty gives them leeway since it does not give percentages or any formula regarding the way the seats should be shared by the parties in Parliament.

“The treaty, therefore, gives us room to pick one independent and two Opposition members. If, for instance, we vote one member of UPC and one member of DP, the Opposition will be represented.”

Yesterday, there was a list circulating in the corridors of Parliament indicating that the NRM MPs had been instructed to vote the six NRM candidates plus DP’s Mukasa Mbidde, UPC’s Chris Opoka and Suzan Nakawuki as the independent member.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ The deputy Opposition Chief Whip, Roland Kaginda, vowed that if the NRM takes six slots, they would challenge it in the courts of law because they will have denied one of the three Opposition parties representation in EALA.

Asked to comment on a list circulating on social media that the NRM has connived to vote the UPC and DP candidates and isolate FDC which is the biggest opposition party, Nankabirwa said she could not comment on rumours.

She, however, advised Opposition candidates contesting for EALA that they have no option, but to seek support from the NRM because they have the majority.

“Already, some Opposition members have been attending NRM functions. That is the way to go because if you do not show that solidarity, they may not vote for

you,” she elaborated.

The deputy Opposition Chief Whip, Roland Kaginda, who is also member of FDC representing Rukungiri Municipality, however, yesterday vowed that if the NRM takes six slots, they would challenge it in the courts of law because they will have denied one of the three Opposition parties representation in EALA.

“We have heard NRM is planning to isolate FDC and vote for the DP and UPC candidates. FDC is the second biggest party in the country which cannot be denied representation in EALA. We shall sue them if they do it,” Kaginda warned.

Kaginda argued that while passing the rules for governing EALA elections, it was agreed in Parliament that NRM would take five slots.

The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, announced last week that elections for EALA MPs would take place next week on Tuesday.