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Political campaigns for the Soroti city mayoral position have gathered momentum, with five candidates declaring interest in taking over leadership from incumbent mayor Joshua Edogu, who is not seeking re-election.

The contest has attracted five candidates, including Francis Esudu of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), Paul Omer of Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and three independents, Simon Peter Ebitu, Emmanuel Opio, plus Edmond Elasu, setting the stage for a competitive race.

The five aspirants are seeking to lead Soroti city, which attained city status in 2021 and has since been led by only Edogu as mayor through its formative years.

As campaigns intensify, residents have become increasingly vocal about the issues their next mayor

IMPROVED URBAN SERVICES DOMINATE AGENDA IN SOROTI CITY MAYORAL RACE



Esudu



Elasu



Omer

should address.

ASPIRANTS' PROMISES

NRM's Esudu says Soroti City needs leadership that unites all communities, promotes transparency and directly engages residents in decision-making.

"Many challenges facing the city result from decisions made without sufficient public involvement. I will involve citizens in planning

processes, starting from budget discussions to identifying development projects," Esudu said.

His manifesto further emphasises improved household incomes and efforts to create a clean city.

Independent aspirant Ebitu, said residents are frustrated by poor service delivery. He highlighted city demographics, noting

that 51% of the population is aged 18-60 years, while 44% are aged 0-17 years.

"The youth remain highly unemployed, leading to widespread idleness. I hope to work with the private sector to create sustainable jobs," Ebitu said.

Another independent contestant, Opio, places administrative efficiency at the core of his campaign.

RESIDENTS' PLEA

Emmanuel Ogaram, a resident in Soroti city wants improved revenue collection. "We need a leader who understands modern revenue systems and can seal leakages," he said.

Another city resident Stephen Elwangu wants city demarcations clarified. He noted that some areas remain poorly integrated into administrative structures.

"The next mayor should prioritise zoning and improved urban planning," he said.

"I will reorganise city departments, introduce clear performance targets and ensure leaders are accountable in well-co-ordinated departments,"

Opio promised. He noted that the city must digitise records, widen the tax base and close revenue leakages, given its growing population.

The youthful independent candidate, Elasu, said Soroti city needs "young blood" to embrace innovation and modern approaches to governance. He promised to promote inclusive planning processes that allow young people to influence city priorities. His campaign has gained traction among the youth, emphasising that the city's future lies in fresh ideas, digital innovation and youth-driven development.

FDC's Paul Omer is currently serving as mayor of Soroti city East Division, banking on his experience, transparency and a people-centred approach to manage Soroti city.

"I am a bold and open leader. My record of community engagements coupled with co-ordination at the division level is evidence of my readiness to lead the entire city," Omer said.