

By Michael Odeng

The Inspector General of Government (IGG) has halted the appointments of some National Drug Authority (NDA) board members, pending investigations.

In a letter dated March 2, 2026, Deputy IGG Anne Twinomugisha Muhairwe directed the drug authority to halt the appointment of Dr Medard Bitekyerezo and Dr Muhammad Mbabali to the ninth NDA board, pending the conclusion of investigations. The letter was addressed to

the NDA secretary, Dr David Nahamya.

"This is to direct you to halt any further action regarding the appointment of Bitekyerezo and Mbabali to the ninth NDA board, pending conclusion of the investigations or further orders from this office," the Deputy IGG directed.

The investigations follow a whistleblower's complaint

alleging that several NDA board members were appointed irregularly.

According to the Deputy IGG, the Inspectorate of Government drew the matter to the attention of health minister Dr Jane Ruth Aceng in a letter dated February 26, 2026, through which a directive was issued halting any further action to formalise the appointments.

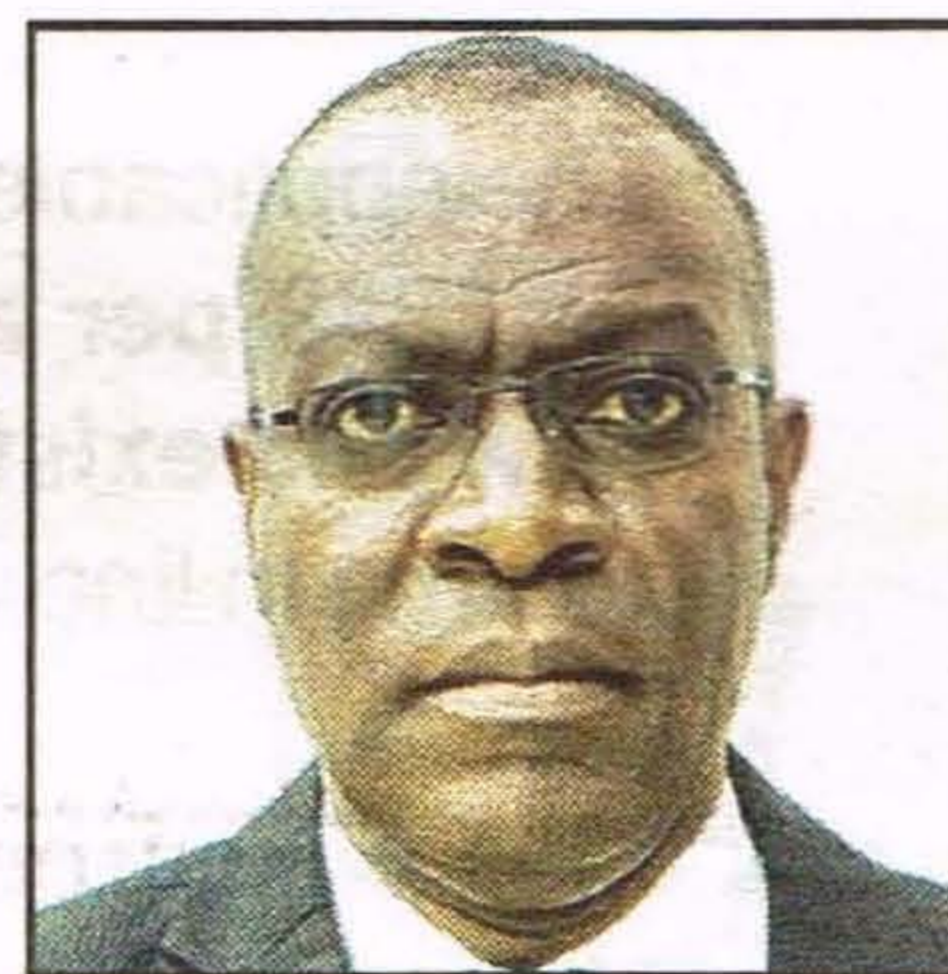
She said their actions will amount to disobedience of lawful orders of the Inspectorate of Government, contrary to section 34 (C) of the Inspectorate of Government Act Cap 32, which is an offence. The offence attracts a maximum sentence of three years imprisonment upon conviction.

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY CALLED OFF

Muhairwe said they had received information indicating that NDA board members were planning to proceed with a swearing-in ceremony yesterday contrary to the IGG report.

The Chief Magistrate of the Uganda Wildlife Court, Gladys Kamasanyu, had been expected to preside over the ceremony at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Kololo, Kampala. But the ceremony did not take place as scheduled.

However, a source said Bitekyerezo, during the meeting, directed the NDA management to write to the IGG explaining



NDA chairperson Dr Medard Bitekyerezo



Deputy IGG Anne Twinomugisha Muhairwe

PETITION

Dr Medard Bitekyerezo and Dr Muhammad Mbabali were appointed on November 7, last year as chairperson and board member representing the Uganda Dental Association, respectively. The whistleblower claims the appointments were made in anticipation of the expiry of their current contracts on February 20, 2026.

The petition further states that Bitekyerezo and Mbabali have served on the NDA board since 2017, completing nine years of service, and are now set to serve an additional three-year term ending in 2029.

Established under the NDA Act, the authority board comprises 20 members.

that they could not be bound by her directives because the matter was already before court.

HIGH COURT CASE

On February 25, 2026, Mark Owayezu dragged NDA, the health ministry and Bitekyerezo to the High Court, challenging the reappointment of the latter [Bitekyerezo] as the NDA board chairperson.

Owayezu is also challenging the reappointment of Catherine Adok and Dr Hanifah Sengendo Naamala as members of the ninth NDA board by the health ministry. He wants the court to declare that their reappointment is null and void.

Justice Collins Acellam of the Civil Division of the High Court in Kampala is set to hear the matter on April 27. However,

court records indicate that the respondents have not filed their defences.

"If no appearance is made on your behalf by yourself or someone authorised by law for you, the case will be heard in your absence," the court registrar, Simon Kintu Zirintusa, warned.

Owayezu contends that the reappointment of the trio [Bitekyerezo, Adok and Naamala] for the fourth term in office demonstrates lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the health ministry.

Owayezu also alleges that the appointment of the NDA's ninth board by the health ministry was in total violation of the statutory and well-known appointment procedures under the law and practice that require strict compliance with the established procedures, including but not limited to solicitation for nomination from designated institutions. Others are security vetting by competent authorities, certification of financial implication and a formal cabinet no-objection prior to all such statutory appointments, among others.

PRAYERS

The applicant has asked the court to quash the decision of the health ministry appointing Bitekyerezo as the board chairperson and the entire ninth NDA board. He also wants the court to issue an order restraining Bitekyerezo and the entire board from assuming office as members of the ninth NDA board.