



**Strong man Museven has done it again.**

**Does Uganda have Law makers?**

Posted by Musa

With pressure mounting in and out of Uganda, some of dictator Museven's closest cronies have been privately urging him to heed to international demand and step down. Most of those who are secretly asking him to step down are the same people who have extremely benefited in his regime, through corruption and are afraid of losing their loot should the government be forced out. These are people who are now in their 50s and up, they all started with him back In 1986

Amazingly enough the ages of those individuals pressuring the dictator to step down fall within the same 50 year new retirement age put forward by strongman M7. The trick is to retire all those "cowards" as he M7 has portrayed them and bring in a new generation between 30 and 40 year olds who will adore him, you must remember that this age was between 5 and 15 years old in 1986 when the dictator first took power. This means that the new appointees will have no history previous rulers to compare to, in order to predict their future should they or the dictator himself misbehave therefore they will be 100% loyal to Museven and will carry out his wills at will. *The last thing Museven wants to hear is asking him to step down.* Since the parliament is powerless to challenge such bogus orders, the command will become law immediately effectively.

A new presidential directive, the second in less than a month, slashing the retirement age further to 50 years has panicked the civil service, The Observer has learned. The latest directive has sent shock waves across the entire civil service that was yet to come to terms with the earlier proclamation, delivered by the Presidential Press Secretary, Tamale Mirundi that lowered the retirement age down to 55 years from 60.

Our highly placed source at the Ministry of Public Service said the latest directive was communicated about a week ago and 30,000 people will lose jobs. "When the President wanted to lower the retirement age to 55, he was told that only 15,000 jobs would fall vacant. I understand he now wants 30,000 jobs," a distressed civil servant told

The Observer last week.

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The same source said government is looking for Shs 400 billion to pay the terminal benefits of the retiring employees in the next financial year. But Keith Muhakanizi, the deputy Secretary to the Treasury said he did not know about the Shs 400 billion and referred us to the Ministry of Public Service. The new directive will affect all civil servants, with the exception of Permanent Secretaries. This exemption has, however, infuriated mid-level civil servants. “Permanent Secretaries were supposed to serve for only two five-year contracts, but these days contracts are renewed all the time. About 60% of them are above 60 years of age and are still serving. This means that nobody is promoted,” he said. The move has jolted those about to clock 50 years. In the Uganda Prisons Service, about 700 officers and lower rank workers would be affected, an insider told us on Saturday. The officer said they were aware of the new directive.

A senior civil servant told The Observer that the spillover social effect of the abrupt retirement of 30,000 people will affect about 200,000 dependants. “If you lay off 30,000 people because you want votes from the youth, what about those youth who will drop out of school because their parents have no jobs? Are 50-year-old people not voters?” he asked.

“The feeling among government workers is pathetic. Work is going to suffer and corruption could increase as people try to find something to retire with,” he added. But Tamale Mirundi said though he was not aware of the new directive, he did not see anything wrong with the President slashing the retirement age to 50.

With runaway unemployment figures, the President has come under pressure to find jobs for a growing army of jobless youth in the run-up to next year’s elections. A World Bank report, Africa Development Indicators 2008/09, says unemployment among Uganda’s youth is one of the highest in Africa, with 83 in every 100 people between 15 and 24 years unable to find work.

According to the same report, Uganda’s population also has the highest dependency ratio (people younger than 15 and older than 64) in Africa — registered at 1:1. During celebrations to mark the International Youth Day last year, the youth petitioned the

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President to cut the retirement age, saying it would create jobs for them.

Early this month, Museveni's press secretary, Tamale Mirundi told journalists that the President had ordered the Ministry of Public Service to lower the retirement age for civil servants to 55 years. He said that would create about 15,000 jobs. But the President wants the age reduced further. A senior official in the Ministry of Public Service who spoke to The Observer on condition of anonymity said:

"It's true the President gave a written directive to the Minister of Public Service to revise the retirement age to 50 years. "The minister then copied this letter to all senior staff asking them to guide and recommend ways how to implement this directive. As senior colleagues, we agreed to meet in two weeks' time to come up with ways of implementing this directive," she said.

### **Implications**

The proposed changes are akin to the restructuring exercise of the public service undertaken by government between 1992 and 1997 at the behest of the World Bank and the IMF. An estimated 320,000 people lost their jobs in an exercise aimed at creating a lean, manageable and efficient public service.

In an academic paper appraising these reforms, Dr Yasin Olum, a senior lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Makerere University, argued that reforms in the public sector should not be driven by political or other consideration but by the desire to make public service more result-oriented and goal driven.

"The problem of what to measure in order to constitute the criteria that is agreeable in the Public Service delivery remains a complex problem. It appears that every profession, including politicians, views the delivery of public services from different perspectives and generally from their historical and contemporary backgrounds.

However, to scientifically evaluate the performance of public services, there is a dire need to identify key performance areas from a holistic point of view," Olum wrote in a

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19-page paper titled: Public Service Reform in Uganda (1989-2002): A Critical Appraisal. Olum, now an Associate Professor, told us in an interview last week that the new changes are ill advised and shall not address the problem of unemployment.

“Whoever is pushing for this is not seeing how it will hurt the people it is supposed to affect. You do not create more jobs by pushing out other people,” Olum said. He said at 50 years, life is just starting and many people at that age would not have marshaled enough savings to live in comfortable retirement.

The implications of losing a job for many civil servants are not only economic but even psychological. Rose Kirabira, a professional counselor told The Observer that abrupt job loss, especially by people above 50 years usually leads to social problems and, in extreme cases, mental breakdown. “When people lose jobs when they are not prepared for it, some become withdrawn from their families and friends. In such cases, we do what we call crisis management to help them overcome the shock,” Kirabira said.

### **POLITICS AT PLAY?**

With the NRM/Museveni vote share dwindling from 79% in 1996 to 58% in 2006, the ruling party strategists have identified the youth as a group to court.

The NRM realizes that many young voters are not persuaded by the old campaign song of “peace and stability” having been born during the NRM regime itself. Their most pressing problem appears to be unemployment, which has driven many into the opposition ranks and at worst into activities like theft and drug abuse.

Source: [Panic as Govt orders workers to retire at 50](#)