

Ugandans to the rescue



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Gen. Kayihura is making violent change inevitable

Posted by Musa

I've been following the walk to work protests in our beloved country. Somehow despite the brutality of your police force, in my own little twisted way, I was pleased with the way you ordered the police and military to respond. Because it was all captured on Camera, and I think even watching the footage yourself makes you cringe with embarrassment.

General Kayihura, I would be embarrassed to lead an incompetent force that does not itself respect the rule of law. I would be embarrassed General, to lead a force that cannot maintain law and order without violating basic human rights. I would be embarrassed to lead a force that is so brutal that its men openly beat up bystanders even without evidence that they were part of the "offending" group.



I would be so embarrassed to be called the police chief of such a brutal police force

General Kayihura, if you really had a conscience, you wouldn't want to be associated with a force that is blatantly partial, a so called "national police force" that belongs to and serves one party – the NRM. As a professional police officer, I wouldn't want to lead a force that treats Ugandans with dissenting views with such contempt, because in your eyes, they are "enemies of the state".

You say you and your force are trained by the British government. General Kayihura, can you imagine a member of London's Metropolitan police, beating up and manhandling an honorable member of parliament? Can you imagine a police officer sitting on the Mayor of London on the back of a police vehicle? Can you imagine them beating up civilians like your men do? Can you imagine them tossing tear gas canisters (moreover expired ones) into people's homes or shops in order to smoke out suspected protesters?

Imagine if the Met police commander issued orders to his men to spray tear gas into school classrooms and hospitals? What would become of him? Would he, like you do, address journalists and say the

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unarmed civilians deserved that brutal treatment? He'd have to resign and he would face the law himself, possibly a long jail term. But General Kayihura, you do not have a conscience and do not care about your reputation. In your detached little bubble, you believe you are above the law. So your men too believe they are above the law, when they arbitral lily brutalize civilians, because they are acting on your orders.

How different are the videos we are seeing from the "Amin days?" As a child, I remember dreading to travel around Uganda because of the roadblocks we encountered in those days, roadblocks manned by angry looking men who felt they had your life in their hands. How different are your men, from those men General Kayihura? What we've seen on YouTube only happens in lawless places. If someone had told me those were Sierra Leonean or Congolese rebels brutalizing civilians in the 1990's, that would be more believable. But not in a country with a stable government that "commands nearly 70% of support". Sadly, it is happening in our country General Kayihura, and you are the man overseeing this brutality.

Do you remember what happened in Egypt? Mubarak's police force was viewed with contempt by the people, because for many years they violated their rights. But time came when the people could no longer be shaken by the police. For two weeks, not even the military with its mighty "mambas" and "fighter jets" could scare those people in Tahrir square. General Kayihura, the time will come when your mighty "tear gas and batons" will no longer shake Ugandans. People's eyes and breathing systems will have been conditioned to deal with it. And what will you do General Kayihura? I guess you will order your men to shoot to kill them. But by that time, Ugandans will have seen a lot of death that killing a few thousand, may not shake them. And what will you do General Kayihura?

Do you remember John F. Kennedy's famous saying that "...those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable?" You are making violence inevitable! What is wrong with a peaceful demonstration? What is wrong with your men just showing up and watching the demos to ensure that nothing goes wrong? Why must they turn peaceful protests violent? Why is it that the MP's who managed to evade the police were able to reach Christ the king church and parliament without any incident? General Kayihura, you say you are trying to prevent chaos. But in actual sense, you are the man who turns peaceful protests into riots. Because you cannot help seeing that there are many Ugandans who are not happy with the status quo. You and your men are now trying to brutalize those Ugandans who see all that is wrong with the current system into submission. But thank God for technology General Kayihura, you can no longer hide your brutality.

What is more worrying is that you are a lawyer and you should know that you're presiding over an ill trained and incompetent force. I wonder if you're not deliberately using their ignorance to brutalize their own, so that you can deny issuing any illegal orders. Is that why you rushed to Kasangati a few days ago on a so-called "fact finding mission?" What facts did you want to establish General Kayihura? You knew the facts as the locals told you off, because the orders had come from above (From you and Mzee).

Well you tried to publicly reprimand the District police commander. This is not only unprofessional, but it also shows that you are trying to pass the blame onto your commanders. Doesn't the buck stop with you General? So if you agreed with the locals that your men contravened the law, what are you going to do next? Will any be held responsible and prosecuted? And what will you do to ensure it does not happen again? You must remember a police colleague called Hussein Ali? He was the Kenyan police commissioner during the violent post election period in 2008. He is currently facing charges at the ICC for issuing orders to his men to violently crack down on opposition supporters. Hussein Ali did not take part in the violence himself but he was the man who was overseeing the police force at the time.

Most of the people who died in Kenya died at the hands of security forces. And someone HAD to take responsibility for the actions of the police force. The buck stopped with Hussein Ali, and Hussein Ali is

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now one of Luis Moreno Ocampo's suspects at The Hague.

General Kayihura, the buck stops with you! Best Wishes.