

Ugandans to the rescue



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Uganda opposition leaders call on people to reject regime.

Posted by Musa

The political trend in Uganda seems to be nearing a precipice as Uganda's oldest political party; The Democratic Party joins others in condemning the irregularities of the recently concluded election, where the 25 year regime of president Museveni was returned to power in a highly flawed election. Dr. Olara Otunnu, of the Uganda Peoples Congress and Kizza Besigye of the FDC have condemned the process in equal terms and rejected the government as a coup on Democracy. Mao said he will not attend the inauguration of the Museveni regime because "when one still your cow and asks to attend a barbecue you just don't attend."

What Did the opposition really think was gona be the outcome? Now that, option has been exhausted plan B should be explored and supported without any hindernes.

Blow we reproduce a statement by DP Norbert Mao.

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up like a raising in the sun? Or fester like a sore-- And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over-- like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?

Fellow citizens,

On the road to the 2011 elections the tell tale signs of a flawed process were clear. President Museveni decided to re-appoint the same discredited Electoral Commission which messed up the 2006 elections. With the help of the most partisan House Speaker in the history of the Ugandan legislature and a largely complicit and compromised Parliament the Electoral Commission was reappointed. Even the walk-out by the opposition Parliamentarians did nothing to change the Speaker's mind about the need for a measure of consensus on such an important matter.

The newly re-appointed Electoral Commission thus started their work lacking the necessary legitimacy and independence to organize a free and fair election. When the voter registration process began, the incompetence of the Electoral Commission became manifest.

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Millions of dollars were spent in securing equipment from a German firm to help with the registration process. Poorly trained personnel were deployed to man the registration process. The registration process was very slow. Consequently, many citizens were caught up by the voter registration deadline.

Meanwhile in Parliament, President Museveni was given a blank cheque to spend State resources for his campaigns. The instrument of a supplementary budget was abused to give State House and President Museveni a total of 160 billion shillings yet our main hospitals get less than half of that amount.

We know for a fact that the recruitment of election officials like Presiding Officers and Supervisors favoured NRM operatives. In Gulu I personally saw people I had seen Presiding at Polling stations openly wearing NRM T-Shirts and jubilating at a party organised at the NRM offices. We had proposed that all election officials should wear name tags with a picture ID.

We went into the election not because we trusted the Electoral Commission but because we trusted the people. We went forward in the faith that it is possible to win even an unfair election.

On Election Day the anomalies were too many to be accidental. The Electoral Commission deleted voters' names from the register and in other cases transferred voters to other Polling stations without notifying them and without their consent. Consequently, on Election Day millions of voters were disenfranchised and denied the right to vote through willful incompetence and a malicious intention to frustrate them.

In addition there was widespread vote buying by NRM operatives. In many cases, these vote buyers were being escorted by armed soldiers. Needless to say, this is unlawful and an abuse of the role of the national army. The cases of bribery and vote buying by the NRM were so rampant that it undermined the free will of voters.

In Kiruhuura, results from four polling stations were cancelled because the number of votes cast exceeded the number of registered voters. In Omiyanyima Sub county of Kitgum it was first declared that 11,000 people had voted for President Museveni only to have the announcement annulled because the Sub County has not more than 7000 registered voters!

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The register appears to have been inflated to create a rigging margin to accommodate ghost voters. This matter was raised by DemGroup who argued that given how young Uganda's population is, it is statistically impossible to have almost 14 million voters out of a population of about 33 million. We suspect that the so called NRM Yellow Book may have had its contents offloaded onto the National voter register. The national register remained a work in progress till Election day. The lack of a clear and verifiable register has totally discredited the 2011 elections.

There were cases of multiple voting. Some of those who voted multiple times claimed to have their names in the register did not have photographs on the register. There was no adequate civic education. This led to the high number of spoilt and invalid votes. We also got reports of falsification of the Declaration of Results form. Furthermore we were informed that some District Registrars were bribed to falsify final results.

We can cite countless incidents of Electoral malpractices but we hope these examples drive the point home. The outcome of an electoral process which is marred by massive rigging, bribery, intimidation and a disenfranchisement of voters cannot be legitimate. We cannot and will not accept as legitimate the outcome of such a manifestly flawed process. What President Museveni and the NRM have done can only be categorized as a coup against the people of Uganda. Through fraud, intimidation and bribery the Ugandan people have been denied the right to exercise a free choice. Our sources indicate that over 150 billion was spent to buy voters.

The NRM and President Museveni know that they have achieved a hollow victory. Otherwise why should some one who has garnered almost 70 percent of votes have to deploy thousands of armed troops around the country and impose a virtual curfew? We condemn in the strongest terms the unacceptable levels of vote rigging, bribery and intimidation. The results declared do not reflect the will of the people. This election has eroded the people's confidence in the Electoral process. Worst still, barring far-reaching reforms, it will be difficult to persuade Ugandans that free and fair elections are possible in Uganda.

The Election pitted hope against fear. We represented and still represent hope for a better future. President Museveni and the NRM represented fear in it's worst form.

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We did not campaign against a political party but the state machinery itself. The NRM and the state are now fused. They have become one and the same. The State and the party are now inseparable. Worse still because of being in power for so long, the NRM now has so many appendages masquerading as State institutions. The individuals in these institutions have surrendered to the will of the party and can no longer think and act independently.

A party which rode to power on the crest of fundamental change now shamelessly preaches no change. In deference to the regimes it displaced, and in imitation born perhaps of a secret admiration, the NRM now revels in the most despicable excesses. Corruption, illegal detentions, election rigging, political persecution, undermining the rule of law and personalization of state institutions have become the hallmarks of the NRM.

These are the reasons why change is imperative in Uganda

. But change will not come on a silver platter. Let's not have any illusions. Change will come out of sweat or blood or both. Therefore those resisting change must be resisted until they succumb to the power of the people.

The question now is 'where do we go from here?' First, we should not despair. Let's keep hope alive. This does not mean acquiescence in the misdeeds and crimes of the regime. As long as we believe in the cause of genuine democracy we must remain in the trenches. In this kind of struggle, every blow counts.

We may look like we are defeated but we are not. By our bold action we forced the NRM regime to show its true colors. We have exposed the hypocrisy which has been passing for democracy. Even in our so called defeat we are like Christ on the cross. To the high and mighty in the Roman Empire the cross was the end of the road for Jesus and his mission. But in God's plan this was the zenith of victory.

To our international partners we say to you that for years you have invested more in individual despots. In the words of President Obama, Africa does not need strong men but strong institutions. We urge you to realize that your relationship should be more with the people rather than the regime in power. We urge you to invest more in democratic systems and institutions which will in turn bring forth democratic leaders. We further urge you to realize that it is hypocritical to pick and choose which violations to condemn

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and seek redress for. Human rights are like the Ten Commandments. You do not have to break all the commandments to earn God's wrath. It is fine to hear world leaders condemn the discrimination of homosexuals but we are disturbed when we do not hear condemnation of extra-judicial killings, illegal detentions and sham elections.

We will confront the menace of an illegitimate government with our bare hands. We declare a campaign of defiance to say NO! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

President Museveni has been ruthless in preserving himself at the helm. Nothing good can come out of President Museveni in the next five years. We do not see any hope in President Museveni in the next five years. Museveni cannot leave power voluntarily. He will only move when he comes under intense diplomatic pressure or physical pressure from the people.

Many Ugandans of all walks of life and of all political persuasions believe in real democracy. The Museveni regime has become an obstacle to democracy. Using sheer force and primitively acquired wealth the Museveni regime's stranglehold on power is absolute. In the circumstances, elections have become a meaningless ritual.

But we are not helpless. To govern, the Museveni regime needs the compliance of the people. We owe it to future generations to withhold our compliance from the illegitimate Museveni regime. In this crisis there is no middle ground. We urge all Ugandans to cast aside the existential fear that has paralyzed them for decades and embrace the cause of ridding our country of Museveni's one-man rule.

We have been pushed too far. Our backs are against the wall. We cannot sentence our country to another five years of oppression, poverty, nepotism, corruption and poor service delivery.

We have to struggle to redeem our country. This is no longer about the ambitions of individual leaders. It is no longer about political parties. The destiny of our beloved country is at stake and we must rise beyond our political confines and reach out to one another. This will not be an overnight struggle. It will take days or weeks or months or even years but let us begin. The starting point is for us to take a clear and unequivocal stand for genuine democracy by denying the Museveni any semblance of legitimacy. The Defiance Campaign will have to be like any other struggle.

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All our previous attempts have only emboldened Museveni to increase his grip on power. We must now say ENOUGH! In the words of Frederick Douglass: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning."

I thank you.

For Truth and Justice

NORBERT MAO

DP PRESIDENT and

DP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE 2011 GENERAL ELECTION

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