

# Ugandans to the rescue

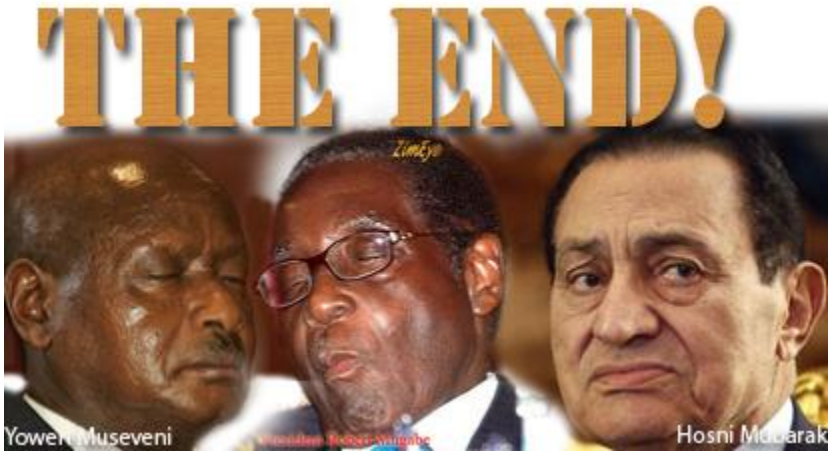


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## Ugandans too can and will do as the Egyptians did

Posted by Musa

The people of Uganda will be going to the polls come Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 2011, and the result has a high potential of yielding far reaching consequences. It is like a time-bomb awaiting to explode if not delicately and carefully disassembled. What has been a mighty progressing country a few



decades back, is at the verge of descending into chaos. The winds of resistance to life-presidency sweeping across Africa are not very far away, and Uganda could follow suit. Many Africans are now beginning to learn that they can actually enforce change if they choose to, despite what it might

Cost



A few years ago we saw Ugandans employ a remarkably successful uprising simply to save a forest reservoir from the hands of cruel investors, which is good evidence that they really can act if they want to. There comes a time when the ordinary man gets too disillusioned and decides to risk all he had previous worked to protect, even if it meant losing it all in a holy cause. Therefore the unpredictability of the political situation in Uganda sets the country at a delicate cross-roads.

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Despite Museveni's promise to quit power peacefully if he was defeated in the elections, there is no reason one should believe him. In fact, such confidence coming from the shrewd Museveni that we know calls for suspicion.

It is highly probable that he has intentions of 'not being defeated' at all costs and is doing something about it. Museveni has been known to manipulate the politics and laws of the land by all means possible to safeguard his presidency and to perpetuate his stay in power.

He has demonstrated before that he could do anything even if this means indulging in outrageous deeds like besieging courts of law to re-arrest men freed by the court (as long as he considers them his enemies enough), or shamelessly amending the constitution to remove term limits so he can stay on presidency infinitely!

During the same week of 11th-18th February down south, Zimbabwe's government of national unity under aging ruler, Robert Mugabe is also reported to be expiring, ushering in another set of elections in yet another former British colony just like Uganda; The African story is similar across the continent, from Cape to Cairo, a time bomb set to explode. in different ways.

Evaluating Museveni from his previous values as a young and proactive president would be self-delusive or rather shortsighted. When Museveni came to power, he promised a fundamental change, but gave Ugandan's a raw deal.

He was at the time very critical of African presidents who stick to power, only to turn around a few years after to subscribe to the club! Besides, it's not the first time he is promising to quit peacefully; he initially had promised to leave office after his second term!

Therefore at this juncture when his dream to become the first East African president holds good promises for him, there is more reason that Museveni has no intentions of quitting, whether peacefully or otherwise. The involvement of Kenyan politicians in his campaigns of course does not help the situation!

If anyone wants to believe that Uganda is far away from the junction that leads to chaos after elections, a phenomenon that has recently characterized

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other Africa countries (including her neighbor Kenya), such a person is self-deluding or simply myopic!

The descending curve of Museveni's performance in previous presidential elections is testimony to the fact that more and more Ugandans are getting tired of his cling to power, and whether he was previous a good man or not, they badly want some change! From a landslide win with 75.5% in 1996, to a good sail through with 69% in 2001 and a narrow win with 59% in 2006, it is apparent that Museveni's popularity has definitely suffered major blows over the years. It is apparently clear that people are at the blink of forcing him out!

The perpetuation of presidents "using and abusing" Ugandans is rooted in the fact that Ugandans as a people have never collectively held their future in their own hands.

Thus Ugandans have been blackmailed by presidents who either keep them terrified by threatening violence or keep them on an appeasement life-support-system.

Ugandans never actually fought for independence (by way of armed struggle) it was handed to them; they never fought to dispose off Obote one (Idi Amin did so) and neither did they fight to liberate themselves from Idi Amin! The NRA/M's so-called liberation struggle was a guerrilla warfare engineered by a strategic individual and his henchmen to reach their own gains. And eventually they have fully rewarded their efforts, only they have done so immeasurably too much!

This is the reason why the NRM protagonists have always excused their corrupt actions by threatening people with a simplicity and selfish phrase, "where were you when we were fighting". Actually, NRM *historicals* have by and large been treated as indispensable! Museveni's liberation struggle that led to his taking power in 1986 was his own ambitious scheme to fulfill his personal dreams; it was not and has never been a revolutionary 'movement' of the people.

The people have no stake in the movement and Museveni thus managed to do whatever he wants including abusing the constitution, because in the real sense it was his personal-constitution (the only man with a vision), and not the people's. However, as more Ugandans realize that they must own their nation, we might witness a revolutionary venture propagated and facilitated by the people in our generation. Uganda has approached the cross roads where the outcome of the February 2011 elections could direct the country

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in at least three directions; firstly, February 18<sup>th</sup> could drive the country towards an era of darkness and outright dictatorial tyranny in venture by Museveni to hold on to power, whether avoiding defeat or refusing to concede; secondly, we could witness an honorable Museveni retiring peacefully and thus setting the country on the rail toward consolidating democracy; or thirdly, we could even see the country degenerate into a predicament of chaos, ensnared in a web of power struggle (resulting from political disgruntlement and outright disillusionment) until consequently, by way of `mob-justice`, the people take matters out of the politicians' hands, into their own!

At this political roundabout, Ugandans might liberate their country, or see it go down the drain, and of course take them down with it! Museveni's part to play is to ensure that the elections are free and fair, and that he makes good his word of retiring if beaten in the election; anything beyond that will definitely fuel greater mass-involving tension that has never been seen before on Ugandan soil.