

Ugandans to the rescue



July 15, 2010

Posted By Musa

Inconsistencies in the eye witness's account of events

Any body who knows Museveni very well and understands him, clearly does not believe that this act of terrorism was conducted by a foreign group

Tuesday, July 13, 2010, the government-owned newspaper, the New Vision, published an eye witness account by one of its sports reporters, Norman Katende, on the bomb blasts at the Kyadondo Rugby Club at Lugogo in Kampala.

Katende narrated the sequence of events leading up to and just following the bomb blasts and his observations provide a vital clue into what happened that Sunday night during the football World Cup final.

Wrote Katende, in this article published on page two of the New Vision, July 13, 2010. I have added bold italics for emphasis in the crucial lines: "It is time for the second half. The Netherlands [Spanish] almost score after bringing on Arsenal Captain Cesc Fabregas four minutes to time. Otherwise, the scoreboard remains 0-0. And this is the last thing I remember about the match.

"Boom" the bomb goes off. People scamper for safety. I remain seated, thinking it is a short circuit. The lights go off. It is pitch-dark. I cannot see what happened. The screen is blurred.

Before I recover my senses after the blast, another one rocks the night, about a minute later. This is even more scary. I move away to nowhere in particular, just because I am the only man still seated, and probably alive. I start taking pictures as people scatter in all directions.

In my dazed state, I reassure people that it is just a short-circuit and they should take it easy. But a security guy knows better. He urges people to stay calm, take cover, stay put. By this time, other revellers have broken the barriers and jumped to the main rugby field. Some others jump into the water channels, while others crawl away for dear life.

Two minutes later, the lights are back. Alas! What a sight! I am perplexed. Chairs are scattered. Broken. Bloody. Bodies and body parts litter the ground." That is the eye witness account by Norman Katende, a long-time Kampala journalist, working with the state-owned newspaper.

Let us work through the sequence of events as Katende saw them. What is striking in Katende's account of the events at Lugogo that night is that after the first bomb went off, the lights at the Rugby club went off. Then, according to Katende, another bomb went off and two minutes later, the lights came back on.

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In a situation where a most unexpected event happens, like a bomb attack, the prevalent mood would have been one of panic by the crowd and everyone in the area. At Lugogo, though, somebody had the presence of mind to calmly switch off the lights on the premises, followed a few seconds later by a second bomb. Then two minutes after the second bomb, according to Katende, the lights were switched back on.

Who was this person at the Kyadondo Rugby Club, stationed at the main switch of the club, who rather than dive for cover after the first blast went off, decided to switch off the lights?

And then with screams, smoke, flames, a stampede and an atmosphere of extreme shock and uncertainty, this person who presumably after switching off the lights would have taken cover on the floor or under some furniture, returned to the mains and switched the lights back on?

If the Uganda Police are right in claiming that the attackers were most likely Somali nationals of the militant Al-Shabab group and body parts of a Somali were discovered at the scene, who was that person switching the lights off and on again?

Whoever it was standing or seated next to the main switch of the Kyadondo Rugby Club must have been a regular at the club. Or at the very least, must have been a person on whom no suspicion would fall. It cannot have been a foreign-looking, Somali-looking person who could attract the attention of the club's security or management.

Whoever that person was who confidently switched off the lights and then rather than flee the scene once the first bomb went off, switched the lights on again, was part of the group that planned the attacks.

Contradictions in the ISO version of events

Secondly, an operative of the Internal Security Organization (ISO) this week told a Uganda Record source that eleven Somalis had entered Uganda through the eastern border area of Malaba and Ugandan intelligence had been tracking them for two weeks.

The ISO operative said four of these Somali had been arrested, two died during the attacks and five are still on the run. Then having said that, this intelligence agent forgot that he was about to contradict himself and said a minute later that the four arrested men were Ugandans.

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Asked if the four arrested men were Ugandans or Somalis, the intelligence man said they were Ugandans, having just said a minute earlier that they were Somalis, four of the eleven that Ugandan intelligence had been tracking for two weeks.

The Internal Security Organization is Uganda's principal domestic state security agency. It, more than any other body, should know what is going on in the country.

That this ISO officer can contradict himself over a small matter like eleven Somalis being arrested, only to forget and state that four Ugandans of those eleven Somalis were arrested, reflects how complicated the bomb attacks of July 11 are to cover up.

For example, on the cover page of yesterday's New Vision, July 14, a photograph was published of four Ugandan police officers --- including the head of counter-terrorism in the Uganda Police, Abbas Byakagaba and the police spokeswoman Judith Nabakooba --- displaying to the media a suicide jacket that the police says had been discovered at the Ice-Link night club in Makindye, a Kampala suburb.

Above the photograph was the headline, "4 arrested".

As the Uganda Record stated yesterday, July 14, the police has been vague about the identities of the arrested men and as we have just seen, it is not clear why what the police says is different from what ISO claims.

Also, considering the scale of Sunday's tragedy and now global this news story has gone, it is incredible that the government-owned newspaper can publish a headline on the arrest of four suspects but the accompanying photograph is of police officers at a press conference, and yet every reader of the newspaper would have been interested in getting a glimpse of these suspects.

The Uganda Record has maintained from the start that this was not an attack by Al-Shabab, by the Ugandan rebel group the ADF, or any other group, but an act masterminded by Ugandan intelligence.

We are quite sure that these contradictions are going to keep coming out until the government in panic at the realization that it is being found out, will be forced to order a media black out on the attacks and order that there be no more reporting on them.

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