



WHAT NEXT AFTER THE RIOTS?

By Nsubuga Rogers

Any sensible person should not let the recent devastating riots pass by without learning either a bad or a good lesson out of them. The question now is what next? This is not time for pointing fingers. The Police and the Judiciary are better placed to handle that part.

Before getting the treatment for our patient we need to know that Buganda is in Uganda. Therefore Buganda cannot exist without Uganda. This calls for our understanding that Buganda exists because there are Ugandans. I am because we are. I am a Muganda because we are Ugandans. Understanding this syllogism makes one humbled and calls for forgiveness from the rioters and restraint by State machinery. There is need for all Ugandans without prejudices to know that we need to learn how to coexist amicably and to be tolerant. There's need to respect one another in whatever we do and say. We have to respect other people's views, cultures, peace, beliefs and above all respect and uphold the Constitution. The Constitution should be respected as the Supreme law of Uganda next to none but God's Commandments, but not the way LRA sees these Commandments.

We should avoid using the Constitution as a means of achieving personal goals and selfish desires but to protect the citizens and their property. Of course when you protect citizens you protect their lives. I presume this is where the whole essence of compensation comes in. Indeed, H.E The President has to be applauded on his Government's commitment to compensate those who lost their property. I guess political leaders will not annoy some people by leaving them out on this one. The committees on compensation should be inclusive not to create another conflict of segregation.

When you look at the majority of those who were arrested during the riots you may agree with me that many pass for lack of what to do category. Many would be clearly labeled as idle and disorderly characters. Some people have argued that lack of graduated tax obligation has forced young people from doing meaningful employment. Many idle people have been engaging themselves in idle discussions and radio phone-ins using their hard earned cash. An idle mind is the workshop of the devil.

Although the riots took a cultural aspect I think this was to disguise other personal underlying grievances which I suggest to be taken care of seriously by the concerned parties assessing the aftermath of the riots. There is need to make a situation analysis on the socio-economic-political causes which might have influenced the riots under the pretext of cultural influence. Was the riot a result of political disgruntledness by some forces within and without? Can we ably relate the iron bar gangs to these recent riots? How many groups are still demanding for payment of this and that? How many people have been paid and how many have not been paid? Could some of these people have been used disguised as Kabaka's people?

There is also need to analyze our security and the morale of security organs. I am confident that our Security Organs have the capacity and the professional expertise to do a good job on this one.

When I saw the scale of distraction and devastation caused by the riots on TV and the News Papers, I wondered what would have happened if the rioters were all armed with sophisticated weapons and from outside the Country? What nature would the riots have taken on?

In my view I think that a lot of personal grievances by various forces were at play under the pretext of Baganda against Banyala alleged conflict. People wanted to turn an anthill into a mountain and confuse the foreign media that there's no democracy in Uganda. Remember that the International Day of Democracy is commemorated on the 15th September. Already this negative picture has led to cancellation of trips to Uganda by tourists because of the hooliganism which was projected by the International Press on local and foreign Televisions screens. It will take us some time and money to change that image abroad. You can see how irrational irresponsible actions can tarnish the image of a nation.

Where do we go from here?

- There is need to create a crisis preparedness centre to monitor and analyze signals and indicators which may lead to a crisis like the recent one. I propose that Security personnel who are graduates of behavioral Social Sciences are selected to man this centre.
- Compensations due to the riots should not be delayed or be politicized as to mandate another crisis due to discontent of some people.
- Both the Central Government and Mengo should restrain their emotions and encourage reconciliation and togetherness.
- There is urgent need to divert the energies of the youth into productive activities rather than being misused by opportunists for personal selfish ends.
- The youth need help and guidance from both Mengo and the Central Government.
- If need be a form of Graduated tax to be introduced to encourage people especially the unemployed youth to get work instead of discussing issues which lead to riots and conflicting behaviors.

For God and My Country.

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