



Opinion

Mmengo Should Respond, Not React to Buganda's Aspirations

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THESE were something of an attempted response by Mmengo's official spin doctor, Mr. Noah Kiyimba to my views touching on Buganda's and Uganda's current political plight. The pettiness with which he approached them can be laughed off because he was, in the long run, compelled to yield to the temptation of having 'his' reaction published twice; first, as "Mengo isn't headquarters of any political party" and next, as "Mengo is Buganda Kingdom seat, not political party headquarters" in the *Monitor* of 7 and 14 March 2021, respectively.

This kind of grandstanding ('*okwekangabiriza*') should raise concern over some of Buganda's current brand of officials, as well as her political and development challenges—and how they impact her future in Uganda, Africa and beyond. Worse, it is part of the smokescreen that conceals what is actually going on at Mmengo, i.e., corruption, intrigue, blackmail and sycophancy. One should like to repeat, though, that "The central challenge and/or difficulty...concerns how the establishment will respond to these issues and more."

Because Mr. Kiyimba was overly excited about the prospects, if any, of having a go at me, he ran the risk of engaging in flights of fantasy over the points I put across—hence the disconnect in his comprehension of their context, too. For this reason, I object to being drawn into the semantics of the words 'corruption' and 'deals'.

Suffice it to note, though, that his patron, also the spin doctor-in-chief, has expressly stated in his "*Ettoffaali*" book that corruption has been and is still rife at Mmengo—citing an example of a chief caught salting something away from the Kabaka's coffers for himself. Soon after his elevation to the *Katikkivoship*, his patron, for months, failed to avail the *Lukiiko* (Buganda Assembly) with copies of the Agreement between the President of Uganda and *Ssaabasajja Kabaka* signed on 1 August 2013. Just before the *Lukiiko* demands, he had, in his inaugural address preached a rather 'wonderful homily' on transparency! '*Obwerufu*', one now holds, might as well have an unstated meaning other than transparency.

One, though, may wish to inquire into the reasons for Mr. Kiyimba's agitation over these issues. After all, he is the one who, on 22 November 2019, issued us with a one-page "accountability statement" on the UGX 6,000,000,000/- (Uganda Shillings Six Billion)



The Bulange, the administrative seat of the former Kingdom of Buganda, now occupied by the club at Mmengo.



Noah Kiyimba

spent on the restoration of the Kasubi Tombs! In this day and age, really?

But the high level of satire in connection with this 'accountability', one can understand, is not something most officials at Mmengo would have been very happy about admitting to, even though formally in line with their '*obwerufu*' gospel.

[Such protestations about corruption at Mmengo are not only boring and self-serving, but equally cynical, to say the least.](#)

We also know of many opportunists at Mmengo and their cronies keen on black-mailing and bulldozing critics and the *Kabaka*'s subjects into, I regret to say, stupid submission, obedience, not answering back, and kowtowing to those in authority under the pretext that to do otherwise; is to be a "non-virtuous Muganda"—'*kumbe*' they are busy taking advantage of the gullible ones. This kind of opportunism, going back to the beginning of the colonial project in 1900, has had great negative impact on both Buganda and Uganda and, therefore, its ugly head must be struck each time it shows up!

Those who infringe upon the rights, freedoms and dignity of the *Kabaka* and the people of Buganda through threats and manipulations cannot now pretend to right them by shouting political rhetoric at the top of their lungs about the "*Ensonga Ssemasonga Ettaano*" (Mmengo's five point programme).

Much like Abu K. Mayanja's 1958 admonitory letter to the Kabaka's Government, "I should like to warn our reactionary rulers that they are running a great danger of discrediting our traditional institutions and thus making it impossible for many of us to reform and adapt what is good in them to the conditions of modern life." This is what demands our immediate attention as well as action if we are going to wrest Buganda from the Noah Kiyimbas of this world; meaningfully "develop" her (*okugikulaakulanya*); and also, secure her future long after we have gone.

And while it may not be that difficult to find honest people who can see through their threats and manipulations plus the manner in which they undermine public confidence, spiritedness and free debate on the establishment's workings; it is going to take more than just a few wo/men of good courage to stand up to Mmengo and say: "You have sat too long in [the Bulange] for any good you've been doing. Depart, [we] say, and let us have done with you! In the name of God, go!"

The writer is a proud Muganda, wishing to remain a thinking royalist. This piece initially appeared on the author's personal blog site <https://jmwesigwas.wordpress.com>.

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