

Proceedings of a Youth Debate Held on 30th October 2015

Theme: The General Elections in Uganda 2016; How Prepared are we for Free, Fair and Peaceful Elections?"

Venue: Seascallop Restaurant in Kitante – Kampala

Organized by Pan African Club

Content Outline

- Presentation by **Dr Julius Kiiza**, a political and social scientist lecturing in Makerere University,
- Participants' Views,
- Responses by **Dr Julius Kiiza**.

PRESENTATION BY DR. JULIUS KIIZA A POLITICAL / SOCIAL SCIENTIST AND SENIOR LECTURER IN MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

Dr Julius Kiiza began with reading newspaper headlines in regard to NRM Party Primaries which stated as follows; *NRM Polls Death Toll rises, 12 Ministers martyred in bloody primaries, Tanga Odoi excited over top ministers' loss, Soldiers raid Minister Rukutana's home, Gen Otafire faints, turns to God*. He implored participants to make sense of the headlines and make a right judgment of the situation whether we have set off on a peaceful, fair and free elections to begin with the NRM primaries, the ruling political party.

Pan Africanism as a solution to Uganda's / Africa's problems

Dr Kiiza said that elements of Pan Africanism include patriotism and unity; He asked that if Pan Africanism is the answer, what is the Question? The Lecturer further asked; given the traffic jam in Uganda and massive loss of public resources through corruption, are Pan Africanists supposed to say that they are okay? He added that in view of the deplorable situations in our health centres including Mulago the national Referral Hospital in which patients sleep on the floor just less than 3kms from the President's Office, if one was a Pan Africanist; would he say he is peaceful in this situation? Then again he asked; in such a circumstance, what would a Pan Africanist do?

The Presenter said that this traffic jam is avoidable adding that the concentration of vehicles is in Kampala and Entebbe beyond which there is none and asked the question; why? The Makerere Don revealed that statistically, the Per Capita availability of vehicles in Uganda is not appealing explaining that since 1986, the national population of citizens has doubled but the number of vehicles has not. He also questioned wealth ownership in the country and wondered whose ownerships are the few available

vehicles in the country. Dr Kiiza detested income inequality in Uganda and asked; who is getting richer?!

The Guest Speaker warned participants against normalizing the crisis in which case they would say that for me this is okay adding that the response of a real Pan Africanist would be to say no to this. He noted that usually it is easy to criticise but difficult to give solutions and challenged Pan Africanist to provide solutions to the challenges we face today in Uganda and Africa at large.

Dr Kiiza advised leaders against descending into rhetoric and empty dogmas but rather they should articulate and address real issues affecting all Ugandans especially the ordinary citizens. He wondered that if the government in Uganda is not on leave, how come we have narrow roads and allow weight far bigger than our roads carrying capacity and thus suffer the consequences!

He taught the youths that we have people living in Africa but they are not Africans! He reasoned that we do not have Ugandans but we have got to create them! This would mean a nation with a people of common language, institutions and the determination to address the fundamental questions to enhance socio-economic transformation of the country and that the emphasis would be the plight of the ordinary person.

The Lecturer said that a National Identity Card is a mere paper if we fail to make a community of Ugandans. He gave example of Tanzania's Civil Service where the spirit is: '*Kila Mtanzania ni ndungu yangu*' literally to say that every Tanzanian is my brother / sister. He said if Ugandans viewed fellow Ugandans as brothers and sisters then no one would steal public funds like for UPE which is meant to support your brother to study and have a future.

He also castigated building in road reserves, he said on his way to participate in this debate at the Pan African Club, he got stuck in jam, jumped out of his car onto a bodaboda (motorcycle) which also got stuck due to the same and that as a last resort, he had to walk to try to catch up with time. He said that he saw an ambulance also stuck in jam which reminded him of those who eat money for the roads affecting the width and the weight carrying capacity of our roads. He explained that by blocking an ambulance through stealing roads money, you are murdering people and that unfortunately, it is our fellow so called Ugandans in positions of authority doing this to us! He said we have leaders who think that one lane is enough, and then they give us roads which last less than two years as well as classrooms which last less than five years, a practice he attributed to lack of patriotism.

Dr Kiiza advised leaders to learn from the lecturers of Makerere University whereby they treat all their students equally irrespective of all sectarian considerations such as religion, sex, tribe and the like. He asked; does my doctor have to be my tribe mate for

me to get healed? He implored leaders to do what it takes to build a people rather than simply talking rhetoric.

Back to elections, Dr Julius Kiiza said in reference to the Red Pepper news headline (*NRM Polls Death Toll rises*) that to this newspaper, if you lose an election you are dead! He asked participants that how many of them think this is sensational or factual. He added that a minister at minimum earns 25m/= a month while an MP earns 23m/= compared to civil servants such as a teacher who earns 350,000/= only which is about just 1.3% of the MPs' salary yet both face the same cost of living, they go to the same market and aspire to take their children to the same good schools! He then asked that even if it were you and you are that Minister or MP and you lose elections, haven't you died economically?! He further asked that isn't there a crisis in Uganda's economy when the main source of income is politics not production?

The Learned Fellow revealed that until recently, the salary of a Lecturer at Makerere University was just 2.5m/= On the other hand, some other civil servants whose salary is just 0.8m/= have been seen in a space of just two years investing in huge multimillion projects exhibiting to possess a lot of money and one wonders where they get it from!

Dr Kiiza reasoned that winning an electoral office in Uganda has become a matter of life and death because the aspirants say it is my turn to eat yet it should be about service and thus about people not about you. He said that for that matter, leaders in Uganda have been getting into offices and do not want to leave, they consolidate themselves there and that we have had situations of same people holding same offices for 10 years, 20 years and 30 years claiming that they are not tired yet visibly you see that they are not just tired but exhausted which means that whatever happens, they have no new ideas they can offer! He said that because listening to such leaders is very boring, it is the reason why when they are talking; their audiences fall deep asleep even when it is morning! He argued that people switch off because they are saying we have heard this before from these leaders. He reasoned that leaders who have overstayed in power find themselves incapable of surviving when they are kicked out of office and thus they would rather die in power no matter what, which is very unfortunate and a pity for Africa in the 21st Century!

Regarding our preparedness for free and fair elections, Dr Julius Kiiza said that at least not in 2016! He said that people are ready to purchase public offices some using our public money. He also doubted that we would have peaceful elections in 2016. He gave example of a headline in the Observer newspaper which stated as follows: "*Gunshots, Teargas as NRM votes*".

PRECONDITIONS FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN UGANDA / AFRICA

1. **Viable and Rewarding Opportunities in the Production Sector / Economy.** Dr Kiiza said that this must be created as an urgent matter in Africa and thus transform our economies enough to avail opportunities to serve as the alternative to earning from politics. He added that the current peasant economies like Uganda which are dependent on donors to finance elections cannot achieve free and fair elections.

The Lecturer appreciated past leaders in countries like Taiwan and Singapore who despite being dictators but had love for their nations transformed their economies because they managed to disable corruption, built powerful infrastructures such as railways which is the most effective form of transport, constructed good roads and in general terms used public money for public cause and the outcome was economic transformation which Africans have admired for decades now but because of misrule are unable to have back home in most of the African countries.

He further said that the economic transformation in countries like Taiwan and Singapore was real because we saw their economies jump from peasant to high industrialised nations involving substantial heavy manufacturing and value addition. He reasoned that on the contrary, the President of Uganda H.E Yoweri Museveni when he is talking about industrialization seems to mean simple processing which cannot go a long way in transforming a country's economy! He further said that he has a problem with Uganda's Vision 2040 and AU's Vision 2063 reasoning that non performing leaders usually put the projection so far away so that you may not be there to hold them accountable! He argued that real and serious leaders give short periods of like say 4 or 5 years and then account to their people.

Dr Kiiza took issue with our poverty indices explaining that to say that if one is living just above One Dollar (3,500/= only) then he is okay is to him misleading. He said that living is not just feeding but it also includes shelter, health among others and thus even two dollars (7,000/=) would not be enough for one to be said to be okay. He suggested that we need to rethink our view of declining poverty measures.

The Makerere Don revealed that Uganda's economy today is largely driven by foreign companies such as mtn and roofings instead of being driven by the citizens. He added that you cannot sustain democracy using foreign aid but rather the wise thing would be that foreign aid be carefully used to develop your own capacity for self-reliance. He castigated luxurious wasteful expenditures giving example of the Electoral Commission which buys expensive cars every 5 years. He wondered whether a good car bought just 5 years ago is not usable now!

2. **Developing a culture of Democracy.** Dr Julius Kiiza pointed out that we cannot have democracy without democrats. He asked participants to identify from parties top leaders and tell whether we have real democrats among them! He also asked; how many of our elite are willing to listen to dissent opinions adding that whoever contradicts the Commander-in-Chief will face it and wondered why one would think that citizens contradicting a politician would face consequences!
2. **The dominant ideology of the top leaders.** He wondered whether the ideology of our top elite to access power is to serve or they come with rhetoric when their real goal is accessing power to create an economic empire and eradicate their own poverty!
2. **The dominant social institutions that promote authoritarianism are posing a challenge to democracy.** He gave examples of the church with the hell concept and homes where authoritarianism is the order of the day.
2. **Internal democracy in the Political Parties.** Dr Kiiza questioned the space for the ideas to contend and the strongest of these to emerge. He said that in our political parties even contemplating to contest for some positions by some members is a no-go-area!

PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Charles Rwomushana said that he in the recent past saw the UPDF guarding an armed police at CPS (Central Police Station) in Kampala, he wondered why a police institution would receive security from the army. He added that he is wondering how the Head of State could become that paranoid that he guards an armed state institution with another armed state institution! He also said that the UPDF was deployed in the NRM Primaries a decision he questioned wondering where there was a threat warranting such a move. He also claimed that most Ministers who lost in the NRM Primaries were rigged out by the militias they had formed to rig out their opponents.

Mr Rwomushana also questioned the impartiality of the Electoral Commission as well as the fairness of our electoral laws. He said that it was wrong for the Electoral Commission to extend nomination of candidates simply because the NRM party was disorganized and not ready to present a candidate then. He also pointed out that it is not fair for the incumbent President to use state facilities and the money while other presidential candidates have been deprived of even the little facilitation that hitherto was provided for in the law.

He concluded that the possibility that we can have peaceful, free and fair elections has by all standards already collapsed and thus Ugandans should prepare themselves for the likely consequences.

Salim Wasswa said that if in your own family you cannot foster peace then you have no peace to spread to your neighbours and that therefore, NRM being the ruling party but failed to have peaceful, free and fair elections, the hope that we can have the reverse of this in the general elections is very low. He also said that there is scramble for power just like it was during the colonial era in Africa and that all this spell danger ahead.

Musana Jafali said that egoism, selfishness, corruption, poverty and unemployment are all rising in Uganda and thus they are an impediment to peaceful, fair and free elections. He also castigated foreign companies taking over work which could have been done by the locals. He gave example of Indians who acquired land at the Shores of Lake Victoria and are doing Fish Farming and wondered whether Ugandans have no capacity to do fish farming themselves!

Benson Amanya said that the Ugandan voters have lost hope and yet the candidates are also lamenting. He predicted that civil disobedience would occur soon after elections because people will not agree with the outcome of the election results. Mr Amany said that people are leaving their jobs in the civil service especially the police and RDCs to join elective politics not because there is a service gap there but because they want to eat better.

Johnson Obbo Emmanuel said that women are generally not in the discussions about electoral issues in the country yet they are the majority voters, he suggested that they should be brought on board. He said that at the moment, apart from a few women such as Dr Sylvia Tamale, majority of the women do not understand civic matters and are not engaged and thus they are posing a big risk in terms of who they will vote.

Mwido Mohammed (nick-named shadow RDC) said that people go to vote without understanding the prevailing dynamics adding that for example, some people are willing to kill somebody if they lose an election! He said that most of the losers in NRM Party Primaries will come back to 'fight' in the general elections because our politics has become a matter of do or die.

About election dynamics, Mr Mwido said that for example in Busoga, there are antagonistic camps between the Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga and the Rt. Hon Kirunda Kivejinja and that the people are divided along those lines. He said that these differences stem from cultural quarrels and that the government has failed to address these conflicts to unite the people of Busoga and Uganda in general.

Mr Mwido said that during the burial of former minister Hon Dr Mutende, President Yoweri Museveni introduced the widow Lydia Wanyoto as a good NRM Cadre and that because the people of Mbale do not like President Museveni as a person, they refused to vote for Lydia Wanyoto in the NRM Primaries for Parliament.

Mr Mwidu doubted the much talked about middle class in Uganda by President Yoweri Museveni and his government. He gave example that in Kayunga just like is in some other parts of Uganda; Mr Karangwa is more powerful than a Minister because he is in the migrant group destroying the indigenous people in the district of Kayunga. He said that some migrants have been brought to become MPs in some areas so as to be used to take the indigenous peoples' land. He called upon the government to stop discrimination basing on peoples' origins but rather protect all Ugandans. He disclosed that such problems of land grabbing by migrants are not only in Kayunga district but also in other parts of Uganda such as the districts of Luka and Mayuge.

Samuel Mutambi said that whether we shall have peaceful elections is no longer a question because there is all to show that we will not have peaceful elections in 2016. He also asked Dr Kiiza that all changes in the past were engineered by students that but the education quality they acquired then is no longer the kind of education we receive today in Uganda because the quality of our education has gone down, he inquired whether in the opinion of Dr Kiiza, our education today can merit a viable nation and what is the future like for Uganda.

Robert Karampende said that University lecturers are not guiding students to go into production. He also faulted Dr Kiiza for not saying anything good done by the NRM government yet there is a lot the government has done for Uganda.

Julius Mutabazi said that the characters of the political players such as nobility, humility and responsibility which are ingredients of good leadership as opposed to egocentrism are in short supply in Uganda. He said we have a challenge of true ideology against pseudo ideology whereby the issues that shape our election dynamics are negative ethnicity, religious chauvinism and the like. He also said that by nature, man is corrupted and perverted and therefore absolute free and fair election is impossible.

Jossy Nuwabiine said that our politicians do not view politics as a service but rather as an opportunity for them to eat. He reasoned that this is why people invest hundreds of millions. He said that a person who has invested like say 200m/= in the elections and then he sees the registrar announcing another person as the winner, he would rather die there! He suggested that the solution is to make politics less profitable so that only people interested in serving the country patriotically can contest for leadership positions.

Kennedy Asiiimwe said that he was surprised by a lot of money he saw in the NRM Primaries and that he is expecting inflation in the country after the 2016 general election because of too much money which will be used to purchase public offices by

politicians. He said that free, peaceful and fair election is unachievable dream in Uganda for now.

Mr Asiimwe said that people in government think that they are everything and they want to determine who wins. He disclosed that in Kawempe for example, announcing NRM Primaries election results took two days because a minister was aiding rigging but people fought. He suggested that the Pan African Club and other stakeholders should do more in sensitizing the people to stand for their rights.

Zephania Nyakubaho said that when Pope Francis visits Uganda, he should pray for our democracy because apparently it is sick. He said that he got a job where he was earning 2.5m/= when he was in UPDF serving in Somalia but the UPDF officers ate his money and he has since been intimidated against demanding for his money. He said it now surprises him to see that Prof Gilbert Bukenya was given 7bn/= for free by a government leader according to the media yet people like him who worked for their money cannot get it and there seems to be no possibility of justice even in the future under this government.

Murungi Robert said that we the youths are energetic but we lack sensitization. He said that nevertheless, the country is growing. He added that it is true there is vote purchase in Uganda and that inflation is expected after the general elections. He also said that the situation is not so bad because many Ugandans are registered voters and they will vote. He also said that political parties are in existence and competing and thus there is some political hope for Uganda.

Rose Mudondo Rinet said that people in the villages do not know why they vote! She gave example that in one village, a candidate said that I put money in this church and therefore you must vote for me! She added that another candidate whom she saw as a good leader was rejected by voters because he was a catholic in a protestant dominated area! She said that many people in Uganda do not know what a leader is supposed to be and do.

Mayombwe Daniel, a Councillor from Kawempe Division said that the ability to concede defeat even when elections have been free and fair is still a very big challenge in Uganda. He said that all people want to be sole candidates and are unwilling to accept results in competitive elections! He also pointed out weakness in political parties' organization whereby some of them fail to even field candidates in some areas and elsewhere they provide no monitoring agents and yet still claim that they were rigged out!

Rtd Lt Abdullah Katongole said that he joined the NRA bush war to fight for his country Uganda when he was aged only 14 years. He called upon the youths to love sacrificing for their country. He suggested that the elite should sensitize others for

peace. He lashed at people who willingly sell their land and are now jealousy of the progress of those to whom they sold the land and are thus now complaining.

Wycliff Turyahebwa called upon voters to observe peace. He condemned the recent practice in the NRM Primaries in some areas where the ballot papers were set ablaze broad day time.

Peter Wankulu an OAU Veteran said that he spearheaded the formation of the OAU when he was a youth and is the one who convinced all the African leaders including Kwame Nkrumah to form the OAU. He added that he was not happy then and is still unhappy today because of poor education system in Africa. He said that our education system is too bookish and theoretical and does not give us skills to engage in production sufficiently. In the past, Muzeyi Wankulu and Prof Edward Kakonge have during Pan African discussions challenged the kind of thinking skills being bestowed upon our young people in the current education system in Uganda. Muzeyi Wankulu said that he cannot understand that 50 years after independence, Uganda cannot produce even simple things like mosquito coil; safety pin, tooth picks and the like! He referred the youths to the question left to us by one of our greatest Pan African ancestors Dr W. Dubois who when talking about our theoretical education system which then was emphasizing reading and writing he asked; ***"You Learn to Read and Write and then do What?!"***

Peter Wankulu said that Uganda is not going forward but backward adding that he grew seeing fertile soils, trees and water which are no longer in many parts of Uganda now, to him the educated people of nowadays have failed to protect Uganda's strategic interests imbedded in nature. He implored the youths to get interested in philosophy that because it explains the causes of happenings. He said that philosophy teaches how things exist and what the expected consequences are.

Prof Edward Kakonge said that the participating youths in this discussion all have got some ideas about the problem we are in as a country and Africa. He also commended Dr Kiiza's approach to the discussion which involved asking questions because it tickled the youths to think and reflect deeply on the ideas being shared in this discussion.

The Professor asked the participants who they are and whether they are what they think they are! He further asked; who is a Ugandan / African? He suggested that if you do not know how to define yourself then you don't know who you are! He said that it is high time we defined ourselves and live in that context instead of allowing others to define us.

Prof Kakonge posed a question for reflection that you are an African on what basis and if then, how do you relate with others? What concern do you see in your relationship

with others and what is your obligation? He reasoned that you cannot exist without other human beings.

He said that the way you define yourself as a human being is in the context of other human beings. He wondered how then given positions of authority, you can mistreat other human beings and divert resources meant for the community! He said you live because others live and then let others live because you live.

Prof Kakonge was annoyed that our leaders in Uganda have huge riches which would make a big difference in solving the problems we find in Mulago National Referral Hospital, strikes in Makerere University and unemployment but our leaders simply do not care about the people they are supposed to serve, they only mind about themselves! He said that Four wheel drive expensive vehicles in possession of our leaders in government as well as the administrators of Makerere University do not need them but they are simply extravagant.

RESPONSES BY DR JULIUS KIIZA

Dr Julius Kiiza said that he likes all the comments from the participants not that they are consistent but they provide a platform for discourse. He said that the view that we should make politics less profitable is a valid one but asked; who will bell the cat?! He highlighted the challenge of selfishness among some of our leaders pointing out that our MPs make a law to determine their emoluments and that no other institution will revise their decision. Dr Kiiza reasoned that the size of Uganda's parliament is too huge and too costly and that we do need it in its current size. He said that we need a determined leader to overcome these challenges.

Dr Kiiza underscored the importance of political economy in the stabilization of democracy. He said that political economy is about how states interface with markets and work to create wealth without which you can't have democracy.

The Lecturer emphasized the importance of ethics and morals in politics to serve the nation. He praised the generation of the independence politicians the likes of the John Babiha's who he said emerged on persuasion not bribery and that their work was public service not corruption. He also revealed that democracy is a process and not an event.

Dr Kiiza said that the loss in the NRM Primaries by untouchable Generals shows that the team in government is tired. He asked; if the team is pronounced exhausted, is the Captain still strong?! He said that the key actors in these elections are roaring fire with their eyes wide open like a pussycat saying you are either for us or against which does not spell peaceful times ahead for Uganda.

He also said that for there to be democracy, institutions matter. He said that one of the preconditions for democracy is respect of the Constitution not its manipulation. He said that any amendments to the national Constitution must be in principle, binding and in national interest not just to benefit an individual or a group of individuals against the rest of the citizens.

The Lecturer added that in Africa generally, ladies right from childhood are socialized to accept dictatorship by way of upbringing compared to the boys. He advised that this needs to change.

Compiled by:

Staff, Pan African Club