

Africa Motherland - Have We Lost Direction?

A Reflection On Laurent Kabila And Other New Age Leaders In Africa

AS we near the 21st century, we as Africans are confronted with many questions as to what the future holds in store for us as citizens of the black continent. Indeed, we are pondering this in the wake of recent happenings on the continent. It is safe to say that there is a common understanding that Africa's leaders have failed miserably in shaping the future of their own people and the continent as a whole.

With Ghana's attainment of independence Kwame Nkrumah had the following to say, "The independence of Ghana is meaningless until the whole African continent gains its independence." He went further to say, "Seek ye first political kingdom before economic empowerment or emancipation." Because, should this have been the case, the means of production would still have remained in the hand of the select few and our attempts at economic self-empowerment could have been meaningless. Nkrumah's dream of a totally independent Africa started to gain

momentum when country after country started to gain its nationhood. However, to our dismay many leaders who were selected by the people started to enrich themselves at the expense of their nation. The plague of corruption, tribal conflict, genocide and human rights abuses continues to undermine the brave fight for the liberation of many African countries.

After independence many African leaders made the mistake of playing into the hands of western countries who apparently had 'more experience and success in governing their own countries.' Our leaders failed to remember our struggle for independence from these very western powers.

Also, civil society (African citizens) are also to blame for the state of affairs for it is through providing leaders with excessive power that governments turn into one-party states. This is the breeding ground for corruption and mismanagement. The principle of succession is not adhered to and we find government



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officials clinging onto their positions, not allowing for new ideas and the resultant progress of the nation.

Hence, we are faced with the question of our next step ... how are we to rid our continent of this bloodshed? Firstly, the perception of governance on the part of our current leaders has to be amended. It is sad to notice that there are only a few of our current leaders who show genuine intentions of making a positive

improvement to the living conditions of their own people. Because instead of changing the traditional tunes of politics in Africa, they are seemingly happy to continue with the status quo.

When considering the new age of leaders one is continuously reminded of Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Shortly after overthrowing Mobutu Sese Seko, Kabila was seen as the man of political change and modernisation in the former Zaire but I had great reserve about his capabilities.

Kabila has shown that my concerns were not without foundation since his current refusal to allow the United Nations investigation into the mass killings of Rwandan refugees makes one question his claim of innocence. When citing such examples I maintain my stance that the role of leaders in Africa needs to be redefined at all cost.

Furthermore, we are faced with people such as Arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe who have made it clear that they will

not easily hand over power to someone else. This is absurd after both these men have run their respective countries for more than sixteen years.

Sani Abacha of Nigeria, despite having overthrown a legitimate government, and taking power through military coup, is apparently trying to install a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone. Is that not what we call double standards of the highest order? On top of that we have the OAU and United Nations - two bodies that continue to play double standards.

Based on this analysis Africa can only be saved by the democratic election into power of people with integrity, vision, commitment and dedication to the cause.

As Africans we must look for what we do not have, i.e. peace, tranquillity and economic empowerment, and then continue to strive for these admirable qualities in our society.

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'Out Of Mighty Nanso Wants Enuna