

United States Election 2000 Reflects Illiteracy?

I FOLLOWED the much publicised and long awaited US Presidential elections outcome with curiosity, despite complications of its Justice system ie it appeared to me that only Florida county laws were applicable to the recount argument during the election court proceedings and not perhaps the National Constitution that I presumed could have been the document that could resolve the election dilemma experienced, as well as duplication, disparities and contradictions between what the voters did and what the Electoral College does.

During the election proceedings in the Florida Supreme Court, I recall one judge was reported as saying the US election 2000 fiasco was caused by people who did not follow voting instructions. This can be an ambiguous or explicit statement, was it due to the illiteracy of the voters or the complication of ballot papers as alleged by the Democrats? From my observation people are attributing it to illiteracy.

According to that judge's statement, it is overt that the voter's illiteracy impelled/incited the whole election process/ballot counting to be referred to the court for a verdict. The same sentiments/ views were also reverberated/repeated by our Prime Minister when he addressed a Swapo by-election rally at Rundu this week and he said: "We know how to count, we are not like the U.S". Obviously this boils down to illiteracy again.

Conversely, was justice done or was the citizen's will, voting rights and voice respected when a clan of judges took a decision on behalf of millions of people while their will/

voice was explicitly and precisely expressed on the ballot papers that could be read/seen by the counting official's naked eyes and not machines. Does this court tell us that if their trusted machines could not count the ballot papers then they should be regarded as spoiled or be left uncounted? With due respect for judges and the court, I certainly believe their ruling was unequivocally biased and was a true reflection of their personal preferences and political affiliations in this regard. I am of the notion that the court was supposed to continue with its initial votes recount order up to its end, which I am sure could be the best determinant of the fairly elected 43rd US president.

Having said that I salute the loser Al Gore and supporters for conceding defeat in the election they were supposed to win. African leaders should learn from the US election 2000 to accept results for the sake of peace, love of the people and country. I know such elections which were too close to call could cause chaos/shed blood in the African context.

With regard to the change of US presidents, Africa should not expect the same favours of the Clinton Administration from the Bush Administration. Africa should clarify its priorities and right from the beginning operate on business principles/terms with the Bush Administration.

Finally, voter education should be made a priority by Political Parties/Electoral Commissions to ensure a fair and just victory by political parties in the elections.

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