

# Rethinking Buganda Strategies and Priorities

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## Pre-amble

### *A need for introspection*

Rebuilding Buganda starts with introspection because we Baganda have been the architects of Buganda's current and past mayhem that have relegated us to beggars for attention in the Ugandan body politic. The sooner we stop pointing fingers at our adversaries from without, in current and previous governments, the better. Amongst us the Baganda we have selfish traitors in history, since the days of the agreement of 1900 and the LEGCO, as well as in today's political formations.

We speculate with fear about what could have driven a particular antagonist Muganda to hate his nation so much to the point of selling its soul (just like Judas sold out Jesus). For example, we should be aware that some of us are in constant communication with and will fax or e-mail Ttabamiruka deliberations straight to our masters who have sent us here to spy. What a shame! It is a pity because we Baganda do not have such spies in other political formations, and yet we are numb about selling our nation out!

I henceforth appeal to the sell-outs; please re-think about what you are doing to our nation. On the other hand, be aware that without fear, we shall carry on with the struggle to resurrect ourselves and Buganda's soul, reported or not. It is a legitimate struggle, not least because every other nation in Uganda is doing just that.

To the rest, I salute your resolve to organise and/or attend this Ttabamiruka. We should not surrender – indeed we ought to show the adversaries that we can stand to their schemes, and outsmart them. We have the intellect and abilities, only these need organisation and leadership.

The main concern for me in this Ttabamiruka is that Buganda has been completely and deliberately wiped off the map of Uganda. Buganda is now an unconstitutional and illegal entity. Obote's regime started this by sowing the seeds upon which the current '*final solution*' is built. What Obote failed to do, has been subsequently achieved through hoodwinking some of us with petty financial benefits. We have sold out our sovereignty.

### *What is the final solution?*

Technologists seek solutions for defined 'problems'. The *final solution* was in response to us Baganda and Buganda being perceived and marketed as Uganda's problem. Without being semantic about the demerits of this hypothesis, the *final solution* is to finish off Buganda, Baganda and their pride. In its final stages happening now, it comprises:

- Settling as many non Baganda as possible in Buganda
- Inciting sections of Baganda to prop up non-Baganda chiefs in Buganda
- Buying as much land as possible in Buganda – sellers are, almost without exception, Baganda, who do not re-invest the money into tangible projects
- Damaging the image of Mmengo – this is dragging the Kabaka down as well, and has involved sometimes Mmengo officials. Mmengo now has no popular standing among Baganda
- Being derided into believing that non-Baganda can in fact be custodians of Buganda's interests and those of the Kabaka of Buganda

- Selling Baganda and Buganda as the enemies against the unity of Uganda
- Inciting the grassroots with get rich schemes, while the Kingdom seldom has the capacity for such schemes
- Making Buganda Kingdom unpopular at grassroots level
- Infiltration by traitors, many carrying Kiganda names, who then make sweeping statements about and on behalf of Baganda

At the end of all this, we have a nation that is poor, hopeless, and unmotivated. It is a constituency that runs to anybody who appears to offer solace or some crumb.

I wish to reiterate ladies and gentlemen, that, we start this debate aware that we have failed our nation – all of us, and that we have been used and duped. We are right now irrelevant to anyone who wishes to lead Uganda, although we were the core of the body politic not so long ago.

### **The main struggle**

There is no Buganda and our Kabaka survives by word of the president only, basically because that entity, Buganda, was dissolved. This is the main struggle on our hands, and that's where, first and foremost, our brains and resources should be directed. We can never claim anything for a non-existent entity. Indeed, right now, the Kabaka belongs to Baganda people rather than Buganda (the geographic entity).

### **Priorities**

Therefore, in my view, the priorities are in the following order and sequence:

1. Re-establishing Buganda as a legal and political entity
2. Reclaiming Buganda's properties, and this includes the 9,000 sq. miles.
3. Re-establishing administrative structures centred at Mmengo

I believe that 2 and 3 are not possible without 1 in the above.

I will attempt to elaborate.

I think that Buganda cannot proceed with any plan without first securing its identity, in legal and political terms. Legal terms means being represented in the Ugandan constitution. Political terms are linked to the legal, but really is another way of getting a federal state called Buganda.

### **How do we go about this?**

#### *The main debate*

I will solely focus my discussion on 'Establishing Buganda as a legal and political entity' as our main problem. The methodology I think, **is, and ought to be, the real and main debate.**

The methodology will not be easy, and requires all kinds of strategies working in concert. It also requires bravery at all levels, from us commoners, clan leaders, up to Mmengo, including the Katikkiro and the King. It requires the collective body of Baganda, aware that some of us are spies and can easily be swayed by petty offers. My suggestions are of course subject to debate.

### ***Establish core leadership***

The first task is to establish a core leadership in the trust of the King, and a chairperson to coordinate the activities. However, this core leadership, regardless of spies amongst us, could be openly elected during Tabamiruka, to include:

- Persons in the diasporas
- King's appointed individuals
- Clan representatives
- Youth, and
- Women

The open elections imply that we need brave and trustworthy people who are not to be bought immediately Ttabamiruka ends. Secondly, at this time we need to coordinate activities globally. The committee should also be able to meet at agreed upon intervals so that it does not lose steam. This could mean that committee members might have to use own finance. So members' financial capacity could also be a criterion for election.

This is not a duplication of Mmengo – it is an *ad hoc* committee to see to one main objective: re-establishing Buganda as a legal and political entity. I am not a legal person, but its terms of reference include using all legal and political channels available to achieve just that. The committee has the advantage of circumventing issues such as the Katikkiro and Mmengo politics. The debates about the Katikkiro, the university, health, education, etc. have to continue separately and concurrently in their normal channels at Mmengo.

### ***Political pragmatism***

We have to be politically ruthless.

- We know that today's politics is that of '*eating*'. If some political leaders can '*buy*' MPs, we could do the same. The utopian democracy is non-existent, not even in the democracies of the first world. The questions have always been '*what is the price*' and '*what is the value of the goods*'?
- We should approach all political parties – Buganda is for all political parties. One of the biggest mistakes of the 1960s was to create Kabaka Yekka. Among other things, Kabaka's candidacy for the presidency of Uganda opened up the Kingdom to political manipulation and pitted the Kingdom against national political parties.

To the extent that in a federal state of Buganda there could be governments led by any political party, the Kingdom needs to keep an open line of communication with all political parties, including other Kingdoms or chieftainships. We need to work at these relationships and remove the myth that Buganda is against any one political formation, except those that plan Buganda's extinction.

Buganda should be able to communicate with all nations (tribes). For example, could it be that another channel of sorting the *Balaalo* issue is to communicate with the Omukama of Bunyoro – at least to get their side of the story? Could we send an emissary to the *Balaalo*? Can we get first hand information from them directly? It is in this context that Kabaka would be encouraged to attend functions in other Ugandan kingdoms.

Thus, we are not to buoy up one party at the expense of others, but rather communicate with individuals who support our cause. Similarly, the government negotiations could indeed proceed, but not halting other channels of negotiations – i.e., what does the

government offer? How far does it go? What are the fears or rather their ulterior motives in failing to adopt full federalism *to the entire country*? Can the government put its views on paper for debate? What do the other political parties say, and what do they offer? Indeed, there is no harm, in my view, to deliberately target individuals, and MPs, in each political party, neither should we be held back from supporting the Kabaka to hold talks with the Ugandan president. What matters is what the president has to say to Kabaka – we are not compelled to follow the proposals if they are against our interests as Baganda.

- Our missions should change from that of vengeance and hate to proactive diplomacy, and from exclusion to inclusion, across religions, creeds, gender, and nations. Let us talk to everybody who can listen – *Balaalo*, Bacholi, Iteso, Balang'o, Banyankole, etc. We have to market ourselves and our ideas with the aim of reversing the myths about Baganda being anti-this and anti-that. This does not mean forgetting our enemies, but it is about winning friends and support for a federal Uganda. It also does not mean that we should not defend ourselves if we are attacked.

### ***Teams within the committee***

Given our main struggle, the most important work is both legal and political. Within the committee there should be experts in law and politics. If they are not, then the committee should be able to hire them, even if that means getting non-Baganda or non-Ugandans. We need to understand the constitution, explain it to the ordinary Baganda, and see where and how we fit in. Politically, we need to create networks that aim at increasing the awareness of Baganda of our political status, For example, translated constitution booklets would do much to de-campaign certain negative myths.

### ***Activism***

We should be able to organise activism through supporting pro-democratic NGOs, and sectors that prop up democratic ideals, which could support our goals. All activism should be linked to the demand for federalism. Take the current *Balaalo* relocation. It is a pity that it goes on without a real protest or demonstration, and no official support has gone towards the youth who stood out to voice their anger against the *Balaalo* settlements. The demonstration would alert the public and international governments about the issues surrounding the *Balaalo* re-settlements and the need for a federal state.

Secondly, we need to be pro-active instead of reactionary – we need to prevent or pre-empt strategies that undermine Buganda's integrity instead of waiting for things to happen. This requires us to think ahead. For example, could the *Balaalo* issue possibly been pre-empted as we saw it brewing in Bunyoro, and had seen *Balaalo* being chased from Teso? What else is up the sleeves of our adversaries? Do we have contingencies in case the worst is imposed upon us? God forbid, but what happens if our Kabaka is arrested or some harm is done to him?

### ***Reinvigorating grass root support***

Firstly, I think the committee returns Baganda commoners to the centre because it would be elected. Secondly, I think our Katikkiro and Kabaka have to be more visible in the lives of commoners. There has to be programmed foot visits throughout Buganda. The dates should be clearly shown on a calendar. A walk through Nakaseke? Why not? In the absence of active Masaza and Miluka, the centre has to change tact. The forces we are trying to neutralise reach grassroots and I think, given a younger generation that never experienced the Kingdom, we

ignore grass root campaigns at our peril. We cannot take grassroots for granted anymore, although our culture (*ennono*) would have ensured that support.

Incidentally, lots of debates rage on the Internet such as Gandatalk and Bugandanet. I think that Mmengo and the ad hoc committee should keep reading these because the e-mails sometimes represent thoughts or frustrations at grassroots level.

### ***Finance***

I doubt whether there is anything that stops us organising finances through an NGO. This committee, rather than Mmengo, should gather these funds. But these should be funds for the committee's functions, Kabaka's visits, lawyer's fees, meetings with political formations, etc. Mmengo's name is unfortunately already damaged with regard to finances.

### **No compromises**

There are issues that we should never compromise upon. These include but are not limited to federalism, Buganda re-appearing on the Uganda map, our land, and the position of the Kabaka.

### **The Kabaka**

This is an institution and will be what we make it. Let us stop looking at the personality occupying the seat (i.e., Kabaka Mutebi) and rather look at how we can support the Kingdom. As I stated above, we really now need the institution to reach people.

### **Conclusion**

Baganda traitors should reconsider their selfish acts, not least because their progeny will live through the mess they will leave behind. Without the fear, the priority for us is to pursue the re-establishment of Buganda in the constitution (legal objective) and on the Ugandan map (political objective). This requires us all to pro-actively market Baganda and Buganda to all Ugandans without discrimination, preferably led by an ad hoc committee to be appointed at Ttabamiruka 2007. Ttabamiruka should be an annual event.