

Violence and lawlessness is the total disregard of laws, destruction of properties and bloodshed.

It is caused by resentment and bitterness among people in a given country. Some of the resentment can be due to over taxation by a ruling government, corruption, unemploy-

ment, poor infrastructure, dictatorship, etc.

In spite of being fully aware of the danger of lawlessness, African governments promote their interests instead of the people's interests which makes them develop hatred against the government.

This even slows development because instead of working to improve livelihoods, the given government will always be fixated on taming the defiant and resentful population

Asuman Micho,
asumanmicho@gmail.com

LETTER OF THE DAY

Injustice can provoke violence

Before and during the recent presidential election, Ugandan bishops, sheikhs, pastors, performing artistes, socialites, etc. were broadcast on various radio and television stations urging the people of Uganda to desist from any form of post-election violence.

They gave spirited pro-peace messages—clearly based on fears that voters who are disgruntled by the conduct and outcome of the election might become violent. However, years before these proponents of peace, Pope John Paul II candidly stated in 2002 that there is no peace without justice, a message that speaks aptly to the post-election events happening in Uganda but about which our proponents of peace are seemingly oblivious to.

On one hand, the reports of all the election observation missions decry conspicuous flaws in the electoral process. Yet, on the other hand, the runners-up to President Museveni are under indefinite "preventive" solitary house arrest as the constitutionally-mandated 10 days within which they could report the said flaws to court tick away. A question relating to post-election peace in the country now is: what will the disputants in the presidential elections and their sympathisers do if they cannot access their constitutional right to seek redress from courts of law in a timely manner? This is a question our proponents of peace who feared for post-election violence should ponder and act accordingly. Yet, as the reports of foreign election observation mis-



sions have faulted aspects of the presidential electoral process and third party actors like the government of the United States have urged immediate ending of the confinement of Mr Museveni's challengers, the news feed in my social media accounts is awash with complaints about the peace proponents' silence that some have characterised as very loud. If the bishops and other proponents of peace think that people will be peaceful simply because they told them to be peaceful, they ought to realise that history has shown that this view is not realistic.

As Pope John Paul II put it, there cannot be peace without justice and it has been said that justice delayed is justice denied. Post-election violence need not come from

the voters' side alone (as is tacitly implied in the messages of the proponents of peace). It can also be by individuals and organisations acting on behalf of the State and, even with the best of intentions for peacefulness, it can be provoked by institutionalised injustice that denies disputants peaceful options for resolving their grievances.

Therefore, after urging the voters to desist from post-election violence, the proponents of peace should address 'the other side' too. They should use their privileged positions to tell the commander-in-chief and those acting on his behalf to beware of violating people's rights and provoking them to become violent.

Dr Jude Ssempebwa
Makerere University

Comments from our readers > With Stephen Otago