QUOTE OF THE DAY **UN Secretary-General António Guterres:** "Global problems will not be solved by one power 'calling the shots'



EDITORIAL

A troubling start for new Chief Justice Zeija

The swearing-in of the 11th Chief Justice of Uganda, Flavian Zeija, last weekend raised uncomfortable questions about symbolism, propriety, and the increasingly thin lines separating the State institutions and personal power.

This is because, at the lowly swearing-in ceremony, something strange happened: the new head of the Judiciary took the judicial oath of office while holding the Bible upside down.

Whether it was an innocent mistake due to the tense atmosphere he was in, the same shouldn't be taken lightly. This is because oaths are not mere formalities; they are solemn pledges made before God, the nation, and the law.

When such a ritual is marred by carelessness — perceived or real — it undermines the office's gravity and fuels public skepticism about respect for constitutional norms.

Even more disquieting was the setup in which the said judicial oath was administered, at a private cattle farm residence of President-elect Museveni in Kisozi, Gomba District.

The issue: Justice.

Our view: Public confidence in the Judiciary depends not only on judicial decisions but also on how judicial leaders assume office.

This is no small procedural lapse. The swearing-in of a Chief Justice is not a personal event between two individuals to be conducted casually, and in any manner one feels like.

It is a constitutional act since it involves the head of an independent arm of government, the Judiciary.

The Judiciary is not an extension of the Executive arm under President Museveni. Its authority is derived from the supreme law, the Constitution, and not from presidential goodwill.

So, conducting such a critical national ceremony from a private residence sends a damaging message — that the office of Chief Justice is bound to personal power rather than institutional legitimacy.

Remember, the timing couldn't be any more sensitive, like now, when the first task of the new Chief Justice was to constitute a panel of justices of the Supreme Court to hear a presidential election petition challenging the re-election of Mr Museveni

In mature democracies, the optics of independence are just as important as independence itself. Public confidence in the Judiciary depends not only on judicial decisions but also on how judicial leaders assume office.

When ceremonies are stripped of transparency and institutional formality, citizens are left wondering whether constitutional boundaries still matter, and such acts are indicators of the shrinking space between the Executive and the Judiciary arms.

Ugandans have long expressed concern about the shrinking space between the Executive and other arms of government.

This episode, unfortunately, reinforces those fears. It suggests a normalisation of informality where strict constitutional symbolism should prevail.

Justice Zeija assumes office at a time when the Judiciary's credibility is under intense scrutiny, particularly following a highly contested general election. He is currently presiding over a presidential election petition.

His tenure demands an unwavering commitment to independence, impartiality, and respect for constitutional order.

That commitment should have been signalled clearly from the very first moment he took office.

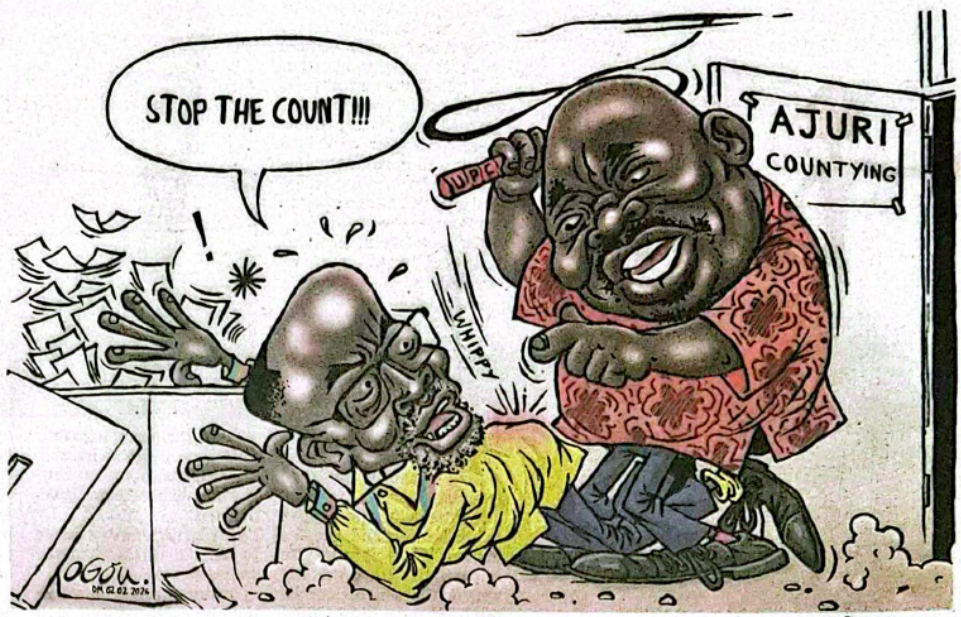
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Cartoon. Teacher Fred Jalameso beat Government Chief Whip Hamson Obua to the Ajuri county MP seat



Martin Luther's legacy rests in our hands

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"- These famous words have echoed in ears again as the world celebrated Martin Luther King's Day.

Martin Luther King's Day comes at a critical time when the world is grappling with geo political instabilities, rising authoritarianism, breach of the United Nations Charter and Civil unrest from Venezuela, Greenland, DRC, Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Iran to Uganda, all threatening World Peace.

Before launching the 'Board of peace' during the World Economic forum, Donald Trump delivered a proclamation on 19th January attributing it to the legacy of a 1964 Nobel Peace winner Martin Luther King Junior an American icon of civil movements, peace and inclusiveness.

Trump's proclamation is a traditional fulfillment of his predecessor Ronald Reagan who declared, every third Monday of January a 'Martin Luther King's Day' with a purpose of celebrating the legacy of an icon that never bowed down to racial injustices, systemic exclusion and inequalities.

Trump's a proclamation followed Barack Obama's blockbuster homage through his official X handle that swayed me and millions of people who cherish the Legacy of Martin Luther King;

I quote Obama "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr dedicated his life fighting for equity and justice. He taught us that even in the face of intimidation and discrimination, we must never stop working towards a better future a lesson that feels especially relevant today".

Quote and Quote "Change has never been easy. It takes persistence and determination and requires all of us to speak out and stand up for what we believe in. As we honor Dr. King today let's draw strength from his example and do our part to build on his legacy" Obama concluded.

> Martin Luther King Jr spoke 2,500 times during public rallies,



Robert Kigongo
Commentary

I fully resonate with Obama's homage message as enlightening and thereby take it as stake reminder to our generation to reflect upon the legacy of Martin Luther King especially in times of challenges.

King will always be remembered for his Southern Christian leadership conference, organising civil movements, unequivocal voice for the voiceless, non-violent activism and advocacy for equality, justice and humanitarianism.

King Luther's advocacy work ultimately led to the Civil rights act in 1964, Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, End of Vietnam War, Voting Rights Act of 1965, thereby contributing to social, economic and political changes in the United States of America.

One of my best takeaways about King Luther's unforgettable contributions was the use of 'Non-violence tactics' to achieve the right to vote, fair trial, access government services, public education and facilities for all Americans.

King's unforgettable contributions became a legacy that to date is still inspiring generations, guiding international laws and treaties beyond the United States boarders.

The same non-violence strategies inspired the rise of non-violent movements in South Africa to overcome apartheid, 1986 people power revolution in Philippines, Tiananmen protests of 1989 in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania and the recently climate strikes that eventually achieved change and a set of goals.

Contrary to Martin Luther's approach of non-violence means in some parts of the World, some freedom fighters and activists opted for violence, arms rebellion, chaotic demonstrations.

Emulating King's legacy of non-violence strategies is not rocket science but a matter of imploring peaceful demonstrations, civil disobedience, protest art and music, boycotts, consciousness raising and information warfare that can change the cause of justice and democracy from oppression and authoritarianism.

Lest we forget, Martin Luther King Jr spoke 2500 times during public rallies, conferences and some of his words became famous quotes, to date still used as source of hope, faith, courage, perseverance and resilience by freedom fighters, activists, academia, civil society and journalists in pursuit of change, justice, equality and different set of goals.

I echo the same famous statement of Martin Luther King Junior to millennials, Gen Z and succeeding generations to speak truth to power even amidst intimidation, fear and authoritarianism.

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