

The beauty of corruption

Rather like most plays and novels, the story of President Museveni's relationship with corruption has a plot. After 40 years, even when accidents and other unpredictable events happen, Mr Museveni can now instinctively respond with actions that generally keep his plot on track.

The late Tamale Mirundi was President Museveni's press secretary and (later) presidential advisor on media for several years.

A savage and sometimes slanderous talk-show performer, Mirundi was avoided by most radio stations. He frequently thanked *Impact FM* and other Pentecostal stations whose proprietors tapped into his journalistic insight, his cruelty and vulgarity to attract big audiences.

It is also reasonable to assume that President Museveni highly valued the combination of Mirundi's attributes.

Mirundi's targets (whether legitimate or framed) were mainly Opposition politicians, but journalists and NRM politicians like Andrew Mwenda and Matia Kasaija had to learn to endure his relentless verbal violence.

Now, Mirundi persistently attacked one of President Museveni's sons-in-law, alleging that the then youngish man was deeply involved in various forms of corruption and was also interested in power. From what we, ordinary people, could see, Mirundi was not stopped from making these allegations. And, although politically damaged, the First Family in-law was not deterred from

NRM has shaped corruption into a convertible tool."



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On the Mark



pursuing his business interests.

Towards the 2016 General Election, Mirundi reasoned that rulers who planned to stay for very long in power spaced out their major tasks. Otherwise, they would run out of tasks.

According to Mirundi, President Museveni had (deliberately) reserved corruption. Fighting the vice would be on Museveni's 2016-2021 agenda, and the in-law would be finished.

It would be cynical, and I doubt whether this was how the President himself reasoned. But his propagandist was dangling this rationalisation to charm and make people vote for the President.

Ten years (and two terms) down the road, corruption on a grand scale is still here, and the myth of fighting it is being woven into schemes of inheritance.

Mirundi must be smiling in his grave. In his absence, his godly radio friends et

al are buying into the idea that fighting corruption is a separate task from the other elements of governance; that it requires a special season; that the President has been occupied elsewhere, or is even too 'kind' to crucify the corrupt; that corruption is now so hard-shelled it requires military-styled operations to crack.

These opportunists are pandering to the hawkers of the related myth that only a biological inheritor of power could be focused, tough and fearless enough to lead the fight the public has been crying for.

The 'fishermen' the President appointed in 2021 were apparently meant to sleep at work. With NRM's endless rule, five years are nothing. The party could afford to waste them. There is plenty of time left for doing things the right way.

The outgoing Speaker, Anita Among, a 'fishmonger' tempted to play colourful princess, was permitted, even cheered and encouraged, to grow big wings, forgetting that her official turf was water.

But Parliament is known by everybody for its pay-and-perks extravagance. How then do you explain the paradox that the House was often flooded with even more money believed to have been arbitrarily endorsed by the Executive arm of government? And not for dignified purposes, but for dubious personal benefit.

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