

Rot runs deep: Uganda Airlines, police sackings expose problems

When inept governments get exposed, they look for scapegoats. That is why Jennifer Bamuturaki, CEO of Uganda Airlines, lost her job. She was wrongly appointed – due process was set aside by orders from above. Yet in a functional setup, Bamuturaki should have been able to perform reasonably well. Airlines do not require sorcery; they require systems: strategic leadership frameworks, disciplined procurement, professional management, predictable capitalisation, route logic and insulation from political meddling. Blaming Bamuturaki alone misses the point.

State enterprises reflect the ecology of the State and institutional environment in which they operate. If governance is characterised by patronage, blurred accountability, erratic policy shifts, or politicised appointments, even technically sound institutions will struggle. From the start, Bamuturaki was set up to fail. Any incoming CEO will fail even faster. If Uganda Airlines requires a magician to succeed, the institutional ecology is hostile. No airline can outperform the governance ecosystem that sustains it – and in Uganda, that ecosystem is distorted by the political economy set up by the so-called revolutionaries.

Bamuturaki should not walk away with her self-esteem diminished. The problem was not her. No one can succeed at Uganda Airlines under the current conditions. The airline was originally established in 1976 when the East African Community was faltering. It was the brainchild of Idi Amin, a man without formal schooling – mismanaged and killed by “revolutionaries” with

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Objection



university degrees who promised “peace, stability and prosperity for all.” The level of thinking that killed Uganda Airlines is the same that resurrected it in 2018 and still supervises it. Expecting miracles in such an environment is naïve.

The firing of Kampala Metropolitan Police Commander Richard Ecega is even stranger. Crime has allegedly gone out of hand, yet responsibility starts at the top. The Inspector General of Police should bear the brunt, not a subordinate. But even that wouldn’t solve the deeper problem: the man who brings ant-infested firewood into his kitchen should not complain when lizards arrive. When Ugandans vote for the NRM, knowing it misuses the police for its own ends, they should not be surprised when crime spirals.

The disconnect is stark. For ordinary citizens, crime is simple: thieves in homes, gangs on streets, lives taken without reason. They expect a police force that prevents crime, detects it, and responds swiftly. For the ruling party, policing serves a different purpose: protecting political power. The machinery moves quickly when Opposition fig-

ures assemble, yet slows to a crawl when citizens call for help. This is not about capacity; it is about choice.

Institutions do not exist in isolation; they mirror the political culture, priorities, and incentives of the State. When appointments are politicised, accountability blurred, and rules bent to serve private interests, performance suffers. People like Bamuturaki become convenient targets for failures they did not create.

Beloved Ugandans, wake up: under this government, you do not matter. Replacing CEOs or firing middle managers is cosmetic. Repainting the surface cannot fix systemic rot. Uganda Airlines, the police, and other State institutions are mirrors of the broader governance environment. Until that environment is fixed – through accountability, transparency, and genuine institutional reform – no individual, however competent, can succeed.

The lesson is clear: cosmetic changes, scapegoating, and quick firings only hide the problem temporarily. If the ruling elite continues to prioritise political protection over public service, Uganda will keep paying the price – in failing airlines, rising crime, and frustrated citizens. True reform requires more than headlines; it requires honesty, structural overhaul, and a willingness to put competence above connections. Until then, the rot will persist, and no amount of scapegoating will make it disappear.

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