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# The Kabaka MUST NOT MEET With Museveni

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By Asumani Balwaana Kaama

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has of late been telling anyone that would care to listen that he would like to meet with His Majesty, the Kabaka of Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II. Mr. Museveni mistakenly believes that meeting with the Kabaka of Buganda will somehow disentangle him from the political mayhem he has caused in Buganda and Uganda in general. However, the reported request by Mr. Museveni to hold a meeting with His Majesty is, to put it bluntly a dim idea.

Museveni's most recent problems with Buganda stem from his tabling of the ridiculous and ill-conceived Amendment Land Bill 2007, which has designs on private property and Buganda's 9000 square miles of communal land. Despite all manner of trickery there is unanimity in Buganda's hatred of the draft Land Bill.

To Museveni's dismay, the hated Land Bill which was intended to bring divisions has instead united the Baganda against this openly naked legislative attack on the right to own property. Museveni's hope that the rest of the country would rally behind him to squeeze the Baganda suffered a premature death when the rest of Uganda coalesced bar the Western region in support Buganda's position.

Faced with Buganda's rejection of his leadership and the Land Bill, Museveni sought to "consult" with the Kabaka; thinking that perhaps he may be able to force His Majesty into accepting the bill on behalf of the Baganda. When the Kabaka turned down the request to meet with Museveni, Museveni in a rather imprudent and desperate act resorted to kidnaping Buganda government officials, thinking erroneously that this would force the Kabaka's hand to meet him.

Museveni's basic problem stems from his and his political handlers inability to grasp the rudimentary understanding of how Buganda operates. He is routinely misadvised perhaps deliberately on things Buganda by renegades like Peter Muliira who knows the truth that His Majesty the Kabaka does not and will never negotiate on behalf of Buganda or the Baganda.

A cursory review of modern Buganda history bares out this fact. During the 1953 crisis when the Kabaka was kidnaped and deported to England, he refused to negotiate with the colonial British government to secure his release. It took a special committee of Mmengo ministers and chiefs, selected by the Great Lukiiko, to negotiated for Buganda and secured Kabaka's release. Even during the Lancaster House negotiations for independence, the Kabaka did not negotiate for Buganda but rather selected Buganda government officials from Mmengo.

It is therefore wishful thinking on Museveni's part that the Kabaka has the mandate or the desire to negotiate with him about Buganda's issues.

What Buganda needs and demands from Uganda is publicly known. Buganda's rights, privileges, land and properties among other things were expropriated by Uganda in broad daylight and they are documented. Therefore Mr. Museveni cannot pretend not to know what rightfully belongs to Buganda. It does not require a meeting with the Kabaka. What Buganda needs was also documented by Museveni's government when a report was submitted by the Mmengo establishment to the Odoki constitutional commission.

Since Mr. Museveni is aware of Buganda's demands, any negotiations should be on the modalities and timetable for the return of what was expropriated. These kinds of negotiations do not require the presence of Kabaka but rather a team of officials from Mmengo duly selected by the Great Lukiiko. As well, any negotiations should not be with Museveni but rather with Uganda's elected representatives in parliament.

In the effort to hog all the power in the country, Museveni made a constitution that barred Mmengo and Kabaka from involving themselves in "politics". It does not help matters that Museveni's definition of "politics" is always evolving.

In addition, Museveni has a checkered reputation when it comes to negotiations and agreements. He has been stringing Buganda along for over 20 years, negotiating and promising to do something only when it suits him. But he always conveniently has an excuse not to implement the agreement. When he is reminded of what was agreed upon, he then calls for another meeting. Only a political imbecile would believe in negotiating with Museveni. Buganda does not need Museveni or Uganda to survive. Museveni cannot have his cake and eat it too.

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