

BLACK MONDAY

Newsletter

Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!

EDITORIAL

Fellow Ugandans,

As the National Resistance Movement marked 28 years of its rule in Uganda, various stakeholders highlighted the single most striking feature of the regime –wanton theft of public resources. This February 2014 Edition takes a closer look at the corruption trajectory since 1986 and highlights the failure of the state to curb the vice.

We also use this opportunity to announce the 2014 Black Monday Movement focus including the CSO Integrity initiative. Building and fostering integrity is the “flip” side of fighting corruption. This is critical to the success and sustainability of this anti-corruption campaign, as well as the growing realization that this campaign must be complimented with a positive pro-active preventative approach.

The Black Monday will continue in a dedicated effort to raise awareness and to catalyze informed engagement and participation of all citizens. We do hope that all patriotic Ugandans will commit to take action in fighting corruption using all opportunities in their place of work or private lives.

Together we can end theft in Uganda and create a country of solidarity, dignity, opportunity and integrity. The overall goal is to cut a “Gordian knot”. We know where we are. We know where we want to be. The answers are coming.

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28 years of corruption?



Uganda Railways was once one of the most useful means of transport in the country. Today the railway lines have turned into footpaths and the alternative means of transport are not any better. Our public funds must be put to better use by stopping corruption.

A key feature of the last 28 years of the National Resistance Movement’s rule in Uganda is the ever increasing, mind boggling, and sophisticated wanton theft of public funds. All this theft of public resources has been taking place in the context of deteriorating state of public services and increasing inequalities across the country. Sadly government efforts to curb this vice have at best been a drop in the ocean and at worst cosmetic.

The broadest definition of “corruption” covers such concepts as nepotism but we shall restrict this particular article to the embezzlement and theft of public funds that has taken place since 1986.

The impression many Ugandans have is that for the first five or six years of the NRM’s rule, the regime was disciplined, well intentioned and patriotic and apart from a few isolated incidents, which were dealt with, corruption was not a national problem. The facts are quite the contrary. Not only did massive corruption start immediately the NRA rebels seized power but it had even been going on in the bush before they came to power.

For example, in August 1985, NRA guerrillas led by a senior NRA commander, Jim Muhwezi, raided the Bank of Uganda Currency Centre in Kabale and took over 400 Million Shillings. They worked with an NRA collaborator, Joy Kasirimbi, who eventually became a senior official in Bank of Uganda after the NRM government was established. This, Muhwezi said, the NRA would refund to Bank of Uganda once they took state power. He also seized a blue and white van belonging to the district farm institute of Kabale and used it to drive the money to Kilembe. An NRA collaborator, Dr. Begumisa, who was a commissioner of finance in the liberated NRA areas of western Uganda, and Muhwezi summoned the UCB Kilembe manager, John Katungi, and gave him instructions to keep the stolen money for use as and when they needed it. They ordered Katungi to open the safe (which safe?) for inspection and deposited their money separately. They opened a book of accounts for the money and started transacting business with it, buying fuel, food, vehicles, and so on. Since they came to power, nothing has been heard of the 400 million shillings, in

terms of refunding it.

Next, the NRA looted coffee from Nyakatonzi Growers Cooperative Society in Kasese and gave it to one of their supporters, a businessman called John Sanyu Katuramu, to buy cars on their behalf from Rwanda and Zaire. Katuramu would, out of this coffee trade, suddenly become a very rich man and later a Prime Minister of the Toro kingdom. The Nyakatonzi coffee has never been repaid.

1986-1998

Among the first reports of what was going on within a few months of the NRM coming to power was a news story by the Citizen newspaper of June 10, 1986:

“Acts of lawlessness have continued to disturb residents in parts of Gulu. Armed robbery and killings have become very common especially in the suburbs of Gulu town. Many of these robberies are committed by men in army uniforms where NRA soldiers are stationed. Last Sunday June 7, 1986,

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How Theft Eats into Uganda's Socio-economic Fabric

Corruption has become one of the most debated topics in Uganda since the NRM government came to power in January 1986. The public perception of the NRM government, is that it is easily the most corrupt Uganda has ever seen. This perception is more accurate than most Ugandans realize; just as non-state society realizes or acknowledges how wide spread corruption is.

The simplest explanation for widespread corruption in Uganda today is that the NRM government does not feel the urgency or importance of fighting it. At least not the type of urgency as when President Yoweri Museveni felt it important to deploy Ugandan troops in Somalia and South Sudan. In which case he took the decision and swiftly sent the troops without seeking or waiting for Parliamentary approval. Efforts by groups like Walk-to-Work, A4C and 4GC, when they were started, among other issues, to protest against corruption were swiftly brought to an end with heavy police and army deployment and the NRM party was quick to crack down on the four "rebel" MPs in 2013, while hastily approving supplementary budgets for State House! The NRM government, therefore, does not lack the will to act decisively over issues that it deems important. That the crisis of corruption has remained unaddressed for the last 20 or so years, clearly demonstrates that it is not considered a priority or a problem.

A peculiar characteristic of corruption under the NRM era, is that it has been left to fester by the government for the NRM's own long-term goals. Under the NRM government, incidences of corruption by government officials, ruling party, opposition members and the business community has been

used as a form of blackmail to achieve political ends. For example, if a cabinet minister, top civil servant, magistrate, opposition MP or journalist takes a bribe, State House political operatives or intelligence agents secretly file and keep the dirty details rather than arrest this particular individual. So that when a time comes for important parliamentary bill to be debated and approved for funds from the treasury, in order to cover-up sensitive government scandals, the "dirt" on a particular official and personality is used to blackmail them. This partly explains why corruption continues to get worse in Uganda by the year, while the NRM government appears to get stronger rather than weaker in its hold on power!

There has also been dramatic increase in corruption has coincided with the privatization of the Ugandan economy and social services. In the face of it, an increasingly privatized economy should have led to greater efficiency, productivity and therefore a reduction in corruption. But this has not been the case. A number of factors are responsible for this. The first is that the social safety net that had previously held the country together was torn apart in the mid-1990s. During the first 30 years of independence, the government operated well-stocked hospitals and fairly good secondary schools, and education at Makerere University was free for all. Civil servants lived in government-owned pool houses in all towns in Uganda. The best primary schools in Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja, to take an example, charged fees of UGX 250 per year for days secondary schools and UGX450 per year for boarding secondary schools (1972-1975), and between 1976 and 1979 schools charged UGX 450 per year

for day and UGX650 per year for boarding. School fees actually increased during Amin's time because of the economic embargo imposed on Uganda by the international community which we have not had in the last 28 years.

The near-collapse of government hospitals, schools and the selling off of government houses have left civil servants exposed to the mercy of market forces. The cost of living today seems to be five times what it was 30 or 40 years ago even though basic goods, services and medicine are in plenty, much more than in the 1970s.

Uganda has been heavily dependent on donor aid to pay her bills and meet her financial obligations since 1986. Most of this aid is channeled through the government - the very agency that, in the first place, was the nerve centre of corruption. With the government receiving the bulk of this donor money and other development aid, the result is that the executive is financially stronger than the other two main branches of state; the legislative and the judiciary. What should have been a political system in which the executive, the judiciary and the legislative act as counterweights to each other, has now become one where the executive is disproportionately stronger and the parliament and judiciary have been reduced to "subservient" branches of state to the president.

Parliament is too weak to call the executive to account while the judiciary acts simply as a civil service, not an effective branch of government. Agencies like the Inspectorate of Government and various commissions of inquiry are appointed by the president and as such serve to suit his pleasure, making it difficult for them to serve as effective and inde-

pendent watchdogs against corruption from the start. In other words, the state structure of power in Uganda today is weighted heavily in favour of the executive and in particular the person of the president.

Another element of corruption in Uganda that does not get much attention is that found in the private sector. At every level of national life, often well outside the knowledge, encouragement or control of the government, corruption is flourishing in this sector. It is well-known, for example, that marketing managers in the major corporations require a kickback to approve adverts to private newspapers, radio and TV stations. Individuals or companies seeking to supply materials to corporations bribe procurement officers to shortlist their tender applications. There is rampant forgery of academic papers and "mercenaries" hired to write out university term papers for busy professionals from the private entities attending evening classes at universities.

Reports of university lecturers soliciting sexual favours from girls in exchange for better grades have become regular. Traffic policemen are offered bribes even before they ask for them. Well-known corrupt government ministers are offered front-row seats at Sunday church services.

So while the Black Monday and other anti-corruption campaigns have tended to focus on state-level corruption, it thrives in every area of Ugandan society. Therefore efforts should be made to ensure that the executive is pressured to take a stand against the theft of public resources that have eaten deeply into the Ugandan socio-economic fabric.

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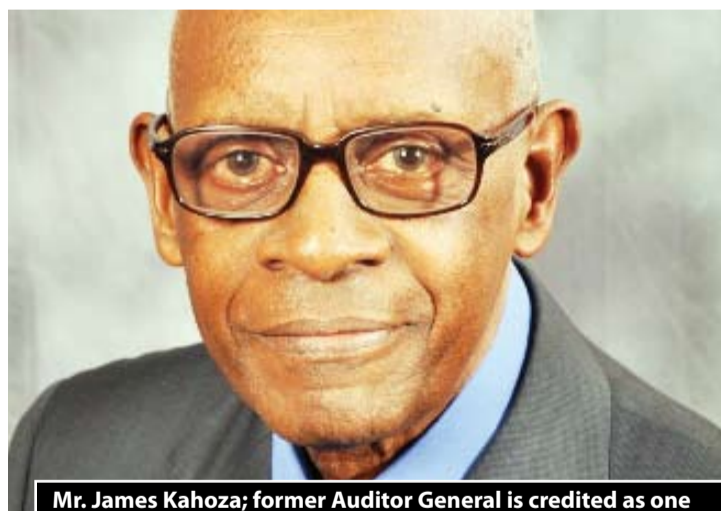
Integrity – The Ultimate Goal of the Fight against Corruption

In November 2012, hundreds of civil society organization planned a gathering at the Uganda Manufacturer's Association grounds in Lugogo, to launch the first ever citizen-led anticorruption campaign; The Black Monday Movement. At that time, many people questioned this campaign's goal. From the time of its launch till now, the campaign continues to emphasize that "enough is enough; we have to end the stealing of public funds" because citizens continue to suffer greatly because of this theft. Theft of public funds represents one of the severest levels of corruption because it robs the country and its people of their dignity and sense of virtue. Ultimately, the fight against corruption is a fight to bring back integrity in public life.

As a country, we have to ensure that we develop, expand and nurture a new culture in public life. Fighting corruption to restore integrity is an important step towards building this new culture. To have integrity is to

live and think according to a standard of truth. To have integrity is not to follow 'dos' and 'don'ts'. It is about looking at and questioning ourselves, and to determine if what we believe in is what we do. The dictionary uses the words - an unimpaired condition, (soundness, wholeness), firm adherence to a code of moral values, (incorruptible, honor) and the quality or state of being complete or undivided, (completeness). These are value-based terms that should characterize our public life. Therefore, as Ugandans, we need to look for these qualities among our leaders.

While we know that there are many thieves in government, we are also aware of several people doing simple acts of honor, adhering to set standards, and refusing to compromise in their execution of public duty. We need to look out for these people in public life. When we affirm, celebrate and appreciate them, we will 'expand the good in our society to crowd out the bad'. The



Mr. James Kahoza; former Auditor General is credited as one of public officials who served with a high level of integrity.

exercise of identifying persons with integrity restores hope, dignity and aspirations of opportunity among citizens.

However, this should not be limited to persons who are always seen in the media. We need to go to all

communities across the country and intentionally work with community members to identify their own icons and champions of integrity that have changed and impacted their lives.

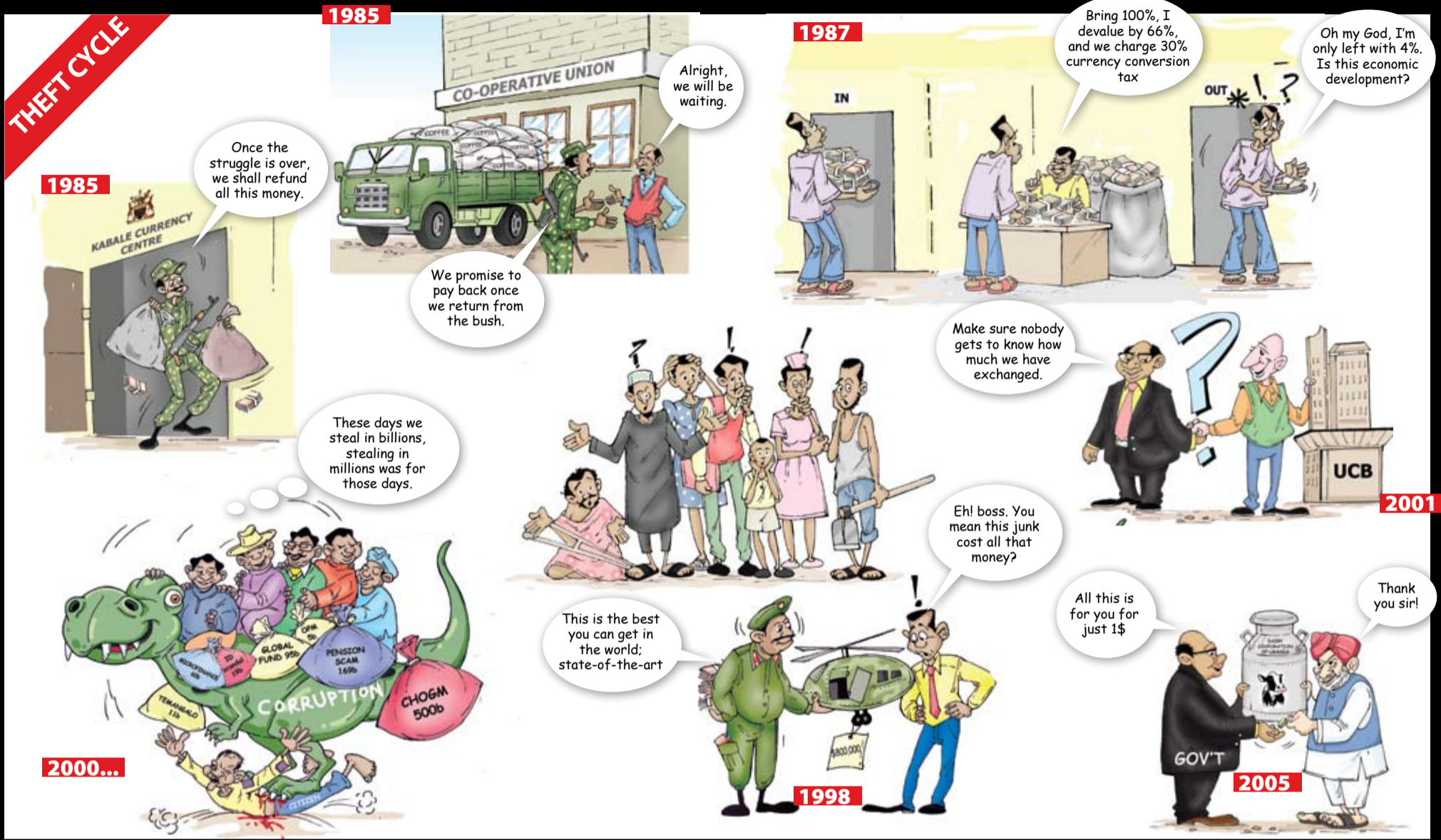
Therefore, the Black Monday Movement this year is launching a

countrywide campaign on integrity. This campaign will run alongside the fight against corruption but with particular focus on profiling acts of integrity. To that end, community members across the country are organizing themselves in community groups known as Community Integrity Agents that will lead the local initiatives. The identified personalities will be our Icons of Integrity. We shall work closely with media but also publicize these integrity persons in our Black Monday Newsletters.

At the end of the year we shall hold a National Integrity Day; a time to underscore that a dignified Uganda with opportunities for happy people, is a Uganda built on integrity and not on corruption. This is our resolve for 2014. We call on all Ugandans to embrace this crusade for integrity. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said - 'Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber'.

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THEFT CYCLE



28 years of corruption?

FROM PAGE 1

armed thugs invaded several homes at Laibi trading centre 2 klms on Gulu/Kla road, and robbed a number of residents and businessmen of their properties and money."

The Citizen followed up their June report on NRA theft with another article on August 17, 1986:

"Gross indiscipline which has spread among the rank and file of the NRA has resulted in numerous acts of violation of human rights by officers and men of the National Resistance Army. Several high-ranking military officers have been implicated in misconduct ranging from corruption, poaching and bribery to outright confiscation of people's property. And several junior officers and privates have reportedly been involved in violent robberies."

The first Managing Director of Uganda Railways under the NRM government, Ateker Ejaru, is reported to have taken the entire cutlery from the company and furnished his Club 2000 in Soroti. It was one of the earliest cases officially reported.

Another interesting story was that of Captain Teddy Seezi Cheeye who was sacked

from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting by the Public Service Commission in 1988, for using over 400,000shs of telex services at the ministry for his personal business and correspondence. This was reported in the July 5, 1989 edition of the Citizen newspaper. This was the same Cheeye who would appear in 1990 with a newsletter, the Uganda Confidential, purporting to be exposing and fighting official corruption!

In 1989, a member of the National Resistance Council (NRC), Basoga Nsadhu said he had discovered a major corruption scandal involving the Ministry of Defence. Over 100 million U.S. dollars had been embezzled in a deal involving the procurement of vehicles for the army. The documents from the French bank BNP Paribas where Uganda's Ministry of Defence was to deposit the money on behalf of the Spanish company supplying the vehicles showed that the cost of purchase had been significantly inflated. Basoga Nsadhu said he would present the documentary evidence before parliament, at that time, the National Resistance Council (NRC). Just before he could, his car was broken into and the documents related to the scandal were stolen.

In 1996, Lt. Michael Shalita, an intelli-

gence officer at the Internal Security Organization (ISO), was gunned down in Bukoto. It is alleged that he had been investigating fraud at the Ministry of Defence's commercial company, Danze.

Again in 1998, news came of a scandal involving the procurement of military helicopters, uniforms and food rations. A Kampala businessman, Emma Katto, and Major-General Salim Saleh, brother to President Museveni, were implicated in the purchase of these helicopters. Saleh later admitted that he had taken an \$800,000 commission (some politicians and media commentators described it as a bribe) on the purchase of the helicopters.

2005 - 2014

In 2005, media reports revealed that money from the Global Fund for Malaria, Tuberculosis and AIDS treatment had disappeared from the Ministry of Health. Three ministers, the Minister of Health Jim Muhwezi, ministers of state Alex Kamugisha and Capt. Mike Mukula were put on trial over the embezzlement of the money. During the investigations and trial, a State House welfare officer called Alice Kaboyo was named as having taken some of the money, which ended up in NRM party youth activities. In his trial in late 2012,

Mukula also mentioned that he had got instructions from the First Lady Janet Museveni to give some of that money to a number of people and groups.

Then, of course, there are all the other scandals of recent years, from the sale of the Temangalo land to the NSSF (in which many journalists took bribes to write favourably about the various camps involved in this saga), the massive theft of money during the preparations for the 2007 Commonwealth summit in Kampala, the numerous orders by President Museveni to Bank of Uganda to "compensate" the businessman Hassan Basajjalaba and many more.

These cases are just the tip of the iceberg. Corruption has become the de facto way Uganda and the NRM runs. It is a system, has its norms, rules, expectations and language. Bribes, kickbacks and other methods of corruption are budgeted into the lives of most Ugandans and many private companies. Therefore, it should be the desire of every Ugandan, young and old to demand from this government to account for the public funds stolen which otherwise would have transformed the country to a high level of development.

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SUMMARY OF CORRUPTION SCANDALS TO LOOK BACK AT



What must we do to get our money back?

Wear only black clothes every Monday to show you are tired of theft.

Demand political action from the President

Isolate every thief implicated in a theft scandal. Don't invite them to your burials, weddings.

Do not buy goods or services from businesses owned by thieves. Support Ugandans working honestly to make a living.

Until all the thieves have returned our money.