

BLACK MONDAY

Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!

Editorial

100 Weeks of Black Monday and still counting!

Corruption has for long been a constant narrative in Uganda's political sphere but in 2012, the Ugandan Society were unanimous on the new and worrying state that the Pearl of Africa found itself mired in. Ugandans had grown seemingly weary of cases where taxpayers' money is siphoned off by well-connected government officials, often walking away scot-free. To mark the United Nations International Anti-Corruption Day which aims to raise public awareness of corruption and what people can do to fight it. The Black Monday Movement looked at how far the movement has come. To call the picture mixed is something of an understatement: we can rightly hail the public finance management reforms that have been spear headed by the Ministry of Finance; the proposed Anti-Corruption Amendment Bill and the changing discourse on corruption. The 100 weeks journey has not been an easy one as it has been characterized by several arrests, police excesses, and attempted ban and with several activists frequenting the Police station with endless bonds. Going forward the Black Monday Movement will seek to have a strong rural focused agenda with greater coverage of local issues, celebrate efforts to rebuild integrity and ensure that corruption counts in the 2016 epoch at all levels. The success of fighting corruption ultimately lies with how the citizens utilize their power to demand accountability and say "Enough is Enough!"

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Black Monday – A Journey in Citizen Engagement



By Richard Ssewakiryanga

In 2012, Uganda was hit by a double tragedy. Two big corruption scandals of theft of public resources were exposed. One was in the Office of the Prime Minister, where billions were stolen and ended up on various bank accounts of public officials and private companies. In the Ministry of Public Service another colossal amount in billions of pensioner's money was stolen. This was stolen over time, through a syndicate of individuals that forged records of pensioner's. The public was mesmerized. The donors took quick action and cut some aid. As civil society organizations we felt frustrated, helpless and in shock. The impunity with which public officials were stealing money was incomprehensible. Civil society leaders came together and debated what could be done in the circumstances by the sector. We thought about various actions that we could take to show our dissatisfaction as well as mobilize citizens to

understand the gravity of this theft of public resources. We then agreed that it would be important to run a country-wide, citizen-led campaign that was simple to understand and easy to join. We then agreed to a simple campaign called Black Monday. In this campaign we would: 1. Wear Black every Monday as a sign of our resolve and speak to at least 5 Ugandans about dangers of corruption and actions needed 2. Shun corruption for it starts with you so that you have the moral authority to remove 'the peck...' 3. Isolate all thieves and denounce them wherever you encounter them and 4. Boycott all businesses and enterprises of the corrupt - supermarkets, petrol stations, shops, etc Black Monday was therefore borne out of this frustration related to impunity in the stealing of public funds. Civil society was always criticized for lack of social and political imagination but we all agreed that we had repeated this 'development experiment' many times and it never seemed to yield any

results. Yet when we looked around us on the continent of Africa and beyond it was clear that citizens all the over world are showing leaders is that, if the world is going to change then people must become agents of their own development. But this is easier said than done.

Today the Black Monday is a movement that exposes corrupt practices of public officials to citizens. The BMM dedicates every Monday of every week as a Black Monday. The campaign publishes a monthly newsletter that exposes the ills of corruption in different sectors and also conducts public actions to further expose the ills of corruption. At its one year anniversary in November 2013, it was agreed that the campaign will now be expanded to also go out and identify public officials who are doing good in public office and impacting their communities positively. These public officials will be celebrated, affirmed and recognized. Looking back, this has been a two year journey of struggle. This campaign demonstrates

citizen's resilience, and it also demonstrates civil society solidarity. In this campaign CSOs have demonstrated that they can work together to influence how public funds are managed. In the early months, when the campaign distributed newsletters in public places, a few of our colleagues were wrongfully arrested but for all of them charges were dropped when it was understood that this was a campaign to promote a cause that was important to all citizens including those that keep law and order – the cause was a - corrupt-free Ugandan public sector.

Today we look back and realize that Black Monday has reached all parts of Uganda, the three hundred thousand (300,000) newsletters that we have published for the last 24 months have been circulated widely. We have reached citizens through music and other types of memorabilia. The over 25,000 newsletters that go out every month are able to reach at least 2.5 million Ugandans and it is estimated that each newsletter is read by over 10 people. The partners in Black Monday believe that Uganda should be a society that promotes citizen participation and action where the 'Citizen is Central'. When citizens become central in improving society – that is the seedbed of 'self-direction'. As Ugandans we should get to a place where we act based on our own values and interests. When 'self-direction' by citizens becomes the organizing principle of our work then as elites, intellectuals and consultants we have to acquire a different role. Just like we have understood in Black Monday, lecturing citizens is no longer useful, what we need is to concentrate on catalyzing action - this is the heart of the Black Monday Movement. "A luta continua, vitória é certa" - [translated] - The struggle continues, victory is certain!

100 Weeks of Black Mon

REFLECTION: When Black Monday hit the streets, the country was taken by surprise. The sight of senior civil society leaders distributing the newsletters to all and sundry gave the campaign even more momentum. In no time, distributors of the newsletters found themselves indulging in running battles with the police. That phase was just but a phase. Calm returned. For 100 weeks now, so much water has flown down the bridge. In this issue, we take stalk of our journey and pick the minds of cross cutting sections of society to share their experiences, criticism and tips on the way forward as we write the next Black Monday chapter. One crystal clear fact for the record, when all is said and done, is that the effort was and remains worthwhile in every sense of the word.



Jackie Lumbasi, presenter capital FM

I honestly think it made no impact. There was no aggressive push and may be the media did not help to publicise such a noble cause. The organisers behind it just have to be more aggressive and take it beyond civil society so that the entire populace appreciates the gospel for change.



Edgar Tabaro, lawyer and attorney general Toro kingdom

Well, well well. Civic awareness of the citizenry as to how affairs of the state is run is intrinsic to the democratisation process. To the extent that civil society pushes this agenda, they have my guaranteed support. However, the infiltration of this otherwise noble cause by those who desire to subvert the sovereignty and popular will of Ugandans is an issue of concern. Civil society can be the vehicle to growing a vibrant democracy!



Anna Adeke Ebaju, former Makerere University Guild President

Black Monday Movement for me was and remains a big opportunity for the Ugandan citizen to actively engage in issues of governance without sitting on the fence and watching as key political and civil society actors play their role. During my time at Makerere University, the movement had only started and trust me it started with enviable enthusiasm, the students truly followed it every bit but I feel the momentum has dwindled and we must return to the drawing board to see how best to maintain that momentum. Of course amidst all odds.

Seven crests of doom & A little dingy boat

A dark night,
Shadows make love;
Kisses, embraces,
slaughters ...

The black of a night sea,
Gentle ripples – a deceptive
faced;
Tempests flare;
Tides rise, yet fall not ...

Waves pound the peoples’
shore;
Painting black – an Africa
lost to the people ...
Yellow – a sun with dark
rays,
Painting red - a peoples’
blood, shed ...

Ever so silently,
The corals and shells are
swept along,
Swept ashore;
They cry – “No change
...”
Laden heavy with loot –

The little dingy-boat
paddles on,
The captain and crew – a
stubborn lot;
The winds howl; Hounds

let loose ...
Paramilitary fatigues –
blue/white camouflage;
Baton strikes – bones
broken;
Poison gas – tears without
end;
Bullets; Rubber-cum-steel
...

The dingy-boat remains
afloat;
Crew; Captain – a stubborn
lot;
Battered, beaten, bruised –
Yet broken not ...

On and on;
Monday after Monday;
A mighty force,
Of reason – to a nation
gone mad,
Of light to hearts become
dark,
Of hope to a Ugandan crane
lost in deserts unknown,
Seven crests of doom upon
her head ...

SOLOMON MANZI
The Lantern Meet of Poets



George William Bakka, entrepreneur, CEO Angels Initiatives

I closely followed the Black Monday movement right from the start though I was not actively engaged in the activities. I remember some notable figures like Bishop Zac Niringiye were arrested. For some reason the momentum seems to have come down, that is the challenge with a number of initiatives in the country. I commend the movement for raising citizen awareness on corruption, perhaps it should examine the best ways of engaging the entire population because for now, it appears like a civil society project yet its cause affects us all.



Kwezi Tabaro, student Makerere University

First, I should admit I have only been able to read one or two copies of Black Monday (that I was handed at the Makerere main gate on two Monday mornings). The other issues, were either not distributed or I didn't notice they were out. Second, it's impact. I think Black Monday made quite an impact in its first three months. I remember an incident where Zac Niringiye was arrested at MUK and caused quite a stir at Wandegaya Police station. Apart from that, the impact has really been minimal. What needs to be done? Well, may be to have more publications and resume handing them to people in traffic jam, office, schools, etc. On whether it was worthwhile, I think it was. Could be the reason why some activists were arrested and jailed.

Monday Citizens perspective



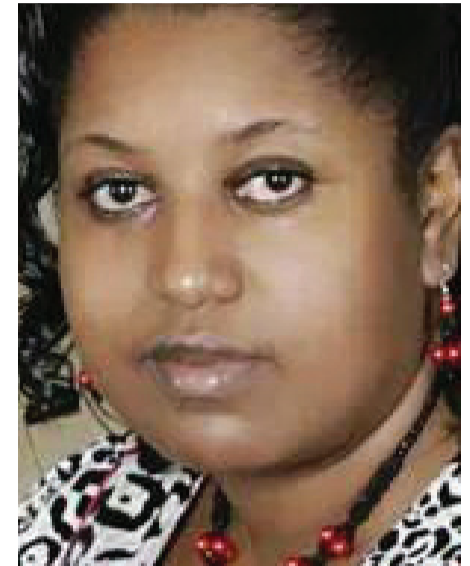
Erias Lukwago, Lord Mayor, Kampala

Their efforts are commendable. For some time there was this notion that civil society had been patronized by government. I truly commend Black Monday movement for taking that bold step of putting corruption at the centre of their activism. We only need to have a dialogue around how best to spread the net of the gospel to reach the ordinary citizens. I am glad the Black Monday newsletter reached some remote areas, there are some followers already. We just need to do more so that the impact is down there.



Jacqueline Asimwe Mwesige, founder member Black Monday Movement

I think Black Monday represented a breath of fresh air in terms of a citizen movement to do something about grand corruption. Black Monday galvanized energies around the use of the term theft of public resources (not corruption). We have consistently produced a newsletter each month focusing on a sector each month, showing how corruption affects that particular sector - education, justice, health, oil, land, Agriculture, forests, police, etc. We participated in public actions to show our discontent or to highlight a particular area of corruption - from giving out fliers in streets, taking food to schools, protesting the paraffin tax, etc. Many people outside Kampala also took to doing their own activities to spread black Monday. Mirrors is now an annual event targeting youth, the anti-corruption week is used as a space to take stock and re-energize the campaign. We also 'exported' black Monday to other countries and encouraged civil society to borrow the model, eg in Malawi, Nigeria, I made a presentation about black Monday in Iowa, USA.



Sarah Kagingo, special presidential assistant communications

When the movement started, it created the impression that it was an opposition outfit, perhaps that explained the reaction from police but as time went on, the movement's true identity was understood, as a collective citizen action against graft. The president has consistently said the NRM government has zero tolerance to corruption, this initiative was only and I hope it continues to support the president and the entire government in the efforts to stamp corruption out of Uganda. Their efforts are commendable, and they should do more.



Angela Katatumba, musician and businesswoman

Corruption is bad, there can be no debate on that. It affects each one of us in several ways so as a person, any efforts to address this problem should be welcome, at any rate really and that is how I look at Black Monday. I have seen a couple of the newsletters and I think there is great work done by the civil society. I have not closely followed their activities but I am sure every bit of their work deserves our cooperation so long as it is not politicized because that creates a divisive impact on the followership. So far so good!!



Cissy Kagaba, Executive Director Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda

The arrests of activists when giving out the newsletter showed impact on the power of the information being distributed; government knows the power of information and tried to block it. The fact that we were giving people information on corruption showed the power in our strategy. We need to devise other innovative modes other than the newsletter; those new strategies should reach the grassroots.



Bills Agaba, author, leadership coach and businessman

Black Monday for me is an effort in the right direction; any citizen must make the business of corruption risky. That said, the campaign lacked maximum utilization of social media to relate with the young people. Let the organisers creatively make the campaign viral online.

Mukula George Williams, aspiring guild president MUK

Black Monday Movement has vastly exposed corruption cases especially within government thus availing more detailed information concerning corruption. However this information regarding these vices is limited the few 'elites' within Kampala who directly or indirectly thrive because of corruption. The mode of information dissemination is limited to the literates and change the local languages would be great. The use of English leaves out illiterate majority and most frustrated members of society. As a result, the intended goal of raising and stimulating cohesion within the population is still low. Black Monday should make use of social media and try to reach out to the dot com youth through Facebook, whatSapp, twitter but most importantly actively involve in making them part of the struggle to rethink and rewrite the future of this country.

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.

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