

MAPAMBANO

● STRUGGLE, SOLIDARITY AND A WORKER'S PARTY IN KENYA ●

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Why the rotten Narc government must go

Since Narc took over power, more than 117 suspected criminals have been summarily executed by security forces in the streets while according to the Independent Medico Legal Unit (IMLU), 45 Kenyans were tortured to death while in police custody in 2003. These Kenyans joined the statistics of more than 1,000 citizens who have been documented by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) as having been summarily executed by police in the last decade, time when Dictator Daniel arap Moi wielded power ruthlessly in Kenya.

So far, no action has been taken against security forces engaged in ritual murder of civilians because the government is afraid that once it takes action against trigger-happy policemen, it will demoralize the 30,000 members of the force whose work in Kenya has become the protection of the rich and the wanton killing of civilians in the name of "containing crime".

The feeling that the police do not have any responsibility to protect citizens is so widespread that in 2003 alone, Kenyans took the law into their own hands and executed 95 citizens who were suspected to have committed crimes. These kinds of executions are usually fuelled by lack of confidence in the judicial process, the same feeling that existed during the Moi dictatorship and which is known as "mob justice".

The Narc government was elected to rescue Kenya from national oppression that was engineered by former Dictator Moi. But what Kenyans are witnessing after President Kibaki was given 61.9% of the vote to help transform the country is arbitrary arrests and detention of innocent civilians including journalists, limitation of both freedom of speech and freedom of press, harassment and intimidation of newspapers especially those critical of the government, repeated restriction of freedom of assembly, disruption of public meetings by police, violent dispersal of peaceful demonstrators, attacks by the President of NGOs allegedly involved in non partisan politics not to mention corruption, tribalism, nepotism and

other excesses of the ruling class that were so conspicuous during the Moi dictatorship.

In 2002, the same year that Narc took over power, 536 Kenyans lost their lives in prison due to pulmonary tuberculosis, gastro-enteritis, pneumonia and malaria, diseases which are treatable if given due medical attention. Kenyan prisons still remain the same "death chambers" they were during the Moi dictatorship. A 2002 report by a Human rights group documented horrible cases of human rights abuses on inmates including the application of electric shocks to the genitalia, continuous beaming of 150-watt bulb on inmates for up to 24 hours, stripping of female inmates who were reported to have been held in solitary confinement for long periods in flooded cells and other violations which many Kenyans thought had been wiped out with the defeat of dictator Moi's regime. The 89 prison facilities with a capacity of 15,000 prisoners are still holding more than 40,000 prisoners more than two years after Narc took over power on a platform of change. At Kericho prison, a cell designed for 12 prisoners was, by last year, still holding 97-127 prisoners. Narc must go!

Kenyans have a government which, through the Public Officer Ethics Bill, tells senior government officers and their spouses to declare their wealth only to hide these declarations from the public. What followed as was seen in the Ndungu Land Report (which the government released under pressure) was a series of evidence linked to land grabbing by top officers of the State led by President Mwai Kibaki himself. Even Judges and magistrates who were interdicted because of evidence of corruption documented in the Ringeria report either sneaked back to work or escaped prosecution. Another KANU is in power!

The economy is in tatters, and just like Moi's regime, the Narc

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Rapper Billy Boy sent to Swedish prison

Billy Okello, a Kenyan Rapper known by his artist name of "Billy Boy" has been jailed for eight months by a Swedish court after being found guilty of five separate charges namely: mishandling a Swedish woman, threatening the woman, damage to property, driving without a license and driving while under the influence of alcohol.

Billy will also pay the woman a total of 28,700 Swedish crowns in compensation for damages to the woman's property, causing her pain, violating her integrity and causing her physical and psychological trauma.

The woman was awarded 5,000 kr for each and every one of the four assaults while the court decided that the compensation will be paid with interest from 6th August 2002 when the last attack is said to have occurred. According to the judgment, Billy was sent to prison on the basis of

what his accuser told the court.

"The major part of the investigation is based on the interview with (name with-held) and the case is built entirely on the information she gave", read the judgment. "As compared to Okello (the woman) appeared prominently more believable. The court has decided that the information she gave will be used as the basis of the judgment", wrote Judge Bengt Bondesson.

"All the crimes Okello is guilty of are such that a prison sentence will, in the first instance, act as a deterrent" wrote the judge. "The court decides that this deterrent will be eight months in prison. Okello has been unavailable for a long time without trace. There is a hanging risk that if left free, he will not be able to meet the sentence. On this ground, he will

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The imprisonment of Billy Boy: A case of racism and discrimination

Billy Boy, a Kenyan Rap artist, has been sentenced to an eight month prison term by a Swedish court after being charged with assaulting a Swedish woman, driving without a licence and driving under the influence of alcohol.

For individuals who were very close to the case and who got exposed to the “facts” that were used for judgement, Billy was sent to prison after a fraudulent show trial that has undermined the Swedish justice system in the eyes of those who are familiar with key facts in the case.

The imprisonment of Billy exposed the scoundrel character of the Social Democratic government in Sweden whose principle agenda with Africans in courts of law (as this case has confirmed) is to throw them in jail without butting an eye.

Billy was sent to jail without a single evidence being produced in court to prove his guilt. There was not a single police report to prove a single case of assault while there was also not a single report from a medical practitioner to document any of the four cases of assault that were brought before Billy.

On the cases of driving without a license, Billy's International driving licence he has been driving with across Europe and which police in other countries have accepted in the past could not be produced in court for Billy to use it to defend himself because the licence had been confiscated by the Swedish authorities.

Billy was charged with drinking while drunk after police were called to quell a party fracas in *Södatälje* in Stockholm. However, Evidence by witnesses who were present at the scene where Billy was arrested never

emerged in court. According to these witnesses, Billy was not drinking on that day while one witness has said that Billy was arrested outside his car after police were called when Billy came under attack.

The woman who accused Billy had told him that she “lied to police” to make Billy to feel the pain after the rapper quit the relationship. But evidence by a witness who testified in court to this effect and who was driving Billy in his car when the woman uttered the words was thrown out by the Judge.

A threatening hand-written note the woman wrote to Billy warning the Rapper of dire consequences if he quit the relationship could not be produced in court as evidence because the woman did not sign it. There are numerous omissions in the case which we cannot go into here but which have been elaborated at Billy's website whose address is listed below.

What becomes clear after an analysis of the case is that Billy is just another victim of racism and discrimination within the Swedish justice system. The case is yet another exposure of institutionalized State racism and discrimination of immigrant communities in Sweden especially Africans who are too unorganized to fight back effectively.

The Billy case has not attracted a lot of media attention in Sweden because of its “low profile”. But for Mapambano, the case demonstrates the hypocrisy of the Swedish State especially in the so called fight against racism and discrimination of Africans in this country. For further info, visit: <http://billyboy.blogspot.com>.

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Why the rotten Narc government must go

government survives by begging from IMF and world Bank. Just like Moi, Kibaki continues to dance to the tunes of the British and United States governments under the Neo-colonial arrangement.

MPs are looting the economy, Kibaki's best friends like David Mwiraria (the Finance Minister) and Chris Murungaru (The Internal Security Chief) have emerged as some of the most corrupt government Ministers making them the new Biwotts and Saitotis of the emerging Kibaki Dictatorship. The ruling Coalition is split down the middle, poverty is growing within the population while some Kenyans are actually starving.

There is no change in the slums, University graduates continue to go without jobs, the youth have resorted to crime to survive, ethnic cleansing is back in full swing, workers are being retrenched, State firms are being sold to Multinational companies while more and more money is being pumped into bogus projects used by the rich to loot the economy. More than two years after taking power, the rot in the new govern-

ment is choking the Kenyan population which put it in power.

At one point, the government says that it is fighting corruption but at another point, the same government releases the very people it has locked in for corruption related offences.

Why is Kibaki appointing senior public officers along ethnic lines after Kenyans gave him the mandate to change the wrongs Moi did during two decades of dictatorship?

At least, this is the case with Dr. Margaret Gachara, former Director of the National Aids Control Council who was one of the prisoners “pardoned” by the President because she was among the statistics of prisoners who had committed a “petty offence”. She was jailed after being found guilty of stealing more than Ksh 27 million in an illegal pay package which left her with a monthly salary of Ksh 2 million paid from tax revenues. The ruling class is now officially

classified as corrupt and many Kenyans are now waiting for the next elections to show the government the door.

The question is: Where is the new Constitution which Narc promised in 100 days? Or why haven't teachers been awarded their salary increments which, Kibaki said, would be awarded during the first month of Narc take-over?

Why were culprits like Moi, who stole money through the Goldenberg scam, been shielded from the stalled Goldenberg commission and what is Professor George Saitoti doing in the Ministry of Education when he should be under investigation for involvement in several corruption scandals including the Goldenberg scandal? Why is Kibaki appointing senior public officers along ethnic lines after Kenyans gave him the mandate to change the wrongs Moi did? Isn't it time for the rotten Narc government to go or should Kenyans still be singing “*Yote yawezekana bila Moi*” (everything is possible without Moi). Who says Kibaki should stay?

The situation at the Kenyan Embassy

Following the power take over in Kenya by the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) government, the situation at the Kenyan Embassy in Stockholm has also changed dramatically. During the dictatorship of former President Daniel arap Moi, Kenyans who had divergent political opinions could not go to the Embassy to raise or discuss anything with the Ambassador. But with the new government in place, the "Berlin wall" that was erected by KANU seem to have been brought down. In the last two years, the Kenyan Embassy in Stockholm has been displaying an obvious willingness to interact more openly with Kenyans in Sweden and Embassy staff seem to have found a new form of freedom that has largely been welcomed by Wananchi.

The Ambassador, H.E Mr. Daniel Mukiri Kinyanjui, has not yet met Kenyans officially to introduce himself to members of the community. But he has been available at Kenyan functions and met groups of Kenyans at the Embassy with various agendas. In the last two years, the Embassy has surprised Kenyans by hosting all-night parties for the community during *Jamhuri* celebrations. Last year the Ambassador played a leading role in the organisation of Jamhuri Party by accepting to meet the "2004 Jamhuri Committee" in his Office and giving much of the authorization for the mobilization of logistics that made the party possible.

In fact, what prevented the Ambassador from presiding over as the Guest of Honour at the Jamhuri Party (which was also set to be a platform for his introduction to Kenyans in Sweden) was the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Wangari Maathai in Norway. As the representative of the government in Scandinavia, he had to be present at the function, not just to receive Kenyan dignitaries who attended the function but also to assert his authority as Kibaki's representative in the region.

The demeanour of Embassy staff in relation to Kenyans in Sweden is in sharp contrast when compared with the days of the Moi dictatorship. In the current dispensation, senior Embassy staff appear to be much more free to attend Kenyan functions without second thoughts. Staff who have been most visible at public places are Mr. Daniel Tanui, the First secretary and Mr. Francis Julius Mwandembo, the Second secretary.

Despite the apparent smooth running for the Embassy and the convivial relationship between Embassy staff and Kenyans, questions have been raised by Kenyans who have visited Mr. Tanui in his office as to where his loyalty really lies. This is because Mr. Tanui has refused to pull down Moi's picture from his office, choosing instead, to keep it at a strategic position where it faces him directly as President Kibaki's picture is isolated at the side of the wall where it is much more difficult to see.

Mapambano has gathered that there has been concerns among Embassy staff that since his arrival in Stockholm early last year, the Ambassador has not called a meeting with junior staff members to listen to their problems because he has been "too busy".

Kenyans who have raised concerns believe that with the defeat of the Moi dictatorship, it is very curious for a senior officer of Tanui's calibre to continue maintaining Mr. Moi's picture in his office and in a situation where KANU has already been sacked by voters. In Kenya, Moi's pictures which were hanging on business premises were crushed indiscriminately or torn into pieces after it became clear that KANU had lost power. A possible explanation which has been put across by analysts in Stockholm is that apart from having been

appointed by Mr. Moi, Mr. Tanui also hails from Mr. Moi's home area of Baringo and that the diplomat still has a lot of attachments to Moi even if the Mzee lost power.

Apart from senior staff, Junior staff members at the Embassy are however still shy in going out with Kenyans in a big way fearing that "a scandal may explode" and put their jobs at risk. In Stockholm, it is very easy for a news item to be picked up by the Kenya underground news channels like "BBC Stockholm" or the "Norsborg Times". The big problem is that some junior staff members fear that if they have too much overt contacts with Kenyans especially during moments of inebriation, they may be suspected or held responsible if damaging or sensitive information leaks out of the institution.

As the political and economic crisis deepens in Kenya and the Narc government becomes much more difficult to defend, Ambassador Kinyanjui will have to work harder to ensure that he does not go out of circulation in Stockholm as Mr. Serгон (his predecessor) did when things became really hot.

For example, some Junior staff members have, in the past, gone without salaries due to pay delays by the Narc government but anybody who can be identified as the source of this kind of information could lose his/her job at the stroke of a pen.

There are Embassy staff who have finished their tour of duty but the government has been unable to recall them because of the huge expenses involved in hiring containers to ferry their belongings to Kenya and the cost of re-deploying new staff to replace them. Hiring an average container which can swallow an officer's accumulated belongings is about Ksh 200,000. Some officers (especially those with families) may require two containers. Added to this is the cost of air tickets of officers and their families together with expenses of re-deploying a new officer from Kenya. Although billions are being looted by the ruling class, the government says that it is broke and so officers can continue serving even after their tour of duty has expired.

Mapambano has gathered that there has been concerns among Embassy staff that since his arrival in Stockholm early last year, the Ambassador has not called a meeting with junior staff members to listen to their problems because he has been "too busy". According to a junior staff member who sought anonymity, the big issue they intend to raise with the Ambassador in such a meeting is the delayed payment of wages, lack of payment of overtime allowances, mutual respect at the Embassy between senior and junior staff members together with the issue of remunerations which, according to our sources, are always delayed or never paid at all. *Mapambano* is raising these issues because junior staff members at the Embassy are fundamentally voiceless.

Since Narc took power, there has been no demonstration outside the Kenyan Embassy because of two major reasons. After Narc take-over, Kenyans decided to give Narc a chance to see how the new government performs. It is during this "wait and see" period that demos outside the Kenyan Embassy in Stockholm also vanished. In fact, a group of Kenyans teamed up with former exiles to launch the Narc branch in Stockholm and to try and use it to contribute ideas towards Nation-building. But as Narc became split and more reckless, associating with the Coalition started becoming a problem and the Narc Stockholm team quietly cooled down activity to study events.

Another reason why demos at the Embassy vanished is that the Narc take-over also led to a period of consultations and political

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KANU or NARC? The ruling class is the same

The political and economic crisis in Kenya inherited by Narc from the former KANU government of President Daniel arap Moi does not exist without an explanation and a permanent solution. After lies piled upon lies, it is now accepted by both the oppressor Narc ruling class and the millions of poor oppressed Kenyans that the two year old Kibaki government will never be able to change their lives or deliver the election promises made just before Narc seized power.

Likewise, millions of Kenyan voters have now accepted that "Narc is the same as KANU" because of similarities in the level of corruption, dependency on IMF and World bank loans, tribalism in the government, looting of the economy by the ruling class, growing poverty among the Kenyans, arrest of journalists, harassment of the press, empty talk by politicians and the daily manifestation of numerous other maladies that were witnessed during the 24 year dictatorship of Daniel arap Moi.

Barely two years after Kibaki came to power, the Kenyan masses are looking for a new political alternative that can sweep the rotten ruling class out of power. The problem is that a political alternative that can tackle the capitalist crisis in Kenya today does not exist among the choice of 45 Parties in the marketplace. Workers who can solve this crisis through political organization are not fully aware about their historical responsibilities. Because of this vacuum, new and old opportunists are busy with underground consultations to moot new superficial Alliances that could help them seize the State machine come the next elections to continue with the same cycle.

Kenyans have just learnt that a new problem of leadership is threatening to rip Narc apart. Both Charity Ngilu, the Minister of Health and President Mwai Kibaki are the latest to form new rival camps whose agenda is to take over Narc leadership and to convert the Coalition into a tool for future political survival. Both Ngilu and Kibaki are struggling to seize Narc leadership and the duel is so serious that Ngilu has patched her differences with her Kamba rival, Kalonzo Musyoka to stage a coup that, from media reports, appears to have left Ngilu's camp with an upper hand in the fight for Narc leadership.

Kenya has approximately 200,000 poorly paid Civil servants who run the government on a daily basis. The power of these workers lies in their ability to down their tools and bring the whole government to halt. But if this happens, another Narc or KANU should not fill the vacuum.

Ngilu, who was President Kibaki's political darling during the struggle against Moi, has presented the Narc Constitution to the Registrar of Societies but only after amending it to make it legally impossible for Narc to recruit individual members into the Coalition. This move, which was also backed by Raila Odinga, the *de facto* leader of LDP and Musikari Kombo, the Ford Kenya power broker, will make matters much more complicated for the Kibaki camp because it will kill their strategy of filling Narc with every Tom, Dick and Harry to get a numerical advantage as the battle to control Narc also widens. The recent meeting between Raila, Ngilu and Kombo no doubt sent shock waves to the Kibaki camp led by the President's two sycophants - Chris Murungaru (Minister in the Office of the President in charge of Internal security) and the "Anglo-fleecing" tainted David Mwiraria (Minister of Finance).

What emerges out of the latest circus in Kenya are moves to

form yet another bogus Alliance to occupy space in the capitalist media as Kenyans count the number of days left before the next elections when Narc is sure to be shown the door. At the Coast province, rebel Narc MPs were reported to have formed a "Third force", the first one being Narc and the second LDP.

This kind of politics is revolutionary because it seeks to transfer power from one class to another. In the case of Kenya, there is need for power to be transferred from the rich oppressor ruling class to the millions of poor workers and the oppressed. The question is how this can be done.

But, looked at from the perspective of political alternatives, the composition of politicians behind the new Alliances, camps and forces shows that they are the same cheaters looting the economy alongside the ruling zealots around Kibaki. The only difference is that those around Kibaki have the State machine and those who are squabbling see themselves as people who are isolated within the corridors of power but who have the capacity to seize the State machine using the electorate. Once this happens, it will be business as usual at State House as corruption, nepotism, tribalism and other vices associated with capitalism continue albeit with new players at the helm.

Just like members of the ruling class who continue to conspire in preparation for every election, workers in Kenya can also strategise to seize power and put the ruling class out of business. Narc seized power with a total of 5.7 million votes. There are approximately 7 million workers in Kenya. If these workers organize themselves around a political party and begin a bid for power, there is no Alliance that will be able to beat such a Party especially if it forms an Alliance with the peasantry who feed the Nation and the millions of unemployed youth who are the ultimate carriers of the burden of the capitalist crisis in Kenya. But the process of this kind of organization requires a long struggle with the key issue being the introduction of working class politics to the workers themselves.

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Kenya has approximately 200,000 poorly paid Civil servants who run the government on a daily basis. The power of these workers lies in their ability to down their tools and bring the whole government to halt. But if this happens, another Narc or KANU should not fill the vacuum. The ideas of Socialism are based on political organization of workers seizing power as a way of overthrowing the political system of the rich called Capitalism. This is why Kenyan Socialists are not just calling for the overthrow of Narc but a change of the system.

In the event of the formation of a workers Party in Kenya which truly represents the interest of the working people, there will have to be a Political program that reflects the aspirations of the working people and other oppressed layers in the Kenyan society. But such a Party will not be able to compete for power if its leaders do not understand what they are doing.

From our contacts, comments and encouragement from readers, there are numerous Kenyans who have understood the ideas of Socialism and who believe that it is time to challenge the wealth grabbers running down the country by shaking the foundations of the system. But the fundamental problem is the 40 year-old anti Socialist propaganda, lack of effective co-ordination of like minded Kenyans, lack of basic logistics involved in introducing the ideas in Kenya and moving in the direction of setting up a Socialist/Workers Party. Put in another way, the question is how the Socialist revolution should be organized in Kenya.

WHAT ARE WORKING CLASS DEMANDS TO BE RAISED IN A PROGRAM FOR POWER?

Working class demands are demands put forward by workers outlining measures workers would like to see in a government that stands for their interests and the interests of other oppressed people. These demands are to be put forward in a Political program, a document which will also contain the line of action in other spheres like the State, Economy, Land, Education, Public transport, Health care, Housing, Energy, Culture, Human rights, women, Defence, Trade unions, Children, the Youth, the disabled, the Media, the Environment and Foreign policy. The general outline of workers demands could look like this:

- Abolition of man to man exploitation. A workers government to struggle for the employment of all Workers by the State as this is the only way of ensuring better job security. Workers to have just and safe conditions of work.

- Workers to be represented in Parliament by Worker's MPs to ensure that issues touching on the interest of workers across Kenya are raised and discussed by Parliament.

- All workers MPs to be subject to recall through the Party on grounds of misbehaviour, neglect of duty, corruption, failure to serve the interest of workers among other grounds.

- Worker's MPs to live on a worker's wage like all workers in Kenya. No privileges for workers representatives as this is the source of corruption, looting and plunder of the economy!

- A ban on all retrenchment of workers in Kenya. Every worker has the right to earn a living and the right to job security.

- All retrenched workers to be re-employed at State expense. Millions of Kenyan shillings being looted by MPs and multinational companies to be re-directed towards rehabilitation of retrenched workers and improvement of education and social services.

- A ban on privatization of State enterprises. All privatized firms to be re-nationalized with or without compensation. Privatizations leads to re-trenchments, mystery of workers and super-exploitation of the population.

- Major industries, factories, Insurance companies, Banks and other giant economic institutions that constitute the "commanding heights of the economy" to be put under democratic workers control and management.

- Workers to have freedom of Association in national and international organisations for the protection of their national and economic interests. All workers to be free to practice politics by joining parties of their choice and standing in civic and Parliamentary elections. No more "leaving of

politics to politicians!"

- All workers to be entitled to fair remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families. No unpaid overtime!

- Workers to have the right to collectively bargain for their terms of work. All workers to have access to vocational training for the advancement of themselves in their specific occupations suited to their personal aptitudes and interests. No hefty holiday packages for bosses at the expense of workers!

- Workers to be entitled to the highest standards of living and health attainable in Kenya. Their dependants to be entitled to social security. Stop the hand to mouth life-styles of working people in Kenya.

- A Workers government to formulate policies with regard to wages and earnings, hours of work and other conditions of work to ensure a just share of the fruits of Uhuru to all and a minimum living wage to all workers. No more Mafia cartels who loot the economy at State House!

- A Workers government to co-ordinate management and labour under democratic workers control in the continuous improvement of productive efficiency and the collaboration among workers in the preparation and application of social and economic measures. No more anti-worker policies drawn by wealth grabbers sitting in Parliament.

- Workers to have a comprehensive medical care, adequate protection for their work and health in their occupations, provision of adequate nutrition, housing and facilities for recreation and culture.

- Journeys of workers from and to their places of work to be made at the expense of the administration. One Benz for *Mdosi* is equal to two mini buses to transport 20 workers!

- Workers to have the right to go on strike and the right to organise independently. No more "illegal strikes" and fake negotiations by corrupt Union leaders.

- All workers to be entitled to sickness benefits, invalidity benefits, old age benefits, employment injury benefit, unemployment and family benefit. The right to these benefits shall be inviolable and shall be protected by law. Long term interest of workers in Kenya must come first.

The implementation of these policies will mean that workers will have to organize and seize power under a Workers Party because there is no capitalist Party or rich man's Alliance that will be capable of addressing these issues. In other words, workers will have to take politics on to their own hands if they want changes that will address their current social and economic dilemmas. The process involving workers seizing power will require a revolution.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mitumba traders in city demo

Second hand clothes dealers (known as Mitumba traders) in Nairobi organized a demo, demanding a meeting with Mr. David Mwiraria, the Finance Minister to protest increment of duty by 100% without notice. The new duty increased the price of a bale of imported clothes from Ksh 800,000 to Ksh 2 million. The bales, which have destroyed the local textile industry, are mainly imported from Europe and the USA.

Transport workers go on strike

Transport workers at the Glob Cinema Terminus in Nairobi went on strike, bringing transport along Muranga-Thika road to a standstill. The workers were protesting against poor working conditions at the new terminus. Through Matatu Owners Association, the workers threatened to stop paying monthly levies of Ksh 1,400 per vehicle to the Nairobi city council if the stage was not improved.

Gov to privatize road bridges

In its continuous sale of public property, the Narc government is planning to privatize road bridges in Kenya. This was announced by Roads and Public Works Permanent Secretary Mr. Murenja Kirinya at a Press conference in Nairobi. The new move is expected to increase the cost of transport along Kenyan roads as private companies begin to convert the weigh bridges into sources of profits through exploitation.

Jerry Okungu's attack on Kenyans abroad was uncouth

The savage attack on Kenyans abroad by Jerry Okungu in his January 5th commentary in The East African Standard newspaper needs a quick reply. Although the writer raised some very legitimate points especially on his characterization of Kenyans abroad into three major categories, he messed up his commentary by unskillfully meandering into the un-chattered waters as to why many Kenyans abroad have been reluctant in abandoning their foreign bases to return home.

Because of economic limitations, it is impossible for Kenyans abroad to travel home every month as a way of strengthening bonds with relatives. A parallel comparison places Kenyans abroad in the same pot with their brothers and sisters who have moved from the back water villages in the country to the cities because of political, economic or academic reasons.

Millions of urbanized Kenyans are known to return to the villages only during Christmas or when a close relative passes. This is exactly what many Kenyans abroad also do. Once one leaves the borders of Kenya and relocates overseas, the whole country assumes the distinction of a huge village and when a foreigner asks where one comes from, one is likely to say that one "comes from Kenya", not *Nyeri* or *Nyalgunga*.

Kenya is in deep political and economic crisis. When Narc was coming to power in January 2002, hundreds of Kenyans abroad pointed out that the political character of Narc appeared the same as that of KANU because both formations had similar ideologies based on the system of man to man exploitation.

But these points were met with a barrage of calls that Kenyans abroad abandon their "luxurious life-styles" and return to Kenya to "soil their fingers". Today, the media is awash with analysis that many Kenyans have lost hope in Narc because it is practicing the ways of Moi.

We wrote articles that even after the "Velvet revolution", Narc would not be able to change Kenya because the wealth of the nation had been left on the hands of foreigners through multinational companies who run the country's economy. But these warnings only met with derogatory epithets especially from unhinged commentators in the media.

Although KCA has its own quarrels with Kenyans abroad, the organization was right - demented intellectuals of the Okungu type who liken Kenyans abroad to "distant cousins" or "foreigners" should never be invited to vomit their filth in any present or future summits whether in Kenya or abroad. They should be left to do so in pubs as they argue with resident alcoholics.

In fact, critical voices from abroad underwent a ritual bashing by liberal cows who are just coming to grips with the harrowing reality – that Narc is being led by zombies more interested in filling their stomachs and running around in sleek cars than in transforming the lives of 30 million Kenyans.

Even the "home grown" intellectuals like Jerry Okungu drowned in the Narc euphoria as we lost our voices, shouting that the IMF and World Bank will continue holding Narc to ransom

because these are the economic weapons of choice used by Western imperialism to subjugate millions of people in the ex-colonial world including Kenya.

For Kenyans abroad who share my sentiments, the problem is that if Okungu and other shibboleths who call themselves "Media consultants" cannot appreciate the gigantic role Kenyans abroad are playing in the country's political and economic survival, then it would be safe to conclude that the political consciousness of the most advanced layers of the Kenyan society may have taken a huge leap backwards during the 24 years of the Moi dictatorship.

By trying to pluck out Kenyans abroad from National statistics with such unsavory comments, Okungu is not worth tying the shoelaces of any Kenyan living abroad! He could easily suffocate the spirit of the new-year if his weak commentary is not smashed to smithereens in a moment of reality check.

Although KCA has its own quarrels with Kenyans abroad, the organization was right - demented intellectuals of the Okungu type who liken Kenyans abroad to "distant cousins" or "foreigners" should never be invited to vomit their filth in any present or future summits whether in Kenya or abroad. They should be left to do so in pubs as they argue with resident alcoholics.

Okungu also attacked Kenyan "Economic refugees", accusing them of fleeing the country after being educated with the tax payer's money. But when you scratch beyond the surface, there are probably more internal economic refugees who have fled poverty in Kenyan villages to try their luck in the major cities where the crisis of the capitalist system is most visible. The reality is that these internal refugees are desperately struggling to flee the country as the cities become hopelessly overcrowded with zero opportunities as politicians steal the national wealth.

A home truth is that the lives of millions of Kenyans would sink into great mystery while hundreds of others would simply die if "Kenyan economic refugees" based abroad failed to remit money to feed poor families whose members are victims of permanent unemployment because Narc is unable to create the annual 500,000 jobs the coalition promised or those whose breadwinners have been brutally retrenched in the name of IMF and World Bank policies.

The situation is so acute that many Kenyans abroad have taken over government responsibility of providing medical services to their ailing relatives who must be admitted in money guzzling private hospitals following the collapse of Public health services as a result of the deep crisis facing the Narc government.

I don't have to mention hundreds of Kenyans whose academic ambitions could evaporate with the twinkle of an eye because their fees are sorted out by relatives abroad as the government worsens the burden by endlessly increasing school fees.

By trying to pluck out Kenyans abroad from National statistics with such unsavory comments, Okungu is not worth tying the shoelaces of any Kenyan living abroad! He could easily suffocate the spirit of the new-year if his weak commentary is not smashed to smithereens in a moment of reality check.

Okoth Osewe

“Kenyans abroad should not return home”, says Ochilo

Kenya’s Minister of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social services Mr. Ochilo Ayacko has appealed to Kenyans across the world not to return home to be part of the problem in the country but to stick abroad where, he said, they are the true Ambassadors of the country. The Minister was speaking at a dinner party hosted by Stockholm’s Human Rights which had invited the Minister to Sweden.

The Minister said that with 55% of Kenyans unemployed and 68% living below the poverty level, sports in Kenya could become a major employer if the country’s sporting potential is marketed properly both in Kenya and abroad.

Fielding questions from his audience, Mr. Ochilo likened Kenyans in the Diaspora to the biblical Joseph whom, he said, became an Ambassador of the Jews in Egypt and later rescued his brothers from famine. “What is important is that you should never forget that you are Kenyan”, he said.

Mr. Ochilo was on a one day trip to Sweden at the invitation of Mr. Jared Aroka, the Office Manager of Stockholm’s Human Rights, to discuss mutual co-operation between the organization and the Kenyan government on sports related issues.

Mr. Ochilo arrived in Sweden on Sunday from Norway together with Mr. Welington P. Godo, his Permanent Secretary, Mr. A.O. K’obonyo, Public Relations Officer at the Ministry and Mr. Gordon Oluoch, Assistant Commissioner of Sports.

After an extensive tour of *Fryshuset*, a sports complex in Stockholm, Mr. Ochilo said that sporting was important because it was one activity that could help in bringing human beings together.

The Minister said that his recent proposal that Kenya should

bid for the 2016 Olympics was serious and stressed that since Olympics was a global sports activity, it was time an African country hosted the event.

He dismissed critics who said that Kenya was too poor to host the games, arguing that the International community should be in a position to help Kenya if the country emerged as a possible venue for the Olympics.

“If Kenya cannot host Olympics, no African country can do it”, he said. He added that Kenya was well known as a sporting country on the basis of numerous medals the country’s athletes had won in the past and defended his proposal saying that Kenya had a right to be ambitious.

When asked about discussions by some MPs to sell Lake Victoria to a South African firm, Mr. Ochilo said that selling the lake was something impossible. “That is a hypothetical question because Lake Victoria is not a commodity”, he said.

Mr. Ochilo said that Kenyans abroad should not believe everything written in the media about Kenya and accused the media of exaggerating issues. He said that the fact that two journalists had been questioned by police did not mean that there was no Press freedom in Kenya since the journalists had been released.

The Minister promised to look into how the case of Billy Boy (a Kenyan Rapper who was recently jailed in Sweden) could be raised in Parliament and requested that all documents related to the case be presented to him directly or through the Kenyan Embassy in Stockholm. The meeting was attended by Embassy staff including the Kenyan Ambassador to Scandinavia Mr. Daniel Kinyanjui while Moses Trubadur, a Kenyan musician, entertained the gathering with live Kenyan music.

Okoth Osewe

Situation at Kenya Embassy from page 3

re-alignments in Stockholm, time when demos at the Kenyan Embassy were replaced by plans by exiles to change their status and travel to Kenya after many years in exile. Kenyan exiles like Mr. Dick Kamau, Ben Allan Nganga, Pastor Beatrice Kamau, Githuku wa Muirani, Okoth Osewe, Peter Mukundi and Alex Wagunya all travelled back to Kenya after abandoning their exile status after Narc took power.

At the moment, there is a huge possibility that protests outside the Embassy may return because of growing top-level corruption in the Narc government, arrest of journalists, muzzling of the press, looting of the economy by the rich, failure by Narc to honour basic election promises, tribalism and nepotism in the appointment of government officials, starvation of thousands of Kenyans as MPs steal tax payer’s money, widespread insecurity, growing mass poverty, endless begging from foreign governments, management of the regime by a “Mafia cartel”, murder of innocent civilians by police among other unacceptable developments.

Demos outside the Embassy are not the preserve of exiles and anybody wishing to register a public protest against the government can take up a placard and attack the government on any issue.

Ambassador Kinyanjui has been taking things easy and moving in slow but calculated steps as he studies the major hazards of being stationed in Stockholm as Kibaki’s representative.

Mr. Kinyanjui is lucky because he took over office at a time

when the perception of many Kenyans in Sweden (including those around the world) was that an evil KANU regime had just suffered defeat under the “Narc mass movement”. The advantage with this state of affairs was that Ambassador Kinyanjui and other staff at the Embassy were not seen as part of the same State institution that created the political and economic crisis in Kenya but as part of the solution that was expected from the new government.

The long term and peaceful survival of Mr. Kinyanjui in Stockholm will depend not just on what happens in Kenya at the political level but also how the Ambassador balances between expectations of Kenyans in Sweden and the crisis facing his bosses in Nairobi.

As the political and economic crisis deepens in Kenya and the Narc government becomes much more difficult to defend, Mr. Kinyanjui will have to work harder to ensure that he does not go out of circulation in Stockholm as Mr. Serгон (his predecessor) did when attacks against him as Moi’s representative also increased.

Most importantly, Mr. Kinyanjui will have to polish his dealings with Kenyans so that he is not seen to be favouring any political, social or ethnic Network, the kind of perception that is sure to breed charges of discrimination which, in turn, could expose the Ambassador to attacks with all kinds of missiles hauled from different directions. Mapambano will continue to keep the Embassy on toes while maintaining a close eye at the institution to report on any new and significant developments that may be of interest as they happen.

Okoth Osewe

Pastor Beatrice Kamau detained by Kenya immigration at JKIA

When she travelled to Kenya to attend her father's funeral in December last year, Pastor Beatrice Kamau, a former exile, was detained at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport for 24 hours, time when she was also held in isolation. Narrating her experiences to Mapambano, Pastor Beatrice said that authorities in Kenya rejected a letter she obtained from the Kenyan Ambassador in Stockholm requesting the government to allow her safe entry into Kenya as she did not have time to obtain a Kenyan passport after her father passed away in Kenya.

"At first, the Immigration authorities wanted me to go back to the aircraft and return to Sweden but I refused because I am not a criminal", she told *Mapambano*. She said that after she was released, she managed to attend her father's funeral after which she began to encounter new problems while trying to obtain her Passport.

"I was told to go to the 7th floor of Nyayo House and meet Mr. Kinyanjui. But when I got there, Kinyanjui told me that they will have to investigate if I am a Kenyan and that the whole process would cost me Ksh 7,000. After being interrogated by several Immigration officials who included Mr. Rintari (Principle Immigration Officer), a Mr. Habiba, Mr. Kogo, Mr. Ndathi and Mr. Toitha Mwangi (Director of Political Affairs), Pastor Kamau's PP application began to move. Mr. Rintari was upset with Beatrice's status as a Pastor while Mr. Kogo accused her of lying about facts in her application without

pin-pointing the problem areas.

"The main issue was that at every stage of the application, the officers wanted me to bribe them but I refused", said Beatrice. "Although Mr. Toitha Mwangi appeared to understand my predicament, I was surprised when Mr. Chege Waitthaka, whom he referred me to, hid my documents at Nyayo house", she told *Mapambano*.

Beatrice said that at one point, Mr Chege used bad language against her saying that he did not understand "*Kwanini watu wanaenda ngambo kurandaranda*". (Why people go roaming abroad). "I was putting on tight jeans and Chege could also not understand why Moi was arresting *wasichana*, (girls) she said.

After four harrowing weeks, Beatrice got her PP but her conclusion was that Moi is not in power but the ghost of Moi is still there. "There is corruption even from below", she told *Mapambano*.

Kinky New Year for Kenyans in Stockholm

The new year opened with Rapper Billy Boy being sent to prison without proper reasons. Billy's case was so newsworthy that it attracted the attention of both the *Daily Nation* and *The East African* standard, the mainstream media in Kenya. Billy's predicament has since been placed on the door step of racism and discrimination within the Swedish justice system.

Then, as members of the Kenyan community began to digest what had happened to Billy, a Kenyan woman was allegedly raped at Norsborg in Stockholm with non other than fellow Kenyans.

The case, which is as complicated as it is mysterious, remains the big talk of town today. According to reports from "*Norsborg Times*", police were called at the scene where they recovered a used condom. But, by the time police arrived, the alleged rapists had fled in different directions.

The sad news could have ended there but then, a Kenyan woman tried to take her life and had to be admitted in hospital in critical condition. The woman was reportedly being frustrated by her ex Swedish boyfriend. No further information has been available in the case.

Rapper Billy Boy sent to Swedish prisom: From page page 1

continue to be held in custody", concluded the Judge who gave Billy until January 25th to appeal.

A group of supporters who came to court to listen to the judgment (including Billy's girlfriend) did not have an opportunity to enter the court room as they were told that judgment had already been delivered behind closed doors. Speaking on telephone as police prepared to take him to prison, Billy said he was never allowed into the court room.

"I was preparing to go to court but a guard came and told me that I have already been sentenced to eight months in prison. I never even saw my lawyer and I have not seen the judgment", he said, trying to enquire what was contained in

it. He thanked everybody who had come to show solidarity with him. When a Kenyan inquired how the group could listen to the judgment, he was told by a guard that this was not possible.

"What will happen is that you will have a piece of paper containing the judgment and then you can have someone to read it for you", said the guard.

Billy's girlfriend was later allowed to slip into the court to pay 56 kr to receive a copy of the judgment. She did not see or talk to Billy.

Officials from the Kenyan Embassy in Stockholm were conspicuously absent from the court precinct although a leading Embassy official had indicated that the Embassy would be represented. The Em-

bassy skipped the main trial last week while the institution has also been very quiet over the Billy case without explanations.

Pastor Beatrice Kamau, who was at the court, said that the most important thing after what had happened was to focus on the appeal as people prepared to give Billy moral and psychological support in case the appeal failed.

Mr. Martin Ngatia, a former Kenya Air Force serviceman, said that Sweden is a "fascist country" and that this fascism manifests itself best in the country's courts especially in situations where Africans are involved. Grief stricken supporters of Billy blamed the Rapper's predicament on racism and discrimination of Africans in Sweden.

Mapambano is a Kenyan political Newsletter published in Sweden. **Editor in Chief:** Okoth Osewe. **Contacts:** Tel: +46736533068. **Email:** mapambano@gawab.com **Country/area Representatives:** Okoth Osewe – Stockholm, Sweden, Onyango Oloo – Montreal, Canada, Orina Nyamwami – Nairobi, Kenya, Ronald Elly Wanda – London, Britain, Alex Owiti – Brazil including Latin America, Stephen Obaje – Kisumu, Kenya, Peter Nelson Juma – Siaya, Kenya, Dickens Kwama – At large

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