

Tanzania's Cag-Speaker Tiff: The Myth of Democracy

News:

Media outlets reported on National Assembly Speaker Mr Job Ndugai ordering the Controller and Auditor General (CAG), Prof Mussa Assad to appear before the Parliamentary Privileges, Ethics and Powers Committee on January 21 to respond to allegations that he showed disrespect for the national legislative body following his recent remark that Parliament was weak in its oversight role.

Comment:

The National Assembly Speaker's statement raised legal queries and harshness whereby he made clear to the CAG to appear by his own volition – or be brought before it in handcuffs.

This tiff between the National Assembly Speaker and Controller and Auditor General unveil the democratic myth of separation of power and accountability which is in reality an open lie to the people, that the two are among pillars of democracy.

In reality democracy never had any of the two, neither separation of power nor real accountability. If separation of power and accountability is real in democracy, the Speaker should have let the Auditor undertake his responsibilities without intervention, and he does his, by making the assembly a workable institution in fighting embezzlement scandals as commented by the Auditor's office.

Furthermore, this saga exposes another big lie of democracy, the issue of freedom of expression. Auditor's comments on irresponsibility and weakness of the National Assembly were part of his view which the Speaker is supposed to respect as his personal opinion, not to mention the sensitivity of CAG office.

In recent years it has been witnessed of extra expenditures from the government such as purchasing new aircrafts which are out of the main budget and parliamentary approval. The failure of the parliament to question executive acts and take required measures is what in most cases viewed by many as an open parliamentary weakness.

In this issue the weakness of democratic manmade laws had been shown. The contrasting part is, the Article 143 (6) of the Constitutions unequivocally says:

“In the discharge of his functions in accordance with the provisions of sub-articles (2), (3) and (4) of this Article, the Controller and Auditor-General shall not be obliged to comply with the order or direction of any other person or Government Department...”

On the other hand, the Parliamentary Immunity, Power and Privilege Act gives power to the Speaker to summon anyone on what he has been said about the Parliament. This contradiction of the highest order, demonstrates that a human being is weak and cannot create prosperous laws, and so human being must be submissive to the laws of Creator.

In Islam, the Rulers are not distinct in nature, they are responsible for looking affairs of citizens, implementation, protection and propagation of Islam. While all citizens have the right to account and monitor them according to the sharia to ensure they are in line with their daily responsibilities.

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