

Fellow Ugandans, especially the Bazzukulu.

Greetings.

Long live the eyokyeero of the Court Martial in contributing to the stabilization of the country. Eyokyeero is a Runyankore word that means reinforcement. I have seen the arguments in the papers by some lawyers regarding the correctness of some civilians being tried in the Court Martial. I want to affirm that, that move was correct and useful and it has contributed to the stabilization of Uganda. Why? It is the NRM that in the year 2005 enacted this law through Parliament. This was because of the rampant activities of criminals and terrorists that were using guns to kill people indiscriminately.

The civilian courts were clogged with the many court cases of the whole country: murders, rape, assaults, robbery, land matters, divorce matters etc., etc. They could, therefore, not handle these gun-wielding criminals quickly. Yet, for stabilization you need speed. Moreover, these

individuals, although not soldiers, voluntarily and with evil intentions acquired killing instruments that should be the monopoly of the Armed Forces, governed by the relevant laws.

Indeed, Uganda and many parts of Africa were and, in some cases are still, disturbed by these unprincipled actors. This is why that law provided that since you became a “soldier,” albeit an illegal one, be tried by a court-martial because it is the one that deals with guns.

Besides, the court martial courts’ system is a subordinate one to the general courts of the whole country. If the Court Martial judged badly, the superior courts will rectify the issue. The advantage is that, in the meantime, these dangerous actors are legally being fed, medically treated by the State and are kept away from harming people. It is also good for the lawbreakers because that dangerous enterprise of theirs of killing People, can lead to their own deaths in the encounters with peace and law—protection agencies.

Just by coincidence, last week, I started my tour of Karamoja. While there, the leaders and elders appealed to me to pardon the, apparently, thousands of the

Karamojong youth that had been safely put in prison by the active Court Martial courts in the 3rd Division AOR (Area of Responsibility). Kitalya Prison, has, apparently, 2000 inmates and the Karamojong youth account for 900 of that number. Oh, I now remembered one of the factors that caused the return of peace in Karamoja and the neighbouring areas. It was the efficient and focused work of the military courts that had supplemented the military operations, by legally putting away these confused youths from society for a given period. This was in contrast to the child play of producing these criminals in civilian courts, where they are granted bail or being kept on remand endlessly where they form part of the backlog of the general court system.

Here, the focused and you could say dedicated court martials, do the preliminary work, release the obviously innocent and convict the guilty and sentence them. The convicted can appeal. In the meantime, the country is peaceful because the disturbers are State guests at Kitalya and other prisons. Should we have a Referendum on this issue? Why would lawyers not see what the ordinary mwanainchi sees? If we were to have Referendum in the

affected districts neighbouring Karamoja on this issue, I am sure 100% would support the law.

Long live the eyokyeero of the Court Martial courts. You have made your own contribution to our peace. I have already directed the CDF together with his army colleagues to audit the Karamojong youth who are in prison now, to see the ones who can be pardoned separate from the hardcore criminals who should not be pardoned yet.

Signed:

Yoweri K. Museveni

Ssaabalwanyi,

The old man with a hat.