

Tanzanians discuss peaceful transition as President Jakaya Kikwete comes to end of his last term

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Tanzania's Inspector General of Police Ernest Mangu presents a paper during the conference

By Elias Mhegera in Dar es Salaam

Key players in Tanzanian politics met for two days this week to discuss a peaceful transition from outgoing President Jakaya Kikwete, the 4th President of the United Republic of Tanzania, to the would-be fifth president after the General Elections due next month.

Three institutions, namely the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), the Inter-Religious Council for Peace Tanzania (IRCPT), and the Tanzania Centre for Democracy (TCD) hosted the symposium. Inviting participants at the symposium, the KAS Resident Director, Mr Stefan Reith said that the focus of the debate was how to ensure that peace prevails during the campaigns and even after announcement of the winner of the presidency being the centre of commotions in many African countries. "All key players should maintain good communication respecting each," he said. Quoting former West Germany Chancellor Willy Brandt who said 'peace is not everything, but everything is nothing without peace', Mr Reith said Tanzania should remain supreme even if the election process was tough.

The 200-plus participants at the Serena Hotel included political scientists, human rights lawyers, religious leaders, leaders and representatives of political parties and the media. At least five papers were presented and discussed before the way forward was set. Other leaders of organising bodies who spoke at the event included the Rev Canon Thomas Goda Director of IRCPT, and Ramadhan Madabida, the Dar es Salaam regional chairman of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), who

represented the TCD. He was open in criticizing what he termed as 'foreign interests' in the election process. In response to this, Alvaro Rodrigues, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme said that Tanzania elections are not to the interest of Tanzanians only.

He added that all people of the world and institutions have vested interests variously in Tanzania, implicitly trying to deny that foreigners have negative interests only. Mr Madabida had commented that foreigners are bent to see the CCM out of power. Two senior lecturers in political science, Dr Jingu and Prof Nyirabu, made presentations and they warned that this year's election is characterized by tensions and too much political propaganda than ever witnessed before in the country's history. Dr Jingu said that the competition will be stiffer than it has ever happened before. 'Uncommon intensities in the political order' one is heightened participation of politics of the citizenry all discussions are centred on politics and even at cheap places of talk.



Judge Francis Mtungi addresses the meeting on safe transition from Kikwete

“We have observed that political activism for and against have increased to the extent that political rallies are well-attended than the situation was previously. But also even between one party and another, particularly when there are dissertations and defections,” he commented. For his part, Prof Mohabe Nyirabu highlighted on issues which can cause conflicts and a breach of peace. He looked at the contentions which can cause conflicts, and political solutions on how to stop those. He mentioned the main cause of conflicts as being the government if it violently suppresses opponents which can cause chaos. He also cited political exclusion, and failure to pay attention to certain groups of people. Prof Nyirabu mentioned another possible source as ethnicity, or rivalry of interreligious denominations. Another possible source was the usage of money in politics and wrong interpretations of openness. He warned that there is a need to guarantee assumed solutions to solve problems. Another possible source, he explained, could be the Electoral Commission, or if there are inequalities in income caused by inequality of chances.

Other presentations on the first day were from the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Ernest Mangu, and the Chairman of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG), Mr Bahame Tom Nyanduga, and the Registrar of Political Parties Judge Francis Mtungi. However, and as it could have even been expected, the two days were drawn into the attention of two institutions

but sharing one common element, mistrust! The mistrusted institutions are the Police Force and the National Electoral Commission.

But good news is now things between leaders of the opposition parties and the Office of the Registrar of Parties seems to augur well. One big element which has turned the Registrar to be seen as a different servant is the fact that he gives equal treatment to all parties, the ruling CCM and its competitors the opposition parties. “Yes, it is true that CCM took advantage of its incumbency during the registration of new parties in 1992, but this does not mean that we should continue in the same manner, things must change now,” he said causing wide ululations from the hall and leaving the CCM representatives dumbfounded.

But at least there was one item which brought fundamental differences between the opposition and the Registrar of parties, namely the call to disband security groups of the parties and leave this task to the Police. “No party has ever registered any security groups in my office, and they do not even exist in your constitutions, you just mentioned about ushers and those are not militias,” remarked Judge Mtungi and so irritating leaders of opposition parties. The registrar was firm that he would not fail to mention anything that he thought should be changed on the part of the opposition parties as well. “Some of you leaders are both political and religious leaders at the same time; this is, in a way, not good for your congregants and it can be a catalyst of fuelling social upheavals,” he remarked.



CHADEMA's Red Brigade which must now be disbanded.

For his part the IGP Mr Mangu said that it is the duty of the Police Force to protect people and for that matter even to protect votes during the elections. So he criticized the trend of forming unofficial group of armies. “Many would tend to think that the work of the Police Force is just to arrest and send people to the courts, but frankly speaking we do more than that, we have even to protect campaigns of political parties,” he commented. In order to bring harmony, the Police Force has been engaged in many activities like provision of education, dialogue, and advocacy but if all these fail then comes law enforcement.

He said that it is his Force which has to supervise distribution of the election tools, from boxes, ballot papers etc. He called for religious leaders and all politicians to maintain peace and order. From the National Electoral Commission (NEC) was its vice chairman who is the former Zanzibar's Chief Justice, Mr Hamid Mohamed Hamid, who said that the NEC is an independent body. He defended that his Commission cannot deal with 'hear says', but if any one, or a party send officially ethical problems belonging to an individual or a party it will work upon them.

All leaders of the opposition who stood for either asking questions or commenting were very critical of either the Police Force, or of the NEC. "We do not trust the NEC and the Force, because they are just there to ensure CCM remains in power," said Erasto Tumbo former legislator and current publicity officer for the main opposition CHADEMA. From the ruling CCM was Mwigulu Nchemba who is also an outgoing Deputy Minister for Finance, said that there is a problem caused by poverty which means no one can point an accusing finger to fellow politicians. "We are abusing voters, we are the ones as political leaders who cook chaos, we should not plunge this nation to chaos simply because we want power," he warned. He wanted to imply that poverty is a global problem but it is just being used by politicians from the opposition camp in order to punish his party the CCM.

Sheikh Juma Mbukuzi from the Islamic Council of Tanzania well known in its Swahili acronym (BAKWATA) after Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania, said that it is not political interests which drives them to make statements which appears to be political. But it is merely because of adhering to the Holy Scriptures. "My religion (Islam) and our Holy Scriptures hates hypocrisy, they order to me to condemn hypocrites, those who promise without fulfilling. He added that those who are insensitive to what they have been entrusted with, must be condemned that is why he feels that he is duty bound to condemn hypocrites even if this may not sound good to them, he was adamant.



CCM's Green Guard which will also be disbanded.

The moderator had studied the mood of the highly emotionalised sheikh and attempts to stop him failed; one factor was that he was the eldest in the hall. So the only way was to leave the old man remove all the grudges he had harboured for long due to political disappointments. These utterances nearly brought tensions within the symposium itself. This is because previously there were utterances from the CCM representatives that religious leader are campaigning for the opposition.

But one bishop from the Pentecost denomination whom the Evening Post prefers anonymity, said that he did not trust the Police Force and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) since then the attention of all questions were dwelt in this direction. He said he was a contestant through the now less noticeable Tanzania Democratic Alliance (TADEA). This bishop went a step further and sought for votes. He was immediately stopped by Dr Ayub Rioba from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications of the University of Dar es Salaam (SJMC-UDSM) who said the commentator should declare interest first; where was the focus of his question? religious or political and therefore this caused much laughter in the hall.

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