

16 July 2021

ASK MUGISHA MUNTU

INTRODUCTION

The Alliance for National Transformation (ANT), Diaspora chapter supported the launch of the Ask Mugisha Muntu dialogues. It is an initiative intended to inform, educate, and inspire Ugandans across the country and in the diaspora. The dialogues will be conducted every month. Today's dialogue was the second in the series, and was excellently moderated by Ugandan renown investigative journalist, Raymond Mujuni.

Highlights

This section captures some of the highlights from the conversations but most of the information can be found on the ANT Facebook page, where the Video is now archived.

The Youth and Everyone's Involvement

The Youth are incredibly affected by the current regime's failings, but these failings affect everyone. While the youth remain frustrated, they are encouraged to be part of the solution to the challenges that the country is facing today. In every cloud, there is a silver lining. It is encouraging to see many youths engaged in various online activities. So, even before the lockdown is lifted, people are encouraged to keep networking to revive hope in the country. It is natural for people to feel hopeless but there is life after every flood, famine, drought, and therefore, after every pandemic. It is also important to note that everyone has a sphere of influence, be it in their workplace or home. If Ugandans interested in qualitative change can use these spheres of influence, tremendous work can be done.

Popularity Vs Discipline

Politics of popularity do not move the country forward. What is required is a commitment to discipline, knowing that there are no shortcuts to long-term solutions needed by the country. The current regime is incapable of carrying out business in the interest of the country and for Ugandans. This is seen from securitization and militarization of operations, a key factor in collapsing regimes. There is a lack of discipline in our country, and this is easy to see with all the money that has been borrowed to manage Covid, but one does not get

any sense of accountability from the current regime. As ANT we believe in the principle of separation of power. We believe in getting feedback and building institutions. We believe in a culture of discipline and accountability.

Focus Resources Accordingly

As we look to move the country forward, especially after Covid, there is need to focus resources where they are necessary. We need to continue investing in Education, Agriculture, and the Citizen - who is at the core of all of this. Give the citizens a chance to excel at whatever they do. Education is especially important because it exposes our minds to who we are. It makes it very clear in our minds that the choices we make determine who we become. It also builds our confidence to make necessary life decisions. Our current system of education does not prepare us for that but if ANT were in Government, this would be one of our key focus areas. Covid dealt the country a major blow. Prior to the pandemic, we, as a country, had not done a great job of marketing ourselves. However, we have an opportunity to invest in Tourism as a way to help the economy recover from the adverse effects of Covid.

Beyond January 2021 Elections

Regarding ANT beyond the 2021 elections, it is important to note that without roots, we are left to hang in the air. We want to focus on the village, parish, and sub-county levels because these are critical levels to the strength of any party. Further, obtaining power is one thing, and using power responsibly is another thing. ANT is focused on doing things the right way. We are focused on preparing for a post-Museveni Uganda. As a party, we are especially proud of the over 700 candidates that we fielded in the January 2021 elections, and we celebrate the 44 successes at the local government level. We also walk away with the confidence that we were warmly welcomed everywhere we went, and did not face any resistance to our message, except from the regime itself.

While not everyone can get involved in competitive politics, it is critical that those who do not engage directly, get involved in influencing those who are active. They can provide advice on policy, support financially, and so on. It is unhelpful to stay on the sidelines and watch things go wrong. We also understand that people's default position is to expect politicians to lie, whether it is the ruling party or opposition. However, the solution is for value-driven people to get involved and change this sad status quo. There are likely people in the ruling party who care for this country, and it is our job as the opposition

to encourage them to change the trajectory of our politics. In the end, it is about qualitative change, not individuals.

Conclusion

There is no question that this regime is on its way out. ANT is focused on what comes after the regime is out. Our core responsibility is to prepare for the qualitative, value-based change we all want. We cannot lose sight of building a critical number of young people who are value driven. Further, good governance is also about recovering the soul of our nation. People want to feel that they are equal, before the law, before God. As ANT, this is what we are aiming to achieve – a government by the people, that serves every Ugandan.