

It's Game Over for African Dictators

The revolution currently sweeping through North Africa and the Middle East is a clear manifestation that dictators can no longer be allowed to hold their subjects to ransom. The Tunisians were fed up with Ben Ali and forced him out. Then the Egyptians, unperturbed by Mubarak's obstinacy, finally showed him the door. This is what people power is all about.

At this juncture, it beats all logic for Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi to hang on until he is attacked by allied forces. Gaddafi should have taken the cue from Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak and either retreated peacefully to his Sirte backyard or fled into exile. But instead, he chose to massacre his people and now he is paying a heavy price.

What is happening to Gaddafi is what will most likely befall other African dictators who have made themselves life presidents. While others like Uganda's Yoweri Museveni and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe have boasted that whatever is happening in North Africa cannot happen in their countries, it is only a matter of time before the domino effect is felt in sub-Saharan Africa. After all, the conditions that led to uprisings in North Africa are the same ones that obtain in sub-Saharan Africa.

The citizens are tired of oppression, high rates of unemployment and escalating costs of living engendered by poor governance. When pushed to the wall, they will have no option but to take up arms against the dictatorial regime. The African dictators should also not underestimate the power of social media that was successfully used in Egypt and Tunisia to mobilise protestors.

Sub-Saharan African countries have some of the most Internet-savvy citizens who can easily send tweets and Facebook posts with precision. With the advent of smartphones and Triple Play services, blocking Facebook or Twitter by the dictatorial regimes would amount to an exercise in futility.

Ultimately, African dictators must now realize that their time is up. They should either resign honourably or be forced out acrimoniously.

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