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LUNOGELO'S CORNER

- ✦ **The current political trend whereby political parties strip their members off party membership on grounds of violating the respective party's constitution can not pass without commenting on. The registrar of political parties John Tendwa has warned that it costs about Sh 19 billion to conduct a by-election. The question is "Is this trend of 'purging' healthy as far as the country's politics is concerned? Isn't there any other way or alternative of resolving these internal political squabbles?"**



Subject: Question on question

From: lunogelo@esrf.or.tz

Date: Saturday, January 14, 2012 11:18 AM

I have noted some rather disturbing silence from the media on what should have been the right approach in dealing with people who have endlessly ignored government directives prohibiting settlements in waterway valleys of Dar. Do you think its right for the government to reward law breakers? In my view the only segment of people who deserved compensation are tenants. They were wooed by errant landlords to pay rent on illegally erected structures. Or have you already discussed that in one of your editions? I recall that one the three pillars of Vision 2025 is creating a society based on rule of law and law abiding citizens. Waswahili have a saying "sheria ni msumeno" once enacted. My worry is that we are creating a dangerous precedent of rewarding law breaking citizens. Don't be surprised that one day an NGO will come with a call or campaign to release all petty thieves and vibaka because after all its not their fault in engaging in such petty crime since the society, through their elected government, has failed to create enough jobs for their lawful employment.

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I thought I should tease you with this provocative question for a change! Once the law is enacted, no one is allowed to break it and later on claim either ignorance or question "where was the government or law enforcers when I was violating the law?". Unfortunately that is where we are right now. The government is being taken to task for its failure to take to task law breakers! I once heard this hilarious joke about a thief who, when given a chance to defend himself wondered why the owner of the house was so reckless he went to bed without properly locking doors to his sitting room! "He must have done purposely to allow me to easily steal his things so that I am taken to court!". "Ndugu Hakimu huyu jamaa ana kisa na sisi watu maskini ambao hatujui kesho tutakula nini!". And so he ended his submission. The question here is: does the failure of government to provide low cost plots or low cost housing schemes justify those with money to invade and build houses in prohibited dangerous areas with impunity? And when disaster catches up with their tenants does the same government turn around and reward them with compensation to the landlords rather than the tenants who were misled to rent in those illegal structures? We are not quite sure of the social and economic status of those valley landlords in Dar. However its an open secret that middle and upper income class with the right political connections are the ones with high stakes in urban slums of Kenya, South Africa and India. In my view the President Kikwete was more than right to intervene and direct that Dar city authorities should also consider the plight of tenants. He however fell short of reprimanding the landlords perhaps because he believes the majority of those illegally built houses belonged to low income citizens or as they say "walala hoi" who were so politically connected that despite several orders to vacate and stop building they had the guts to ignore those orders with impunity until when the 2011 floods came and demolished or rendered them useless on behalf of the government.

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Thank you.

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