

Religious Leaders and the Issue of DP World Agreement in Tanzania

News:

On June 10, 2023, the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania endorsed an inter-governmental agreement between Tanzania and Dubai which would allow Dubai's multinational company DP World to operate Tanzania's ports, especially one located in a city of the Dar es Salaam.

Comment:

The agreement raised mixed opinions within the public whereby proposers of the deal, mainly the ruling party and its supporters term it as the best, while opposers mainly opposition and their supporters term it as the worst.

The discussion also raised some religious leaders criticizing the deal such as the retired Bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, while interviewed by Tanzania Episcopal Council's YouTube channel, said: "If a Tanzanian (investor) fails, you cannot throw him away and say you can get a lot of money by bringing a foreigner." (Mwananchi 18/06/2023)

To say that Christians leaders have concerns on national interests and welfare of the people is not true, for instance Mr. Pengo during the previous regime of John Magufuli while many people were killed, tortured, jailed and falsely detained not only was he oblivious, but he was a staunch supporter of Magufuli's regime to the extent that he was wondering why people called him (Magufuli) a dictator.

On November 18, 2019, during a meeting between religious leaders and the then Regional Commissioner of Dar es Salaam Paul Makonda, Cardinal Pengo claimed that people who were speaking against the regime that it ignored the affairs of the people and concentrated on developing things like roads, railways, etc. were misleading the public, he said: "There have been rumors that our President is a dictator...he deals with developing things rather than developing people." (Mwananchi 18/11/2019).

It is an amazing matter that, while Christians leaders criticize deal between Dubai and Tanzania as unfair and timeless agreement, yet they have been quiet for years on the deal between the government and their Christians religious institutions. This particular deal of Memorandum of Understanding done since 1992 between the government and the churches works infavour of Christians and their institutions upon which the government uses public funds to support church health facilities which is not the case for the Muslims. Muslims are aware that the government is serving the interest of Christians at the expense of Muslims and other citizens.

Inspite the fact that agreement between Tanzania and DP World multinational company is unfair since it relied on capitalist basis, church leaders have no moral authority whatsoever to criticize the deal since they are not truly for the people's

interests, for their support of such an exploitative and ethnical agreement with the government. The Memorandum of Understanding favors one group (the Christians) between two main groups of religion in the country (Muslims and Christians) being aware that Muslims likely are majority of the population.

Furthermore, it is definitely known that Christianity is partially spiritual religion only with no solution to worldly matter, so her followers always present capitalistic interests based solution since their religion lacks neither political nor economic systems.

Regarding some Muslim leaders who propose and supporting privatization deal of the port to the DP World company, they have just raised to counter the provocation done by Christian leaders without providing any Islamic ideological solution as if Islam has not provided any ruling regarding the public properties/utilities. Infact, they should have provided clear solution to this matter according to Islamic sources which have vast analysis and explanation on the rules of public goods/properties/utilities.

According to Islam, port is among public goods/utilities which is under public ownership. It is the right of all people to enjoy public properties and its management could be submitted and entrusted to the Caliphate (State), then the results are returned to the Ummah.

Therefore, all types of assets that are included in the category of public ownership including port is prohibited for individuals to control, benefit and privately managed and so privatization of public assets is a forbidden act. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: «الْمُسْلِمُونَ شُرَكَاءُ فِي ثَلَاثٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ وَالْمَاءِ وَالنَّارِ» **“Muslims are allied (have equal rights) in three; fields, water, and fire”** (Abu Dawud).

Privatization is capitalist economic policy that causes and brought many destructions in socio-economic aspect, it makes property circulate only among the rich, both individuals and companies. Thus, the majority cannot benefit from these assets, and the distribution of wealth will be increasingly unbalanced as we witness today that richest 1% grabbed nearly two-thirds.

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