

Shame and Shame Again on the Compromised Kenyan Media!
By Miguna Miguna, May 17, 2017

Shame on the compromised Kenyan media for glorifying mediocrity!

The “story” about Mike Mbuvi Sonko’s “running mate” by Collins Omulo and Elvis Ondieki is given three quarters of page 8 of the *Daily Nation* newspaper of May 17th. “Sonko picks Igate to make up for his academic, managerial rawness,” the heading screams.

I have no idea what “academic, managerial rawness” means. The article doesn’t explain these terms, although they appear, implicitly, as admissions that Sonko has no genuine academic and managerial qualifications and skills to govern Nairobi. However, the writers are quick to smother these fatal deficiencies by stating that, the “Senator publicly admitted his shortcomings, sought supporters’ advice.”

These baseless words appear at the very beginning of the story without any reference to when or where the “senator admitted his shortcomings” and “sought supporters’ advice,” nor why Nairobians should elect a distinctly unqualified individual as their governor.

The principal focus of the story is obviously to advertise Sonko as “Nairobi’s next governor” – facts be damned!

Just below the screaming but hollow headings are two other curious sub-headings. “Jubilee leaders said to settle on suave corporate chief to fill gap in senator’s CV,” the first one proclaims. The second one states, “Profile: He hates Gossip, Corruption,” before proceeding to present a disjointed and distorted “colourful profile” of Polycarp Igate.

Although the story falsely celebrates Mr. Igate as “a hard-working and successful corporate titan” who “hates gossip and corruption,” a simple Google search reveals the very opposite. Cleverly concealed is Mr. Igate’s directorship at the Uchumi Supermarkets from May 2015 to March 2016 - when the supermarket chain went into receivership.

Meanwhile, as of May 16th, Sonko had not actually named Mr. Igate as his running mate. The impugned story doesn’t refer to any press conference, statement or event where he was “named.” The story is essentially a presentation of rumours the reporters gathered as they drove in circles from the Jubilee House in Pangani to The Hub in Karen and the Deputy President, William Ruto’s Karen offices “in search of Sonko” - and back to The Nation Centre

There are no credible and named sources. Sonko isn’t quoted even once. Vague references are made of an apparent “Sonko’s Facebook post.”

The image accompanying the fake story shows both Sonko and Igate with a few “Vivo Energy employees” – beaming from ear-to-ear. The caption reads, simply: “Correspondent/Nation.” No actual name of the photographer or when the picture was taken.

In order to mislead its readers and boost Sonko's dwindling stock, the story claims, falsely, that "Mr. Sonko heavily defeated former Gatanga Member of Parliament and 2013 presidential candidate Peter Kenneth at this month's party nominations, polling over 160,000 votes."

That's an egregious lie. The truth is that Sonko only managed a paltry 138,185 votes out of 2.3 million registered voters in Nairobi - a dismal 6% showing! Even the non-quantity Jonhson Sakaja received 163,446 votes – 25,261 votes more than Sonko.

Of course, the *Daily Nation* – like virtually all the other local media – doesn't want its readers to know these facts and for them to remember that anyone with a Kenyan Identity Card was free to vote for Sonko in the Jubilee primaries but they clearly didn't. There are credible reports that many voted multiple times in the Jubilee primaries. Mr. Kenneth has also made credible allegations of vote-stuffing and other serious electoral malpractices.

Even more egregiously, the *Daily Nation* story only mentions Kidero as "Sonko's opponent in Nairobi." As usual, my name is deliberately and unfairly omitted. That wasn't an error; it is a deliberate conspiracy not to accurately and truthfully inform Nairobi voters that I am a candidate for the position of governor.

It explains why the unveiling of my running mate on May 13th was not given equal prominence by the media. The images of my unveiling were never published together with the threadbare story that appeared. Yet, I named James Karihe Gathungu – a 24-year old dynamic former Laikipia university student leader and businessman as my running mate.

The fake "Sonko picks Igate" story also used contrived adjectives such as "the flamboyant legislator" to describe Sonko. No facts have been presented qualifying these nonsensical descriptions.

Why isn't he called a "convicted criminal" when he is a self-confessed "big thief" and criminal? Why isn't the *Daily Nation* describing Sonko – accurately - as a "prison escapee" when he has publicly and repeatedly admitted to having escaped from the Shimo La Tewa Prison? Why is the media mute about Sonko's well-known fraudulent escapades and numerous documented cases of land-grabbing in Nairobi and Mombasa?

The pathetic journalistic grovelling and glorification of mediocrity and the culture of impunity are partly responsible for the current mess in Nairobi. Just before the 2013 general elections, the *Nation Media Group* was among the hopelessly compromised media that hailed Kidero as a "corporate titan;" and "blue chip CEO who Nairobi needs."

The gullible public was bombarded with acres of manufactured stories and shallow commentaries that portrayed Kidero as "a suave corporate chief" who would turn Nairobi around in the same manner that he had purportedly "transformed the Mumias Sugar factory into a leading and profitable sugar miller in East and Central Africa!"

Barely one year into Kidero's tenure in Nairobi, the gloriously "successful Mumias Sugar Company" collapsed having been looted to death by Kidero. The KPMG audit reports that exposed Kidero's kleptomania have all been concealed.

Now, it appears like the compromised Kenyan media is desperately trying to audition another contaminated candidate for Nairobi voters.

But no matter how hard the media tries to mislead the public, patriots like me will never relent in our protracted struggle to liberate our city from the tight grip of the organised cartels.

Mr. Miguna is a candidate for Governor of Nairobi, is a lawyer and an author.
mm@migunamiguna.com