

Our state has become a butcher, not of cattle or goats, but of children and citizens of our land.

In recent weeks, newspapers have been awash with reports about the shooting of Costa Kalafatis, brother to John Kalafatis whose life expired prematurely in 2008, when security forces sprayed life bullets into his body. Costa Kalafatis is said to be under intensive medical care and holding bravely to his life. The same newspapers suggest that Mr Kalafatis, the father, died mysteriously three or so years following the brutal execution of his son.

No one within the security forces has been able to offer a cogent explanation to account for all three tragedies, nor has anyone offered to re-assure the country that such kind of mysterious extra-judicial killings or shootings will not happen again under the watch of those who govern this country. This is a sad season in the life of this nation.

In this country, much is discussed in hashed tones, with the hope that the long ear of the current State does not catch the conversations of its people. The people live in fear, they are afraid that one fateful night someone will knock at their door and question them for their spite of the State; they are afraid a phone call will come in to announce the cancellation of a Government contract on whose livelihood they depend; they are afraid the post office will carry mail addressed to them the pages of which, in bold print, ask them to go on early retirement.

The people are afraid to jeopardise their prospects for promotion and they are afraid when foreign investors come to Botswana, they will be told by officials that they cannot be in partnerships with those who have rubbed the ruling regime in the wrong way. Worse still, young University students are growing into young adults who feel that their dreams will amount to nothing if they do not align, or have someone put in a good word for them, with the ruling elite. This is modern day Botswana about which many within and without in Botswana are in denial for they are still under the compelling spell of how they knew it in the past.

This is a country in which an entire family, the Kalafatis family, perishes, and no one is held responsible in the system. It is a country in which you can't ask questions about what happened to its children, for the authorities in the highest offices are preoccupied with other matters of the state. They will instead feed a rumour mill, purveyed by their henchmen and henchwomen, that these Kalafatis siblings are as dangerous as the Nazis. These faceless individuals who boldly justify the extrajudicial killings and shootings are our new justice system. They are Botswana's new judiciary that decides who is a danger to our society and who is not. They decide if state sanctioned shootings are good or bad, depending on who it is metered on and who commits it. They have no regard for country's official justice system process.

Those who are committed to a fair justice system process are regarded as naïve. They are told that there are hyenas and horrid men out there, whose crimes cannot be mentioned by the human mouth – they do not deserve to be tried in a civil way. This is a tragedy about which future generations will vilify us.

In the seat of the Government of Botswana is an irresponsible and callous circle of friends that govern this country. Our governors have thrown away the idea of fairness and cast it deep in oceans. No one values fairness anymore, among these men (we cant say if there are women among them).

They continue to veer this nation off-course. The State has become a butcher state. Time has a way of repairing the wrongs of the past, and revealing the truths that need to be revealed. When that time comes, and true justice prevails, they will remember that we lived by our duty to speak the truth.

The people have it in their hands to change the course of nation's journey. The people should see these injustices for what they are. The people of Botswana: go out in your millions in the next elections to fix your country. Go out to your neighbours, and over tea and bread, bring your neighbours to cast their votes in the coming elections. Go on the bus and visit your cousins and grandparents in the villages. Tell them they are strong. Tell them only they can bring justice to this land. Be of courage and strong will – and go out to fix this country by the power of your vote. Vote in a more and responsible Government led by the Umbrella for Democratic change. Bring back the high value of fairness among our people.

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Umbrella for Democratic Change