

## **The Tale of One Country, 12 men, 21,900 days, and One People Acting Independent.**

April 26, 1961, the hustle of the nation would have been so thick; we could almost rub our fingers and taste it.

Every citizen and resident of the state was excited and at daybreak, it would be the last day under the 'oppression and tyranny' of paying homage to foreigners in our land. By the turn of midnight, leadership would revert to the indigenous rulers in its entirety.

In the 21,900 days of “rulership”, authority has moved, popularly and otherwise, among 12 leaders, 11 Christians and all male.

The tale of these leaders has moulded a nation towards its destiny, and after all this while, it begs a straightforward question - When do we end the tale of acting independently?

12 men, 6 shooting their way to the people's mandate, one who has had the pleasure of serving twice, 2 who served for ten years each, 2 who were related by blood, 3 still alive and one who is away on medical exile.

21,900 days of dependence on foreign aid and partners for our daily sustenance and we proudly celebrate the concept of self-rulership. A journey that started with 2.3 million people and currently has about 7.8 million people. On average, these twelve men have ruled 458 thousand people each in the period under review.

Leadership generally has not favoured the nation as most of her sisters and brothers in the struggle for independence have slightly better stories.

History is always a recollection of stories that connect the past to the present and told with an angle of bias. Therefore, we would not mention individuals and what they have achieved or not.

Suffice it to say also that history reminds us of the great days of our musicians. S.E. Rogie and Amie Kallon. The Krio folk songster whose songs inspired fighters of the RUF to seek out his legend and ask him to perform....usai we get for go when the rebel dem cam for kill we? The music moguls like Jimmy B and Kabaka, the engineers like Sahr Issa and King Fisher. Our entertainers, the Professionals and our very own Dan Moss and wanpot.

However, the joys, hopes and promises of midnight of April 26, 1961, still look like what we yearned for after 12 men and their cabinets, departments, agencies and collaborations have held the nation's dreams in their hands and sadly have not delivered.

These political leaders, while not delivering, have not tainted the delivery of our sportsmen.

The Dyfans and Kallons, the Junior Tumbus and the Parades, the Billy Cokers and the Musu Peles. Our Cricketers and Horace Dove-Edwin. The tears of joy running down the faces of fans as we lifted the zone two trophy—the privilege of watching the Sierra Leone team on national television for the first time.

21,900 days later, aside from the quality of the photos and videos, leadership looks similar and identical, the promise of paradise when the leaders have no idea on the way to go.

In 525,600 flight hours, the nation still awaits leadership that would touch down in the promised land. We are close to sure that the milk and honey would be gone by the time the ship of state berths in the aqua of joy and plenty.

After 21,900 days of this charade of self -rule, we just might be content with the ordinary touch down. Having been blessed with leaders that have seen independence as the right to do as they please but not the opportunity to do what is right.

After all these days that turned into years, we have, by the goodness of God, had two great blessings. Freedom of speech and conscience and by some spiritual machination, leaders who have the prudence to practice neither of them. Leadership that has forced us to prefer peace with slavery to liberty with danger. Leadership that has ensured that the majority does not prevail and the irate, tireless minority don't get a chance to set bushfires of freedom in the minds of their compatriots.

Leadership that has toyed with the rule of law while in office and bemoaned it while in opposition. Leadership that has enacted laws that have bitten them like mad dogs. 21,900 days, at the stroke of midnight on the 26th of April 1961, a national of sufferers was born, a bunch of jubilating citizens with little knowledge of what the ruling class had in store.

31,536,000 minutes after the British Union Jack was folded and the trumpets blasted to herald the birth of a nation and handed over to our kinsmen to lead us, we have been led like lambs to the slaughter. Corruption and cabalocracy, nepotism and tribalism, state capture and rampant socio-governmental comedy.

Leaders who have valued their pockets more than the life of citizens and have made choices not based on pure truth but the opinion of the majority who agree with them.

At the stroke of midnight April 26, 2021, one country, after 60 years of reported independence and 7.8 million people internally, would mark the start of a nation set against itself by a dozen of her sons and their friends. Years later, a brutal civil war would redefine many boundaries, much later, Ebola and a mudslide would add to the woes of an already woeful but hopeful people.

1,892,160,000 seconds after the green, white and blue was hoisted amidst the cheers and shouts of the many, the hopes of the young and the fulfilment of the old. The joy of the present and the sweet anticipatory titillation of the unknown pleasure. The sigh of relief of the oppressed, the racing heartbeats of the comrades in prison, the staccato of the breasts of women dancing to the beat of the legendary drums of Africa. The stomping of feet for the great and proud warriors of freedom.

60 years on,.....what a journey.

60 years later.....what a collection of leaders.

60 years and counting.....what a story.