

This blame game

It is a common practice amongst Africans especially those living in Europe to blame the Europeans or Americans for the misery that is facing our beloved continent. Africa, the so-called forgotten continent has a lot of resources both material and human but has been subjected to very harsh conditions due to poor leadership, corruption, tribalism, nepotism, egotism, civil strife just to name but these.

It may be true that the West is partly responsible for Africa's problems but I want to believe that for a period of 50 years of independence, Africa has to take her fate in her own hands and work for the interest of her people. Blaming would not help to remove us from Limbo. Colonization, Christianity, slavery, and globalization are some of the Western factors that have helped to change the African way of life but I am of the opinion that these changes are not only negative but positive as well. The Africans did not invite the West to colonize them but colonization and Christianity have both a negative and positive influence on Africans. The Africans used to kill twins and albinos, but this misdeed was stopped due to the teaching of Christianity.

Although the partition of Africa that took place in Berlin in 1884 contributed to some of the conflicts that are facing Africa today, it must be stated that there used to be tribal wars in Africa during the pre-colonial period. The transatlantic slave trade is one of the Western horrors that affected Africa adversely but we are aware that some of our ancestors facilitated this inhuman business because of greed. It was other Africans who went to the remote areas and captured their fellow human and handed over to the Westerners. Even before the Europeans invaded Africa, a form of slavery existed in most African societies. Captives or prisoners of tribal wars used to be treated more or less like slaves. Dead kings used to be buried with living people. Another form of slavery still exists in Southern Sudan. Rebel leaders in Liberia and Sierra Leone used many women as sex slaves. My point is that we should not only blame the West for our problems simply because we are not innocent of the accusations. We are helping them to maltreat and exploit our people. It is

high time we stop this blame game and confront our real problem. Africa's real problems to me are irresponsible leaders, corruption, greed, favouritism just to name but these.

We have natural wealth but lack the wisdom to manage it. We should first develop our infrastructure as a first step towards development. That would ease the transport of goods and services and would attract foreign investors. The legal system should be independent so that justice can flow freely. Corruption should be fought at all levels and victims brought to justice. A campaign against illness should be launched, and medications brought to patients, for a sick society means a sick economy. There should be freedom of press and expressions. We should also encourage South-South cooperation because the North (West) would only help us if it is at their own interest. They would always want Africa to be a source of cheap raw materials for their home industries. Only Africans can change the destiny of Africa, with the help of international partners.