

A CALL OF THE DIRECTOR OF TANZANIA RECORDS AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES ON TANZANIAN MIGRATED ARCHIVES

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The issue of ‘Migrated Archives’ is one of the delicate and complex issue and has, in fact occupied many regional, national and international forum on archival matters for last four decades of the last 20th century. In some occasions, has bred hatred, frictions and misunderstandings among the archivists and the countries involved.

The term ‘migration’ implies movement of things animate and inanimate from one place to another place in search of either conducive environment, social amenities or because of wars or other natural or manmade catastrophes.

The migration of human beings is made possible with the help of their legs or transports systems like horses, camels, cars, trains, planes and ships which makes them to move from one place to another place. Animals and birds do move from one location to another by the help of their legs and wings respectively, in search of water, good pasture or due to bad and unfavourable climatic conditions. They can also move by the help of human beings who takes them from one place to another.

Plants and crops do not move from one place to another by themselves, they are either taken by human beings or by natural phenomena like the winds, hurricanes, water currents or by animals and birds. Plants and crops have neither legs nor wings and therefore they cannot move on their own.

Similarly, the archives have neither legs nor wings hence they cannot move from one place to another by themselves. They are moved (or displaced) from one place to another by the help of human beings either ‘legally’ or ‘illegally’. They are moved from one country to another country by such acts as theft, purchase, donations, gifts, war plunder or by deceptions.

Over the years, it has been increasingly evident that important records relating to colonised countries (Tanzania included) are found and preserved abroad, notably in the custody of their former colonising mother countries’ institutions mostly in such countries such as Germany, Britain, Belgium, Italy, France and many others.

As far as access to those records by colonised countries is concerned, they have the right to access them by whatever available means and the only practical and permanent access to those materials is through copying projects which is the major aim of the Tanzania National Archives.

The colonised countries have the right to access to those records because they clearly and deeply document the history of those countries as well as form natural part of their national heritage.

In line with the afore mentioned situation, the need to have a comprehensive programme which will critically analyse and identify type of migrated archives which are in alien countries is of paramount. The programme must further identify sources of information to where we can extract these records; decide whether the records and other information

materials are sufficient, complete and comprehensive enough; and conduct other survey if necessary for acquiring more records in diasporas.

A call to Tanzanians and other good partners who sympathise with the Tanzania Historical Heritage to assist the country and the Tanzania National Archive in particular to investigate and provide some finding as to where these heritage information can be secured and brought back to their provenance would be highly appreciated.