

# How To Be A Dictator



## BINYAVANGA WAINAINA

### **RULE 1**

Be the richest man in your country (Daniel arap Moi, Robert Mugabe, Uhuru Kenyatta). If you are a second-generation dictator, this is not hard – just blackmail the guy who came before you (Frederick Chiluba). If you come from an oil-producing country, this is even easier (many Nigerians and Angolans, Chad). If you are a Kenyan, the National Social Security Council is good for a few billion. Defence contracts are even better (all presidents). Money-printing contracts, the best (all presidents). In South Africa, anything with the words ‘black empowerment’ works fine (Jacob Zuma).

### **RULE 2**

Find poor, stupid and brutal men from every corner of your country and make them rich (Julius Malema). Do not give them money. Give them a place to steal from. Give all women’s church groups money. They are the most powerful groups in your country.

### **RULE 3**

Make America and China happy. Make Israel and Saudi Arabia very happy. Do not mess with the Muslim Brotherhood (Hosni Mubarak, Gaddafi). Blame all internal conflict on al-Qaeda. Blame all external conflict on American intervention.

### **RULE 4**

Be very, very nice to your army. Be very mean to your police. Expand your private and state spy service with the most violent and loyal people who come from your village. Make sure you have private security imported and well lubricated. Brandy and hard cash. South Africans are excellent for this.

### **RULE 5**

Allow all international NGOs and donors free access to starving rural people, so that they vote for you because they got food aid (most African countries). Arrest all the same whenever they tweet the following hashtags: #Occupy, #Dictator, #Democracy.

### **RULE 6**

Colonial countries expected little of Africans. Maintain this illusion. Keep your citizenry ignorant and unproductive. For their food needs, see Rule 5 above.

### **RULE 7**

Make sure you become your tribal leader (Kenyatta and son, Odinga, Goodluck Jonathan, Moi, Zuma). Even if you do not speak the language (Jerry Rawlings). Meet important people in your tribe every month and emphasise how the other tribes are going to kill you all if you leave power (Moi). When the shit hits the fan, your people will wield machetes for you. In Africa, ‘tribe’ means anybody who speaks your language to whom you give money and civil service jobs. Just like the colonials.

### **RULE 8**

Destroy or infiltrate all workers’ unions and civil organisations that have a constituency of educated Africans. This way, you have no organised civil society that works. All farmers’ associations, parents’ associations and teachers’ associations. Also church groups – especially the Catholics, who have a dictator in the Vatican who is richer than you.

### **RULE 9**

Allow all civil society groups that do not have any sizeable membership or constituency among your citizens. This way, you can shrug your shoulders and say you are happy to be criticised, but what noise they make means nothing.

### **RULE 10**

A free press is important. But have shares in all major media and make sure that you allow them to be very critical of everything, except you. You can, these days, secretly pay bloggers. They can say, for example, that your economic policy is Keynesian, but they should never say you are a “corrupt Zulu warlord”.

### **RULE 11**

Do not send all the money you steal to Switzerland and do not give it to your wife. Do not have businesses in your wife’s name. Or in your children’s names. Deal in euros, Krugerrands and diamonds.

### **RULE 12**

Be nice to your fellow world dictators; you may need them to give you a home some day. Join Nepad (Wade). Attend all African Union (AU) meetings. The AU is the dictator’s best friend (Idi Amin). For presents to colleagues, cash is good, gold is better and treasury bonds are best. No Ndebele prints please. Always make sure you have a direct line to Syria and North Korea.

### **RULE 13**

Buy 10,000 drones and get a huge anti-terrorism grant from Obama to increase surveillance on all your political threats. Say yes to Africa Command and the Americans will defend you.

### **RULE 14**

Be seen in a Pentecostal church every Sunday and you will be forgiven. Any Saudi-financed mosque works well too when relevant. Give noisy imams land and money.

### **RULE 15**

Do not fuck with any drug dealers or, if you are Francophone (all Francophone countries), with the Government of France (Rwanda, Ivory Coast).

### **RULE 16**

Love China.

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