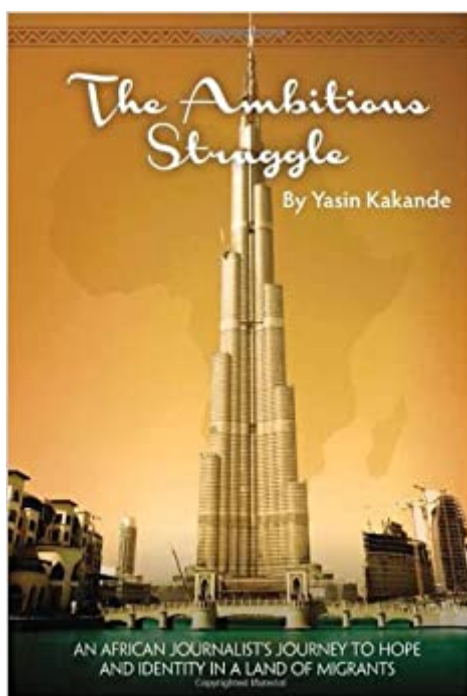


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# The Ambitious Struggle: An African Journalist's Journey Of Hope And Identity In A Land Of Migrants



## Synopsis

A fascinating and gripping account of life in the United Arab Emirates, as seen and reported on by a Ugandan journalist resident for over a decade in Dubai. The first such account of its kind, in outlining the duties he was assigned (in print and broadcast media) and the news events that made it (or did not make it) into the print and broadcast media, one gains a keen look at the points of sensitivity in the complex society of the UAE.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On face value, Yasin Kakande is a man many people might look at and admire instantly, and wish they were like him. But after reading his compelling story - the story of a man who simply refused to give up - right from his childhood days in the rural villages of Gombe to the glitz of the sky-scraped cities of the Middle East, they will learn one important lesson: good things eventually come to those who refuse to give up. Uganda's Independent magazine. "This is an intensely human story about trying to maintain personal integrity in a struggle for survival and success. How can you remain honest in a society that is corrupt? How can you tell the truth when your silence can be so easily secured by dismissal or deportation?...and he writes vividly and powerfully about both. His accounts of the sex industry for example, are as harrowing as they are shameful." Esther Dowling, Business Intelligence Consultant, UK. "Behind glossy magazine stories about Dubai the hopes and aspirations of the migrants who have built this city are often forgotten. Yasin Kakande offers a rare first-hand account of their daily lives. With the sharp eye of a reporter he describes their cultural diversity, their quirks and prejudices, but never without regard for their dignity. Essential

reading for Dubai citizens, expatriates, and visitors." --Eckart Woertz, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and author of "Oil for Food""His story lifts the lid on the booming sex industry, occasioned by Ugandan girls lured by imaginations of a better life only to be trapped in misery, self-pity and disrepute, The Daily Monitor "The book is a story laced with courage and a conviction to unravel reality, well aware of the ramifications, different from what is largely perceived, earns Kakande an automatic deportation from the UAE," The New Vision

Dubai is the modern epitome of cosmopolitanism. Its 21st century panoply of economic opportunities reinforces the inviting veneer of its cosmopolitanism, which, at least, appears on the surface to be as enlightened as one would expect in a community that thrives on a monumental scale of innovation and enterprise. Dubai's promise of lifelong prosperity and economic justice has attracted many citizens from all over the world - especially from underdeveloped countries such as Uganda. Success comes easily for some but also frustratingly slow for others. Sadly, many also must give up their dreams, as they realize that even in a desert oasis of so much economic promise the quest for tolerance, affirmation, and respect is, indeed, a universally challenging task.Â The Ambitious Struggle: An African Journalists journey to hope and Identity in a Land of migrantsÂ represents a long journey and, to be honest, the book changed and morphed as the story developed and time continued to march on during the writing process. Initially, I planned to write the book focusing heavily on the deep presence of racism and discrimination that confounds and complicates the struggles of immigrants who come to Dubai looking for economic security and freedom. However, as the book took shape, I also learned more about myself, recalling my roots in my home country of Uganda and their still evolving impact upon my life as an immigrant who came to Dubai and eventually established an active career as a journalist. Thus, even as I am still a relatively young man, I realized that the whole spectrum of my formative life experiences endowed a unique, genuine sense of cosmopolitanism that prepared me for the successes as well as the disappointments in the process of creating a productive, happy, and healthy life in Dubai. Furthermore, my experiences abroad have reinforced and strengthened the most essential aspects of my identity - family, the Muslim religion, and Ugandan roots, which are extensively chronicled in the book. The book also includes many anecdotes about my work as a journalist in Dubai. Many readers might be unfamiliar with how the media operate in one of the world's most progressive and economically developed nations. There are many similarities to mainstream media in other parts of the world but there also are some unique elements which emphasize just how precarious, fragile, and delicate the media's professional commitments and ethics are amid the omnipresent shadows

of press censorship and the opaque nature of official spokespersons who aggressively protect Dubai's intricately constructed status quo. These tensions are most frequently observed in the day-to-day coverage of crime, business, public meetings and other routine events that constitute the bread-and-butter of local media throughout the world. Some of the most illuminating insights come from stories about immigrants, signaling themes that easily could apply to similar stories in virtually any other part of the world.

I bought the *Ambitious Struggle* after reading about the Author and the public outcry his book caused in Dubai, in our country's newspaper, the *New Vision*. Because I love reading and I seek out Ugandan authors, I picked an interest and ordered the book online because it was not available then in Uganda back in 2014. I must say that it was eye opening to me and made me realize that the Arabs/residents segregate a lot, despite always complaining about being singled out in Western countries. Having lived in US for about 13 years myself, I must count myself lucky for not having incurred such hardship, lack of freedom to change jobs, or even witness sufferings of fellow immigrants, in a land where most hope to earn a descent living. It is a must read for all, and I am looking forward to reading his second book, "Slave States" I am particularly pleased because I have finally met the author and I am excited to work with him in Uganda.

I really liked the book since it gave me details of what I knew happened but never had sound evidence. The book was easy to read and all the characters were chosen and presented with much care. Yasin's documentary style made my reading very pleasant. I recognised a lot as I came from the same background as the author. Just like Yasin I also left my motherland in search for a better life. Yasin reported job seeking as an African in industrialised countries in a realistic way.

Unfortunately "people of colour" despite their genuine qualifications have to work hard to get to the level they deserve.

I bought this book because I was curious to know how life is for an African journalist in Dubai. I had an idea of what to expect. Yasin traces his story from Uganda to Dubai. It is an important part of the story because it allows the reader to understand how and why Yasin got to Dubai. I must also say Yasin is a brave man for writing such a book.

Yasin Kakande is a journalist who in this compelling book has managed to carefully examine the immigrant experience from a new perspective. Born in Uganda, Kakande immigrated to Dubai in the

United Arab Emirates and both in his role as a schooled and trained journalist he offers insights into the rise of Dubai as a cosmopolitan capital of importance in world matters and the effect that rapid rise had on him and is having on the world. It is clear that the direction of this book progressed from a straight forward examination of the deep seated racism and discrimination immigrants who fled to Dubai in hopes of finding economic security and freedom to a more personal tale of Kakande's roots in Uganda and the impact on his life as an immigrant who came to Dubai and eventually established an active career as a journalist. It is simultaneously a thoughtful expression of aspects of his identity - family, the Muslim religion, and Ugandan roots. THE AMBITIOUS STRUGGLE comprises six sections and epilogue. The first section My Roots discusses the author's childhood, the second section The Road Map to Dubai explains the challenges as an immigrant in Dubai seeking to establish a career, the third section Reporting from Dubai details his work as a journalist, and the fourth and fifth sections - The New Society and The Color of my Skin - take the reader through the forces and implications of Dubai's new cosmopolitan oriented emphasis as well as the racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination confronting immigrants - issues as magnified by Kakande's keen eye a journalist in Dubai as well as retrospective investigation of his life as a young man in Uganda. The sixth section is Kings Presidents and Rulers - a comparative study of the cultures and processes of governing in Dubai and Uganda. He ends his book with a poignant return to his family roots and the intricacies of his mother's terminal illness and the effects on his decision to write this book. Immensely readable, his book relates many true stories covering thirty years, and includes many anecdotes about his work as a journalist in Dubai. It explores many topics - how the coverage of crime and police matters, public health concerns (e.g., HIV and AIDS), racism and racial profiling, governmental accountability, corporate responsibility in accidents, and other reporting beats proceeds against a backdrop of tensions that pit an enlightened cosmopolitanism against the strict cultural, social, and religious mores closely associated with the region. For a new view of the changing world about which we have little first hand information, this book is an eye-opener. Grady Harp, February 14

In a very concise, yet gripping style full of imagery the author takes you on a journey from Uganda to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and back again to Uganda. Although very factual, it reads as a well-documented biography. I found it most insightful. Although not oblivious about the situation in the UAE, I've genuinely learned far more about the situation there than I could ever see from my more privileged perspective. His account laid bare a struggle many deal with when traveling abroad in search of a better life. The blurb focuses on the UAE. I would agree this is the

point of focus, but the author speaks at great length about Uganda as well. I struggled a little to get sucked into the story, working my way through 11 chapters regarding his roots, in anticipation of his experiences in the UAE. I didn't find it particularly helpful that he spoke at great length about his attempts to recite Koran verses in a particular style. I failed to see the significance, even in retrospect and have no affinity with this. There were a few other sidesteps I had difficulty placing. However, as I abandoned the idea of it as an account strictly about the UAE, I started to see the value of the sections on Uganda. Although I do feel the description of war-torn Uganda, with images like piled up skulls by the road, genuinely asks for a book in itself, with quotes like: "Why their human remains are always used as play pieces in a political game to remind the opposition about the risks of challenging the ruling leadership or, more recently, used as an exotic, bizarre attraction to earn some cheap tourist money is perplexing." Or: "That is when our venerable leader would be reminded that he has blood on his hands and when so many fellow nations would publicly express dismay as to how someone could have absorbed so much blood on his hands continuously without even taking a single shower for decades." This simply begs for more. The blurb may have gotten me on the wrong foot, the content definitely made up for that.

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