

Beyond Imperial Presidency in Kenya: Interrogating the Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki Regimes and Implications for Democracy and Development

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Abstract

This article uses a historical trajectory to examine the impact of presidential politics in development in Kenya, using Kenyatta, Mo and Kibaki regimes for illustration. My argument is that corruption and inefficiency of the three regimes has made Kenya very vulnerable, now regarded as one of the fragile states on the African continent. Kenyatta inherited colonial structures that were designed to serve British imperial and financial interests, and these structures have remained intact and have brought certain material advantages to privileged few, especially his family. A recurring problem for the three regimes has been the unresolved land issue and factiousness of the state. I suggest that the expansion of representational technologies and capacities have allowed people access to freedom, as well as important information and can make superior judgments. These new mentalities and self imaging have been generated, largely outside spaces of political control such as the internet which address the challenges of this new historical period. Proliferations of FM radio stations and gutter press have also added to this free flow of information. As a consequence, new critical discourses abound on Kenya's past and present. New academic approaches such as postmodernism, multiculturalism and post colonialism have also helped to raise new questions – which this essay grapples with.

Key words: Ethnicity; political parties; Kenyatta; Moi; Kibaki; ODM

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Citation Format

Amutabi, Maurice (2009). Beyond Imperial Presidency in Kenya: Interrogating the Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki Regimes and Implications for Democracy and Development. *Kenya Studies Review*: 1, 1, 55-84.

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Introduction

Presidential historians in Kenya have not done a good job in assessing the effects of presidential policies from 1963 to the present. Jomo Kenyatta ruled Kenya between 1963 and 1978 and a lot of information is just starting to emerge about his rule.¹ His successor Daniel Moi ruled from 1978 to 2002 and his political closet is still unraveling but has not been thoroughly examined by historians. Despite the secrecy that surrounds presidents in Kenya, there is a lot that is in the public sphere. Kenyatta believed in delegation and created a strong cabinet and forceful provincial administration. He rarely appeared in public, largely as a result of his old age, having become president in old age (about 80 years). Moi was a hands-on leader and more energetic and transformed KANU into a formidable political machine through which he channeled his development agenda. It is also evident that the last years of Kenyatta and Moi regimes were notably unproductive, and replete with succession intrigues and disputes. When Mwai Kibaki took office in 2002, he was equally old, in his 70s and tended to emulate Kenyatta, staying away from the public glare. Like Kenyatta, he was frail due to old age and having suffered a serious accident during the campaign period, in 2002.

Like Kenyatta, Kibaki seems to believe in delegation although he is indistinguishable about everything else. Kibaki's last years in office are not likely to be different. Thus, the three presidents that Kenya has had this far are similar: Kenyatta was old and suffered ill health which made him insecure. Moi lacked charisma and did not have a solid intellectual base which made him nervous and easily irritable; while Kibaki has been a political recluse of sorts, largely as a result of his approach to politics. Kenyatta and Moi were convinced of the dangers of constitutionalism and tried to impose total control over the information available to Kenyans through VOK and KBC through single party rule. Alternate political voices were mercilessly suppressed. The harshest measures were directed against the university community and trade unions. My objective in this article is that in order to prepare better ground for Kenya's future development, we need to unpack and expose past mistakes in order to learn from them. Kenyatta tended to privilege members of his Kikuyu ethnic group in appointments to strategic ministries as well as civil service positions. Moi did the same and so has Kibaki. What is interesting is that the three presidents rewarded party loyalties as well, Kenyatta and Moi through KANU and Kibaki through DP and its subsequent metamorphoses as NARC, PNU, etc.

To understand presidential politics in Kenya, one has to examine the nature of party and ethnic politics.² It is through understanding of the place of ethnicity and party politics in Kenya that we can understand the history of presidential politics in the country. Ethnic groups have

¹ For more on Jomo Kenyatta, see Guy Arnold, *Kenyatta and the politics of Kenya* (London: Dent, 1974); Jeremy Murray-Brown, *Kenyatta* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979); and George Delf (1961), *Jomo Kenyatta: Towards Truth about 'The Light of Kenya'* (New York: Doubleday, 1961).

² The concept 'political ethnicity' is similar to what Lonsdale has called, 'political tribalism.' For an elaboration on the notion of 'political tribalism', see John Lonsdale, "Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism", in Kaarsholm, Preben and Jan Hultin (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Occasional paper No. 11, International Development Studies, Roskilde University, 1994.

become vital building blocks for Kenya's democracy, as seen in the scholarship on ethnicity in Kenya.³ In a country whose politics are ethnically determined, pronounced disparities in population sizes have posed numerous challenges. To enhance their political premium nationally, politicians have used populations of their ethnic groups as a bargaining chip. They have created alliances based on their ethnic numbers and support. The more numerous an ethnic group is, the better recognition its leaders get in the re-configuration of alliances and attention from the political schemers.

During the dominance of KANU, ethnic groups were recognized as significant in determining the sharing of power even though the ethnic group from which the president comes has been the main beneficiary of the national spoils, occupying the centre circle around the presidency.⁴ To them belongs the actual power. But the "big" ethnic groups were still regarded very highly in the sharing of the national cake. Kenya has had elections in 1964, 1966, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007. Between 1964 and 1988, the elections were held under KANU. In these elections, ethnic competition was not as pronounced as later became the case in liberalized politics under a multiparty political dispensation, from 1992. After 1992, it became clear that ethnicity mattered in national politics and Kenyans for the first time started to vote on what was clearly ethnic basis. Leaders with small parties even without a chance of ascending to the presidency performed better among their own ethnic groups during elections. The best example is that of George Anyona's Kenya Social Congress (KSC), which always performed relatively well in Kisii districts but palled into dimness outside Anyona's Kisii ethnic turf. Even Ford Kenya has consistently performed well among the Abaluyia areas especially Bungoma District since Michael Wamalwa, a Luyia was its leader.

An assessment of party and ethnic politics in Kenya offers a vantage point from which to examine where Kenya has come from and where it is going. For many decades, access to the national cake in Kenya has been through ethnic balancing, even if not well balanced, but the intention has been visible.⁵ Using these multiparty elections - 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007, I

³ See Korwa Adar, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Kings: The Enduring Dual Constraint in Kenya's Multiethnic Democratic Electoral Experiment," *The Journal of Third World Spectrum*. Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998, 71-96; Shadrack Nasong'o, "Resource Allocation and the Crisis of Political Conflicts in Africa: Beyond the Inter-Ethnic Hatred Thesis," in Okoth, P. G. and B. A. Ogot, eds. 2000. *Conflict in Contemporary Africa*. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 2000, 44-55; O. Oanda, "Economic Reform, Political Liberalization and Economic Ethnic Conflict in Kenya," *Africa Development*, Vol. 24, No. 1-2, 1999, 83-107; B.A. Ogot (ed) *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Democracy in Africa*. Maseno: Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research, 1997; S. Orvis, "Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism in Kenya's 'Virtual Democracy'," *African Issues*. Vol. XXIX, Nos. 1&2, 2001, 8-13; Walter O. Oyugi, "Ethnic Politics in Kenya," in Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnic Conflicts in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 1998, 287-309; Walter Ouma Oyugi, "Ethnicity in the Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections in Kenya," *African Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1997, 41-69.

⁴ Godwin R. Murunga, "Ethnicity, Community Relations and Civil Society in Contemporary Kenya: Trends and Field Experiences," in *Ufahamu*, Vol. 29, Nos. 2/3, 2003, 29-36.

⁵ R. Ajulu, "Politicised Ethnicity, Competitive Politics and Conflict in Kenya: A Historical Perspective," *African Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2002, 251-268; E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo,

demonstrate how tensions have been precipitated by ethnic elites under various pretences. I show that these elites have used ethnic groups to acquire power and manipulate the masses. They have used political parties as vehicles of achieving their ambitions. The article demonstrates that greed, poor leadership, deceit, corruption, grandstanding and separatist threats, manifested through ethnic nationalism and sectionalism are responsible for the tensions in contemporary Kenya. The country has not fully recovered from the effects of the Kenyatta era, where the president was supposed to be the patron of the nation. To understand the origins of recent tensions and developments such as the apprehension over the referendum in 2005 and the bungled presidential elections of 2007, one must look back in history. I seek to examine the reasons for shifting political alliances and why there is political fragmentation in Kenya based on ethnic cleavages. I argue that the hatred, fear and suspicion among ethnic groups were clearly visible in the results of 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007 elections. Tensions came into the open in the referendum carried out on the Kenya Constitution Draft in 2005 (Wako Draft) and in the 2007 elections more than before. My argument in this article is that political parties in Kenya have never been driven by ideology, right from independence to the present. They represent individual greed masquerading as ethnic interests; and elitist and personal ambition masked as popular wills of members of ethnic groups. Thus, parties and ethnic groups provide sites, spaces, and frameworks under which to assess the constituent parts that influence politics in Kenya, and only through them can we provide diagnosis and treatment to the present political malady.

Powerful and Imperial Presidency: The Reward System

Jomo Kenyatta's rule lasted between 1963 and 1978 has been accused of so many omissions and commissions. Four factors worked to the advantage of Kenyatta when he became president. First, he was an old man and in many African patriarchal structures, this gave him a huge advantage, earning him respect from fellow politicians many of whom were much younger. Second, Kenyatta hailed from one of Kenya's largest ethnic groups, the Kikuyu and who happened to be politically savvy, having participated in the Mau Mau war of liberation. Third, Kenyatta had travelled widely, lived in Europe for almost twenty years and was also reasonably educated. Fourth, Kenyatta perfected the reward system and 'divide and rule' policies which had been used by the colonial system. He rewarded those who supported him and was often accused of engaging in some form of "Kikuyunisation" or negative ethnicity, in the process.⁶ Apologists for Kenyatta have argued that Kenyatta did not create ethnicity, pointing out that pioneer political parties were formed largely around ethnic considerations. The Kenya African National Union (KANU) was predominantly for the Kikuyu and Luo, whereas the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) was regarded as a party for the so-called "small ethnic groups." But this is not entirely true because even KANU had members from minority ethnic groups.

Another variable besides political parties was the role of ethnic chiefs. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was seen to represent Luo interests, and Pius Masinde Muliro represented Abaluyia ones.

"Hegemonic Enterprises and Instrumentalities of Survival: Ethnicity and Democracy in Kenya," *African Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2002, 223-249; J.M Klopp, "Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya," *African Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2002, 269-294; K. Omolo, "Political Ethnicity in the Democratization Process in Kenya," *African Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2002, 209-221.

⁶ Godwin R. Murunga, "The State, Its Reform and the Question of Legitimacy in Kenya," in *Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asiatic Dialogue*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004.

The Embu and Mberere interests were purportedly represented by Jeremiah Nyagah, and those of the Meru by Jackson Harvester Angaine, and the Maasai by John Kochellah while Paul Ngei was the Akamba chief. But at the center of these two agencies – parties and ethnic groups – was the presidency. In their article, ‘Prospects for Democracy in Kenya’ Godwin Murunga and Shadrack Nasong’o suggest that many of the political problems in Kenya can be placed right at the doorstep of imperial presidency. They write,

...the prospects for democracy in Kenya are contingent, to a large extent, upon restructuring the institutions of governance and concomitantly devolving power from the presidency, a process that all governments in Kenya, including the Kibaki one, have been reluctant to shepherd.⁷

Many writers have grappled with the problems created by a very powerful presidential structure in Kenya, which does not have significant checks and balances. The occupants of the position of the president have exploited this office to enrich themselves and their cronies. Since independence in 1963, Jomo Kenyatta started consolidating power around the presidency. As the first president, he ensured that members of the Kikuyu ethnic group and loyal members of his party dominated politics and economic realms, for good political reasons. By tasting power, they would support him by all means, because Kenyatta loved power.⁸ Kenyatta reasoned that by controlling economic matters, his cronies would ensure success of the state, as stakeholders. The first three years of independence were spent on political and economic recruitment, creating a ruling class. Kenyatta ensured that he recruited able and loyal lieutenants into this ruling aristocracy. He gave them land and money and power and ensured that they were loyal while isolating legitimate heroes, those who fought in the war of liberation (Mau Mau).⁹ The youthful lieutenants became very loyal and were willing to do anything for Kenyatta because they owed him everything.

Many of Kenyatta’s lieutenants had homes in posh areas of Nairobi, and land in the former white highlands in the Rift Valley. They formed an impenetrable aristocracy. Some of these lieutenants whom Kenyatta placed in positions of influence were in their 20s, for example Kenneth Matiba who was made a permanent secretary at the age of 29. Kenyatta also used KANU to recruit young lieutenants to do his bidding. He made 30 year old Tom Mboya party secretary general and minister in his government. He also recruited Mwai Kibaki into the party as executive officer in his 20s and when he proved reliable quickly moved him to the cabinet.

⁷ Godwin Murunga and Shadrack Nasong’o, ‘Prospects for Democracy in Kenya.’ In Godwin Murunga and Shadrack Nasong’o (eds), *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007), 3.

⁸ John Lonsdale, “Ornamental Constitutionalism in Africa: Kenyatta and the Two Queens.” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Volume 34, Issue 1 March 2006, 87 – 103.

⁹ See David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London, 2005).

These young lieutenants owed allegiance to Kenyatta through either ethnic or party connections. The next stage in Kenyatta's drive to consolidation of power was to unmake his perceived threats and enemies in order to entrench himself. He did this by removing other legitimate leaders, particularly those who had large, legitimate and loyal constituencies, such as Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Ronald Ngala, Pius Masinde Muliro and John Kochellah. Kenyatta wanted to make his own leaders, who would be loyal to him. His first target for destruction was his populist vice president Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. The first political disagreement between Jomo Kenyatta (a Kikuyu) and Oginga Odinga (a Luo) in 1966 was quickly seen as a Kikuyu – Luo conflict.

In 1966, Jomo Kenyatta isolated Oginga Odinga as Kenya's Vice President and the Luos have never forgiven the Kikuyu community for that fallout. Ironically, it is Odinga who had held KANU together when Kenyatta was in detention. Odinga even declined to form a government without Kenyatta when the British invited him to do so. The dismissal of Odinga was very Machiavellian in the way it was executed, because Kenyatta basically baited Odinga into resigning from government. He made it very hard for Odinga to function effectively as his principal assistant for Kenyatta was a very cunning politician. Although he rewarded his followers and supporters, he was also very sensitive to those who appeared popular and tried to become independent of him. This is a lesson which for politicians like Tom Mboya, Ronald Ngala and J.M Kariuki came too late, for Kenyatta was very retributive.¹⁰ He always warned his adversaries and those who changed and reformed, like Paul Ngei, they lived to see many years ahead, but for those who did not heed his warnings such as Fred Kubai, Kung'u Karumba and J.M Kariuki they always ended on the wrong side.¹¹ Karumba and J.M Kariuki were killed. Non-Kikuyu politicians opposed to his policies felt the brunt of his power as well, such as Ronald Ngala, Bruce Mackenzie, Pio Gama Pinto, Argwings Kodhek, and Tom Mboya, who were all killed or died in suspicious circumstances. Other critics such as Martin Shikuku, Jean Marie Seroney, Oginga Odinga, George Anyona, among others, suffered detention or long jail terms on trumped up charges.¹² Kenyatta liked to isolate and frustrate his opponents. This was a pattern that reached its apogee in the many politically related killings from 1968 when opposition against his regime became sharp. That is why the deaths of Ronald Ngala and Tom Mboya came in quick succession, almost in Machiavellian fashion, to silence his critics, and it almost worked. Indeed, this is one of the reasons that the name Kenyatta still raises goose bumps on skins of a many octogenarian politicians in Kenya that lived in that era. The name still exerts a chilling effect on many politicians. The Moi era was not much different. When Daniel Moi took over in 1978, some Kalenjin also became wealthy largely due to his patronage.

During the regime of Daniel Moi that lasted from 1978 to 2002, there was a significant reduction of Kikuyu influence in government, especially senior positions of the civil service. Moi reversed the order in favor of Kalenjins. From 1979, Moi started to develop the Kalenjin alliance more earnestly.¹³ For instance, whereas in 1978 there were 35 Kikuyu District

¹⁰ See *David Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya: The Man Kenya Wanted to forget* (London: Heinemann; New York: Africana Books, 1982).

¹¹ Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi: Transafrica Press 1980).

¹² Karimi and Ochieg, *The Kenyatta Succession*.

Commissioners (DCs) out of 41, 5 Kikuyu Provincial Commissioners (PCs) out of the 8, and 13 Permanent Secretaries out of 19 available; in 1991, there were 17 Kalenjin PSs out of 28 in the nation, 45 Kalenjin DCs out of 66 available positions and 4 out of 8 PCs.¹⁴ It is clear that the Kalenjin and their allied pastoralist ethnic groups such as the Maasai, Samburu and Turkana replaced the Kikuyu almost to a man when Moi took over as Commander-in-Chief and President of Kenya. Many scholars have written about this, assessing the so-called 'Nyayo Era' providing the personnel breakdown.¹⁵ Lucy Mulli writes,

Through a process of 'cronyism', Moi [was] able to retain power by using his ethnic group as a support base. In exchange for their support, the Kalenjin have been rewarded with resources from the public sector. These include senior positions in parastatal organizations and the administration, as well as actual monetary benefits in the form of government loans. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the accession to power by Moi saw the simultaneous entry of Kalenjins into top positions, and the corresponding exit of Kikuyus.¹⁶

During the Kenyatta and Moi regimes respectively, the Kikuyu and Kalenjin possessed disproportionately large representation in all leading sectors of the economy such as agriculture, health, and education, among others. The tension between President Daniel Moi and the elite members of the Kikuyu ethnic group was not just confined to the corporate world and civil service positions. The contestation took many forms and spread to all sectors, including

¹³ Contrary to popular belief, the Kalenjin appeared as an ethnic group in official records in the 1989 census, although in 1955, Daniel Moi, Henry Cheboiwo and Taitta Towett had created the Kalenjin Political Alliance. This means that the Kalenjin alliance is not as recent as the Moi era. True, in 1979 Population census the Kalenjins appear as Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Tugen, and Sabaot.

¹⁴ Maurice Amutabi, "Ethnicity and Kenya's Civil Service: A Retrospection", Mimeo, Department of Development Studies, Moi University, Kenya, 1999, 8.

¹⁵ The Kalenjin replaced the Kikuyu as chief executives in heading the leading agricultural parastatals such as the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC), the National Cereals Board of Kenya (NCBP), the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA), the Coffee Board of Kenya (CBK), and the Kenya Seed Company (KSC), among others. During Kenyatta's term as president, the Kikuyu not only headed but also held senior positions in all the key government corporations such as the Central Bank of Kenya, Kenya Commercial Bank, Kenya Power and Lighting Company, Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, Kenya Industrial Estates, Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC), Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), among others.

¹⁶ Lucy Mulli, "Understanding election clashes in Kenya, 1992 and 1997." *Africa Watch* Institute for Security Studies. <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/8No4/AfricaWatch.html> (Accessed July 12, 2009).

education. Some scholars felt that Moi targetted schools found in Kikuyu regions for ‘poaching’ of good teachers. Many good teachers often ended up in schools in the Rift Valley such as Sacho, Baringo, Kabarak, Kapsabet girls and boys, and Tambach high school, which became academic giants. Of course this argument has been countered by the fact that according to the Teachers Service Commission Act, teachers of public schools agree to work anywhere in Kenya. The defenders of Moi argue that teachers are not marked for any particular region when they graduate from university and it is wrong to suggest that by distributing teachers to various parts of the country, Moi undermined certain regions. There are also those who have argued that Moi’s policies did not just affect only schools from Central Kenya, pointing out that former giants in Kaelnjin regions such St. Patrick’s Boys’ High School (Item), Kapkenda Girls, Moi Girls, Eldoret all declined during Moi’s period for various reasons. However, the area in which Moi was seen to target the Kikuyu occiured in run up to the 1992 multiparty elections, during which Moi’s regime was blamed for using ethnic clashes from 1991 to target members of the Kikuyu ethnic group, and others such as the Luyia, Luo and Kisii.¹⁷ President Moi was against multiparty politics and was quick to interpret the violence that accompanied political competition as the results of multiparty politics, which he had warned against. Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu (KAMATUSA)¹⁸ warriors targeted non-pastoralists (mainly the Kikuyu) that had settled in the Rift Valley. Over 3,000 people were killed in the ethnic skirmishes. Thousands were displaced, and since they were outside the areas in which they had registered to vote, their votes were rendered useless. The ethnic “cleansing” was seen as a pre-emptive move by KANU operatives to disfranchise the Kikuyu and other ethnic groups in the vast Rift Valley province. KANU used money looted from the Treasury to buy support of ethnic leaders and even blamed the ethnic clashes on the victims. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was used

¹⁷ In 1991-3, Kenya witnessed state-sponsored violence directed against ethnic Kikuyu, Luyia, Luo and Kisii farmers who had migrated to the Rift Valley (former President Daniel Moi’s home province) and were likely to vote for parties opposed to his KANU Party (which is associated in the main with Moi’s own Kalenjin ethnic group and its allies) during the first multiparty elections held in 1992. The perpetrators of the violence - window-dressed as “Kalenjin or Maasai warriors” - attacked wearing red uniform T-shirts and trousers (uniform of KANU youth wingers). With faces concealed, they conducted Ku Klux Klan-style night rallies and vowed to cleanse the Rift Valley of the baleful “madoadoa” (non-Pastoralists). Use of guns, bows and arrows, and nighttime firebombing of homesteads, Christian churches, and Kikuyu, Luo, Luyia and Kisii businesses were standard procedures. Firebombs by the phantom militia were planted in those newspaper and human rights offices in Nairobi that dared to publicize the ethnic cleansing in the Rift Valley. Some 3,000 people - mainly Kikuyu - perished in these ethnic attacks, while about three hundred thousand others became, and remain, internal refugees (internally displaced persons). For more details see *Divide and Rule: State-Sponsored Ethnic Violence in Kenya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993).

¹⁸ Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu (KAMATUSA) formed an alliance known as KAMATUSA to mount anti-Kikuyu crusade in the Rift Valley. KAMATUSA was supposed to be a counter movement against the pro-Kikuyu ethnic alliance known as GEMA that brought together Gikuyu, Embu and Meru ethnic groups and which dominated political activities back in the 1970s and 1980s.

successfully to spread propaganda against the Kikuyu. This caused disaffection for the Kikuyu by other ethnic groups.

Ethnic tensions in the run-up to the 1992 multiparty elections

Towards the end of 1992, the country was polarized ethnically and the Kikuyu were at the receiving end, viewed very suspiciously by other groups despite being victims of the KAMATUSA attacks. The government clamped down on pretests and marches. The crack paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU) was everywhere, monitoring people on the streets and at public meetings. Arresting of people opposed to the government, often on false charges became common and courts were increasingly incorporated in this scheme. Members of the Kikuyu ethnic group composed majority of those arrested and tried. The government also targeted civil society groups, many of which were headed by the Kikuyu, such as the Greenbelt Movement led by Wangari Maathai, which were placed under a government control structure (the NGO Coordination council),¹⁹ created for that purpose under an act of parliament that had been quickly rushed through the single-party National Assembly in 1991. Some rich Kikuyu that were isolated from power could not restrain themselves from working towards removing KANU from power. Thus, although Martin Shikuku (Luyia), Masinde Muliro (Luyia), Oginga Odinga (Luo), Ahmed Baharmariz (Swahili) and George Nthenge (Kamba) were the opposition lynchpins in Kenya, it was Kenneth Matiba (Kikuyu) and Charles Rubia (Kikuyu) who were often vilified for their campaign for multiparty democracy beginning May 1990. When Matiba and Rubia were detained, the Kikuyu saw a sinister anti-Kikuyu scheme in the move by the KANU regime. Following this, many prominent Kikuyu politicians kept a low profile as non-Kikuyu politicians pushed the country towards multiparty politics. By the end of 1991, KANU and Moi were in terrible panic due to the massive support that the Forum for Restoration of Democracy (FORD) enjoyed, and which they did everything to scuttle.

Table 1: Percentage Population of Ethnic Groups in Kenya (1999)

Ethnic group	% Population
Kikuyu	22
Abaluyia	14
Luo	13
Kalenjin	12
Kamba	11
Kisii	6
Meru	6
Others (35)	15
Non-African	1

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 1999.

¹⁹ See Maurice Amutabi, *The NGO Factor in Africa: The Case of Arrested Development in Kenya*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006.

The FORD movement remained united for a while, before ethnic considerations emerged, particularly on how the pie would be shared in the face of what was seen as imminent defeat of a weakened KANU. The Kikuyu elite were thought to be scheming revenge against the Kalenjin, and strongly felt that only a Kikuyu could ensure that the Kalenjin paid fully for their atrocities. Also, the Kikuyu elite could not envision a Luo presidency under Oginga Odinga (who was then the acting chairman of FORD and the front-runner for a FORD presidential ticket), neither could they stand a Luyia presidency (under Pius Masinde Muliro or Martin Shikuku). The Luos could not budge. In 1991, the Luo elite was determined this time to see one of their own ascend to the presidency, having allowed Kenyatta the chance to become president in 1963 as Oginga had turned down the offer from the British to form a provisional government as deputy leader of KANU in 1962, at a time when Kenyatta was still languishing in colonial jail.²⁰ The Luo were not prepared to hand over power to the Kikuyu a second time.

Following ethnic suspicions that were building up around the torchbearer for the FORD presidential ticket in the 1992 elections, the movement broke up due to three factors. First, the sudden death of Pius Masinde Muliro on arrival at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (Nairobi) from London meant that the neutral, moderating and unifying voice in the opposition movement was gone. Many saw KANU's hand in this death.²¹ Second, it has emerged recently that KANU stage-managed the arrival of Matiba in Kenya, sending crowds to receive him and raise his ego, and they succeeded as Matiba's image was so puffed up after wards, making him refuse to back down for Odinga. Third, the FORD leadership was complacent following the euphoric support the movement was receiving nationwide. Suddenly Oginga Odinga was waving to crowds through city streets in an open roof vehicle the way President Moi did. Fourth, the Kikuyu dominated media played a role in dividing the opposition. The media had created a hero of some sort out Matiba's medical predicament arising out of detention. Thus, the media had created and sustained Matiba beyond his real political value and worth, mainly out of ethnic considerations. The gutter press illuminated and valorized Matiba to the point that he quickly became the opposition front-runner, eclipsing Oginga Odinga.

Finally, the constitution gave the President the power to call elections and there was no way Moi would call elections when KANU was weak but rather at the weakest point of the opposition FORDS. This he confessed when he said that the day of elections was his "secret weapon" which he indeed used very successfully. By holding onto the election date, the KANU government worked on the principle of attrition successfully as many terrible things started to happen to the opposition. In August 1992 FORD which was at the center of the emergent political process and agent of change, split into two factions, FORD-Asili (led by Kenneth Matiba) and FORD-Kenya (led by Oginga Odinga).

Ethnic Fragmentation and loss of opposition in 1992

Before the 1992 elections, FORD, broke up into two factions (Ford Kenya and Ford Asili) and experienced further splinters afterwards. The Kenya National Congress (KNC) broke off from FORD-Asili. Many observers of Kenya's political scene believe that it was the Kikuyu factor

²⁰ See Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*.

²¹ Muliro's family stunned the public when it declared that there was need for post-mortem. His South African-born widow Mercy Muliro did not help matters when she insisted that the matter of Muliro's death should not be politicized.

that destroyed the opposition unity in 1992 allowing KANU to win the elections. It was as a result of Kenneth Matiba forming his own party (FORD-Asili, a splinter from FORD), that the invincibility of FORD was shattered. The Kikuyu voted overwhelmingly for Matiba's FORD-Asili and for Mwai Kibaki's Democratic Party (DP) thereby dividing the opposition vote.

Therefore, some analysts believe that what sealed the fate of the opposition for the 1992 elections was the formation of the Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) in December 1991 by Mwai Kibaki. DP was created in order to serve Kikuyu business class interests just in case the Kikuyu scheme did not succeed through Matiba's FORD-Asili. Many non-Kikuyu leaders felt betrayed with the late arrival on the political scene of Mwai Kibaki's DP, embracing people from the coast, the Meru, the Embu and Kisii areas who had felt that their stakes were not very clear in FORD. They therefore gravitated very fast towards DP. It was clear that Mwai Kibaki had founded DP to forestall what the Kikuyu elite (mainly from Kiambu and Murang'a) feared to be wrong crowds, of radical politicians who did not have immense wealth, and who were therefore unlikely to preside over vengeful looting after the departure of KANU and the Kalenjin plunderers. To them, government was useless and meaningless if it was not accompanied by pillaging. Radical politicians and mavericks such as Martin Shikuku, and George Nthenge surrounded Matiba and this scared the golf playing Kikuyu group. This conservative wing did not see how Matiba would deliver the pie under all those "Mr. Cleans." The other fact that made Ford Asili unattractive was its attraction of ordinary loafers (*manambas* or *makangas*) and petty traders, and the many Johnnie-come-lately.

Being a conservative Kikuyu politician and having experienced his ascendance in politics under the patronage of rich Kikuyu from Kiambu, Mwai Kibaki appealed greatly to this part of Kikuyu elite and they predictably trooped to his party. The DP was associated with big business and pioneer Kikuyu elite within the Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, Nyandarua and Kirinyaga districts. DP was also associated with the remnants of the Kiambu Mafia from the Kenyatta years (1963 -78). The DP also appealed to those elements not represented in FORD-Asili and Ford Kenya, such as the Taita, the Meru, the Embu, the Kisii, and the Miji Kenda. The formation of the DP created a political re-alignment within the Kikuyu ethnic group, which prior to this was often divided between the Kiambu and Murang'a on one hand and those from Nyeri, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua on the other. The formation of DP and its centrality in sections of the Kikuyu constituency clearly underlined the lack of cohesion among the Kikuyu while at the same time unmistakably delineating the ethnic dimension of Kenyan politics. In many ways therefore, the DP leaders represented the interests of Kikuyu bourgeoisie and leaving those of the *hoi poloi* (peasantry) to Kenneth Matiba's FORD-Asili.²² This was clearly frustrating even to the international community. The 1992 general elections, both presidential and parliamentary were similarly frustrating for the majority of the electorate who had overwhelmingly voted for the opposition. A joke was made that a dog would have won against a KANU candidate in any Kikuyu-dominated constituencies. Indeed some of the candidates that won in Kikuyu-dominated constituencies (especially on Ford Asili ticket) came from dubious backgrounds. The

²² There has been this myth that the Kikuyu (mainly coffee farmers and subsistence peasants) often vote as a block in national elections, meaning that the elites (industrialists, businesspersons and bourgeoisie) and ordinary ones (*hoi poloi* such as peasants, lumpens and proletariat) often unite. This was clearly not the case in 1992 and in subsequent elections, in 1997 and 2002.

parliamentary elections were more frustrating because the opposition MPs could not change much in a KANU-dominated parliament. Bribery-induced post-election defections depleted opposition ranks even further.

Table 2: 1992 Presidential Elections

Candidate	Percentage Vote
Daniel Moi	36.3%
Ken Matiba	26.0%
Mwai Kibaki	19.5%
Oginga Odinga	17.5%

Source: *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard Newspapers* (Nairobi), January 1-3, 1993.

In 1992 general elections Moi was elected to a fourth term as president of Kenya with 36.3% of the vote ahead of Kenneth Matiba (26.0%), Mwai Kibaki (19.5%) and Oginga Odinga (17.5%). The three opposition candidates had a combined 63%, which clearly meant that they enjoyed popular mandate. The two Kikuyu candidates (Matiba and Kibaki) had a joint percentage vote of 45.5% which was a clear 9.2 % ahead of Daniel Moi's 36.3%. It was the alliances that they created that made the two Kikuyu politicians to garner a substantial number of votes across their ethnic divide. Matiba gained many votes from Western Province due to the influence of Martin Shikuku (the Secretary General of Ford-Asili). Mwai Kibaki received many votes from the Embu, Meru and Akamba constituencies due to the role of his lieutenants in Eastern Province such as Norman Nyaga, David Mwiraria, Kiraitu Murungi and Agnes Ndeti (deputy DP chair person).

KANU garnered 100 seats, FORD-Asili and FORD-Kenya gained 31 seats each and DP got 23 seats of the 188 seats in Parliament.²³ The Kikuyu allegiance was split between Ford Asili and DP. Many ordinary Kikuyu voted for Ford Asili whereas many Kikuyu elites voted for DP. Ford Asili dominated in Murang'a (Kenneth Matiba's home district) and parts of Kiambu and the regions of Kikuyu diaspora in Nairobi and Rift Valley, whereas DP dominated in Nyeri (Mwai Kibaki's home district) and Kirinyaga. The divisions of 'lighter' and 'darker' Kikuyu were also clearly at play here, with the 'lighter' Kikuyu (from Murang'a and Kiambu) voting for Ford Asili and 'darker' ones (from Kirinyaga and Nyandarua) voting for DP. Overall Ford Asili was regarded as the party of the ordinary individuals. Many ordinary Kikuyu mistrusted Mwai Kibaki whom they nicknamed "General Kagwoya" (General 'Coward) but easily identified with the courage of Kenneth Matiba. Many admired Matiba's slogan, "Moi Must Go" which seemed to resonate well among peasants. They thought that it was the courage of Matiba that would get them back their land in the Rift Valley where many had been ejected under the ethnic clashes and not the gentlemanly mien of Kibaki.

²³ See *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), January 1-3, 1993 and *East African Standard* (Nairobi), January 1-3, 1993).

Table 3: Party Parliamentary Seats at 1992 General Elections

Party	Parliamentary seats	% of Total (188)
KANU	100	53.2%
FORD-Asili	31	16.5%
FORD-Kenya	31	16.5%
DP	23	12.2%
Others	03	01.6%

Source: *Daily Nation* and the *East African Standard*. (December 30 – 31, 1992 and 1-3 January 1993.

The performance of the opposition in the first multiparty parliament, which convened in March 1993, was disastrous largely due to Matiba's arrogance and betrayal within the opposition ranks. The country witnessed many defections from the opposition ranks to KANU with embarrassing frequency. There were many defections of MPs from the opposition to KANU. FORD-Asili, which emerged as a Kikuyu outfit, was the major casualty of the defections. As the first leader of opposition in Parliament Kenneth Matiba was quite uninspiring and was to blame for the poor showing by the opposition. He took to empty sloganeering such as "Moi Must Go" and to grossly unappealing behavior such as "technical appearances" in Parliament. Matiba quickly became a public spectacle, a caricature of sorts and a shell of his previous dynamism and charisma. Matiba was a sick man whom the government had wronged by detaining and really needed serious medical attention. Matiba's bad health affected FORD-Asili.

FORD-Asili started to disintegrate because of many reasons. First, there were differences between Matiba and Martin Shikuku, his Secretary General. Matiba and Shikuku were ideologically poles apart and could not just work together, a billionaire and a self-appointed peoples' watchman. Second the party suffered due to Matiba's ill-health and his incoherence in public appearances. The party was very weak structurally as it seemed to function and operate solely on Matiba's personal fortune. In terms of vision, the party could not provide the much-needed opposition leadership. Third, FORD-Asili MPs were an embarrassing lot. Many were previously public vehicle touts (*manambas*) and other lowly positions with dubious credentials, such as former councilor Stephen Ndichu, self-proclaimed prophetess and faith healer Mary Wanjiru, semi-literate Dickson Kihika Kimani, and former lorry driver David Manyara. Majority had glided into parliament on the threshold of the multiparty euphoria.

As the 1997 elections approached, the opposition was embroiled in wrangling. In June 1994 opposition groups—with the exception of FORD-Asili—formed a coalition, the United National Democratic Alliance (UNDA). From the onset, ethnic disagreements and irreconcilable differences plagued UNDA. Opposition to Kenneth Matiba within FORD-Asili led to the formation of a rival party executive in FORD-Asili led by Salim Ndamwe. In October 1997 Matiba's faction of FORD-Asili registered as an independent party, Forum for the Restoration of Democracy for the people (FORD-People). Ford People, unlike Ford Asili remained a Kikuyu affair. Only Matiba's Kikuyu bosom friends and minor politicians such as Kimani wa Nyoike and Philip Gachoka trooped to Ford-People. Martin Shikuku had succeeded in ditching Kenneth

Matiba from the shell that FORD-Asili had remained. Following his boycotting of the 1997 elections, and which decision banished him to political oblivion, Matiba abandoned FORD-People and promptly formed Saba Saba Asili Party that has remained unregistered but dominated by the Kikuyu. Thus, towards the 1997 elections, Ford Kenya was preoccupied with turf wars between Michael Wamalwa Kijana and Raila Odinga, DP was mute as a result of Matiba's dominance, and Ford Asili was in disarray, an empty shell left to the whims of Martin Shikuku. It was in this confused state that the opposition parties moved towards the 1997 General elections.

The 1997 General Elections and Ethnic Voting

Towards the 1997 general elections Kenneth Matiba declared that he would not offer himself for election. It was therefore not surprising when Paul Muite, a Kikuyu politician together with a few of his friends created a new political party in 1995 known as SAFINA. The creation of SAFINA in May 1995 explained many things. First it was an indication that some Kikuyu were still uneasy about the existing political parties, especially DP of Mwai Kibaki. There was also the thinking that Muite's party was supposed to take over the vacuum left by Ford Asili in Kiambu, Muite's home district. Second, since his resignation from Ford Kenya as vice-chairman, Muite still harbored presidential ambitions and he needed a vehicle to do so. Third, some Kikuyu elite believed that Kibaki's DP could not cater for their interests the way Ford Asili under Matiba would have done. Thus the creation of SAFINA was what some observers saw as a Kikuyu safety net, although its founders, mainly youthful opposition activists claimed that the party intended to campaign for the introduction of proportional representation and improved human rights and fight against corruption.

In 1997, Moi and the KANU hard-liners devised a rigging strategy similar to the one they used in 1992, to take care of the Kikuyu. The first scheme was to perpetuate the Kikuyu division using mavericks like Joseph Kamotho, Kuria Kanyingi, among others. Second, KANU deployed "zoning" where non-Kikuyu areas were declared KANU zones, locking out opposition and Kikuyu politicians. The third mechanism was to create more constituencies in areas dominated by KANU. There was an addition of 24 constituencies (parliamentary seats) resulting in 210 parliamentary constituencies.²⁴ For instance, Nairobi which had the highest population growth and an area dominated by the Kikuyu and where KANU had won only one of eight parliamentary seats in 1992, received no additional constituency. Fourth, areas that were predominantly sympathetic to the opposition in 1992 were denied new ID cards and voting cards (required for voting), especially Kikuyu constituencies. These actions affected their presidential vote. Others had their voter registers messed up and names removed. Fifth, during the election time, ballot papers from Kikuyu and other opposition areas were intentionally sent to wrong constituencies hence aborting voting in the process.

Kikuyu politicians falsely believed that they had the required numbers and support to make one of their own win the 1997 presidential elections. Mwai Kibaki and his handlers in the

²⁴ Many constituencies were created in KANU strongholds and where it was expected to win. In Nandi, the not very large Mosop was divided into two, creating Mosop and Emngwen constituencies; in Kakamega, Butere was divided into two constituencies, Butere and Khwisero; and Mumias into Mumias and Matungu. Opposition strongholds such as Murang'a received Mathioya hived from Kiharu to create a constituency for Joseph Kamotho.

DP thought that they had a realistic chance with Matiba out of the running. They therefore refused to join a unified front against Moi and KANU. What Kibaki and the rest of the opposition failed to see and acknowledge was that Moi and his allies were a legitimate voice of roughly one-third of Kenya's voters. Unable to unite behind a single presidential candidate due to the arrogance of Kibaki, Raila and Wamalwa, the opposition stood no chance against the well-oiled KANU campaign machine. Whereas in 1992 the opposition was divided among three major parties and several minor ones, by late 1997 it had divided into at least six significant factions. For the Kikuyu, there was one dominant party, the DP in 1997 unlike 1992 when two major Kikuyu parties (Ford Asili and DP) fought it out. Mwai Kibaki falsely believed that the Kikuyu alone would propel his DP party into victory.

In the 1997 presidential election Moi gained 40.64% of the popular vote, Mwai Kibaki 31.49%, Raila Odinga 11.06%, Michael Wamalwa 8.40%, and Charity Kaluki Ngilu 7.81%. The absence of Matiba on the ballot did not make matters better for Kibaki as he had mistakenly imagined. The reality dawned that Matiba had performed better due to the alliances that he had created with non-Kikuyu leaders. Although there were some doubts among some sections of the Kikuyu with regard to Mwai Kibaki's courage and sincerity, they overwhelmingly voted for him. Due to the nature of Kenya's politics that are dominated by ethnicity, the Kikuyu voted almost to a man for Mwai Kibaki's DP. However, many Kikuyu constituencies rejected the choice of people that the DP presented and instead elected people from different parties (Social Democratic Party- SDP, Ford People, SAFINA and National Democratic Party - NDP) although giving Kibaki the presidential vote. KANU won 107 out of 210 available parliamentary seats, while DP gained 39 seats, NDP 21 seats, FORD-K 17 seats, and SDP won 15 seats.

Table 6: The Results of 1997 Presidential Elections

Name of Candidate	Percentage vote
Daniel Moi	40.64%
Mwai Kibaki	31.49%
Raila Odinga	11.06%
Michael Wamalwa	8.40%
Charity Ngilu	7.81%

Source: *The Daily Nation* and the *East African Standard* Newspapers [January 1-3, 2008].

The ethnic nature of Kenyan politics became apparent in 1997 elections. The Kikuyu had voted overwhelmingly for Kibaki. The Luos voted almost to a man for Raila Odinga, a fellow Luo; the Abaluyia voted overwhelmingly for a fellow Omuluyia Michael Kijana Wamalwa; the Kamba voted for fellow Kamba Charity Kaluki Ngilu.²⁵ Even small party candidates such as George Anyona and Katam Mkangi, received more votes among members of their own ethnic groups compared to the rest of the candidates. An idea of creating ethnic alliances as an important beacon in politics in Kenya was born after the 1997 elections. It was clear that personality factors also played a role in the elections besides the ethnic factor. Without Matiba, Ford Asili had suddenly become an insignificant party. However, KANU remained predominantly a Kalenjin party, DP was Kikuyu, NDP was Luo, Ford Kenya was Luyia and SDP was Kamba.

²⁵ *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard* January 1-3, 1998.

Therefore, smarting from defeat in 1997 elections, three opposition leaders Mwai Kibaki, Michael Kijana Wamalwa and Charity Kaluki Ngilu (the “Big Three” as they became known between 1997 and 2001) worked out some sort of an alliance, a working relationship. They held frequent “breakfast meetings” at strategic hotels in full media glare, to keep the idea of unity going, but nobody took them seriously, not even KANU. This became the impetus that would see inter-ethnic bridge-building develop later to become NARC. The opposition had realized that this was the only way they could defeat KANU at elections. The populous Kikuyu had realized that they could not go it alone. It was a bitter reality but one that would be put in use in the 2002 general elections.

Table 7: Party Performance in 1997 General Elections

Name of Party	Seats (210 seats)	% of Total
KANU	107	51%
DP	39	18.6%
NDP	21	10%
FORD-K	17	8.1%
SDP	15	7.1%
Safina	05	2.4%
Small parties	06	2.8%

Source: *The Daily Nation* and the *East African Standard* Newspapers (January 1-3, 1998).

The 2002 Grand Coalition and Opposition Victory and Fallout

In 2002, Emilio Mwai Kibaki was elected Kenya’s third president. Many factors contributed to Kibaki’s election. First, it was the amalgamation of hatred against the dictatorship of former President Daniel Moi by many politicians in Kenya. The second factor was the political alliance of the ‘big three’ of Kibaki, Wamalwa and Ngilu. Michael Wamalwa’s clarion call for “the Grand March to State House” in 1997 had initially sounded empty and hollow but became a reality in 2002. This was because on the road to the 2002 general elections, the opposition was more prepared and attuned to KANU’s underhand strategies. The “Big Three” alliance of Kibaki, Wamalwa and Ngilu coalesced to form NAK just months before the 2002 general elections. The NAK revolved around Kibaki’s DP, Wamalwa’s Ford Kenya and Ngilu’s National Party of Kenya (NPK). The NAK was seen as the most formidable alliance to be forged from Kenya’s opposition and this became even so obvious when Wamalwa and Ngilu abandoned their own presidential ambitions and decided to support Mwai Kibaki for the presidency under one party. The grand coalition that would end KANU’s forty-year iron grip on power had been born!

The alliance was built around elite consensus rather than democratic principles, a factor that would come back to haunt the alliance later. Voices of dissent were stifled, especially those against a Kikuyu presidential candidate for NAK. But the Rainbow Alliance created by KANU rebels such as Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka, George Saitoti, William Ole Ntimama, Joseph Kamotho, Moody Awuori, among others and who had abandoned KANU because it was bent on nominating Uhuru Kenyatta for presidency and which later became the Liberal Democratic Party, was even thinner on democratic credentials. Except for Raila, who had been victimized by the state for dissent, virtually the entire LDP senior cast consisted of survivors from KANU. These were individuals who had made careers out of repressing reformers in Kenya. But that seemed not to matter at that time. Both groups found a common agenda at the eleventh hour, to defy Moi and help in removing his party from power. NARC's unity caused nightmares for KANU whose torchbearer for the 2002 elections was a greenhorn whose only political credential was being a scion to Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta. The selection of Uhuru Kenyatta by KANU was Moi's plan which was made through emotion more than political reality and was doomed to fail.

The merger between NAK and the Rainbow Alliance that created the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was born when Raila Odinga asked the mammoth crowd at Uhuru Park, "Kibaki Tosha?" (Is Kibaki capable to be president?). The crowd answered in the affirmative, effectively endorsing Kibaki as the only opposition candidate. Simon Nyachae of Ford People who was waiting in the wings to create an alliance with the Rainbow Alliance (they had actually agreed tentatively on some form of alliance but the Raila-led group found Nyachae's party rather a one man show and not serious) left immediately. NARC courted Kikuyu votes through Kibaki, Luyia votes through Wamalwa and Awuori, Luo votes through Raila Odinga, Kamba votes through Ngilu and Kalonzo, Maasai votes through Saitoti and Ntimama, and the list could go on and on. Thus, from the very beginning, the political marriage of NARC was based on ethnic alliances through recruitment of ethnic political leaders. NARC perfected a game that Daniel Moi and Jomo Kenyatta before him, had started.

Therefore, in the 2002 General Elections Daniel Moi's inaptitude as a politician was for the first time exposed for lacking in his actions was his so-called political shrewdness and astuteness. It occurred to observers that maybe he had been given more credit as a strategist than he really deserved. Perhaps he had just dealt with naïve and somewhat incompetent politicians in the past. His major undoing was to build so much on the incompatibility of Luos and Kikuyu. His main logic and on whose strength his 2002 election strategy seemed to rest were faulty and based on defective logic and facts. To begin with, Moi's ethnic arithmetic had never envisaged a Luo (Raila) supporting a Kikuyu (Mwai Kibaki) based on two historic fallouts. First, the fallout between Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (Raila's father) a Luo with President Jomo Kenyatta a Kikuyu in 1966; and second when Kenneth Matiba, a Kikuyu denied Jaramogi Oginga Odinga the presidency by dividing FORD into two factions, Ford Kenya and Ford Asili. These two events, Moi believed, had created a permanent wedge between the Luo and the Kikuyu. Moi had learnt many political lessons but had probably forgotten the Machiavellian maxim, which states that there are permanent enemies in politics and the Bismarckian principle, which states that only fools fail to change with situations. Moi thought that all the Kikuyu would troop to Mwai Kibaki's DP leaving the rest with no choice but to support Moi's candidate. He also thought that since there appeared to be so much mistrust in the past between the Kikuyu and the rest of Kenyans, there was no way other ethnic groups would support a Kikuyu candidate. Daniel Moi played the ethnic card to the very end. In order to scuttle the Western Kenya vote in 2002, Moi

named Musalia Mudavadi Vice President. When Mudavadi took the “second biggest flag” in Kenya to his home district Vihiga in Western Province, he became the first Vice President in Kenya to be stoned by constituents. With the formation of the grand alliance of NARC, Moi saw his schemes and strategies melt and resorted to his age-old resolve and recalcitrance, hoping that something would probably go wrong in the NARC alliance. Nothing of the sort happened. Moi was wrong on all of his premises. With the Abaluyia, Luo, Kamba, Maasai and about 60% of the Kikuyu votes behind Kibaki, Moi’s game plan of the ‘small ethnic groups’ ganging up against the ‘big ethnic groups’ was futile, predestined to fail.

Table 8: results of 2002 Presidential Elections

Candidate	Political Party	Votes	% of Total
Kibaki	NARC	3,646,277	62.20%
Kenyatta	KANU	1,853,890	31.32%
Nyachae	FORD-P	345,152	5.89%
Orengo	SDP	24,524	0.42%
Ng’ethe	CCU	10,061	0.17%

Source: *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard* Newspapers (December 30, 2002 and January 1 - 3, 2003).

The results of the elections clearly indicated that the Democratic Party (DP) was the party of choice for the Kikuyu together with their distant cousins the Meru, Embu, and Mbeere. The Abaluyia were solidly behind FORD-Kenya, since Michael Wamalwa Kijana, a Luyia, was its leader. The Kalenjin as expected unquestioningly adhered to the direction of Daniel Moi despite the fact that there was apparent error and miscalculation in his choice. The Abagusii (Kisii) were in FORD-People, almost to a man, since Simeon Nyachae, a Kisii was its presidential candidate. Similarly, the results confirmed that the Luo could only hear a voice of their own, this time they obeyed the bidding of Raila Odinga as his father had done for over three decades, and voted as Raila told them. The Kamba were behind Kalonzo Musyoka and Charity Ngilu. The results confirmed that ethnicity was so entrenched and that it cannot be wished away by the self-same politicians, the major beneficiaries of ethnicity. NARC was a unique experiment at coalition building. The question was whether this alliance would last long. It did not.

Table 9: Results of 2002 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Seats	% of Total
NARC	125	59.5%
KANU	64	30.4%
FORD-P	14	06.6%
SISI KWA SISI	2	01%
Safina	2	01%
FORD-A	2	01%
Shirikisho	1	0.5%

Source: Daily Nation and East African Standard Newspapers (December 30, 2002 and January 1 - 3, 2003).

The Kibaki Presidency and Ethnic Question

Mwai Kibaki started his presidency in 2002 on a rather shaky ground. Mwai Kibaki started by disregarding other members of the coalition. He had agreed to a pre-election pact with other parties in the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) but ignored it after elections. The unfilled memorandum of understanding (MoU) remained a contentious aspect in the alliance and preoccupied the first term of the Kibaki presidency. The refusal to honor the MoU literally spelt the end of the coalition. As Kenya quickly moved towards 2007 general elections, new alliances emerged to replace the dishonest National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) that was created just before the 2002 elections. NARC was all but dead by 2005. Politicians from all ends of the ethnic spectrum started to forge possible winning coalitions from their ethnic bulwarks, in which members of the Kikuyu ethnic group are increasingly getting isolated.

What isolated Kibaki's regime was the fact that almost half of cabinet slots in the first NARC government went to Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association (GEMA) areas – Mwai Kibaki, John Michuki, Chris Murungaru, Martha Karua, Amos Kimunya, Kiraitu Murungi, David Mwiraria, etc. Kenyans were also not surprised to see the strong re-emergence of the Kiambu connection in the Kibaki government in the reconstituted so-called government of National Unity that embraced the GEMA grouping even more enthusiastically; especially after non-GEMA members of parliament (MPs) rejected some cabinet positions, especially those who were made assistant ministers.

Kibaki did not do well on the ethnic question. In 2006, there were 19 permanent secretaries from GEMA-related ethnic groups out of 34 in the country. In 2002, there had been 14 permanent secretaries from the Kalenjin, and related ethnic groups out of 26. In 2006, members of the GEMA group headed 23 of the 34 public corporations (parastatals).²⁶ From the events of the NARC coalition and how President Mwai Kibaki mishandled his colleagues in the alliance, there was a sense in which the Kikuyu were held in deep suspicion by other ethnic groups, and this was tested in the 2007 elections. The defeat of the Kibaki government (Banana Team) during the 2005 referendum on the watered down Draft Constitution by the Orange Team

²⁶ Maurice Amutabi, "The Kikuyu Factor in Politics in Kenya." Paper presented at the African Studies Annual Meeting (ASA), New York, 2007.

was significant in determining events for 2007 elections. Economic scandals did not help Kibaki's course either. Leaders from other ethnic groups in Kenya, even Kibaki's allies like the Meru and Embu (after Mwiraria and Murungi were sacked) felt that they were ejected from the government as sacrificial lambs following Anglo-Leasing Scandal).

When Kibaki took over, members of the Kalenjin and allied groups headed 24 of the then 33 public corporations. In 2006 there were 47 District Commissioners from the GEMA-related ethnic groups out of 82 positions in Kenya. In 2002, there were 37 DCs from the Kalenjin and related groups, out of 74 positions at the time. In 2007, there were two Kikuyu Vice-Chancellors of public universities, for the first time. Before 2002, only the Kalenjin ethnic group had two vice-chancellors. In the military, the armed forces chief was from GEMA, the first since independence, with the army, navy and air force strongly controlled by GEMA-related officers. In 2009, Matthew Itere, from GEMA replaced Major General Hussein Ali as commissioner of police and the officer ranks of the force were dominated by members of GEMA who also headed the rest of the police units and formations, from the CID to the GSU. The Judiciary especially the High Court and Court of Appeal are dominated by members of the GEMA groups, right from the Chief Justice. The list of Kenya's diplomatic representation abroad since 2003 read like a GEMA directory. In short, things have changed very quickly, with almost GEMA replacing the Kalenjin directly. There were several Kikuyu PSs who were above the Civil Service retirement age. In July 2006, the five PSs that were still serving in the Civil Service contrary to the retirement age were all from GEMA. They included the Head of Civil Service, Francis Muthaura, Karega Mutahi (Education), Patrick Nyoike (Energy), Gerishon Ikiara (Transport) and Stanley Murage, who was President Kibaki's strategic policy adviser, based at State House.²⁷ Younger and more talented Kenyans could not serve their country in these important positions because some old PSs were being recycled again and again simply because they belonged to the President's ethnic group. Moi's regime respected the retirement age even if his ethnic group were over-represented in those positions.

Within the first anniversary of NARC in power in 2004, it was clear that a 'Mount Kenya Mafia' had taken over. On NARC's third anniversary in power, 'the Kiambu mafia' joined in the fray under the guise of government of national unity on invitation by NAK to cushion the Presidency from would be enemies from within. This occurred following the loss of the government in the referendum on the draft constitution of 2005. The poor performance by the NARC government under President Mwai Kibaki made it difficult to forge an alliance with any of the opposition leaders, who could not trust Kibaki. The bad blood that had developed between NAK and LDP leaders within NARC had shown that coalitions and alliances were very shaky and tenuous in a state where politics are played along ethnic lines. It was embarrassingly obvious that the NARC government had been pursuing a constricted ethnic agenda instead of larger national interests. By 2006, the NARC record at national unity and at pursuit of democratic principles was dismal. Like Kenyatta and Moi regimes, Kibaki regime confirmed that Kenya's political elite is largely self-centered, narcissistic and unrefined hodgepodge of ethnic barons with no national vision for the country. Since ascending to power, the NARC government was engulfed in factional warfare that was structured around ethnic calculations. The pre-election reformist promise never materialized due to the ethnic polarizations that President Kibaki's had failed to stem.

²⁷ Daily Nation, Nairobi, Kenya. July 10, 2006.

http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgcontententry.asp?category_id=64&newsid=76934

By 2007, observers of the political scene believed that that Kibaki had failed to offer bold and visionary leadership. Instead, he surrounded himself with plotters, sycophants, incompetents, buffoons and nincompoops, drawn mostly from the Kikuyu and kindred ethnic groups such as the Meru and Embu and the “Makerere grandfathers” some of whom he had appointed to universities as chancellors and leading corporations as CEOs. Unfortunately for Kenya, many of these courtiers did not have what it takes to deliver development, as they were entrenched in ethnic cocoons and old classmate tales and were lacking in insightfulness in dealing with people from outside their own ethnic group and class. There was not trust in the coalition, and a new constitution was not possible under the circumstances.

The ruling coalition of NAK and LDP did not agree on how to divide the power of executive between the position of prime minister and president. This was guided by ethnic insinuation, innuendo and selfishness. Kenyans knew that Moi and KANU were opposed to a new democratic constitution due to selfishness and lack of democratic will. But little did they know that once in power, NARC and Kibaki would turn out to be an exact reproduction of KANU. After all, NAK was a vehement advocate for a new constitution; so was Raila Odinga, even within KANU. It quickly became apparent that the fervent appeal for a new constitution was a strategy on the part of NAK and the Rainbow Alliance to simply get rid of KANU from power, not to change the political landscape in Kenya.

The “Makerere grandfathers” constituted a significant lot of NARC’s gatekeepers at State House. They deployed divide and rule strategy and used state rewards to win supporters just like Moi had done for many years. It was clear that the regime was interested in survival and it did not come as a complete surprise when Kibaki’s regime started to warm up to KANU and those in its former regime. These were individuals whom Kibaki had accused in his inaugural speech of causing bloodshed, carnage, chaos, and mayhem and looted the country. It was clear that Kibaki was interested in containing the rebellion of Raila Odinga and LDP. Thus, the greatest mistake of NARC was its insistence on engaging KANU era personalities as well as appointing people from the Mt Kenya region to key positions at the expense of merit. The Kibaki regime had moved very fast into the Moi mode - of wheeling and dealing- as well as divide and rule and self destruction. By 2007 it was becoming difficulty for Kibaki to forge an alliance with leaders from other ethnic groups.

End of high road for Kibaki: Repression and Corruption

On March 3, 2006 Kenyans awoke to the shocking news of an attack by Government agents on the Standard Group, in which the Kenya Television Network (KTN) was put off air, the Standard Newspapers’ printing plant located at Industrial Area in Nairobi was disabled and tens of thousands of newspapers burnt.²⁸ In the commando-like operation, masked policemen descended on the Standard Group’s premises at the I&M Bank Tower in downtown Nairobi and switched off the KTN channel, before proceeding to the Group’s printing plant on Likoni Road, in Industrial Area where the masked police squad, from the dreaded Kanga crack squadron, beat up guards and staff and carried away vital broadcast equipment and computers from the KTN

²⁸ “Standard Under Attack,” *Standard Newspapers*, Nairobi, Kenya. March 3, 2006. http://www.eastandard.net/hm_news/news.php?articleid=37310 (Accessed 9/7/2006).

newsroom. The police also stole a delivery van, which was later found abandoned in a police yard three months later on July 9, 2006.²⁹

The Government took responsibility for the attack, with Security Minister, John Michuki (a Kikuyu), declaring: "If you rattle a snake, you must be prepared to be bitten by it." Michuki said police were simply doing their job. Police spokesman Jasper Ombati, in a widely publicized statement on the raid, claimed that the media house was raided following information that it intended to commit an act that posed a major threat to national security. This was reminiscent of the days of dictatorial KANU regime when print media was often raided and newspaper copies confiscated and destroyed. The raid on Standard Group was directed by the Director of CID, a Kikuyu. The then Police Commissioner (a non-Kikuyu) Major General Hussein Ali was left out of the plans for the raid. Many professionals condemned this police action but copiously missing were the voices of so-called democratic forces and the media. During the raid, foreigners of dubious credibility known in Kenya as 'Artur brothers' - Artur Margaryan and Artur Sargsyan - participated, using racist language on the newspaper employees. From this incident, among others, it emerged that free press only mattered in Kenya when a Kikuyu was not in power as president. But the problem is not just with freedom of the press but also high-level corruption.

The plethora of corruption, financial and political scandals that have bedeviled Kenya in the recent past under President Mwai Kibaki and his National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and Party of National Unity (PNU) is appalling. Scandals of gigantic magnitude such as that involving the fictitious Anglo-Leasing Company concerning questionable dealings in which the government of Kenya lost billions of dollars is compared to the Goldenburg scandal in which the previous regime of President Daniel Moi and KANU lost billions of dollars that benefited few people in the system and their foreign accomplices. Other scandals under NARC include the corrupt manner in which tenders for the security system upgrading and passport upgrading machines were awarded and in which billions were swindled; the cowboy contractors that have received payments for incomplete or shoddy road and building projects; the Uchumi supermarkets debacle; and the 'Artur brothers scandal', which have left a bitter taste in the mouths of Kenyans. Corruption in Kenya is blamed on a group of elite and other minor functionaries surrounding the president, and the predominantly Kikuyu regime. Composed of what has been described as 'the Mount Kenya mafia,' from the GEMA group of ethnic groups, this elite group has been hell-bent on resisting the liberalizing effects of a nascent democratic pluralism in Kenya that brought it to power under an alliance of many parties that produced NARC.

The anti-corruption Tsar in the NARC regime John Githongo ran into exile fearing for his life, after several of his attempts to bring the many corruption scandals to a halt were frustrated by Kibaki confidants and insiders. The social 'cohesiveness', and the 'sharing of the national wealth' through ethnic quotas, which was instituted by KANU under Moi has been replaced by an out rightly regional agenda. Just like the dictatorial Moi regime, the NARC government recruited a cabal of intellectuals as advisors and think tanks as well as creating a propaganda office known as Government Spokesman. Moi was a dictator and his regime corrupt, but Kibaki has turned out to be more dictatorial and his regime more corrupt. He has filled important positions in his government with his cronies. The regime has been busy since 2003 removing

²⁹ "Standard Under Attack," *Standard Newspapers*, Nairobi, Kenya. March 3, 2006.
<http://eastandard.net/archives/sunday/index.php?&date> (Accessed 9/7/2006)

critics from critical ministries and promoting Kikuyu dominance by replacing non-Kikuyu with members from the Kikuyu ethnic group. Even Universities have not been spared. For example Ratemo Michieka, a Kisii and the Vice-Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) was replaced by Nick Wanjohi, a Kikuyu who was not even qualified to be VC as he was not a full professor but associate by the time of his appointment to the position by President Kibaki. Nick Wanjohi is a political scientist, a discipline that is not even offered at JKUAT. Kibaki's regime has also been refused aid on allegations of corruption by such bodies as the IMF and the World Bank and leading Western nations.

The response to allegations of corruption by Britain and United States has been the naïve chest pounding that Kenya can do without foreign aid. This was the popular response from NARC ministers and functionaries, and which Prime Minister Raila Odinga has taken up under the PNU and ODM coalition. Two of the Ministers in the NARC government Chris Murungaru and David Mwiraria were banned from visiting the United States and Britain due to the undesirable business associates, a diplomatic way of saying that they are corrupt. In 2005, in a move that must have terribly embarrassed the NARC government of President Mwai Kibaki, the United States and United Kingdom blacklisted former Transport minister Chris Murungaru on whom they imposed a travel ban, and notified all airlines through written notices not to grant him airtickets to the two countries. In 2006, President Kibaki's former private secretary and personal assistant Alfred Getonga and businessman Jimmy Wanjigi were also banned from visiting the United States. The US also imposed a travel ban on Baringo Central MP Gideon Moi (former dictator Moi's son) to the United States.³⁰

To be sure, officials in Moi's regime never reached that level of international notoriety and revulsion. The NARC administration experienced the same hostility that the KANU government faced at the height of its dictatorship from the early 1990s to 2002 when it was bundled out of power. Moi, unlike Kibaki, often fought his critics, even diplomats. For example, responding to the German ambassador's 1994 recommendation to close the "moral deficit" with more accountable governance in Kenya, President Moi said, "Moral standards in Africa and Kenya particularly were much higher than in Europe ... where moral decadence had set in ... [due to] ... perversion and other unnatural acts.... Any degree of immorality that had crept into Africa was due to the decadent influence of the West."³¹ Left unsaid, but clear to many Kenyans, was the implication that Kenya's corruption was not homegrown, that foreign forces fanned it. Of course that is not true, as corruption in Kenya is by and large a vice borne by the government bureaucrats and politicians. Opinion polls have always revealed that government departments such as the Office of the President and Police lead in corruption. Addressing his KANU parliamentary group caucus on September 30, 1996, Moi was reported as saying that, should he depart from the political scene, "this country will be just like Rwanda."³² His prophecy came close to becoming true after the 2007 elections when over 1,300 people were killed and

³⁰ 'Prominent Kenyans banned from travelling abroad,' *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), Kenya. June 21, 2006.

http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgcontententry.asp?premiumid=0&category_id=2&newsid=75599

³¹ 'President Moi Criticizes Diplomat,' *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), March 7, 1994.

³² The People Newspaper (Nairobi), October 4-10, 1996.

thousands displaced in post election violence. Kenya has not recovered from the tensions of the post election violence of 2007 and 2008 and the country has remained in a permanent election mode with all kinds of alliance-creations despite the fact that the 2012 elections are many years away.

The 2007 Post election violence

Because the tensions of the post election violence are still in the air, and given the many contradictory figures from the polls, I would like to avoid discussing the results of the 2007 elections. Kenyans cannot gain anything from revisiting the disputed results, whether it was Mwai Kibaki or Riala Odinga who won. Revisiting the issue only seems to raise bad blood and negative energy. What is clear is that in the parliamentary race, Raila Odinga’s ODM won twice as many seats as Mwai Kibaki’s Party of National Unity (PNU). Over two thirds of Kibaki’s cabinet, including his Vice President Moody Awori, was vanquished at the polls, many at the hands of ODM candidates.

Table 10: Results of 2007 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Seats	% of Total
ODM	99	47.14%
PNU	43	20.56%
ODM-Kenya	16	13.3%
KANU	14	6.66%
Safina	5	2.40%
NARC-Kenya	4	1.90%
Ford-People	3	1.42%
NARC	3	1.42%
Others	23	19.16%
Total seats	210	100%

Source: *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard* Newspapers (December 30, 2007 and January 1 - 3, 2008).



Source: *The Standard* Newspaper, Nairobi, Kenya. <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/cartoon/> (Accessed December 12, 2009)

Going by the parliamentary election results, Raila Odinga's ODM should also have won the presidential election, because that is the logic of the pattern of elections of the past elections, but this is a debate I do not want to engage in. What I would like to state is that the 2007 election results reflected an ethnic dimension as well as personality traits. The three main presidential candidates (Raila Odinga, Mwai Kibaki and Kalonzo Musyoka) and their allies influenced the way their ethnic groups voted. Kibaki received more votes among the Kikuyu, Raila Odinga among the Luo and Musyoka among the Kamba. It was clear that ODM had formed the most formidable and broader alliance. The results also revealed the massive rejection of KANU and the legacy of former president Daniel Moi, especially when his three sons lost in all the constituencies in which they ran. Just like the pre-election polls had indicated, Kibaki lost a lot of support from areas that previously supported him in the 2002 elections.

However, the 2007 elections did not veer off the pattern of previous elections. Like the multiparty elections of 1992, 1997, 2002, the 2007 results revealed the presence of 'political ethnicity', where Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for individuals and political parties along the dictates of their own ethnic groups. It seems like other ethnic groups in Kenya isolated the Mount Kenya or GEMA groups, due what was seen as Kikuyu dominance and suspicion. This became apparent in the post election violence following the 2007 elections in which the ethnic

clashes that followed seemed to target the Kikuyu. The revival of GEMA and rise of Kikuyu-led atavistic movements such as *mungiki* did not help matters.³³

Although the intervention of Kofi Annan saved Kenya, by coercing Kibaki and Raila Odinga into a coalition government, tensions have remained and the cabinet has remained divided. Corruption has remained endemic with a lot of sleaze reported in all ministries. Politicians and public officials are still grabbing public land. The Mau forest controversy has raised new corruption questions, where former KANU operatives have received payouts as compensation for returning the land they had acquired illegally. The change of official cars from Mercedes Benz limousines to Volkswagen passats has also been controversial with claims of kickbacks. The most recent corruption has emerged in the Ministry of Education in which Ministry officials embezzled funds meant for the implementation of universal primary education. By 2009, over 20 prominent Kenyans were banned from travelling to the United States and the United Kingdom, including Attorney General Amos Wako due to corruption and blocking constitutional reforms.

³³ For more information on *mungiki* movement, see Grace Nyatugah Wamue, "Revisiting Our Indigenous Shrines Through Mungiki", *African Affairs*, 100:453-467 (2001). See also Peter Mwangi Kagwanja, "Facing Mount Kenya or Facing Mecca? The Mungiki, ethnic violence and the politics of the Moi succession in Kenya, 1987-2002." *African Affairs*, 102:25-49 (2003).

Conclusion

Given the ethnic arithmetic in 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007 elections the script is written clearly, that no politician can afford to ignore the ethnic factor card in Kenya's politics. In political transition to democracy, elites have been busy manipulating ethnic groups to ascend to power. Even after the tumultuous 2007 elections, the manipulation of ethnicity seems to be set to continue with politicians' eyes set on 2012 elections. Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki have all cunningly adopted the colonial framework of perpetuating their own egocentric interests. Many Kikuyu intellectuals who were known critics of the Moi regime, with constant calls for better government in Kenya have kept quiet since 2002 after Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, became president. Despite the fact that the Kibaki regime has presided over some of the worst scandals in Kenyan since independence, the Kikuyu intellectuals gave the NARC government a clean bill of health, and are doing the same for PNU. In pre-2007 some GEMA elite went a step further by commissioning dubious opinion polls which showed that the NARC government was still popular. The ODM and PNU alliance is obviously not working for there are many tensions on a new constitution. There are fears that a new constitution will not be in place before the next elections. The high-profile demand for transparency and accountability has disappeared. The critical articles directed against the Moi regime have ceased under the Kibaki regime. Although NARC was a triumph of the multi-party advocates, the fruits of its success have quickly translated into a Kikuyu victory for the simple reason that the then opposition selected Kibaki, a Kikuyu as their torchbearer. Today, there is need for the rule of law as Kenya increasingly slides into anarchy with Ethiopian rebels operating inside Kenya and Nairobi and other urban areas having fallen into the hands of gangs where cabinet ministers with bodyguards have been carjacked.³⁴ Kenyans do not enjoy a free press any more. The 1992 general elections were held against a backdrop of what the opposition perceived to be a weakened KANU, but it was obviously mistaken. Months before the elections, many Kenyans assumed that the FORD movement that had converted itself into a political party was going to win. For the KANU government, save for a miracle, it was just a matter of time before it was edged out. Even KANU itself seems to have resigned itself to that fate. It was a foregone case that FORD was going to win, and what was still in doubt was only the margin of the victory.

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³⁴ Hon. Kamanda was hijacked at gun point in 2004. On June 29, 2006, Trade Minister Mukhisa Kituyi was carjacked, his car snatched, his bodyguard disarmed, before they were abandoned in Ngara from where they walked to Pangani Police station in Nairobi. The car was later found abandoned in Majengo. In 2009 many prominent Kenyans have been robbed at gun point. On July 27, 2009, a senior police officer was carjacked and robbed at gun point in Nairobi. Kinuthia Murugu, the *Permanent Secretary* in the Ministry of Youth and Sports died on July 9, 2009 at *Nairobi Hospital* after he was shot by carjackers in Nairobi.

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