

THE Weekly Review

For the Thinking Person

ISSUE NO. 57 | OCTOBER 1, 2023 FREE WITH 'SUNDAY NATION'



ODINGAS' DILEMMA

As head of the opposition, Raila is revered and hated equally. Like a colossus, he has straddled Kenyan politics for more than three decades with a mixture of successes and failures. But with no clear heir to succeed him and accomplish the family's long quest for the presidency, is this the final lap of the Odingas?

kenya lens

■ THE VETERAN OPPOSITION LEADER'S QUEST FOR THE PRESIDENCY APPEARS TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS

RAILAMANIA: THE LONG ROAD TO

With age no longer on his side, the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya principal may have to admit that it's time to park his political vehicle and leave the scene. But, after five high-powered campaigns for the top seat, will he?

● BY JOHN KAMAU

The House of Jaramogi is in political trouble, nay turmoil. Perhaps. With no heir to succeed Raila Odinga and accomplish the quest for the presidency, it seems that the family, which is Kenya's face of radical politics, is on the wane.

Raila will be 82 if he decides to run in the next general election – a tall order for an octogenarian. At that age, Mwai Kibaki had retired from politics while Daniel arap Moi was already four years into retirement, having left the scene in 2002, aged 78.

In Africa, only incumbents have run for the presidency and won beyond the age of 80: Cameroon's President Paul Biya, the oldest President in the world at 90, and the late Robert Mugabe, who won the last race at 87.

This week, Raila hinted that he was not about to quit or name a political heir – a hint that he might face William Ruto in 2027. With age no longer on his side and Odingaism, the undying loyalty and obedience to the Odingas, declining, his chances at the poll get more complex. Raila inherited a complex fanatical machine from his father, Jaramogi Odinga Odinga – the doyen of opposition politics in both Jomo Kenyatta and Moi regimes.

At only 25, Raila was under constant surveillance of the Special Branch. He had come to the public limelight in 1970 when he addressed a press conference at Nairobi's Brunners Hotel, appealing for his father's release from the Hola detention facility on humanitarian grounds.

After this, Raila and other family members were allowed to visit Jaramogi, and he described Hola as "a remote, desolate, burning hell-hole-on-earth". Despite all that, he had been employed at the University of Nairobi as a junior staff member and later with the Kenya Bureau of Standards.

Like father, like son, Raila's fate in his quest for the presidency appears to follow the footsteps of Jaramogi: A *cul-de-sac*. By the time Jaramogi died in 1994, his search for the presidency ended with some dismal performance. The memory of the age-old Jaramogi had faded among the voters. In 1992, Jaramogi got 944,197 votes against President Moi's 1,962,866 and Kenneth Matiba's 1,404,206. While Matiba's voting block evaporated quickly, Raila has, over the years, retained some of his fa-

ther's blocks and mannerisms.

A social democrat trained in Eastern Europe, Raila's failure to capture the presidency in 2022, when he had the backing of the incumbent, left him scarred. He looked desolate. His best chance was neutered by Ruto's populist "Hustler" campaign and a disorganised secretariat waiting for "deep state" miracles to cover its muddled campaign. Still, he managed to score 48.8 per cent of the vote compared to Ruto's 50.5 per cent. The loss surprised his followers, who saw the 2022 election as his best chance.

Today, even part of Odinga's Nyanza backyard – trapped by a patrimonial incumbent – has started plotting their post-Raila strategies, a signal that they no longer peg their politics around the persona of Raila. More so, they hope that Ruto will work with them to dismantle the last columns of Odingaism, which solidifies a significant voting block in the country around Raila. But who inherits that mantle?

As the symbolic head of Kenya's opposition politics, Raila is revered and hated equally. He is the divisive and uniting factor – a duo tag he has carried all along. Like a colossus, he has straddled the Kenyan politics for three decades with a mixture of successes and failures. Raila has had a contentious political career and has served as the Prime Minister in the Grand Coalition Government with Kibaki.

He served as Minister of Energy from 2001 to 2002 and Roads, Public Works, and Housing from 2003 to 2005. But the presidency, the ultimate trophy he has hunted with zeal, has eluded him. To survive, Raila has always crafted face-saving strategies or negotiated his survival in the elite circles of Kenyan politics.

Thrice, he negotiated co-existence with Moi, Kibaki, and Kenyatta as part of his survival tactic by first merging his National Development Party (NDP) with the ruling party Kanu and then forming a coalition government with President Kibaki after the disputed 2007 presidential results triggered violence.

President Kenyatta also tamed Odinga's radical politics with a 'handshake' that silenced his aggressive tactics. The Kenyatta handshake later became Raila's Waterloo, for he ironically carries the burden of the Jubilee fiasco – thanks to a political narrative that exonerates Ruto from blame,

though he was the Deputy President. While Raila had told the *Financial Times* that he wouldn't run again, much has changed ever since. He has forced Ruto's Kenya Kwanza alliance into the negotiation table, a move that could set the stage for constitutional amendments and a referendum, which could be a mock test of the ruling coalition's popularity. Ruto has simi-

larly called for UDA party elections, which is usually a mark of political confidence.

As Ruto cements his international links and reaches – with the backing of the US – Raila will have to protect his local networks from crumbling. With the economy in turmoil, corruption on the rise,

and the cost of living rocketing, Raila has a chance to silence the Kenya Kwanza propaganda machine that uses the 'handshake' as the scapegoat for their policy failures. Whether the high taxation and high cost of living will play in his favour remains to be seen. But, certainly, Raila will not let such an

opportunity go to waste. It is this mobilisation prowess that almost brought him to the apex of Kenya's leadership, and as disillusionment with President Ruto continues to grow, Raila is the only personality with credible status to take him on by mobilising the disgruntled crowd.

Stolen votes

Though he believes his presidential votes have always been stolen, political goofs have worked against him.



kenya lens

FATHER, JARAMOGI: A CUL-DE-SAC

‘CANAAN’

After successfully leading the Kibaki campaign in 2001 – after the Narc candidate was demolished by accident – Raila made an about-turn that became Kibaki’s waking nightmare and lost the credence he had created in the populous Mount Kenya region. Because of that, he cannot take credit for Kibaki’s success, for he almost ruined his presidency over demands on a power-sharing Memorandum of Understanding. This push for political power culminated in the post-election violence of 2007/8, forcing Kibaki to share power with him.

It happened that when the Electoral Commission declared Kibaki the winner of the 2007 presidential vote, Raila refused to concede defeat and called for “mass action”. Violence broke out in ODM strongholds, targeting perceived Party of National Unity (PNU) supporters. The violence spread to Nairobi, and before a deal was brokered, about 1,500 Kenyans had lost their lives, and nearly half a million people were displaced from their homes. Property to the value of billions of shillings was destroyed, and agricultural and other production activities stopped. Raila then agreed to mediate with Kibaki to end the violence under former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and his team of eminent persons, including former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and Madam Graca Machel of South Africa. Pundits say that had Raila stuck with President Kibaki, chances were that he could have easily inherited the mantle.

Detained, jailed, exiled, and tortured over his democratic ideals, Raila and his family have borne the wrath of separate regimes. Like his father, Jaramogi, he had hoped to crown all the decades of struggle with the presidency that has eluded the family. For political scientists and historians, the watch is over what happens to Odingaism without an Odinga. Swedish political scientist, Dr Fredrick Roe Boe, who did a PhD studying Odingaism and its relationship to the “Luo narrative of decline”, regards “Odingaism (as) a special brand of political-isms that refers to the exceptional hold the Odingas, and especially Raila, over the Luo”. A Moi-time Kanu apologist and univer-

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

82

Raila will be 82 if he decides to run in the next general election – a tall order for an octogenarian. At that age, Mwai Kibaki had retired while Daniel arap Moi was already four years into retirement.

90

Cameroun’s President Paul Biya is the oldest President in the world at 90. The late Robert Mugabe won his last Zimbabwean election at 87.

sity scholar, Prof Henry Mwanzi, once argued that the family has controlled the community “mentally and psychologically as they seceded from Kenya and lived in a world of their own... (choosing) for them who to elect”.

Similarly, University of Wisconsin’s Prof Michael Schatzberg, in his book, Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa, argues that what distinguishes Odingaism from others is that “the authority is real; it is not crafted around a hawkish evocation of a carefully orchestrated personality cult”. To him, this is why the Odinga elite hardly question Odingaism. Those who question are either ostracised or forced to toe the line – the way Prof Anyang Nyong’o’s and James Orenge’s bid to navigate the Nyanza politics outside Odinga’s party almost took them into political abyss. Today, Raila’s Orange Democratic Party has moved to expel MPs who have shifted their loyalty to President Ruto, a signal that MPs must adhere to Odingaism as the reference point.

With Kenya’s politics rotating around inter-ethnic mobilisation, Raila will have to work extra hard to convince his previous backers that he still has a chance. The political elite who survived by being close to the House of Jaramogi are piling pressure on him not to abandon the boat. But Raila is now between a rock and a hard place. Like the Lolwe Road Services bus company that his father owned, Raila may have to admit that it is time to park his political vehicle. But will he?

jkamau@ke.nationmedia.com, @johnkamau1

■ ‘COMMUNITIES ARE DIFFERENT IN APPROACH... KAMWENE IS OUR VEHICLE’



IT’S A HOUSE DIVIDED

Leading opposition figures concerned over Karua-Kioni’s lukewarm support for ongoing bipartisan talks between Ruto and Raila camps

● BY OSCAR OBONYO

The newfound political partnership between Narc-Kenya party leader Martha Karua and Jubilee Secretary-General Jeremiah Kioni has sent jitters within the formation that coalesces around former Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Leading opposition figures are concerned over the duo’s lukewarm support for the bipartisan talks between teams allied to President William Ruto and Odinga. The emergence of “Kamwene”, an outfit associated with the two, has exacerbated tensions within Azimio La Umoja – One Kenya coalition party. The red flag was raised last week by Kisumu Governor Angang’ Nyong’o, who criticised those “placing thorns in the way of national healing” and urged players from both sides of the political divide to embrace the bipartisan talks at the Bomas of Kenya.

Pointing out that his coun-

ty is among those that bore the brunt of the clashes between protesters and police, Prof Nyong’o said Kenyans had come a long way as a country “from the dark moments of our history and must continue to struggle unwaveringly against all forces of obscurantism”.

The governor hinted at “some leaders across the country” and “from both sides” who wanted the dialogue to collapse so that the country relapses back into political and economic chaos and turmoil. He warned such leaders “who have been blowing hot and cold about the talks” that Kenyans will judge them harshly should the bipartisan dialogue collapse.

“We support the dialogue and would like it to continue to a successful conclusion as per the wishes of our party leader (Raila) and appeal to the negotiators and our leaders to give the talks a chance to help resolve issues that resulted into the demonstrations,” Prof Nyong’o observed. Kisumu was the epi-

center of the nationwide mass action organised by the opposition in protests against the high cost of living and increased taxation. Besides massive destruction of public infrastructure and private property, the lakeside city recorded a huge number of deaths, some reportedly through live bullets from the police.

During a hearing before the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) last Wednesday, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (Ipoa) reported that 57 Kenyans were killed as a result of police brutality. About 30 of these deaths were documented in Kisumu, 20 in Nairobi, and one each in Kakamega and Nakuru.

Ipoa’s figures may be inaccurate or altogether moderated, according to Azimio-allied politicians. The opposition party, which has independently assembled the figures, puts its casualty list at 72, while human rights groups attribute 94 deaths to police brutality. The latter in-

cludes innocent children, toddlers and senior citizens who may have suffocated or choked to death from teargas lobbed at them in residential areas.

Politicians from Mt Kenya have been fingered for demonstrating disinterest in the talks. While Kioni has come out openly to affirm this fact, others like Karua, who was also Odinga’s running mate in last year’s presidential race, has been sending mixed signals.

Other senior politicians from the region within Azimio thought to belong to this school of thought, include former Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya and former Murang’a Governor Mwangi wa Iria.

Former Laikipia Governor Nderitu Muriithi and former Nyeri Deputy Governor Caroline Karugu are thought to firmly subscribe to the position of the larger Azimio group, which fully supports dialogue. Kioni regretted that the law enforcement of-

Continued on Page 21

kenya lens

■ UN DECISION TO PULL OUT PEACEKEEPERS MEETS WITH MIFFED RESPONSE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

BEHIND ENEMY LINES IN SOMALIA**Serving in the war-torn nation as part of Atmis mission, Kenya Defence Forces have restricted Shabaab to sporadic attacks, mainly in Mogadishu. Troop withdrawal raises fears of fresh terror attacks in both states**

● BY JUMA KWAYERA

The drawdown of peacekeeping troops in Somalia has raised fears of increased terrorist attacks in Kenya, with senior officials in Nairobi and Mogadishu remaining apprehensive of an imminent hell-on-earth spell that preceded Operation Linda Nchi in 2011.

The scaling down of forces was set to enter the second phase in September, but President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud appealed to the United Nations, African Union, United States and European Union to delay the process.

Somalia National Security adviser Hussein Sheikh Ali wrote to the UN Security Council, saying the government's campaign against Al-Shabaab had "suffered several significant setbacks", and had exposed vulnerabilities that necessitated a thorough reorganisation.

The African Transition Mission in Somalia (Atmis) had on June 30 concluded the first phase of the drawdown of 2,000 troops, and was due for the second troop withdrawal of 3,000. For about 12 years, Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) in Somalia have restricted Al-Shabaab to sporadic attacks, mainly in Mogadishu.

Defence Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale told *The Weekly Review* that Somalia had petitioned the UN to pause the drawdown following increased terrorist attacks in Mogadishu. He said the war against Al-Shabaab had been transferred to the Somali National Army and police, but the federal government had become apprehensive that the fragile security formations would be overwhelmed by the militia.

"Somalia is now leading the war on Al-Shabaab. They have petitioned the UN to pause the drawdown for (September) October. We are waiting for the response and we are ready and willing to comply with any UN decision. It is not KDF that is in Somalia, but Atmis under a UN mandate. So it is not Kenya or the other troop contributing countries that are making the decisions," Duale said.

"If the drawdown ends in December 2024 as scheduled, we are planning to have a post-drawdown discussion and evaluation with the UN on how Kenya is going to secure its territorial integrity. We won't allow Al-Shabaab to attack us. We have a duty to guard our borders and we have always been ready to keep Kenya safe from external attacks."

If need be, Duale said, Kenya would fill the vacuum left by Atmis along the border to repulse any Al-Shabaab threat. "However, this is subject to the outcome of our discussions with the United Nations. We have always been ready to protect our country," he offered.

The drawdown of Atmis – which has troops from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Burundi – has government officials scratching their heads as concerns soar in Nairobi and Mogadishu that Somalia is hurtling towards an Afghanistan-like moment. In Kabul, Taliban jihadists over-



Kenya Defence Forces' combat helicopters during Operation Linda Nchi. The scaling down of the African Transition Mission in Somalia (Atmis) forces was set to enter the second phase in September, but President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud appealed to the United Nations, African Union, United States and European Union to delay the process.

ran a weak US-installed regime and replaced it with Islamists who proscribed constitutionalism and secularism in preference to Sharia law. Both the Taliban and Al-Shabaab (and Islamic Union that preceded Shabaab) are backed financially and logistically by global terror outfit, Al-Qaeda. The emergence of hugely resourced Islamic State jihadists in Syria in the past decade adds fresh concerns to Kenya and the Horn of Africa.

The Islamic State already has tentacles in Mozambique, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and vast swathes of the Maghreb region of North Africa and West Africa. Nairobi and Mogadishu have quietly expressed reservations over the decision by the United Nations, the African Union, the United States and the European Union decision to defund Atmis – formerly African Mission in Somalia or (Amisom).

A decision to withdraw Atmis peacekeepers in April 2021 states: "The military component will have 18,586 troops until December 31, 2022 and then draw down by 2,000 troops. There will be further graduated drawdowns by September 2023, June 2024, leading towards a final exit in December 2024. The drawdowns will take into account the prevailing security situation in Somalia and will be guided by regular joint technical assessments."

Security expert George Musamali told *The Weekly Review* warned of catastrophic consequences should Atmis pull out. "The drawdown is ill-advised and will

expose the region to more Al-Shabaab attacks. The SNA is not ready or capable of tackling Shabaab, who seem to be better equipped and co-ordinated. Kenya initially sought to create a buffer zone between its borders and the militia, but later opted to stabilise Somalia," he said.

He noted that the increase in attacks on security installations in Somalia, along the Kenyan border and in Lamu was an indication that the region was not ready for a drawdown from Somalia. "We have seen an increase in attacks on military camps and critical installations in both countries. Towns from which Atmis has withdrawn and handed over to SNA are falling back to Al-Shabaab which shows that SNA is not ready. We have not achieved what we intended to," he said.

Major setback

In their assessment of SNA's preparedness to replace Amisom, *Texas National Security Review* found that the conception of the structure and size of army was haphazard and done without the requisite clan and economic ingredients to guarantee acceptability and representativeness that would have provided a buffer against Al-Shabaab incursions in neighbouring countries – especially Kenya.

"The assessment was needed because neither the Somali government nor its partners had reliable basic information about the army, including the identities of its personnel, their locations and unit

affiliations or their weapons and equipment. The assessment confirmed the army was in a dire state: There were fewer frontline personnel than previously estimated (on average battalions had only 63 per cent of their authorised strength), there were inconsistent recruiting standards and most battalions lacked basic equipment, including weapons, ammunition, communications kit and vehicles," *Texas National Security Review* found.

Somalia descended into 'incestuous' clan war following the ouster of former tyrant Siad Barre on November 1, 1991. The war has sucked in foreign interests with the Al-Qaeda establishing terrorist cells in the Horn of Africa nation that periodically unleash terror in neighbouring Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and even as far afield as Uganda, Mozambique, DRC and South Africa.

Al-Qaeda have made no secret of their ambition to establish an Islamic caliphate in east and southern Africa using Kenya as their staging ground for the holy war or jihad. Kenya's invasion of Somalia in 2011 proved a major setback to these ambitions but the onset of the drawdown has seen an upsurge in terrorist activities along the Kenya-Somali border and Kenyan coast.

There have also been deadly attacks in Kampala and western Uganda, where Al-Shabaab and Islamic States allies, the Allied Democratic Forces, have claimed responsibility.

Former Defence Cabinet Secretary Eu-

gene Wamalwa shares President Mohamud's fears of an imminent upsurge in terrorism in eastern Africa with Kenya on the leeside of the resultant terrorist crossfire. Wamalwa links the start of the withdrawal of Atmis peacekeepers in June to increased Al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu and in Mandera and Lamu.

"Everything should be done to prevent Somalia from going the Taliban way. Somalia is exposed in the face of unmatched capability of Somali national army to take over from ATMIS. Kenya will bear the brunt of the ensuing insecurity as already witnessed in Mandera, Lamu and Boni Forest. We are already feeling the brunt (of the Al-Shabaab attacks) as SNA lacks the capacity to fill the vacuum left by Atmis," he said.

Texas National Security Review's Paul D. Williams provides some sobering assessment of the situation in Somalia as the drawdown is implemented. "My new research provides the first comprehensive assessment of 11 years of international efforts to build an effective Somali National Army... Somalia represented a uniquely difficult context for this project because of two decades of state collapse, interclan conflicts and world-leading levels of corruption."

The sentiments are shared by a former UN Development Programme Under-Secretary, Dr Christoph Jaeger, who is currently resident in Nairobi and is involved in stabilisation of Somalia. Dr Jaeger, until recently a senior advisor of Somalia Berghof Foundation, warns that "it's premature to leave the country without outside security support".

"The country is still not sufficiently united and stable. State-building is still mostly a top-down affair, and 'western thinking' is still prevalent – and too much focused on constitution building with hardly any elements of the Somali culture and value system," Jaeger told *The Weekly Review*.

Rather than help Somali re-emerge from the years of terrorism and guarantee security and safety in neighbouring country the German conflict expert says the drawdown provides another opportunity for increased US military attacks. He observed: "But this (my view) does not answer your question of (Atmis) leaving the country without outside security support other than the US bombing expeditions that, it seems, (will) kill more innocent civilians than terrorists."

Kenya's preparedness to degrade Al-Shabaab's capacity to visit mayhem to the country remains in a quandary with fears that Nairobi may have spread its military capacity too thin as its troops are involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Mozambique peacekeeping missions. Kenya has also accepted a UN and US request to deploy 1,000 police officers in Haiti to rein in runaway crime on the Caribbean island nation.

jkwayera@yahoo.com

Jitters in Azimio over Karua-Kioni camp

Continued from Page 18

ficers “unfortunately opted to kill demonstrators exercising their democratic right and scores of other citizens”, a factor that is ultimately influencing the dynamics within Azimio on the merits and demerits of resumption of mass action.

Noting that Azimio’s interim point in the standoff with the Ruto administration was addressing issue of the cost of living and increased taxation as well as dealing with police brutality, Kioni said the current focus by NADCO offered little or no hope at all to Kenyans.

He believes the opposition party has been trapped in “meaningless talks”. Kioni feels that the talks are a ploy by the Kenya Kwanza administration to hold and confine the highly active and potentially “dangerous” Azimio to Bomas of Kenya, while the President and his allies continue to criss-cross the country in premature campaigns under the guise of prayer rallies and inspection of development projects.

With former Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka – a principal partner in Azimio – held at the Bomas talks as co-chairperson, Odinga and Karua have elected to slow down on public engagements as their main rival, Ruto, meanwhile, has escalated political activity across the country.

It is against this backdrop that Kioni and Karua are thinking about the resumption of mass action. This is the genesis of the political heat between the coalition partners, because the Karua-Kioni camp is facing roadblocks on the account that supporters from other bases other than their own will be most affected.

This argument is persuaded by the feeling that Mt Kenya Azimio supporters were not active in the demonstrations compared to those in Nyanza, Western and Eastern.

“It is true that our supporters in Mt Kenya did not come out in large number to demonstrate. But that does not take away the reality that they are affected just like other Kenyans by the high cost of living and increased taxation rate.

Our people are pained as well and we are having a conversation on how best to involving them in the protests,” said Kioni.

It is because of this and other reasons that Karua and Kioni are evidently leading a group from the Mt Kenya in fronting an outfit called “Kamwene”.

The group, which loosely translates to “ours” or “our own”, has been set up to organise and mobilise residents of the region against the Ruto administration.

Already the move has created jitters within the larger Azimio fraternity with critics suggesting that the duo is pulling away to create an alternative centre of power.

A two-term legislator from the Ukambani claimed that the “Kamwene” move is aimed at frustrating Musyoka’s ascendancy.

Dr Henry Wabwire, a political pundit, said opposition heavyweights from Mt Kenya are bound to view Musyoka as a stumbling block to their political matrix. The former VP’s role in the talks gives him a head start in the 2027 succession plot.

“Communities are different in perception and approach, and Kamwene is our avenue of managing our politics. We are in the process of organising a delegates’ meeting in the region for a candid conversation over some of these issues,” Kioni said.

oscar.tko@gmail.com

■ MULTIBILLION-SHILLING INDUSTRY SET FOR CHANGES NECESSITATED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

CONSTRUCTION REVOLUTION

In a far-reaching proposal aimed at discouraging the use of fossil fuels in the country, new residential buildings will have to install charging facilities for electric vehicles



The newly constructed Buxton Point Estate in Mombasa. It may soon be mandatory for owners of residential buildings to install charging facilities for electric vehicles. Below: The Autopax Air Yetu electric vehicle. PHOTOS | FILE INATION

● BY PETER MBURU

A revolution looms in the multi-billion-shilling construction industry as the government plans to introduce guidelines that will promote eco-friendly residential apartments.

The Kenya Institute of Public Policy and Research Analysis (Kippra) wants all residential buildings to be equipped with charging facilities for electric vehicles.

The proposal will have far-reaching ramifications not only in the cost of construction and building designs, but also rent and home prices.

In making the case for adoption of electric vehicles, Kippra says increased investment in charging infrastructure will accelerate Kenya’s journey towards net zero emissions.

“Issue guidelines to have new residential buildings have charging facilities,” Kippra recommended in the Kenya Economic Report 2023, a policy proposal it puts forward as one of the solutions to the high cost of living. While there lacks comprehensive data on the value of Kenya’s residential construction industry, the value of residential buildings completed in Nairobi alone has averaged Sh87 billion over the past five years. It hit Sh118.6 billion in 2022.

Some 63,581 residential buildings were completed in Nairobi between 2018 and 2022, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) data shows.

Kenya continues to be a heavy user of fossil-fuel vehicles even as the road transport sector grows, its value of output growing by 255 per cent since 2015, to hit Sh2.2 trillion last year. The sector is dominated by hundreds of thousands of combustion-engine vehicles, and some two million motorcycles mainly in the boda boda sector, which



has seen Kenya’s petroleum import bill hit Sh628.4 billion in 2022.

As other African countries still lag behind in adoption of electric vehicles, Kenya has 671 registered by the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA).

Less than 3,000 electric vehicles were in Africa by 2021, based on the Global EV 2022 outlook report (IEA, 2022).

“Motorcycles make up the biggest share at 324, while electric 3-wheelers and electric motor vehicles are 105 and 128, respectively. The remaining vehicles fall under “other” vehicle categories,” Kippra observed.

Carbon emissions

The institute points out that with sales of electric cars expected to grow from a five per cent rate in 2021 to 60 per cent by 2030, structures need to be put in place to accommodate them.

It vouches the use of electric vehicles as a key solution to greenhouse carbon emissions within the road sector, especially Nairobi which has been ranked second worst city in the world for traf-

fic congestion according to World Health Organisation (WHO) World Air Quality Index.

But while Kippra makes the case for the shift in a proposal that would have huge implications for an industry that is already struggling with increased costs as a result of increased input prices such as cement, players in the sector argue that the move must be made with caution and consultation with professionals, to avoid passing more costs to tenants and house buyers for a facility that may not end up being used.

Developers want factors such as whether a building is meant to host people who drive, number of people who drive and current construction costs considered, should such a law be passed.

“We haven’t yet adopted electric cars to a large extent and developers/owners will be considering the reality that as much as you want them to introduce the charging facilities in buildings, if the building doesn’t have anyone owning a vehicle, there won’t

be any logic,” says Chacha Collins, the Head of Marketing at Villa Care.

Observing that owners and developers would pass any additional costs to home buyers and tenants should the proposal be passed, which would raise rent and buildings prices as developers are forced to designate the charging areas at the expense of space that would be otherwise utilised, Chacha argues that the proposal should be delayed until when the country gets to a certain threshold of electric vehicles.

“Until we have a certain threshold of the electric vehicles, it will still be logical for people to continue charging them at public charging stations.

“We also don’t want to be put in a place where decisions are being made without consulting the professionals themselves. As much the policy proposal has been put forward, developers should provide their view on how beneficial it would be and how best it would be effective,” he says.

Between 2021 and 2022 alone, the number of residential buildings completed in Nairobi increased from 10,863 to 16,910. Residential buildings would need to provide charging facilities that offer overnight charging, which would go up to eight hours.

Kippra says that although Kenya has few electric vehicles, the value of output in the road transport sub-sector has continued to increase and dominate other modes of transport, including railway, water and air transport.

It says an observation on those that have been piloted in the country shows that from a powering perspective, costs of running diesel buses are more than double that of charging, with charging cost to cover 250km being Sh5,000 and while a diesel bus consumes Sh12,000 for the same distance.

Transport constituting 9.65 per cent of total household expenditures and a huge cost for the government when fuel subsidies are offered, Kippra argues that reducing reliance on fossil fuels by adopting electric vehicles “is a strategic policy shift towards having affordable and sustainable transport”.

“The electric mobility sector is still young with huge potential to transform transport services in the country. Focusing on putting in place adequate charging infrastructure, reducing electricity prices, offering funding and enhancing the capacity of suppliers, assemblers and retrofitters will support the growth of electric mobility,” Kippra says.

The body has also noted that it will be key to engage players in the building industry to provide adequate charging points and battery-swapping stations along the major routes.

“The path to net zero emissions requires immediate deployment of clean and efficient energy technologies and this gives electricity the edge in the race to net zero,” Kippra says.

pmburu@ke.nationmedia.com

opinion

Kenyan public sector needs radical reforms



**KARUTI
KANYINGA**

In the recent past, Kenyans have witnessed quarrels in ministries and departments as well as in the county governments. Media reports show cases of conflicts between Cabinet Secretaries and their Principal Secretaries. There have been reports of PSSs issuing statements different from their bosses, the CSs. In some parastatals, same incoherence – or worse – is evident. Ordinary citizens also are complaining of poor public services by their counties and the national government ministries. Effectiveness in service delivery that was the hallmark of Kenya's public service has considerably declined. Mediocrity has taken root. There is limited focus on quality and efficiency.

Why has the public service gone this route and yet Kenya's public sector was often praised for effectiveness, efficiency, and professionalism? One study by David Leonard way back in 1991 cited Kenya's public service as an island of success in a chaotic continent. Even as recent as before 2010, Kenya's public sector was identifiable with effectiveness, efficiency and professionalism.

Today, however, the incoherence and poor delivery of services witnessed in some ministries and county governments is a big departure from what stood out as Kenya's public service – ethical, effective, and focused on duty.

But this problem is not found only

in Kenya. It is a problem found in several countries in Africa. In Uganda, some public servants sometimes defy their bosses because they have access to a more powerful boss – sometimes the president or his relatives. Tanzania has a similar problem. Delivery of services is poor and some defy authority because they count on informal power actors.

In South Africa, services have not only declined but decayed altogether. Overall, there are few countries where there is effective public service. These include Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Mauritius.

Kenya used to be in this group of effective and strong public bureaucracies. The Kenya Institute of Administration, the precursor of the present Kenya School of Government, trained all government officers on ethos of public service.

Public servants would be promoted on account of passing training exams, among other requirements. But it did not matter whether you knew anyone: Your passing training exams, the quality of your character and your effective performance determined your career progression. There are signs that our public sector has succumbed to usual parochial pressures that undermine development. And undertaking reforms on management, open government, procurement framework, and performance contracting appear not to have helped.

Past public sector reforms

Kenya's public sector exceptionalism is worth of note. Fundamental and effective reforms took place under President Mwai Kibaki's first five years especially from around 2004. In addition to introducing performance contracts for public institutions, the government supported implementation of Sector Wide Approach to Planning (SWAP) in which ministries, departments and agencies interlinked and networked their plans to deliver as one. The argument under the SWAP reform was that public sector institutions operated better when coordinated as one than in silos. Failure of one agency would trigger failure in others ministries and agencies.

Within a short period, all public sector agencies borrowed international best practices and implemented what they borrowed with a resolve to change. This led to significant changes in delivery of services. Productivity in many sectors increased as evidenced by economic recovery at the time.

But there were anti-reformers in government. Those who preferred status quo were very powerful and threatened the young pro-change individuals in the ministries and departments.

The anti-reformers, however, went quiet when it became clear that the President himself was in full support of radical change in delivery of public services.

The grand failure

This change gradually halted in the last five years of President Kibaki and during the grand coalition government that was formed following the disputed 2007 presidential election. The new coalition government brought together allies of President Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga. From then on, quarrels within the coalition government spilled over to affect the functioning of government. Public servants were undermined and prevented from carrying out their work. Both sides of the coalition came with different interests. Their greed to 'eat' steered the public sector away from reforms.

Three factors combined to undermine gains made. One, self-interests and ethnic considerations were prioritised in appointment to senior positions in government. Those appointed in senior posts would be loyal to their political masters rather than the ministers under whose ministries they served.

Two was the outcome of competitive politics. The 'winner-take-all' politics showed that when you win election, you take everything and give benefits only to your people and allies. The prize in elections therefore 'capturing government' to benefit allies. After winning, no one pays attention to long term objectives: the focus is on quick fixes with an eye to the next election.

Finally, there is public social norms.

Voters expect their public servants to 'milk' the government for them. The government is the prize and therefore public servants are required to give jobs to relatives, friends and members of their ethnic group. These three combined, have reduced the importance and value of public sector reforms.

Surprisingly, public servants in charge of reforms in Kenya are very diligent individuals. Left on their own without these pressures they can rebuild a strong public sector. They are highly trained and skilled professionals. They speak the right language and have solutions to almost every challenge you can mention in public service. However, they operated in an environment where these three factor prevent them from undertaking meaningful reforms. They attend to performance contracts as an end rather than a means to an end.

Improvement of public services requires weakening these interests. Developing long term development plans with a buy-in of both the national government and the county governments and protected by law can serve as a good starting point. Vision 2030 was one good example but it did not have widespread support especially because county governments were established much later. It is high time the government revisited its bottom up economic transformation agenda alongside plans by county governments to develop another long term agenda protected by law. In the meantime, public sector can be rebooted through radical reforms. All that is required is protection of public servants from aggression of informal powerful cartels that fight reforms that are not aligned to their self-interests.

Prof Kanyinga is based at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, karutik@gmail.com, @karutikk

No sympathy for government as crises bombard Britain

Scarcely a day goes by, it seems, without a new crisis hitting UK headlines. No wonder they call us "Broken Britain".

In just the last few weeks, a large number of schools were found to contain a dangerous, crumbling form of concrete; an official inquiry reported that a migrant centre was more like a prison and racist workers moved detainees around naked; more than 1,000 Metropolitan (London) Police officers were suspended or demoted in a crackdown on the corrupt and incompetent.

Sparking a major security concern, dozens of officers from the same force turned in their gun permits after a colleague was charged with the murder of an unarmed civilian. Soldiers were put on standby, but the Met said later enough armed police were available to cover needs.

A leading medical authority reported that almost 400,000 patients had spent 24 hours or longer waiting in hospital emergency departments. "We just don't have enough beds," said Dr Adrian Boyle.

Even worse, more than a million National Health Service appointments have been cancelled because of strikes by nurses and doctors.



**GERRY
LOUGHRAN**

As for governance, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak provoked widespread anger by watering down measures aimed at fighting climate change, notably pushing back the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035.

Critics claimed Sunak's aim was to secure votes for the Conservative party in a general election due next year. A recent restriction on old vehicles in London was unpopular with many drivers and is thought to have narrowly won a London by-election for the ruling party.

Environmentalists denounced Sunak for "playing politics" with the country's future. After 13 years of Conservative rule, the party in power finds itself 33 points behind Labour and desperate for rescue.

The public, however, do not seem to be in a forgiving mood – and that goes for politicians of all stripes.

Opinion polls show that in recent years the sense that politicians are "only in it for themselves" has grown dramatically from 45 per cent to 80 per cent.

Commentator Julia Langdon found this figure "scarcely surprising" in a culture where "parliamentarians have been exposed for corrupt and improper behaviour, where ministers have faced legal action for breaking their own laws and truth has grown to be a challenging concept for so many at the dispatch box".

An occasion that passed barely noticed amid the noise and clamour of day-to-day politics was the first anniversary of the reign of King Charles III.

The former Prince Charles spent September 8 at his castle, Balmoral, in Scotland, with prayers and reflections

on the life of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, who died on that day one year ago.

That was the way the late Queen would mark the date of her own accession to the throne upon the death of her father during a visit to Kenya by the then princess.

After the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II, there was uncertainty here about what the transition would mean and whether there would be major change. One year on, it is evident that has not been the case.

"The king really has set a very neutral course," said royal commentator Justin Vovk. "Many people were expecting a lot of reform and change because of the way he had acted as Prince of Wales. But keeping things balanced has become his hallmark."

Moral conundrum: A few weeks ago, I spotted a ten pound note on the floor of a bank. Reluctant to donate a tenner to a rich financial institution, I gave the money to a beggar.

Feeling a bit queasy about this later, I mentioned the incident to a couple of friends and both said I was right. However, my sister said I was wrong, as sisters always do! The money might

have belonged to someone poorer than me, she said, and I should have handed it in for the loser to claim.

Further muddying the waters, another friend said what I did was actually illegal. "Illegal!" I expostulated. "What about 'Finders keepers'?"

Of course she was right. A little research showed that keeping money you happen to spot lying around is "theft by finding."

Just please don't mention my name.

Air travel 21st century-style: Passengers are sitting comfortably 34,000 feet above earth. A voice comes over the Tannoy: "This is your captain speaking. I'm working from home today." Passengers are now sitting less comfortably.

Not for the first time, Edith, was late at the office. Said her boss angrily, "You should have been here at 8 o'clock."

"Why," asked Edith, "what happened at 8 o'clock?"

The importance of tea to the elderly: "Without tea, I go into rooms and forget why I went there. With tea, I still don't remember, but at least I have something to sip while I try to figure it out."

Gerry69@hotmail.com

people, power and politics

■ The Americans championed the collapse of the International Coffee Organisation

Why coffee cartels will be Gachagua's nightmare

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has finally admitted that the coffee cartels are entrenched. It is a good admission – and it will not be easy. So, let us not expect any miracles from him. As I wrote here some months ago, summoning farmers and seeking their opinions on what to do about the sector is unhelpful. That would add to naught if we do not understand the global picture. We are now at that stage where Kwame Nkrumah warned that Africa risks becoming the producer of cheap raw materials for Western capitalists.

Once upon a time, Gachagua's brother – the late Nyeri Governor Nderitu Gachagua – thought he could organise farmers by jointly milling and marketing coffee from the county. He banned cooperatives from selling their coffee to private millers and, instead, asked them to channel their produce through Kenya Cooperative Coffee Exporters, which would sell directly to buyers in Europe and other areas. The cartels sabotaged him, and the initiative flopped.

The Americans – now purporting to be friendly – championed the collapse of the International Coffee Organisation (ICO), a global body aiming to stabilise coffee prices and benefit both the producer and the consumer. ICO operated the same way OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) determines the oil output and the pricing. But for coffee, the buyers determine how much they would pay. That is the irony of the coffee market.

If you look at the goals of ICO, it was a noble organisation whose goal was to “achieve a reasonable balance between the world supplies and demand... avoid excessive fluctuations in the levels of world supplies, stocks and prices”. It was to help the development of coffee in the producing nations and promote its consumption.

So organised was this cartel that it had set export quotas that could only be evoked if the price fell below an accepted set price. This quota was divided among the various producers and enforced by the importing nations since coffee had a stamp indicating the country of origin. In the arrangement, quotas were suspended if the prices rose sharply, and that is how Kenyan farmers made a killing. There were also incentives given to countries that built stocks at periods of surplus. Each country knew its quota and worked to maintain that quota. For instance, Kenya had 2.5 per cent of the world market then and relied heavily on the quota system to maintain its share.

This system was sabotaged, and this is the kind of global discourse we would like to see DP Gachagua try to engage with. The Americans thought the coffee system, established in 1962, was not meeting their commercial needs. In 1989, they decided not to renew their membership of ICO and ordered us to liberalise our economy. From then on, the coffee sector was turned into a playground of Western cartels – not only



JOHN
KAMAU

for us but for the nations that could be intimidated. There is no better way of putting this: Our farmers were turned into slaves of Western coffee cartels. There was also the complication brought by the entry of Vietnam as a new player in the market, which dumped more coffee into the market.

It all started with the argument that coffee-growing nations were getting more money than they deserved and that the “international cartels” (then meaning growers) were ripping off American consumers. One syndicated columnist, Jack Anderson, wrote in 1979: “Already gouged by the oil-producing nations and a uranium syndicate that has multiplied the cost of energy, Americans are also paying twice as much as they should for their coffee. The cause: price rigging by coffee-growing countries.”

The Americans accused the coffee-producing countries of “taking action to keep prices artificially high.” Sadly we watched the sector brought down by “our” friends. If you read the confidential congressional report that Senator Max Baucus prepared, it argued that “the price of coffee is approximately double the price that would be consistent with the historical supply-and-demand relationship”. The Senate was being urged to intervene. By the time the US was leaving the ICO, the entire terrain had been poisoned by harsh media. That move lowered coffee prices for American consumers, raised profits for the Western food companies that sold coffee, and turned it into a slave crop where the producers earned peanuts. After the American withdrawal, coffee prices plunged, and some countries began to neglect the sector or cut down trees.

By then, three giants dominated the American coffee sector, accounting for more than 80 per cent of retail sales. These were General Foods, Procter &

Gamble, and Nestle. Today, the largest players in the market are dominated by the likes of Starbucks, Dunkin', and Tim Hortons. Sadly, we are a coffee-producing country with no value-added industries. Sixty years after independence, we are still in that space where the buyer determines the prices of our resources. Coffee is the ugly symbol of neocolonialism. The ugly face.

A few weeks ago, some pictures of coffee farmers in Murang'a who were uprooting the trees were trending. Even the auction is not of any help for it symbolises a competitive market – yet it is a racket. This auction house has become the platform where coffee is undervalued. When Gachagua went to Columbia for the coffee summit, one would have expected that his agenda would be the push for the revival of the 1993 Association of Coffee Producing Countries. This body was promising but collapsed in 2001 as declining coffee bean prices made it difficult for African producers to pay cartel member fees.

The other problem facing us was political and had to do with America's relation with what was known as the Bogota Group – a group of Latin American countries led by Brazil and Colombia that had decided to control and manipulate the coffee trade to the advantage of producers.

We sided with the Bogota Group. Made of eight countries, it had incensed the Americans by stockpiling and manipulating the prices. The most fascinating story was about a man known as Ricardo Falla – the man the Americans feared most within the coffee market. Falla, also known as “El Gordo” (The Fat One), had managed to drive the coffee prices high at the New York Coffee and Sugar Exchange, which alarmed the Americans. Interestingly, the Bogota Group gave Falla a \$150 million fund to

play the futures market.

When the US State Department confronted him, Falla told them: “It may be your court, but it's our ball.” It meant that Americans only owned the futures platform rather than the coffee. After that, Falla was reportedly grabbed by US Customs officials and detained until he promised to disband Pancafa, a Costa Rican-based corporation that ensured that coffee producers got the best in the American market. Falla folded his company.

With the Bogota Group out of the way, the next stage was the sabotage of the International Coffee Organisation by the free market mandarins led by Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State, James Baker. It was this push for liberalisation that saw coffee prices drop. A meeting in London could not agree on the future of the agreement with Brazil, Colombia, the European Community, and African producers on one side and the US on the other side with producers of “other milks” – an industry jargon for other producers of Arabica excluding Brazil and Colombia. As the largest consumer, the US wanted the so-called Group of “other-milks” to export more coffee, while Brazil, Colombia, and African producers did not want to cut their share.

With that, coffee dropped by more than 50 per cent, and the margins fell below the cost of production, given that inputs like fertiliser, chemicals, and machinery and credit had risen. We have never recovered from these global nightmares and unless we go back to the ICO, any push for reforms locally would amount to zero-sum gum. That is not to say that we have no domestic problems. Nay. Our coffee sector is inept and corrupt. It is also disorganised and receives little government support. (Remember we stole the Stabex funds). Yet, there is still some money to be made. While I would love to see the cartels who are marketers and buyers tamed, the focus should be on a global discourse that rights the wrongs of yesteryears. President Ruto should speak to his Washington friends.

Gachagua has an impossible task. He should explain to coffee farmers that it will not be easy. If he thought he would intimidate the cartels, he is in for a fight – and they can even fight him politically. Perhaps he can ask the Colombians how they manage to keep their coffee business afloat.

It was good to see the reforms started by President Uhuru Kenyatta and Peter Munya on the tea sector bear fruits. The tea industry was on the verge of collapse, and much had to be done to make the Kenya Tea Development Agency accountable to the farmers. The bad manners of yesteryears slowly creeping back among some directors should not be allowed.

jkamau@ke.nationmedia.com
@johnkamau1



Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua at a coffee farm Chinchina, Caldas State, Colombia last month. PHOTO: DPCS

OBIT

US Senate titan Dianne dies at 90

• LOS ANGELES



Veteran Senator Dianne Feinstein, a titan of US political history who notched a string of legislative achievements during a trailblazing three-decade career in the Senate, died on Thursday night. She was 90. Feinstein, the Senate's oldest member, was celebrated as a pioneer for women in politics and a hugely effective legislator. During a career that began in local California government, she grew to be a tough check on administrations from both parties. She had already announced her retirement this February as her health worsened and following a number of missteps that threatened her legacy. Her death is not expected to shift the tight balance of power in the Senate, with the Democratic governor of California appointing a temporary replacement for the remainder of her term, which ends in January 2025.

“Senator Dianne Feinstein was a pioneering American. A true trailblazer. And for Jill and me, a cherished friend,” US President Joe Biden said in a statement. Feinstein's chief of staff James Sauls hailed her as a rare example of a woman who could call herself “senator, chairman, mayor, wife, mom and grandmother.” “Senator Feinstein was a force of nature who made an incredible impact on our country and her home state,” Sauls said in a statement.

The Californian, who was widowed last year, became San Francisco's first female mayor after the fatal shooting in 1978 of city official Harvey Milk, then country's only openly gay politician, and mayor George Moscone by a disgruntled former colleague.

Other dramatic moments including surviving an attempted bombing of her home. She was also near the scene of an infamous double murder in San Francisco. Feinstein missed almost three months of work in Congress earlier this year due to a bout with shingles and used a wheelchair to get around on her return. She had taken part in Senate votes on Thursday morning but was absent from a Senate judiciary committee hearing. “She didn't feel well this morning,” the panel's chairman, Dick Durbin, said, according to politics news outlet The Hill. Summing up her dedication to public service, Feinstein once said that “even with a divided Congress, we can still pass bills that will improve lives. Each of us was sent here to solve problems.” Democrats in her home state led tributes as news of the senator's death cast a pall over Congress. (AFP)

Weekly Review

Founded by the late Hilary Boniface Ng'weno

Stephen Gitagana
Group Chief Executive Officer
Joe Ageyo Group Editorial Director
Pamella Sittoni Group Managing Editor

Washington Gikunju Managing Editor,
Planning & News Desk
Mike Owuor Lead Editor, Sunday Nation
Allan Buluku The Weekly Review Editor

Andrew Anini Chief Graphic Designer
Joan Perueran Visual & Syndication Editor
Benjamin Situma Graphic Designer