

The ORANGE

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NEWSLETTER OF THE ORANGE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT PARTY OF KENYA



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Health as a Basic Human Right in Kenya

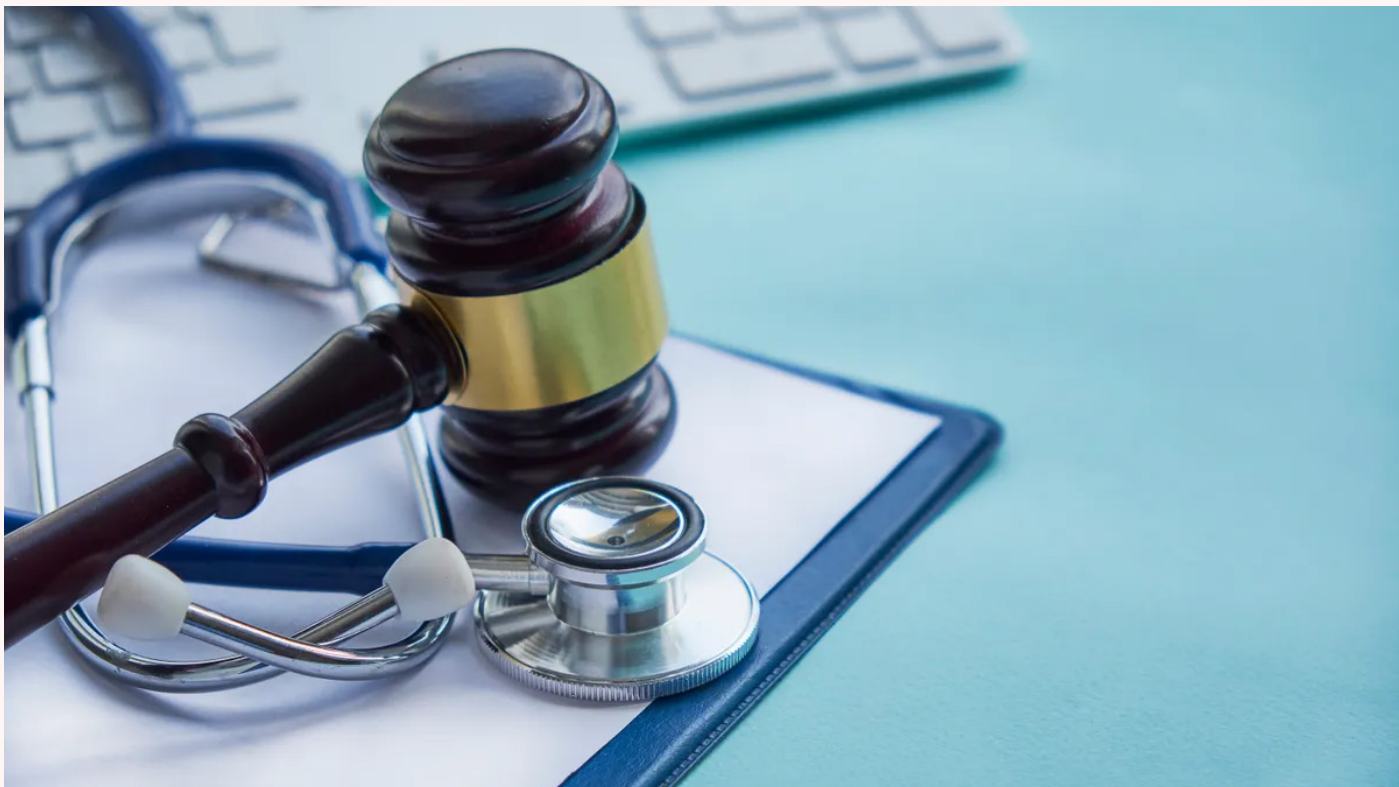
Health is not just a privilege or luxury; it is a fundamental human right. Article 43(1)(a) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, clearly states that every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Additionally, Article 43(2) safeguards individuals from being denied emergency treatment. However, despite these constitutional provisions, Kenya's healthcare system remains in crisis. Sixty years after independence, disease, poverty, and ignorance—three adversaries our governments have vowed to combat—continue to undermine the nation's progress. In fact, in recent years, these enemies have only gained ground, further complicating the fight for better healthcare for all Kenyans. >> **Pg2**



ODM NEWS

Suna East MP and National Assembly's Minority Leader Junet Mohammed, on Sunday, November 10, explained why Orange Democratic Party (ODM) MPs joined their Kenya Kwanza counterparts to send former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua home. Speaking during the Thanksgiving Ceremony of Homa Bay County Governor Gladys Wanga, Mohammed stated that once their colleagues across the Parliamentary aisle approached them for support in the impeachment, they considered the issue and decided that the accusations made against the former deputy president were legitimate and thus decided to answer to the plea and join their colleagues in the vote. >> **Pg 9**

Health as a Basic Human Right in Kenya



Health is not just a privilege or luxury; it is a fundamental human right. Article 43(1)(a) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, clearly states that every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Additionally, Article 43(2) safeguards individuals from being denied emergency treatment. However, despite these constitutional provisions, Kenya's healthcare system remains in crisis. Sixty years after independence, disease, poverty, and ignorance—three adversaries our governments have vowed to combat—continue to undermine the nation's progress. In fact, in recent years, these enemies have only gained ground, further complicating the fight for better healthcare for all Kenyans.

The Evolution of Healthcare in Kenya: From State-Funded to “Cost-Sharing”

One of the first significant moves by Kenya's newly-independent government in the early 1960s was the establishment of a state-funded healthcare program. This was a bold declaration of the government's commitment to providing universal health coverage to its citizens. For many, it marked the dawn of a new era

in which access to healthcare was considered a right, not a privilege. Yet, over time, the public healthcare system has been systematically eroded, culminating in the infamous cost-sharing policy introduced in the late 1980s.

The cost-sharing policy, which required patients to pay for part of their treatment, signaled a major shift in Kenya's healthcare philosophy. Initially introduced as a way to raise funds for the increasingly underfunded public hospitals, this policy has instead deepened inequalities in access to healthcare. It has placed healthcare beyond the reach of many, particularly the poor, who are unable to afford treatment even for common ailments. This shift, which began almost unnoticed by the general public, has worsened the health crisis, particularly for those living in rural areas where healthcare facilities are scarce, and services are limited.

The roots of this shift lie in the influence of the Washington Consensus, a set of economic policies advocated by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These policies encouraged the Kenyan government to reduce public spending, including in the

healthcare sector, and instead rely on market forces to provide essential services. As a result, many public hospitals and health units have become more profit-driven, focusing on cost recovery rather than patient care.

The Consequences: A Rising Death Toll from Preventable Diseases

The results of this market-driven approach to healthcare are stark and disturbing. Under the cost-sharing system, many Kenyans have died from preventable diseases due to a lack of access to timely and adequate treatment. Diseases that were once on the decline, such as tuberculosis, have resurged. In some areas, the proliferation of poorly regulated private clinics has led to a dangerous mix of substandard care, inadequate equipment, and unscrupulous practices. These clinics, often referred to as “village bandas,” are notorious for their unsanitary conditions, where patients are treated by unqualified personnel and are subjected to unsafe medical practices.

David Werner, a renowned community health expert and author of *Where There Is No Doctor*, has long been critical

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of the shift away from universal healthcare. In his book, Werner outlines the dangers of privatized healthcare systems, especially in low-income countries, where access to essential health services is already limited. He points out that, historically, the concept of universal primary healthcare—endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in 1978 at the Alma-Ata Declaration—was meant to be a global solution to inequitable health systems.

The goal was simple: "Health for All by the Year 2000." The Alma-Ata Declaration emphasized that health is a right for all people, and it called on governments to ensure access to healthcare services that were affordable, equitable, and comprehensive.

Primary Healthcare: The Missing Link

The Alma-Ata Declaration was groundbreaking in its vision, but its implementation in Kenya and many other nations has been slow and inadequate. At its core, the Declaration called for primary healthcare that would address not just medical needs, but also the broader social determinants of health, such as nutrition, sanitation, and education. It was a vision of healthcare that was consumer-centered and equitable, where the government would be responsible for meeting the health needs of all people, regardless of their economic or social status.

Unfortunately, the promise of primary healthcare in Kenya has not been fulfilled. The shift towards market-driven health policies has undermined the very principles of the Alma-Ata Declaration. Instead of focusing on prevention and primary care, Kenya's healthcare system is often forced to deal with

the consequences of neglected health issues—issues that are more costly and complex to treat.

As a result, healthcare in Kenya has become fragmented and inaccessible for many. The country's health sector continues to face significant challenges: rising costs of medical services, an underfunded public health system, a shortage of medical personnel, and a lack of medical insurance coverage for large segments of the population. The situation is further exacerbated by the uneven distribution of healthcare facilities and medical equipment, particularly in rural areas. As a result, the nation's health outcomes remain poor, with preventable diseases still claiming thousands of lives every year.

The Washington Consensus and Health

The relationship between economic policies and health outcomes is complex and multifaceted. Over the decades, the Kenyan government has implemented several economic reforms, including Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s. These reforms were meant to stabilize the economy, but they also had serious repercussions



for public health. With reduced government spending on health services and the introduction of user fees for healthcare, access to essential services became more difficult, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

Research shows that countries that have adhered to these market-driven policies have seen a deterioration in health outcomes, particularly among infants and children. For example, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that have high levels of debt and have implemented aggressive economic reforms have witnessed stagnation in the improvement of infant mortality rates. Conversely, countries with lower debt levels that did not fully implement SAPs have seen more progress in reducing infant mortality.

The economic strain caused by SAPs has led to higher food prices, reduced incomes, and cuts to essential health programs. Public health services have suffered as a result, with a decline in the availability of vaccines, disruptions in the supply of pharmaceuticals, and reductions in the coverage of preventive health services. These factors have contributed to the resurgence of diseases that were previously under control, including



malaria, tuberculosis, and cholera. Malnutrition, which is closely linked to poverty, has also worsened, leading to higher rates of disease and death, particularly among children and pregnant women.

The Impact on Women's Health

Women have borne the brunt of these healthcare failures. The introduction of user fees for maternity and antenatal care has made it more difficult for pregnant

women to access essential services. Many women are now giving birth at home without the supervision of trained healthcare providers, leading to a rise in maternal mortality rates. Additionally, the rising cost of transportation has further exacerbated the problem, as many women in rural areas are unable to afford the journey to the nearest healthcare facility.

The economic decline has also had a direct impact on HIV/AIDS transmission, with many women being forced into commercial sex



work due to financial hardship. This has led to an increase in risky sexual behaviors and, consequently, a rise in HIV transmission rates.

Parallel Importation and Access to Medicines

One of the key strategies that Kenya has attempted to use in its fight against rising healthcare costs is the concept of parallel importation of medicines. Parallel importation refers to the practice of importing genuine medicines from other countries at a lower price than what is charged by authorized distributors. This practice is aimed at ensuring that Kenyans have access to essential medications at affordable prices, particularly for life-threatening diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

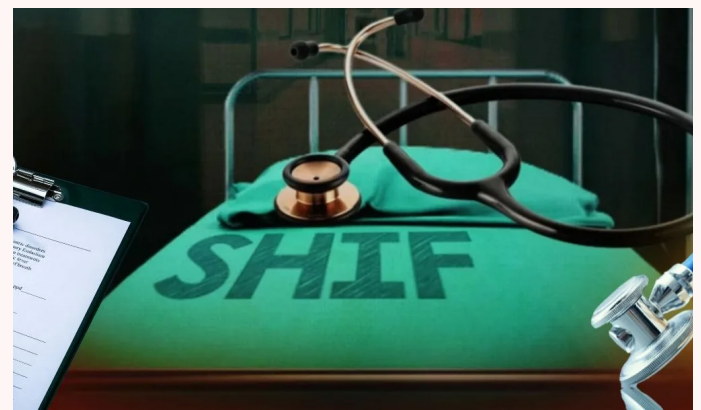
In 2006, the Kenyan parliament amended the Industrial Property Act to allow for parallel importation, enabling the government to bypass the monopolistic pricing of multinational pharmaceutical companies. This was seen as a major victory for public health, as it allowed for the importation of generic drugs at lower prices. However, this amendment has faced strong opposition from foreign pharmaceutical companies, which have lobbied to have the law repealed. These companies

have even spread misinformation, claiming that parallel importation violates Kenya's commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

However, international trade agreements, such as the WTO's TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement, allow countries to make exceptions to patent protection in the interest of public health. In fact, the TRIPS agreement



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permits the use of parallel imports and compulsory licensing to ensure access to essential medicines. Despite this, the Kenyan government has come under pressure from pharmaceutical companies and international bodies to abandon these provisions, which could potentially limit access to affordable medicines for millions of Kenyans.

National and County Governments Must Choose

In the face of these mounting challenges, the Kenyan government must choose where it stands on healthcare. Recent changes to the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), replacing it with the Social Health Authority (SHA) and the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF), have raised concerns that these reforms may ultimately undermine efforts

toward universal health coverage. While the government has good intentions, the shift has the potential to turn healthcare into another avenue for profiteering, rather than improving services for the public.

At a time when healthcare should be a universal right, the Ruto government is at a crossroads. Will it prioritize the well-being of its people, or will it continue to cater to the interests of private companies and multinational corporations? The choice is clear: it is time for the government to stand firm in its commitment to health as a basic human right and to ensure that all Kenyans, regardless of their income or status, have access to quality healthcare.

The road ahead may be long and fraught with challenges, but one thing is certain: the health of a nation is inseparable from its future.

Zanzibar: Independence, Revolution and Tanzania



Zanzibar to East Africans is the romantic group of Indian Ocean islands off the coast of Kenya and main land Tanzania-Tanganyika of our recent past. Zanzibar is the karafu, clove, island of taarab music of Siti binti Saad, Shakila Saidi, Bi Kidude as well as beautiful hotels, fine beaches and Tippu Tip (Tipotipo in Congo)- the infamous slave trader.

People have lived in Zanzibar for 20,000 years. The earliest written accounts of Zanzibar began when the islands became a base for traders voyaging between the African Great Lakes, the Somali Peninsula, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and the Indian subcontinent. Unguja offered a protected and defensible harbour, so although the archipelago had few products of value, Omanis and Yemenis settled in what became Zanzibar City (Stone Town) as a convenient point from which to trade with towns on the Swahili Coast. They established garrisons on the islands and built the first mosques in the African Great Lakes Region. During the Age of Exploration, the Portuguese Empire was the first European power to gain control of Zanzibar, and kept it for nearly 200 years.

Sultanate

In 1698, Zanzibar fell under the control of the Sultanate of Oman, which developed an economy of trade and cash crops, with a ruling Arab elite and a Bantu general population.

Plantations were developed to grow spices; hence, the moniker of the Spice Islands (a name also used for the Dutch colony the



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Moluccas, now part of Indonesia). Another major trade good was ivory, the tusks of elephants that were killed on the Tanganyika mainland; a practice that is still in place to this day.

The third pillar of the economy was slaves, which gave the Zanzibar slave trade an important place in the Indian Ocean slave trade, the Indian Ocean equivalent of the better-known Triangular Trade. The Omani Sultan of Zanzibar controlled a substantial portion of the African Great Lakes coast, known as Zanj, as well as extensive inland trading routes.

British rule and independence

Sometimes gradually, sometimes by fits and starts, control of Zanzibar came into the hands of the British Empire. In 1890, Zanzibar became a British protectorate. The death of one sultan and the succession of another of whom the British did not approve later led to the Anglo-Zanzibar War, also known as the shortest war in history.

The islands gained independence from Britain in December 1963 as a

constitutional monarchy.

The history of the struggle for independence of Zanzibar can be viewed through the life of Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu.

Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu was born in 1924 in Zanzibar in East Africa, then a British protectorate. He described the place and period in which he grew up in a brief autobiographical sketch which was intended to form the basis of the memoirs which he had been commissioned to write, but which were always postponed by more immediate work relating to contemporary struggles:

'Zanzibar, with its trade and maritime links all over the world, was a unique place in which to grow up. Although for all practical purposes a British colony with all the complexities of a racially stratified society, it had a rich and dynamic culture peculiar to its situation. During World War 2 many young Zanzibaris were drafted to fight in British armies, mostly in Africa and Asia...in the post-war period they returned from the war zones bringing back the reality and scale of imperialist violence. Their stories of meeting recruits from other colonies



(especially those from the 'Gold Coast' now Ghana, in the Burma campaign) helped make us in Zanzibar aware of the possibilities of solidarity and revolution.

Meanwhile, East Africa itself was entering the epoch of rebellion. The youth of Zanzibar were engulfed in the mood of the epoch. Jomo Kenyatta's mobilisation of Kenya Africans in a political party against the white-settler rule in Kenya brought home to the rest of us in E. Africa the need for a national political organisation. The rise of the Kenya 'freedom fighters', which later led to the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya gave us the deeper meaning of liberation struggle'.

In 1951 Babu went to Britain to study Philosophy and English Literature and was drawn first to Anarchism and then to Marxism. London was then a center for anti-colonial movements and Babu was to play a key role in



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the well-known left-led Movement for Colonial Freedom which had its base there.

Babu writes of the impact on his generation of Nkrumah's victory in Ghana in 1956, 'coming as it did after the Chinese Revolution, the Viet Minh victory against the French at Dien Bien Phu and the Algerian Revolution, it gave us a new awareness of the importance and effectiveness of the



'mass political party' against colonialism'. In 1957 Babu returned to Zanzibar to become Secretary General of Zanzibar's first political party, the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP). Under Babu's leadership the party organised urban workers, rural workers and seafaring workers and mobilised the urban petty bourgeoisie. The party developed a consistent anti-colonialist political line; a grassroots organisation of party branches at local level; and links with the worldwide, and especially African, anti-imperialist struggle.

This was the era when the movement for Pan African Unity was emerging, and Babu participated in the historic All African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana in 1958 along with Nkrumah, Franz Fanon and Patrice Lumumba, whom Babu and his comrades 'discovered' when traveling through the Congo on the way to the conference, and took with them to Accra.

In the same period, Babu describes how 'I was the first liberation fighter from East and Central Africa to visit revolutionary China, in 1959/60. From then on I was keenly following the ups and downs of the Chinese experiences; meetings with Mao, Chou En Lai, Marshal Chen Yi, Deng Tsiao Ping, and others, immensely heightened my revolutionary spirit and optimism. I became a correspondent for the Chinese

News Agency HSIHUA for East and Central Africa, which deepened my knowledge of the Chinese revolutionary trends, especially the underlying causes and the significance of the Chinese 'Cultural Revolution'.

Seeing Babu as a threat to continuing post-independence neo-colonial domination, and a source of 'Chinese influence' in the region, the British, with the collaboration of reactionary elements within the ZNP itself, had Babu imprisoned for two years on charges of 'sedition'.

On 10 December 1963, the Protectorate that had existed over Zanzibar since 1890 was terminated by the United Kingdom. Rather, by the Zanzibar Act 1963 of the United Kingdom, the UK ended the Protectorate and made provision for full self-government in Zanzibar as an independent country within the Commonwealth. Upon the Protectorate being abolished, Zanzibar became a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth under the Sultan.

The independence which was negotiated in 1962 led to the formation of a right-wing coalition government still controlled by the British, which intensified repression against trade unionists, youth leaders and other progressive elements. By 1963 it was clear that the left could no longer play an effective role within the ZNP and under



the leadership of Babu, a mass revolutionary party, the Umma (People's) Party, was launched, galvanizing working class and peasant youth across racial groupings into action.

Revolution

The Zanzibar Revolution took on 12 January 1964. Sultan Jamshid bin Abdullah was deposed during the Zanzibar Revolution. The Sultan fled into exile, and the Sultanate was replaced by the People's Republic of Zanzibar, a socialist government led by the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP). Over 20,000 people were killed – mostly Arabs and Indians – and many of them escaped the country as a consequence of the revolution.

For the U.S., Zanzibar was now the 'Cuba of Africa' from which communism would spread across the continent, and there followed a period of intense CIA activity. Only four months after the Revolution, the U.S. succeeded in engineering a union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar (to form Tanzania) which effectively crushed the progressive potential of the revolution and 'neutralized' Zanzibar.

In April 1964, the republic merged with mainland Tanganyika. This



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United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was soon renamed, blending the two names, as the United Republic of Tanzania, within which Zanzibar remains an autonomous region.

Zanzibar in Tanzania

For the US, revolutionary Zanzibar was now the 'Cuba of Africa' from which communism would spread across the continent, and there followed a period of intense CIA activity. Zanzibar had to be swallowed by a larger neighbour to neutralise left wingers in its government.



Jomo Kenyatta was first approached to effect a union between Kenya and Zanzibar. Kenyatta refused. He had his own problems with Marxists in his Kanu party. These left wing forces coalesced around his deputy Oginga Odinga and were coordinated by Pio Gama Pinto.

Next to be approached and convinced was Julius Nyerere the president of Tanganyika. Nyerere and Sheikh Abed Amani Karume, the leader of the Afro Shirazi party of Zanzibar, agreed to form the United Republic of Tanzania. This union

effectively crushed the progressive potential of the revolution and 'neutralised' Zanzibar.

As an autonomous part of Tanzania, Zanzibar has its own government, known as the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. It is made up of the Revolutionary Council and House of Representatives. The House of Representatives has a similar composition to the National Assembly of Tanzania. Fifty members are elected directly from constituencies to serve five-year

terms; 10 members are appointed by the President of Zanzibar; 15 special seats are for women members of political parties that have representation in the House of Representatives; six members serve ex officio, including all regional commissioners and the attorney general. Five of these 81 members are then elected to represent Zanzibar in the National Assembly.

Zanzibar spans 5 of the 31 regions of Tanzania. Unguja has three administrative regions: Zanzibar Central/South, Zanzibar North and Zanzibar Urban/West. Pemba has two: Pemba North and Pemba South.

Concerning the independence and sovereignty of Zanzibar, Tanzania Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda said on 3 July 2008 that there was

"nothing like the sovereignty of Zanzibar in the Union Government unless the Constitution is changed in future". Zanzibar House of Representatives members from



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both the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi, and the opposition party, Civic United Front, disagreed and stood firmly in recognizing Zanzibar as a fully autonomous state.

Politics

Zanzibar has a government of national unity, with the president of Zanzibar being Hussein Ali Mwinyi, since 1 November 2020. There are many political parties in Zanzibar, but the most popular parties are the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and the Civic United Front (CUF). Since the early 1990s, the politics of the archipelago have been marked by repeated clashes between these two parties.

Contested elections in October 2000 led to a massacre on 27

January 2001 when, according to Human Rights Watch, the army and police shot into crowds of protestors, killing at least 35 and wounding more than 600. Those forces, accompanied by ruling party officials and militias, also went on a house-to-house rampage, indiscriminately arresting, beating, and sexually abusing residents. Approximately 2,000 temporarily fled to Kenya.

Violence erupted again after another contested election on 31 October 2005, with the CUF claiming that its rightful victory had been stolen from it. Nine people were killed.

Following 2005, negotiations between the two parties aiming at the long-term resolution of the tensions and a power-sharing accord took place, but



they suffered repeated setbacks. The most notable of these took place in April 2008, when the CUF walked away from the negotiating table following a CCM call for a referendum to approve of what had been presented as a done deal on the power-sharing agreement.

In November 2009, the then-president of Zanzibar, Amani Abeid Karume, met with CUF secretary-general Seif Sharif Hamad at the State House to discuss how to save Zanzibar from future political turmoil and to end the animosity between them. This move was welcomed by many, including the United States. It was the first time since the multi-party system was

introduced in Zanzibar that the CUF agreed to recognize Karume as the legitimate president of Zanzibar.

A proposal to amend Zanzibar's constitution to allow rival parties to form governments of national unity was adopted by 66.2 percent of voters on 31 July 2010.

The autonomous status of Zanzibar is viewed as comparable to Hong Kong as suggested by some scholars, and with some recognizing the island as an "African Hong Kong.

Nowadays, The Alliance for Change and Transparency-Wazalendois





(ACT-Wazalendo) is considered the main opposition political party of semi-autonomous Zanzibar. The constitution of Zanzibar requires the party that comes in second in the polls to join a coalition with the winning party. ACT-Wazalendo joined a coalition government with the islands' ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi in December 2020 after Zanzibar disputed elections.

Self Determination

From the inception of the United Republic of Tanzania there have been Zanzibari voices against the union. There have also been voices from the mainland against the union.

The general position of the anti union Zanzibaris is that citizens of Zanzibar should have been consulted through a referendum if they wished to join with Tanganyika. In their view the union had and has no legitimacy.

The anti union mainlanders see Zanzibar as a nuisance. A small outpost of chauvinists who benefit more from the union. To them Zanzibar has a distinct government, a parliament of its own and politicians who can become presidents of mainlanders. Mainlanders do not have a government of their own, have not distinct parliament of their own and are harassed by small country Zanzibari chauvinists.

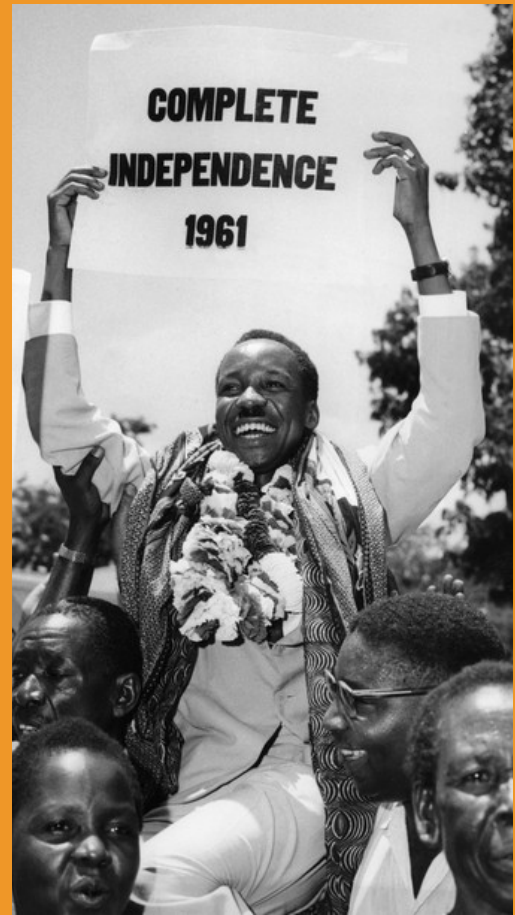
The Tanzanian Constitutional Review Commission was established as per the Constitutional Review Act of 2011 for the collection of public opinion on the review of the Constitution of Tanzania and its validation via a referendum.

Key aspects of the review were legal frameworks for the state of the union, the presidency and the contentious aspect of human rights, which were included in an amendment after public protests. The commission collected views from citizens of different regions within the country and prepared two constitutional drafts for discussion and vote by the National constituent assembly.

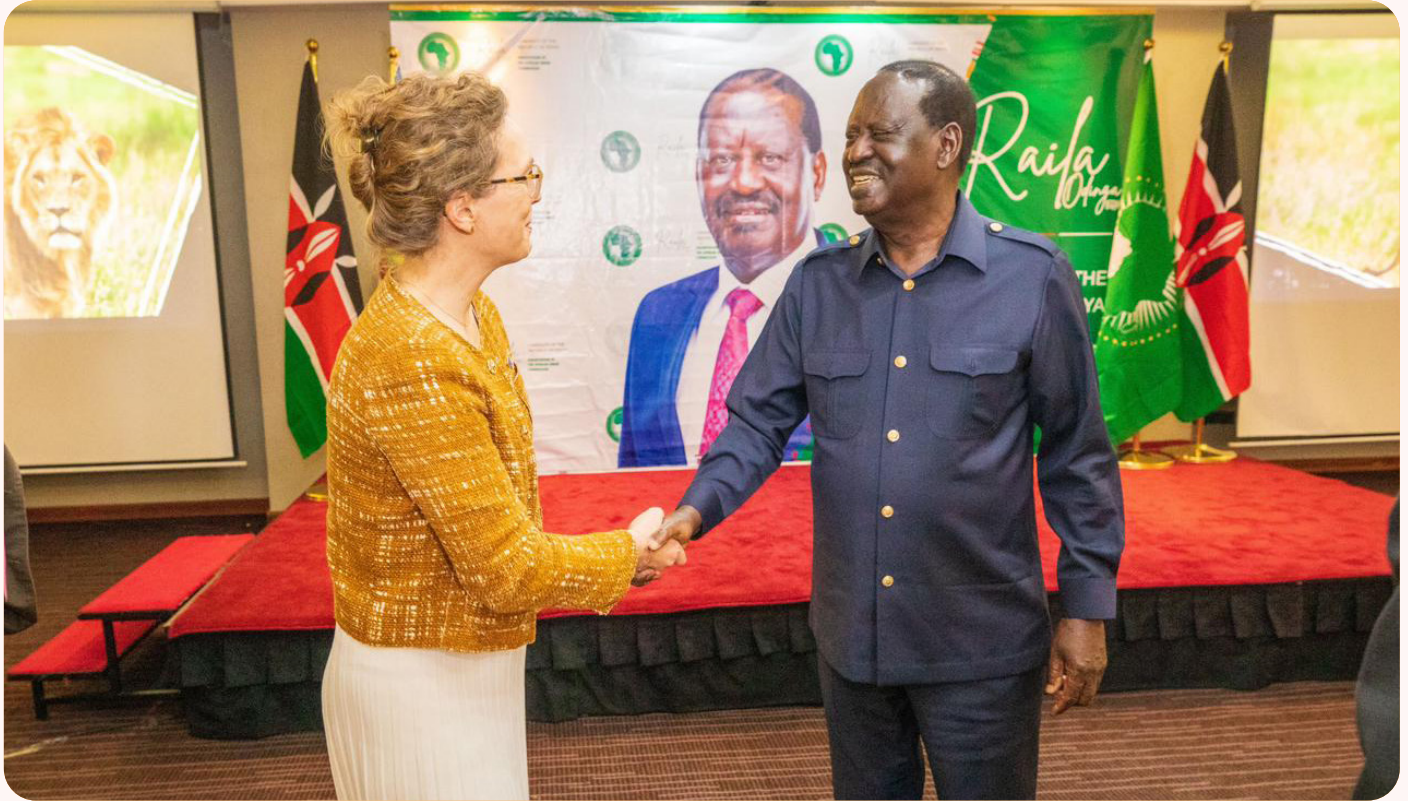
The assembly was divided on the core issues of union framework and Zanzibar autonomy. After missing the deadline and the extension, the process was stalled by the walkout of the Ukawa party from the constituent assembly and also the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2015.

The process was expected to restart after the elections of 2020 but the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party (CCM) has not committed to a constitutional amendment so far.

The question of Zanzibar in (or out of) Tanzania may one day be determined through a constitutional process. Or maybe another 1964?



I am the Person Africa Needs Now, Says Raila as he Unveils his Vision



Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga on Friday 8th November 2024 hit the African stage with a promise for a better, vibrant, independent and all-inclusive Africa if elected Chairman of the African Union Commission (AUC).

He addressed a room packed with the African Union's permanent representatives and diplomats, pitching ideals he said would lead to economic and political progress for the continent.

Raila, who also engaged with the media on Saturday morning, is banking on uniting Africa through physical and technological infrastructure to spur development.

During the official launch of his bid at the Nelson Mandela Hall in Addis Ababa, Mr. Odinga described himself as a Pan-Africanist and an Afro-optimist, who believes that Africa has enough tools to lift itself from its financial pit. He reflected on the visions of the continent's founding fathers, who dreamed of Africa's prosperity. "I have also lived through the collapse of that grand vision and have had occasion to watch as the

world rapidly transformed, while back at home, we are developing at a slower rate," he said.

Regional blocs

Raila urged internal cohesion through effective structures for Africa's regional blocs, highlighting Europe's successes in overcoming its history of internal conflict to establish the European Union.

His blueprint includes enhancing peace and security to create a conducive environment for economic growth. "There can be no development if there is no peace. In 2013, the African Union came up with 'Silencing the Guns' as part of Vision 2063. The focus for the next 50 years is peace. They were ambitious and wanted the guns silenced by 2020... they are not silent, and this is a big challenge for this organisation's leadership," he added.

He also outlined a vision for the youth, whom he said he would place at the centre stage as the driving force behind innovation and change.

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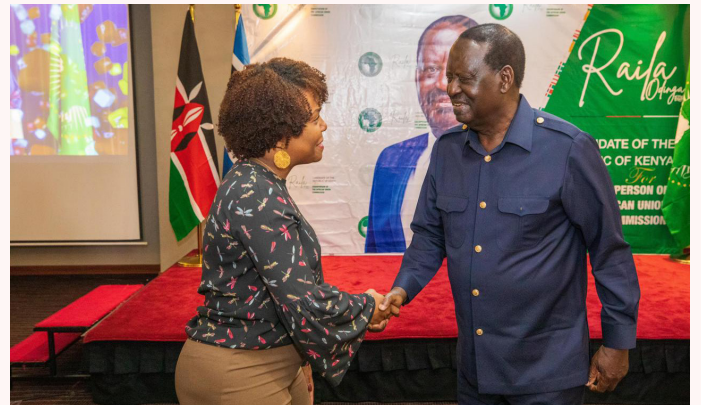
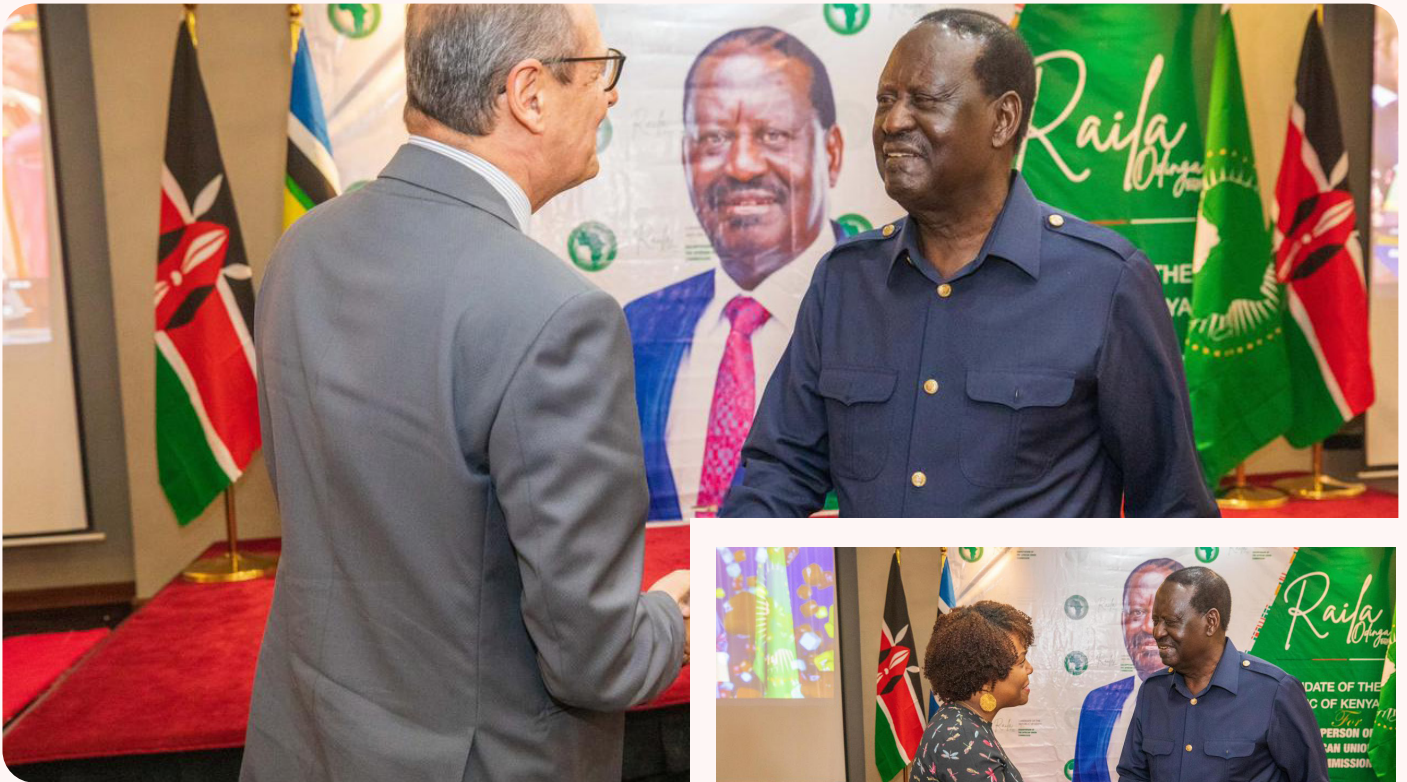
His vision includes leveraging technological advancements in Artificial Intelligence. "Picture vibrant cities buzzing with energy as young entrepreneurs leverage technology and creativity to build dynamic businesses. With AI and digital resources at their fingertips, they invent solutions for our unique challenges: transforming agriculture with smart farming technologies, revolutionising healthcare with telemedicine,

and reshaping education through accessible online platforms," he said.

Intra-Africa trade

Raila's other pillar was transforming the continent's economy and making it self-sustainable by exploiting its resources and the ingenuity of its people. The plan also involves promoting intra-Africa trade, with Raila pushing for the easing of cross-border trade barriers. He said that under his watch, the African Continental Free Trade Area "will be more than a policy." "It will be a reality," the opposition veteran stated, pointing out challenges that hinder optimal intra-Africa trade, such as air travel restrictions and under-investment in infrastructure. He also advocates for an open-skies policy and a connected road and rail network.

"Imagine an Africa booming with industry, where businessmen and women from Bamako can take the trans-continental high-speed rail to trade in Kampala. Where cotton material from Lomé can be bought online by a housewife



in Lusaka. Where African products can be bought in supermarkets across the world under the name of African brands, owned by Africans, and where African workers and farmers are proud of their products. An Africa that does not require visas for other Africans.”

His message on unity is, ostensibly, aimed at breaking the Anglophone-Francophone divide that could become a factor in the AUC elections set for February.

“Why should languages be a barrier in a continent?” Raila asked. “We want to be Afrophones and speak as one people, as Africans.”

Raila wants the continent to become self-sufficient and rid itself of its dependence on aid from external actors such as the European Union, which is the AU’s biggest funder.

His vision also includes achieving environmental sustainability by protecting Africa’s rich biodiversity and natural resources. He also pitched for renewable energy to mitigate the effects of climate change and regenerative farming methods to ensure food security.

Raila spoke about gender equality and inclusion, saying his leadership would push for the empowerment of women and girls in all sectors by creating safe spaces for them to thrive in an ideal Africa.



Raila wants the continent to become self-sufficient and rid itself of its dependence on aid from external actors such as the European Union, which is the AU’s biggest funder.

“In this ideal Africa, gender equality is not just an aspiration; it is a reality. Women and girls are empowered to pursue their dreams, leading in every sector — from technology and politics to education and business. We ensure their voices are heard in every decision-making process, creating a balanced and equitable society,” said Raila.

Gender equality ties into the cultural renaissance that the former prime minister says Africa needs, urging the continent to preserve its rich heritage while embracing modernity. He conceded that his dream was “ambitious” but said its fulfilment would be possible with an extensive technological innovation plan.

“In this future, we embrace technology as an enabler of progress. Cities are smart,

utilising AI to optimise everything from energy consumption to transportation systems. Education is accessible to all, with digital classrooms that open doors to knowledge regardless of location.

“Our health systems are strengthened through telehealth and AI diagnostics, ensuring that every individual receives quality care. But fundamentally, my rallying call is to the leadership of Africa: we must join hands and make sure that no African is left offline,” the opposition chief stated.

During Friday’s event, Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Korir Sing’oei, who chairs Raila’s campaign secretariat, said the former prime minister was best placed to push for the implementation of the AU’s Agenda 2063.

“The journey to achieving Agenda 2063 is not a sprint but a marathon... We present to you a leader who has run the marathon and who understands the need for endurance, resilience, focused tenacity, and the need to never give up, to never yield ground until it is done,” said Sing’oei.

Raila faces three other Eastern African candidates: Mahamoud Ali Youssef (Djibouti), Richard Mahitsison Randriamandrato (Madagascar), and Anil Gayan (Mauritius).

He needs votes from 32 out of the 48 eligible African nations to secure a first-round win in the race to succeed outgoing chair Moussa Faki Mahamat of Chad, who has served two four-year terms.

The opposition veteran has secured the support of East African nations and is believed to have the backing of more than 25 countries. Zambia’s President Hakainde Hichilema is the latest to endorse Raila after a meeting with President Ruto in Bujumbura, Burundi, last week.

On Friday, Algeria’s Ambassador to Kenya, Selma Malika Haddadi, who is seeking the AUC’s vice chairperson position, wished Raila well as he seeks to replace Mahamat.

“The inspiring vision that has been presented to us today is equal to the vision I am offering to guide my action,” she said, making her pitch for her candidacy.

I am Still Here with You, Says Raila



ODM leader Raila Odinga says even though he has stepped up his campaign to become the next Chairman of the African Union Commission (AUC) based in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, he will still be throwing his eyes on the happenings in the local scene.

Speaking at Ligisa Secondary School last Sunday during a Thanksgiving/Interfaith prayer service organized by the ODM National Chairperson Ms. Gladys Wanga, Raila said vying for the AUC seat does not warrant anybody to count him out of Kenyan politics.

He expressed confidence of winning the AUC seat. "I am committed to winning the AUC seat but that should not make people think that I am going there without coming back. I will be around," he said.

Raila reiterated that ODM party remains strong and announced a programme for party grassroots elections scheduled for November 27. Mr. Odinga said the grassroots election will be held at the polling station level. "This will be followed by the ward, constituency, county and national elections give the party new officials", he said.

Raila urged ODM supporters to ensure the exercise is peaceful and that winners and losers should embrace each other after the exercise. He said that the party election is like a friendly match hence there should be no acrimony if one loses.

"I want all ODM members to consider the forthcoming ODM grassroots elections as a friendly match. If one is defeated, please shake hands with the person who has defeated you. Don't take it as a do or die contest," he said. Raila assured supporters that the elections will be transparent. He said the election officials will be picked from villages where the voters hail from. Party National Elections Coordinating Committee member Mr. Richard Tairo said the elections will be held from 10:00am to 3:00pm and urged party members to be punctual to avoid time wasting.

"Only registered party members will participate in the exercise. We urge our members to cooperate with the County Election Coordinators in their respective counties for a smooth exercise", said Mr. Tairo.

Kenya Kwanza had No Muscle to Send Gachagua Home, Says Junet

Suna East MP and National Assembly's Minority Leader Junet Mohammed, on Sunday, November 10, explained why Orange Democratic Party (ODM) MPs joined their Kenya Kwanza counterparts to send former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua home.

Speaking during the Thanksgiving Ceremony of Homa Bay County Governor Gladys Wanga, Mohammed stated that once their colleagues across the Parliamentary aisle approached them for support in the impeachment, they considered the issue and decided that the accusations made against the former deputy president were legitimate and thus decided to answer to the plea and join their colleagues in the vote.

"Recently, people have been asking why ODM collaborated to unseat Gachagua. Gachagua is someone who had a foul mouth and he used to insult Baba. We told him that a day of consequence would come. If those people had not collaborated with ODM members in Parliament, they would not have ousted Gachagua," Mohammed told the congregation.

He said ODM's strength was powerful and that Kenya Kwanza had to reach out to them to help them eject Mr. Gachagua from office through impeachment in both houses of parliament. "That means that ODM has a lot of power because UDA would not have removed Gachagua alone. They had to speak to us and we weighed in on the issue and decided he was unfit to hold public office and he needed to go."



Thousands Throng Rangwe for Wanga's Fete



Thousands of ODM supporters, political friends and relatives last Sunday filled Ligisa Secondary School grounds in Rangwe Constituency in Homabay County to celebrate the appointment of the County Governor Gladys Wanga as the National Chairperson of the ODM party.

It was pomp and colour as people from all walks of life, within and without Nyanza region arrived at the venue for the Thanksgiving ceremony that was graced by Party Leader and Kenya's candidate for the chairmanship of the African Union Commission (AUC) Mr. Raila Odinga.

Members of the clergy from different faiths performed prayers for the Governor and her family that was led by her spouse Mr. George Wanga.

The clergy prayed for the family, the ODM party and the country and called on Kenyans saying the country needs prayers for it to head in the right direction.

They also prayed for Mr. Odinga as he embarks on the final stretch of the campaign for the African Union's top seat for which he formally launched the campaign

last week on Friday (8th November 2024) in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, the headquarters of the AU.

Politicians from different parts of the country and formations attended the event which was billed as the biggest of its kind to be held in the region in the recent past.

Former Cabinet Secretaries Mr. Moses Kuria and Ms. Aisha Mohammed heaped praises on Ms. Wanga describing her as a hardworking woman and dedicated leader.

"Hon. Wanga has proved that she is a great leader and a strong woman" said Mr. Kuria.

ODM Acting Party Leader Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o described Wanga as a "strong personality" whom he said had proved that she can go to great lengths to make the lives of her people better.

On his part, Mr. Odinga said he was proud of Ms. Wanga saying it is because of her hardwork, dedication and determination that the party made her the National Chairperson to replace Mr. John Mbadi who resigned to pick up the appointment as Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury.



"Governor Wanga is hardworking. She is loyal to the party and has the energy to help make the party great", he said.

Mr. Odinga said as the party heads to the grassroots elections on the 27th of November, it requires leaders who have the zeal and courage to make it more stronger and appealing to the masses.

During the event, immediate former National Chairman Mr. Mbadi officially handed over the mantle to Ms. Wanga and urged her to work with other party officials to make ODM stronger as we head to the 2027 general elections.

"I am here to officially hand over this mantle to my Governor. I

want to thank our party leader Hon. Raila Odinga for seeing it wise to have the position of National Chairman remain in Homabay County", he said.

The event was attended by among others, the Deputy Party Leaders Mr. Simba Arati, Mr. Godfrey Osotsi and Mr. Abdulsamad Sherrif Nassir, former Deputy Party Leader and now CS for Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs Mr. Hassan Ali Joho, Members of Parliament drawn from the Senate and the National Assembly, Members of National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ODM, Party County Chairpersons from all the 47 counties and Members of the County Assembly from various counties across the country.