

The ORANGE

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NEWSLETTER OF THE ORANGE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT PARTY OF KENYA



TOP STORIES

1. **The NDR postcard 3.**
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*A lady sets up her stall as she waits for her customers to buy her vegetables.
Photo: UN Habitat*

Raila: We cannot tolerate a gangster state

Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga condemned the rising cases of mysterious abductions in 2024, urging the government to end the practice, which he called punitive and a threat to national security. He decried the return of oppressive tactics and demanded lawful justice for all.

ODM's interim leader, Anyang' Nyong'o warned of popular resistance against oppressive governance.



ODM NEWS

President William Ruto, during the Piny Luo Cultural Festival at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Stadium in Siaya, pledged to invest Ksh.100 million in a fish landing site to boost the local fishing economy. He also inaugurated the Ksh.400 million Ramogi Campus, set to admit students in January, and announced the gazettment of Ramogi Forest and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Mausoleum as cultural heritage sites, with seven more under review. Lauding the region's cultural preservation, Ruto emphasized the government's commitment to enhancing Kenya's heritage. The event, attended by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Raila Odinga, and other leaders, also saw Ruto endorse Raila's bid for the AU Commission Chairmanship, calling it a victory for Africa.



Despite the excellent progress made on infrastructure development, there is a high concentration of unpaved roads in Nairobi's high-density settlements.

THE NDR POSTCARD

PART III: THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND THE LEFT IN KENYA

In this third and final instalment, I take a look at the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) in the context of Kenya. Being a concept developed to adopt the revolutionary pursuit to territories where the development of social classes was essentially pre-industrial and the proletarian leadership had to be anchored in other exploited classes, it has emerged as the most preferred "intermediate stage" towards socialism. All ex-colonies inherited a system of bastard capitalism in that it is capitalism that did not organically evolve but that which was parachuted into these societies that were in evolutionary transition (communalism to feudalism with a few having developed a fully matured feudalism).

As Lenin observes, progressive historical role of capitalism may be summed up in two brief propositions: increase in the productive forces of social labour, and the socialisation of that labour. But both these facts manifest themselves in extremely diverse processes in different branches of the national economy. Before attempting to canvass this matter, it is fitting to engage with conceptual problematique.

Understanding NDR as a Dynamic Concept

It is important to view the concept of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as dynamic, evolving in response to shifting historical, social, and political conditions. Progressive parties often engage with such conceptual shades as democracy, culture, gender, and sexuality, which are mistakenly treated as static and universally understood.

Instead, we should recognise these tools of analysis as fluid, capable of either advancing or hindering the progress of national liberation, depending on how they are interpreted and applied.

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The NDR concept is no different. For example, the NDR as a concept has been more widely popularised as the post-Apartheid South African dispensation and in post-Mengistu Ethiopian "revolution" than anywhere else in Africa. Yet their characteristics significantly differ.

These shifts in meaning are not solely discursive; they arise from real-world choices and organisational practices by individuals, communities, and institutions. These actors navigate the complexities of life, encountering challenges, opportunities, and disappointments that shape their collective understanding and strategies. This dynamic perspective is crucial to understanding the evolution of NDR in post-independence Africa.

While a comprehensive analysis of post-independence developments across African states is beyond the scope of this discussion, certain shared characteristics are evident in the construction of national liberation or revolutionary movements. These movements, often the successors to colonial administrations, have inherited and adapted many features of the old state. Through their efforts, representative democracy was introduced to almost all African countries, albeit imperfectly.

This democratic transition was influenced by factors such as negotiated or imposed constitutions, the inherent weaknesses of the change movements, and the structural limitations of the colonial state.

Despite these challenges, the NDR's dynamic nature underscores the importance of contextualizing democracy and related concepts within specific historical and cultural frameworks. Liberation movements did not merely replicate existing models; they navigated a complex interplay of traditional values, modern political ideals, and the socio-economic realities of newly independent states. By adopting a flexible and dynamic understanding of the NDR, progressive forces can better respond to contemporary challenges and envision pathways toward genuine national liberation.

In sum, NDR is not a fixed or monolithic concept. It evolves alongside the lived experiences and organizational choices of those pursuing liberation. Recognizing this dynamism is essential for progressive movements to remain relevant and effective in advancing their transformative goals.

Wither NDR in Kenya?

Generally, the notion of NDR entails combining of resistance to both national oppression and class exploitation, in the process avoiding a class reductionist or petty reductionist mode of understanding and strategising, that is using class lenses to view and explain everything. Over time, as the society and revolutionary elements of it embrace the vagaries of patriarchy, NDR has now evolved to incorporate gender in an undeveloped way without fully unpacking the problems in understandings of gender and patriarchy. Considering NDR in the contemporary Kenyan context, the words national, justice and unity are indispensable, enjoining people from all oppressed sections of the population and a range of classes who have continued to suffer under successive post-colonial administrations. It plays a catalytic role of bringing back the National Question discourse in the forefront.

The strategic objective of the NDR is the creation of a united and democratic society in an effort, to paraphrase Mao, unite all the forces that can be united. Our point of departure must be objective facts, not abstract definitions, and we should derive our guiding principles, policies and measures from an analysis of these facts. This in essence means the liberation of the working classes – workers, peasants, the landless, petty traders, the jobless and the lower middle-class – from the clutches of political and economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all Kenyans, especially the poor.

What an NDR in the Kenyan context will have to accomplish is to overcome the legacy of a social system the colonialists built on the international division of labour that relegates our country to the extraction and export of primary commodities and import of manufactured, processed and value-added products. It is about dismantling the political and economic system that has been reinforced and perpetuated by the successive ruling elite over the last six decades. The promulgation of the new Constitution of Kenya in 2010 was a positive step in as far as economic, social and cultural rights of the masses were for the first time explicitly acknowledged and guaranteed. However, without express dispensation of social justice, such guarantees continue to ring hollow, the pastime of those who can make ends meet.

There exists a symbiotic relationship between imperialism, sectarianism, corruption and state oppression in our country, and the stupendous concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals and local and

transnational monopolies therefore render trite the vainglorious declaration that state repression and its social consequences can be resolved by our electoral autocracy that has substituted political democracy and which is underpinned by the so-called market forces to which all should kneel in supplication: "everyone for him/herself and the Empire for us all!" While the opening of democratic space may present opportunities for some middle-class individuals to advance, without a systematic national effort to unravel the skewed distribution of wealth and income, the social reality of apartheid will remain.

How then should the strategic objective of Kenya's National Democratic Revolution find expression, in broad terms?

An essential and necessary condition for an NDR is democracy and an abiding culture of promotion and protection of human rights. All citizens – including the comprador and petty bourgeoisie – should be guaranteed the political, economic and social rights including but not limited to freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination, and other rights entrenched in our Constitution. They should have a government not only formally based on their will; but one that is open and transparent, and one that consults and continually involves the people in the making of policies and their implementation.

Prerequisite to nation-building will be the demobilisation of the agents of imperialism. It will also require the creation of a society in which the station that individuals occupy in political, social and other areas of endeavour is not defined on the basis of ethnicity, geography, language, religious, cultural or other such considerations. It demands the integration of communities in residential areas, at the shop floor of the workplace and within the trade union movement organisation, in sports and other areas. It also means a consistent programme of affirmative action to eradicate the disparities created by colonial and post-colonial policies.

The ushering in of this new democratic state must recognise that individuals within such a nation will have multiple identities, on the basis of their physiological make-up, cultural background and socialisation. It will be illusory to imagine that such features will disappear in the melting-pot of a newly liberated Kenya. Neither does their association on the basis of one social attribute or the other constitute a denial of their other

identities. But it is critical that the National Question is addressed as a priority so as to make Kenyan-ness the overarching.

The affirmation of our Kenyan-ness as a nation should nothing to do with the suppression or domination of one culture or language by another – it is in reality a recognition of a geographic reality and the awakening of a consciousness which colonialism suppressed. The promotion of Kiswahili as our national language should not be mistaken to kill any or all forty-plus indigenous languages.

Neo-colonialism in Kenya has meant the systematic suppression of the cultural independence and interdependence, talents, creativity and capacity of workers, peasants and women to play their role in the ordering of the affairs of the nation and the State. It is a critical part of the NDR to address this problem, both to affirm the principle of popular governance, gender and intergenerational equity and ensure that in practice, it finds conscious expression in the programmes the nation embarks on. In the same vein, persons with disabilities, "ethnic minorities," and the jobless among others have borne the brunt of the neo-colonial state's hierarchy of denial. Addressing these matters is not merely a concern for this or the other "sector" of society; it is in actual fact a matter of revolutionary obligation and principle, an expression of our humane values, without which liberation would be nothing but a farce.



Kenya's National Democratic Revolution must dismantle colonial legacies, uphold human rights, and foster inclusive nation-building to achieve true social justice and equity.

Democracy and development are integral to each other, and cannot be decoupled. In particular, the notion that economic progress can be attained through some kind of benevolent dictatorship is counterrevolutionary and has to be fought with vigour. It is in not only dangerous but fatal; for it assumes that some self-pontificating elite can generate, package and deliver economic progress tied with a ribbon from on high to a meek and grateful mass that does not participate in its own advancement.

This goes against the grain of the history of struggle, in which the masses were in reality their own liberators. Conversely, mass or popular participation does not imply paralysis or wilful inaction in the name of endless consultation. Decisive, bold and speedy action should always be pursued, without absconding from the need for the people themselves to facilitate such promptness in meeting their socioeconomic needs.

In the wake of NDR, the new democratic state derives its character from praxis emanating from the struggles of the oppressed social classes. It is one in which formal expressions of democracy and human rights should be backed up by mass involvement in policy generation and implementation. The state in an NDR dispensation should mobilise the nation's resources to expand the wealth base in the form of a growing economy. It is a state which has to continually strive to improve people's quality of life. Such a state should ensure that all citizens are accorded equal opportunities within the context of correcting the historical injustice.

The new state must strive to create a social order in which the few positive elements of the market dovetail with the obligations of the state to citizens and citizens to one to each other. Through its elected representatives and other avenues, it is the duty of the state to ensure that those who have been rendered indigent by the imbalances in attendant to the political economy of neoliberal globalization are accorded a humane and respectable quality of life.

In this sense, the NDR in Kenya must consciously and from the onset strive to create a society that is neither a clone of a laissez faire capitalist order captive to the fabled "invisible hand" of the market (particularly in an economy dominated by a few multinational conglomerates), nor an egalitarian utopia of mechanical social equality. Indeed, within the context of a mixed economy, in which market forces have some role to play, the state has the critical task of ensuring guiding and regulating the market, seconomic growth and development, of meeting people's social needs and of providing the requisite environment for the safety and security of citizens.



A technician walking in server room doing checkup inputting data

NDR in the Wake of Digital Colonialism

Today, our open veins are the “digital veins” crossing the oceans, wiring up a tech ecosystem owned and controlled by a handful of mostly US-based corporations. The transoceanic cables are often fitted with strands of fibre owned by the likes of Google and Facebook, for the purpose of data extraction and monopolisation. The cloud centres are the heavy machinery dominated by Amazon and Microsoft, proliferating like military bases for US empire, with Google, IBM and Alibaba following behind. The engineers are the corporate armies of elite programmers numbering in the hundreds of thousands, with generous salaries of USD 250,000 or more as compensation.

America, the armies of cheap labour annotating artificial intelligence data in China and Africa, the East Asian workers enduring post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to cleanse Big Social Media of graphic content, and the vast majority of people asked to specialise in non-digital goods and services in a worldwide division of labour reminiscent of that created by the manufacture-based imperialist division of labour. The centralised intermediaries and spy centres are the

panopticons, and data is the raw material processed for artificial intelligence services.

The US is at the helm of advanced economic production, which it dominates through the ownership of intellectual property and core infrastructure, backed by imperial trade policies at the WTO. The missionaries are the World Economic Forum elites, the CEOs of Big Tech companies, and the mainstream “critics” in the US who dominate the “resistance” narrative, many of whom work for or take money from corporations like Microsoft and Google, and integrate with a network of US-Eurocentric intellectuals drawn from Western Ivy League universities. Added to this, state-corporate elites, entrepreneurs, and educational institutions in the global South are replicating the Silicon Valley model of digital capitalism.

During the Gen Z uprising as during the 2011 Arab spring ones, the US media filled its airtime with the commentary of social media executives, experts, and pundits promoting “the revolutionary democratic spirit of the new electronic activism.” In the Kenyan case, Musk offered “generous” support to the struggle by providing affordable internet access. However, this explosion of interest was not simply about filling airtime.

The US media was primed for the heroic portrayal of Facebook and X (Twitter) by factors years in the making.

The starting point is clearly the astounding consolidation of the Western media into fewer and fewer hands like the Rupert Murdoch or Silvio Berlusconi empires. As part of the logic of neoliberal, free market transformation, these new media empires cut staff to the bone and avoided confrontation with the powerful in exchange for access. The upper levels of management stopped talking about the “fourth estate” and began referring to their job as producing a “news product.”

Today, at least in the West, the challenge for the public is not only getting news without corporate bias, it’s about getting news itself. Given this transformation, there are legions of reasons why headlines like “the Facebook revolution” are irresistible to the news directors at CNN, MSNBC, and the Murdoch outlets.

It is much cheaper, and more profitable to simply do an Internet search from the studio’s back office than send journalists to a potential war zone or maintain foreign bureaus round-the-clock. It took months before anyone on the major media outlets questioned why all the tweets they were reporting on from Iran

during the 2009 protests were in English instead of Farsi. If a revolution happens to be in a place that the US government has marked for “regime change,” the corporate media will reliably promote American capitalism and culture. As the technology critic Evgeny Morozov put it, by emphasising the liberating role of the tools and downplaying the role of human agency, such accounts make Americans feel proud of their own contribution to events in the Middle East. After all, the argument goes, such a spontaneous uprising wouldn’t have succeeded before Facebook was around—so Silicon Valley deserves a lion’s share of the credit.”

NDR OR CDR? A Pan-Africanist Bent

In this period, Africa’s collective discourse has revolved around the notions of Pan-Africanism and an African Renaissance, as philosophical underpinnings to its endeavours. What is the relevance of these concepts?

From luminaries such as Marcus Garvey and WEB du Bois – with the latter asserting that the problem of the 20th Century would be about the colour-line – to Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) and Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria),



Protesters march in Nairobi on June 20. (Photo by Luis Tato/AFP via Getty Images)

Pan-Africanism has been about the recognition of the shared histories, common experience and the desired common destiny of Africa's people against colonialism and slavery, and for unity, independence and self-determination.

From Pixley ka Seme (South Africa) on the regeneration of Africa and a new and unique civilisation that is thoroughly spiritual and humanistic²; to Cheikh Anta Diop (Senegal) on culture and development³ and Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), their inadequacies notwithstanding, the African Renaissance has been conceptualised as repudiation of the notion that Africans are exotic objects of others' curiosity but a people of the continent that has immensely contributed to, and should by their own actions help shape, human civilisation.

It is in this context that the continent should reflect on what the successor to the OAU (one wonders whether Kwame or Abdel Nasser would recognise

what became of their product of labour!), the African Union (AU), characterises as Agenda 2063. The notions of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance have not lost their relevance though. But their inheritors are more than just fighters against what Africa does not like. Today's generations are – and should in their mindset act as – architects of a new socio-economic system in what should be an all-encompassing Continental Democratic Revolution and anti-imperialist in character.

The question though is whether the regeneration of the continent, signalled in a variety of ways over the past decades, is sustainable! Do endogenous and exogenous conditions point in the direction of an accomplished Pan-African Renaissance by 2063? To answer these questions, it behooves the progressives and revolutionary intellectuals in Africa to identify the key driving forces that have shaped Africa's trajectory in the past 60 years and help design the continent's development flight path.

Tasks for the Kenyan Left

Kenya is a country where the petty bourgeoisie, by far the greater part of the population that has the capacity for quick grasp of the theory of the revolution but often unwilling to team up with the revolutionary classes. Its vacillations between the comprador bourgeoisie and the proletariat are inevitable, and only when it joins the proletariat and the peasantry is the victory of the revolution, of the cause of social justice, freedom, and land for the working people assured easily, peacefully, quickly, and smoothly.



Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance emphasize unity, independence, and the regeneration of Africa through a shared destiny and self-determination.

The majority of the Kenyan Left belong to this class yet the Kenyan workers remain captive to the labour aristocracy masquerading as trade union leaders. Liberating labour is the most urgent task.

The second urgent business is to help get everything possible done to make sure the "last" chance for a peaceful development of the revolution, to help by the presentation of an NDR programme, by making clear its national character, its absolute accord with the interests and demands of a vast majority of the Kenyan population. As Lenin advocated, "let us take it more to those down below, to the masses, to the office employees, to the workers, to the peasants, not only to our supporters, but particularly to those who follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, to the non-party elements, to the ignorant."

Raila on abductions: We cannot tolerate a gangster state



Delegates during the 4th edition of the Piny Luo Cultural Festival in Bondo, Siaya County.

Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga called for the immediate halting of the ongoing mysterious abductions in the country.

Speaking in December, Odinga noted that the rampant abductions that have witnessed in 2024 should be expeditiously addressed by the government lest they pose a huge threat to national security. "We are now crossing the end as a country. This year has been challenging for the people of Kenya. We had demonstrations and innocent lives being lost. But we also want to see the end of something we have witnessed this year we line at the end, the abductions of innocent people," Odinga noted.

"This is punitive and it's something that is very strange. We cannot live in a country where people disappear for no other reason and are kept incommunicado for a long time. The government must take this thing seriously and it must come to an end. We want a safe and secure country."

Odinga noted that the tactics to use abductions as a way of administering foul justice have become of age and any Kenyan found to be contravening the law should be dealt with lawfully.

"Gone are those days where they used to arrest you and take you to Nyayo House. But these days you are being taken to unknown places. It is primitive and unacceptable," Odinga added.

The ODM party issued a stern warning, threatening to spearhead a popular resistance against Ruto's administration over the emergence of dictatorial and oppressive politics.

In an exclusive interview with the Daily Nation, ODM interim party leader Anyang' Nyong'o took issue with the ongoing abductions across the country, saying they would resist attempts by the regime to oppress Kenyans.

"We are ready to lead a popular resistance to dictatorial and oppressive politics that tries to impose an oppressive and undemocratic regime on people through such things as abductions and Precambrian political threats. We therefore strongly caution the government to stop this cowardly abduction of those who criticise undemocratic policies," Prof Nyong'o said.



Commoditisation of Land and Land Grabbing in Kenya



A colonial officer supervises an evacuation order in colonial times. Image: standardmedia

The commodification of land and land grabbing are a twin challenge in Kenya's political economy. The phenomenon originates from the colonial occupation of the territory that was later to become known as Kenya.

In pre-colonial Kenya land was not a commodity to be bought and sold in a market for profit without any improvement or development as can be seen in speculative dealings in land these days.

Colonial occupation involved amongst other things the large scale alienation of land by the colonial government for its own use and for gifting to white settlers. This involved the massive displacement of indigenous African peoples and communities from lands that they previously occupied so that such land could be used to fulfill British imperialist interests.

Colonialism was therefore a large scale land grabbing project. The colonial state grabbed land for its own use and gave the rest to white immigrant settlers. It is this grabbing and alienation of land that also gave rise to transaction in land as a commodity for profit. It made it possible for hoarding of land for speculative purposes thus making it possible to profit from the hoarded land without

investing in any improvement or development whatsoever.

This land grabbing fundamentally changed the place of land in the economy. Henceforth the settlers could sell the land and so in this manner a market for land came into being.

The Struggle for Land and Freedom

The struggle for independence in Kenya was therefore essentially about land and freedom. Africans were not only demanding self-determination but also a return of their stolen land.

It was therefore expected that the transfer of power from colonial authorities to indigenous ruling elites would lead to a fundamental restructuring of the management of land. Unfortunately this did not materialise and the result was a continuation of colonial land policies, laws and administrative infrastructure.

This was because the decolonisation process represented a new form of colonialism commonly known as neocolonialism which is superintended by co-opted indigenous African elites for the perpetuation of the imperialist mission to exploit and oppress the people of Kenya. These new political elites were essentially clients of the departing imperialist patrons.

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This process gave the new power elites access to and a vested interest in the skewed European colonial economy which they should otherwise have been dismantling and re-organising

with a view to meeting the needs of the broad majority of exploited and oppressed Kenyan people. Essentially the nascent African ruling elite aspired to be postcolonial landed aristocracy. Their vision for land was to acquire titles for private ownership of land to establish a feudal rather than a capitalist economy in which they would extract rent rather than profits from productive enterprises.

Evolution of Land Grabbing

In Kenya, land grabbing can be examined by looking at three critical phases through which land governance has evolved. There is the first epoch that was characterised by colonial acquisition of land to establish colonial rule and provide land for incoming settlers among other reasons.

Secondly, there is the post-colonial epoch that was characterised by land grabs orchestrated by the new political elites who were keen on retaining power upon independence. Upon independence, in 1963, land had become a fundamental factor in the dynamics of power and wealth allocation among the new political elite. Illegal and irregular allocation of public and community land became the order of the day as politicians abused the trust placed on them as trustees of land.

Land meant for use as school grounds, cemeteries, playgrounds, parks, forests and other public uses was grabbed by individuals and private companies.

Thirdly, and most recently, the phenomenon of land grabbing has assumed a new face: a global face with graver consequences on communities and their livelihoods than ever before.

Commodification, Land Grabbing, Neoliberalism and Globalisation

The management and development of public land holdings is now part of the debate on urban land grabbing in the Global South. Exploiting public land for profit through inventory, sale, concession, real estate capitalisation is a growing phenomenon worldwide.

To facilitate access to land, public operators are being pushed to capitalize on their land or real estate resources. A good example in Kenya of this is the so-called affordable housing scheme being pushed down the throats of Kenyans by the Kenya Kwanza government in public land is being gifted to privateers for free.

Similar schemes can be seen in the privatisation of the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) as well as the Kenya Railway land in the Nairobi city centre and elsewhere in the country.

Commodification of land in an age of neoliberalism, highlights the consequences of globalization and financialization of land that involves a shift from a development rationale driven by the prospect of public benefit, to rationales of profit maximization. This makes these developments most advantageous to individual or corporate investors.

Land grabbing is therefore a persistent and growing issue in Kenya, affecting communities, environmental conservation, and economic development. It involves the illegal acquisition of public, communal, or private land by individuals, corporations, or government entities, often leading to displacement, environmental degradation, and social inequality.

This new form of land grabbing involves foreign multinationals and governments acquiring land in developing countries for a multitude of reasons, which includes mining, huge infrastructural projects, oil exploration and large-scale agriculture. In Kenya such instances have for example been seen in the Tana Delta (biofuels) and Turkana oil exploration fields.

What is the extent of Land Grabbing in Kenya

Extent of Grabbed Public Land: According to the National Land Commission (NLC), about 200,000 acres of public land were illegally allocated to private individuals and companies between the 1960s and 2000s. This includes critical public resources like forests, wetlands, school properties, and wildlife reserves.

Some studies indicate that land grabbing costs Kenya's economy billions of shillings annually. According to a 2021 report by the Transparency International-Kenya, illegal land acquisitions and encroachment on public and community land cause losses of up to Ksh 8 billion (approximately \$70 million) every year due to lost revenue and reduced access to land resources.

Kenya's forests are significantly affected by land grabbing, leading to deforestation and environmental degradation. The NLC estimates that approximately 50,000 hectares of forest land were illegally allocated, contributing to Kenya's forest cover declining to less than 6% of the total land area, far below the recommended global minimum of 10%.

Land grabbing has displaced thousands of Kenyans, with many forcibly evicted from their ancestral lands. According to a 2018 report by the Kenya Land Alliance, approximately 500,000 Kenyans have been displaced due to land grabbing, especially in areas designated for large-scale infrastructure and agricultural projects.

Urbanization has also driven land grabbing in Kenya's cities and peri-urban areas, where prime land is in high demand. Nairobi, Mavoko in Machakos County, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru have seen a surge in land grabbing, especially along new roadways and near planned infrastructure projects.

In Nairobi, it's estimated that over 30% of land transactions in recent years have involved some form of illegal acquisition.

A 2015 report by the Land Matrix Initiative indicated that foreign investors control approximately 1.75 million hectares of land in Kenya, much of which was acquired without the consent of local communities. These large-scale acquisitions are predominantly for agriculture, biofuel production, and mining.

The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) report documented extensive land



Kenya's land-grabbing history spans three phases: colonial expropriation, post-independence elite land grabs, and a modern era of global-scale land acquisitions threatening communities and livelihoods

grabbing cases dating back to colonial times and post-independence periods. Over 80% of historical land injustices reported to the TJRC involved illegal land allocation, displacement, and irregular land titles, affecting millions of Kenyans.

Effects of Land Grabbing in Kenya

Commodification of land and land grabbing has perverse impacts on the Kenyan economy as it promotes a rentier rather than a productive economy. State actors use their privileged institutional position for personal and financial gain rather than for public service and the public good for which they are being paid. In this context 'institutional resources' become key to understand control exerted over land ownership via schemes of privatisation and formalisation

Colonial-era land appropriation and skewed post-independence redistribution policies that left the those dispossessed by colonialism without land have left unresolved land ownership issues, creating loopholes that land grabbers exploit and festering flash points for recurrent political conflicts and violence.

Deliberately inefficient Land Registration Systems: Inaccurate records, incomplete registrations, and lengthy bureaucratic processes create opportunities for illegal land transactions thus compounding the festering crisis.

Land grabbing has displaced thousands of Kenyan families, depriving them of ancestral lands and traditional livelihoods, especially in agriculture and pastoralism.

Previous government reform initiatives to combat land grabbing have been tepid at best. Consequently the land question remains unanswered, with extensive economic, environmental, and social implications for the future development and stability of Kenya.

Over the years the reform of land governance has imposed by the people upon the government and a political class that was and is reluctant to reform the land administration because of the benefits bestowed upon them by historical system of territorial control and centralised authority over land rights in place since colonisation. The overhaul of land governance systems would prove too expensive for them in political terms since many of them are beneficiaries of the perverted system of land grabbing.

Combatting land grabbing will require a radical change in the character of the state as well the emergence of principled, ethical and resolute political leadership with a vision for a modernising and industrialised country. It requires a leadership and a people committed to building a prosperous, equitable, fair and just society to protect land rights especially of the historically marginalised and vulnerable and to ensure fair and transparent land ownership.



41 petitions grassroots elections reviewed by ODM Party, 6 Forwarded to Appeals Committee

The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) has completed review of 41 petitions emerging from November 2024 Grassroots polls now forwarded to the party's Appeals Committee for hearing and determination, Secretary General Edwin Sifuna has announced.

Speaking in Kileleshwa on Friday, after the ODM Central Committee convened for its first meeting of the year, the Party SG Edwin Sifuna noted that out of 41 appeals filed, six were found to be supported by evidence.

The remaining 35 appeals, Sifuna says, were found to lack substantive evidence and were thus rejected

"Following the largely successful grassroots elections in November at polling units in all the 47 Counties the Party received 41 Appeals. The cases have been reviewed for merit with most of them being found to be frivolous," Sifuna said.

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The two decades following the declaration of Kenya as a colony in 1920 marked a critical phase in Kenya's anti-imperialist struggle.

"A total of 6 appeals were found to be supported by evidence and will be proceeding to hearing before the Party's Appeals Committee."

He added that the party's National Elections Coordinating Committee (NECC) has appointed three senior party members to serve on the Appeals Committee, that will determine the cases.

"The Central Committee has seconded Abdulsamad Sheriff, Rosa Buyu and Ahmed Abdisalan to be members of the Appeals Committee for purposes of the 6

appeals," said Sifuna. Once the hearing process is concluded, ODM's NECC will make a final decision, after which the party will announce the dates for subsequent elections at the ward, constituency and county levels. "Upon conclusion of this process, the NECC shall be announcing dates for the elections at ward, Constituency and County levels," he said.

Additionally, Sifuna extended congratulations to all those who were successfully elected during the grassroots elections. "The Party Congratulates all those elected in the various positions and has directed the NECC to issue certificates to the successful candidates who fully complied with the rules including the requirement on Payments," he said.

"As the government, we are also accessing other 7 sites that have historical, cultural and traditional significance in Siaya with the possibility that they meet the threshold for us to gazette," Ruto noted.

"The Ministry of Culture and Heritage is working with the counties to make sure we have these sites which will act as Beacons of culture and heritage."

The event was graced by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga who is eyeing the Africa Union Commission Chairmanship, Governors, Senators, MPs and other leaders.

The president at the same time drummed up support for Raila's Africa Union Commission (AUC) chairmanship bid, reiterating that his victory would be a win not only for the East Africa region but also for the entire continent