

The ORANGE

Volume 4 Number 4 | May 2025

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORANGE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT PARTY OF KENYA



ODM Party leaders in Homabay in December last year. Photo/courtesy

TOP STORIES

1. Protecting Devolution: Power To The People
2. Raila Odinga and Kenya's Struggle for Devolution
3. ODM News
4. James Aggrey Orengo: Governor of Siaya

Protecting Devolution: Power To The People

The constitution requires that there is devolution up to the village level in rural areas. In urban areas, the principal devolution units are cities, municipalities, townships and market centres. Urban areas are required to further devolve themselves into smaller units. The County Governments Act and the Urban Areas and Cities Act outline how devolution is to be achieved beyond the county headquarters. >>pg 1-2



Hon. Raila Odinga with former governors in 2022. Photo/courtesy

ODM NEWS

ODM is Only Cooperating With UDA to Unify the Country, Says Raila

We are in a presidential system of government where there are no opposition or government benches in parliament. What we have an institution of parliament whose role is to legislate and oversight the government" said Mr. Odinga adding that "there is no coalition between ODM and UDA" and that the current arrangement is driven by the MoU between the two parties which contains ten points that the party is pushing to be implemented. >>pg 7

Protecting Devolution: Power To The People



Raila Odinga speaking at a past devolution conference. Photo/courtesy

The ODM party Leader, Raila Odinga, has recently indicated that strong anti-devolution forces were working hard to derail and reverse devolution in Kenya. He indicated that there were attempts to resurrect the provincial administration to replace county governments. According to Raila, it was unconstitutional for MPs to demand control of the Sh105 billion Road Maintenance Levy Fund, one of the key issues that has led to the deadlock in talks to resolve the stalemate over the equitable revenue share for devolved units.

He explained that MPs' thirst to continue controlling the fund followed their 'successful anomaly' in gaining control over the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NGCDF) and the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), which, he argued, gives them the power to conceive, implement, and oversee projects at the same time – against the spirit of the Constitution

Since 2013 there have been, often vicious, fights on issues of devolution between county governments and the national government. The national government, and the deep state, is dominated by centrists who do not see why funds should be sent to counties to be eaten by undeserving simpletons. Funds must be collected from all counties and consumed by its owners in Nairobi.

Article 174 of the constitution

outlines the objects of the devolution of government. Two important parts of this article are to: Give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance the participation of the people in the exercise of the powers of the state and in making decisions affecting them; and to recognise the right of communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development.

The constitution requires that there is devolution up to the village level in rural areas. In urban areas, the principal devolution units are cities, municipalities, townships and market centres. Urban areas are required to further devolve themselves into smaller units. The County Governments Act and the Urban Areas and Cities Act outline how devolution is to be achieved beyond the county headquarters. Devolution requires that representatives of the people at all levels should assume office after some electoral process.

County-level centrists have been averse to further devolution in counties since 2013. Kakamega seems to be the only county to effect village councils as devolved units in rural areas in the first 5 years of devolution. No county effected devolution in urban areas in the first 5 years of elected county governments. After the 2017 general elections, governors have been setting up urban areas boards. The interest in setting up these boards has been sparked by the World Bank's Kenya Urban Support Programme, KUSP.

KUSP avails funds for development in Urban areas. The principle condition for accessing the funds is the existence of a governance board or committee for the urban area. The Urban Areas and Cities Act outlines the classification of areas as cities or urban areas. The latter category consists of municipalities, townships or market centres. The classification criteria include population, infrastructure, revenue generation and collection capacity, capacity for waste management, residents' participation framework and seat of county government.

The boards of cities and urban areas are appointed for a term of five years through a competitive process by the county governor, with the approval of the county assembly. The members of the board represent various interests including professional associations, the private sector, informal sector, neighbourhood associations, gender equity, representation of persons with disability, youth and marginalised groups.

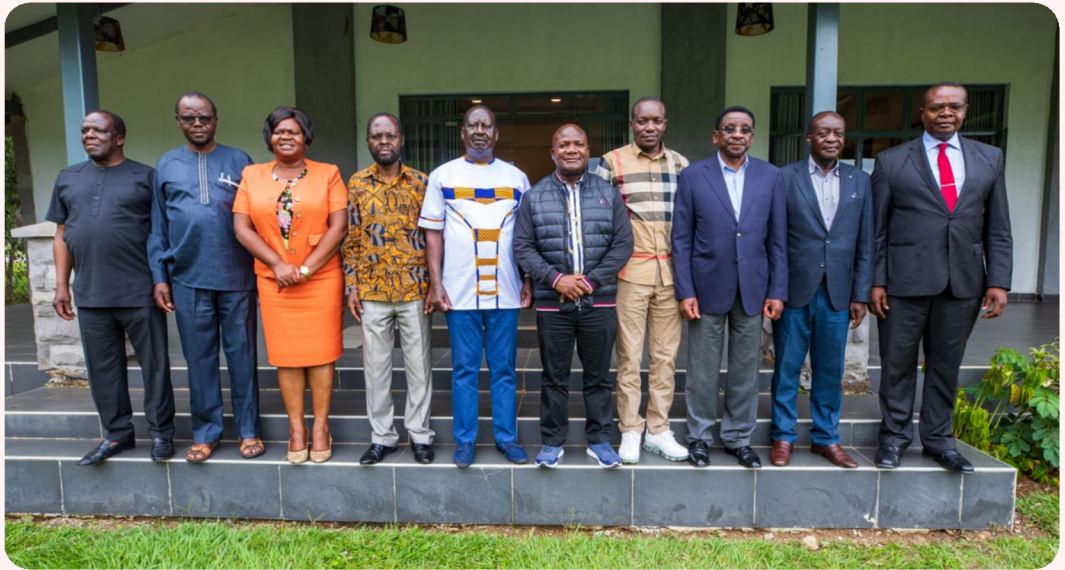
The struggles for devolution space between the national and county governments have been mirrored at the county level between the county executives, led by governors, and boards of urban areas. In the period 2013 to 2014, we witnessed bizarre struggles for office space between the county executives of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu and the national executive.

In Nairobi, the Transitional Authority had earmarked the former prime minister's office as the office of the

governor. The deputy president grabbed this office, forcing the governor to retreat to City Hall. In Mombasa, TA had identified the former provincial headquarters as the office of the governor. The county commissioner refused to allow the governor to occupy space in this building. In Kisumu, the governor occupied the former provincial headquarters and renamed it "Prosperity House", the county commissioner issued orders for the governor to vacate the office on several occasions.

The above perverse office struggles are being repeated between county executives and boards of urban areas. These boards are in essence successors of the defunct local authorities including city and municipal councils. In as far as possible, infrastructure developed to support work of the local authorities should be used by the current boards. The county executive has made this very difficult.

The country was subjected to infantile anti-governor debates in parliament at the inception of devolution. Members of the national assembly and senate debated motions to denigrate governors by stopping them from: Using the title "Excellency"; flying flags on their vehicles; and having convoys. We now see some members of the county executive try to denigrate board members by saying that the boards are "purely advisory" and executing projects in relevant areas without involvement or knowledge of boards.



ODM party leader Raila Odinga with Governors from the Lake Region Economic Block. Photo/courtesy

The struggles for the division of the national cake between national and devolved governments have been intense. The national government has tried to trash lawful procedures of division of national revenues and its appropriation by the national and county governments. This sad situation has been replicated at the county level between the county executives and boards.

With respect to budgeting for urban areas and cities, the annual estimates are to be prepared and submitted in line with the Urban Areas and Cities Act. In line with section 45(l) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, the steps are as follows: (1) Three months before the commencement of each financial year, a board or town committee shall cause to prepare estimates of the revenue and expenditure of a board or town committee for that year; (2) The annual estimates shall make provision for all the estimated revenue and expenditure of the board for the financial year to which it relates; (3) The annual estimates shall be tabled before the board or town committee for adoption and approval; and (4) The annual estimates approved by the board or town committee under subsection (3) shall be submitted to the county governor for submission to the county assembly for its approval.

Section 45(4) above is clear. It is expected that the budgeting process is to be participatory. This includes interactions with the governor and CEC. However, once the budget has been prepared by the board, then it is only the county assembly which can alter it. Some

county executives have deliberately chosen to misinterpret the law and treat these devolved units as departments. They have then proceeded to unlawfully make budgets for the urban areas or cities.

Accountability and financial autonomy are a key requirements of boards. A reading of Section 46 together with Section 51 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act indicates clearly that boards must maintain and operate their own bank accounts. Indeed, the auditor general audits boards as separate entities.

The major purpose of devolution is self governance. That is to allow the people, generally through, their representatives to participate in making decisions on development issues and governance. Implicit in this principle is the right of the people to decide on who represents them inorgans of governance. Generally, these representatives assume office after some electoral process.

Before 2013, the President would appoint all provincial and district commissioners. These commissioners would then govern their designated areas with delegated authority from the president. After 2013, we have been electing governors and members of county assemblies to govern the county on our behalf. This way we are exercising our right to self-determination in counties. Citizens in urban areas and cities must also get the right to determine who represents them on boards. Allowing the governor to nominate and appoint representatives on boards is not in line with the spirit of devolution.

Board members appointed by governors, like PCs and DCs before, are appointed to principally serve the interests of the governors. They are likely to be well selected pliant governor's poodles.

The Urban Areas and Cities Act must be amended to allow for election of board members by citizens. The elections can either be direct first the post in demarcated electoral areas or through proportional representation in party lists.

The County Governments Act provides for devolution upto the village level. The act provides for village councils as governance units of devolution at the grassroots level. The problem with the act is that it does not provide for election of members of the village councils. They are appointed by governors. This defeats the spirit of devolution- self determination. The act should be amended to provide for election of members of village councils.

In most progressive countries in the world Education and Policing are devolved.

We have witnessed the perverse situation in which teachers employed centrally by the Teachers Service Commission refuse to serve

In some counties. Teachers interviewed and employed by counties would not act in this manner. Also, the centralisation of school infrastructure development in Nairobi has led to absolutely no such development despite budgetary allocation for this

purpose every year. Devolution of education would enable better citizen participation and oversight of school infrastructure development.

Our policing system is a relic of colonialism. The police force of an agent of colonial subjugation. Hence policemen were generally outsiders whose role was subjugation of natives. Police persons in the colonising countries were from the local community and interacted fairly humanely with the public. Policing must be essentially a community issue. The community knows its thieves, liars and witches. Before colonialism policing was a community affair. Therefore we need to devolve policing.

Our principle of devolution is that funds should follow function. Sadly the major part of funds for devolved functions such as agriculture, health and water are still held unconstitutionally by the national government in Nairobi. This situation must be reversed.

Our Party Leader indicated that in Nigeria funds from the national budget are shred as follows: 45% to federal government; 25% to state governments; and 20% to municipal governments. In Kenya we currently share 85% to national government and 15% to county governments. This must be changed. We must also share 45% to national government, 20% to county governments and 20% to urban areas and cities.

We must protect devolution our survival and prosperity depend on it!

Raila Odinga and Kenya's Struggle for Devolution



Raila Odinga. Photo/courtesy

Raila Odinga is arguably the most consequential opposition figure in modern history, a politician who has shaped the country's democratic landscape and popularised the language of devolution and equity in governance. Raila stands as a living metaphor for Kenya's struggle against centralised autocracy, having been detained, exiled and vilified and yet, never silenced. Despite never capturing the presidency after five attempts, he remains the loudest voice on equitable governance and decentralization.

Raila is a principled architect and ideological driver of Kenya's devolved system of governance, enshrined in the 2010 Kenyan constitution. He has consistently framed devolution as a tool for distributive justice, aimed at dismantling the legacy of ethnic favouritism and regional underdevelopment inherited from the colonial and post-colonial centralised state. Raila has continually advocated for increased fiscal decentralization, pushing for at least 35% of national revenue allocation to counties, particularly during the BBI campaign to ensure subnational governments can effectively deliver public goods.

During the 2023 biennial devolution conference in Uasin Gishu, Raila warned that some functions of the national government were being smuggled back creating duplication and waste of public funds, urging that

such agencies should be disbanded. Raila often argues that the constitution envisaged that counties would not be subordinate to the national government.

Raila continues to insist on equity based intergovernmental fiscal relations. He opposed conditional grants that limit county discretion, favouring unconditional equitable shares for counties to shape their developmental agendas. He also advocates for citizen participation in budgeting and improving accountability and legitimacy of devolved governance.

Raila was a central player in the 2005 and 2010 constitutional reform efforts. He opposed drafts that consolidated executive power and weakened regional structures. In the 2005 referendum he led the No camp through the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party, a party that continues to promote county empowerment and equitable resource distribution.

In the 2010 constitution, Raila was instrumental in lobbying for devolved government which restructured Kenya into 47 semi-autonomous counties, thus redistributing economic and political authority. Raila additionally publicly supported the Council of Governors as a legitimate voice of counties and demanded that parliament respect county functions under the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution.

In February 2024, Raila Odinga officially announced his candidacy

for the chairperson of the African Union Commission with the backing of President William Ruto. During his campaign, he emphasised his commitment to advancing the African Union's Agenda 2063. "As a lifelong Pan-Africanist, I will offer participatory leadership to ensure delivery on the priorities of the African peoples as envisioned in the African Union Agenda 2063," he said. He also articulated his vision for a united and prosperous Africa, envisioning a United Africa characterised by peace, prosperity and sustainable progress for all.

As a lifelong Pan-Africanist, Raila campaigns for continental integration, viewing regional cooperation as essential for trade, peace and infrastructure.

Raila Odinga was born on January 7, 1945, at Maseno Church Missionary Society Hospital in Nyanza. He is the son of Kenya's first vice president and liberation hero, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga whose nationalist credentials deeply shaped Raila's ideology.

Raila was schooled at Kisumu Union Primary School, Maranda Primary School and Maranda High School before proceeding to Germany where he was later to earn a master's degree in Mechanical engineering from Maddeburg's Technical University in 1970.

Following his graduation in Germany, Raila moved to Kenya

where he served as a lecturer at the University of Nairobi between 1970 and 1974. It was during this time that he founded East African Spectre Ltd., a private-sector gas cylinder manufacturer. Between 1974 and 1978, Raila worked at the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) where he rose to deputy director. These roles introduced Raila to institutional bureaucracy and technocratic governance.

Raila's political journey is tightly interwoven with Kenya's second liberation movement. His book, *The Flame of Freedom* (2013) is a memoir chronicling his sacrifices and the broader democratic struggles of Kenya. Similarly *The Quest for Nationhood: Roadmap to Our Future* is an analytical text on post-independence nation-building, highlighting the misuse of power, state repression and the need for equitable institutions. He frames himself as a transitional figure between colonial resistance and democratic consolidation.

In 1982, he was detained without trial for 6 years under Public Security regulations which was allegedly linked to the failed coup against Moi's regime. In 1983 he was adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience. In 1988, he was re-arrested and jailed again for a year for opposing single-party rule under KANU. In 1990 Raila was detained during the historic Saba Saba protests that led to the repeal of section 2A of the constitution and the restoration of multiparty

politics. In 1991, Raila was forced to flee to Norway for Asylum. While there, he mobilised international solidarity for Kenya's pro-democratic effort. He was later to return to Kenya in 1992 to join FORD led by his father pushing for democratic pluralism.

Raila was first elected as the MP for Langata in 1992 where he served until 2007, using parliament as a platform to challenge executive overreach and fighting for constitutional change. Between 2001 and 2002, Raila served as minister for energy under the KANU-NDP merger. However, he left alongside George Saitoti, Kalonzo Musyoka and Joseph Kamotho when Moi side lined him in Favour of Uhuru Kenyatta for presidency to form the Rainbow Movement.

The Rainbow movement transformed to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that then teamed up with Opposition leader Mwai Kibaki's National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) that ended KANU's rule in KANU's.

Under Kibaki's government, Raila served as the minister for Roads and public works between 2003 and 2005 when he had a fallout with Kibaki.

After the fallout with Kibaki in 2005, Raila founded the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) to oppose the centralised draft constitution. Orange was the symbol of resistance to authoritarianism and support for devolution in the constitutional referendum. ODM has since evolved into Kenya's leading social democratic party with devolution as its pillar.

Raila Odinga is a long-standing anti-corruption advocate consistently positioning himself as a staunch opponent of corruption. He has been heard terming corruption as the cancer of Kenya's progress, advocating for strengthening of anti-corruption institutions, instituting lifestyle audits for public officers and demanding asset declaration compliance. In many instances, Raila has condemned the government for failing to address corruption effectively.



Raila Odinga. Photo/courtesy

During his 2022 campaign, Raila pledged to implement stringent anticorruption measures including empowering the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission and ensuring transparency in public offices. "Baba" as he is commonly known by supporters has also consistently advocated for the strengthening of institutions.

He has called for the enforcement of anti-corruption institutions advocating for their independence and capacity to act decisively against corrupt practices. Odinga has also expressed concerns over the integrity of electoral processes, citing instances

where individuals convicted of corruption were allowed to run for office thereby undermining public trust. Raila has additionally promoted judicial reforms aimed at reducing corruption within the judiciary, including the professionalization of judicial democracy and providing judges with substantive training.

Raila has consistently advocated for industrialisation, pushing for the one sub-county, one product initiative during his campaign to localise industrial hubs and promote self-reliance. He continues to advocate for SME development and reduce import dependency.

His industrial policy is tied to manufacturing, technology adoption and infrastructure investments aligning with Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

Raila's style of politics embraces populist mobilisations. He employs political pragmatism with a willingness to form strategic coalitions across ideological divides to achieve systemic reforms. Despite not being in active opposition politics, Raila remains the ODM party leader and a key political figure in national dialogues. He remains vocal in matters of devolution, governance reforms and constitutional amendments to restructure executive power.

ODM is Only Cooperating With UDA to Unify the Country, Says Raila



Raila Odinga speaking at the funeral of the late Mama Preskila Koyo in Karachuonyo. Photo/courtesy.

ODM Leader Mr. Raila Odinga has once again reiterated that the ODM party is not part of the Kenya Kwanza administration saying that the party and UDA are only co-operating under the guidance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was signed by him and President William Ruto representing both parties.

He says the March 7, 2025 ceremony held at the KICC in Nairobi paved the way for cooperation of the two parties on matters governance and that it is not a coalition agreement.

Speaking in Karachuonyo Constituency during the funeral service of Mama Preskila Koyo, wife of the late Chairman of the Luo Council of Elders, Ker Koyo Opiei, the former Prime Minister said the ODM party is working with the UDA administration in the interest of all Kenyans for peace, prosperity and development of nation.

He said this relationship does not in any way mean that the party has joined government. "During President Joe Biden's regime, he had people from the Republican Party working in his administration. Today, in President Donald Trump's administration, there are Democrats working in the government", he said.

Mr. Odinga added that the co-operation between ODM and UDA is a healthy one and which is meant to ensure equitable distribution of resources to all regions of the country, good governance and adherence to the provisions of the constitution by the government.

"We are in a presidential system of government where there are no opposition or government benches in parliament. What we have an institution of parliament whose role is to legislate and oversight the government"

“We are in a presidential system of government where there are no opposition or government benches in parliament.”

said Mr. Odinga adding that "there is no coalition between ODM and UDA" and that the current arrangement is driven by the MoU between the two parties which contains ten points that the party is pushing to be implemented. "So when Mr. Odingo speaks, he is doing so within the confines of the MoU that we signed at KICC. Same to Prof. Nyong'o", he said. The ODM leader said that when leaders raise



their concerns over matters within their purview, it doesn't mean that they are opposed to the arrangement. "It is their democratic right", he added.

He singled out Devolution which he said was threatened because of poor implementation of its functions by the national government as provided for in the constitution. "Why would the national government withhold over KES. 100 billion meant for health sector which is a devolved function?" he posed. He said in the 2010 constitution, devolution was the most important aspect which should be implemented to the later but is being slowed down by the national government.

On infrastructure, Mr. Odinga said it was improper for the national

government to be in charge of roads supposed to be under the jurisdiction of county governments.

When I was Minister for roads, I formed KURA, KERRA and KENHA under the unitary system of governance, but now with devolved system, we do not need them. The money meant for rural roads should sent to county governments to the roads" he said. On the NG-CDF, Mr. Odinga maintained that the fund should be scrapped and the monies channeled to County Governments to fund projects. "On this there is compromise" he said. He appealed to media houses to report objectively on this issue saying that Kenyans need accurate information and not sensationalism.

Kilifi County Receives Medical Equipment to Boost Health Care

The County Government of Kilifi last Thursday received a donation of diagnostic equipment worth KSh 13 million to aid in the diagnosis of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in the County.

During a brief ceremony at the County headquarters in Kilifi town, the County Governor Mr. Gideon Mung'aro who led the top county officials in receiving the equipment said this was a step in the right direction in the bid to deal with Neglected Tropical Diseases in the county.

"This initiative, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Amref Health Africa, and the Children's

Investment Fund Foundation, enhances the integration of disease control into our primary healthcare system", said Mr. Mung'aro.

He said the initiative addresses conditions like lymphatic filariasis and schistosomiasis, improving diagnostics, training, and health systems.

He said the equipment will be delivered to three sub-counties—Rabai, Magarini, and Malindi—benefiting 16 health facilities, including Kilifi Referral Hospital.

"I commend our health team's progress towards a healthier future" said the County boss.



Governor Mung'aro receiving the medical Equipment .
Photo/courtesy.

Let Devolution Prosper, Nyong'o to Ruto



Kisumu governor Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o . Photo/courtesy.

The Governor of Kisumu County Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o has slammed the national government, accusing it of undermining devolution by clinging to functions that should be managed by counties, particularly in the roads sector.

Governor Nyong'o, in a statement on Tuesday, said the continued existence of the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KERRA) was unnecessary and a betrayal of the spirit of devolution enshrined in the 2010 Constitution.

Citing the problems facing healthcare in the country, he questioned the logic of the national government holding onto the management of road funds, noting that counties, unlike the former, have proven capable of handling key devolved functions such as healthcare.

"The Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KERRA) need not exist if the national government is prepared to fully implement devolution," Nyong'o stated.

"The counties manage health effectively and efficiently. The national government cannot even manage Kenyatta National Hospital: one of the very few health entities in its hands."

According to Nyong'o, the push by President William Ruto's administration to retain control over development functions previously earmarked for devolution is reminiscent of past centralised regimes.

Governor Nyong'o warned that any rollback on devolution would have far-reaching implications not only for service delivery but also for the

broader project of building a democratic and developmental state.

“

"The truth is that the Ruto regime has decided to go back to pre-devolution times of the Nyayo era..."

"The truth is that the Ruto regime has decided to go back to pre-devolution times of the Nyayo era. The 2010 Constitution is a hindrance to its primitive accumulation schemes," he claimed.

"This will affect not only devolution but the very ethos of building a national democratic and developmental state."

The governor thus called upon the Council of Governors to stand firm in defending the gains of the Second Liberation.

"The Council of Governors and all progressive forces in our Republic need to be aware of this fact and to resist it by all means necessary. The achievements of the Second Liberation must not be destroyed by this regime," he noted.

Nyong'o's remarks fuel the ongoing debate between county and national governments over control of road funds, where the governors are demanding greater autonomy as envisioned under the Constitution.

This came after President Ruto asked the Senators and Members of Parliament to grant him permission to control the disbursement of the Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF).

Governor Nassir Calls for Devolution of Road Maintenance Levy at Kisauni Bursary Event



Mombasa governor Abdulsamad Nassir addressing ODM supporters during the event. Photo/courtesy.

“

Mombasa Governor Abdulsamad Sheriff Nassir has reiterated calls for the full devolution of the Road Maintenance Levy to county governments, arguing that local administrations are best positioned to manage and maintain county roads. He made the remarks during a bursary issuance event hosted by Kisauni Member of Parliament Hon. Rashid Bedzimba at Mtopanga Secondary School.

Speaking at the event, Governor Nassir emphasized that the management of county roads must be left to county governments as envisioned in the Constitution. “We know where the shoe pinches. Residents look to their local leadership to solve local problems. The Road Maintenance Levy should be devolved as per the spirit and letter of the Constitution,” he stated.

“We know where the shoe pinches. Residents look to their local leadership to solve local problems. The Road Maintenance Levy should be devolved as per the spirit and letter of the Constitution,

He further underscored the role of County Assemblies in overseeing road infrastructure projects to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The bursary ceremony, which provided vital education support to students from Kisauni, brought together leaders and members of the public in a show of unity and



Mombasa governor Abdulsamad Nassir with Homabay governor Gladys Wanga during the event. Photo/courtesy

commitment to community empowerment.

Among those in attendance were Mombasa Woman Representative Hon. Zamzam Mohamed and Members of County Assembly Allen Katana (Shanzu) and Amriya Boy (Mjambere). Governor Nassir commended the

collaborative efforts among leaders across different levels of government, noting that such partnerships are essential in addressing the development needs of Mombasa's residents.

James Aggrey Orengo: Governor of Siaya

James Aggrey Orengo remains a distinguished legal mind and political icon in Kenya, revered for his role in shaping constitutional democracy.

As a senior counsel, he made history by helping nullify the 2017 presidential elections and asserting judicial independence. As the governor of Siaya County and a reform-driven leader, he brings decades of public service. Known as the "Walking constitution, Orengo embodies Kenya's struggle for justice, legal reforms and democratic governance.

James Orengo serves as the current Governor of Siaya County effective August 9, 2022, elected on an ODM ticket under the Azimio la Umoja coalition. His election is a reflection of sustained political relevance in Kenya's devolved government system.

Orengo succeeded Cornel Rasanga, reinforcing ODM's political dominance in Siaya politics. As the governor, he oversees development, fiscal policy and public service delivery. He remains active in implementing devolution ideals and championing legislative reforms at the county level.

James Orengo is a veteran politician and a key player in Kenya's second liberation movement. He held a cabinet position as minister for Lands between 2008 and 2013 under the grand coalition government. During his tenure as a cabinet minister, he exposed the Grand Regency scandal leading to the implication of high-ranking officials in covert asset transfers.

He was first elected as the Siaya senator in 2013 and later in 2017 for his second term whereby he replaced the incumbent national assembly speaker Moses Wetangula as the senate minority leader.

Appointed by former president Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga in 2019 as part of the task force to implement the BBI, he played a part in shaping constitutional dialogue. Orengo remains a political symbol of principled resistance and legal reforms.

James Orengo rose to prominence in the 1970s as a student leader advocating for academic freedom and democratic governance.

Orengo a fierce critic of Daniel Arap Moi's single-party autocracy was a member of the "Seven Bearded Sister" in the Fourth Parliament.

The group included Martin Shikuku, Chelagat Mutai, Koigi Wamwere, Mashengu wa Mwachofi, Lawrence Sifuna and Abuya Abuya. They were respected for their valour and steadfast resistance to the emerging Moi dictatorship at a time when the majority elected the comfort of appeasement and collaboration with the tyrant for personal comfort.

In 1981 he was forced to flee into exile in Tanzania where he joined fellow MP Chelagat Mutai and Kenyan student leaders who had sought and obtained political asylum to escape persecution by the KANU regime. However, in November 1983 he was forcibly repatriated back to Kenya in a controversial "exchange of prisoners" deal between the Julius Nyerere and Daniel arap Moi governments.

He was returned to Kenya alongside Hezekiah Ochuka and other Kenya Air Force soldiers suspected to have been behind the 1981 abortive coup against the Moi regime in 1981 who had sought and were granted refuge in Tanzania.

Orengo is one of the architects of the second liberation and a member of the dynamic dissident group of Young Turks including Raila Odinga, Kijana Wamalwa, Kiraitu Murungi, and Paul Muite who joined Oginga Odinga, Masinde Muliro and Martin Shikuku to bring about Kenya's Second liberation and formed FORD party.

Governor James Orengo holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of Nairobi and was admitted to the bar in 1976. He is a recognized senior counsel for exemplary service and legal excellence in Kenya where he led landmark constitutional and human rights cases challenging state overreach.

James Orengo has and continues to play a pivotal role in constitutional debates and legislative drafting. He frequently appears as amicus curiae in major constitutional petitions in the country. As the cabinet minister for lands, he continually advocated for land justice, something that was instrumental in policy to redress historical grievances.

He was elected MP for Ugenya in a 1980 by-election at the age of 29 becoming Kenya's youngest MP at the time. He lost his seat in parliament when he went into



Siaya Governor James Orengo. Photo/courtesy.

exile in 1981 but was re-elected to parliament under FORD Kenya party in 1992 and again in 1997, serving until 2002. He lost the seat in 2002 after his presidential bid but recaptured it in 2007 under an ODM ticket. He served as MP for Ugenya until 2013 focusing on education, justice and infrastructure.

Orengo represented the Ugenya constituency through shifting political landscapes from KANU to FORD to ODM. He was a founding member of FORD, one of the first major opposition parties in the post-single party era.

He ran for the presidency in 2002 as the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidate. However, he secured only 0.4% of the votes placing him fourth. Though unsuccessful, his candidacy reflected a principled ideological commitment to the protection and promotion of multipopular democracy.

Governor Orengo was born in February 1951 in Kasipul Kabondo, Homabay County to Apolo Stefano Orengo, a senior police officer and Josfina Orengo. He attended Ambira Primary School in the mid-1950s before joining Alliance High School in 1965, a school known for academic excellence and leadership grooming.

He entered the University of Nairobi in 1971 to study law and was elected the president of the students' organization in 1973 where he led nationwide protests for academic freedom and good governance. His student activism laid the foundation for lifelong opposition to elite impunity.

A lifelong justice crusader, James Orengo embodies Kenya's democratic evolution. His legal intellect and political resilience continue to shape devolution and progressive governance, particularly in Siaya County.