

CHAPTER 1



Political Background

Kenya achieved independence on 12 December 1963 with Jomo Kenyatta as the first Prime Minister and later President when Kenya became a republic in 1964. Prior to independence two national political parties had emerged to contest elections in 1961, namely the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). KANU was victorious in this election and again at the 1963 pre-independence election to a bicameral legislature. Shortly after independence in 1964, KADU dissolved itself and merged with KANU. President Daniel arap Moi was at that time a deputy leader of KADU and with the merger became Vice-President of KANU.

In 1965, dissident members of KANU broke away to form the Kenya People's Union (KPU) under the leadership of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. In 1969, the KPU was banned and Kenya for all practical purposes became a one-party state. In the same year the House of Representatives and the Senate were merged to form a unicameral National Assembly.

When Jomo Kenyatta died in 1978, he was succeeded by KANU's Vice-President, Mr Moi. In May 1982, the Government amended the Constitution to make Kenya a *de jure* one-party state. In 1991, a campaign for the restoration of a multi-party political system was initiated by prominent Kenyan political personalities. This gathered momentum with the formation in August 1991 of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), which united initially for little more than opposition to the Government of President Moi. Subsequently, under the pressure of competing prominent political personalities FORD split into three political parties. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Harare in October 1991, President Moi emphasised that single-party democracy had served Kenya well but at the same time indicated a willingness to consider the gradual reintroduction of a multi-party system.

It was against this immediate background that in December 1991 the Government of Kenya decided to begin the process of transition to a multi-party system, and formally initiated this change with the repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution by which Kenya had been transformed into a one-party state.

The requirements for a political party to register under the Kenya Societies Act are that the party must have a constitution, officers and a specific minimum

number of members. Nine parties were so registered, while the applications of three were rejected: The Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK), the Green Party and the Green Party of Africa. The IPK, which has a substantial membership, was rejected on the grounds of being a religious group subject to foreign interests and also because it was deemed to be a threat to national security. The other two were turned down for 'security reasons'. The Registrar-General apparently had a wide latitude within which to accept or reject a party's application.

At the onset of the nominations process, seven opposition political parties (three of which trace their origins to the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy) emerged to contest the Presidential, Parliamentary and Civic elections along with KANU, the ruling party. The following eight political parties contested all three elections:

1. **Kenya African National Union (KANU)** led by President Daniel arap Moi;
2. **The Democratic Party of Kenya** led by Mr Mwai Kibaki, a former Vice-President of Kenya and former Minister of Finance and of Health in the Moi Government;
3. **FORD-Asili** led by Mr Kenneth Matiba, also a former Minister in both the Kenyatta and Moi Governments. As the name suggests, FORD-Asili (meaning FORD original) is one of the three parties which emerged from the original FORD;
4. **FORD-Kenya** led by Mr Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, a prominent figure in Kenyan politics since before independence, and a founding member of the original FORD, from which this party is also derived;
5. **Kenya National Congress (KNC)** led by Mr Titus Mbathi, also a former Cabinet Minister, and the third of the three parties formed from the original FORD;
6. **Kenya National Democratic Alliance (KENDA)** led by Mr Mukaru Ng'ang'a;
7. **Kenya Social Congress (KSC)** led by Mr George Anyona;
8. **Party for Independent Candidates of Kenya (PICK)** led by Mr Otieno Otwera.

By the time of the elections, the first four of the above parties and their respective leaders had emerged as the major contenders in the Presidential and Parliamentary elections, with all four claiming to have a solid national base on which to build election victories.