

Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya

Mwai Kibaki, a veteran of Kenyan politics, was first elected president of Kenya in 2002, after running for the office twice in the 1990s. His election, which ended 40 years of Kenya African National Union (KANU) dominance, hinged on two promises: to end corruption and to create economic growth in Kenya.



Mr. Kibaki was born in 1931 in Kenya. He left Kenya to study in Uganda and the United Kingdom, but returned during the independence movement.

Following independence from Britain in 1963, Jomo Kenyatta and the KANU party governed Kenya. In that same year, Kibaki, a member of KANU, launched his political career as a member of parliament. During the 1970's and 1980's, Kibaki held three key government posts: Finance Minister, Vice-President, and Minister of Health. Daniel Arap Moi, who succeeded Kenyatta in 1978, ruled Kenya until he was constitutionally prevented from running for re-election in 2002. In 1991, after the government repealed a ban on multi-party elections, Kibaki left KANU to form his own Democratic Party and was the leader of the parliament's opposition until his election as president in 2002.

As an experienced economist and government official, Kibaki has governed Kenya as a quiet, competent technocrat. He rarely gives press conferences and has rejected the populist style of his predecessors and many continental peers. As a result of his efforts to reform the national economy, the Kenyan economy grew annually at six percent between 2002 and 2006. Much of this growth came from improvements in agriculture, transportation, manufacturing and increased tourism. During Kibaki's reign, Kenya has also made progress combating HIV/AIDS, with President Kibaki declaring "total war" on the disease in 2003. Prevalence rates in adults have fallen from approximately 14 percent in the late 1990's to 7.4 percent in 2007. Yet, HIV/AIDS is still a severe epidemic in Kenya, killing 73,000 people in 2007.

Despite Kibaki's bold promises, corruption continues to be a significant problem in Kenya. Transparency International ranked Kenya 150th out of 180 nations in their *Corruption Perception Index*. Some donors estimate that up to \$1 billion was lost due to corruption between 2002 and 2005, leading many donors to reduce aid, including the World Bank. In 2002, President Kibaki appointed John Githongo as the government's whistleblower on corruption. Githongo was disturbed by what he encountered and left the position in 2005 after losing faith in the government's commitment to combat corruption.

Raila Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya

Following a dispute over presidential power with President Kibaki, Odinga was made Prime Minister in 2008, in accordance with a power-sharing deal brokered by Kofi Anan. Although Raila is strongly supported by the Luo tribe in western Kenya, he has tried hard to position himself as a populist national leader.



Prime Minister Raila Odinga comes from a political family; his father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, was a prominent leader of the independence movement and, later, the nation's first Vice President. Raila's brother also currently serves as a member of parliament.

At the age of 15, Raila moved to Germany, where he completed his secondary education in Leipzig. He then went on to obtain a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the Otto von Guericke Technical Institute in Magdeburg, Germany. In 1970, Odinga returned to Kenya to take a post as an Assistant Professor at the University of Nairobi.

Raila left academia in 1975 to pursue a political career and was appointed Deputy Director of Kenya's Bureau of Standards. However, in 1982, he was placed under house arrest on suspicion of plotting a coup to depose President Moi and was imprisoned for six years without trial. After his release in 1988, Raila was then arrested and detained several more times for his efforts to promote a multi-party system. Fearing for his life, Raila decided to flee to Norway. He returned to Kenya in 1991 once the ban on multiple political parties had finally been lifted.

Raila has served as a member of parliament since 1992. In 1997, Raila ran against former President Moi and finished third. After his loss, Raila mended relations with Moi and served in his administration. It is believed that he expected President Moi to name him as the KANU party candidate in 2002, but he was passed over in favor of Uhuru Kenyatta, the inexperienced son of the nation's first President, Jomo Kenyatta. After this incident, Raila then left the party and helped form the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc), which helped bring President Kibaki to power. Since becoming prime minister, Odinga has been outspoken in his calls for Kenya to clean up corruption.