

KENYA

Date of Elections: 8 November 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the popularly-chosen members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Kenya, the National Assembly, is composed of 158 elected members; 12 nominated members appointed by the President of the Republic from among persons qualified to be elected as members of the Assembly; and the Speaker and the Attorney-General, who are *ex-officio* members. The Speaker is elected by the Assembly from among persons who are members of the Assembly or are qualified to be such. The Attorney-General has no voting rights. The normal term of Parliament is 5 years.

Electoral System

All citizens of Kenya over the age of 18 years are entitled to vote if they are registered as electors and have resided in the country for not less than one year immediately preceding the date of the elections, or for periods totalling not less than four years during the eight years before the elections. To be qualified electors, persons must moreover have resided, carried on a business, been employed or owned land or residential buildings in the constituency where they apply to be registered for at least five of the 12 months preceding the elections. Those persons who are declared to be of unsound mind, undischarged bankrupts, or those detained in lawful custody or disqualified from voting after having been convicted or reported guilty of an offence connected with the elections may not vote.

Postal voting is permitted for election officers, certain employees who cannot have time off for voting, and persons who, on polling day, are travelling abroad or cannot get to a polling station by reason of ill-health or infirmity.

Qualified electors who are over the age of 21 years, are able to speak and read the Swahili and English languages well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly and who are nominated by a political party may be candidates for Parliament. Not qualified to be elected are persons under allegiance to a foreign State, those under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months (except for failure to pay a fine), those having a direct interest in contracts made with the Government, as prescribed by the Parliament, and those persons holding or acting in any office in the

public service, in the armed forces or in any local government authority, or in any office involving responsibility in connection with the conduct of an election to the National Assembly.

Candidates are nominated at preliminary elections for the selection of party candidates, which are held by secret ballot within the constituencies.

The 158 popularly-chosen members of Parliament are elected in an identical number of constituencies by simple majority vote.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary seats which become vacant between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The legislative term of the National Assembly elected in 1974 expired on 25 September 1979. The date of the general election was announced on 1 October. It was the third general election since Kenya became independent and the first since the death of President Jomo Kenyatta.

There were 742 candidates for the 158 seats to be filled. All of them belonged to KANU (Kenya African National Union), which has been the country's sole political party since 1969.

The election campaign aroused great interest in the country. A large number of leading personalities relinquished their posts, as required by the Electoral law, in order to stand as candidates.

Although all the candidates were members of KANU, more than half of the outgoing members of Parliament lost their seats, including seven Ministers and some twelve of their colleagues. Thus, most of the MPs elected were entering Parliament for the first time.

On 11 October, it was announced that President Daniel Arap Moi had been declared the sole candidate for the presidency. On 28 November, he announced the composition of the new Government, which comprised 25 Ministers, including 3 Ministers of State. He also proceeded to appoint 10 of the 12 nominated members to complete the composition of the National Assembly. None of the Ministers defeated in the elections were among them.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered electors	5,602,110
Voters	3,792,493 (67.69%)
Blank on void ballot papers	58,956
Valid votes	3,733,537