

KENYA

Date of Elections: 26 September 1983

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the popularly-chosen members of Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 15 July 1983. General elections had previously been held in November 1979.

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. Voting is not compulsory.

Qualified electors who are over the age of 21 years, 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 the Kenya African National Union (KANU) 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 required to deposit a sum of KShs 1,000 (US\$71) to cover part of the election expenses.

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 Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

President of the Republic Daniel Arap Moi dissolved Parliament a year before the normal end of its term by virtue of the constitutional provision which empowers the President to effect dissolution "at any time". This was reportedly done in order "to clean the country's political system of disloyal elements". The polling date was set on 2 August 1983.

There were over 750 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.

Generally speaking, personalities outweighed issues during the election campaign. A large number of leading personalities relinquished their posts, as required by the Electoral Law, in order to stand as candidates.

Polling day was marked by a low voter turnout. Results spelled defeat for a number of Cabinet Ministers and junior members of the Government, and approximately 40% of the Assembly seats changed hands. Mr. Moi was automatically returned for a second five-year term as President when no other candidate challenged him for his local parliamentary seat.

On 1 October, President Moi announced the composition of a reorganized and slightly reduced Cabinet.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered electors	7,035,583	
Voters	3,394,723	(48.25%)
Blank or void ballot papers	63,676	
<i>Votes in favour of the Kenya African National Union (KANU).</i>	3,331,047	

2. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

Men	169
Women	3
	172

3. Average Age of Members of Parliament: 43 years