

## KENYA

**Date of Elections:** 21 March 1988

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 5 February 1988. General elections had previously been held in September 1983.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Kenya, the National Assembly, is composed of 188 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 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

\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 12.

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.

For the first time in Kenya's history the 1988 polling was preceded by a ruling party nomination process that was carried out at the grass roots level. Every registered member of KANU was free to choose a candidate to stand in a given constituency. The registered party members queued behind candidates of their choice. Those candidates who obtained at least 30% of the total number of votes recorded in each constituency were declared nominated by the Party to stand for the general election in that constituency. Furthermore, any candidate who was unopposed or who obtained more than 70% of the total votes recorded in a constituency was automatically declared the sole candidate by the Party to stand for election in that constituency.

The 188 popularly-chosen members of Parliament are elected in a like number of constituencies by simple majority vote.

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

## Background and Outcome of the Elections

President of the Republic Daniel arap Moi dissolved Parliament on 5 February 1988 (several months before the normal end of its term) with a view to giving the Government a fresh mandate.

Party nomination day was set for 22 February, when 796 candidates were in contention in the 188 constituencies. In accordance with the new Electoral Law, 65 candidates of the Kenya African National Union (KANU - the country's sole political party) were thereafter unopposed, leaving 123 seats to be contested by some 300 other candidates on 21 March. The campaign lasted three weeks and in most constituencies personalities of those in the running outweighed real issues. The election attracted a number of leading figures such as businessmen, professionals and academics.

Polling day was marked by a low turnout and results spelled defeat for 80 members of the previous House; among these were three Cabinet Ministers and 23 Assistant Ministers.

On 24 March, President Moi, who was himself returned for a third term of office, announced the composition of a reorganized and enlarged Government of 34 Cabinet Ministers and 70 Assistant Ministers.

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the National Assembly*

Number of registered electors. . . . .	5,562,981	(KANU registered electors: 4,528,480)
Voters. . . . .	2,264,381	
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	33,152	
<i>Votes in favour of the Kenya African National Union (KANU). . . . .</i>		
	2,231,229	

Political Group	Number
Kenya African National Union (KANU) . . . . .	188

\* Elective seats only.

2. *Distribution of Elected Members of Parliament  
according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	186
Women. . . . .	2
	<b>Total</b>

3. *Average Age of Members of Parliament: 43 years*