OCTOBER
DEMOCRACY IN KENYA

BACKGROUND

In October WAC learned about the history of Kenya and its ongoing journey to become a legitimate democracy. The Republic of Kenya\(^1\) is a presidential republic in east Africa. The country won its independence\(^2\) from the United Kingdom in 1963 and adopted their republican constitution the same year, electing Jomo Kenyatta\(^3\) as their first president in 1964. He remained president until his death in 1978, and was succeeded by Daniel arap Moi\(^4\).

Moi ran without opposition\(^5\) in 1979, 1983 and 1989; he faced an attempted coup\(^6\) in 1982 and his government was embroiled in controversy over the Wagalla Massacre\(^7\) in 1984. Despite later allowing opposition parties\(^8\) in the 1992 and 1997 elections, the removal of secret ballots\(^9\) garnered criticism as being non-democratic.

In the 2002 elections\(^10\), the opposition candidate Mwai Kibaki\(^11\) was elected president; this was seen as a key step towards the democratization\(^12\) of Kenya. However, when Kibaki was announced victor in the 2007 elections, violence broke out after opposition leader Raila Odinga\(^13\) called on his supporters to protest the results due to alleged electoral manipulation\(^14\), leading to the 2007 Kenyan Crisis\(^15\), in which many hundreds of Kenyans died due to ethnic clashes and government crackdown of the protests. Since the 2013 elections, the president of Kenya has been Uhuru Kenyatta\(^16\).
Today, Kenya has a multi-party system and uses a two-round, first-past-the-post voting system where the candidate has to garner at least half of the vote to be declared winner. The 2017 elections were held on August 8; the two main contenders being the incumbent Kenyatta and long-time opposition leader Odinga. The current president of the Republic of Kenya, since 2013, is Uhuru Kenyatta of the Jubilee Party, a center-right, conservative party formed in 2016. At head of a center-left coalition of parties is the primary opposition leader in Kenya, Raila Odinga.

Just days before the election, Christopher Msando\textsuperscript{17}, chief election official of information technology was found tortured and killed. However, former Secretary of State John Kerry\textsuperscript{18} has said that the system in place for the Kenyan elections is fair and legitimate in an interview with CNN. Despite these assurances, some say that while the credibility of the elections may be legitimate at the ballot, the electoral process is flawed due to mass bribery of voters. Ultimately, the electoral commission in Kenya proclaimed Kenyatta as the victor by a margin of over 1.4 million votes, while Odinga’s National Coalition refused to concede defeat.

On August 16, Odinga held a press conference in which he said he would challenge the official results of the election in court. This came following a number of clashes between Odinga’s supporters and police that have left two dozen dead already. On 1 September, the results of the election were nullified by the Kenyan Supreme Court and a new election is to take place in the future.

\textsuperscript{1}While Kenya is the common name, the official long form name of the country is the Republic of Kenya.

\textsuperscript{2}Formerly known as British East Africa, Kenya gained independence in 1963 following years of nationalism and rebellion, becoming a self-governing Commonwealth dominion. It was later made a republic in 1964.
Jomo Kenyatta (1897 –1978) was a nationalist leader of the Kenyan independence movement. Later Kenya’s first president and conservative politician, he is known as the “Father of the Nation.”

Daniel arap Moi (born 1924) was Kenyatta’s vice president at the time of his death and succeeded him as president. He has been Kenya’s longest serving president to date, serving from 1978 to 2002.

Kenya was officially a one-party state as per its constitution.

A large part of the Kenyan Air Force attempted a coup against Moi due to the perceived corruption and authoritarianism of the regime. The coup failed and the Air Force was disbanded for some time.

The Wagalla Massacre was an operation by the Kenyan Armed Forces against ethnic Somalis in northern Kenya. Moi’s government dismissed the event as a massacre as a disarming operation “gone wrong,” despite around 5,000 deaths.

The Kenyan constitution was changed to allow for opposition parties in 1992, but Moi still won the two subsequent elections.

The secret ballot is a method of voting in which the votes cast are anonymous. In the elections following the constitutional change, Kenya used a method of open ballots, where the vote was taken publicly.

Moi was barred from running in the 2002 elections and Kibaki became president, marking the first time an opposition candidate won the presidential election.


Democratization is the process of “becoming democratic,” i.e. introducing fair and free elections, reducing corruption, etc.

Raila Odinga (born 1945) has previously served as Prime Minister of Kenya before the position was abolished by a constitutional amendment in 2013. His 2017 campaign marks his fourth presidential run.

Kibaki’s win in 2007 was protested by Odinga and also criticized by many international observers as being rigged.

Due to partisan support being split in a large part along ethnic lines, ethnic violence broke out after the 2007 elections, as well as between supporters of Odinga and police. The violence lasted months and resulted in over one thousand dead and hundreds of thousands displaced.
Uhuru Kenyatta (born 1961) is son of Jomo Kenyatta and has been president since 2013. He is known as Kenya’s “digital president” due to his presence on social media, particularly Twitter.

Christopher Msando was the head of I.C.T. of the Kenyan electoral commission; his death comes after reports of attempted hacking of the voting system.

John Kerry (born 1943) served as the 68th Secretary of State under President Obama and is acting as an international observer in the Kenyan elections on behalf of the Carter Center.

**LET’S THINK ABOUT IT**

Your SWAC leader will prompt you with questions revolving around the same idea: how pivotal do you think the 2017 Kenyan elections are in the country’s history and political development? Express your thoughts and contribute to discussion with your fellow peers!

**MY THOUGHTS ON KENYA**

(room to write your thoughts)

This lesson plan is meant as an aid for the Faculty Sponsor, President or Vice-President to lead their respective SWAC chapter in the discussion of this two weeks’ focus: the 2017 Kenyan elections.

**Kahoot! Introductory Quiz**

Kahoot! is an online Quiz platform. This small ten-question quiz is to test the student’s prior knowledge of Somalia and introduce them to the discussion to come. The quiz will require the proctor to have a Kahoot account in order to start. Students will use an electronic device in...
order to answer. The link is below; click START NOW and select Classic mode. After the Game
PIN is generated, students will be able to join the session by accessing kahoot.it
on their computer or mobile device. Begin the quiz once all students have
joined! This activity shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes.
LINK: https://goo.gl/VVq8Qg

Lesson Handout

Now is when the handouts should be passed out to students. It is split into two sections, one
which covers the history of the Kenyan presidency and a second which covers the current
election situation. It is recommended that the handout be read aloud as a group instead of
individually. Take some time after the document has been read to cover the material with the
students and make sure that its been generally understood. Ask questions to students; get them
to summarize what they’ve read and make sure that the students are engaged and
understanding. The reading shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes.

Video Resources

We have three video resources below that will go over in more detail the current event portion of
the handout and expand upon it. Following each link we’ve included a description of the video
and possible questions that you can ask students to see what they’ve taken away from watching
the clips. Each video clip is between 2 and 5 minutes; coupled with questions, this segment
shouldn’t take more than 20 minutes.

PROTESTS OVER ELECTION FRAUD CLAIM TURN DEADLY IN KENYA
LINK: https://goo.gl/qv7HbZ

This link is to a video by Al Jazeera which covers Odinga’s original dismissal of the election
results as fraudulent and manipulated. It also covers the
violent clashes that happened afterwards in the city of Kisumu.

›Would you say Odinga is responsible for the violence between his supporters and the deaths that have resulted?

2017KENYA ELECTIONS: JOHN KERRY CONFIDENT IN COUNTING PROCESS
LINK: https://goo.gl/bNfaVY

Here we see John Kerry being interviewed on CNN regarding his observance of the Kenyan election on behalf of the Carter Center. He discusses what he sees as a fair and legitimate process, despite Odinga’s claims.

Play the video until 4:36. (after this timestamp the conversation shifts to Korea)
›Does listening to John Kerry’s statement reassure you of the Kenyan democratic process?

DIPLOMATS WELCOME NASA’S DECISION TO GO TO COURT
LINK: https://goo.gl/hPWDDD

Though originally saying that his party would not go to court, as he did in 2013, the Odinga has moved forward to start a case to contest the results of the 2017 elections. This course of action has been well received by Kenyans and the international community, both of which would like to avoid a repeat of the 2007 Kenyan Crisis and see evidence of a further democratized Kenya.

The link below is a video by NTV Kenya highlighting the reactions of an American and British diplomats in Kenya.

›What does going to court mean for Odinga and Kenya? What are the larger implications about their political system?
DISCUSSION

How pivotal are the 2017 elections in terms of Kenya’s history and political development? Ask students to consider the different ways that this election can play out; do you think that despite going to court we will see a repeat of the 2007 Crisis? What would a second Kenyan Crisis mean to the region?

Given the Supreme Court’s ruling, what does this mean for Keynatta? For Odinga? If we see a peaceful (re)-transition of power, what would this imply about Kenya’s political and democratic evolution? This shouldn’t take more than 10 minutes – total estimated meeting time: no more than 1 hour

BIBLIOGRAPHY


