

# STATUS OF MUSLIMS IN KENYAN POLITICS AND THE ELECTION PHOBIA OF POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN THE 2017 GENERAL ELECTION

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**Abstract:** Currently, Kenyans both Muslims and non-Muslims are on election fever. By 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017, shall be exactly five years of His Excellency president Uhuru's first term in the office as the fourth president of the Republic of Kenya. This paper is just a brief survey on the past and current Kenyan Muslim political affairs in particular and the coastal people in general. The study is trying to present the historical injustices done to Muslims past and present. The paper shall also well look into the election phobia especially when Kenyans reflect back to the 2007 post-election violence that costed a lot of lives and properties. Needless to say, there is a big fear among Kenyans in general, and Muslims in particular for the History to repeat itself. The major objectives of this study are to: Identify the political status of Kenyan Muslims from colonial to post-colonial regimes. Explore the current Election phobia among the Kenyans and its causes. Recognise some means to overcome the post-election violence challenges. In this study, observations of the existing phenomenon, interviews and self-documentation, as well as library research are going to develop the research methodology of the work.

**Keywords:** Muslims, election phobia, Kenyan Muslim political, post-election.

## 1. ABBREVIATIONS

PhD	Doctorate of Philosophy	FORD	Federal Restoration of Democracy
H.E.	His Excellency	NASA	National Super Alliance
NCCK	National Christian Council of Kenya	IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KMC	Kenya Meat Commission	NGO	None Governmental Organisation
KM	Kilo Meters	UK	United Kingdom
IDPs	Internal Displaced People	MUHURI	Muslim for Human Rights
UAE	United Arab Emirate	MCA	Member of County Assemblies
US	United States	MP	Member of Parliament
KDF	Kenya Defence Forces	CWMNA	County Women Member of national Assemblies
GEMA	Gikuyu, Embu, Meru and Akamba communities	ED	Edited
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement		

## 2. OBJECTIVES

At the end of this paper the reader should be able to:

1. Identify the political status of Kenyan Muslims from colonial to post-colonial regimes.
2. Explore the current Election phobia among the Kenyans and its causes.
3. Recognise some means to overcome the post-election violence challenges.

## 3. INTRODUCTION

The August general elections are just around the corner and all Kenyans are on election fever. However, it has emerged that these elections might have a lot of political violence before and even after the elections. This paper is an attempt to study the current and the past Kenyan Muslim political affairs in general and the coastal region in particular. Similarly, the study shall as well discuss the Muslim/government relationships.

As we have mentioned earlier, the author shall discuss the Muslim–Government relationships. In addition to that, some issues that were and still are creating disharmony between the two shall be widely explained. As we are approaching the general elections, the study shall discuss the 2017 post-election political violence. At the end of this study, the author shall bring about some suggestions to assist in solving the challenges that can enable the government to bring back the Muslim confidence with the current government and any other new government to be elected. Suggestions shall also be given on how to handle the election phobia in an amicable manner. The document shall include the following: Introduction, Abbreviations, Objectives, Historical background of Muslim–Government Relationship [From Pre-Colonial era 1895 to the current post-Colonial era 2017], the current political situation and its challenges, what is the way forward to overcome the challenges the conclusion and appendixes. In this study, observations of the existing phenomenon, interviews and self-documentation, as well as library research are going to develop the research methodology of the work.

## 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MUSLIM-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP

While the government is preparing for the general election 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017, there are so many factors need to be put into consideration. One among them is to evaluate and assess the political situation in the country general, and then concentrate with the regions that are the strong holds for the opposition. The government should as well look into those forgotten communities and do something for them at least to reduce the opposing gravity.<sup>1</sup> General speaking, and to be very honesty to my readers, the relationship between Muslim Community and the Kenyan government has always been bitter and sour. Historically, Muslims from the first post-colonial government [1963] to the current [2017], feel they are totally marginalized and discriminated. Although, there are many Muslims who participated in the struggle for independence,<sup>2</sup> and development of this country in one way or another, but still Muslims in Kenya are being treated as second class citizens and many Muslim heroes and freedom fighters have totally been forgotten. For example:

1. The late Mr. *Salim Mwamunga* from *Kwale* County was among the Muslim freedom fighters. According to one of his son, Mr. *Mwamunga* was jailed in *Kipini*<sup>3</sup> prison during colonial era. Today at *Tsimba* village in *Kwale* County, a memorial primary school has been opened under his name called *Mwamunga* Primary School. No any compensation is done to his family which is living in a very pathetic condition. The author happened to visit *Mwamunga's* family in

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<sup>1</sup>During President Kibaki's campaign slogan 'Kazi indelee' (Task should continue) Mr. Kibaki formed a committee which came to be known as "Sharawi Committee". The major task for this committee was to look into injustices done to the Muslim community in Kenya past and present and come up with instant way forward. This report has totally been forgotten and no one in the government want to hear anything about it. However, the Muslims have always been inquiring about it although the government forgets about Muslims never do.

<sup>2</sup> Currently, I am on another academic research titled "The Forgotten Heroes..." In this research my major objective is to come up with a study that proves the role of Muslims in fighting for the independence of this country, with some names and photos of Muslim freedom fighters. All this is to establish how the Kenyan Muslims have participated in the straggled for this county, hence, they are not second class citizens as many believe.

<sup>3</sup> A town in Tana River county

*Kwale*, and found them in a very sympathetic situation. While the other so called freedom fighters have well been compensated, *Mwarambunga's* family is left with a lot of empty promises from the past governments. During my interview at *Mwarambunga's* family, I happened to meet one of his son who was both of his legs because to tetanus.

2. In Mombasa the late *Maalim Juma bin Muhammad* [1906-1973] was among the Muslims who supported His Excellence the late President Mzee Kenyatta for independence of this Country morally and financially. Today a road in Mombasa has been called after his name *Maalim Juma Road*. *Maalim* was a Madrasa teacher. I personally, happen to visit his Madrasa in *Kaloleni* in 2010. I met his son who one of his leg was also amputated due to diabetes. Still no any companions is done to the *Maalim's* family despite his support to the first President of this country.

3. From *Moyale*, a Chief known by the name *Wabera*, was killed during the *Shifita* war while fighting for his beloved Country Kenya. Today there is *Wabera Street* in the Middle of Nairobi City off city hall.

4. In Malindi *Omar Basadiq* was among the delegate who went to Lancaster House in 1962 to represent this country on the issue of independence and federalism, he is still alive in Mombasa, I met him in 2011. Mr. *Basadiq*, is currently living in Mombasa just like any other citizen. No any recognition or appreciation from the government on the role he played for the success of the Kenya independence.

5. Another Muslim veteran is *Sheikh Abdullahi Nassir* from Mombasa still alive. *Sheikh Abdullahi* was in 1962 among the member of delegation that went to Lancaster House, London to represent the country on the matters of Kenyan independence. Mr. *Nassir* is not only a politician, he is also a Muslim scholar, historian and an academician.<sup>1</sup>

6. *Muhammad Hassan* is another Muslim freedom fighter from Juja<sup>2</sup> a Somali by tribe. In 1954 his business in Juja town was closed down and jailed by the Colonial government because of his participation in straggling for the independence of this country.

All the above mentioned Muslims heroes participated in one way or another in the struggle for the independence of our beloved country Kenya, the government often forget this fact, but the Muslim community never do. Throughout the life of Muslims in Kenya during colonial period to post-colonial regimes, Muslims have been complaining against their governments. The following table is a chronological arrangement of the regimes from the Colonial regime to the current Post-Colonial regimes:-

PERIOD	YEARS	REGIME
Colonial Era	1895-1963	British rule
Post-Colonial Era (i)	1963- 1978	H.E.Mzee Jomo Kenyatta <sup>3</sup>
Post-Colonial Era (ii)	1978-2002	H. E. D. Arap Moi
Post-Colonial Era (iii)	2002- 2013	H.E. Mwai Kibaki
Post-Colonial Era (iv)	2013 – ----- <sup>4</sup>	H. E.Uhuru Kenyatta <sup>5</sup>

## 5. MUSLIMS DURING COLONIAL ERA [1895-1963]:

Back to the pre-colonial period, Muslims were the original citizens of the Indian Ocean Coast for many years. Muslims controlled political, economic and social welfare of the region. However, under the colonial regime, the first damage Muslims got was losing of their political power not only in Kenya, but on the whole of East African Coast. The second blow was losing of their economic privileges as well. Thus, by the time of Kenyan independence, Muslims of the Coastal region were finding great difficulties in meeting the competition of non-Swahili/non-Muslims educated candidates in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendixes (a)

<sup>2</sup> Juja town is situated along the Thika super high way near Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. The information was collected on 2016 from Mzee Ali Kabati in Thika.

<sup>3</sup> H.E. means His Excellence.

<sup>4</sup> We are not sure who will be the next President of Kenya. Thus, is left open till after 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Among the bitter feelings of many Kenyans both Muslims and non-Muslims is that from 1963 to date, apart from His Excellence President *Moi* all other presidents of this country are from one ethnic group. Hence, many Kenyans believe that Kenya is made of two categories of Kenyans, "*Wananchi*" the citizens of the country, and "*Wenyenchi*" the really owners of the country.

what had been the home region of the Swahili people/ Muslims. However, Muslims during this period protested against the colonial government and accused it of trying to damage Islam and drive it out of Kenya. Moreover, in 1931, Muslim representatives sent a Memorandum to the British authorities pointing out that colonial policy in Kenya was aimed at preventing the spread of Islam as was happening under British rule in Uganda. The memorandum noted that the British government in Kenya had invested a vast amount of money in the propagation of Christianity and Western culture by supporting the Christian missionaries' activities.<sup>1</sup> During the colonial period Asian Muslims, Arabs as well as African Muslims mistrusted Christianity. In 1935, Asian Muslims established the Muslim Missionary Movement, whose main objective was to check Christian missionary activities.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that, before colonization in Kenya especial among the Muslims, there was no discrimination between Muslim *Swahili*-speaking town dwellers and members of group that became known as *Mijikenda* (nine villages). Some *Mijikenda* Clans were predominantly Muslim, others were traditionalists.<sup>3</sup> Just like other parts of Africa, British colonial system in Kenya implemented its normal policy of divide and rule. The Kenyan society was then racially divided into the following: Europeans, Asians and followed by Africans occupying the lowest rung. This policy enabled the Europeans to have full control of the socio-economic and political power of the country.

During the pre-independence, Muslims in Kenya never lagged behind. They participated in the struggle for independence since the time of Portuguese to the British colonialists. For example the city of *Mombasa* was fought over many times by the Arabs, by the Portuguese, by the *Zanzibaris*, by the *Mazrui*, by the British and others. In all these wars, the people of *Mombasa* resisted because they never wanted to be colonized<sup>4</sup>. Hence, they had to fight for their independency.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, within the context of the British colonial state, Muslims were gradually pushed to periphery and eventually marginalized. Today the Muslims freedom fighters history in Kenya is among the untold stories. Let the world know that the Swahili/Muslim community in coast, before the coming of the colonialists had their own system of leadership based on Islam and Swahili cultural norms. The Swahili/Muslim community along the coast under the system of city states political leadership were appointed based on family, respect and each leader remains on power till his death. It is after the death, another eligible candidate is appointed based on physical fitness, wisdom and culture.

## 6. MUSLIMS DURING POST- COLONIAL ERA [1963- 2017]

### *Muslims during H. E. Mzee Kenyatta [1963-1978]*

Despite the fact that the late president *Jomo Kenyatta* was a non-Muslim and a non-Swahili, Muslims in Kenya general and along the Coast in particular believed that he had a vision of a united Kenya. With his policy of “*Let us forgive, but not forget*”, Muslims/Swahili assumed that *Kenyatta* will lead Kenyans to a more humane, democratic, equal opportunity and freedom of worship. Before *Kenyatta* invented his famous stereotype describing (Coastal people/Muslims) as lazy and allergic to work, social, political and economic equality was a dream for many Muslims in Kenya.<sup>6</sup> The major aim of *Kenyatta's* stereotype was to prepare the country psychologically to accept the resettlement of his largely landless tribesmen in the midst of the most predominate Muslim Districts of *Lamu*, *Tana River* and *Kwale*. The Muslim community and the *Swahili* people always feel discriminated when they remember the history of *Kenyatta* using the foreign aid given to the Kenyan government and deviated to provide building materials, food, heavy agricultural equipment and land for agricultural purposes for his tribesmen. Even after *Kenyatta's* death the settlers were not abandoned, both National Christian Council of Kenya (N.C.C.K.) and the Germany missionary organization (G.T.Z.)

<sup>1</sup> Salim, Ahmed: *The Swahili Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast 1895-1965*, Kenya.p.165. See also Oded, A.: *Islam and Politics in Kenya*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2000 USA.p.101

<sup>2</sup> Ibid,p.166 and Ibid, p.102

<sup>3</sup> Hoorweg, J and Others : (e.d) *Kenya Coast Handbook Culture, Resources and Development in East Africa Littoral* Transaction Publishers 2000 UK.P.116

<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is very wrong and even a political and historical crime for one to claim that only two tribes are the ones fought for the independence of Kenya, not unless you exclude *Mombasa* to be part of Kenya.

<sup>5</sup> Mazrui, Ali A: In “*Image of Islam: Power, Passion and Piety Terrorism and the Global Image of Islam: Power, Passion and Piety*” p.139”. More details coming soon from my research “**The Forgotten Heroes...**”

<sup>6</sup>*Kenyatta* used the same colonial stereotype that was used during pre-independence period when Africans fought for their freedom. Africans were referred to as lazy people and very allergic to work. The same terms used by British colonialists to Africans, *Kenyatta* used to his fellow countrymen.

were still active in providing financial and moral support to their Christians in the midst of hopeless Muslims full of poverty in Lamu District. It has been estimated that about two Million Kenya Shillings is repatriated annually to the Central Province where the settlers originally came from.<sup>1</sup>

The following are some of the basic ingredients that fuelled conflict between the Muslims and the Kenyan Government during the first President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta's Regime:

1. Education: The government has been encouraging the establishment of universities in the up Country dominated by non-Muslims, but never in Kenyan Coast where the Kenyan's second city of Mombasa is allocated, nor in the North Eastern Region where is also dominated by Muslims. Today, over 53 years of independence, there are only two fully flagged Public Universities along the Coast, the remaining are only branches of the main campuses from up Country. And one University College in North Eastern.<sup>2</sup>

2. Slaughter House: Muslims in North Eastern are pastoralists, for a long time they have been complaining for not having a slaughter house near their life stocks. They are always being forced to transport their life stocks by road for many days for them to reach Kenya Meat Commission [KMC] in Athi River.<sup>3</sup> For example a journey from Mandera to Nairobi by road is almost 501 miles or 1135 KM. By the time their life stocks reaches Nairobi they are already weak and valueless.

3. Land Grabbing: Among the basic ingredients that fuelled conflict between Muslims and the government during Kenyatta's regime to date is the issue of land grabbing along the Coast. Many of the lands along the shores are overwhelmingly owned or controlled by non-Swahili and non-Muslims from the up Country. Hence, by 1972 the Kenyatta government engineered invasion of the Swahili lands. This has always been in the minds of the Swahili people and they always keep on saying that it is "unforgettable even if we forgive".<sup>4</sup> Prof. A. Bujra<sup>5</sup> while describing the impact of past and present policies of Kenyan government to Lamu Muslims said:

*"The question of large scale immigration aimed at illegally taking land belonging to Lamu people is very serious for Lamu people. Here are some of the implications. (1)At independence the entire land in Lamu district was taken by the government and became government land. Unlike the rest lands in the Country, Lamu District has no trust or community land. On what basis were Lamu people denied ownership of their community land? (2)The first Internal Displaced People (IDPs) in Kenya were the Bajuni community<sup>6</sup> who were driven out from their home land by Shifta<sup>7</sup> in 1963. (3)Since 1970s, four major settlements schemes have been created in Lamu district. Most of the land in the schemes is now owned by up-county people-mainly from Central Province (Kikuyus) some of these schemes have been created on land owned by Lamu people who have not been compensated until now. (4)Most Lamu people who own land do not have documents (title deeds) and very difficult to get..."<sup>8</sup>*

On the issue of land in Malindi district Prof. A. Naji<sup>9</sup> was describing the forceful invasion of private farmland said:

*"...the worst I have heard is a supposedly to be respected politician telling a Baraza<sup>1</sup>, in front of a government minister and top administrative offices, that he does not recognize a piece of paper called a title deed, that the Arabs did not come with land in their dhows. The reference to the Arabs was the Bajunis of Ngomeni and Gongoni, north of Malindi town"<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Bakari, M. and Saad S. Yahya (1995), *Islam in Kenya*. MEWA publications. p. 236 - 237.

<sup>2</sup> Hoorweg, Jan and Others (ed) Kenya Coast Handbook Culture, Resources and Development in East Africa Littoral Transaction Publisher 2000 UK .p.xxv. The Garissa University was closed after the terror attack in 2 April 2015, killing 148 people.

<sup>3</sup> The same applied to the people of Marsabit, Moyale and other parts of that region. Both the Somali and Borana communities voted for Jubilee during the last election. And according to the latest information from Moyale and Mandera, the Muslims are still going to vote for the government come 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Mazrui, Alamin M. And Ibrahim Shariff: *The Swahili Idiom and Identity of an African People* Africa World Press, Inc 1994 USA .p.141

<sup>5</sup> Professor Abdallah Bujra is the executive director of Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF)

<sup>6</sup> Bajunis are 100% Muslims from Lamu district

<sup>7</sup> Somali bandits whom use to cross the Somalia -Kenyan border in the early days of independence. Several acts of abominations were done to the Bajunis including killings, raping and stealing of properties.

<sup>8</sup> The Friday Bulletin, June 24, 2011.p.6

<sup>9</sup> Professor Abdullah Naji Said is a consultant Animal Agriculturist/Educationist/ Human Resources Development in Malindi.

During my study I came across a Swahili and a Muslim old woman by the name Ma Amina. In an interview with her, I asked her to tell me what she remembers about the first President Kenyatta, she said one day she heard Kenyatta saying of course to his community “*Continue suckling the milk of the cow, I am holding for you the horns*”. Meaning you could continue grabbing and stealing the country’s wealth without any worry since am on power.

4. The issue of Citizenship: During the Kenyatta regime Muslims/Swahili people were considered non-Kenyans. Government officials could not hesitate to tell the *Swahili* people that one day the *Swahili* people would be driven back to Arabia. Such statements from top government officials were very common while addressing *Swahili* audiences along the coast. In this way, then they could justify coming in grabbing Muslim/*Swahili* lands over and over again.

These historical injustices are very important for the government to know how to handle them during the campaign in Muslim dominated areas. Do you know that the people of North Eastern and Northern part of the country hate the opposition especial His Right Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Raila Odinga? It is a result of his father’s idea of poisoning all the wells in the region during the war against the *shifita*. Just imagine, an opinion of his late father stated more than 50 years ago has costed his son a lot in today’s Kenyan politics<sup>3</sup>.

However, when His Excellency President Kenyatta realized that what he did to the Muslim general and to the Swahili community was total unfair, he came with a cover up at least to reduce the impact of injustices. President Jomo Kenyatta nominated Muslim members of Parliament and gave them positions as assistant Ministers. These were *Sheikh Salim Balala*, who held the position of assistant minister of finance, and Mr. *Jahazi mohamed*, was given the position of assistance for Tourism and *Kassim Bakari Mwamzandi* that of assistant minister for foreign Affairs. This gave confidence to Muslims communities of Arab, Swahili and Asian. These politicians held those positions for a greater part of Kenyatta’s fifteen years autocratic rule. Despite all the support and sacrifices of the Muslims to the Kenyatta regime, the president never appointed a single Muslim for a post of a Minister apart from the Assistant ministers as mentioned above.<sup>4</sup>

The current government should therefore learn from the past regimes. On the other hand during Kenyatta’s regime, the government in several cases, as a way of answering the Muslims complained about being marginalized, tried to satisfy the Muslim needs and complains. For example, on the issue of *Hijab* (Vail) when two students in the coastal area were expelled the matter was taken to court and the court ruled in favour of the Muslims. A similar incident occurred in *Meru* town when seven Muslim girls were expelled from school run by Catholics just because they did not turn up for school because they went to the Mosque to pray *Eid* prayers after the month of *Ramadhan*. The matter was also brought to court and the girls were reinstated.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Muslims during His Excellency D. Arap Moi [1978-2002]:**

Despite the fact that H.E. Daniel Arap Moi was from a minority *Tugen* tribe, he was the longest serving member of the National Assembly who had been there since 1955. As a Vice President, he maintained a low profile and established national contacts throughout the country. After the death of *Mzee Jomo Kenyatta* in 1978, *Moi* became the second President of the Republic of Kenya. The closest parallel between *Kenyatta* and *Moi* is that of *Gamal Abdel-Nassir* and *Anwar Sadat* of Egypt. It was only after *Kenyatta*’s death that *Moi* proved to be a smart politician. Muslims during the *Moi* regime had a big hope and a lot of expectation. President *Moi* being from the minority, Muslim had a feeling that they are going to be in safe hands. Although the constitution granted equal rights to both majority and minority, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, there had been a lot of complain from the Muslim community in the Country including:-

1) Muslims were denied opportunities to join government schools on account of their names and faith. I personally remember when I was in primary school level, one of our teacher use to tell us that we should avoid using names like *Abdallah*, *Ali* and alike, because we may easily be made to fail our national examinations for being using Arabic names.

<sup>1</sup> Governmental meeting between the government officials and civilians

<sup>2</sup> An Open letter to the Minister for Lands by Professor Abdullah Naji Said 7<sup>th</sup> August 2008 p.p4

<sup>3</sup> An interview conducted with some Somali elders from North Eastern region.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix (d)

<sup>5</sup> Oded, A: *Islam and Politics in Kenya*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2000 USA.p.37

2) Among the historical injustices during President *Moi's* regime, was the harassment in getting the ID card, birth certificate and passport. Muslim politicians especially the MPs have had to spend almost all parliamentary lives looking for these documents for their constituents instead of concentrating on developing their areas.

3) In a very typical colonial style, former President Daniel T. *Arap Moi* was quoted saying that: *"Islam and Muslims had been responsible for the enslavement of their forefathers"*<sup>1</sup>

This statement shocked many Kenyan Muslims, however, it was the discovery that such anti-Islamic sentiments prevailed even in the highest ranks of the State. This was demonstrated by President *Moi* himself when, in a *Madaraka Day*<sup>2</sup> addressing the whole nation on June 1, 1992.

4) With his philosophy of *Nyayosim*,<sup>3</sup> many Kenyan Muslims assumed that *Moi* had just come to follow the footsteps of his predecessor *Mzee Jomo Kenyatta* the first president of the Republic of Kenya. But little they knew that he had a different concept. In his book *Moi* said: *"... Nyayosim should inculcate in everyone the unmatched value of human life. Nyayosim springs from African roots and upholds the Christian tenets of peace, love and unity-principles which pervade the entire life of the Christian"*<sup>4</sup>

In the same book he said:

*"Nyayosim (by propounding and advocating peace, love and unity) singularly embeds the kernel of the principles of Christian life in the national philosophy"*<sup>5</sup>

According to *Johnstone P.* and *Jason Mandryk* in their book *"Operation World when we pray God Works"* clearly stipulated that:

*"Islam and Muslims have long been more passive and marginalized in Kenya than elsewhere in Africa...The Coast and North-eastern has been Muslim for centuries..."*<sup>6</sup>

In terms of economic, according to the late Professor *Ali Mazrui*:

*"As someone who comes from the Kenya coast, I have seen over the years the wealth of the coast passing from Coastal hands into the hands of upcountry citizens (Christians) with tribal connection in the central government in Nairobi. Under both President Jomo Kenyatta and President Daniel Arap Moi the coast has been, quite literally, looted by non-coastal Kenyans. Who controls the tourist industry at coast? Who owns the best land at the coast? Who runs the best hotels? Who enjoys the best jobs? Even a relatively superficial scrutiny will soon reveal the overwhelming domination of non-coastal names"*<sup>7</sup>

5) Among the bitter experience of Muslims during *Moi's* regime, was the Nairobi bomb blast August 1998. Because the terrorists happened to be Muslims, every Muslim was considered to be a potential terrorist and many Muslim NGOs were closed down. Immediately after the 1998 bomb blast, cartoons which were featured in *Taifa Leo*<sup>8</sup> and the Daily Nation showed a Muslim on a prayer mat besides his camel, thanking God for killing 247 Kenyans and 10 Tanzanians. This was a clear reference that the attacks were condoned by Kenyan Muslims and such negative media portrayals increased a culture of hatred for Islam and Muslims among Kenyans.

<sup>1</sup> Mazrui, Alamin and Ibrahim N. Shariff: *The Swahili Idiom and Identity of an African People*. Africa World Press, p.157 Kenya 1994. See also: *Society*, June 29, 1992.p.11

<sup>2</sup> Independence Day which is a national public holy day in Kenya June 1<sup>st</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Nyayo* is a *Kiswahili* word meaning footsteps. During his time, *Moi* introduced *Nyayosim* as a political philosophy that included Love, Peace and Unity many Kenyans assumed that he was referring to following the footsteps of his predecessor.

<sup>4</sup> *Moi*, Daniel T: *Kenya Africa Nationalism Nyayo Philosophy and Principles*, Macmillan Publishers 1986. Kenya. p.31

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* p.36

<sup>6</sup> *Johnstone P* and *Mason Mandryk*: *Operation World When we Pray God Works 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, mission International Research Office 1974, republished 2001. The Netherland p.382

<sup>7</sup> Mazrui, Alamin M. And Ibrahim Shariff: *The Swahili Idiom and Identity of an African People* Africa World Press, Inc 1994 USA .p.154

<sup>8</sup> A Swahili daily news paper

One thing the government should understand is that all true followers of Islam know that terrorism is totally forbidden in Islam. Terrorism has no religion, terrorism has no ethnic affiliation. Islam is not terrorism and a terrorist is not a Muslim. It is therefore unfair when an individual from a certain community commits a sin to generalize the entire community.

***Muslims during His Excellency Mwai Kibaki [2002-2013]:***

The political marginalisation of Kenya's Muslims continued after Kenya's obtained its 3<sup>rd</sup> President, His Excellency *Mwai Kibaki*. The grievances of Muslims since independence were still the same but with slight improvement in inclusiveness in politics and beginning of Multi-party journey. In this regime, we saw the first big number of Muslims in parliament but with only five ministerial posts out of 40 Ministers. Mr. *Kibaki* appointed Hon. *Muhammad Yusuf Hajj* as his Defence Minister, Hon. *Najib Balala* Minister for Tourism, Hon. *Ali Makwere* for Transport, Hon. *Mohammad Elmi*----- and Hon. *Naomi Shaaban* for special programmes. President *Kibaki's* regime had two major clashes with Muslims. The first one was inherited from his predecessor, and that was war on terror and radicalisation of youth. The second one was the entrenchment of *Kadhi's* court in the new Kenyan constitution. However, the later never took long, when the constitution was inaugurated in 2010 that was the end of it. Muslim use to complain and still they are complaining that war against terrorism doesn't focused on the really perpetrators, but even some innocent Muslims are being harassed, assaulted and even being killed through extra judiciary killings.

There are several factors that have served to intensify the country's defencelessness to radicalization and terrorism:

- Structural and Institutional Factors
- Grievances
- Foreign and Military Policy
- Extreme Ideology
- Corruption
- Lack of job opportunities for the youth
- Historical [stated above] and contemporary injustices [extra judiciary killing, disappearance and detentions]
- Denying the Muslim youth their basic national documents such identity Card (ID), passport, birth certificates that lead them to lose job opportunities in Gulf countries and then opted for drug abuse.

***Muslims during Uhuru Kenyatta [2013-2016]:***

The Muslim perception during this regime has been of mix reaction, while a number of Muslim Communities have been benefiting from the political affiliations, the grievances and challenges that have mostly inherited from the past regimes are not yet tackled. Moreover, the representation of Muslims in the Government was mainly based on political grounds, an ordinary Muslim who is educated and qualified, could not get job opportunities and hence causing more political criticisms. President Uhuru Kenyatta appointed only four Muslim Cabinet Secretaries out of 18 Cabinet Secretaries. These are Hon. *Najib Balal* Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, Hon. *Amina Muhammad* Cabinet Secretary Foreign Affairs, and Hon. *Hassan Wario* Cabinet Secretary for sports, culture and Arts lastly Hon. *Adam Muhammad* Cabinet Secretary Industry, trade and cooperatives.

On the other hand, the development of terrorism and radicalization in Kenya in recent decades, has caused a lot of insecurity in the country. Nevertheless, the socio-cultural and political factors that have emerged due to political marginalisation and lack of regional balancing in all sectors has contributed to political disorder. Actually, the general pre-disposing factors that influencing the rising threat of radicalism in Kenya are:

- Institutional weaknesses;
- Increasingly serious grievances by the Muslim minority;
- The establishment of other extremist forms of Islam in Kenya, along with hard-line ideology and propaganda.
- Kenya's foreign and military policy, particularly as it pertains to Somalia.
- Corruption and looting of Public coffers.
- Nepotism



As a matter of fact, and without emphasis on the issue of terrorism, Muslims in Kenya are totally against all forms of terrorism and violence extremism. While trying to overcome this challenge, the Kenyan government should cooperate and involve Muslims scholars in war against terror. I remember once I and other Muslim leaders and scholars participated in a security meeting with the former internal Cabinet Secretary Mr. *Ole Lenku* at his office and several suggestions were given with regards to the Raid in Eastleigh but the minister was very adamant to accept any of the ideas and suggestions. And he insisted that the government will still continue with the operation. This type of mentality creates more harm perception than good. During this regime a lot of disappearance and extra judiciary killings of Muslim youth were and still are experienced both along the Coast and North Eastern regions. While some of the targeted were really perpetrators of violence, others were very innocent. They are either caught at cross road or wrong identity. Consequently, Muslims always balm Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) for human rights abuses in the country.<sup>1</sup>

Honestly speaking, the government's position on war against terror is very vital. However, there is institutional weaknesses and misusing of power by some individuals who have been given the authority to deal with terrorism. For example on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2016 my biological son, a form four student on his way to school from *Malindi* was assaulted by the KDF at *Minjila* road block near *Garseni* in Tana River County for no any genuine reason. When he called the following day and narrated to me the story I was really very sad. The first thing I thought about him was how Psychological affected whenever he comes across any KDF. This is just one example to understand the really perception of Muslims towards the government. When he narrated the incident to his grandmother she cried a lot and she had this to say: "*These Police men are the ones leading our grandchildren to the terror groups.*"

Having seen the historical relationship between the Kenyan government and the Muslim community in Kenya, from the colonial to post-colonial eras, I cannot over emphasize the negative perception of Muslims towards their government. At this juncture, it is important to focus our study on the current political situation especially that Kenyans are going to the polls come 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Due the last election experience of political violence, many Kenyans are in a state of fear and election phobia. However, the current Kenyan political state of affairs and the pre/post-election violence is a matter of concern not only to Kenyans, but to other people, national and international.

## 7. THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE 2017

Currently, Muslims in the country are deceptive about their status. They feel being excluded, rejected and side-lined from government employment opportunities available to other Kenyans. This was especially the case as Kenyans from the interior of the country began to buy properties (land)<sup>2</sup> along the coast during the increasing of tourist industry and others grabbing lands belonging to the local coastal people. While in some areas, along the coast, local people are still straggling in securing title deeds, the non-coastal people have already acquired theirs. Thus, has led to a big number of Muslim youth travelled abroad to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE searching for greener pasture which could not be found from their backyard. As much as we may agree that no religion supports terrorism including Islam, the Muslim community in Kenya is forced to run the country for being targeted as potential terrorists. Nevertheless, the current extra-judicial killings of innocent Muslim Youth, Muslim scholars, women and disappearance of innocent Muslim Youth and women has created a lot of fear of post-election violence. Come 2017 general elections, there are all possibilities of the history to repeat itself.

To avoid what happened in 2007/2008 political post-election violence, it is advisable to the current government and the opposition, to facilitate and mobilize the Youth, religious leaders, community leaders, women and Kenyans at large to organize community *Barrazas*, seminars, workshops and conferences to sensitise the effects of the post-election political violence. The main stakeholders and facilitators for the whole project on peaceful election and peaceful post-election should be none other than the government, the opposition, civil societies and religious houses of worship.

<sup>1</sup> MUHURI, (2013). "We're Tired of taking you to the Court" Human Rights Abuses by Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit.p.23. MUHURI, Muslims for Human Rights

<sup>2</sup> Unlike the up country, where most of the land are belonging to the communities. At the coast most of the land is owned by the government. This policy has given many non-coastal people to poses lands in their home areas and at coast. Due to poverty, many coastal people are living as squatters in their own home region. A good life example is Mr. *Waitiki*'s land in *Likoni*.

Similarly, the current sour relationship between His Excellence the President, and the Governor of Mombasa Mr. Ali Hassan Joho has created a lot of tensions and worries among Kenyans, Muslim community and coastal people in particular. People have created a lot of election phobia and worries of experiencing the 2007 post-election political violence. Honestly speaking, if the above main stakeholders are not going to take their responsibilities and play their roles, Kenya is at risk of repeating the post-election political violence that tarnished its 2007 presidential election, during which 1,133 died and nearly 600,000 were displaced from their homes. Political order in Kenya nearly collapsed. Ending that crisis, it required two months of negotiations mediated by former UN secretary-general Mr. Kofi Annan and supported by the United States and its partners. The negotiations resulted in a power-sharing agreement known as the National Accord, between the two rivals in the election President *Mwai Kibaki* and *Raila Odinga*. The deal elevated Mr. *Odinga* to the post of prime minister and provided for the writing of a new constitution to address the causes of the conflict.

Kenya's next elections, to be held on August 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, are questionably the most important and complex since the country's return to multiparty politics decades ago. If the elections are largely peaceful and viewed as "free and fair," they will once again bring Kenya's new constitution, inaugurated in 2010, fully into force and advance the country's progress toward becoming a modern democratic state. On the other hand, if the elections are marred by widespread pre and post-election political violence and perceived as illegitimate by the Kenyan public, they are likely to plunge the country into a renewed period of political instability and set back Kenya's democratic advance. A breakdown in the electoral process will also do serious harm to Kenya's economy, which has not been performing well in recent years. Currently, Kenya is facing a very heavy inflation challenges on many domestic commodities especially the foodstuff.

Similarly, a breakdown in the electoral process will also do serious damage to the Kenyan security. Since Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) is at war with *Al-shabab* militants in Somalia, political instability in the country, will create a conducive environment for *Al-shabab* to wage more wars on the Kenyan soil. Kenya being the "big brother" of East African countries, a prolonged political, economic and security crisis will also affect the neighbouring countries and the international regional policy. In particular, the so called two major U.S. foreign policy goals in the region:-

1. Preventing Somalia from becoming a safe haven for terrorists and
2. Nurturing peace between Sudan and South Sudan could be compromised.

Hence, the United States, and its alliances should work hard with all parties concerned to ensure the forthcoming elections are peaceful, free, and fair. And make sure that there shall be no any post-election political violence.

As the August elections are just around the corner, it has emerged that tribalism and negative ethnicity is going to play a big role before and after the elections. Hence, the possibilities of electoral violence during the run-up and in the immediate aftermath of the 2017 elections is very high. Just like previous elections, one of the main political challenge is mobilization of voters that is based on ethnic groups, and supported by all presidential candidates. This mobilization, might cause an outbreaks of violence between the members of opposing ethnic groups. Historically, Kenyan politics is known by its negative ethnicity. The country is divided into five large ethnic groups that constitute 68% of the Kenyan population. The groups include the Kikuyu and its related ethnic community (GEMA)<sup>1</sup> are 21%. The Luhya 14%, the Kalenjin 13%, the Kamba 10%, and the Luo 10%. Unfortunately, none of the above ethnic groups have a majority number of Muslims. Needless to say, the leaders of the largest ethnic groups form ethnic coalitions among themselves and with the leaders of minority groups to dominate their rivals during general elections. During the campaign period, unemployed youth are normal used by rival politicians to attack their opponents. Right now some youth have already been used to cause political violence in some political rallies.

Initially, there were five candidates contesting for presidency. Ironically, all are from the above larger ethnic groups. Now, five have formed an alliance party called National Super Alliance (NASA) and the other one is the Jubilee Party which led by his Excellence President *Uhuru Kenyatta* (a Kikuyu) with his running mate Deputy President Mr. *William S. Ruto* (a Kalenjin). Mr. *Raila Oding* (Luo) is for Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Mr. *Kalonzo Musioka* (a Kamba) for Wiper Party, Mr. *Moses Wetangula* for FORD Kenya (a Luhya) and Mr. *Musalia Mudavadi* for Amani Party (a

<sup>1</sup> Meaning Gikuyu, Embu, Meru and Akamba.

Luhya/ Kalenjin) and Mr. *Issack Ruto* for *Mashinani* Party (a Kalenjin). The four leaders have allied themselves with one of the present front-runner and former Prime Minister *Raila Odinga* and made him the (NASA) flag bearer, and Mr. *Kalonzo Musyoka* his running mate. Kenya's forthcoming elections will be full of challenges especially, most Kenyans are tired to be led by two ethnic groups since independence. The worst of the matter is that Kenyans general and Muslims in particular are frustrated to have a Kikuyu president. Many Kenyans and even some Kikuyus would wish Mr. Uhuru to be the last Kikuyu President. The sentiments of many Kenyans is that the Kikuyu community is pushing Uhuru again to finish his term and to prepare and groom another Kikuyu president come 2022. Therefore, Uhuru is a Kenya's third Kikuyu president out of four since independence 1963. However, by the time this paper was being prepared, The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Chairman *Wafula Chebukati* recently released the full list of presidential aspirants and all political parties candidates list.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there are many possibilities if the election results won't go as per the Kenyans expectations, the civil political war and violence may be erupted. It has also emerged that IEBC has announced the name of the presidential aspirants and the name of Mr. *Kalonzo* is in the list despite him being the running mate of Mr. *Raila* in the August 2017 elections.<sup>2</sup>

Another challenge, if political violence is going to take place, it will cause a mega insecurity in the country. It is important to note here that, Kenya lacks an adequate number of trained police officers despite the new recruitments' that has been taking place in the country. Kenya has approximately 70,000 police men and women.<sup>3</sup> That means 160 police officer shall be serving 100,000 civilians, which is less than three quarters of the 220 officer per 100,000 as recommended by UN. Corruption and human rights abuse among the Kenyan police is another factor that shall contribute to more problems during the elections. If they were unable to control the 2007 political violence I strongly believe that they will be insufficient to deal with the challenges this time. Definitely, there will be between 30,000 and 40,000 polling stations to which at least one officer must be deployed. If that shall be the case, then possibilities of violence in more areas shall be expected more than the past. This phenomenon shall create a situation in which the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) shall be required to support the police to maintain order. Such involvement of (KDF) would be the military's first deployment to maintain domestic order since independence. And that will confirm to the Kenyan's speculations that the current government shall use all possible means to remain in power even if it mean to use military forces. Already many Kenyans are feeling that the jubilee government might use force or raging in case it fails in the elections something that could lead the country into civil war and political crises. Hate speeches is another challenge that could lead to political violence during the 2017 general election. Many politicians from both the government and the opposing side are always using hate speeches in any political rally. The sour relation between president Uhuru and the governor of Mombasa Mr. Ali Hassan Joho as earlier mentioned, has contributed to a lot of fear among the coastal people general and the Muslims in particular. Through my interviews with some coastal people, many are feeling that the current government is planning to bring political violence to the coastal region this time around. The history has recorded that during the 2007 political violence, the coastal region was the most peaceful region in the country followed by North-Eastern region. Coincidentally, both regions are Muslim predominantly regions. Many political violence of the 2007/2008 took place in the up county regions that are dominated by non-Muslims. Many people lost their lives, properties and lead to the Internal Displaced People (IDPs). I personally, have the feeling that the renewal of hate speech, especially by politicians could lead to more harm than good. Need not to say, hate speech was a significant driver of the 2007 post-election violence.

The Kenyan government, the opposition and all Kenyans at large should understand that Kenya cannot afford another political violence in 2017. We all know that our country is at war with terror groups in Somalia, our armed forces are in Somalia for many years. Any political instability shall give the terror groups an upper hand to wage new attacks in the country. The historical terror attacks in this country has a long history. It started as early as in 80s. The 1980 was the first attack when Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi was bombed. In 1998 was the bombing of the U.S. embassy, and the year 2002 was the bombing of Israeli owned hotel in Mombasa. After that many attacks followed one after the other. The Westgate shopping mall attack on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013<sup>4</sup>, the *Mandera* one on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014, *Mandera* two and three. Another one which was the worst among all was the Garissa University attack where more than 147 students were killed

<sup>1</sup> See the Appendixes (c)

<sup>2</sup> See the Appendixes (b)

<sup>3</sup> According to the last year recruitments.

<sup>4</sup> MUHURI, (2013). "We're Tired of Taking You to the Court" *Human Rights Abuses by Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit*. Open Society Foundation.p.24 USA.

by the terrorist.<sup>1</sup> However, none of these incidents to date have threatened Kenya's stability nor have they been explicitly directed at the elections. Nevertheless, we should not take things for granted, instead it should be a lesson to us and understand how political stability is so important for our country. But this situation could change as the 2017 elections draw near if necessary measures are not taken to avoid the political violence in the forthcoming election.

## 8. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES?

Religious leaders and faith-based NGOs should play a big role in mobilizing their followers towards peace campaign. Both Muslim and Christian religious leaders should preach peace, cohesion and integrity. Motivated by religious goals of seeking peace, Kenyan religious leaders and faith-based NGOs should frequently play prominent roles as mediators or other forms of intervention in Kenyan political conflicts. The leaders should be neutral and be able to bring together both the government and opposition leaders with the intention of having free and fair elections. Religious figures should be able to use their positions of authority to work toward peace and to forward the cause of justice. Imams as respected members of society, and religious leaders can often be at the forefront in fighting impunity, hate speeches and all ways of corruption that could lead to unfair election results. Just like Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda and Liberia, religious leaders served as mediators in civil wars. Local Imams in Kenya can as well save the nation from the post-election violence through interfaith dialogue. Another good example that religious leaders should emulate in promoting peace in the country, is that of Rwanda genocide. Muslim leaders in Rwanda used Mosques as shields to rescue Christians from the killings by accommodating them inside Mosques. It is reported that all the Christians who entered the Mosques were safe and none was injured talk less of being killed. Some of the advantages that religious leaders appear to have in the society is their persistence, respect and commitment. Studies suggested that faith-based NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina have helped to overcome conditions that fuelled the conflict by bringing people together for such varied projects such as soup kitchens, building homes, and organizing choirs. The long-term commitment of these religious based NGOs, the studies find, have contributed to reconciliation.

The Media is another platform that can be used to promote peace in the country. Both before and after the general elections, the Kenyan Media should be in front line in promoting peace and discouraging violence. The Media should stop purporting the system of spreading hate speeches as freedom of speech. The journalists should avoid using their professionalism for collecting money from the politicians. The Kenyan Media should always be presenting the truth to its audience. It should at all times be against spreading negative ethnicity and tribalism to the public. Similarly, the burning porosity was disseminated by mobile phones and social Medea especially via text messages, WhatsApp messages, Twitter, Facebook among others. Vernacular Radio stations were taking the lead in promoting hate speeches and negative ethnicity. The saddest part of all is that the government do not take serious measures in dealing with those political leaders who are convicted with hate speeches. Many political leaders who are condemned and convicted with such acts, none of them sent to imprisonment or any serious judgment. If this trend shall continue, the likelihood of hate speeches continues to be a matter of concern. The Kenyan Media should stop offending or confronting another's ethnic group or faith. For example the cartoons published in the Danish Press in 2005 that depicted the Prophet Muhammad it set off protests through the Muslim world. Such publication on people's political parties, ethnic group and faith can create a lot of unnecessary political crisis in the country.<sup>2</sup>

The youth is another group that is being misused by politicians to cause election violence before and after the elections. We all know that youth contribute a bigger number for Kenyan population. Hence, parents should hold responsible for their children. As a country we should know that our youth our future.

My final advice goes to my fellow Muslim brothers and sisters. It is important to remember that peace and stability in the country is the most important gift of Allah (God). Islam is a religion of peace and stability, and it means totally submission to the will of Allah. It includes therefore political, social and even economic stability. Hence, peace and

<sup>1</sup> BBC 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2015

<sup>2</sup> MEDIA COUNCIL OF KENYA (2014). *Deconstructing Terror Assessing Media's Role in Religious Intolerance and Radicalisation*. P.43.



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