

## Your Vote is irrelevant in Democratic Nominations and Elections

### News:

Political parties in Kenya have been holding primaries to choose the candidates who will represent them in the August General Polls. The process which kicked off on April 13<sup>th</sup> has been marred with chaos and violence. Police arrested armed men with machetes and whips seen disrupting a nomination exercise in some regions attacking party officials, accusing them of planning to rig the exercise. Nairobi Jubilee Party gubernatorial ticket hopeful Bishop Margaret Wanjiru was arrested after she allegedly stormed the City park polling station and destroyed ballot papers. In some parts of Central Kenya disgruntled voters burnt ballot papers and held demonstrations as anomalies hit the repeat of Jubilee party nominations.

So far at least two people have been reportedly killed nationwide following clashes between rival political groups and many more have been injured. The nomination, which ended on 30 April, was solely managed by political parties, which have struggled with the logistics of holding an election. There have been accusations of planned rigging, with pre-marked ballot papers being intercepted.

### Comment:

Political parties have raked in a billion in nominations fees from thousands of aspirants seeking sponsorship for various elective seats. The ruling Jubilee Party is the greatest beneficiary of the windfall from aspirants with an appetite for political seats. The ruling party has banked Sh673 million (\$6.5 million), more than double the total proceeds of Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) which got at least Sh286 million (\$2.5 million). A combined force of the National Super Alliance (NASA) received Sh374 million, including money raised from its four principals as presidential candidates of their respective parties. This is the true picture of how political parties within Democracy and its entire elections process mix politics with money. Parties are tools owned by small individuals who dictate the parties' ideas and even choose people of their choice. Therefore, elections in a capitalist system are big business of the few elites who decide the law and policies of their parties. It is not strange the entire democratic electoral process to be marred with riggings and bribes. Hence an individual voting does not carry any relevance. Apparently political leaders have created apathy and deep disappointment amongst the public who some have vowed to boycott elections.

As for the violence seen in the nomination, this has rekindled memories of the 2007 post-election violence, which left more than 1,000 people dead and about 600,000 displaced from their homes. A survey by research firm Infotrak released early this year showed that Election related violence is the biggest worry for majority of Kenyans in 2017. It showed 60.6 per cent of respondents' single biggest worry for 2017 is election related violence. In the race to meet their political interest's democratic politicians care nothing about security instead they engage in violence and chaos.

The more elections are held the more Democracy exposes its failure of creating distrust and apathy in the wider society. Since its re-introduction in the early 90s in Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa, multiparty Democracy has produced politicians who are bound to the materialistic based ideology of Capitalism which indeed has made them insincere and run for power to satisfy their selfish needs. With empty promises of the politicians it has now become clear that Democracy is the rule for and by of the handful elites.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
Shabani Mwalimu  
Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir in Kenya**