

## The “Earthquake” Phenomenon Powers the Kenya Kwanza Administration

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Many wonder why I picked on an innocuous word like “earthquake” and turned into an endearing campaign brand. In my political career, I read public moods and listen to the ground at the same time, though I have made political sacrifices even when it was unpopular to do so, and paid for it.

The “Earthquake” like “NASA Hao” in the 2017 elections, quickly caught on as an inspirational slogan, a rallying call, of the Kenya Kwanza campaign. It was tattooed on the minds of Kenyans so much so that whenever I rose to speak, the crowd would call me out with shouts of “Earthquake! Earthquake!” as if it was my second name.

Reading Shakespeare, Earthquake is used metaphorically not in reference to natural phenomena but to human foibles, like the events that proceeded the assassination of Julius Caesar. He was forewarned but ignored the entreaties. Similarly, wherever earthquakes occur, people get forewarned but rarely do they take precautions. Our competitors ignored the warning signs of a political earthquake sweeping them to political Armageddon. So, it happened that the choice of the euphemism and its disruptive meaning was apt for the events before, during and after elections 2022.

What exactly did I mean by saying the Earthquake will “scatter them, and gather them?” Psalm 55:9 says “Confuse them, Lord, and frustrate their plans, for I see violence ... and from that place the LORD scattered them over the face of all the earth.” The “Earthquake” frustrated our competitors plans and though they resorted to violence at Bomas, they instead were at sea as IEBC results and the Supreme Court confirmed our win. Today, the behemoth that was Azimio isn’t recognizable – they are “scattered ...over the face of all the earth.”

There is a lot of pretence and hypocrisy in Kenyan politics. If you are neither, you are labelled laidback, indecisive or even a coward. When you talk serious, some will be impatient and tell you; “*Maliza, unipe yangu nieende*”. You get this through the body language of politicians but it’s dramatized by ordinary Kenyans. These Kenyans are learning from their leaders’ outward lack of commitment in what they say and do.

In Shakespeare’s writings, Earthquake disruption represents the future, a new universe. To “scatter them, and gather them” was my euphemism for separating the wheat from the chuff, paving the way. It was a test case, a measure to know who is sincerely committed to changing our lives for the better from those for whom leadership means ownership of chattels, including the citizens.

In another sense, “scatter them, and gather them” is a long-time KKA strategy to identify and grow committed leadership to the cause of Kenyans. And true, there are amazing young focussed politicians that the elections brought up.

Some lessons from the Earthquake are enduring: That elections come and go, but they are important in nurturing democracy. That you don’t have to agree with me, but allow me to express myself without intimidation. That we don’t have to be mortal enemies, because of my choice. That Kenya has demonstrated to the world that in Africa, you can have free, fair and credible elections.

We have also learnt that voters are rarely wrong in their choices. The problem is interference from dark forces intent on falsifying and defeating the will of the people. Oligarchs survive on electoral fraud. Yet Africa is not alone in this experience. Increasingly, even mature democracies are targets of insidious ploys. The war in Ukraine is a recoil from the Orange Revolution (2004), nipped in the bud through an attempt to assassinate the leading presidential candidate by poisoning him, followed by electoral fraud.

We have seen ultra-right populist and extremist forces attempt civilian coups in USA in January last year and in Brazil recently. Our own experience with such treacherous attempts at Bomas gives credence to the fickleness of democracy; that it requires eternal vigilance.

This is why the Earthquake is still erupting. There are still seismic economic and pollical waves. The after-shocks are hardly silent. We are redefining our targets in terms of socio-political and economic engagement as a country. We have political stability which has facilitated effectiveness in decision-making; the results of which are starting to show and will be even more evident in months to come. More than ever, we are aware of the dangers of state capture.

Thanks to the Earthquake, you can hardly notice that we have divergent views within the ruling coalition. This is because we have chosen cooperation as our guiding principle. The emphasis is on the positive working relationship between coalition partners rather than negative energy. The coalition was and is bound by a shared economic philosophy and agenda focussed on empowering citizen and service delivery.

Unlike before, the KKA came together out of shared goals and values. These shared goals include the economic prosperity of all Kenyans through the *Uchumi Bora, Pesa Mfukoni* mantra which aligns very well with the *bottom-up* philosophy. This in turn ties us and drives our enthusiasm and commitment to a national economic transformation agenda.

Going forward, Kenya Kwanza government *The Plan* initiatives are what we intend to implement. Despite the tremendous challenges, we are enroute to a rebirth. In this journey of the Earthquake, transparency and accountability by public officers is not negotiable. Impunity and corruption will not be tolerated. In the public interest, I will execute my roles to oversee and supervise government entities as set out in Executive Order No. 1 of 2023, the “Earthquake” way of disrupting cartels; to ensure government functions, performs and delivers.

Ours is to translate the solidarity of the coalition into stability of the country, and unity of purpose across all regions. Kenyans are saying 'elections are over, it is time to get to work'. That is the Earthquake fruit of a peaceful election; the people are leading in reminding us to focus on uplifting the living standards of the voter.

End.