

Kenya Human Rights.
Interview by Robert M. Press during research on PhD dissertation at the
University of Florida, 2002.

I = Press; R = Sheikh Balala

INTERVIEW WITH SHEIKH BALALA

- I So Sheikh Balala, what is it that you did between 1987 and 1997 in specific terms of activism to try to advance human rights and what do you think might have been the impact of some of those steps taking individuals incidences one by one
- R Honestly my participation was not necessarily on a political level but as a spiritualist because I have had in the past attendance of religious studies, Islamic , Christianity and indeed other theologies. This has kept me to be somehow without any pride other than I just try to expose my values. Aah, I have always been a spiritualist, I believe very much in ethics, in morality and indeed to achieve higher values of human life. Aah, thirdly, I have lived in a society back in the early 60s of independence of Kenya, let us say from 1963 during my school days with highly qualified people from most parts of East Africa and indeed some from Europe and so on. That has taught me the importance of a strong person and the importance of an honest person derive from knowledge. And God naturally gifted me with honesty and intellectual love. I do very much love to be intellectually healthy or strong. Out of those factors it has raised me to a level of probably not the only one in our place in Mombassa or Coast region but one of the very very few that have looked at things in a very sympathetic manner as long as our people were concerned.
- I Mmmh
- R I am separated, we live in a building , am down and the are up, although I eat and talk to them
- I The price that people have paid for some of this activism, I think it is an untold story.
- R Oh, indeed
- I That separation you would trace back to the fact that you were in prison for a long time ?
- R And had this woman not had children from me I could have been away from her long ago. In fact, now am thinking of re-marrying again very soon but not in Kenya probably in the USA. I will not get married in Kenya because once you touch a lady, I did also try with another lady , also she belonged to the system. This one with my children she did not belong to the system but the

intimidator, when I get out of home they come and talk to her and so on. I have had very rough times with her.

I Well let us talk about that period from 1987 to 1992 then when you were actually were free and your activism

R This is how I was coming up with the story of what initiated the whole push if I may just use a polite word.

I Sure

R I told you out of these ethics, out of these principles of morality , honesty and having an understanding of our problems, I and a few others , we were probably less than 8 people, we sat down and we decided that we first promote the coastal people's legitimate grievances.

I What year was this?

R That was in the mid of 1991.

I Okay

R From February 1990 to June 1991.

I Was this an organised group or just a few friends?

R Aah , five of them they were from my same school age, one of them was an old aged person whom we took as an advisor

I It wasn't a formal organisation?

R Oh not at all , just from the streets

I Okay

R We talked to each other on the streets

I Some colleagues?

R Something like that

I Was it a religious movement?

R Oh not at all, we spoke out of those there were three Christians, there was one person who just did not belong to any religion and we really agreed

I The others were Muslims right?

R Ya. The others were Muslims

I What in February of 1990, we go back to February of 1990, it was still a one party state, there hadn't even been a sabasaba at that point, FORD hadn't been formed, what was the grievance?

R We always discuss about our problems in the Coast and let me start with the Coast first.

I Ya

R We have been marginalised in terms of projects, most of the money for the economy of the country is generated from the Coast Province which earns close to a hundred million a day and that money is not seen. The other thing is of the original inhabitants of the Coast province, that is the Taita, *mijikendas* and when I mean the *mijikendas* I mean the Giriamas, The Digos and so on.

I Ehe

R Now this is a mixture if Christians and Muslims and the Bajonis who are mostly Muslims or all of them are Muslims. And am not talking about the Arab Islanders, people on the Mombasa island itself, those are mostly wealthy, and I do not talk about normal Arabs who are just like any other Coastal people

I You are talking about minority groups that are poor

I What in February of, okay, we go to February of 1990, 1939? Still a one party state, they hadn't been even a sabasaba at that point. Ford hadn't been formed, hmm, what were you, what was the grievance?

R People always discuss our problem in the coast, and let me started with the coast first, is that if that we have been marginalised in terms of projects, most of the money of the economy of line economy of country generates at the coast province, like the Kilindini Harbour, which earns close 100 million a day, and that money is not seen. The other thing is, most of the inhabitants of the Coast Province, i.e. the Taitas, the Mijikenda and, eeh, when I mean the Mijikendas, I mean the Giriamas the Dogo and so on; Now this are a mix of Christians and Muslims, okay, and the Bajunis, who are mostly Muslims, or all of them are Muslims. But, and I am not talking about the Arab/slanders, people on the Mombassa island itself, those are mostly wealthy. Okay, and I do not talk about the normal Arabs, who are just like any other coastal people.

I You are talking about minority groups that are poor?

R Minority and Majority groups.

I And majority poor?

R Yes indeed, all poor, indeed.

I All poor general.

R this is what made us feel deprived.

I so, your Grievance was not necessarily human rights, political grievance but the economic grievance?
Oh no, No, they came out, they derived out from there, Because you see, eeh, Mr. Robert, there is one thing..

R Bob,

R I know that, it's American, eeh, just with a lot of respect, for you, eeh, back from 1963, until this multiparty era, no political party, no movement has been formed in Kenya, and probably in East Africa, without originating from the Coast. But we have to start, because of the hardships of the iron – fist of the dictatorship, people have to look for as way to send a message, that's why looked for a way to send a message.

I Okay, it was a definite strategy and a tactic, to send a message.

R Indeed, indeed. Indeed.

I And what was the tactic you were using; eeh fasting, marching, eeh, what did you do?

R eeh, we started with the platforms, we started with the platforms, in the Churches and the Mosques.

I Written documents;

R Indeed, indeed.

I Calling for?

R Calling for, eeh sort of, sort of awakening, yeah understanding, people us ask or seek for something better and so on and so forth. People used some language that we did not like when drawing the lines, eeh, that was out of our cause saying that we have been deprived because of the upcountry people, It was not part of our movement, But some people who represented the system itself, came up with this things. Even they used to distribute leaflets, in the churches and the Mosques, that anybody who belonged , either a Muslim or a Christian, who belonged to upcountry, should leave us and leave us the jobs, the land and so on.

I Was the party your platform?

R Oh not at all. Oh my colleagues and me we have never touched such an issue. And for that we naturally belong to the opposition. But when started as I told you, no political movement has started in this country without coming to the

Coast, all of them came to the Coast. First, 1964 when the Kenya people's union started, of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, it started there.

I Really!

R Kanu itself , originated from Mombassa. Okay that was KAU the Kenya African Union. Eeh, KADU, the Kenya African Democratic Union, started in the Coast, it lived in the Coast, it's main base is from the Coast.

I So, was it your intention to start a political party then?

R You see because of the fastness of the train during the 1991/1992 era, it was a short time for us to come up a political party. When things were going too fast, and I wanted to come this at a later stage, when I just finish up with our grievances first, I'll answer that question. It's like this, 99% of the people in the Coast today, right from the border of Tanzania to the border of Somalia, 99% do not own one acre of land to a particular person. Anybody that has been given a piece of land or a tittle deed, that you own this land, it has never been done for fifty years. During the British colony, during Kenyatta's era, and during Moi era, not a single acre has been given. Yes, people during the multiparty era that have been given letters known as allotment letters, those do not mean you are holding, eeh, you're only asked to wait for something to be given. But none of the promises were fulfilled, none, none were fulfilled.

I Elsewhere in Kenya, people do own land?

R Even in Nairobi, everywhere

I Okay

R Now there we had a problem. When the British left, they left the Coast province, they wrote something known as Crown land – everything is being owned by the British Crown.

I for the whole country?

R No, no, for the coast province only.

I only

R Only, and if you go to the Archives here, you'll see it for yourself. You see. Now part of our problem is, if you go to Kilifi, Malindi even Msambweni and the south Coast, you'll see about 20,000 people living in small – like village, but they make houses very ,very temporary. And sooner or later, somebody will come with a tractor and give them 24hrs to get out with their goats , with their cows, with trees with their plantations, out of this place, why, it's mine.

I Who comes?

R A businessman, a minister, eeh.

I An illegal title?

R Anybody, and even today, It's being practised like that.

I 144?? Political friends of the government?

R Indeed, by the system, this was done during the British, it was done during Kenyatta, and is being practised until this hour. Now, these are some of the touchy thorny issues that we had over there. Not a single school was built, not school, a single school, since 1963 until today in the whole of the Coast province, not one single school has been built. All of them are either personal by people's initiative, or probably something from the colonial days, but nothing has been done by the government itself.

I By the government..?

R We don't have a single college, let alone a university, even a single college. We educationally backward, as much as we are gifted in knowledge, eeh, no two, we are economically very weak, you see. All the money comes from the coast, probably 2/3 of the money from the government.

I [153??] genuine, sincere and ...??[154] legitimate grievances, economic grievances.

R Legitimate grievances indeed.

I Why did you choose 1990 to do this?

R From 1963 to 1991, some of our leaders and mainly, I should mention, eeh, the Hon. Late Ronald Ngala, who was the head, the chairperson or the chairman of KADU, where also president Moi belonged to that party, from 1963 to 19..., the party started in 1951 and it ended up in 1969, when they all defected to KANU and president Moi was made the vice president. So they comprised, all of those KADU stalwarts, like Raila now, they came to Kanu, and they were given ministerial posts, all of them . Eeh, president Moi , Masinde Muliro, Martin Shikuku, Ronald Ngala and others, Jean Seroney, I think from every province there were either one or two representatives that were given ministries from KADU into KANU.

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I But the choice of 1990, did it come because of the fact that , well, a couple of things had happened, the soviet union had fallen, the Berlin wall was over.?

R I have not answered your question. I t is like this. Our movement was not moved by any foreign reasons , neither were we moved by any foreign influence, neither were we moved by anything outside the boundaries of Kenya. Basically, we started from the Coastal region for the Coastal people.

I Okay

R Now, from 1963 to this period, basically somebody like Ronald Ngala, he was tortured and many others, even people have lost their lives, people were imprisoned by having this KADU, during colonial days and during Kenyatta's time. Now this particular Ronald Ngala, if I mention 1975, there was a celebration here on the 12th of December, during independence day, it is known as Uhuru day. Here he was supposed to be with the president here as a Minister to attend the ceremony for the independence day, but he was picked at 5 'o'clock, told that you are needed in Mombassa. Eeh, first time a minister should be in his province to attend the celebrations and not with the president. So, when he was driving out over here after Mtito Andei, the driver the driver, he didn't know his car was parked here in Nairobi, and he was taken by a government car. Eeh, no plate number, eeh, it was only a flag. When they reached outside Mtito Andei, they hit him with hammers and bars. On the burial day I was there when they opened his face, he was broken here, broken here, broken here. He was hit so hard and he died even before he reached Mombassa hospital. Imagine, instead of sending him to Mtito Andei hospital or Nairobi hospital which was closer, they brought him to Mombassa hospital. He was bleeding like anything until he reached Mombassa.

I How did they send him?

R I think by ambulance, probably by a police car

I From Nairobi?

R No, NO, FROM Mtito Andei, which is about 120 miles from Nairobi, a little more. Instead of sending him backwards 100 miles, they took him 250 miles onwards.

I That reminds me of the Steve Biko story

R It is something like that. Nobody has promoted his cause but he is one of the very prominent people who were brutally killed during the Kenyatta era. Now

I Where was he from?

R He is from Kilifi, he is the father of Noah Katana Ngala who is a minister today. Just as an example.

I Unsolved mystery. I mean unsolved, nobody ever, ever

R That driver, was brought to the police and the statement he wrote was that he was attacked by bees and the car overturned. He had nothing, nothing, no damage on his body and he is still alive until this hour. Now, this is one of the guys that were killed in August 1975 okay. He is not one of the victims of course, Tom Mboya and others and others were part of it. The system was so cruel that it eliminated very prominent people.

- I This is (..??195) Kenyatta?
- R Yeah
- I Why did you suddenly in 1990 decide to form this little group, what was the purpose of that ? I mean, the purpose I know but the timing I don't know.
- R Now, people that have suffered from 1963 to that eeh ,period of multipartism, all these people were afraid. I was not afraid, but I was looking for a platform. I have always been courageous in my life, I have always been courageous in my life, I have never feared anything and as such I knew the price would be expensive. In fact, in the first meeting it was in eeh, it was in a hall. And I told my friends, among all of us here, who will ..??103 the cat, who will ..??103 the lion and everyone was quiet . And I told them, I will pay the price and I will ..??104 the lion or the cat but remember to continue outside. I will be , I told them, I will be in prison but you continue. Because having and these experiences of intimidation, imprisonment , of probably being forced to exile and so on, all of these people , everybody was afraid. That is why our region was not only marginalised but it was highly oppressed.
- I So you kind of got angry with things the way they were?
- R Not necessarily, no , I wanted to approach things not only honestly but courageously. Thank you Bob, you Bob, I did not take things in a hurry, secondly , I did not want to show that...
- I Thank you Agnes, Asante sana Agnes, this is Sheikh Balala
- R Nimefurahi kukuona mama.(Am happy to see you mama) So I did not want to prove I was brave or probably the best. No, I knew my people, I know my people, they have a lot of fear inside because of the experiences they had. We were so weak that you could move on the street with your mother anytime after seven , on the streets in town and they will ask you, where are you going with this prostitute? And she is your mother. Just because you don't carry an ID with you, probably you have forgotten it or you don't have. So, we were so afraid they could come to your house , you have an Identity ? No. And they will take gold, they will take money from you and so on. So wee were oppressed , we were fearful , we were weak. And I told them that we need to pay a price
- I So you formed this group, you formed it right?
- R I am one of the eeh, you should say what ,founder members. One of the founder members
- I And what ?
- R I became one of the most prominent ones because I made the best speeches, I gave the best , I touched the best issues and apart from that , I represented the lititimate grievances of the underprivileged. That is why I became the best of

all my friends, yeah most of them belong to the civil service, they were afraid of losing their jobs.

I Were they, did they go public?

R Well, when we came to churches or mosques, when we go to schools but on those like me , I went to the streets

I Yeah, I know I was living here

R And I challenged on the street

I You were often pictured as the head of a large group of young people marching the streets of Mombasa

R No police could dare come close to us

I So how did you attract ...??33 what was your method of doing that?

R You see when these political parties were gaining some momentum or ground, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and others , they approached the coastal people. Different groups and a few people who were working with people in Nairobi came to us as well. And we came up together , that we should first start a rally. And I said we don't start a rally, I do not understand their agenda for multipartysm. I wanted to know what are they demanding. And I know , I never expected Kenya to repeal this 2A, what we call the 2A section of the law. That they will not be a party state. I never believed in that. I said , of course Kenya is as elected dictatorship, it is a monarchy in the being. It is a tyrant government. As much as I do not have those reservations with them, But I never expected change without a good fight. And I do not mean fight to lose lives, but I meant fight to send a strong message, yeah. So, I challenged the system itself single handedly. I said I will do the job. And Bobb, to show you my polite initiative and to show you that I have every honesty and sincerity in me, we collected every clergy, christian and muslims and we consulted them before we went to the streets , before we went to the mosques. Please, we want to start. W e believe there is a train coming very fast , it is multipartysm. Please allow us to go onboard. T his is a language I used. Some people encouraged us, some people were afraid.

I Yeah

R We even spoke to the people, the intellectuals, they were also afraid. W e spoke to the politicians, they were afraid. At the end of the day, we made a very big gathering in one of the halls and that day we pronounced that if you do not want , we are coming up with a religious movement in the country, and that religious movement after sitting down, seeing that the system will divide us , we said that we start from the mosques, and we decided to go to the mosques

I So first you tried to involve intellectuals , Christians , everyone and you couldn't find them.

R Nobody would support us, even with money, even with little money for my sweat. I was outside Kenya for over 22 years. I put my blood ahead of the movement. It was me in person, single handed. We did a few contributions, probably 10,000 shillings, 50,000 shillings from a few ten twenty people

I So you put your own money into it ?

R Oh, even my blood, even my life. But honestly, my good will to the district commissioners, the provincial commissioner, the provincial police officer, I told them that we are speaking a multiparty age coming and we simply need freedom to express our views, that is one. In a very honest manner I told everybody. And I had two representatives from the government, one is from the office of the president and he sat down with me for six good hours even before we started any trouble and even before we started any confrontation with the state. Not only that, the second thing, we told him, we have our grievances with the central government, not only with the provincial level but even on the central government, that all the money is sacked out of this area, and no development, and we expect that it is better that we die.

I So,so

R And so the only thing they told us, please go with the opposition, come with KANU, come with the government. I said what is the difference. Now people are in KANU, they are not representing us. We simply will not see that. Thirdly as a human being, even if I do not want to embrace politics or even use of religion or even use of coastal, simply I want to stand as an honest human being in history, that I have presented a legitimate cause, that is what I told him. Even if it is not because of politics or anything else. And really Bobb, since then they were relieved with my point and trust me Bob, since the day started, politely and even during the confrontation time, we dared touch any government official, we did not, we had the power even to kill, we had the power probably to destroy but we simply we were on the streets with hundred thousand people one at a time, sometimes even 500,000 you know. And even more. We have a record of a million people during one of the attendance of the FORD original, the first meeting of FORD. I think it hit the record in Kenya

I What was in Mombasa?

R In Mombasa, Madaraka grounds in 1992, before the elections by probably six, seven months (laughs)

I So explain now the steps that were involved. First the concerns I understand, the timing I understand. The moving from group A, eight people and then trying to get others and then basically finding a supportive group among the Islamic ...? 192 and through the mass, getting the message there, how that what was your tactics in terms of organisation, street marches, rallies – what were your choices there? I don't remember all the details.

R Yes Bobb, we wanted the platform on a daily basis because the momentum was very high. We did not leave our Christian brothers and our traditional religious people outside. People used to attend even in the mosques. Probably it was the first time that we conquered the mosques; ambassadors came there to make speeches, FORD people came there

I Oh really , to the mosque?

R Yes, but we started at eight after prayer time. From eight to ten. Yeah, that was almost on a daily basis

I After prayer, it became a political rallying point?

R Indeed , indeed. It was the only way out. Because when we do outside, we will be looking for a confrontation.

I You got the police everytime?

R Everytime. We did not want that, we did not want to harm anybody. And imagine, those people who opposed us were indeed the government but the paymasters of all those people who opposed were the commercial elite, who are pro-government, the Arabs, the commercial elite, the Arabs themselves who I say, from reasons rooting up out of primitiveness, ignorance, illiteracy, greed for money, the corrupt elements, these are the people that paid a heavy price for us to be in the bad, or for us to be misunderstood and so on and so forth. They played a big role, thinking that we were a radical or an extremist religious movement, we were not. Even our manifesto, I can get you a copy it is in Mombasa. Even our constitution does not say anything like that. AS much as the IPK we started it as a name , that did not??

I The Islamic party of Kenya ?

R Yes, the Islamic party of Kenya

I When did you start that ?

R Finally eeh five months before the elections of December 1992. It was simply a movement we did not want to register it. But we had to go forward so as to get tickets for election.

I So, did you run candidates on IPK?

R On FORD ticket, yes many, many, many

I Okay, so it was aligned with FORD Kenya?...??220

R Totally, yews, we were with FORD Kenya, the is right, when they split. But we joined the original FORD in the beginning, yeah

I I have to be so little about this thing, but maybe if a diagram would help, because you know, I was not there and I remember in my mind reading the good things. But you had, you were using, excuse me, sophisticated strategy... something we can learn from...other people ..

R You see Bobb, our people were ripe

I But let me skip the ...I know the background now, we will come back to the details. But first , in 1990, you have a group of eight

R Yes

I Okay, you are looking for Islamic Christian unity and intellectuals , you don't find it. Basically where you find support, the only place that people say okay , will join

R Silent support

I Silent support, okay

R Yeah, silent support

I Was from the mosques then at some point you begin to have marches

R Yes

I Marching on the streets

R Yes

I That is one

R But addressing issues.

I Oh, I know I now , I understand

R They were not blind, they were not , eeh

I Specific issues

R Yes, specific issues

I Were there any other things you did besides marches (235???) like did you hold rallies, and things like that?

R Ofcourse we did, several rallies, several rallies, leaflets, we distributed a lot of leaflets, eeh, and we throw them down like on a Sunday at six o'clock, before people come to the mass, or the churches, we make sure that they are on gates, or the doors of the churches. On Friday we make sure that they are on the doors of their Mosques and so on. In schools, yeah, if we make sure that there

are probably 20000 children in about 5 schools, we make sure every child will carry one home. Yeah, that we did as well.

I Okay, great, then at some point...

R Because of the pace, the time was so short for us

I I know,

R Yes,

I But because 1991 was when they went multiparty, in December, and in 1992 is when we had the elections.

R Yes.

I So you were in '90 though, doing this? Or was it...

R Ah, in the end of '90.

I When was it.

R Oh, December 15th, December 20th.

I So basically we are talking about 1991, was the main era when you were doing this?

R But the participation between here and here, was the secret meetings of FORD, we were not cooking but we were attending and listening.

I Right because FORD went public I think somewhere around in here, in 1991.

R Yes, we were together with them.

I But there were underground meetings...

R For sure we were part of the people that were approached. The only thing many people did not want to go, in places like halls or libraries, or even, they simply got houses.

I In houses.

R Yes in houses.

I Aha, Shikuku was involved in formation of the Ford [258].

R But Shikuku did not come to the Coast in the beginning, he had a lot of

I So, when did you form a party?

R Ah, as I told you six months before 1992.

I Oh, six months before 1992, before the elections. So it was around June, say mid 1992?

R That's right.

I Formed a party? Okay. In the meantime the idea was to keep the momentum going. What kinds of message were trying to send to the government, you said that one time you were trying to send a message.

R The people in the Coast are monopolised on everything by the commercial elite, by the businessmen in Mombasa and the majority of these are the Arabs, few Asians, a few British – very few a tiny majority, Now those people we believed they are the centre of power politically, economically, socially, educationally, they were controlling our lives. And we said without making sure, these people are...

I Business elite...

R Indeed, very strong, very strong.

I Including many Muslims by the way...

R Oh, they are Muslims, most of them am not saying, no, 99% were Muslim, 99%, ya 99% , infact they are the most corrupt. Bob being a Muslim does not mean you are an angel.

I Aah what?

R Doesn't mean you become an angel, you, we are normal human beings. You see a crime committed by a Christian and a Muslim is a crime, crime is a crime before the eyes of God.

I So you had a Moslem business elite that was controlling things.

R Indeed, indeed.

I Part of your message was not just to, to president Moi?

R Yaeh, to these, no we did not start with the president, we started with the people.

I Infact the main reason, it was a local economic protest?

R Indeed, in the beginning as a reason, as a reason, as root – cause.

I Stage one? Stage one: Local economic protest?

R Yes.

I Stage two?

R Stage two was to deliver that there's no political representation either from the Coastal people, or the Christian people, or the Islamic people of the coast.

I Oh I mean, you had you had representatives, Nassir Sharrif and others [387???

R They all belong to the system.

I Okay.

R They were, they were, they were...

I Nobody was representing the poor..

R The grievances, the poor, or even, of even the area itself in terms of development, they were doing nothing.

I Okay.

R They were doing nothing.

I Doing nothing for the poor, Ofcourse.

R Ofcourse they were just part of the KANU system.

I Yeah, yeah.

R We were divided on the tribal lines, we were divided on religious lines, a lot of hate between us for no apparent reason, you know, it's a pattern of dictatorship. They make you hate a Christian, they make you hate your brother out of probably another tribe; we have two advantages in the Coast – nobody has them in the whole of East, probably central Africa. That place is cradle of civilisation? I give an example, everybody coming to East Africa or to the Central of Africa, is passed from there: the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Arabs, the Chinese, the British, everybody, even the Germans. Everybody. So the place, is the cradle of civilisation. It is multi – cultural, it is multi – religious, we have lived here , Bob, you have not lived in Mombasa.

I I have been to Lamu and Mombasa but haven't lived there.

R You see this is a house and that is another house, if you just pronounce a voice, of, of, of pain, your neighbour comes, we love each other than anybody else. But that has been sort of made a problem for the government, they don't like to see neighbourhood, they don't like to see people being together – Christian, Muslim on a part, no way. It was the tyranny and and, the hatred of the government against it's people. I don't know if Moi knew about it or Kenyatta, but on, on the ground, eeeh, we were so, they would take a woman of six years because she does not carry an ID after seven o'clock, thrown into

jail for three days, seven days, eight days, just because she does not carry an ID. “Where are you from” “I am from a wedding” is it illegal to get out of after 8 o’clock, then she’d her a prostitute, they would take her to court that she is a prostitute, and so on and so forth.

I Why?

R It is because of timidity, this weakness of our leaders, these people who did not advance our economic and educational causes; we are weak, we have not been an elite, we have not been together as a community, either as Coastal people or even as a religious or tribal power. We were not.

I Alright, I’ll go back to some of that, but I understand much better than ever before, some of the reasons, what I’d like to do is to try to match you did, when you did, with any results, any impact. So that’s why I go back to this. Do you probably don’t know dates in your head. I have, ... then....

R Oh, I have everything in, file.

I Really?

R Yeah, I have everything including my cases, including my documents in Germany, everything. Everything is in file. Some of them are here, some of them are in Mombasa. Well, we can co-operate in that.

I Well, okay.

R I can get you pictures and so on

I I might want to do that.

R Oh yeah, I have no objections about that.

I ’91 was the big active year though, that was when

R This meetings started in January 1991, January 1991. Several meetings underground....

I January 1991.

R Yeah.

I Okay, let’s hit a couple of dates if we can, and see if there’s any kind of results from all this.

R I did not attend all the meetings...

I This will be the action okay, and this will be the impact if you can describe it.

R Yes.

I January 1991, well, you had some meetings.

R Yeah, that is the time when Moi spoke openly that there was an underground movement which wanted multipartism. And we said that we will take on the bite head on, we will take it

I You said, yap, ...??337 right.

R Sure, yeah, yeah.

I So you had meetings, in homes.

R In homes to begin with, I did not attend all of them,

I No, that's alright, I am not asking for your personal participation in all of this. You can't be Omni- present. But there were meetings in homes?

R Yeah, and meetings in...

I To discuss this kind of a thing

R To discuss on the national level first. Okay, there wasn't really an impact there, either regionally or locally rather than a few people meeting in homes

I Did the numbers grow?

R The friction, the heat started from the Coast, yes, the heat not only for this FORD, even for the previous ones. You see when Masinde Muliro,

I I remember, I have met him, before he died.

R And Martin Shikuku, and others when they had KADU, not only Mombasa their headquarters but they started everything from there. You see, so we started it from there. The only thing up here in Nairobi, did not know how to ignite people. We knew how to ignite our people, they did not know how to touch the issues and the spirits of the people.

I How did you ignite the people?

R It's by telling them that if you do not, stand up now for your rights, you'll never have them, the next 200 years probably 300 years and so on.

I Okay, so the tactics... Remember that.

R And the language...

I That's one of the focuses. The main focus.

R Yes, that is right

I The tactics, meeting in homes to get things started

R Yes

I 360?

R That is right

I Next, then what did you do?

R We went out to plan and meet people within the systems, either to help us or to advice us , or if not , apart from those two, we would like to penetrate them and divide them from within and seek something that will shake the system from within. Yeah.

I How do you mean, shake the system from within?

B By having secrets from the government, that,. That will...

I Have some tea, by the way.

B Am having, am having.

I Oh, okay you are, good.

B Thank you. That we had thorny issues.

I Did you get your one sugar?

B Eh, Not necessary, anyhow, thank you, I don't drink a lot of sugar, I do have sometimes.

I Okay.

B You see Mr. Robert, eeh right from '63, and even before '63 the Coastal people believed like Eritrea, like Ethiopia...

I I have been to both and then there's [375??]

B Yeah there people here in the Coast until here although we are different from them we have the same cultures as the whole of East Africa as compared to Tanzania you know and so own, but and and Mombassa [376??] the coast being the mother of the Swahili language.

I Let me steer you back if you don't mind. This is very rich history that you are giving me, but I don't want to miss the tactics and the Chronology, because I think that kind of will, will show some of the way you bring the change about. I know that seems to be the most Mundane part of this and for you.

- B Our first strategy was engagement with system politely, we went to talk to them,we went to explain to them and they knew that they but they knew that one day sooner or later although it was not that they but they knew sooner or later this people will explode,and it is the only province in the country that has not been recognised by the present constitution. It has been British protectorate until 1922 when it was changed.
- I You had talked to the government representatives, as you said, openly, at the beginning.
- B I personally, took that initiative with some of my people.
- I And they didn't buy it, they just say join KANU
- B Ooh no, no, they knew, you see people that didn't come with us the government made speeches in Mosques and Churches, they, they...
- I My friends, they live right up there. After, 394?? What was the next step?
- B People passed a message other than ours, that we will cut the Coast province from Kenya. Although it was part of us, but people from within us, using outside people, came up with this, ...[417??], we never planned for it, it was not part of our agenda, it will never be, I am not a majimboist, I am a nationalist. But I believe in the participation of the Coastal people in the representation of their lives, their rights, and indeed of their representation to central government.
- I So, although it wasn't part of your plan, you didn't sort of kill the message because in effect it was KANU shaking people.
- B Ooh, we never replied, to honest. The government came to me personally and others, "please do you have any agenda about the Coast region". I said honestly "can you cut my hand"? he said "no" I told him why, "I will go to jail – I said, the same thing like me. If I do that, it is like imprisoning my own principles. I told him that I can never allow the Coast not to be part of Kenya.
- I It might have had a little bit of... it might have got their attention.
- B Ooh, indeed, oh am telling you people tried,I think even before, I don't know how far they have gone, but maybe even military, people tried in the past. Sharrif Nassir has gone to prison for a few days because of that in 1970. People died , people died because they were killed by Kenyatta by using that language. Ooh if you say, see there are three, there is majimbo, there's Mvita, which is the old name of Mombasa, okay there is Mwambao. This three languages , do say, if you mention them, they will know that you want to curse them, to cut the Coast from Kenya.
- I February, March, April?

B Ooh, ooh, February, February: that thing has hit the headlines probably by three months.

I So after three months there was this talk; are they gonna succeed ...[444] ?? but somehow in statehouse, they begin to pay attention.

B The government to divide us with our platform, they used some people for the Coast to be cut from Kenya, even the system itself.

I So you think that was the kind of sabotage, the government was actually behind that?

B They didn't start it, they hijacked it. They did not start it.

I Aah, they hijacked what?

B They hijacked the message, that the Coastal people have been deprived and they need to be cut off from Kenya or probably, they need to be addressed, it is one of the two. They hijacked the message.

I And maybe, they were then using that as excuse to crack down, there were a lot of congratulations ...456??

B The confrontations were from me. Yeah, it got nothing to do... with.

I Tell me about those confrontations; what was the strategy there?

B There was a law from Kenyatta's time even during Moi's time, until when multiparty started., that anybody demonstrating, will be charged with fines.

I So, laws banned public demonstrations.?

B That's true.

I But you decided to challenge that

R Indeed. Because of I believe freedom of speech is the first principle in democracy. And having lost not only a personal friend but many many people in Mombasa, some people have been in jail for many years, some people lost their lives, I said let me be one of them, let me lose my life provided I pay the price for freedom.
I believe freedom for expression is the first principle in democracy, if people can be allowed to express their views, I believe not only the society will be healthy but it will be very productive. That is, and having the experience of visiting the west and the East for over 22 years, I knew that this is something that the country needed

I You were seeing it in the east, you were seeing it in the west

R Everywhere. Not only did I like it, it was part of my spirit right from childhood. Honestly Bobb, I don't say this out of pride but, simply what I

have been practising for the last 15 years in politics it is been my inner principles, it been my bir5th right . It is true that in age am very advanced politically, my thoughts are 100 year45s ahead of my people because of my experience outside , but also intellectually God has given me this small gift in me that I can see what they cannot see and my speed is fast, that is why I achieved a lot and has also did not achieve a lot. I achieved what I wanted but did not yet achieve what I want.

I What do you want?

R Little more , I would like our people there to be more institutionalised politically, that is my basic understanding of

I More institutionalised you mean having political parties?

R Aligned also to the whole of Kenya, more better intellectually and matured politicians , indeed educational institutions that would produce people of different classes

I And intellectuals

R Intellectual , economical , am very much concerned . That place if you take it from the point of view that it is a large province probably in terms of geographical area , it is not as big as Japan , but close to Japan. We are less than 3 million, the Japanese are over 100 million, we are very wealthy.

I That is good , I wanna go back to the chronology because if I don't get it here, I have to go back over 10 years of weekly review which takes me weeks.

R I am not concerned about the economical growth of that area.

I Matching , the confrontations , what kind of confrontations did you organise?

R O h we knew that anybody starting the confrontations or starting the demonstration is declaring unlawfulness to the government

I These were rallies and matches booked?

R Yes indeed, after Friday prayers, during celebrations

I You would meet and try to go somewhere?

R Always we deliver a letter to the Provincial Commissioner , to the Kanu offices. That was before the multiparty started. And we knew that many people would go to prison , we knew these people might shoot one or two of us , we knew it

I But that did not happen did it ?

R Aah, to be honest we did not harm anybody as much as we fought with them with blows. Neither did the police, yes three people died

I Only three

R Only three. One about six thirty in the morning he was coming out from swimming , he was short here on the leg and he died.

I What I remember was , I skipped that point because I know that three is a minimum number for that many people

R Yes , yes , but not on the same day

I Well I remember pictures in Indonesia showing a lot of youth , mason youth , IPK youth many times just sort of attacking another group or running through the streets, it looked like wild confrontations going on

R Honestly the police never came to us except other than people that were sent by Shariff Nassir and others. Yes.

I Okay, okay, that was a government tactic?

R Ofcourse indeed, we had infiltrators

I I want to be aware of the government tactics in response to this

R Yeah, we had infiltrators on site, by eeh the prominent politicians in the country

I Okay

R Yes, we did have

I Who would try...??361 violence?

R Who would like to create violence , try to create violence. Not only did we not harm anybody, but we did not even break one shop. Nobody in Mombasa would tell IPK did break one shop, not one.

I Really?

R I can , I honestly do swear

I W ere you practising no violence?

R Indeed, ...??364

I I t almost sounds like you have got ..??364many of them on the streets and you are not breaking

R Our achievements were indeed achieved openly

I Yeah

R The , we had , In spite of the confrontation , on probably weekly basis, I did have dialogue with the government on a weekly basis.

I Well, I mean how, do you, how do you control hmmh, a group like that it doesn't become a mob?

R I made them busy, you know when we met in our areas eeh, probably in the , in the mosques and sometimes in the halls, even in the churches , we spent quite a fortune on putting a lot of money to the youth, eeh, people that are jobless, we take them for driving anybody who is not learned and we give them a matatu, and we said okay, become busy. But at the same time, he is part of our eeh, soldiers

I Yeah , yeah.

R The other people not only did we pay for their polytechnic attendance but we spent a lot of money eeh , to pay school fees to orphans, we tried very hard, as much as our eeh, eeh our income was very minimal, very small. But we tried to put most of our money to make sure these people are occupied , so that they do not remain a running battle with, eeh with the system. We made sure that somebody goes to school. That was the main way of keeping them from staying, going out and beating people up. You got them, you helped with the school fees, you got them jobs, you couldn't do that for all those there, there were a lot of young people supporting you at the time. Even our silent supporters played a big role in contributing

I What did they do?

R They used to bring indirectly, probably pay about 200 people to go for driving, computer courses, pay for school fees , language eeh, you know , get a few matatus you know and people to start driving. And, and we made sure that every evening at eight, we met to talk to the people.

I Every night?

R Eeh, almost every night in the beginning, eeh, close to the elections

I When you had gone public yeah?

R Yes, close to the elections

I Where would you meet?

R Eeh, at Saki8na mosque, that was the main ground

I How do you spell it ?

R SAKINA. Sakina mosque

I So you would have these pretty large meetings right ?

R Oh, very big

I How many people , in thousands , hundreds, tens?

R Eeh, well that mosque takes over 25,000 , but it was full. No, I do not mean the ground, I mean even eeh surrounding , people that would stay on the streets on the side and so on and so forth.

I These were massive meetings?

R Oh , very big

I Were you leading

R We have pictures

I Were you the kind of leader at that point of the efforts of that movement?

R I was, I was the spiritual eeh , cause of the whole thing

I Okay , Okay

R Yes, I even did not put in my name in the office bearers of the registration for the movement to the government. Because I knew once I put it in, they would claim that this was a religious movement and so our constitution had nothing to do with religion , nothing at all . We were purely a political movement , because we did not want to loose the others. And indeed we also wanted to , and indeed out of honesty , we wanted to represent and not eeh, some people, we wanted to represent everybody. Eeh, thirdly also we thought of this political chain between us and Nairobi, the big parties . W e wanted to have this.

I Political chain, you mean a linkage?

R A linkage

I You wanted to be linked to one of the parties?

R We know that we would be registered. W e knew that the government always took the coastal people as..????

I So you never sought registration for IPK?

R Ooh, for sure oh , right from the beginning we knew that that will not happen

I You never even tried?

R Eeh, the only thing to allow the temperatures to be high was to give them eeh, the registration application , let them deny it , let's keep the temperature up.

I Okay, so you gave them , .. you applied ?

R Yes

I And your application was turned down ?

R Oh yeah, we went to court and we won

I But keeping the temperatures up in the?? 402 Part of the strategy of keeping the momentum of this interest going? Isn't it ?

R For sure, for sure

I I mean, you know you have to have something?

R Oh, for sure, it has been there. W e did achieve lot , we did , eeh eeh, and our Achievement

I What were your achievements ? What was the achievement of this , the impact?

R I t was the first time....

I Let us talk about the impact

R I t was the first time that a commission was formed to address the entire coastal land problem , first time in the history of Kenya

I What year was that ?

R Oh, immediately . I think it was in 1993

I After the election?

R Yes , immediately , I think in February or March.

I?? The election?

R Yes, aah , the other is

I408 do anything?

R O h yeah, they brought the constitution, they addressed people, they started making boundaries, telling people if you are here for over fifty years it is yours. If you are here for ten years, you pay a ten of just ...?? a sum of ten thousand shillings and so on

I So you have ownership now?

R Aaah, some

I Some

R Not , generally, but there is an improvement in the climate

I Okay, you get some land titles

R Yes, yes, yes

I What was the second impact?

R The second impact is , in , eeh, there was indeed a congestion in the port of Mombasa, from 1988 to 1995 or 1994, when the economy was quite healthy, somehow. T here was a vacuum of labours and we had to take in numbers, hundred at a time, a thousand at a time and they all get jobs. Even on a daily basis, some people are paid.

I You mean it was port congestion?

R Yeah

I Yeah . So you had people hired to go clean it out and that was a plus, because they hadn't been doing that.

R And even today, most of those people are employed permanently. And if..??

I Okay

R Yes, permanently

I More jobs?

R A lot of jobs, a lot of jobs

I??419 jobs?

R A lot of jobs , a lot of improvement on that . And most of??

I What about in terms of human rights, were there any gains in that ?

R Indeed, I have not heard of anybody being taken to prison, or hit by a police or even taken his money from the streets, because of an Identity card. They never

ask for an Identity card nowadays. You can walk in Mombasa at any hour today , in the whole of the coast , nothing. We did not have weddings after 7'oclock but today we have them, we did not have burials after 7'oclock , today we have them . You know as Muslims we bury anytime.

I Yes, within 24 hours?

R Now, we can during Moi's era, we never did, we were afraid of that

I So, so, you basically have more freedom of assembly ad movement right?

R A lot , a lot

I When did that start?

R 1991. Even before, yeah

I Have some tea please and I will give you some water too. Would you like some water?

R No, thank you very much Mr. Robert

I It is the smoking you know, you should??

R It is not the smoking, it is the spirit which is coming up.

I Okay , so when did you get there?

R People , that have been imprisoned, none of them for the last ten years told me was beaten. Before that , if you smoke marijuana, you are in prison for six months , for a year, you come out either you lose your eye, you have been beaten, eeh , you are paralysed or something like that. Not one for the last 10 years. If I see one telling me that something has happended in the prison. I myself, I went to prison in the beginning of 1992 and in ...??? After 1997 more of them came forward to say that ???you they don't even intimidate you to tell you hey go, not even that they respect you. If you pass , they salute you. T hat has never happened too any prisoner on the coastal region , and even of course , Manyani is part of the Coast prisons, I was in Manyani most of the time.

I You were first arrested in I mean in 199?

R 1992

I Two, why were you picked up?

R For treason, of course, they wanted me to be out of the elections

I Oh, okay

R They wanted me and the head , as the spearhead , they wanted me out so that my people become headless and they influence those votes

I 1992 was just when you were picked up?

R January

I January 1992,okay. A h, right after they went for multiparty elections, they agreed??441 then they come down and pick you up?

R Oh yeah, for sure

I They agreed in December 1991 we will have elections and .??

R Oh yeah ,oh yeah, immediately , immediately and everything

I We don't want this guy out and??

R And everything that came out to the press was through either my lawyer or through letters I wrote and gave tem to the prison warders. T hat is why I only infiltrated my comments

I Did you keep, did you stay in touch with your group through prison letters so to speak?

R Eeh, sometimes eeh. One or two sympathisers who either belonged to FORD or eeh and so on

I O h that a again

R Yeah, Yeah, they even , once in a week , they bring me biscuits. You know there you have only empty ugali

I Yeah

R With no other type of food

I S o , who got your message out , were there party people who came in and??

R No, no, no party people. No, no

I Sympathetic wardens?

R Those people who are working, working there....

I You know because that 's happened in a lot of cases

R As a politician , you are in jail alone , nobody is close to you, only for wardens , four policemen...?? Come ... they are out . And these people when

I Solitary?

R Yeah, when they come and give me food, they tell me you have ten minutes to write a letter , and give me a pen and ... you know there is nothing. I slept on the ground for all the time , yeah

I Because there was no bed?

R They don't give you anything. Even if you cry, even if you don't sleep

I For three years?

R Yeah , yeah, yeah, all the time

I On the ground , was it a ...??455 floor or cement floor?

R Eeh , half cement half rocky. Half cement , it is rough

I Rocky?

R Yeah, it is not good , it is rough

I There was no bed , no beddings?

R To be safe , the best word is rough. I t was not very smooth. No nothing, nothing at all, nothing , nothing at all.

I Were you tortured?

R No, not touched. Psychologically , yes, they sent people to tell me that my mother is dead eeh , they sent me people to say that my mother is dead, they sent me people to say that your food has been poisoned, eeh, you know and to threaten you, that Moi after the elections will kill you, that eeh , you have a treason case and you will hang or be shot eeh , psychological torture, yeah , yeah , psychological

I Your mother wasn't dead?

R Oh nothing at all, nothing at all. I know , I was laughing infact. I had a lot of experience with these political prisons and so on and so forth. I was never afraid.

I Why did they keep you for three years just in case you didn't wanna go on with the elections

R You see , it is like this Mr. Bobb. Before the elections , they could not compromise with me and they were so desperate that they wanted those votes ,

so they??? I had to be away from my, from, from leadership. And they did achieve some ground ,okay. After that

I They achieved some ground in what sense?

R They gained some votes from our area , they had one Member of parliament in Mombasa.out of four , they had 15 counsellors out of 34 councillors and so on.

I KANU?

R Yeah, they lost a whole ground if I was out, they could not have not achieved a vote if I was outside.

I Hmmmh, but why three years , I mean , elections came and went and you were still there?

R Now, this is the reason. I n Kenya, if you kill or if you are charged with treason, there is no hand, no bail

I No bond, no bail

R Yeah, there is no way out. The government cannot even come and withdraw the case according to the law. T hey cannot , until either the charge quit, you are being acquitted by the judge, or something extra-ordinary happens in the government and declares a massive for all political prisoners , something like that.

I So what happened in your case, how did you get out finally?

R I was acquitted by the Court

I You were acquitted?

R Yes, for treason, for treason, incitement , for povocation

I Your case didn't come up for 3 years?

R They everytime, before the elections, they said the attorney general has not the consent reports or the consent file, they call it the consent file , the judge waited, after the elections, she said I am giving you one month , they transferred her. Another judge and he said I give you a month, he was transferred and so on , they changed about 5 judges in about 5 months. Then, the same , the original one came and she said I m giving the government the whole year either to address this person or not. Everytime they are waiting for the file , consent file , everytime.

I A piece of paper

R That is all. Eeeh, whether to prosecute or not

I So it was a deliberate strategy to delay

R Indeed , indeed

I They considered you dangerous?

R The Attorney General is out of the country. Secondly they could not also withdraw the case because it will be against them. I will be given a lot of money as compensation. That is why they could not do

I What specifically were you charged with in treason,of inciting riots or something like that ?

R Very funny! I dreamt that president Moi died, and Kenya was blind. Ha ha ha. Dreaming, haha. I dreamt, eeh, haha

I And you spoke that aloud/

R Not at all. Not at all. They had no accusation. Nothing at all

I What was the accusation?

R I don't know, really....??

I Oh , you mean that is what they said?

R Yes, yes

I They charged you with dreaming?

R Yes, yes, it was a fabricated charge. I dreamt, aah, even the prosecutor laughed

I The accused dreamt that Moi died and, and Kenya was blind

R And Kenya became blind. And, you know, to dream or to say or even to think that the president is dead is a crime in Kenya . It is treason in Kenya , until this, until this???

I And did you dream it ?

R Not at all, ha ha ha . Bobb please you ,you get the constitution and read it yourself. To think or to dream , this is what they charged me with.

I You were arrested a second time, 1997?

R 1997, after I came from Germany

I Yes, why were you arrested in 1997? Oh again , it was , it was... were you part of the mass action leading up to IPPG?

R I, I never wanted this raw deal. I did want , I wanted constitutional reforms, totally

I Let me go back after I get clear on why they charged you late in 1997

R But , but this for treason, yeah in 1992 not one for reason, eeh they told me also incitement, provocation, okay, eeh...

I Related to your encouragement of this matches and...

R That's right, that's right. That's right yeeah.

I Okay and you would say in that case you, you really.

R They withdrew five charges and it remained one, treason. The five charges were withdrawn after one year.

I '97 what's the reason they gave?

R Eeh provocation and incitement.

I For again the same kind of...

R Yeah but not treason in '97, not treason provocation and incitement. And they denied me bail by force, they told the judge "if you do that, we will either remove you from your job, eeh, because the judge said it in front of me "I am threatened", and I can't give you bond. And I am sorry I will do this after 8 months, And I stayed 8 months and he did not give me bond. So, then he gave me bond, after the elections and he said, I only give you a week to go look for your mother and wife and then you come back and tell me. I delayed for a day, and when I delayed for a day, they put in for a year without bail again. Hahaha. They told him, if you even if you delayed for a day, you go in for a year without a bail. Provocation and incitement is bailable in this country, but because I delayed for a day from the day that the judge gave me and I went in for a year without a bail or a bond.

I Tell me the activities that you were trying to do in terms of tactics in 1997 to advance human rights or pluralism or whatever your agenda was at that time.

R In 1997, simply we the people. The people were very much aware of what we were trying to do because of the improvement. The head of the general staff, Kenya's army, is from the Coast, Joseph Kibwana. It is the first time during Kenyatta's era, one percent of the army, the airforce, was from the Coast, one percent , during Moi's era it was 2%. Today it is 31% maybe little more, 31% in the Army in the airforce and so on and so forth. The head of the general staff, major general Joseph Kibwana is from the Coast because problem The head of Navy, the head of the military intelligence in Mombasa island, where it is supposed to be the biggest city in the country, did not have a minister from '63 until multiparty. Because of my voice, and I mentioned this to the government, and they appointed Sharrif Nassir as the first minister from Mombasa. We never had a minister from Mombasa District at all. We did not have an ambassador. After the multiparty today, we have 23 ambassadors, pickled from the Coast.

I So that's another impact?

R The provincial education..

I Gradual representation at senior levels of government. Everything. What were during in '97 in terms of your own activism? Did ...??532 you were trying to bring change?

R When people were reformed , when people were feeling the achievement , when people were eager for a probably better strategy, I came out and said to boycott the elections. Many people did not vote. Many people did not??533

I Why were you calling for a boycott?

R Because I believed KANU would rig in with the same constitution

I Okay

R And I believed Moi was as strong as in 1992.

I He was?

R Yeah, to fool the people. To fool the people and he did not fool the people.

I So, did you have demonstrations and the same kind of activity that you did in 1992 or 1991?

R I visited schools and churches and mosques by force. I was physically stopped because he was....???

I Stopped by police

R No, not buy police. By activists of the government

I You mean by

R They wanted a fight , KANU's people , they wanted a fight

I Like these youthwingers and things like that ?

R Yaah, they wanted a fight . I didn't give them a chance. They wanted a fight.

I So you were trying???

R I tried to avoid anything like the Likoni clashes , eeh, they burnt kiosks

I You know this is the period of the clashes

- R Yeah, I wanted to avoid , I knew it. I wanted to avoid that . I was not part of it, I don't know anything about it, but it was purely paymasters were the same people I told you in the beginning , the Arab businessmen, and KANU and so On
- I Was there funding the eeh , the clashes?
- R Oh yeah , for sure , oh yeah for sure
- I Human rights watch has a report out saying from about 6 different participants that they were paid by the government to do these things and they thought they would get land out of it.
- R Aah, the message was wrong. Aah , Bobb to e honest, apart frpom what I know from minor sources of the government, I live in an area north of Mombasa known as Bombolulu. I t is an estate. Behind me , are bungalows like this, owned by Ports, Kenya Ports. Most of these are empty until this hour because four five years ago , people were dismissed from their jobs. Now, those people still go to Rwandese , over 300 of them.
- I Rwandese?
- R Yes, from Rwanda, the Hutus , oops , the Tulsi's , I don't know Hutus or Tutsis
- I???They are the ones running away
- R Something like that. T hey were there every morning . I see them with my eyes , their Kiswahili is Rwandese. Every morning when I go to my prayers or even when I leave for town , sometimes I walk slowly and talk to the people and we have coffee and that is my nature. I am social by nature. Aaah, I see them , I see them by my own eyes, they had??? Do you see the guitars, the big ones where they put it in aah, sort of pocket and they close it with?? They were carrying them. One day I asked somebody, but these people are funny. He told me 'why' ? I told him these are not Mombasa faces. Well ,he said, these are Rwandese. Innocently and he is working in the government. T hese are Rwandese, I think they are guests of the government. Hey I went to these houses in the evening and I saw them with my own eyes , they were brushing them, they were cleaning guns! With my own eyes. T hey are the people , the first seven days that did the job. Not a single coastal person participated in that, in that game. I can swear in that. With my own eyes, not one mornings, they were there even 5 months before those clashes happened. And they were going for exercising , that is when , even if you read in the Akiwumi clashes report on the papers. I t says they were trained there on how to do it.
- I To go back to Rwanda?
- R That is right , no here . Then get over to Rwanda. But the paymasters were the business KANU tycoons in Mombasa , the business KANU tycoons they are

the paymasters. It was not Biwott, Biwott's name was used so as to make sure the people of the government eeh, implement the clashes

- I Why were they paying and why were the paymasters, KANU business tycoons using them ?
- R They have various reasons. The first main reason is this , people will be impoverished and they will use them to buy their votes. They will use them for cheaper labour and so on, they have their greed, they have their own political ends. If these people are poor before the elections, they will give everybody 200 to vote. They knew that eeh, that place will be economically unstable and they will use them like the way they are doing now. That was one of the main reasons
- I I mean , why were they trying to kick, get the Luhyas and the Kikuyus and chase them back up country? Just to get the MP's seat?
- R Oh for sure, not one others of course
- I Yeah
- R Yeah, presidential votes as well as so on
- I Yeah, the seat and they had been bored by KANU...??532
- R The coastal people were weakened by that strategy
- I But it wasn't the coastal people themselves
- R No, not at all
- I At least at first
- R Even today, if I go to Mombasa with you, you can stay afar and I can stand on any road. In 5 minutes time, ten . twenty, thirty thousand will come this hour. Let alone night , even this hour. I have the majority of followers in the coast today and (mobile phone rings)
- I So that can happen , today you still have some followers
- R A lot of them . Even in Nairobi I enjoy a lot of respect and support as much as am honest and very close to the people
- I I kind of knew that and I was very happy to meet you as a person
- R Am very honest on my nationalistic feelings am very strong , am very honest
- I I want to get to know you as a person not as a symbol
- R Yeah

I But you are also a symbol? I mean there is a symbolism of what you do ?

R Yes

I So in 1997 , what specifically were you doing to attract the attention of the government besides calling for boycott?

R They were afraid that I would also influence a lot of votes against the government for those participants. So they said let us take him to prison.

I You mean because of the clashes?

R Nothing to do with the clashes, nothing

I Nothing to do with the clashes

R Nothing. Am innocent , I have never been taken to court for he clashes

I It wan an inside Kanu influence just before the elections?

R That is all

I So before elections in 1992?

R I was not involved in the clashes, I don't know anything about them

I They get you before the 1992 elections and before the 1997 elections?

R Ya, ya

I I hope you are safe this time

R Oh , I hope so . Oh ,they have given me a voter's card so I will , for the first time

I Really?

R I will be voting for the first time in my life , all this time I have never voted

I Now, one question that I think would be helpful to know is the difference between an individual activist and one who is working with an organisation. From what I can see you were doing both at different times, You began kind of as an individual

R Yes of course

I But then you organised I don't know what I can call that structure in 1992

R You see

I It is IPK , I guess is the structure

R You see Bobb, once you contribute individually to court or you are taken to prison , nobody will come for you , maybe your family , maybe your family if you are lucky . Because even our families are afraid to go to court or even to prison , they will also be persecuted. S o that is why , not because I was afraid , it was a strategy , I would win the support of the political parties , I will have cover , lawyers , as much as I put my own money for lawyers. That is part of the strategy that I used as a cover up. Cover up

I It enhances the influence ?

R Indeed

I It is moving from an individual sense to an institution sense?

R They knew I had a big follow up so they wanted to win me as much as I wanted to win them .So we came naturally together , that we had mutual interest between us.

I And this sort of moving into an institution cover with support of others, what was the name of that structure ? What would you call it ?Was it IPK ?

R Oh, not at all, everything was under FORD

I Does it have an informal name ? FORD

R Everything was under FORD, FORD. Everything FORD.

I FORD

R Before it split

I Ya , the original Ford

R Ya , before it split. And then we remained with Jaramogi of Ford Kenya

I You remained with Ford Kenya

R We remained with Jaramogi in Ford Kenya

I So what kind of , I mean did you get clerical help from FORD when you were trying to make pamphlets and leaflets ?

R FORD never gave us a penny as much as we were honest with them, we did not need one. The only thing they told us is

I How did you get your pamphlets printed, you paid for them

- R One thing I did , I had my own money as I told you and a few other contributions , we bought a very big Gestetner machine if you know it , that big printer
- I Ya , ya Gestetner
- R German made. We bought one of it and we put it in a place outside Mombasa, we told the people this is ten thousand per month, do the job
- I Ya
- R You see these idlers , these people who sit in the corners of the roads , they are more clever than the university students , they have creative ideas of their hardships , they can come out , they can come out with slogans nobody has them in life. And they really address the issues of the day, so you don't have a job , come , this is three months salary , every month you will come and collect ten thousand here. And you know every five hours I put people there. I never see them they never see me.
- I What would they do?
- R They would write their slogans, they would draw pictures, they would address issues and so on and so forth
- I Ya, would they talk to people, would they
- R On an individual level, and probably on group level, yes, yes , they went on the roads , they went to the villages
- I They were kind of messengers themselves?
- R Indeed, indeed
- I That is very interesting
- R Indeed. First of all I helped them , you see to give somebody ten thousand a month is no joke . That house which I put them , not only with the machines , everything, food was there, goats were there , a cook was there for them even if they need to sleep we had beds over there , we furnished them with anything they wanted. They were not there to remain but they were there to be facilitated
- I You gave them a place to stay
- R Everything. They have their homes , they go in and out but the only thing I did not want the government to know or KANU to know where we were, how I was operating
- I You keep that clandestine?

R Yes indeed

I So these youth wingers...??667 . You are from the Coast, I don't want you to get cold , shall we move inside?

R Why?

I Are you cold?

R No, not at all.

I Are you sure ?

R I have been in Germany for many years I am German by blood
(laughs)

I I don't want you to get cold. So, organisationally wise, you were under the cover of FORD? That is true.

R That is right

I Did FORD actually supply you with any money or any

R Money no.

I Legal protection ?

R Eehh, yes, some , some, few lawyers , some few, some few lawyers

I??667 gave you , a little bit of that

R Yes, few lawyers, tickets for elections , that we choose our own people , our representations , from

I Right , eeh

R Yeah, from all levels. They denied anybody....

I Telephones or anything like that

R Aaah, no, nothing no facilitation at all , other than.....

I No, no, facilitation

R Yeah , nothing at all

I So , in a sense, the organisational help that you got was something which you created yourself?

R Indeed on the coastal level , our own, our own , yeah!

I Hmmmh, with , some , some financial support from sympathisers which, which would be

R Within our society

I Coastal people , right

R Yeah , some , eeh , three four people , not more than that

I Okay , just a few , just a few

R Everybody , most of the people were afraid of us , some people hated us, you know and old habits are hard to die, they never believed that these changes are for the betterment.

I I am sure there were some, in , in , eeh , ...??671. If I remember correctly , help me if I am wrong , ...??672 ten years ago. But , here were , there were, some muslim leaders who were definitely against what you were doing

R Many of them

I Okay

R Oh, we have a small problem , and this could be within the subject or out of the subject

I Yeah

R You see, most of the mosques in , in , in the coast and generally in Kenya, have been paid from outside, either Saudia Arabia , either Iran , most of ,I am not one of them, I never belong any mosque, I am not an Imam myself, as much as I preached as much as I lectured, much as I have participated in politics , but I am , I have never been part of that deal. Never have I any penny from any outside government.

I Okay

R Yeah, that is , that is

I Totally independent

R That is for sure , that is for sure

I And you wanted it that way

R Oh, that is in principle, but it is my nature that ,eeh.

I Did you seek their support and they just said , no you are too much trouble , you know , we don't wanna be with you (laughs).

- R Bobb, Bobb, as I told you , part of the gift eeh is my strength , my principle. I believe , small means but great achievements , small means but fgreat achievements
- I In a sense , that's what you did, wasn't it?
- R Indeed, aha, that's the achievement, everybody thanks me. Today, you know, we have 23 ambassadors just from the coast alone. We have about 11 assistant ministers, that's not a joke.
So these small means, to get back to it, it seems, it seems like it may not be important to you but it is very interesting. To understand how small means can make great achievements, you are hiring kids, some of them unemployed, the young men. You, you putting out things with donations from three or four people but it's not a massive in pouring of funds from Saudi Arabia, or anything like that...
- R But you see with that machine,
- I Yeah
- R We had everything there
- I ?692?
- R we had all the papers there for probably supply for two or three years together, everything was supplied. We did not need any other budget apart from tea, coffee, you know and so on, light food.
- I But then, if you were to categorise your organisation strength, it was kind of an organisation that you created it, did it have a name, or was there a name to this thing?
- R People did have that IPK euphoria, people did have that coastal regionalism, that we are coastals and we want our rights. They had that spirit collectively. Yeah,yeah.
- I So when, when, when an ordinary person will talk about this, they say IPK
- R The majority, the majority of the beneficiaries in this cause were non-muslims to be honest with you. I never draw the lines of helping a particular society or community- I help everybody. But most of the people who were promoted in the government who, who did benefit financially, are the non-muslims. I reached more non-muslims than muslims.
- I You crossed the lines so to speak.
- R Even in here Nairobi University, you can go and ask them. I one time spent 8 million in a day; people said we don't have fees- ten thousand each. We don't

have I don't know what, ten thousand. You go and ask. I spent a lot of money just in one day.

I Where did you get the money?

R It was from somebody here in Mombasa. I had about 1.4 million that day and somebody gave me a cheque of about 6 million.

I so you had a few financial backers who said, look we believe in what you are doing

R Oh yeah, for sure

I We don't wanna come out in front, but we, we will do it?

R Oh yeah, I did not want our cause to be materialistic. Indeed, you see...

I But you had their money, to make this work, ...?719?

R Now if you furnish somebody with his fees for a whole year, do you expect that people to forget you

I No

R You've won their spirit forever. And remember, it could be his third year in the university.

I where does it leave ..., in terms of hmmm, I mean, I.. it seems like you sort of formed an underground organisation to begin with, a little tiny thing and you came public, but still working on the edges, I mean you don't wanna stand in front of the youth wingers and say, here I am. So you come public, but then your organisation, it seems like, kind of , disappears after a while.

R In '97, in '97, not only my, not only was I in prison because I did not have the time to address my people very much, after I came out of prison, there was a...

I In 19...

R In 2000

I It is.., two years are gone.

R Yes, yes, yes. The government had a different mood, and a different eeh,idea and probably a different eeh, attitude towards me. They wanted an engagement with me, a civilized engagement with me.

I Yeah, okay

R And I did make a bridge with them you know one way or the other. I did, I did make a bridge with them . Now this time , my strategy is , or was , to tell them that as long as you are listening , and my achievements are coming slowly or whatever, I thank you for it. This is what I wanted to tell them. But in the other hand, I have this vision of my own. Eeuh , without , without

I What is it?

R As I told you , it is constitutionalizing our people over there ,

I Yeah, okay

R Gaining , gaining all the land and property that has been taken away

I Right

R Not only am I talking about the forests, am not talking about the forests or the used up land, I am even talking about the property within the city itself , almost everything has been looted

I Mmmmh

R That is the place where we wanted to

I Land titles

R Yes, indeed

I And more jobs...??741

R Yes, psychological torture

I Economics

R Psychological torture. The people have been, people, people they have suffered. I am telling you , if , if you just could see somebody coming out of prison just because he has been imprisoned for ten, fifteen or twelve years because he has smoked marijuana or whatever, you would feel, these people are better , these people were tortured . Here , pieces of fire , not only of cigarettes, but pieces of charcoal itself here, these people were tortured.

I For what reason ?

R No, they say you were destroying the country , they make people be afraid

I You mean some of the followers that you have ?

R Oh , yeah

I And your own followers?

R Oh yeah, and ,and , and

I So , while you were known, they don't wanna harm you , but with some of the unknowns , were harmed?

R Oh , yeah, oh yeah, let us assume some of them did use to smoke marijuana, but not all of them. Yeah

I Yeah , yeah, no well , yeah

R No all of them

I Right

R And they used to take them into group by groups.

I So they were a lot of people arrested then?

R Eehh, quite a number , not much, quite a good number. T he first , the first block if I remember very well was eighteen, the second one was about 108, of course in different police stations , eeh

I Mmmmh

R And on the coastal region , 102 was not much

I Yeah, so there has been eeh, may be a little more than a hundred

R Yeah, yeah, even out , but this were for a long period, there were for a long. The others were two weeks , three months and so on. But the others were 6 months , and so on and so forth. Eehh, we did spend some money with , with the lawyers , to help us

I You mentioned eeh , briefly that you did not support the IPPG but did you support the mass media actions leading up to the eeh, the demonstrations , the mass actions in 1997 where they were demanding change?

R When I came out from Germany, I wanted to show the government I was stronger on the national level, I was spearheading those demonstrations , here in Nairobi , if you remember, go to the

I No, I wasn't here

R I spearheaded those years

I Okay , okay

R What hurt me most is the last day before the IPPG , we had a very, very solid agreement that we boycott the elections. I t was about 11.30 in the morning

and we had tea together with most of the ministers and the members of parliament, like Kibakis, Shikukus, and others. In the afternoon at 2.30, people come there and tell us people are receiving money outside Ufungamano, the same people who were there the other day

I Yeah, I was

R I spoke, if you remember

I I remember

R I told the people, come out of this gate and go to receive money. They were paying members of parliament five million, leaders of political parties 7 million, normal people 2 million. I was one of them who was given 2 bags of 7 million each, I rejected. I was given 40 million and I said no that day. And I went out to look at the trucks that brought the money

I There were trucks?

R Of course, eeh, what do you call these mini-lorries of, of, of

I Yeah, with bags of money?

R Of course, bags of

I To try to get you to come out of there?

R No, they called somebody, you, you, not everybody. Not, not every activist. Heavy people, heavy

I MPs?

R Yes, heavy, they were there, I said it in front, I think you were there.

I I was there

R I told Mutava Musyimi, he was one of them. I said, please you were here, you are an eye witness that people were coming out to receive money. Some of them came back, most of them went out

I Where did Musyimi go?

R No, no, he was there. No, that person is alright, he is good, he is good, he is honest, he is the only thing that, he is very compromising sometimes, but otherwise he is good, well principled

I Well, but then MPs as a whole moved out...?

R I am telling you, most of the political elites, they diluted us, they diluted us, even the activists, the strong activists were given money

I You ,you I assume that other people can verify that .I wasn't here,but there are others who will say that , right ?You are not the only one saying that,right ?

R Oh yes,of course, we have some honest people , oh yes, some people eeh, the language they were telling us , we will lose our jobs , we will not be MPs anymore. Most of

I Do you think , do you think Willy Mutunga, could confirm what you are saying here?

R Aah, maybe yes. O h, yeah, he knows, eeh , he may do it , he may not do it . Eeh to be honest , this is out of record, yeah , it is out of record

I I will turn that off . That is recording again. Tell me, what was your motivation , not just in ah, an intellectual way in he very beginning, where in your life do you find the roots of someone who says , okay , I think , I am gonna stand up and try to do something about these issues?

R Eeeeh, in life the inner senses , the spirits are motivated by only two things, and that is from my own ruling or judgement. First of all, it is a personality that always inspires others. Could be a political leader, could be a clergy, it it it could even be an old aged person in a town or a village, whatever, yeah, as social gathering also inspires people. So first of all it is the personality of a person . You know the likes of Kennedy, the likes of Martin Luther King

I Charisma

R Indeed , indeed

I Yeah

R That has a lasting impact on me before, with this I mention Muliro and Ronald Ngala and others , they did that

I They inspired you ?

R Of course

I As a child or as an adult

R Back in 1964 , 1966

I Ngala inspired you , who else?

R Eeeh , Masinde Muliro , Tom Mboya

I Okay, what inspired you ?

R But also I read a lot about Mahatma Gandhi and Kennedy, Mahatma, Nelson Mandela. I came to know him only in 1978. I did read about others , Chris

Hanni Biko and the people before O liver Tambo in school and so on

I They are outstanding individuals in your readings

R Not only for me , for anybody, even in religion, people like Jesus , people like Mohammed never went to school but they were inspired by others. Indeed there is what I can call divine inspirations and there is what I can call human inspiration. Divine inspiration is a gift people like Jesus and so on , these are divinely inspired. But at the same time , that impact is gone in them , followed by others. I am sure they were influenced by others

I So you had human inspiration?

R For sure , foe sure. Well with a clean heart obviously, we have these divine feelings in us, we are also blessed as much as God's people as well

I Well, it is one thing to be inspired by someone but it is another thing to take that inspiration and apply in a problem, where did you begin ?...??843

R Sooner or later , you will explode, that is natural. You might not explode on a national level but on a city, for sure if this thing touches your heart

I Would you , you know , as an individual?

R I exploded

I When?

R Well , I started lecturing back in 1982, religion

I Where?

R Here in Kenya and outside Kenya

I Lecturing where though?

R Well, to some schools , I visit schools , we have a gathering with our

I As a volunteer?

R For sure

I On what topic?

R Eeeh, first, I had this political blood in me

I (Laughs)

R Yes, I had this political blood in me

I Where does that come from Sheikh?

R It is natural, somehow it is a gift and the other thing is by dying you get somebody being moved by an opportunity and so on, it does come. This is something I call it , the law of nature where for sure God says I have a soldier to face every evil. As much as every disease has hypernesia, every disease has a medicine

I Eeh

R Every disease has hypernesia, every disease has a medicine, that is for sure. So God has his

I Ehe, so do you feel like a soldier responding to a particular problem?

R Naturally. I remember I even fought my mother because of a right at my home and she hated me because she liked my brothers and sisters and at the end of the day probably she said you are a rebel in the house but you are the best of my children because you say the truth always.

I Do you know , do you remember the incident ?

R (Laughs). It was about , I was denied of going to learn to swim when I was in class six or seven, during my primary days, I was denied of going to see a football match, I was denied of getting money to go off to social gatherings. I was to be told always, study , study, study and to me , I thought that was oppression

I Ya.I am sure every child would look at it like that

R Indeed , I was gifted , she thought that I would be the best of her children but to me that was oppression. I wanted some social air. I wanted to be happy. Why my brothers and sisters , why not me ? I rebelled against that and I said I will sleep outside, I will run away from you.

I Did you get it ?

R Indeed, oh, the situation changed. Oh, it was too much for me , I told her it is either you are my mother or you are not my mother. You either listen to me. And I rebelled

I Ya

R I do not cry but I was fierce until today. It was heavy , it was heavy

I And she came back?

R I even fight my neighbours because of my friends , if I see them that they do not , this was during my primary days

I But your mum came back and said

- R That she was wrong. She said as much as you are rebellious but you are the best of my children because you speak your heart. She knew that I was speaking honestly
- I Did that make any impression on you ?
- R Eeh, an encouragement . It was not a certificate , you know of a graduation but to me it was a spirit of encouragement , she made me feel like a human being, and that is what I wanted
- I Eeh
- R She solidified my spirit. One time I remember in secondary school, in the first year of secondary school , you know we were studying with boys and girls
- I In Mombasa
- R In Mombasa and it happened that a new headmaster came and he had this
- I This was a primary school?
- R No, secondary school, first year and he looked at me and he said from tomorrow you will be the leader of a group, accidentally he didn't mean to choose me , in fact the first week of his profession, of his occupation and he said from tomorrow you will be a leader, I said for what , he said everybody here make sure he doesn't come with long trousers.
- I No longer long , they had to be short ?
- R They had to be short (laughs). And we were boys and girls in the school. So the second day I did not tell anybody , the second day we all came with long and he took a stick and he asked me what happened? He said why didn't you apply my law, I said it was not a law. And he told me why , on assembly before we got to class, it was on assembly and I was answering the headmaster
- I In front of everyone?
- R Everybody, and the teachers were there , why are you doing this , I told him you should have asked me yesterday and not today. As a respect let me answer you politely, I told him two things, number one, that everytime, every lunch time from 12.30 to 1.30 , we get an off to go and pray and we need to have long trousers under the knees if I come with a trouser here you will say am crazy so it is got to be
- (interruption, start another tape)*
- R In this school , we want to get out without any sexual abuse or any sexual bad record. So please do not allow us to stay eh, in short trousers, you know, and

we start playing foolish of the girls or the girls playing fool of us. We would not like that.

I What did he say ?

R He punished me , he punished me

I Infront of everyone?

R And I was expelled with the three people who supported me , and then I had a bigger group and what I did, I made sure that I went to the Provincial Commissioner. At that time, it was very heavy for somebody to the approach the Provincial Commissioner, he was very strong. And I went to his office and I told him two things; either you give me a police to take me back to school or you come to school. And he handed me the Provincial Education Officer, plus a policeman. And we went there , they listened to us and we argued with the headmaster . And then the second day the headmaster apologised to me in person for having punished me, yeah. He hit me here with canes, yeah. H e apologised and I shook his hand and I told him , you are like my father, you have taught me something, and I taught you something. I told him you have taught me something and I taught you something. You are my teacher and my father, but am also, am a teacher to you today.

I You continued?

R We became very good friends after that

I Did the long trousers continue?

R Yes indeed, oh yeah indeed. I achieved, I won. Yeah. Indeed you see,

I You became friends with your enemies didn't you?

R As it is , if I have a cause, I do not take enemies as enemies, I treat them as opponents in a game, yeah, in a game , politely, liberally- I am very flexible, you see, am very flexible. Even in theology, you see, Bobb, I did not go to a theological school, I did not take Islam on any...?? I did sit with high scholars indeed. I studied dot from high scholars, and I read a lot of religious books, both Christian, Islamic and Jewish. But the thing that I do when I get this good knowledge from people, I like to weigh and I like to judge on my own. So this has given me orthodoxy means, I do allow in my mind and in my spirits, before I sleep, any acceptable view, anything that is positive, I like to absorb it, and memorize it and build it in my heart. That is what I have done since childhood. So that is why I am always flexible, I am very..?? you can call me liberal, but an orthodox; I accept anything positive, very orthodox.

I?? to say fundamentalist?

R I t does not apply, anybody who lives with me would love me, oh, I go to bars, I sit with people who smoke marijuana, I go to the hill..??, I go to the you know good people, to the bad I have nothing....?? Even Moi, as much as I

have been very bitter with his leadership, I have nothing personal against him. Nothing.

I Have you ever sat down and talked to him?

R He has asked me many times, but I have never met him in person, only once, during Jaramogi's burial.

I You never met one to one?

R No, no, not at all. I don't want to be paid. I don't want to be paid. That is to avoid the?? also, right? That is so, but that is so, otherwise I have nothing personal against him at all.

I You said the other day, let us pray for the head of state?

R Yes indeed.

I You meant it, didn't you?

R Of course, for sure for sure. Shariff Nassir I talk to him, I greet his hand like a father, we joke with each other and so on that if I tell him that if I go to elections, I will defeat you, he said well, because he tell me, because I am very old now, so you can run faster, I say no, even in 1992, I could have defeated you but you imprisoned me.

I Are you running this time, by any chance?

R At Mvita

I You are running for ...?? What is the area called?

R Mvita. MVITA

I So you are a candidate for ...??

R Yes, for Mvita

I Which party?

R Mombasa Central. That is the Centre of the town, Mombasa Central

I But I mean, is it Ford Kenya still?

R No, Green Party

I Green party?

R The Green Party

I Do you have a chance?

R 99 %. Nobody would defeat me there . Even in 1992, eeh...??

I I notice that?? The Greens

R The Greens. Haha

I That is a new party.

R No it is from Germany. When I lived in Germany, they gave me the lawyers, they supported me with money,

I Is it locally the only Coastal Party?

R No, no. Here the head of the Green party in Kenya is Professor Wangari Maathai, she is heading that

I Ooh, okay

R Professor Wangari

I She is the one that ran for the presidency on that ticket?

R That is right, on that ticket, yeah. Previously it is known as the Green Party

I Olay , Okay

R It is in Germany. I t is in Mexico, it is Venezuela

I I know, I know, I know

R I t is Greens International

I Are you the only representative running for parliament?

R Eeh, here is in Kenya, we have ten until now

I Ten candidates?

R Yes, for Greens

I??

R More will come, more will come

I N one elected so far?

R Not a single one in 1997

- I But will you make it this time?
- R Oh, hopefully, as I told you , am very optimistic about it. I have no doubt about it , nobody would stand me there. First of all I see no candidate that any candidates that makes me sweat. Secondly, my track record is so clean, eeh, they know about me. Even on a presidential level, I will influence a lot of votes, that is where my problem lies, who should I back, that is my problem. But otherwise....??
- I I will turn that off...??I wanna ask you about Civil society in the year 2002, right now, hum, it is a different ball game from 1992, the Civil society seems organised. Are they effective?
- R Aah, honestly they are not well organised, they are organised but they are well organised. The organs are not facilitated, the organs are not...?? People do not attend meetings, people do attend functions, but people who call for those functions do not facilitate these people
- I What is the difference, I don't quite get it, they come to the meetings but they don not work?
- R People are not given the chances to express their honest views, aah, most of those genuine people who probably have better ideas cannot attend because the facilitators are choosy and so on.
- I So it is of an elitist movement...??
- R You are right, you are right, there is a lot of money being poured only to some individuals .As much as probable the group would be a thousand times bigger than what it is now with a bigger push. But those people, it is either the Kenyan system is behind or those donors do not know how to push their people well
- I So it is not as strong as it appears then?
- R Oh, not at all. O h, it will make no major difference, Moi can rig the elections, Moi can go in without a constitution, nothing will happen. Ooh for sure, for sure. I am assuming Bobb one thing, that is even with my participation in these coming elections , even if we try or do not try, we are going with the old system, we will not go with the new constitution, that I believe, that is what my assumption is
- I Well, there has been a progression in terms of the advancement of human rights and the strengthening of the civil society from 1997 to 2000?
- R Psychologically, there is a major improvement, a tremendous improvement, big achievements. Psychologically the people are more relieved today, the people are satisfied, oh there is a big satisfaction on the part of?? It is only as I told you, they are not strong to see , to reach the benefits or the fruits of those achievements easily, but psychologically, spiritually even physically,

people are less... away from damage or harm today than they were 10-15 years ago. Oh, people are , they are happy, there is a comfort, there is a consolation, there is a lot of consolation.

I But the authoritarian state is still there?

R Aah, no not, they are downing into pieces, the only thing that is with them, is that they are holding the media, and that is the biggest part of..., people are eating today only from the media. You see, there as no true messengers very much for the cause, very few, very few. Ah, the second thing, the government still uses these corrupt elements to corrupt the societies even on a few, on a small level, by giving people money, probably cars, probably a piece of land and so on. Still those things have been used to spread propaganda on a social level.

I And the constitution hasn't been changed?

R I t will not be changed, with this government, we must have a new government. Yes, I don't know of miracles, I stand to be proven wrong. I f there is a big push, miraculously something can happen, but the way I know Moi today, and those stakeholders from outside like the British, they will not allow an easy change at all. Mass action will not work today too.

I You think that if there is mass action it will not work today?

R Will not work today

I Why not?

R The first reason is , the mass action will be election driven fever. People will be inspired by the politicians to go or to feel that the importance of a constitution is the elections as majority of Kenyans are not politically matured. They will not know the aim of the politicians and pour politicians are shrewd ; they can make them an assembly because of a constitution and yet they promote their political agenda and at the end of the day, they will come with a raw deal like the IPPG, and so on and so forth. We have seen them, we have seen them, we have a bitter experience with them. Even in 1992, we were split no because of anything other than the shrewdness of our politicians; so that is one. The other thing is , the political parties themselves, the major political parties themselves are the major giants of the game , the heavy weights, do not want a constitutional change, they themselves in person, they would love to have this constitution ,so that as some of them think of revenge, some of them would have to have the whole cake, some of them probably have elements of corruption in the past and so on. Those could be the side reasons of no commitment, that is why they have no commitment.

I That is why more off the presidential aspirants are wearing yellow ribbons?

R They are not committed very much, they are not committed. Non of these people

- I In 1992, 1997 and 2002 they never stood for reduced presidential powers?
- R We have pushed the tree, and we can see the roots but still this tree is so heavy it needs a bigger push to put it down and the roots could come up. Corruption in Kenya is the cause of all our problems.
- I How do you get that bigger push?
- R Oh, the bigger push is....
- I It is not an easy question. I am asking but it is a sincere question.
- R President Moi is leaving and single handedly, he has managed to control this authoritarian , authoritarian eeh, puzzling with the people's minds. He is been very clever, he is not shrewd, neither is he very strong , but he is clever. He knows how to play with our minds, not individuals but the society or the community itself. Eeeh, if we allow people like Uhuru to be there, we will still not get a better deal or something better than what Moi would give us. That is also a bigger problem. Now the bigger push is ...
- I Yeah, how do you organise them, you had some experience with matches and things, the civil society has it's problems as you said, how do , how do people get change? Short of a revolution?
- R You see, egoism, the lust for power and material gain are the three weaknesses of our opposition politicians. So the three basic ones, these people will have the wisdom or even the courage to do anything, whether a protest or a civilized method. My approach today is different from 1992, let me be honest, I am more mature today.
- I People change, and they learn from experience
- R No, no. It is an achievement, it is not a change, not at all. I have enhanced my methods because I can see the reasons that have defeated this ...??. Moi
- I Alright, I am interested in knowing how the methods evolved
- R Moi is going out, he is resigning. I am pretty sure by a margin of 99% maybe a little less that Uhuru will never make it. I am concerned that anybody coming with the present system will not change also, I am trying to bridge my links with anybody that gives me an ear, for the betterment of the country's and for the betterment of them, and for the betterment of the people. I am opening avenues. I am trying to explore the possibilities of reaching the people through them and not myself. I might be the indirect force for the change of heart and in the change of strategy provided we achieve what we want.
- I What new strategies would be effective compared to the old strategies like marches and protests?

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R Is to satisfy, is to satisfy behind the doors those concerned, those authorities whether it is Moi, Uhuru Kenyatta or the opposition that they will face a fate not less than what the Zambian president has faced, eeh Chiluba or even president Kamuzu Banda of Malawi

I Kaunda for one

R Even Kaunda to a less extend. But Chiluba has suffered more.

I Some kind of safety guarantee that will allow the country to move on

R Very much

I Infact there was a bill passed yesterday that presented first formal reading, a kind of a benefits package in a sense

R Also a generation as long as my humble knowledge is concerned is about 40 years so if you take the generation of Kenyans today since 1963 until 2003 , it is 40 years. So I believe like if you have been at the

I That is usually called two generations , one into one.?

R That is right. But to me it is only one, because if you were born in 1963 I can tell you majority of those people in parliament today , less than 10 percent are 40 years of age. You see most of them are over 45 yeas of age , you see what I mean?

I True

R So they are not part of us

I So your point is ?

R My point is if you have been to Uhuru park when the Rainbow Alliance was there two weeks ago, I am telling you Bobb

I I should have been

R 90 % of those people who were there were youth , that crowd was not less than three hundred thousand. They were sending a clear message , this is a new generation, this is anew demand, this is our future. They were sending a clear message . Now that is one of the forums even without telling what you want to tell , the presence of three hundred thousand plus is a message to itself by whoever wants to see, it is a message to itself.

I How do you translate that into political change?

- R It should tell Moi you see these people can go tot the streets, these people can influence votes, these people can revenge, these people can take the government by force, these people can bring a social disorder and so and so forth. You simply, you simply pass it over in a civilized manner behind the doors and let those people come out and either repent or either do something positive.
- I Instead of trying to say get people's attention by the streets and by protests and by these sort of things
- R I t works (coughs)
- I Which were effective in 1992
- R I t works, Bobb believe me it works in every situation even in good situations
- I Okay, so that still works
- R It works even in good situation, you see human knowledge is promoted
- I But the added element here is behind the scenes negotiations , discussions face the ..??159
- R It is not negotiations , it is guiding them to make the right message, to have the right speech and to use the right words. I t is not a matter of making these people moulded, you are not changing anything from them, you will still remain Moi, you see what I mean?
- I Stratifying common interest?
- R T hat is right. O r common ground or common
- I Or common ground
- R But the hope is as long as these people are going and losing , make sure in the next few months we will have another better government that is why I am hopeful of that , so using them in the last minute, co-ordinating with them , or co-operation with them is victory by itself
- I So it is less of spending outside and throwing the rock against the wall as it is trying to open the doors so the people can talk o each other face to face and say look we have got some common issues here let's talk about it, you wanna be secure in the future we want a new nation.
- R Success is the best revenge. Success is the best revenge. If you succeed and your enemy and your enemy succeeds, that is the best revenge you have given him, he will be bitter forever saying that I have mistreated such and such a person , I have done wrong and so on , success is the best revenge.

I I don't actually understand that , what do you mean?

R It is very hard for us to vote and elect Kibaki as the next president and Kibaki comes and jails people and loots the economy an does not improve anything, we have not succeeded , we are revenging and wasting time. The best thing is to have a better man than Moi and tell him Moi, we did not jail you , we did not imprison you, we did not kill you , we are not going to kill anybody but this is what must be done like the way Mandela did.

I Ya

R Mandela did not throw any white person from South Africa, he never jailed anybody, he never took anything from anybody, you see what I mean, that is the best way to do , is to succeed. Success is the best revenge and this is Robert Kennedy, he says success is the best revenge

I You mean you help the person that has

R That has done wrong to you

I You turn them into success. I n other words they, okay , I think I know what you mean.

R More will come to you

I It comes down to one thing, love your enemies is another way of saying it

R That is right but in a practical manner

I You have been crying ..??185 to someone and suddenly they turn around and say wauuh, nobody is hurting me

R Yes, nobody will hurt them of course

I And they heal themselves

R I f the next government comes, I will be the next one to tell my comrades in government, please do not harm anybody, whoever has looted, follow the legal path, whoever has killed let us forgive him, this is what I will do and am sorry to say this in advance.

I You actually have already said it at Ufungamano house

R Okay, oh yes

I When you said pray for the press. It is one of the reasons I crawled over here to meet you.

R And I quoted Jeremiah in the bible and I told Musyimi you are a spiritualist and the bible says reach your opponent to seek for a solution. I quoted the book of Jeremiah

I Well am gonna let you go

END