

# IDENTITY, NATIONHOOD AND RISING CRIME

## A PRESENTATION AT A CMD WORKSHOP ON “THE RISING INSECURITY IN KENYA”

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Honorable Ministers,  
Honorable Members of Parliament,  
Leaders of Political Parties,  
Distinguished Members of the Press,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

The title of my presentation, “Identity, Nationhood and Rising Crime”, makes it imperative for me to define the words ‘identity’, ‘nationhood’, ‘crime,’ ‘insecurity’ and ‘enemy’.

### Insecure

1. Not sure or certain; doubtful: *unemployed and facing an insecure future.*
2. Inadequately guarded or protected; unsafe: *A shortage of military police made the air base insecure.*

## **Insecurity**

- **the state of being subject to danger;**
- **the anxiety you experience when you feel vulnerable and insecure (Anxiety : a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some -usually ill-defined- misfortune)**

## **Nation**

- **The people living in, belonging to, and together forming, a single state with common aspirations**
- **A relatively large group of people organized under a single, usually independent government; a country.**
- **The territory occupied by such a group of people:**
- **The government of a sovereign state.**
- **A people who share common customs, origins, history, and frequently language; a national**

## **Identity**

**A sense of belonging to/identifying with a certain group- a nation is characterized by a political culture which is associated with self-determination and with which people self-identify.**

## **Nationhood**

**The state of being a nation**

## **Enemy**

- **A person who is actively opposed to someone else.**
- **A hostile nation or force, or a member of it;**
- **An opponent or adversary.**

## **Crime**

- **A crime is a wrongdoing classified by the state as a felony or misdemeanor.**

- **A crime is an offence against a public law.**
- **This word, in its most general sense, includes all offences, but in its more limited sense is confined to felony the difficulty of exactly defining and describing every act which ought to be punished, the vital and preserving principle has been adopted; that all immoral acts which tend to the prejudice of the community are punishable by courts of justice.**

**Why would Kenyans especially the youth:**

- 1) Feel insecure?**
- 2) Lack identity?**
- 3) Lack nationhood?**
- 4) Turn to crime?**

**The reasons are many and varied.**

**A. Insecurity stems from the feeling that:**

- (a) There are thugs wherever you are be it in Muthaiga or Mathare/ Kibera**
- (b) That the police, who are supposed to protect us, are not only failing to do this but, quite often, they have resulted in:**
  - (i) Harassing people with uncalled for arrests aimed at eliciting bribes or, worse,**

**(ii) Themselves becoming the most brutal thugs.**

**(c) There is a little hope that the hard life will change in the near future.**

#### **B. The lack of identity**

**One has to have something to identify with, e.g. a culture, belief, etc. but Kenyans and the youth in particular find that there is nothing to identify themselves with.**

#### **C. Nationhood:**

**At independence, there was a lot to be proud of – a new nation that had just conquered the coloniser with aspiration to conquer illiteracy, hunger and disease. This hope has faded away as the years passed by. In addition, through the influence of our leaders, the Kenyans have come to think of themselves as 42 different ‘nations’ each of which has different aspirations and expectations with the fallacy that if you belong to tribe A you can always get a job or a favour from government. Of course, since this is not true, those from tribe A end up being disfranchised because not only do they not receive the favours but they also end up being ostracized by other Kenyans thereby suffering double tragedy**

#### **D. Crime**

**As hopelessness set in, many Kenyans have found crime as the only solution to their problems:-**

- (i) As the vent for their anger;**
- (ii) As a means to eke a living;**
- (iii) As a means of getting even with the enemy;**

## **E. Enemy**

As defined earlier, an enemy is a person who is actively opposed to someone else. With the unfair distribution of wealth and resources, many poor Kenyans feel aggrieved by those who are 'well to do' whom they feel have taken, if not stolen, an unfair share of the national cake. Unfortunately 'well to do,' like most other expressions, is very relative. In deciding who is 'well to do', thugs at time attack others who are poor.

**The main cause of our problems is the way our leaders have handled our political and economic life as the following details will show:**

When the colonialists came to Africa, they whipped-up the tribal differences in order to effectively colonise us. Indeed, they went further and created differences between the same communities to entrench this policy. There was the chief who had power to arrest, beat and lock up an individual. He also had power to seize property. This legacy was handed to our leaders by our colonisers. What is sad, indeed most

despicable, is that our leaders have perfected the art of divide and rule. They have whipped-up tribal differences as long as they were benefiting. Our politicians see nothing other than self to such an extent that **"nothing is good until it is good for me and nothing is bad until it is bad for me"**. They have succeeded time and again to manipulate us. We elect them once, they mess us up but we elect them another time and yet a third and fourth time. There is a saying that "you can fool a person all the time but you cannot fool all the people all the time". The converse of this saying hold very true in politics. Why? Because politicians know what nerves to touch, **the nerve of survival!** If your survival is threatened

there is nothing you will not do. Our politicians manipulate us with **“our people are being targeted”**. Unfortunately, what politicians do ostensibly for our good but in reality for their self aggrandisement, has in many instances resulted in civil strife. Kosovo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Rwanda are but a few examples.

Kenya has had its history. She started off very well with **all the tribes of Kenya joining together to fight for independence from the common enemy—the coloniser. On attainment of this goal, the few Kikuyus around Kenyatta started behaving as if Kenya belonged to them.** They took large tracks of land and amassed wealth through government contracts to the total exclusion and detriment of other Kenyans including the Mau Mau fighters who had lost property and relatives while they were in the forest fighting for uhuru and land. Unfortunately, this created bad blood between the Kikuyu in general and other tribes. The animosity came to its climax when Tom Mboya was killed and the Luo blamed his death on the Kenyatta Government. They vented their anger by throwing stones at Kenyatta’s motorcade during the official opening of the Russian-built Nyanza Provincial General Hospital in Kisumu. The police resulted in killing a number of innocent people which heightened the hatred between the Luo and the government. Threatened by possible Luo uprising, Kenyatta and his

advisers warned the Kikuyu of the dangers posed to the ‘Nyumba Ya Mumbi’ and forced the Kikuyus to take oath to protect themselves resulting in the infamous ‘KANU PRIVATE’ vehicles transporting Kikuyus to oath centres which were above police scrutiny. The oathing intensified the animosity between the Kikuyus and other tribes. This animosity was heightened when Moi took over from Kenyatta. Moi took a

deliberate effort to break the Kikuyu economic might in order to control them. **A clique of Kalenjins whipped up the tribal differences with the “excuse” the Kikuyus “ate” during Kenyatta’s reign, what is wrong with “us tasting”. They placed a Kalenjin in virtually every important post in government. With this, they ripped-off the economy.**

What is pathetic is that when the Kikuyus or the Kalenjins are accused of “eating”, it is only a very small clique of people who enjoy the power and protection from the top. And, using this, they loot the economy to the detriment of the rest of the tribe and the nation in general. And, when the clique is threatened with prosecution, it turns round crying “our people are being targeted” as if they shared their

loot with their tribesmen/women. Unfortunately, Kenyans swallow their leaders’ statements floater, hook and liner and arm ourselves to protect them even at the risk of losing our lives. How pathetic!

During Moi’s reign, tribal differences escalated to ethnic cleansing with the Molo and Likoni tribal clashes which were meant to reorganize tribal balance in preparation for the elections. All of sudden, Kalenjins who had lived with Kikuyus for several decades found that the Kikuyus were their arc enemies who had to leave Molo or die. The same situation prevailed in Likoni where, supposedly, the coastal people realized that the Luo with whom they had lived happily were now unwanted ‘foreigners’.

Luckily for Kenya, these clashes did not escalate to full scale tribal/ethnic wars covering the whole country because they had been started by people in government and it was possible to control the spread after their purpose had been served. **Of course, this is no guarantee that, in the future, government, or whoever starts tribal/ethnic clashes, will be able to contain the spread.**

**Kenyan is at crossroads especially as the elections draw near. Tribal/ethnic and, indeed, religious differences could cause havoc in this country. What is pathetic is the fact that politicians, who are well aware of what Rwanda went through (indeed some parliamentarians visited Rwanda to have first hand experience of the genocide) continue to whip-up tribal differences. Incredible!**

**Some of the Kenyan Politicians have lost their right to lead. Since the introduction of multiparty system, we have seen politicians who have changed their party five times. When a politician loses in the party nomination, he/she switches to another party. A politician disagrees with his/her colleagues, he moves to another party; a politician senses the defeat of his/her party, he/she moves to the party more likely to form the government. Luckily for them, there are currently 130 registered political parties in Kenya many of which were registered by people whose motive was none other than **creating a product to sell and make money!** We have seen in the last few months, huge shift in party affiliations of very senior politicians who aspire for the highest office in the land.**

**As the American would say “you aint seen nothin”. By the time we are casting votes later this year, there may be a thousand politicians who will move from one party to another.**

**Even worse is what has become the vogue since Moi times. A politician is elected to parliament through Party A. He/she is then enticed by the President with an appointment as a minister or an assistant minister. He joins the government declares his allegiance to another party that is in government yet remains in parliament. In 1966 the late Jaramogi Odinga, Bildad Kaggia, Ochieng Oneko, etc. lost their seat when they moved from**

**KANU to KPU, by a new law which required a parliamentarian, who changes his/her allegiance from the party, by which he/she went to parliament, to go back to the electorate and seek new mandate. Has this law changed or whatever happens today is an illegality that lawmakers use to retain their lucrative employment?**

**Can any politician in Kenya stand up and be counted as one who:**

- i) Believes and lives in an ideology;**
- ii) Is not motivated by selfish motives either to gain power or make money?**

**As Leonard Mambo Mbotela would ask**

**“Je huu ni ungwana?”**

**Our leaders have a big challenge. They have to change their ways. They need to be patriotic and do whatever they do not for their benefit but that of the electorate bearing in mind the words of Martin Luther King Jnr. who said “**

**An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity”.**

**What can we ordinary Kenyans do to stem out this threat if our leaders continue to set us against each other? Think, realize and act. Think of their motive; realize that they do it for their own selfish reasons;**

**and act to counter their tricks. Realize that we are Kenyans irrespective of where we come from appreciating that ethnicity is not a choice. Act by refusing to be swayed to despise/hate/fight each other for the selfish aims/gains of leaders.**

Martin Luther King said “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character”. Let us all say that we have a dream that one day we will create **ONE NATION, KENYAN, FOR THE ONE COUNTRY, KENYA, where:-**

- **We will judge issues not personalities!**
- **No person will be denied a job/opportunity because of his/her ethnicity/religion;**
- **Government projects will be initiated where they are deserved not because of the locality but because of the need of the people**

If we do this, we will be able to act as one people and we will have ensured that:-

- **We can refuse to be made to fight each other **ostensibly for our tribes but essentially for selfish gain of politicians** - woe upon the larger tribes who may think that they can dominate the smaller tribes (in Rwanda, after the Hutu had almost eliminated the Tutsi, the latter were able to overthrow the government of the former creating a big threat to the Hutu);**
- **We will elect our representatives for national and local governments not because they belong to what tribe but because they are the right people to represent us;**
- **We will be able to fight corruption by the well-connected people who, through corruption, indirectly steal our taxes and, when threatened with persecution, turn around and claim that “our**

**tribe is being targeted” as if whatever they stole/acquired corruptly was equally shared by their tribesmen/women.**

**LOOK AT THE KENYAN FLAG: DOES IT GIVE AN AREA THAT BELONGS TO ANY PARTICULAR TRIBAL/ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS GROUP?**

**This is the message ONE KENYA ONE NATION is endeavouring to preach.**

**It should be remembered that “The rule of dominant persons does not depend on political or economic power alone, but on persuading the ruled to accept an ideology that justifies the rulers’ privileged positions**

**and convinces the ruled that their best interests are being protected. Human being can bear oppression only to a certain extent beyond which they resist even if it means death”.**

**I now invite comments/questions from you because, as I said at the beginning, this is our common problem and we must own it. (I have literature on ONE KENYA ONE NATION that I will distribute after this talk).**

**I thank the organizers of this seminar for giving me the opportunity to address you but I thank you most sincerely for listening so intently.**

**May God bless you and our beloved COUNTRY, KENYA, and our tribeless KENYAN NATION**

**Thank You**