

Abstract:

In 27 December 2007, Kenyans went to the polls to elect their presidential, parliamentary, and civic leaders. This general election was described as replete with serious anomalies—a situation that continues to raise serious doubts about the validity of the electoral process. On 30 December 2007, after three days of uncertainty, the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) Chairman, Samuel Kivuitu, announced Mwai Kibaki's re-election amidst chaos. According to ECK, Kibaki (Party of National Unity – PNU) won the presidential election with 4,584,721 votes (46 percent), against 4,352,903 (44 percent) garnered by Odinga (Orange Democratic Party –ODM). The whole process was less than transparent, casting doubt on the credibility of the electoral outcome, especially the presidential election. The majority of those involved—whether media, civil society organizations, politicians, religious institutions, leaders, even ordinary citizens—were perceived as politically tainted, partisan, or compromised. Many felt that the churches, which prior to the referendum on the draft constitution of 2005 were regarded as voices of reason and moral authority, had failed in the 2007 election to provide visionary and unbiased leadership. This essay discusses the background to the violence and critically analyzes varied church responses as well as the implications of these responses for political stability in Kenya.