



WORLD
RISK &
GOVERNANCE

Decoding Kenyan Elections

16 Aug 2022

Summary

The results of the Kenyan Elections for 2022 were announced on 15 Aug, with voters from around the country and the diaspora casting ballots. Former Deputy President William Ruto and long-time opposition leader Raila Odinga squared off, with Odinga winning. This election cycle occurs during a period of severe economic discontent, with many Kenyans concerned about growing living costs, public debt, and widespread corruption. Kenya change in leadership could potentially help ease the socio-economic crisis facing the country, while re-assessing its role in the region.

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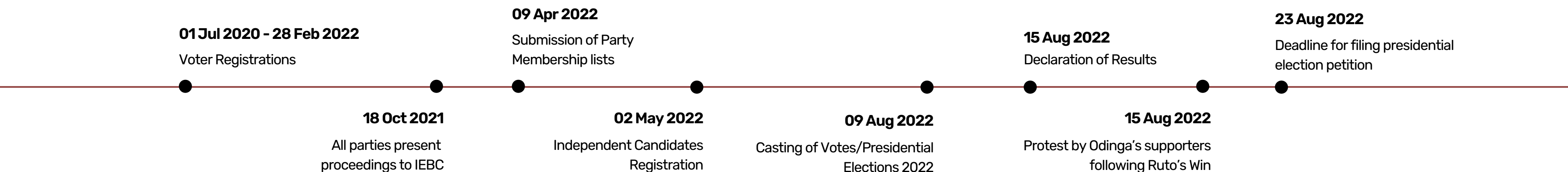
Kenyan Elections 2022 - Overview

Kenya's democratic elections have a fraught history. The democratic process in Kenya has sometimes led to violence in recent years. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) is mandated to conduct the general election for 22,120,458 registered voters, across a total of 46,229 polling stations.

The elections included voting for:

- The President and deputy president
- 47 governors and their deputies
- 47 members of the senate
- 47 women representatives
- 290 members of parliament
- 1,450 members of the County Assembly

Looming Threat of Violence: According to experts Kenya's political unrest might escalate into violence as only 26% of Kenyans trust the electoral commission and 23% trust the judiciary (NCIC report).





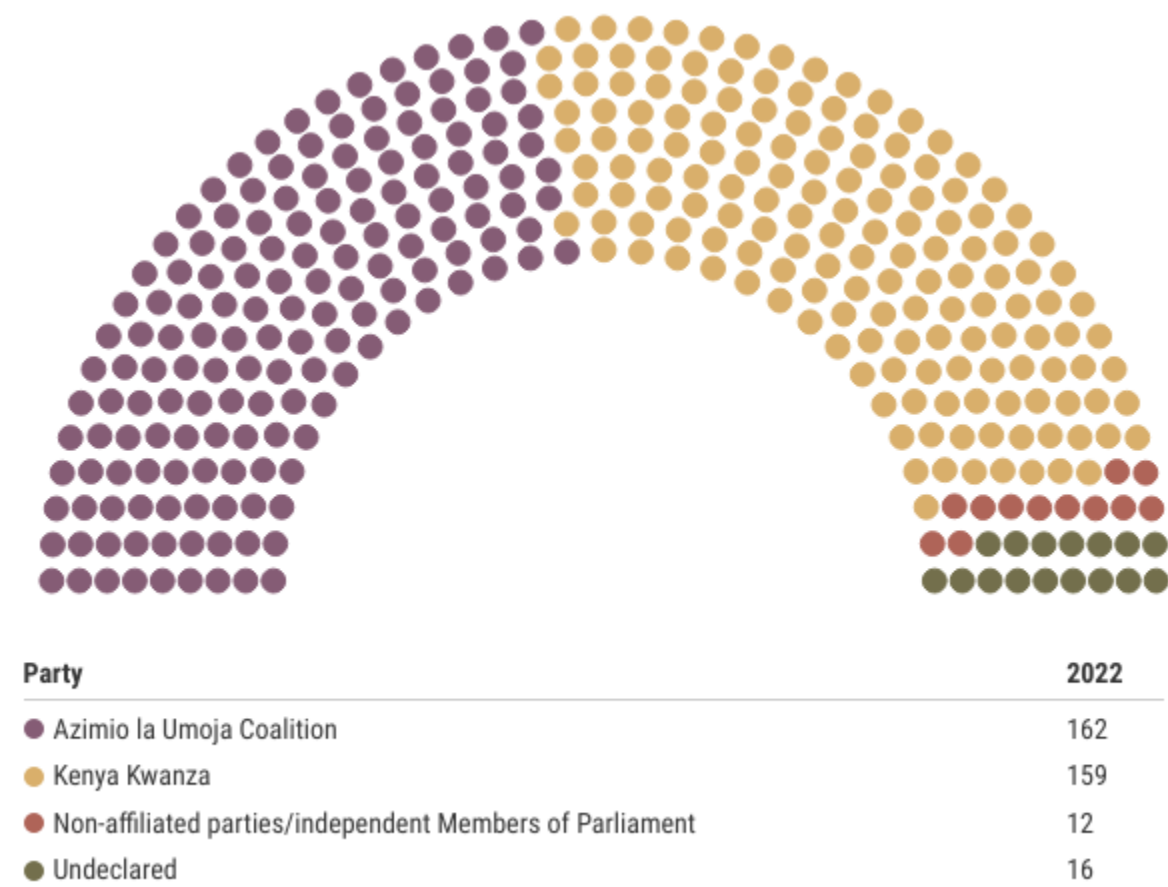
Kenyan Elections 2022 - Results

The election, which centred on the economy and the high cost of living, was participated by around 65% of Kenya's 22 million registered voters. Due to significant millennial unhappiness, the figure was lower than expected. In 2017, almost 78% of the electorate voted. To win the presidential race in the first round, a candidate needed:

- More than half of all the votes cast across the country.
- At least 25% of the votes were cast in a minimum of 24 counties.

Kenya Election Results 2022

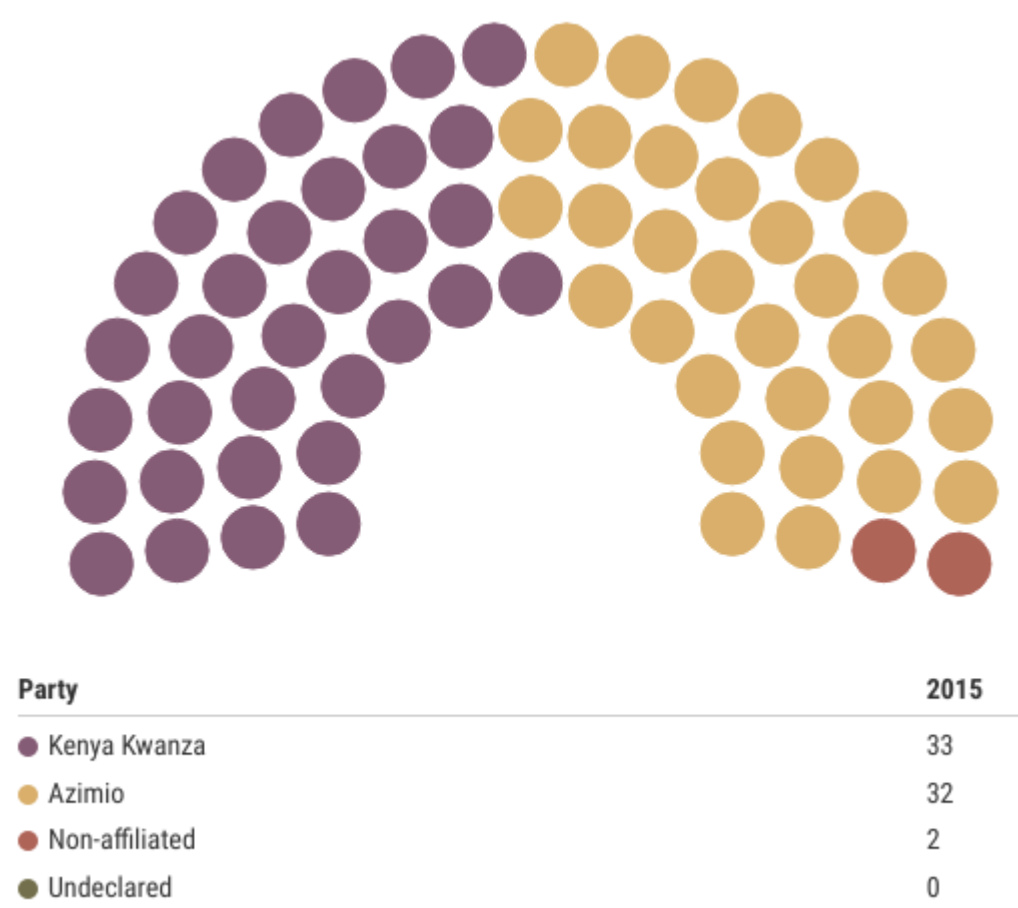
National Assembly



Source: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

Kenya Election Results 2022

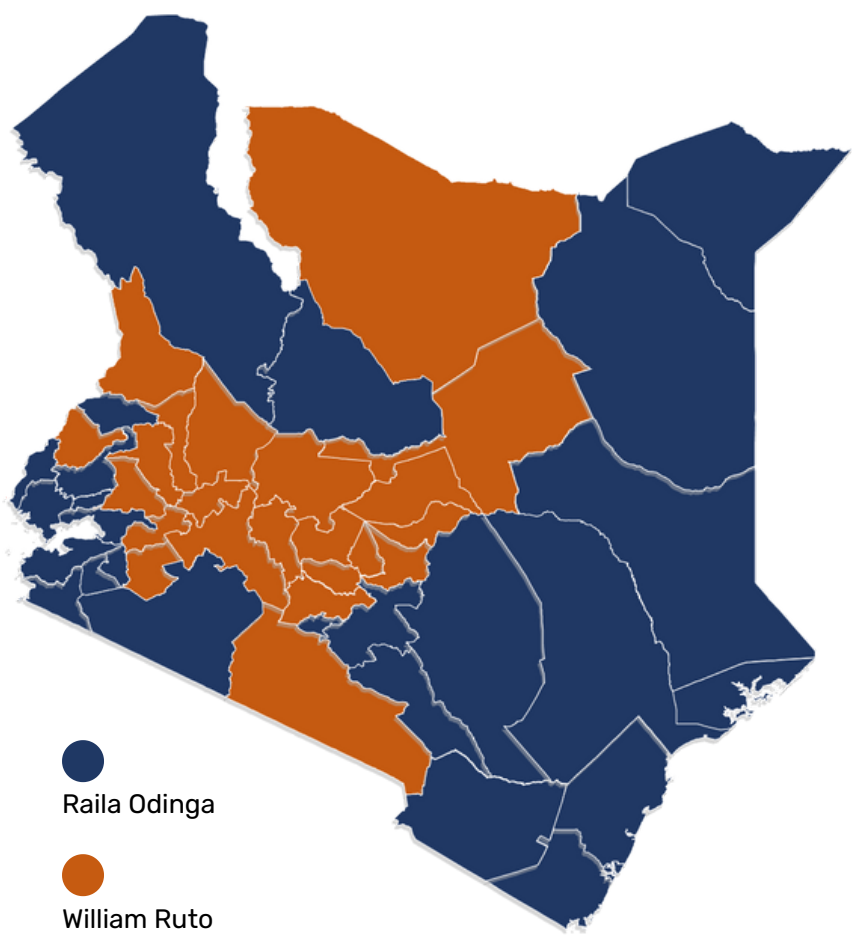
Senate Seats



Source: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

Presidential Election Results

County-wise



Source: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

Contesting Parties & Results



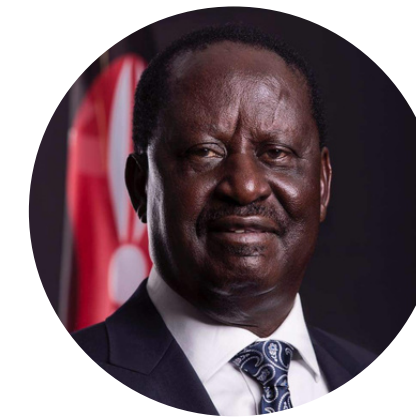
William Ruto

WINNER

- Presidential candidate for the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) and Kenya Kwanza political coalition
- Ruto won with 50.49% of the vote, defeating opposition leader and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga

Policies

- Subsidised health insurance cover for all Kenyans as well as a fee waiver for poor households.
- Annual allocation of \$420 million to support small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Appointment of a gender-balanced cabinet.



Raila Amollo Odinga

- Received 48.85% of the vote (6,942,930 votes).
- Contesting the election under the banner of Azimio la Umoja, Swahili for “Pledge of Unity.” Azimio la Umoja is made up of 10 parties, including Odinga’s Orange Democratic Movement and former President Kenyatta’s Jubilee.

Policies

- Achieve double-digit economic growth via investing in small-scale businesses and the manufacturing sector.
- Provide affordable quality healthcare for all.
- Expend \$50 (£42) a month to two million needy households



Election Campaigning

Disinformation via TikTok

- TikTok has a huge user base and influence, and it has now completely altered Kenya's social media environment.
- The platform's interaction features were abused in a disinformation campaign for political advantage.
- According to a Mozilla research report, TikTok has evolved into more than a forum for political discourse; it is also a forum for rapid and far-reaching political deception through the use of synthetic and modified content.
- Videos with the hashtags **#siasa** or **#siasazakenya** (Swahili for politics and Kenyan politics) have over 20 million views on TikTok.
- Mozilla discovered content on the network that, in light of Kenya's violent electoral history, can be classified as worrisome.
- These videos are examples of ethnic provocation and hate speech, with some having outright threats of ethnic violence.
- Kenyans are uploading and consuming a lot of political content on TikTok. Some may be operating as a news source for a portion of the population through their platform.
- On TikTok, a highly sophisticated disinformation campaign was deployed, including video content and attack ads that made false claims about candidates while also threatening various ethnic populations.



Image from Mozilla Report; Credits: Odanga Madung

Kenya's Burden To Tackle

Kenya has achieved significant political, structural, and economic changes during the last decade, resulting in sustained economic growth, social progress, and political advances.

However, the East African country has a lot of systemic issues to tackle going forward, which include:

Corruption and ill governance

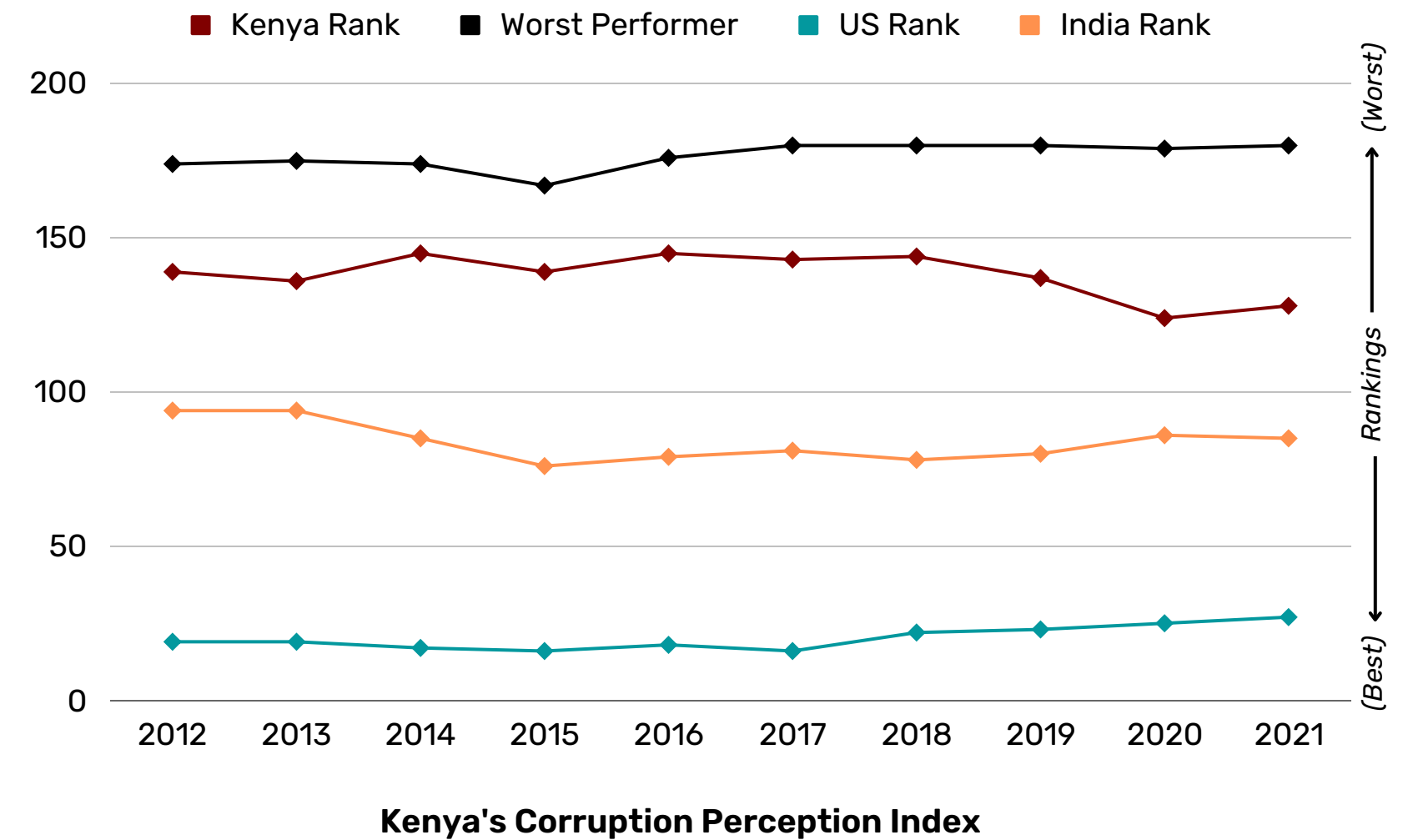
COVID-19 pandemic-related economic slowdown

Dwindling consumer spending

Lower public investment and fiscal responsibility

Regional & National Security

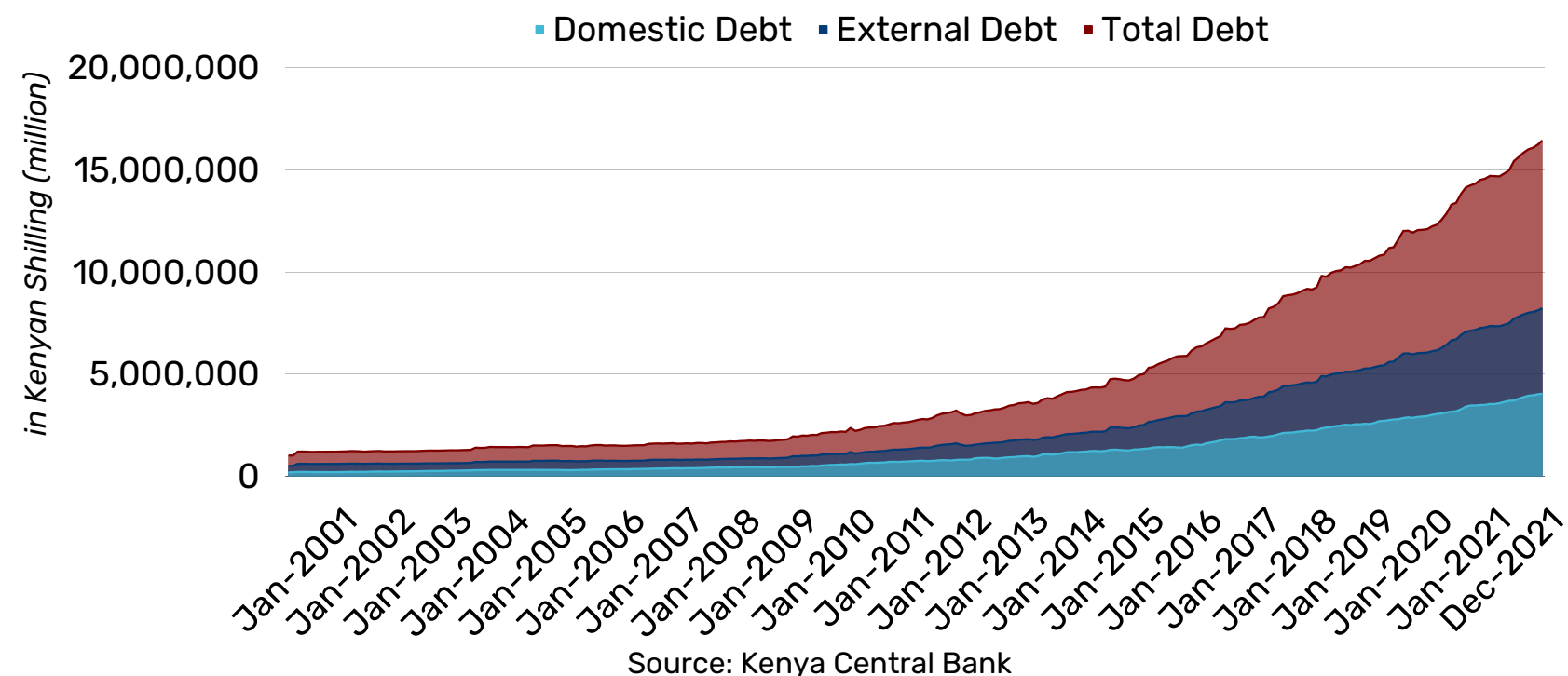
Corruption and Ill Governance



- In Kenya, corruption allegations remain, particularly in land purchases and significant government contracts.
- Other governance challenges include ineffective government and ineffective regulatory and judicial institutions.
- Despite some judicial changes, courts continue to have huge case backlogs, with cases taking years to resolve. Allegations of widespread corruption in the courts persist.

Kenya's Increasing Debt Obligations

- Kenya's prior efforts for fiscal consolidation have been thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating a new, all-encompassing approach to fiscal planning. Overall, the pandemic led in a substantial financial shortfall, projected at around 1.5% of GDP in 2019/20, and Kenya's public debt climbed by KES 1.3 trillion (\$11.8 billion) in 2020 up to 65.6% of GDP in June 2020
- This multilateral debt increases Kenya's debt burden from domestic and international financial markets, as well as bilateral players such as China, raising the threat of a credit risk downgrade and making it difficult for Kenya to meet its debt obligations in the near future.



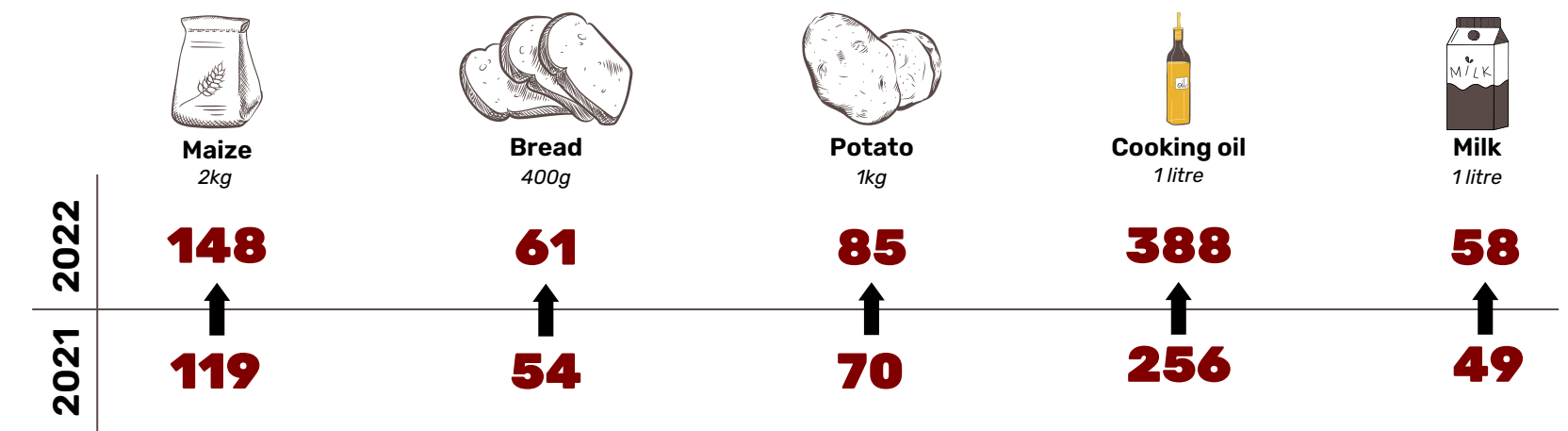
Economic Slowdown, Development Issues & Consumer Spending



- Kenya's macroeconomic indicators are among the best in Africa, with GDP growth of 5% to 6% over the last five years, inflation of 6% to 8%, improved infrastructure, and robust consumer demand from a growing middle class.
- Poverty, inequality, climate change, sustained poor private sector investment, and the economy's vulnerability to internal and external shocks remain major development issues.
- Kenya facing a massive income disparity. Less than 0.1% of the population (approx. 8,500 individuals) possess more wealth than the bottom 99.9% of the population (more than 44 million citizens).

Inflation of food prices in Kenya

(in Kenyan Shilling)





Kenya's Regional Security Concerns

- Kenya's immediate neighbourhood has been growing increasingly hostile in the recent past.
- Ethiopia's internal difficulties jeopardise its stability, and the country's border conflict with Sudan, as well as current tensions with Sudan and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, could lead to clashes.
- Somalia is entangled in a maritime border dispute with Kenya, which is both a symptom and a cause of the region's deteriorating relations.
- South Sudan's governance faults continue to fuel chronic instability, while Uganda's profoundly flawed elections raise serious concerns about the country's future trajectory, as the country's obstinate leadership appears to be colliding with its young population's desire for change.
- Tanzania, to the south, is a relative haven of peace, but the terrorist organisations operating (including Al-Shabaab and Islamic State - Mozambique) in northern Mozambique has launched strikes into Tanzanian territory, creating concerns about the East African nation's future.



Kenya's Neighbours

Conflict Prone Region



Kenya's Role in Region & African Multilateralism

- Kenya, one of Africa's most prosperous countries, is home to the regional headquarters of global firms such as Alphabet and Visa, and it acts as an important commercial hub for East and Central Africa.
- Kenya remains East Africa's largest and most important business, financial, and transportation hub, with Mombasa Port handling 80% of the region's trade.
- Kenya has played a crucial and growing role as an "anchor" state in the subregion of Eastern and Central Africa, providing leadership and promoting stability among its neighbours. Kenya has remained a strong role in its neighbourhood, both politically and economically, as well as in terms of security.
- Its active participation in regional organisations such as the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the East African Community (EAC) is viewed as critical to building and shoring up regional multilateralism.



**Map not to scale*

Assessment



Developmental Impacts

Low to Medium Risk

- The new increased level of electoral transparency showcased during the Kenyan elections occasioned through the use of technology, and the deepening of democratic tenets could improve the political dynamic of the African region.
- Kenya's longstanding factor of incumbency has witnessed a demise (temporarily), and this could influence long-standing regional cooperation.
- Kenya's election campaigns focussed on insecurity, economy, and corruption-related issues which directly addresses the challenges of Kenyan populace.



Economic Recovery

Medium to High Risk

- Kenya's financial situation has long been a source of vulnerability due to its current account and fiscal deficits. As a new government is coming to power, a strong partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will be the need of the hour, allowing Kenya to regain full access to global financial markets with a convincing plan.
- Kenya's economic uncertainty has long been a talking point for the region. Kenya, under William Ruto, with '*anticipated surge*' of plans for economic rejuvenation, could potentially influence the region.



COVID-19 & Other Disruptions

High to Extreme Risk

- Owing the COVID-19 pandemic, major Kenyan business ecosystems have been affected and small and medium enterprises need to be supported and promoted by the incumbent government, as it can open a global base for Kenyan businessmen.
- With rising inflation, critical wealth disparity, and rising unemployment (close to 40%), Kenya faces a challenge that would need a robust political and policy framework.
- Rising debt ratio is another area that could hamper future developments for Kenya. The new government would have to reduce its dependence on multilateral institutions such as the IMF to reduce its external debt, while staying focussed to reduce its rising internal debt.



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