



A Political History of Mombasa

As told through their elected representatives, 1957-2023





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Limitations

• Excludes local government throughout.



2 Meru
3 Ukambani
4 Embu and Mbeere
5 Maasai and Samburu
6 Somali
7 Nakuru and Laikipia
8 Nairobi
9 Bukusu Luhya
10 Southern Kikuyu
11 Northen Kikuyu
12 Mombasa
13 Kilifi and Kwale
14 Kakamega and Vihiga
15 Taita and Taveta

16 South Nyanza

1 Gusii



A Short History of Mombasa

Mombasa is a tropical, pre-colonial urban area, one of the oldest in East Africa, which became the main cargo entrepôt in the colonial era for goods entering and leaving East Africa.

Expanded as a military fort and administrative centre by foreign powers (Portugal, later the British), it was also the centre of Arab (Omani) settlement and power, and was part of the Omani Sultanate from 1837 until the British leased the coastal strip in 1895. It remained nominally under the sultan until 1963, when the strip was incorporated into Kenya proper. It was also the centre (alongside Lamu) of the Swahili (Afro-Arab) language and culture and the centre of Kenya's Islamic traditions and culture.

Local Mijikenda had no land rights in the 10-mile strip, which was outside the "Nyika" (as they were then known) Reserve, but squatted there nonetheless. Slavery was finally abolished in the sultanate in 1907 and some freed slaves settled in the Mombasa area. When Kenya Colony was formed in 1920, the Coastal strip remained legally outside.

Work drew many upcountry Africans into employment in Mombasa, in particular Luo and Kamba, while Kikuyu traders established business and its position as the second urban centre in the country after Nairobi led the government to site many offices there, creating a highly cosmopolitical ethnic and racial environment.

The county is home to Kenya's sole deepwater port (Kilindili), and the terminus of the old colonial and new Kenyatta-era railways. The Island is the original "Mombasa" and contains the central business district and railways station. The county is mostly urban, having the second highest population density after Nairobi (2019 Census).



Governor Renison

1956-7: The First Vote for an elected African





Cyril Usher

Mombasa

Asians

Sayed Mohamed Shah

Eastern Muslim

Asians

Anantprasad Pandya

Eastern Non-Muslim

Arab

Mahfood Mackawi

National

Africans



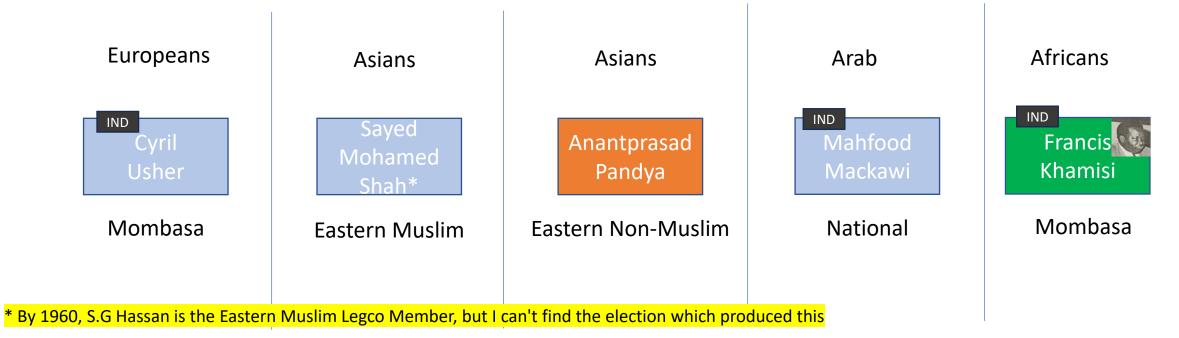
Coast

In 1957, the African constituency of "Coast" (including Mombasa) was established and won by rising Mijikenda star Ronald Ngala, defeating influential ally Francis Khamisi, who was then nominated to the LegCo. Mombasa also had separate constituencies for Europeans, Indians and Arabs, elections for which were held in 1956. Most candidates in all racial groups stood as independents (it was required for Africans).



Governor Renison

1958: 6 more African constituencies



In 1958, "Coast" constituency is split, and the new seat of Mombasa formed. It is won by Francis Khamisi (leader of MADU), editor of the daily *Baraza*, Kenya's first African broadcaster and co-founder of KAU in 1944. Ngala remains LegCo member for the rest of the coast and deeply influential in Mombasa politics. In 1960 he accepts ministerial office in the restricted government. There are strong links between African political activity and the trade union movement, especially the dock workers union. Multiple regional political parties spring up during 1958-60, often with overlapping memberships.

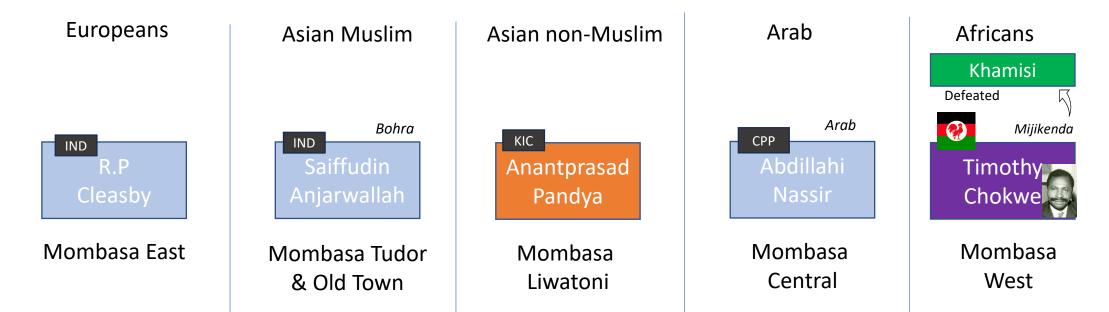




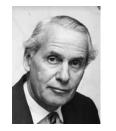
Governor Ronald Ngala Renison (KADU)

Feb 1961: The Kenyatta Election





With national political parties now permitted and the formation of KANU and KADU in 1960, African politics takes on a more structured form. In the 1961 "Kenyatta election", the racial seats remain but are structured into geographical areas where non-Africans are more numerous. There is a racially reserved primary and then everyone can vote in the first common roll poll. Coastal autonomy is the dominant issue. Pandya is returned but all other leaders change. KANU and KADU both boycott the reserved Arab seat. In the sole African seat, the Mijikenda are with KADU and Ngala, but Khamisi (KADU) is decisively defeated by KANU's Timothy Chokwe (an ex-KAU trade unionist).





Governor Ronald Ngala Renison (KADU)

1961-2: KADU Government



Mombasa Census 1962: 180,000 The population is growing rapidly and highly cosmopolitan. Only 40% of its residents were born in the district

Arab

Sheikh M.A Alamoody

National MP April 1961

Nationally, Kenyatta is released, he takes up the leadership of KANU, then enters the Legco and the government. But in the Coast, 1961-2 is dominated by the efforts of (mostly) non-Africans in the coast to have the coastal strip become autonomous ("Mwambao"), while most Christian Africans favour integration. Land rights and religion are the key fault lines. The government's Report on the Coastal Strip (Nov 1961) recommends it be integrated fully into Kenya, with protections including the recognition of Moslem law in Moslem personal matters and guarantees for land rights for Arab and Asians. In the KADU government of 1961-2, some Asian representatives join KADU to sustain the minority side, as does National MP Alamoody.



Renison Kenyatta Ngala

Apr 1962-63: Coalition Government



Mombasa East



Mombasa Tudor & Old Town



Mombasa Liwatoni



Mombasa Central



Mombasa West

In the KANU-KADU coalition government of May 1962-3, Chokwe becomes a minister. In Oct 1962, Pandya defects to KANU. In Mombasa, tensions between upcountry Africans, especially Kikuyu, and locals grow as regionalism moves forward.



1963: For Self-Government



Arab

Balala

Specially

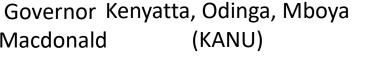
Elected MP



Ngei (APP)



Ngala (KADU)



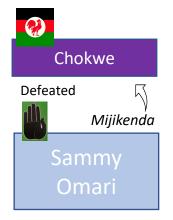
Asian

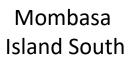
Anantprasad

Pandya

Mombasa

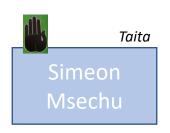
Island North







Mombasa Mainland



Timothy

Chokwe

Speaker

of Senate

Mombasa Senate



Mayor of Mombasa

In the new unitary electoral system, with no reserved seats, Mombasa has three seats in the house and one senate seat. KANU wins nationwide but in Mombasa, KADU wins every seat. Minister Chokwe loses and is compensated with speakership of the senate until its abolition. As KADU goes into opposition, no MPs have any government role. SM Balala (businessman and KANU) activist) is elected by the house as a Special MP. Odinga-ally Kombo is elected as Mombasa mayor.



Kenyatta, Odinga, Mboya (KANU)

Dec 1964: Republican Constitution



One Party State (Part 1): 1964-66



Speaker of Senate

Salim Balala

Specially Elected MP



Mombasa
Island North



Mombasa
Island South



Mombasa Mainland



Mombasa Senate



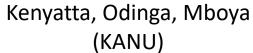
Mayor of Mombasa

KADU folds and join KANU. Republic established with Kenyatta as President. No change otherwise. Kombo is now Mombasa KANU chairman.



1965-66 KPU



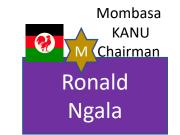




Speaker of Senate

Salim Balala

Specially Elected MP





Mombasa
Island North



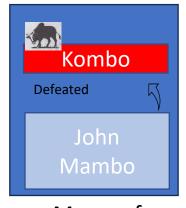
Mombasa Island South



Mombasa Mainland



Mombasa Senate



Mayor of Mombasa

August 1965's Senate one-third rotation sees Msechu lose the KANU nomination and then the seat to a Ngala ally. The 1966 KPU rebellion has no effect among Mombasa MPs; they remain loyal to Ngala and KANU. Kombo however is replaced by minister Ngala as Mombasa Chairman in 1965, and (by now a backer of Odinga and the KPU) loses the Mombasa mayoralty in 1966.



1969 General Election



Ngala

Salim Balala One Party State (Part 2): 1969-82

Nominated MP

Kamba 12%
Luo 9%
Luhya 6%
Arab 6%
Taita 6%
Non-Kenyan Afs 6%
Kikuyu 6%
Others 9%

Mombasa Census 1969:

24% 16%

Mijikenda

Asian

Mijikenda

Ibrahim Mwaruwa

Mombasa North Pandya

Defeated

Mijikenda

Mohammed Jahazi

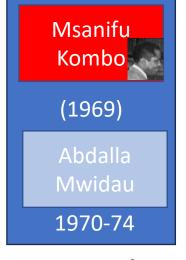
Mombasa Central Mijikenda Khalif

Mwavumo

Mombasa South Kamba

David Kioko

Mombasa West



Mayor of Mombasa

1967 Senate abolished and resulting boundary redistribution keeps four seats but allocates the Senator to a new seat. Chokwe departs. In 1969, the KPU is banned; return of one-party state. In Mombasa, Mijikenda newcomers win three of four seats, while Mombasa West (with the port) is won by a pro-KPU Kamba businessman Kioko. By March 1969, Kombo is back as Mayor.

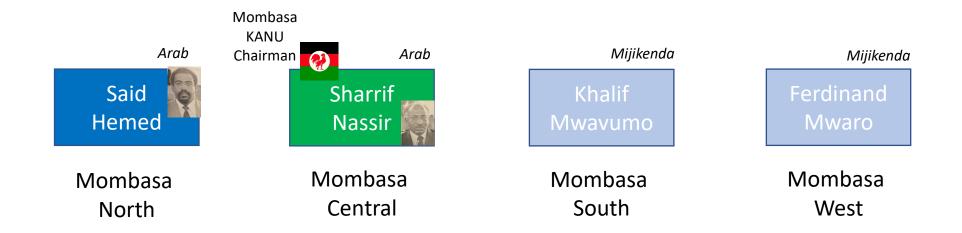


1974 General Election





Nominated MP



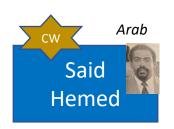
Ngala dies in 1972. In the 1974 election, all MPs change bar Mwavumo. Acting Mombasa KANU Chairman Sharrif Nassir (ally of VP Daniel arap Moi) is elected for the first time. Beating off a coup attempt in 1975, he is confirmed as chair in the 1976-77 party elections. Ex-Mayor Mwidau (an opponent of Nassir's) replaces Balala as Coast nominated MP. No other changes 1974-79



1979 General Election



Mombasa Census 1979:	
Mijikenda	26%
Luo	13%
Kamba	12%
Luhya	8%
Asian	7%
Taita	7%
Arab	6%
Kikuyu	6%



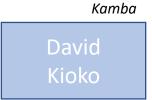
Mombasa North



Mombasa Central



Mombasa South



Mombasa West

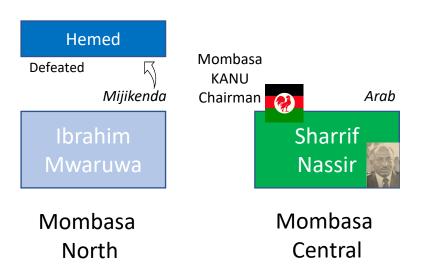
Nassir re-elected in Mombasa Central (and becomes Assistant Minister) and Hemed becomes Chief Whip after winning Mombasa North. Kioko returns in Mombasa West. Mwidau moves from nominated to elected MP. Still no ministerial roles for Mombasa. Nassir receives significant financial support from Libya.

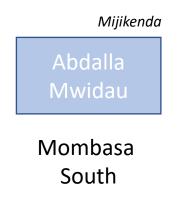


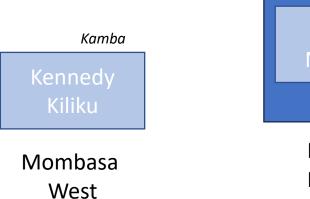
1983: Snap General Election

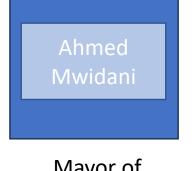


One Party State (Part 3): De Jure 1982-91









Mayor of Mombasa

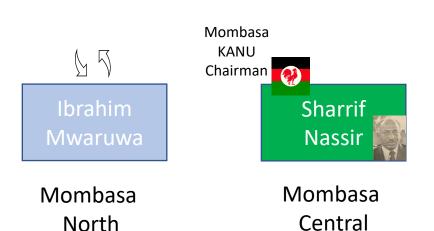
Njonjo's fall after the 1982 coup leaves Said Hemed, a close ally, exposed and he is duly defeated. Nassir is narrowly re-elected as is Mwidau. In Mombasa West, newcomer Kennedy Kiliku (another Kamba) is elected, Kioko having moved back to Ukambani.



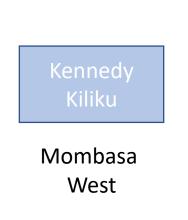
1984-86: by-elections



One Party State (Part 3): De Jure 1982-91







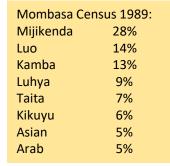


Mayor of Mombasa

Mwaruwa is ousted in 1984 after a petition, but re-elected. In 1984, Hemed is expelled from KANU in the anti-Njonjo purge but readmitted in 1987. Mwavumo returns in Mombasa South in 1986 after Mwidau dies of a heart attack.



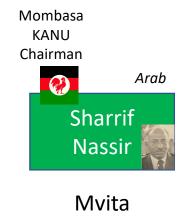
1988 (Public Queue Voting)



Kamba

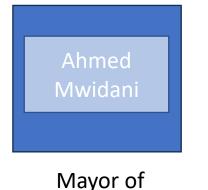












Mombasa

Boundary redistribution doesn't benefit Mombasa, but constituencies renamed. Nassir wins a decisive KANU primary victory and a rehabilitated Said Hemed returns. Abdalla Mwidau's son Abdulkadir is elected in Likoni, Kiliku returns in Changamwe. Soon after Nassir is re-elected in the KANU national elections, and remains Moi's fixer in Mombasa, but ministerial office and national level KANU leadership remain in the rural Mijikenda and Taita communities.



Late 1992: Multi-Partyism









Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe

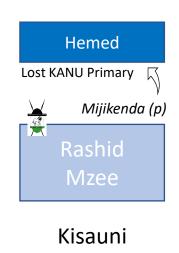


Mayor of Mombasa

Queue voting abolished 1991. Multi-party democracy returns December 1991. As FORD and the DP emerge, Mombasa politics is split between pro-KANU forces led by Nassir and pro-opposition forces, centred around Luo and upcountry communities and radical Muslims led by Sheikh Balala and the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK). The incumbent Mijikenda and Arab MPs remains loyal, but Kiliku, chair of the 1992 select committee into the ethnic clashes, defects to the DP in October.



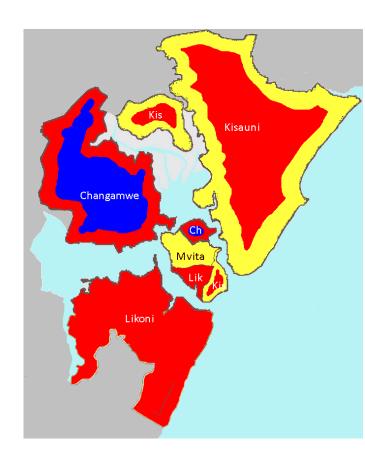
December 1992: Multi-party General Elections





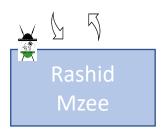








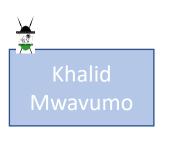
1993-5: Petitions and By-elections



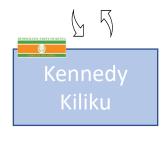
Kisauni



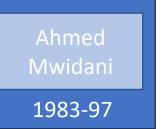
Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe



Mayor of Mombasa

Mzee's election is nullified after a petition in 1993 but he wins the seat back in November against KANU's Emmanuel Maitha. In 1995 Kiliku's election is also conveniently annulled, but he is too is re-elected for the DP. Tensions between the IPK and KANU-supporting militia led by Karissa Maitha spill over into violence periodically in the region.



Dec 1997 General Election





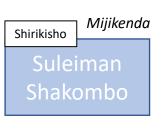
Nominated MP



Kisauni



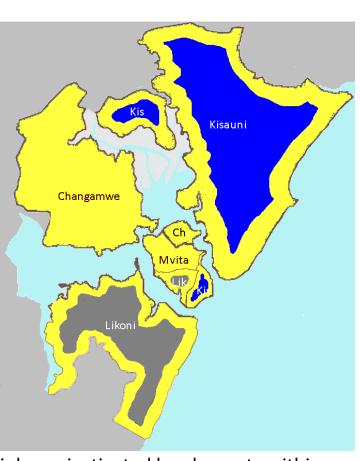
Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe



Boundary redistributions don't affect the city. In the runup to the polls, the coast is wracked by political violence instigated by elements within the government. After ethnic Mijikenda militia attacks on upcountry Kenyans, and then violent repression by the GSU, election turnouts are very low (37-44%) as many have fled. In the presidency, Moi wins all four seats. In parliament, KANU's Karissa Maitha (allegedly one of the architects of the violence) defects to the DP and wins. Coastal federalist party Shirikisho wins Likoni. Nassir remains in control of the Island. Kajembe seizes Changamwe from Kiliku. After the polls Moi nominates Rashid Sajaad, an Asian businessman also implicated in the clashes, to parliament.



1998: Mombasa's first Minister





Nominated MP



Kisauni



Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe



Mayor of Mombasa

In February 1998, Nassir is finally appointed as Mombasa's first minister since independence. In 1998-9, Mombasa has a new reforming mayor, businessman Najib Balala, but he is soon forced out.







Late 2002: LDP Defection



Nominated MP







Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe

With the rainbow rebellion joining the national alliance, the political tide nationwide shift sharply against KANU, and even in Mombasa KANU's grip weakens. Shakombo defects to KANU in May but moves to the LDP later that year. Kajembe joins Maitha in the NARC ("National Alliance Rainbow Coalition") in October.







2002: Moi Retires, Kibaki Elected







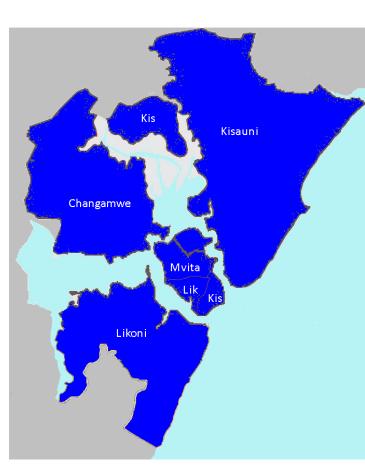
Mvita



Likoni



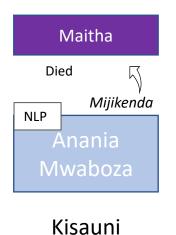
Changamwe



Moi retires and his successor Uhuru is defeated for the Presidency by Kibaki. In Mombasa, the story is the same with a clean sweep for Kibaki. NARC (dark blue) also wins all four seats in Parliament. Nassir finally loses Mvita to Najib Balala. Karissa, Shakombo and Kajembe win, now all in NARC. Maitha and Balala both become ministers.



2004: Maitha Dies, By-election



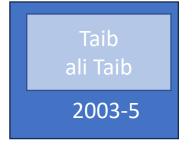


Mvita



Likoni





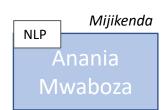
Changamwe

Mayor of Mombasa

In 2004, new Mijikenda "kingpin" Maitha dies suddenly. He is replaced by little-known Mwaboza (backed by the (ex-DP) NAK wing of the coalition), defeating NARC's Hassan Joho (backed by the LDP wing). In Kibaki's first 2004 coalition government, there is no change



2005: Second Coalition Government



Kisauni



Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe



Mayor of Mombasa

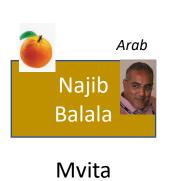
In the 2005 Banana-Orange referendum split, Mombasa votes decisively (4-1) no. Balala backs the Orange side and is sacked. In November 2005, digging deep, Kibaki appoints Kajembe as a minister.

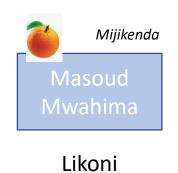


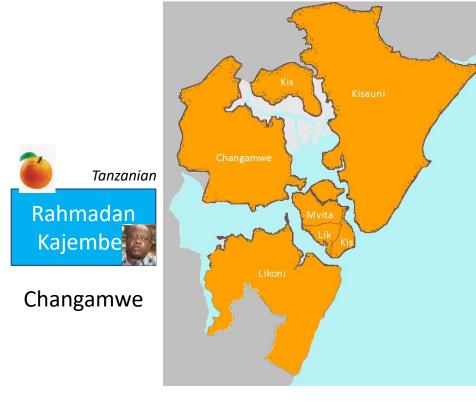
2007: General Election and Subsequent Chaos











ODM-PNU battle nationwide. Balala campaigns for the ODM nomination against Odinga but stands down, facing inevitable defeat, and is nominated as one of Odinga's "Pentagon" of key leaders. Kibaki declared the winner in contested presidential polls. In Mombasa, Odinga beats Kibaki more than 2-1 and ODM (orange) takes all four seats, with controversial businessman Ali Joho the most notable new entry.



2008: Grand Coalition



Kisauni



Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe

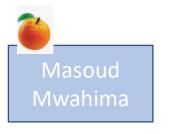








Mvita



Likoni



Changamwe

With the new constitution gradually coming in effect, the coalition stumbles on, as do the ICC cases against Kenyatta and Ruto. In Mombasa, in March 2012, Balala is sacked at Odinga's request, as too close to the Kibaki wing. Soon after he defects to Mudavadi's UDF, hopeful that he will be Mudavadi's running mate. Meanwhile Kenyatta is building his National Alliance (TNA) and Ruto the URP under the umbrella of the Jubilee Alliance. In December 2012, in a stunning piece of political theatre, Uhuru concedes leadership of a new combined alliance to Mudavadi, then abrogates the deal and goes forward with Ruto as his deputy. Balala meanwhile has formed his own micro-party, the Republican Congress Party. In 2010, Joho is named as a cocaine and heroin smuggler by the US government.



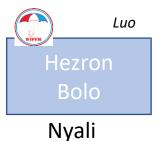


Mombasa Political History 2013: New Constitution



CS for Mining





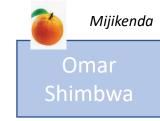








Jomvu



Changamwe





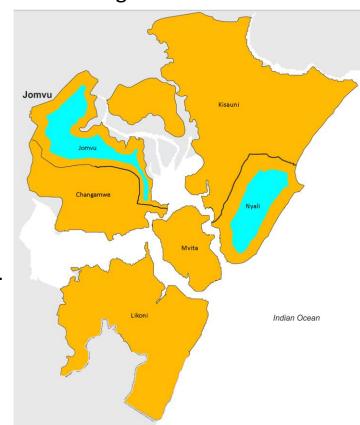






Women's Rep

New constitution, new boundaries (and two new seats for Mombasa), bicameral parliament, Governors. Ministers (Cabinet Secretaries) no longer MPs. TNA and URP in alliance win the election, but Mombasa is a clean sweep for the CORD alliance. Odinga (ODM) wins every seat in the presidency. Joho wins the governorship for ODM. Balala and Kajembe both lose as Senator. ODM and Wiper win all the MPs seats. Mishi Juma becomes Mombasa's first elected woman representative. Nassir's son wins "back" Mvita. Balala returns as one of Kenyatta's cabinet secretaries.





2014-16: Joho's elevation





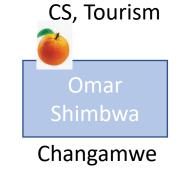


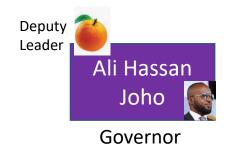
















Women's Rep

2014 Joho becomes ODM deputy leader to Odinga. It is alleged he is a major financial donor to the party. However, he faces allegations relating to drug smuggling and forgery of a school exam certificate to get into university. Balala faces reports of a \$1m bribe demand as Mines CS, but survives.

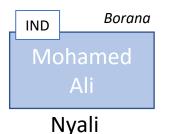




2017: Gen Elections



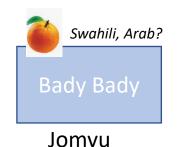




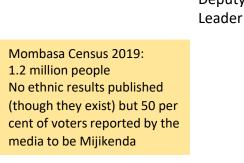


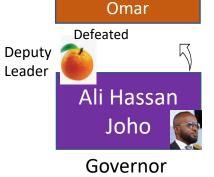










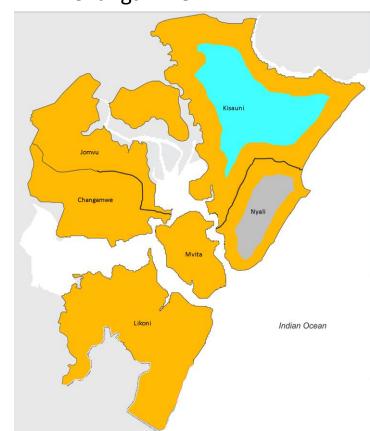






Women's Rep

Wiper rejoins ODM in NASA but loses to the Jubilee alliance of TNA and URP. Odinga (ODM) wins all seats in the presidential polls. Joho is reelected as governor and NASA take all other Mombasa seats again bar a pro-Raila independent, journalist Ali Mbogo in Nyali. Juma moves from Women Rep to constituency MP. Balala returns as Tourism & Wildlife CS. Joho's company is awarded a contract for the new inland container depot in Mombasa in 2018 in questionable circumstances.



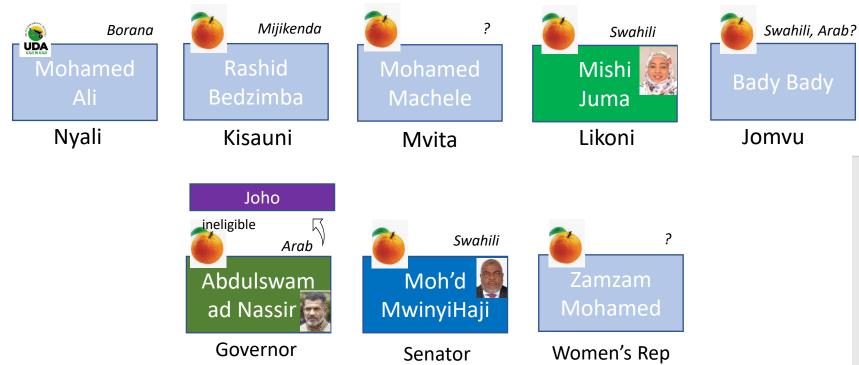




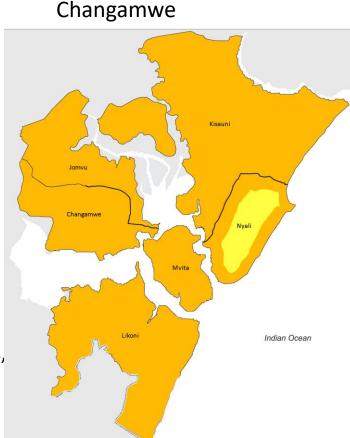


August 2022: Ruto's Revenge





Odinga loses narrowly to Ruto nationwide, but in Mombasa he again wins every seat, though more narrowly (161,000 votes to 114,000) as Ruto has some support in the Mijikenda and urban voters everywhere. Joho cannot stand (two-term limit) and initially declares for the presidency himself, then supports the Odinga campaign. Gubernatorial elections are delayed two weeks due to ballot paper errors, but result is as expected and Joho's nominee Nassir wins. ODM fields the same team (no primaries) and wins all seats except Nyali, which Ali retains on a personal vote for UDA. Wiper no longer holds any Mombasa seat.



Mijikenda

Omar

Shimbwa