Background to the Post-Election Violence

Author(s)
Sosteness Francis Materu

Abstract
Literature indicates that the violence accompanying the 2007 general elections in Kenya was a spill-over effect of the country's previous history, hence the need to scrutinize the historical antecedents to these elections. This chapter identifies and analyzes five factors, namely negative ethnicity, dictatorship, political alliances, criminal gangs and impunity, which, prior to the 2007 elections, had characterized the Kenyan politics. The chapter reveals that in view of the five factors, feelings had developed in Kenya, already before the 2007 elections, that certain ethnic communities had been deliberately marginalized since independence, while others had been highly privileged or favoured in different ways. This gave rise, inter alia, to a number of historical fears and grievances, mostly in relation to land. It is shown that this state of affairs became a recipe for election violence accompanying all the multiparty elections prior to 2007, and since the grievances were not addressed, and in view of the previous trend of election violence, it indeed became certain that even the 2007 general elections would not be free from violence.