

The GLOCEPS

Webinar Series | Week 3 Report

Theme: Institutionalizing the Raila Odinga Legacy: Constitutionalism, Democratic Reform, and the Realization of African Union Agenda 2063

Overview and Analytical Framing

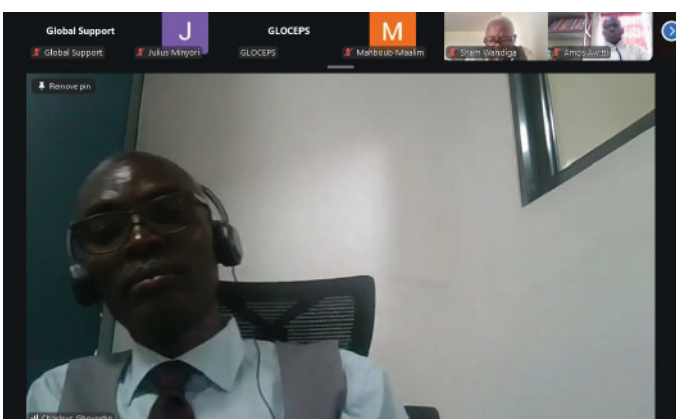
The Global Centre for Policy and Strategy (GLOCEPS) convened the third session of its ten-week webinar series on 8th April 2026, examining the institutionalization of reformist political legacies within Africa's governance landscape. This session focused on the intersection of democratic policing, security sector accountability, and constitutional reform, situating these discussions within Kenya's post-2010 transformation and the broader aspirations of Agenda 2063.

At the core of the discussion were two working papers that collectively interrogated a central governance question. How are reformist political visions embedded within institutions and sustained beyond individual political actors? The session underscored that the durability of democratic reform depends less on political personalities and more on the strength, autonomy, and legitimacy of institutions.

Strategic Context and Opening Reflections

The session was formally opened by **DG (Rtd) Alexander M. Imbenzi** on behalf of **Brig. (Rtd) Wilson Boinett**, Chair of the GLOCEPS Council of Advisers. He situated the discussion within Africa's ongoing struggle to consolidate constitutional governance amid rising political polarization, declining public trust, and renewed pressures on democratic institutions. He emphasized that institutionalizing reformist legacies is not merely an academic exercise, but a strategic imperative for realizing the African Union's vision of "The Africa We Want."

Dr. Kenedy Asembo, Executive Director of GLOCEPS, further framed the discussion within the organization's Governance Pillar, noting that security sector reform represents one of the most critical tests of democratic consolidation. While Kenya's 2010 constitutional framework provides a robust foundation for accountability and citizen-centered governance, the real challenge lies in translating these formal provisions into operational realities. The session was moderated by **Col (Rtd) Julius Minyori, MBS**, and benefited from the critical insights of discussants **Dr. Susan Mwangi**, **Dr. Kizito Sabala**, **Dr. Janet Kiguru**, and **Dr. Evans Onyango**, whose contributions significantly deepened the analytical quality of the discussions.



Summary of Key Insights from the Papers

Paper I – Democratic Policing

Title: Democratic Policing: Raila Odinga's Legacy and the Advancement of Constitutional Accountability in Kenya's Security Sector Reforms

Author: Mr. Amos Ochieng' Awitti

The paper argues that Kenya's post-2010 reforms mark a significant departure from the historically coercive, state-centric policing model. It highlights the establishment of oversight institutions and the constitutional redefinition of policing as a public service grounded in accountability and human rights. The paper also notes persistent gaps between reform design and implementation due to entrenched institutional cultures, political interference, and weak enforcement mechanisms.

Paper II – Institutionalising the Raila Odinga Legacy

Title: Institutionalising the Raila Odinga Legacy: Constitutionalism, Democratic Reform, and the Realisation of the African Union Agenda 2063

Author: Mr. Charles Govan Ochieng, CPA

This paper reframes the legacy of Raila Odinga from a personality-driven narrative to one centered on institutionalization. It emphasizes Odinga's contribution to constitutionalism, democratic reform, and devolution, aligning with Agenda 2063. The paper cautions that these gains remain vulnerable due to weak institutional autonomy, limited civic awareness, and the persistence of personality-based politics.

Discussants' Reflections and Critical Engagement

Paper I – Democratic Policing

- **Dr. Susan Mwangi** emphasized the need for oral histories and archival evidence, highlighting Raila Odinga's personal encounters with state repression. She noted the Africanization of policing as a conceptual gap and called for broader public participation in security reforms.
- **Dr. Kizito Sabala** praised the use of Fukuyama's sequencing dilemma to explain reform contradictions but identified gaps in primary data, periodization, and theoretical engagement (e.g., Achille Mbembe's notion of commandement). He applauded the continental framing of the paper and the balanced assessment by the author. He also praised the use of diverse sources of literature. He recommended including additional institutional actors (judiciary, DPP), incorporating gender perspectives, and employing comparative African experiences.

Paper II – Raila Odinga Legacy

- **Dr. Janet Kiguru** commended the paper's futuristic approach and analysis that moves beyond personality narratives and the need to institutionalize legacies beyond personalities. She cited the need to improve the rigor of analysis, not to appear like a subjective opinion piece, by including Raila's misses that serve as key lessons for future leaders. The article is fixated on around 2015 with no follow-up to Raila's reforms beyond 2015, like the BBI and the NADCO report. The topic was argued to be too broad, with the analysis not clearly showing the causal pathways of Raila Odinga's legacy.





•**Dr. Evans Onyango** affirmed the paper's conceptual ambition but called for greater clarity, focusing on "what next after Raila". He suggested developing a coherent ideological framework ("Railaism") and examining how Odinga's strategies institutionalize democratic norms. He emphasized the need for methodological rigor, stronger engagement with literature, and a combined historical-thematic approach. He stressed balanced evaluation of successes and strategic missteps.

Areas of Improvement Identified by Discussants

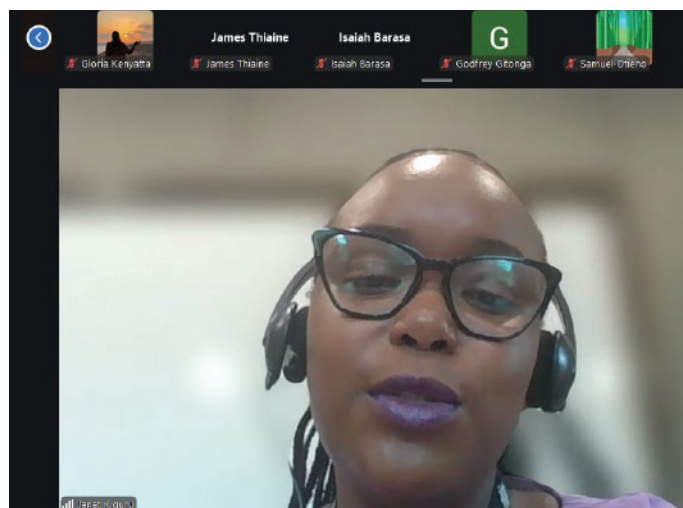
Paper I: Democratic Policing

1. Strengthen empirical grounding through primary data, oral histories, and archival sources.
2. Improve historical depth and periodization to trace reform evolution
3. Deepen theoretical engagement, including African-centered frameworks (e.g., Mbembe).
4. Broaden institutional scope to include judiciary and DPP roles.
5. Integrate gender perspectives in policing reforms.
6. Advance the Africanization of policing beyond colonial legacies.
7. Incorporate comparative perspectives from other African and global experiences.
8. Integrate case studies where democratic policing in counties has worked and where it has not.
9. Connect literature with Raila Odinga.

Paper II: Institutionalising the Raila Odinga Legacy

1. Need to undertake key informant interviews to enrich the analysis from lived experiences.
2. Extend analysis beyond 2015 to capture Raila's legacy towards his sunset days.

3. Include key theories on charismatic leaders and a deep analysis on Raila's legacy on devolution, including the role of women.
4. Enrich it with empirical evidence.
5. Differentiate the uniqueness of the USA federal system and Kenya's devolution system, which are asymmetrical and very unique.
6. Enhance conceptual clarity, centering the question of "what next after Raila".
7. Develop a coherent ideological framework ("Railaism").
8. Strengthen methodological rigor and alignment with evidence.
9. Improve analytical structure, e.g., historical-thematic approach.
10. Ensure balanced and critical assessment of achievements and limitations.
11. Deepen engagement with existing literature.
12. Look at how other leaders institutionalized their legacies.
13. Make sure the recommendations are targeted, specific, and actionable.
14. Incorporate Pan-African and comparative perspectives to situate Odinga's legacy.
15. Look at the role of other actors in shaping Raila Odinga's reform journey and give an analysis of his views about institutions.





Cross-Cutting Analytical Insights

1. Persistent **disconnect between constitutional design and institutional practice** due to capacity constraints and political interference.
2. The **sequencing dilemma**: democratic oversight mechanisms have outpaced institutional capacity, creating hybrid governance structures.
3. **Institutionalization is inherently political**, requiring legal frameworks, political commitment, resources, and societal buy-in. Without these, reforms risk stagnation or reversal.

Plenary Reflections

Participants explored practical implications:

- Interrogate the Paradox between the administrative systems of colonial government and the political system in post-independence, and why the latter has failed, and whether Raila's legacy was shaped by the former.
- There is a need to escalate Raila Odinga's legacy to the continental level based on his role as a peace broker on the continent.
- Need to interrogate how institutionalization should be implemented given Kenya's context and realities?
- The effectiveness of oversight institutions remains limited; militarized practices persist; the scalability of community policing initiatives is constrained.
- Fiscal autonomy for devolved units is critical, and independent institutions remain vulnerable to

executive influence.

- Comparative insights: Legal reform alone is insufficient; experiences from Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa show the need for legal, institutional, and cultural change.



Conclusion and Way Forward

In his closing remarks, **Col (Rtd) Godfrey Gitonga** commended both authors and discussants for advancing critical dialogue on governance and institutional reform. He emphasized that the **sustainability of Kenya's gains** depends on strengthening institutional autonomy, enhancing accountability, and fostering a culture of democratic governance.

The session concluded with a call for continued participation in the webinar series and contributions to the forthcoming GLOCEPS Eastern Africa Journal for Policy and Strategy, aimed at deepening scholarly and policy engagement on Africa's governance future.



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