

## The Voice of the Voiceless in Independent Kenya: Case of Gen Z Revolution

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the transformative role of Generation Z in Kenyan political discourse, focusing on their adept use of social media platforms and direct engagement with government leaders. In recent years, there has been a rise of Generation Z activism, which, according to scholars, emerged as a formidable force in shaping political narratives and advocating for change. This study focused on the historical context of civic engagement in Kenya, tracing the evolution from pre-independence political activism to the current digital age. This group has portrayed vital aspects, including their technological savviness and digital native status. Through the analysis, the study presented case studies of successful campaigns led by Kenyan youth, illustrating how platforms like X (formerly Twitter) lead to the facilitation of political engagements. Additionally, the study explored the role of influential figures whose efforts in digital activism prevented the bill from receiving the assent of Kenyans, leading to engagement with Generation Z on X space on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2024, to discuss public and political matters. The research also assessed the immediate and long-term impacts of digital engagement on governance, considering changes or commitments made by the government and potential shifts in governance style and citizen-government interactions. Additionally, the challenges facing Generation Z activism, including government response and sustainability of digital activism, are explored alongside opportunities for enhanced civic engagement. Strategies for effective engagement and bridging the gap between digital activism and traditional political processes are proposed, underscoring the potential for continuous digital engagement to shape Kenya's future political landscape.

**Key Terms:** Civic engagement, digital dialogue, empathetic governance, Generation Z, public accountability, social media activism.

## INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement has undergone a significant transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly with the advent of social media. According to scholars, there has been a profound shift in Kenya, which was brought forth by Generation Z, which has emerged as a potent force in political activism. Diverse aspects have shown the generation as one that is characterised by digital nativity and social consciousness, which has underscored the redefinition of political discourse and civic participation (Enjolras, 2024). As Generation Z disrupts various social media platforms particularly through their involvement in X Spaces their impact has grown in importance, with young Kenyans leveraging this platform to articulate their concerns and shape political conversations. This is evidenced through their active involvement, which was demonstrated through peaceful protests against the Finance Bill 2023 but escalated due to criminal infiltration, resulting in public terror and looting. Nevertheless, despite the challenges, Gen Zs have been influential through their ability to raise voices for the voiceless to an extent of compelling President Ruto to engage directly with them in a historic X-Space conversation.

Diverse scholars report that digital activism goes beyond the traditional forms of activism, utilising digital platforms to mobilise, organise, and advocate for social and economic reforms. Essentially, this is because such engagements underscore the power of social media in modern activism through showcasing the youth's pivotal role in shaping national policies and demanding government accountability, including calls for major Cabinet changes and police reforms in Kenya.

Globally, this study observed diverse case studies where digital activism has played a crucial role in several significant movements. One of the most notable examples was the Arab Spring, which began in 2010 and saw widespread use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube to organise protests and share information. This took place in Tunisia after a fruit vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolated as a result of conflict with the police and governmental authorities. Gradually, the movement spread to most parts of the world, especially in the Middle East and North Africa.

The study also took note of the Egyptian case, where, in Egypt, for instance, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011, activists used these platforms to mobilise mass protests that ultimately led to the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. Studies record that the Egyptian protesters held diverse grievances which included legal and political issues, including police brutality, state-of-emergency laws, lack of political freedom, civil liberty, freedom of speech, corruption, high unemployment, food-price inflation and low wages, thus, taking to social media to rebel. Similarly, in 2019, the Hong Kong protests leveraged social media to organise demonstrations against proposed extradition legislation, resulting in large-scale participation and international attention. These movements demonstrated the power of digital tools in bypassing traditional media, coordinating actions, and rallying global support.

On the other hand, Africa, whose internet usage has increased significantly in the last decade, with the number of users more than doubling since 2015 has significantly used social media has similarly been a catalyst for political change and social movements. In 2020, Nigeria's #EndSARS protests used Twitter to highlight police brutality and mobilise demonstrations against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The movement garnered international support and led to significant government action, including the disbanding of SARS. In Kenya, there have been similar protests, such as the demonstrations against police brutality in 2020, which saw extensive use of social media to organise and communicate.

Similarly, in the Kenyan landscape, since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025, Kenya has witnessed a surge in youth-led protests and digital activism, notably against the Finance Bill 2024, which saw the coining of hashtags such as #March2Parliament in July. In building a foundation on this, it is important to create an understanding of this bill as one that proposed various tax increases, which were perceived as exacerbating the already high cost of living. The discontent among the young culminated in widespread protests, which were predominantly led by Generation Z activists. Their opposition was rooted in concerns over economic policies that they felt disproportionately affected their future prospects (Lim, 2024). These protests were a clear indication of the growing

frustration among young Kenyans regarding economic policies and governance. In addition, President Ruto's decision to engage directly with the youth via X space demonstrated a recognition of their influence and the need for more transparent and inclusive governance.

During the three-hour session from 2:20 pm to 5:30 pm on Friday, 5th July, 2024, the president addressed multiple issues, including the controversial Finance Bill, alleged abductions during protests, and healthcare concerns. Besides, the engagement was marked through raw and direct questions, which were raised from diverse participants, which the study considered as a reflection of the deep-seated anger and disappointment with the current administration. This platform allowed the president to receive unfiltered feedback and provided him with insights into the public's sentiments. Some of the agitated reactions which were presented to Kenya's president Ruto included what many listeners, including the authors of this paper, finding Osama Otero, a prominent digital activist and host of the session, set a confrontational tone by questioning the government's accountability: "Are we in a terrorist country?" he asked, referencing the brutal police response to protests. Another participant, Miller, expressed his frustration and distrust, stating, "Do we really matter as people who elected you?" and voiced his anger about witnessing police violence firsthand. Marvin Mabonga, an unemployed university graduate, bluntly criticised the government's competence: "In your cabinet, we have so many incompetent cabinet secretaries." The conversation highlighted the deep-seated anger and disillusionment among the youth, who used this unfiltered platform to demand answers and accountability from their leader, showcasing the powerful role of digital activism in modern civic engagement.

In addition, there are aspects where the interaction on X Space was not without challenges. Technical difficulties and a shaky start tested the patience of both the president and the participants. However, as the discussion was ongoing, President William Ruto engaged in a historic live audio discussion on X Spaces from Kenya's State House. This marked a significant turning point in Kenya's civic engagement, providing an unfiltered forum for citizens to directly question their leader on pressing issues. According to Soy

(2024), the discussion peaked at 163,000 participants, which showed that there was a clear testament to the growing importance of social media in political discourse. The session underscored the potential of digital platforms to facilitate direct communication between the government and the target population.

President Ruto's apology to the families of those who lost their lives during the protests and his commitment to listen more empathetically were key moments of the engagement. These gestures were seen as steps towards rebuilding trust with the public, particularly the youth. Besides, the study noted that the deputy president, Rigathi Gachagua, who also praised the engagement and governance where he was recorded encouraging other political leaders to adopt a similar approach, emphasising the importance of listening to the people and avoiding arrogance in their dealings.

This publication emphasises that Generation Z ensures that there should be a redefined political discourse in Kenya through social media activism and direct engagement with government leaders (Müssig & Okrug, 2024). Thus, the rise of Generation Z in Kenyan politics represents a paradigm shift in how civic engagement is conducted. Their use of social media as a tool for activism and their ability to engage with government leaders are reshaping the political landscape. Therefore, this study essentially revolves around the provisions of a comprehensive analysis of these dynamics, offering insights into the future of political discourse and civic participation in Kenya.

## Historical Context of Civic Engagement in Kenya

Kenya's journey towards political independence in 1963 marked the beginning of a dynamic history of civic engagement and political activism. The studies indicate that in the post-independence era, Kenya as a country was marked by a significant civic movement aimed at shaping its political landscape. This development was further encouraged by the initial political activism, which academics describe as marked by initiatives to create a new nation-state, tackle social and economic disparities, and set up democratic institutions of government. It is also important to be aware of the role of the youth in historical political movements since they have been at the forefront of political activism in Kenya (Ainea & Moi, 2024). This can be witnessed from a case study that was

conducted by researchers regarding the Mau Mau uprising, which consisted of young militant movements who fought against British colonial rule. Additionally, history also holds that during President Moi's time, there were intense protests by young Kenyans who were regarded as university students who were particularly active, with the University of Nairobi becoming a hub for political dissent and activism (Etuk, 2024). Additionally, the issue of the 1980s and 1990s, where there were aspects of the Young Turks, which was composed of young politicians and activists, emerged as influential forces in the push for democratic reforms.

The Mau Mau resistance in Kenya during the 1950s and the youth movements for KANU in 1992 provide significant historical context that parallels the current Gen Z protests. The Mau Mau uprising was a fierce struggle against British colonial rule, characterised by violent repression, land dispossession, and brutal state violence (Muganda, 2024). The young Kenyans involved in this movement were driven by a desire for independence, land rights, and justice, challenging the colonial systems that entrenched inequality. Similarly, the youth-led protests in 1992, particularly during the Saba Saba demonstrations, were directed against President Moi's authoritarian regime, demanding political reforms and an end to the criminalisation of political dissent (Ngugi, 2024). These past uprisings in Kenya are linked by a shared theme: the youth rising against tyrannical governments, seeking fairness and governmental reform.

The study also likens the Generation Z-led protests in Kenya to the historical resistance of the Kapenguria Six, illustrating a recurring theme of youthful defiance against perceived oppression and injustice. The Kapenguria Six, which scholarly evidence showcases as being composed of Jomo Kenyatta, Bildad Kagia, Achieng Oneko, Paul Ngei, Fred Kubai, and Kungu Karumba, were significant persons within the struggle against British colonial rule in the early 1950s. Their attributes led to them being detained and tried under harsh conditions for their alleged involvement with the Mau Mau, a movement seeking independence from colonial rule. Scholars indicate that their arrest and trial symbolised the broader resistance against colonial oppression and the fight for self-determination.

Similarly, the Gen Z protests are a modern manifestation of resistance, driven by dissatisfaction with the current government's policies, particularly those perceived as economically punitive and unjust. These protests have been marked by demands for accountability, good governance, and significant political reform, echoing the Kapenguria Six's struggle for justice and freedom. Both movements highlight the pivotal role of youth in challenging the status quo and advocating for systemic change. Moreover, the government's attempts to quell the protests through force and legal means parallel the colonial authorities' efforts to suppress the Kapenguria Six, underscoring the enduring nature of state resistance to dissent.

Besides, the protests led by Generation Z in Kenya echo the tensions and demands for justice reminiscent of the 2007-2008 post-election violence that led to the indictment of the "Ocampo Six" by the International Criminal Court. Just as the Ocampo Six were accused of orchestrating violence that resulted in widespread deaths and displacements, the Gen Z protesters are vocal against perceived injustices and government mismanagement. Both movements reflect a profound dissatisfaction with political leadership and a demand for accountability. The post-election violence highlighted the ethnic and political divisions within Kenya, while the current protests underscore a generational push for systemic change and political reforms. Despite differences in context, both periods showcase the Kenyan populace's resilience and persistent quest for justice and better governance.

The current Gen Z protests in Kenya resonate deeply with these historical movements, as they too confront systemic issues of state violence, economic injustice, and political repression. Utilising both online and offline platforms, today's youth have mobilised to challenge the status quo, much like their predecessors. Social media and digital activism have boosted their visibility, facilitating instant interactions with political figures and expanding the reach of their cause. President Ruto's participation in an X Space debate exemplifies this shift, marking a new era of civic engagement where young Kenyans can directly question and hold their leaders accountable. This digital dimension of the Gen Z movement underscores a continuity in the spirit of resistance, connecting the struggles of past generations with contemporary

efforts to reclaim narratives and demand systemic change.

In addition, it is important to record within this paper the evolution of media and civic participation. Studies indicate that the early years of independence were marked by traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television, which are well known to Kenyan people as primary sources of information and platforms for political discourse, which were also influential in shaping the political opinion, together with informing the public (Ibrahim, 2024). Besides, there are aspects of liberalisation of the media landscape which occurred in the 1990s, where studies indicate a significant growth in the independent media outlets, marking a turning point in civic engagement. This also saw the rise of the proliferation of FM radio stations, community radio, and private television channels, which offered a provision for public discourse and activism. This also saw a rise in talk shows, call-in programs, and investigative journalism, which have become powerful tools for holding the government accountable and mobilising the public (Maritim et al., 2024).

Consequently, this paper looked into the implications of social media on political engagement and activism. Essentially, according to history, the advent of social media in the 2000s revolutionised civic participation and political engagement in Kenya. This is because of the increased platforms which came up, such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp, and YouTube, which became integral to political activism, offering unprecedented opportunities for information dissemination, mobilisation, and organisation. An important aspect to note is that social media allowed activists to bypass traditional media gatekeepers, reaching a wider audience and facilitating real-time communication and coordination (Ongeti et al., 2024). This also saw social media playing a role in the 2007-2008 post-election violence, which was conclusively noted through the incitement of violence and promotion of peace and reconciliation efforts. Essentially, there was a 2010 constitutional referendum which was vital to ensure extensive usage of social media on matters that related to civic education and mobilisation which would contribute towards a peaceful and informed voting process. Over the years, this has grown to where the Generation Z is

digitally aware and capable to harness the power of social media to drive political activism and engagement making them a digital-native generation which uses all platforms to mobilise themselves such as X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube where they air their social and economic reforms to challenge government policies. For instance, the Finance Bill 2024 implications of the impact of social media on political activism, the Gen Z have been noted as one group that has used social media to organise protests in a manner that has ensured that they effectively disseminate information, and engage with the public. This was evident when President William Ruto engaged on X space, further highlighting the significance of digital platforms in facilitating direct communication between government leaders and the populace.

## The Rise of Generation Z in Kenyan Politics

In order to have the most relevant definition of Generation Z, it is important to understand that this is a group of young adults who were born in the mid-1990s and early 2010s, representing a unique cohort in Kenya's demographic landscape. It is also significant to understand that this is a generation that is marked by the coming of age in a digital era, which is characterised by their technological savviness and status as digital natives. The research noted that these are young adults who have grown up with the internet, smartphones, and social media, which have awakened their senses that have shaped their worldview and modes of interaction. In essence, the study came to an agreement that Generation Z makes up a significant portion of the population, which contributes immensely towards the dynamic and youthful demographic profile that is increasingly influential in various spheres, including politics (Tsuwa & Akase, 2024).

To create a clear image of the study, there was a need to review the technological savviness and digital native status. The studies portrayed this generation as one that is capable of integrating digital tools into their daily lives using social media platforms, messaging apps, and other digital channels for communication, information, and activism. Additionally, they are detailed to be digital native since they utilise social media which allows them to navigate and leverage technology in ways that previous

generations could not, making them powerful agents of change in the digital age (Ofei et al., 2024). Essentially, this generation is one where they are educated on technological proficiency has enabled them to change in the digital age. This technological proficiency has enabled them to organise, mobilise, and amplify their voices on a range of political and social issues, creating new avenues for civic engagement and political participation.

In understanding why Kenyans are experiencing the rise of Generation Z in Kenyan politics, there are diverse reasons. For instance, the aspect of economic challenges, unemployment, and cost of living, which are all unstable, becomes a pressing concern for Kenyan youth, which now becomes a fuel for their demand for economic reforms and better job prospects that can foster financial insecurity. Additionally, factors such as education and opportunities are ones that mark the Gen Z in Kenya. They are known to have accessed quality education and opportunities for their personal and professional growth, however, they are also associated with disparities that gained their way into the system which they show that it has become expensive and that it requires reformations to ensure equitable access of education and skill training as they all consider education as being a tool that can make one empowered and uplift of communities, thus, driving their activism for their activism for improved educational systems (Lim, 2024). Thirdly, the aspect of social justice and human rights plays a role in the youth protests. Studies inform that this generation is vocal about issues such as gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental sustainability, and anti-corruption. Thus, understanding this generation as one that is unafraid to challenge systemic injustices and demand accountability from leaders, the social media campaign, protests, and advocacy initiatives centred on these issues reflect their commitment to creating a more just and equitable society (Mburu et al., 2024).

### **Social Media as a Platform for Political Change**

This section looks into the power of social media, which cannot be underestimated. The study came to that agreement on the basis that social media has revolutionised political engagement globally, and Kenya, which is no exception. The researchers with X

accounts can attest that it has powerful tools for political discourse, enabling real-time communication, mobilisation, and advocacy. These platforms offer an unprecedented level of access and interactivity, which is vital when allowing users to bypass traditional gatekeepers of information and directly engage with political leaders and institutions. Thus, in Kenya, social media's influence is evident in the way it facilitates political engagement among the youth. It serves as a virtual square where ideas are exchanged, movements are organised, and voices are amplified. Furthermore, one needs to understand that the decentralised nature of social media empowers individuals to contribute to political conversations, share personal narratives, and build communities around shared causes. Also, within this paper, from diverse successful social media campaigns such as the #Repeal162 campaign, which was hugely influential among young activists who needed reformations on Twitter regarding the aspect of LGBTQ+ rights in Kenya. Additionally, with #MyDressMyChoice, it is also envisioned as another successful trend that was on social media platforms, especially Twitter, which saw Kenyan's address issues related to gender-based violence and women's rights, leading to their protection within the legislative changes. Thus, this makes the aspect of social media being influential and even developing influencers out of it, such as Osama Otero, Kimuzi, and Amerix, who are regarded as mobilisers of youth for political causes on critical issues such as corruption, unemployment and social justice, which is a clear indication of the digital activism landscape.

### **President Ruto's Engagement with Generation Z on X**

This section is one that discusses on the events of 5th July, 2024 that saw President William Ruto making a history in joining X space to engage his citizens particularly the Generation X. This was a great moment for the country as it also saw a transformation in Kenyan political discourse through the evidence that presidency was willing to utilise modern platforms to connect with the younger generation. This meeting was significant as it saw the president of Kenya being asked a wide range of pressing issues regarding the Finance Bill 2024 and its proposed tax increases. He was also asked questions regarding the abductions of digital activists and critics, and also national issues such as the state of public healthcare and strategies to improve access and quality, which were vital

reflections of the youth's increasing concern about these issues. It is important to comprehend that the public and political reactions on that matter were of divergent views, since this engagement drew mixed reactions (Misiko, 2024). X session which particularly hosted by the Gen Z who are the young activists and other concerned Kenyans found the meeting to be fruitful since it was marked by transparency and responsiveness, whereas there are those whose feedback was not entirely positive as they found the president to be evasive and inadequate with his answers and that he needed to be more sincere and address the issues discussed (Buheji, 2024).

## **The Impact of Digital Engagement on Governance**

This paper also discusses that following President Ruto's engagement on X space, the government made several immediate changes and commitments. These changes came into play following the public outcry, which saw the pledge to review and possibly amend contentious aspects of the Finance Bill 2024, an aspect that was also abolished after the youths protested against it, fully withdrawing it. Additionally, the president formed a special task force that would investigate abductions of the young activists, through the demonstration of a responsiveness to human rights concerns. Additionally, other changes were witnessed in matters such as the health sector, where the government announced a new initiative aimed at improving healthcare infrastructure and access. This was all achieved following a successful continuous digital engagement, which played a critical role in shaping the future of the political landscape; thus, a testament to the transformative potential of social media in fostering a more connected and responsive political environment in Kenya.

The dissolution of Cabinet Secretaries (CS) as a result of revolution often arises from widespread discontent among the populace regarding governance. In the case of Kenya, President William Ruto's recent dismissal of his entire cabinet and subsequent reappointment of familiar faces sparked significant unrest and protests. The public's dissatisfaction was largely due to the perception that the president was merely recycling old officials rather than addressing the systemic issues that led to the initial dismissal. Many Kenyans, especially the youth, felt that their concerns about governance and representation were

not being taken seriously, as evidenced by the continued appointment of individuals with questionable past performance and political affiliations. This situation exemplifies how revolutionary movements can pressure leaders to make substantial changes in their administration, although such changes may not always meet public expectations, leading to further unrest and calls for genuine reform (Etuk, 2024). The effectiveness of these governmental changes hinges on the leaders' ability to recognise and address the root causes of public dissatisfaction rather than resorting to superficial adjustments.

The dissolution of the Kenyan cabinet and the appointment of new cabinet members by President William Ruto have not appeased the youthful protesters, who remain unimpressed by these changes. Despite Ruto's efforts to rebuild confidence and extend an olive branch to the opposition by including high-level opposition members in his new cabinet, the protests continue. The Gen Z protesters demand accountability and good governance, rejecting the recycling of old political figures and calling for fresh faces in leadership. The inclusion of opposition members and attempts at ethnic inclusivity are viewed by many as insufficient measures to address the core issues of competency and accountability. The persistent frustration among the youth indicates that the cabinet changes have not quelled the ongoing demonstrations, which are driven by broader discontent with the current state of governance in Kenya.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

Despite the promising landscape of Generation Z's activism in Kenya, several challenges persist. For instance, an issue arises when the government's response to activism includes suppression tactics such as censorship, surveillance, and intimidation. Especially when Kenyans are faced with aspects such as instances of internet shutdown during protests and the arrest of vocal activists, these tactics stifle dissent and discourage participation. Additionally, the issue regarding the sustainability of digital activism is of major concern, since while the social media campaigns can gain significant traction quickly, maintaining momentum and translating online efforts into real-world implications can be difficult (Masinde et al.,

2024). This is seen through the digital platforms, often having to establish echo chambers, limiting the reach of messages to a broader audience. Moreover, the fast-paced nature of social media can lead to fleeting interest, making sustained advocacy efforts challenging.

The protests led by Generation Z in Kenya have been a pivotal moment in the country's political landscape, underscoring the youth's role as the voice for the voiceless. Despite being initially ridiculed as leaderless and formless, Gen Z has demonstrated remarkable resilience and unity in their fight for justice and accountability. Their use of digital platforms to organise and communicate has baffled traditional political entities and showcased a new era of civic engagement.

The movement has faced significant challenges, including violent crackdowns by the government. The police's brutal response, which included killing at least 41 protesters and abducting and disappearing dozens more, highlighted the state's oppressive tactics. The infiltration of protests by thugs and criminals to delegitimise the movement further complicated their struggle, but the youth remained undeterred. In response to the sustained pressure from Gen Z, President William Ruto attempted to quell the protests by withdrawing the unpopular Finance Bill and implementing austerity measures. However, these concessions did not satisfy the protesters, who continued to demand deeper systemic changes and accountability for the killings and other injustices they faced.

The role of civil society and religious institutions has been mixed. While some churches and civil society organisations have supported the Gen Z movement, others have been criticised for their past complicity with oppressive regimes. The youth have called for a break from such institutions, demanding that churches stop providing platforms to politicians and rejecting financial contributions from public officials. The opposition, led by Raila Odinga, initially appeared to align with the government's attempts at dialogue, but eventually, he threw his support behind the youth. Odinga's call for justice and compensation for victims of police brutality, alongside his proposal for a national convention to address critical issues, resonated with

the protesters. However, it remains uncertain whether these steps will appease the youth or if they will continue their relentless push for change. Lastly, the Gen Z protests have been a significant force in challenging Kenya's political status quo. Their actions have revealed the power of collective youth activism in demanding accountability and reshaping political engagement. As they continue to resist co-option and maintain pressure on the government, they embody the essence of democracy—not merely through elections but through sustained civic participation and holding leaders accountable. This movement is a testament to the enduring spirit of revolution, and the youth's unwavering commitment to justice and equity will undoubtedly influence Kenya's future.

Additionally, the role of churches in the Generation Z-led protests in Kenya has been marked by division and varied responses. Some church leaders have criticised the clergy for allowing politicians to use their platforms to spread divisive rhetoric and unfulfilled promises, arguing that this has undermined the moral authority of religious institutions. These critics support the youth's demands for accountability and reform, viewing them as the new opposition force capable of driving significant political change. Conversely, other church leaders advocate for a more measured approach, urging the youth to allow the government time to implement changes and emphasising the importance of peaceful demonstrations (Luttrell & McGrath, 2021). This division within the church highlights the broader societal debate on the legitimacy and impact of the protests, reflecting differing views on the role of religious institutions in political activism and social justice.

Consequently, there are opportunities that arise from enhanced engagement among Gen Z in Kenya. Especially, the aspect of development of effective engagement mechanisms which can propel the difference between digital activism and traditional processes is made essential. This is because there is significant involvement in the creation of platforms for continuous dialogue between government officials and young activists, ensuring that digital discussions lead to concrete policy actions. Additionally, with the factor of capacity-building initiatives, there can be an empowerment of the young activists with the skills and knowledge that are required to navigate the

political landscape effectively. This can also encourage using data and analytics to empower activists, enabling them to assess campaign impact and make well-informed decisions. In such a manner, they can build alliances between digital activism and establish civil society organisations that can help them strengthen their advocacy efforts. Furthermore, encouraging digital literacy and critical thinking skills among Generation Z can foster a more informed and engaged citizenry. Therefore, through educating young people about their rights and the importance of civic participation, there can be a significant improvement in the creation of a culture of active citizenship in Kenya.

The protests led by Generation Z in Kenya serve as a powerful reminder of the resilience and determination of the youth to be the voice for the voiceless. Despite the government's attempts to suppress the movement through force and manipulation, the young protesters have succeeded in capturing national and international attention, compelling the political class to reconsider its approach. The protests have highlighted the capacity of the youth to mobilise and organise outside traditional political structures, using digital platforms to spread their message and demand accountability. While it remains to be seen how lasting the impact of these protests will be, it is clear that Generation Z has fundamentally altered the landscape of political engagement in Kenya. Their actions demonstrate that true democracy is not just about winning elections, but about continuously holding

those in power accountable and ensuring that the government serves the people. As the youth continue to resist co-option and maintain their pressure for change, they exemplify the enduring spirit of revolution and the quest for a more just and equitable society.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In independent Kenya, the voices of the voiceless have continually risen against oppression, injustice, and misgovernance, reflecting a persistent struggle for equity and accountability. From the historic resistance embodied by the Kapenguria Six, who challenged colonial rule, to the contemporary protests led by Generation Z, the Kenyan populace has consistently shown resilience and determination in demanding their rights. The post-election violence of 2007-2008 and the subsequent indictment of the Ocampo Six underscored the severe consequences of political impunity and ethnic strife. Today, the youth-led protests symbolise a new chapter in this ongoing narrative, with young Kenyans fervently advocating for transparency, fairness, and a responsive government. These movements, though separated by decades, are united by a common thread: the unyielding pursuit of justice and the amplification of marginalised voices. As Kenya continues to navigate its democratic journey, the enduring spirit of its people in speaking out against tyranny and striving for a just society remains a powerful testament to the nation's commitment to true independence and equality.

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