

ORPP in the News

05 February 2026

Registrar of Political Parties, J. C. Lorionokou
at **Radio Generation – Kenya**, *The People's Breakfast Show* from 8.00 – 9.00 am



Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyBt9ZjjBXA>

Transcript (edited version)

Presenter 1:

Welcome to Radio Generation, and a Happy New Year. I have been wishing people a Happy New Year and I think I will continue doing so until March. Welcome once again to Radio Generation.

RPP:

Thank you very much. I appreciate the invitation.

Presenter 1:

There was a time I worked in the same building where the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties is located—Westlands, Lion Place. The office always seemed very quiet. Sometimes I even wondered whether anyone was there. Is it actually a busy place?

RPP:

It is quite a busy place. I am surprised you say it is quiet. It depends on the time of day or the season. At times, it can be one of the noisiest places.

Presenter 1:

From time to time, I have seen senior political leaders there. They do visit the office regularly, right?

RPP:

Yes, they do.

Presenter 1:

How many political parties are currently registered in Kenya?

RPP:

We currently have 90 fully registered political parties. At the beginning of the year, we had 92, but two were put on notice in mid-January. In addition, we have 32 parties at various stages awaiting full registration, subject to compliance with requirements.

Presenter 1:

What are the requirements for registering a political party? Are they the same for all parties?

RPP:

Yes, the requirements are standard for all parties. Registration begins with expressing the intention to form a political party. The first step involves reserving a party name and slogan, which are reviewed to ensure they are not offensive or misleading.

Presenter 1:

What happens after the name reservation?

RPP:

The name is reserved for about 90 days, during which time the promoters prepare the necessary documentation. This includes submitting a list of founding members, which is reviewed to ensure compliance with Article 91 of the Constitution and Chapter Six on leadership and integrity. Background checks are conducted through relevant agencies.

Presenter 1:

What follows once that stage is completed?

RPP:

The promoters are then required to draft a party constitution, outlining governance structures, ideology, and operational rules. Once these foundational requirements are met, the party is issued with a provisional registration certificate.

Presenter 1:

What does provisional registration allow?

RPP:

It gives the party 270 days to meet the requirements for full registration. These include establishing offices in at least half of the counties—a minimum of 24—and registering at least 1,000 members in each of those counties. All members must be registered voters.

Presenter 1:

So that is at least 24,000 members?

RPP:

Yes, that is correct.

Presenter 1:

Are these county offices required to be operational?

RPP:

Yes. The offices must be functional and accessible to the public during normal working hours. Once a party is fully registered, compliance becomes an ongoing obligation, and we monitor whether offices remain operational and whether party structures are functioning as declared.

Presenter 1:

Is there a statutory timeline for meeting all these requirements?

RPP:

Yes. The 90-day name reservation period applies initially, followed by 270 days after provisional registration. If a party fails to comply within the 270 days, the process lapses and they must start again from the beginning.

Presenter 1:

That explains why some parties take years to register.

RPP:

Exactly. Some parties began the process in 2022 or 2023 and only completed it recently because they had to restart after timelines expired.

Presenter 1:

How much does it cost to register a political party?

RPP:

The fee for provisional registration is KES 100,000. Upon meeting all requirements for full registration, an additional KES 500,000 is payable.

Presenter 1:

That seems expensive, especially for young people who may want to form political parties. Are there any waivers or reduced fees?

RPP:

Currently, there are no waivers. These fees are prescribed by the Political Parties Act. However, the cost also serves as a commitment threshold to discourage briefcase political parties.

Presenter 1:

What do you mean by briefcase political parties?

RPP:

These are parties formed around individuals, often for short-term political convenience. Our aim is to strengthen political parties as institutions that endure beyond election cycles and individual personalities.

Presenter 1:

Are individuals allowed to belong to more than one political party?

RPP:

No. A person can only be a member of one political party at a time. We use the Integrated Political Parties Management System (IPPMS), which requires consent via mobile confirmation before registration is finalized.

Presenter 2:

What about political alliances and coalitions? What is their legal basis?

RPP:

The law provides for coalitions. There are two types: a coalition political party, which is registered and issued with a certificate, and a coalition arrangement, which is an agreement among parties without registration as a party. Both are governed by coalition agreements that outline leadership, operations, and exit clauses.

Presenter 2:

When did the current Political Parties Act come into effect?

RPP:

The first Political Parties Act was enacted in 2011. However, it has undergone reforms, particularly after 2021, to address clauses that required improvement for better service delivery. The Act has therefore been reviewed once since its initial enactment.

Presenter 2:

So arrangements such as those in 2002, like the Rainbow Coalition, existed before the Act?

RPP:

Yes, those arrangements predated the Act. At the time, political parties operated under a different regulatory framework and were largely overseen by the Electoral Commission. The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties did not exist as an independent entity then.

Presenter 2:

So those were essentially gentleman's agreements?

RPP:

Yes, although there was some regulatory framework, it was not as comprehensive as what exists today under the Political Parties Act.

Presenter 2:

So coalition political parties now have a clearly defined legal pathway—how they form, function, share responsibilities if they win, and how they dissolve.

RPP:

That is correct. Coalitions were introduced as a solution to Kenya's evolving political environment. Initially, coalitions were not envisioned in the Act, but political realities demanded a structured framework to regulate them. The Act now provides that framework, although we acknowledge that it still requires refinement.

Presenter 2:

That makes sense. You only truly understand the strengths and weaknesses of a law once it is operationalized.

RPP:

Exactly. As an office, we see the need for a more structured and elaborate coalition framework going forward.

Presenter 2:

There has been renewed debate around Azimio. They deposited their coalition agreement with your office. When certain members appeared to align with the government, was there a provision in that agreement to address such situations?

RPP:

What you are referring to is what the law terms as “deeming.” A member is deemed to have moved from a party when they begin to openly espouse the ideology or interests of another party.

Presenter 2:

That is exactly my point.

RPP:

However, the Registrar cannot act on perception alone. The affected political party must formally write to the Registrar, indicating that the member is no longer acting in accordance with the party’s constitution and values.

The party must demonstrate that it followed its internal disciplinary processes—such as issuing warnings, summoning the member, and documenting responses. Only then does the Registrar intervene as an arbiter to ensure due process was followed.

We avoid micromanaging political parties. That is why parties are required to have internal dispute resolution mechanisms, including tribunals, to resolve issues internally where possible.

Presenter 2:

So the authority to act rests with the party itself.

RPP:

Yes, it does. My role is to ensure the party complied with its own constitution and afforded the member a fair hearing.

Presenter 2:

So political parties must anticipate such situations and provide mechanisms in their constitutions.

RPP:

They must. Ordinary members can freely leave a party. However, the situation is different for elected leaders or party officials. Because they hold office through the party's ticket, a formal process must be followed.

Presenter 1:

For example, if a governor elected on Party A decides to move to Party B, do they retain their seat?

RPP:

No. The seat belongs to the political party that sponsored the individual. If an elected leader resigns from the sponsoring party, they effectively vacate the seat and may only contest again under a different ticket in a subsequent election.

Presenter 1:

So they are essentially bound to the party until the next election.

RPP:

Yes, if they wish to retain the seat. That is why parties must be functional and accountable. Leaders are expected to address disagreements internally rather than abandon the party mid-term.

Presenter 1:

What if a party violates its own constitution in choosing leaders, but no one complains—do you intervene?

RPP:

Declarations alone do not confer leadership. Leadership must follow the process outlined in the party's constitution. Until leadership changes are formally communicated, validated, and gazetted by my office, the previously registered officials remain the lawful leaders.

RPP:

Any leadership change must be supported by minutes, attendance records, resolutions, and evidence that the appropriate party organ—such as a National Delegates Conference—made the decision.

RPP:

Such changes must also be publicized, including through newspapers and party websites, to allow members an opportunity to raise objections.

Presenter 2:

This helps explain the confusion that often arises in political reporting.

RPP:

Indeed. Much of the public discourse is driven by rhetoric rather than legal reality. One of our priorities as an office is to educate the public on how political parties function and the laws that govern them.

RPP:

Many party members are unaware of how their own parties operate. Civic education is therefore critical.

Presenter 1:

Some people argue that Kenya has too many political parties and should impose a cap.

RPP:

The Constitution establishes Kenya as a multiparty democracy. However, it also emphasizes national values and good governance. Until there is constitutional reform, our role is to register all parties that meet the legal requirements.

RPP:

Multiparty democracy also requires accountability, not just numerical freedom.

Presenter 2:

Is it possible to have too much freedom?

RPP:

Freedom does not mean absence of rules. Democracy and freedom must operate within a framework. Without that, there would be disorder. The issue is balance, not restriction.

Presenter 1:

We are coming to the end of the show.

RPP:

That was fast.

Presenter 1:

Thank you for your time. One last question—do you ever decline party names or symbols?

RPP:

Yes, regularly. Applications are rejected if names or symbols already exist or are too similar. This happens every day.

In closing, I want to emphasize that Kenya is undergoing a transition, whether we acknowledge it or not. We can either prepare for it through structured systems or let it unfold chaotically.

The Constitution provides a framework for change. Political parties are a key vehicle for that change, especially for young people. My message to the youth is: engage political parties, reform them from within, and hold them accountable.

Presenter 1:

Thank you very much, *Bwana* Registrar.