Tecla Wanjala

How should post-conflict societies deal with human rights violations? Since the 1990s, this question has been dealt with transnationally by a growing number of experts from different professional backgrounds, ranging from human rights lawyers and activists to peacebuilders. Accordingly, the solutions provided by these groups have been extremely varied. Tecla Wanjala was born in the Western part of Kenya. When ethnic clashes broke out in 1991/92, she became engaged in the settlement of these conflicts at the local level. When, after a series of renewed clashes, the government established the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya in 2007, Wanjala became a member. She would later go on to serve as the vice chair of the commission. Skeptical of human rights lawyers and their approach of retributive justice, she saw herself as advocate for restorative justice.

Interview

The main part of the interview took place in the library of the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin on August 20, 2018, and was conducted by Dr. Anne Menzel, a researcher at the Center for Conflict Studies in Marburg, and Dr. Daniel Stahl, coordinator of the Study Group “Human Rights in 20th Century” at the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. After three hours, the conversation had to be discontinued. One month later, Dr. Wanjala and Dr. Stahl completed the interview via Skype.

Stahl
I would like to ask you to start by describing your childhood.

Wanjala
I grew up in the western part of Kenya in a district called Bungoma. It’s right on the border between Kenya and Uganda. I come from the second major ethnic group in our country, the Luhya. I was the third to be born in an extended family of twenty-five siblings. My father was a polygamist. My mother was his first wife. He had four wives and I’m from his first wife.

I think being born into this large family prepared me for the work I was going to do. Coming from the border area also prepared me for my future work because, from primary school until the fifth grade, I never went to school in my own district. Instead, I attended school in the neighboring district with different ethnic communities.

My grandfather's family was even bigger. I think he had over ten wives. Each time I visited my grandmother, I was overwhelmed by how they were coping. Even eating was a competition in such a large family. As a wife in that home, you couldn't just cook for your own children. Eating was rotational. You would eat one thing in one house and then move on to the next.

As illiterate as my grandfather was, he was a recognized elder in the community. He was what the Luhyas called a seer. The British called them witchdoctors. Essentially, they were

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somebody who could foresee the future. I think my grandfather's lifestyle encouraged me because, while he had many children only a few of them were female. We were always given preferential treatment, so it gave us a sense of pride from the beginning. I'm saying this because, in Africa, girls are usually not favored, owing to cultural issues.

When it came to my own father, he also did not discriminate against us, especially when it came to education. He gave us a good education. I think this was probably because he was a teacher so, for him, there was no question about getting an education. I'm saying this because when I looked around this wasn't the case. This was an island, a family with an island where girls could become very well educated, compared to those in the surrounding. That prepared me.

Overall, my childhood was very good. My dad gave me the education that I wanted in the school I wanted to go to. He was able to give me that and that gave me leadership skills from the very beginning.

From the time I stepped into what you would call first grade here, I was a prefect. A prefect is a leader. All the way through until high school, I was a leader. I performed roles in school that ranged from being a class prefect to a dining hall prefect to a head girl to a games prefect. In fact, when I joined college, I said no. They wanted to give me a leadership role, but I said no.

Stahl
What does being a prefect mean?

Wanjala
In Kenya, teachers help students learn how to lead the other students. If you're a prefect in a class, you'll be in charge of that class. If anything goes wrong, you have to know. If people make noise, you have to control them. If you are a head girl that means that you are oversee the whole school. If something goes wrong, you network with the teachers. Since most of our schools are boarding schools, a dining hall prefect is charged with making sure that the meals are okay, namely that they are cooked on time, the place is clean, and all of that.

Menzel
So, it's about discipline and conflict mediations, right?

Wanjala
Yes, and learning in this environment was different from my life in my community. It helped me a lot.

Menzel
Can I ask why you went to school in the neighboring district? Because you highlighted that earlier.

Wanjala
My father wanted me to go to a boarding school and, because he was a Catholic teacher, he

loved missionary schools. My older sister went to another school in my community, a boarding school. When it came time for me to go to a boarding school, a Catholic mission had just set up a primary school and my father saw the potential for it to grow. The school was in the neighboring community – a community that we were in conflict with. I'm the darkest in my home and the other community was very dark.

I'm dark, but we have some Africans who are darker than I am. So, this neighboring community had very black people and we – my community – used to look down on them and demean them. In fact, they used derogatory terms against them. The term they used against them is the term that some of my family members, including my siblings, used to call me because I was so black. Since I went to school with them, I embraced them. I loved them because I looked beyond that dark skin to see who they were as people.

To answer your question, then, I went to the boarding school because my dad wanted me to get the education that I needed because, in boarding schools, all you do is concentrate on your academics, apart from small chores, like cleaning and taking care of yourself. That is why I went.

Stahl
Was your father a very political or religious person? How would you describe him?

Wanjala
My father was an educationist. He loved education. He came from a larger community so, in his family, there were very old women speaking English. They had gone to school because he took them. I think he was a socialist because whenever there was a problem in the neighborhood, he was the one who mobilized people to support that family. I think his father was actually more politically active than he was because, around the time of independence, more politicians used to come and consult his father than him.

I started asking questions: Why don't we have medics? Why don't we have lawyers?

Stahl
How did you get involved politically?

Wanjala
When I reached college, I said, “I don't want to be a prefect.” They wanted to appoint me, but I didn’t want to be a prefect, I wanted to just be a student. However, when I saw what happened with Saba Saba,[1] I couldn't just sit back. I had to mobilize students to come up with an opposition. This is at Maseno, which would later become Maseno University. At this time, it was still a development training institute.

Anyway, we mobilized, and we formed an opposition. We found a way of linking up with other students from the University of Nairobi, some of whom had lost their loved ones. We used our voice and began agitating for the change from a one-party regime to a multipartisan one because the current system was not working for us.

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Menzel
Earlier you said your father was a socialist, right? So, I was wondering what role did ideology play in your time in college? Did you talk about different systems, or was it more that you were interested in having freedom and multiparty elections, no matter what sort of system came afterwards? How did you discuss it? Also, maybe you could tell us a bit more about what exactly you did to react to Saba Saba and to help people.

Wanjala
Okay. For me, when I saw the violence that was happening in 1987, I started asking: "Why is this happening?" I started reading the newspapers and making connections. I come from the western part of Kenya, an area that was very much marginalized politically. At that time, we had some leaders that were agitating for multiparty democracy.

I started relating more and more to what the leaders were doing back home. Masinde Muliro[2] was one of the leaders who was advocating among the people for political change. I started asking questions: Why don't we have medics? Why don't we have lawyers? We were concerned that people didn't consider us for prime jobs. As soon as I started relating to issues like these, I got interested. So, we petitioned and came up with signatures for students in the western part of Kenya to support what students in Nairobi were pushing for. They were pushing for multiparty politics, so that we could have a fair playing ground, and so that life could improve for everybody – every Kenyan, not just a sector of the community.

The reason I went to study social work development was so that I could support development back home. The area I came from had a wealth of natural resources, but the people were still living in abject poverty. It's not because we were not hardworking, but rather because the systems were just not good for us. In fact, we produced a lot, but what happened was the middlemen came from other communities to take our produce at a throwaway price, only to return later to sell it back to us at a higher price.

Stahl
One could also explain this underdevelopment by pointing to the industrialized states and saying they implemented an economic world order that exploits countries like yours. But, as I understand now, you didn't point to the industrialized countries, instead you saw the government of Kenya as the main problem. Did you also discuss among the students about the worldwide economic system and inequality between industrialized states and the so-called Third World countries?

Wanjala
Not at that level. At that level, my vision was very narrow; I was focused on what I was observing. At that point, I was looking only at that subsistence level. I think that in terms of our awareness and maybe because I was not an economics student, I couldn't relate to what was happening in the outside world. Instead, I looked at the environment where I was born, what was happening, and what the leadership was doing.

Stahl
African states, in particular, demanded a right to development in the 1970s and 1980s. Did

you discuss this matter at the university?

Wanjala
Students of politics might have done that. But for social development, which was my passion, I looked at the subsistence level instead of at the macro-level.

Stahl
I was also wondering about the ways that you mobilized the students. Which forms of protest did you use at the college?

Wanjala
At my college, the protests were not as pronounced because this was in the western part of Kenya. The colleges in Nairobi were in charge. From the periphery, we tried to support them by writing and signing petitions, declaring that we are united in this struggle. We also sent a representative to participate and bring us feedback whenever there was a meeting in Nairobi.

Because of that connection whenever there was agitation in Nairobi or there were boycotts, these events also took place in colleges outside of the city and students boycotted going to class.

Menzel
Can you give us some examples of what would happen if you signed petitions to send them to Nairobi or if you participated in the demonstrations?

Wanjala
Of course, ringleaders – especially ringleaders of the demonstrations – were sometimes sent home. At the universities in Nairobi, we lost lives. I think, on Saba Saba day, we lost 12 students who were shot by the police on the streets while demonstrating. They were shot dead. Afterwards, of course, some students were dismissed from their studies and life changed for them. For all of us.

Menzel
What role did ethnicity play among the students who were protesting? Were there protests across ethnic divides or was there ethnic alliance building going on amongst students? Or was that something that you didn't want to talk about…

Wanjala
Definitely. We were agitating for multiparty democracy and the way that the concept was introduced was top-down. What I mean here is that it started with the leaders in the opposition: Odinga Odinga[3] and later Masinde Muliro.[4]

Most of the students looked up to their leaders. You'll find many Luos, many Luhyas, and many Kikuyus, participating in such demonstrations because they had their own leaders. For students, I think the demonstrations were cutting across divides. For them, it was just about the system. It was not working, and it needed to be changed.

Stahl
What was your role in these protests? What did you do?

Wanjala
I just encouraged others to join us on the streets and I encouraged writing the petitions. We were still at the university level, so we convinced others to join our cause by talking about the issues. We helped people understand.

Stahl
Would you say that the majority of the students participated or was it just a small group?

Wanjala
The majority of students participated. In fact, the students in Kenya played a very important role in pushing for democratic values and principles.

Stahl
In that case, it could also be interpreted as a clash of different generations. Would you support that interpretation?

Wanjala
No, they had a few older leaders supporting them as well. Why did it happen? There was a window of opportunity that happened with the end of the Cold War era and the fall of the Soviet Union. All along, leaders had been pushing, but the Western world never supported us because of their vested interests. But, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they started paying more attention to the dictatorships in Africa and in other parts of the world.

Students played a role, but so did the political leaders whom the students looked up to. Religious leaders also played a very big role in all this pushing for multiparty democracy. In fact, the only time that our then-President gave our cause attention was when the religious leaders – both Protestants and Catholics – united and gave one statement. That is when they listened.

Stahl
What was the end result of these protests?

Wanjala
In 1991, they changed the constitution to allow for multiparty democracy.

Stahl
What did Kenyan civil society look like at this point?

Wanjala
By the 1990s, they got more organized. They advocated with one united voice. They got more analytical with issues, working together with the politicians, and pushing for civil resistance.

Stahl

What were the topics or issues that these different groups were dealing with?

Wanjala
They were all centered around governance and the marginalization of other groups. They raised issues about the way we were being governed and the fact that there was no level playing field when it came to general elections. They also raised issues about nepotism, tribalism, and broader issues about political space. Because there was only one party, there was no fair competition. Anybody who wanted to compete, because it was a one-party regime, was simply not given the space to do so. There were ways you were just eliminated.

Menzel
So, even in the 1980s, did you already have the type of NGOs that became dominant later on?

Wanjala
We had them. They were around, but not as much as in the 1990s.

Menzel
I'm thinking that this was probably because of the funding, no? International money only started flowing in to support these things in the 1990s, correct?

Wanjala
Yes. Then the civil societies were there, especially human rights groups.

Stahl
Did they explicitly call themselves human rights groups?

Wanjala
Yes, in Kenya, we have different categories of civil society institutions. We have those in development. We have those in relief support or humanitarian work. We have those in human rights or activism. We have faith-based organizations. The religious institutions still play a very key role in Africa and, for that matter, in Kenya.

In the 1980s, most agitation came from the religious institutions. That was the voice. As we moved towards the 1990s, we now had more groups in the civil society. Around this time, there was unity among local civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and international institutions.

I remember that the network I was heading had a number of international organizations, like Oxfam and ActionAid. It also had the Mennonite Central Committee, which is an American institution, as well as others. There was a kind of unity among the civil society and because of the support, institutions like USAID and PeaceNet, where I worked, came in to support.

Organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) also played a significant role in supporting the local agitation for change. In fact, had it not been for IMF and the World Bank, we would still be struggling with the sanctions that came with

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these great institutions. The government had to listen.

Stahl
When did you get married?

Wanjala
I got married in 1986. I had my firstborn child before going to college and left to study when he was around five years old.

Menzel
So you and your husband went to college together?

Wanjala
No, no. He had already finished college. He had promised my father that he would take me to college and he kept this promise. After I had my first child, I did some teaching, although I wasn't trained, but I remembered what my father had said. More importantly, I didn't want to become comfortable in being a housewife, so I told my husband that before I had a second child I needed to go to college.

> I helped mobilize single mothers by finding out what skills they had and finding them suitable work within the camps.

Stahl
How did you get your first job in the refugee camp?

Wanjala
It was right after finishing college. When I came out of college, I was still living in the coastal area, Mombasa, where my husband was working at the Kenya Revenue Authority office. Since I knew that institutions that did development work were religious institutions, when I finished college in 1991 I went to the Catholic Church and looked for employment.

At the time, I was expecting my second child. They told me there was a job, but they didn't tell me what the job was. I was expecting that they were going to take me to a women's group or something like that. But when I reported for my first day of work, they put me in a vehicle. I remember that it was a Red Cross vehicle. We went to a section of the coastal area very close to Serena Beach Hotel. That is Utange area. And I saw this place enclosed with shrubs. Inside were over 30,000 refugees from Somalia. Somalia had just disintegrated.[5] I was told that I was to support the vulnerable groups, mainly children under five and the elderly. The refugees couldn't communicate, so we set up a full makeshift school and I taught there. I taught kindergarten-aged children in the local language. That is where I started my work as a social worker, in the Utange Refugee Camp for Somalis.

Stahl
How was the work at the camp organized? Were there many workers like you doing the same job?

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Wanjala
There was a group. We had Red Cross and UNHCR staff. We also had the Catholic Church there. We had other religious institutions supporting us as well. Everyone picked a group to support. For the church, we tried to support the vulnerable, especially those with special needs. At one point, we began to search amongst ourselves to find someone to support the teaching of those in the camps. Since I had been an untrained teacher before and I had done Kiswahili as a language in high school, I supported this work.

These camps are chaotic. While I was there, I constantly looked beyond my mandate, and my heart went out to the single mothers. Apart from the relief work I was doing, I organized sessions for them because I realized that while others in the camp had spouses supporting them, these women did not. There was nobody to support them. I helped mobilize them by finding out what skills they had and finding them suitable work within the camps.

I remember that some of the women were tailors and the locals taught them how to make mats because the schools were made of mats. After that, I looked for a tailor for whoever was in charge of setting up school uniforms. That is what I did in the Watanga Refugee Camp. I organized vocational training, more or less. There, my social work skills came in because I wanted them to at least to be in a group as a safety net for each other and also for income-generating activities.

In fact, by that time I had been in Utange for about a year, the UNHCR had noticed the work I had done and they wanted to employ me. I remember going for the interview. At the same time that I was offered the job, my husband was transferred to Isebania, near the border. I could have been a senior UNHCR person, but I declined. I told the woman doing the hiring to give my job to whoever had come second in the process. I remember her looking at me and telling me that she has never seen such a stupid African woman.

Stahl
So, a job with the UNHCR would have been much better than working for the Catholic Church?

Wanjala
Yes, of course. I was earning 30 Euros by then.

Stahl
And it was not an option for your husband to stay with you?

Wanjala
No. An African man should give up his job because his wife has gotten a better job? Not an African man. It's always the other way, so I resigned from my role and relocated back to my own home, without knowing what was to come next.

Menzel
You were working for the Catholic Church, but I imagine that the Somalis were mostly Muslims, right? Was there any religious animosity at that time? Because my impression

today is that there's a lot of interreligious animosity and distrust in Kenya, but I'm not sure if I'm right. At the same time, this was not an issue that you were dealing with, right?

Wanjala
It was not an issue. Although, I thought that was the case initially because the kids used to sneer at me whenever I entered the camp. I thought maybe I was not dressed appropriately. So, I went and bought a Buibui and started dressing appropriately. Still, they sneered at me.

It was not an issue of religion. It was their trauma. These were kids from affluent families who were used to being educated in posh schools and driven around in expensive cars. In the camps, their lives were reduced to sitting on mats in a makeshift school. I only discovered later that, actually, their rejection was not based on religion; it was because of the trauma they were going through. I represented their trauma.

Even if we had religious issues, they were not the focus. Immediately, when women arrived, the first thing they did was to find out where they could get food for their family. Within a week, there were kiosks all over. So, in some ways, I think they may have traded that coexistence for their survival. I didn't notice any religious tension.

Stahl
How did the broader Kenyan society discuss the issue of refugees?

Wanjala
This was in 1991. We had also started agitating for a multiparty democracy. I think we knew our time was coming because I looked at them, and I said, "Why would a country put their citizens through what Somalia had done?"

Before the ethnic clashes in 1991 and 1992, Kenya was an island of peace surrounded by nations that were in conflict: Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia. These were not even the first group of refugees; Kenya was already hosting refugees. The difference was that this time they came en masse. I think the response was about our neighbors and what they were going through, and also about the obligation of the UNHCR that, when a country is hurting, another one should receive those fleeing.

Of course, there were tensions, as normal, between the locals and the refugees. But I also think that the locals benefited from the refugees. Before I left, they were just being transferred from the coastal area to other areas in the northeast. The locals there also benefited from the relief, especially because these were historically very poor communities.

In fact, it was not a question. Thinking about what is happening here in Germany, it's all about politics and the lack of political will from the top leadership. But, in Kenya, there was the political will from the leadership to host refugees.

Here in Germany, I think the issue of refugees has been politicized so much and when you ask – we had meetings with some of the politicians from the right wing recently – they cannot pinpoint what refugees are taking away from the locals, apart from the fact that they feel they're competing with them for resources. Here in Germany, it's more political.

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The issue has been politicized. In Kenya, that is not the case. Over the years, we have hosted so many refugees. We still have refugees there today – all the way from Rwanda, from Burundi, and from the DRC.

Menzel
So you went back to the west without a job?

Wanjala
Without a job, like a stupid African woman, yes. At this time, I was pregnant with my third child. So, my husband put me back in the village. He ensured that I had a telephone so that we could communicate. But again, because of the way I was brought up, I was not just going to be a housewife. Again, I took my papers to the Catholic Church.

I was told to report the following day. “There is a job for you,” the woman at the office said. I looked at her, and I'm like, “Are you not seeing this?” I was almost ready to deliver. It must have been my eighth month. I reported anyway. Again, I thought I was being taken to do development work. It was already 1992 at this time, when the first ethnic clashes were taking place. I was put in a vehicle together with the staff who were supporting Oxfam. They took me from one hall and market center to the next, across two districts. In Kenya, because of proximity of what we called the “enemy community”, they had not put the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in an enclosed place, but instead they had spread them across market centers, church halls, and schools.

Menzel
So these were Internally Displaced People from the ethnic clashes?

Wanjala
In my region, yes. The ethnic clashes in 1992[6] displaced about 300,000 Kenyans. We lost around 1,000 people. In the Catholic Church of Bungoma, where I come from, we had 40,000 IDPs. They were the ones I was in charge of.

Stahl
Was your family affected by these clashes?

Wanjala
My uncles, yes. Especially my uncle Carl. My mom comes from the neighborhood where we had ethnic clashes, so her family was affected. I had climbed Mount Elgon to provide relief because the ethnic clashes were between three groups: the Bukusus, the Tesos, and the Sabaots. While there were many IDPs on the slopes of Mount Elgon from the two communities, the main conflict was between the Kalenjins and both the Tesos and Bukusus. The Bukusus were my community.

The Bukusus had formerly inhabited Mount Elgon, so the majority of the IDPs were Bukusus and Tesos. However, during the violence there were also Sabaots who were living among the Tesos and Bukusus and because of the clashes they now had to travel to Mount Elgon. During the relief efforts, I was supporting the Bukusus and the Tesos and I also had to travel to the headquarters on Mount Elgon to provide relief for the Sabaots, who were

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also affected and displaced.

I remember one day when I was providing relief when somebody ran to me and told me, “You are needed. Your uncle has just been killed.” Oh my God, suddenly when I looked at them, I saw all of them as being perpetrators. That’s what happened. Among my relatives, there were other people who were killed because the clashes stretched over time. It wasn’t like they just happened over the course of one month and that is all. No, they kept happening and there were always more, even one year later. Many had already been displaced during the first round of clashes before elections, but the violence continued.

I hired this staff member who I didn’t know was a perpetrator.

Stahl
Didn’t you fear becoming a victim?

Wanjala
I was implementing the policy of the relief providers, Oxfam. You didn’t discriminate based on gender, ethnicity, or religion. I think it depends on the way you carry out your work, but this is what made me who I am now. It’s how I turned from being just a relief worker to becoming a peace builder. I did not discriminate; I was able to travel and support them. I created a very good working relationship with the Sabaots. Over time, I understood them more.

When I got so tired with relief work and I wanted the IDPs to go back to their homes, this exhaustion provided me with an opportunity to mediate between the IDPs from these groups and the Sabaots. That is what led to conflict resolution and resettlement. I was afraid, but what could I do? Somebody had to provide support.

Menzel
So you established good relations with the group that sort of, speaking collectively, victimized your family?

Wanjala
Yes, our enemy, to be specific. But I think that is where I was able to ascend. I was able to look beyond. It was that moment when I heard that they had killed my uncle. I was so enraged. That was a human reaction. That said, whenever I was giving relief, I looked at them as victims also and survivors, not as the perpetrators. They were where they were because somebody from my community or another community had victimized them. I looked beyond ethnicity of the people that I was serving, and they loved me for that.

Stahl
But how could you be sure that they wouldn't attack you?

Wanjala
I was not sure of that. How could I be sure that they wouldn’t attack me? At one point, they almost killed one of my staff. I hired this staff member who I didn’t know was a

perpetrator. He had perpetrated violence. One day, when we arrived at Mount Elgon, they recognized him and there was a lot of commotion. I had to act very quickly to put him in the vehicle and remove him from the situation.

Of course, I had to take precautions. Some of the precautions that I took I couldn't even tell my husband about because, if I told him, he would not have allowed me. For instance, every time I went to provide relief, I had to wear a diaphragm so that, in the case I was raped, I wouldn't get HIV.

Another precaution I took was that I might be attacked on the way on land, struck by a landmine, or we could be waylaid. Therefore, each time I took this route, I ensured we didn't come back the same way. I always took different roads.

One rule I broke, which is a rule for most humanitarian workers, is that you cannot carry civilians in the vehicle. I broke this rule. Every time I went I found a sick person that wanted to be taken to the hospital and I put them in my vehicle. If I found people on my way – because these are very remote areas –I put them, irrespective of which community they came from, in my vehicle. For me, it's the faith that I'm doing God's work. I was just doing my job, but there were obviously risks.

Stahl
What is it like in Kenya? Does everyone know immediately which group you belong to?

Wanjala
It's by language. We have 42 major ones. In total, there are almost 80. So, it's often language that identifies you.

Stahl
Did your family criticize you for helping the people who had killed your uncle?

Wanjala
They couldn't. Of course, I mourned just like all of them. When the Sabaots learned about my uncle, some of them mourned with me. But there's nothing they could do. They expected favoritism. For instance, when I was providing relief in Sabaot area, you could see those who were from my community coming around me for that privilege. They'd start talking with me in my language. But do you know what? All Kenyans can – apart from English – speak a shared language called Kiswahili. We can all speak in Kiswahili. They would come to me, start speaking in Kibukuso, my own language, but I always spoke Kiswahili because I thought it was a way to just to be on the same level. That is what I practiced. I never favored anyone; I was always fair. When it came to aid distribution, it was always fair distribution. With language, I was fair because I knew that by speaking my own language with these others, I was going to marginalize others. They were bitter, of course. But what could I do? I was doing my work.

Stahl
Could you perhaps describe your work during this time in greater detail?

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Wanjala
I was the relief and rehabilitation coordinator. I was employed when people had just started moving to these camps and my first job was to register them. In each camp, there were small shopping centers where people were. There were eight major camps, and, in total, we had 45,000 people there. So, my first job was to register them and to know how many people we had.

My second job was to develop structures in the camps for management. So, I – we organized and the IDPs selected their leaders: a secretary, chair, treasurer, and committee members. That was the initial work.

Then I had to ensure that we had enough relief supplies and so I was writing proposals. The first relief came from common people through the churches. An appeal was made by the main churches by that time. We had the Catholic Church. We had the Church of England. We also had the National Council of Churches of Kenya and the Red Cross. Those were the major institutions that were supporting our work.

We had to ensure that we had enough food. The Catholic Relief Service came in very handy, providing us with relief. The first relief, as I said, was donations from the people, including clothes and food. Women cooked for them before they settled down. Then we started receiving relief and we would visit each camp to provide relief.

We also had a full-fledged mobile clinic with nurses to move around in the camps to treat people. The church also set up a mission hospital for referral and so whenever we went into the field and the nurses were not able to intervene in a situation, we had to refer them to the mission hospital. That was my daily work for a while.

We were in the field almost weekly and whenever I was there, after my team had finished providing relief, I asked the women: "Let’s talk. How was the week?" Here, we had our own space and the women could narrate what had happened to them and pray together.

I noticed that the women looked forward to those moments. It was only later on that I realized that I was actually helping them debrief their trauma. That was my daily work. I provided relief from 1992 until 1994.

After a while I got so tired of relief work. The more people I took to the hospital, the more I was told to come out and collect their corpses. The more food I distributed, the more people were malnourished. It reached a point where I said I was tired of relief work. These people needed to get back to their homes. But where was I to start from?

I noticed, even in Mount Elgon, those who were working there, they were also tired because Mount Elgon region is what we call a granary. We keep our food in granaries, a very fertile area. They were producing a lot. But, honestly, they didn't have a market because of the conflict they had with their neighbors. The potatoes, the tomatoes, everything was rotting. I could see that the two camps were tired, but I didn’t know where to start from. I was not a trained peace builder.

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By then, we only had one NGO that was supporting peace building. They were in Sudan and called People for Peace in Africa. I approached them, and I said, “Hey, I’m tired. These people need to get back. Where do we start from?”

They sent a team from People for Peace. They looked for a young university lecturer to come around with a psychiatrist from one of the hospitals. We organized meetings in the camps. The way we packaged it was that we just wanted to find out under which circumstances people had left their homes. I worked with the women. We moved between the eight camps holding at least one full day of meetings at each.

The way the question was packaged was to encourage participants to share: How did you leave your home? They were encouraged to use whatever method that wanted to. They came up with skits, poems, and songs. From their creations, they narrated their stories and they cried.

Eventually, I said, “Hey, can we break and come back?” I told them, “We have doctor so-and-so. Please, if you’re feeling so bad and you need support, he's in such-and-such place. Go.” They said, “No. Let us talk about it.” And they said, “For so many years, you've decided to listen to us. We just want to be in this place. To listen.” So, we listened, and we talked from morning until evening.

At the end, they told me, “Okay. You’ve listened to us. We are sending you now to our neighbors. Go and find out, why did they have to chase us away?” And this is where my relief work came in because I came from the victim community. At this point, the youth were still staging attacks and going back into the forest to hide there. At the end of the workshops, the team from Nairobi who came from an NGO called People for Peace in Africa went back to Nairobi. With them gone, it fell to me to ensure that we continued with the dialogue.

> Then the international communities came in and spoiled our chance of working step-by-step to rebuild the relationship between these communities.

Menzel
So when you say ‘we’ you are referring to the peacebuilding NGO that you brought in, right?

Wanjala
It was just me and those working for the Catholic Diocese by this point at the community level. The People for Peace team left, and it was now up to me to continue. I didn't know where to start from. But, of course, in January I started to visit the other side. This time, I didn't go there with relief. Instead, I went there, and I said, “Hey, your neighbors have sent me. They're tired. They want to find out, why did you chase them away?” And the General told me, “We have no problem. The problems are over. But maybe you should find out about the situation from the women.”

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The women told me, “No, we're okay. They can come back. But find out from the elders.” I then held meetings with the elders. That is when the elders revealed that, actually, the situation now is not in their hands, but in the hands of the youth, the gangs, who were still operating from the caves. Then we realized that for the past year, there had been initiatives at the national level led by the statehouse, where the President called 10 elders from each of the communities to engage in a dialogue. What we noticed was that whenever these meetings were held, houses burned. That is why the elders said, “The situation now is with the youth.” I realized that might be where the problem was. Somehow, we had to get to the youth – or, more specifically, the militias or gangs. They were young men, but unattached men who generally didn’t have families and who were living in the bush. How were we going to meet them?

I was doing it already under the Catholic Church of Bungoma. But, how were we going to discuss these sensitive issues with them? In the church, I was working with a man who was not from one of the three ethnic groups Sabaot, Teso and Bukusu. He was a Luo named Morgan.

I sent him in just in case my ethnicity might impact their decision to participate. What we said is that we wanted to hold a meeting to find out how youth how youth were participating in development and if they were in challenges.

But how would we reach them? I used one whom was on the committee that I had set up, a Sabaot. He was called Inea Neuno. I told him, “Inea, I don't know what you’re going to do, but I need those young men to come from the caves for a meeting back in Montango.”

The gangs were hiding in the forest because the government was after them. During the clashes, they were incited by politicians to fight for the cause of politicians. The politicians had succeeded in their cause, but the youth failed. They were used and dumped, so they vowed that there would not be peace in the region until they were recognized.

Now when it comes to negotiations at the national level, they were focused on the elders. That is why, at the national level, they would invite 10 elders from Bukuso, 10 elders from Sabaot, and 10 elders from Teso for negotiations. But to sabotage that -- whenever these meeting happened -- the youth came from the forest to burn houses because they were disgruntled.

I packaged our conversations as development because discussions about the ethnic clashes were too sensitive. Also, the role of the church was to facilitate development, so I used the terminology of development to bring the youth to the negotiating table.

The youth came to the negotiating table and revealed that, yes, they were sabotaging peace efforts. I could not sit in the meeting, but I used one young man that was a camp leader, Inea Neuno. I told them I was there to cook for them, but what I did was to stay by the window outside and follow the proceedings for the entirety of the three-day meeting. I hid there with a jug of water. Each time I felt that I needed to say a point, I came in with a jug of water and a glass -- I didn't care whether it was full or empty -- and poured as I made my point. I did that the first day and, again, the second day. On the third day, they said, "This

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woman has something to share with us. Let her sit in the meeting." So, I was allowed to sit in the meeting, which was very good because we were coming up with solutions.

What was most important was that they resolved to end the clashes and invite their neighbors back. In fact, they promised that they were willing to help the neighbors rebuild their houses and, afterwards, with resettlement. I'm cutting a long story short. The process started. Then the international communities came in and spoiled our chance of working step-by-step to rebuild the relationship between these communities.

Menzel
When did the international community come in? What happened next?

Wanjala
In 1995. The youth had promised that they were ready to help rebuild the houses. But because of the success, other actors in the area joined the project: the local branch of ActionAid, the Kenya Red Cross. They took over the resettlement process and we lost out on an opportunity to unite these neighbors. As always in post-conflict or reconstruction, they came to set up iron sheet houses in poor villages. In this case, they set them up where the owners who had beaten their neighbors because they felt marginalized didn't even have iron sheet houses. Now we suddenly had iron sheet houses for the returnees.

Menzel
So you would have preferred a slower, more locally driven process?

Wanjala
Yes.

Stahl
Were there any other clashes or instances of violence in these communities after this?

Wanjala
The clashes changed. They became intra-ethnic. Among the Sabaots themselves, we also have clans. The crop of clashes that came up then were over the land settlement among the clans of the Sabaot. But, yes, since that process, we've not had ethnic clashes between Sabaots and the two others.

I look at it now and I think I was engaged in that process before I entered any conflict resolution class. When I look back at what I have done, I was at my best then because peacebuilding is about one initiative leading to another other until you reach a conclusion of the issues.

Looking back, I think that was my greatest contribution in the area of peace building and conflict transformation. It was not after I received my Master's degree or my Ph.D. in conflict transformation. That was only academic.

Stahl
Soon afterwards, in 1996, you started working for the Peace and Development Network.

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How did this come about? What kind of organization was it?

Wanjala
Somebody had sent me an advertisement that, in Nairobi, they wanted a coordinator for a national umbrella of organizations called the Ethnic Clashes Network. I was invited and given the job of being in charge of coordinating the network.

Why the Ethnic Clashes Network? We had ethnic clashes, but at this time, we didn't have a lot of support from the international community. People were very careful not to ruffle the feathers of the government. And they didn't want to support us. We were being targeted as Catholics. I remember, in a meeting that I attended when I was at the Bungoma, the local administration did not address me as Tecla, but instead as, "Yes, yes, Catholic." So, we were being targeted as institutions and the only way that we could deal with that was to come together and coordinate.

Menzel
So the Ethnic Clashes Network in Nairobi was a Kenyan network funded because people felt that there was not enough focus on the ethnic clashes anymore?

Wanjala
It's because people who are working on ethnic clashes issues were being targeted by the government as individual institutions. One way we wanted to deal with that was to present a strong voice for advocacy by networking among ourselves and presenting issues with a unified voice. It was an initiative of the NGO Council, an organization which coordinates the work of the Kenyan civil society.

Menzel

At this point you moved to Nairobi, right? Can you tell us what that was like for you?

Wanjala
Can you imagine moving from rural Kenya with limited English to this high-level network of country directors from Oxfam, ActionAid, etc.? They just talked above me. Anyway, for me, because of the experience I already had, I thought it was a good thing.

My job was to coordinate the activities of all the members. By then, there were thirty-member organizations from all around the country; some operated at the highest levels, while others were community-based. My first job was to find out how many members there would be and to determine how they were going to schedule meeting with one another. We used to meet once at the beginning of the year to develop a plan. We would have another meeting towards the end of the year to review what we'd accomplished. At this time, the network also played a role as a rapid response mechanism.

For example, whenever there were clashes erupting anywhere, I was to rush to be there on the ground. The beauty is that, as I rushed to find out what was happening, there were other members there. They could give me the secretariat. I could move on to remote areas, find out what was happening, and then come back to Nairobi. There, I would write a report

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and convene a meeting of the national members and give them ways that they can support lobby for the issues at hand.

For me, these interventions were key. Again, I think it helped the purpose that we were set up in a way that we could present one strong voice for advocacy because this was feared by the government. When we spoke, when we issued a statement, they listened.

Menzel
This was ahead of election time again, the second multiparty election.[7] There was probably also international attention on the state and I imagine that the government didn't want you to speak up and raise awareness about these issues.

Stahl
At this time, were you trying to get attention from the international community or the government?

Wanjala
The government. We were spoiling the image of the government. We were agitating people to rise up against the government. Even after the change to a multiparty government, we were still pushing for an overhaul of the entire constitution. In our first push, we managed to get the government to change from a one-party system. But, the rest of the constitution remained the same, so we were still struggling, and we wanted to hold the government accountable on a number of issues.

Stahl
So you were using the issue of ethnic clashes to demonstrate that the government was failing?

Wanjala
Yeah, it was still failing.

Stahl
And you were doing fact-finding to prove that the government was failing?

Wanjala
Yes, most of the clashes were instigated by the politicians. So, for example, if I went to a town where they told us that the clashes had started because this or that politician came. We gathered the information, the pictures, wrote a report and issued a statement.

Stahl
Why did you change the name of the network?

Wanjala
We started this network because of the ethnic clashes that we experienced in 1991 and 1992. It was called the Ethnic Clashes Network because we raised issues around the causes of ethnic clashes. We drew attention to the people who were displaced in the field, the conditions in the camps, as well as what the government was doing.

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By the time that I joined PeaceNet, the ethnic clashes were over. In some areas, we had initiated a resettlement. People had resettled, but we needed to continue presenting a unified voice for advocacy around issues. As a way to continue networking on the same issues, they changed the name from Ethnic Clashes Network to the Peace and Development Network in 1996.

Stahl
And you kept on working on the issue of the ethnic clashes?

Wanjala

When we finally agreed, “Hey, the clashes are over. People have settled, but we need to focus on promoting peace now. How can we continue now promoting peace and development?” That’s how we changed the name to the Peace and Development Network.

Stahl
By the mid-1990s, because of what had happened in Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the international community was paying a lot of attention to ethnic cleansing. Was the issue of ethnic clashes also a way of getting the attention of the international community?

Wanjala
I don't know if there was any relationship with Rwanda. Although, I guess the same vocal civil society and the same NGOs, like Oxfam and ActionAid, that were supporting us in Kenya were giving aid elsewhere. Maybe this played a role, but we were focused on Kenya's ethnic clashes.

Menzel
Who were the members of the network?

Wanjala
The Kenya Human Rights Commission was one of the board members of our network. Bantu for Development and ActionAid were members. Oxfam was a member. The umbrella organization of Protestant churches was a member. The Catholic Episcopal, now the umbrella organization of the Catholic Church, was also on board. The network was so strong that, anywhere I moved, I was followed by an intelligence officer because I was the coordinator. All these opposition leaders were supporting this. Around that time, I think we actually had the strongest civil society in Africa.

> In fact, it was the human rights investigations which were sensitive for the government and allowed us to influence the international community.

Menzel
A lot of people who are powerful in Kenya today, not only in civil society, but also in international offices throughout Kenya, mobilized and emerged during these years. It’s interesting that it is all sort of happening at the same time, around the second multiparty elections.

Wanjala
That was the peak of the civil society and the President would listen to the voice of the civil society. But, during the last election, I looked around, and I was like, "Hey, where are these people?" So, I started looking online for that crop of people and within a week, I had 30 on my WhatsApp. We started holding meetings and issuing statements.

Stahl
Were human rights an issue during this time?

Wanjala
Yes, that was the essence. During this time, we lost activists through torture and death. There were instances where a whole government building was turned into a torture chamber in Kenya. This was the time where people were detained without cause, imprisoned without trial, courts were conducted at night, and assassinations happened regularly.

Stahl
Did your organization also report about these incidents?

Wanjala
Yes, whenever it happened, investigations were done, especially on behalf of this Ethnic Clashes Network, where we had representatives from the fields of relief, development, and human rights. So, whenever I went to investigate I would decide whether the incident should be on the docket of the development committee members. I then looked at who were the members from development that could handle it. If it was about human rights, the Kenyan Human Rights Commission was there to deal with that.

In fact, it was the human rights investigations which were sensitive for the government and allowed us to influence the international community. That is why, whenever I traveled to international meetings, like when I went to attend a Commonwealth meeting in Birmingham in 1997, I knew that I was being followed. We had our own ways of finding out about this kind of thing.

I remember I was told that I should be careful about anybody who was not Kenyan but spoke in my language. So, when I entered the plane, and this woman came and sat next to me and said something like, “Hey, who is this beautiful woman I'm sitting with?” I said, “I'm so-and-so.” From my language – from my second name – you know where I come from. Straight away she started speaking with me in Kiluhya. And I'm like, “That woman is speaking to me in Kiluhya." She then helped me maneuver through Heathrow Airport and ensured that I arrived at the venue safely.

I remember another time when I was going to Finland for a meeting. I was told, “This time, you'll get a Finnish who is more patriotic than a Kenyan.” I reached Finland and sure enough there’s a man that fits the description who is at every working group I am a part of. When I finally leave him to go to meet members of Parliament, I thought, “Now that I have slipped away from him I can now speak to these members frankly.” In one of these meetings, mid-sentence, I see him come in. So, it’s clear the government took our voice

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seriously and because of this they followed me.

Stahl
Why did you decide to go to the United States for a Master's program from 2001-2003?

Wanjala
I didn't decide. I think I have a problem. When I'm in a situation, I'm fully in a situation. It was a coincidence. On the Peace and Development Network, one of the board members from the Mennonite Central Committee was a woman that I will always be grateful to. Her name is Janice Jenner. She had done a term on this committee in Kenya, finished, and gone back.

Around this time, I think it was in the year 2000. The USA organized a meeting of what they called Young Democrats to visit US, to learn about the political situation of US and all that. I was selected to be one of them. Before I left, I met Janice, who had come back to visit with a group. I told her, "I'm coming to the US." And she said, "Yeah, why don't you come and visit me?" I asked, "Where?" When I went to visit, I realized that she's in the university. And I asked her, "Janice, is there any harm with me trying to join?" She said, "No harm." She gave me papers, I applied, and I was selected.

I was selected. After high school, I didn't have the first degree. I missed some points. So, I gained a diploma instead. I did so well in that diploma course that, out of 23 subjects, I had almost all distinctions. It was on the strength of how I performed and my experience in peace building that I was accepted to join a master's degree program. The first semester was for them to test me to see if I'm able to cope. But I think I entered in the class and after my first contributions, they forgot all about it. I continued with the degree. So, that's how it happened that I went to school in the US. I didn't choose. It was a coincidence.

Stahl
Do you think you learned something from the program, perhaps something that had an impact on what you did later?

Wanjala
When I finished my diploma, those who came for my oral exam, they told me, "You should earn your degree immediately from the way you've performed." I would not be here if the chance had not presented itself for me to join that Master's program.

What happened for me in that master's class is that I had a wealth of experience. The coursework that we were doing was only affirming my experience through theoretical concepts. In fact, one of the courses that you are supposed to complete before you are awarded your degree requires that you do a practicum. I told them I'm not going to do a practicum because I've been doing practicum my whole life. What I needed was to develop my skills in writing. Can you allow me to go back to Kenya? I ended up going back when we were having the 2003 elections. I asked them if they would allow me to reflect on a concept in writing so that I could start building my communication skills.

The beauty with Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) is that they were very flexible, so

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they allowed me to do this. I didn't go to do a practicum, but instead I started applying the concepts I had learned in the classroom in the field. Now I could say, "Hey, in Mount Elgon, that was shuttle mediation. There, I was facilitating a negotiation. There, I was doing that." For me, the degree helped me link theories to the practice that I had already done. I enjoyed the degree and I finished it in the shortest time possible.

It was very beneficial for me and helped me to overcome my bad experiences with the school system. I always had been a very good student. However, at the end I changed to a school which didn't work for me. For me, that was a nightmare. I wanted to go to the highest rung on the academic ladder and going to EMU for my Master's gave me the chance to later earn my PhD.

> I can now resign as a peacebuilder.

Stahl
In 2007, elections took place again in Kenya. Were you politically involved during this time?

Wanjala
Before the elections, my group of peacebuilders had moved on from working on the Kenyan situation and were now looking into the situations in other countries. I think, after the shift from a one-party regime to multiparty regime and with the dislodging of KANU[8] from power during the 2002/3 general election, we thought we had completed our work.

We had won. In fact, I was in Mount Elgon observing when I saw Kibaki being installed. I remember saying, "I can now resign as a peacebuilder." But, as we were moving towards election, I remember meeting a colleague that I had worked with, Dekha Ibrahim, and we observed that things were not okay. We disregarded this, though, and we said, "Let us focus outside of Kenya." I think that is the mistake that we made.

I think some of us could tell there was tension, but to what magnitude, we didn't know. When the clashes[9] happened, I remember I was in western part of Kenya. I was by then working in this regional office looking outside in JICA,[10] I was so frustrated.

Immediately, an opportunity arose for us to start traveling. I was a part of the first convoy of vehicles to Nairobi. That's when we started meeting as women to find the way forward. We pushed for dealing with the root causes through those meetings and we were there to support the mediation process. Unfortunately, I could no longer stay in this very structured institution that was mostly focused on bilateral cooperation and working outside of Kenya, when there were other issues within our own borders. I could not look away when my own house was on fire.

The first thing I did was resign. Then I joined a more flexible organization, where I had time to organize a meeting with different women's groups to analyze the conflict and to provide input to whoever was coming to support us, including the East African community Members of Parliament and our other neighbors.

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The political involvement came too late, when clashes after the elections had already started. I wish I had responded to it earlier, when we first saw the signs. We saw polarization among politicians in the media, but nothing was done. The magnitude of it all came as a shock to us. But we could not just stay idle, so we started meeting. For me, it made sense to use the platform of the women's network. We also looked for former members of Parliament among the women to come and meet with us, to strategize, and to come up with position papers.

Menzel
At the time, there was a strong moment for women in Kenya. In 2006, they introduced the Sexual Violence Act.

Wanjala
Yes, we mobilized very quickly, called for meetings, came up with position papers, and called on the politicians before the mediators came. We told the politicians what we wanted and the media what we needed. We continued to push.

I remember when we were presenting at one of the press conferences, I shouted that we needed to look at the root causes because, why is it that every time we enter into elections we fight? And so we positioned ourselves in such a way that if a group came to mediate, we had a meeting with them. We had already analyzed the situation and we had already proposed some strategies.

In fact, Kofi Annan,[11] may God rest his soul in peace, arrived with his team immediately. We looked at her Excellency Graça Machel.[12] She was among the three eminent African people: Kofi Annan, Graça Machel, and Benjamin Mkapa,[13] the former President of Tanzania. Graça was the wife of the late Nelson Mandela. We convened before they started negotiating.

And I remember that at the first meeting she listened to us. She saw we were still very upset and caught up in our own ethnic anger. And she told us, "Women, go out and speak it out. Go and meet among yourselves. Speak it out before you come and have a dialogue." We went into the adjacent house and held our own meeting. We blamed each other. However, the good thing, and the beauty about women, is that we shall quarrel and blame each other, but in the end, we arrive at a level ground where we can start talking. Then we started influencing, and Graça kept on coming back to us to support our work.

> My thinking was that if I don't participate in this, the truth-seeking process will be left in the hands of lawyers.

Menzel
If I'm correct, it was through Kofi Annan that the idea of a truth commission was put back on the table, right?

Wanjala
Yes, he came up with the agenda. Some of the issues that we, the women, pushed, required

more than remedies. We told them, “Don't look at the symptoms. Don't look at the houses burning. Don't look at the displacement. Don't look at the killings. Don't look at the stolen election. Look at the root causes, because each time this happens, the way we go at each other's neck every time there’s an election, goes beyond stolen elections. What is it? Let us investigate our past and why we have such a debt with each other.”

It was under agenda four that a truth commission was proposed. There was also a proposal to complete the constitutional review process, as well as a proposal to set up a national cohesion and integration commission. When we talk about the agenda four commissions, TJRC, was one of them.

Again, by that time, I was pushing this. I didn't know that a TJRC would be set up and I would become the commissioner. However, when I saw an advertisement that they wanted commissioners, I applied. My application was based on the fact that I had done restorative justice courses at EMU. My thinking was that if I don't participate in this, the truth-seeking process will be left in the hands of lawyers. I'm not a lawyer, but I knew through my work with the network in Kenya that lawyers love retributive justice. If I wanted somebody to push for litigation and retributive justice, I should go to human right activists. If I wanted peace, I should go to the peacebuilders. For development, I needed to go to those working in development. So, I applied.

I remember, even in the letter, I said, “I have to be a part of this because I believe, as a country, as we look into our past, we have to know that the line between the victim and the perpetrator at the community level is so blurred that only restorative justice will help us. If we leave it to the lawyers alone, they will take us down the road of retributive justice.”

Stahl
You saw yourself as peacebuilder promoting restorative justice?

Wanjala
Yes, yes. In fact, I just said I want to be a part of this because, if we leave it to the lawyers alone, they'll lead us to retributive justice, which does not work for us. Guess what? I was again nine months pregnant when I went for the interview. My big body helped me. I just put on a trouser suit with my headscarf. I walked the length of the panel. It was as big, if not bigger, than this hall. I think they must have wondered, “Wow. This woman is big.” They didn't realize I was pregnant.

Stahl
Who was on this panel?

Wanjala
The business community, human rights and religious leaders, as well as civil society representatives. Every sector in Kenya was on that panel. Anyway, I did the interview and I was called. My son was exactly one month old at this time. I had not even weened him yet, so I carried him around wherever I went.

I remember when we had our first meeting with the Minister of Justice and I arrived there.

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I looked at the permanent sector and said, “I need a room”. She looked at me and asked, “What room?” She almost fainted when I revealed that I had brought along my cousin who was carrying my new baby. So my son stayed in a room somewhere nearby. After the Minister addressed us and the Chairman started speaking, I was called on, “The baby is crying.” And, so, I carried my baby into the meeting. This is one memory I will never forget.

So, for the first meetings, I concentrated on my child and, surely, these commissioners were wondering, "What's wrong with this panel? Why did they select this woman who knows nothing?" because I never contributed. I was just waiting until they’d suggest taking us towards retributive justice. Then I'd be like, "Hey, don't." I didn't know at that point that things were going to turn and that I would take over the leadership of the commission.

Menzel
The ironic part is that, even though this was a huge panel, and everybody was involved in the process that, in the end, they got a commissioner, a Chairman, who nobody wanted, right?

Wanjala
Nobody wanted him.

Menzel
And then you took over, right?

Wanjala
Yes, until this moment came I had been silent. During meetings, I was contributing nothing. I was waiting for the time for me to go breastfeed my child. But again, that is my demeanor and sometimes that is misunderstood. For example, I was in Bonn in 2000. I went there to present a paper just before I joined my master's program. After I presented, one of the professors from Nigeria told me, “You present a very different view of who you are until you start getting passionate.” And he told me, “The fire is inside you.” I realized that he was right. All of these other commissioners who had not worked with me, including the international commissioners, always underrated me and what I was capable of because I don't blow up until you annoy me.

Stahl
So, no one in the commission knew you before?

Wanjala
I was the only person from peacebuilding.

Stahl
From all the activists, many of whom had been active in your network in the mid-1990s, no one was in the commission?

Wanjala
The Vice-Chair, Betty Murungi, knew me because we worked together when we were mobilizing for the women. It was only Betty who knew me. The rest of the members, they

looked at my face, my demeanor, and they didn't realize.

Betty Murungi resigned because she didn't want to work under the chairmanship of Bethuel Kiplagat, who had himself been accused of human rights violations.[14]

I went to the remaining Kenyan fellow, Margaret Shava and told her, "Margaret, look at me. I'm breastfeeding. I'm not a lawyer. Kiplagat is not a lawyer. You are a lawyer. Take up this position so that you can at least complement his efforts." She told me, "Tecla, this is a very difficult position. You know, when the Chair goes away, you have to step into his position. You'll be conducting meetings, conferences." I simply looked at her and I gave myself one day to make my decision. I came up with my decision. I told them I'm taking over. They couldn't believe it.

Menzel
So nobody really wanted the responsibility. Is that what you think happened?

Wanjala
I think that some of the commissioners had an agenda and they were working with the international community, especially the lawyers among the commissioners. I think maybe they thought that Betty's resignation would lead to mass resignation and that the commission would be reconstituted or something. But the mistake they made was that they were only talking among themselves, as lawyers, and some of us were not lawyers. The human rights activists were not even in the picture.

When I told them that I was taking over and that we had to go a selection process, I think they didn't know how to deal with the situation. But, in the end, I was selected.

I remember Ron Slye[15] telling me, "Tecla, your colleagues are complaining that you are not responding to their emails." But I knew, if I responded to their emails, they were going to distract me. For me, I just put everything aside and focused. Why did I do that? I did that because of my work in Bungoma, where I had worked with women, who had been traumatized by the clashes of 2007. I remember, when Betty resigned, I asked her, "Betty, don't you want those women's tears to be affirmed by this commission?"

I carried the experiences that I had working with the victims and the survivors with me into this new role. I decided right then and there that I was going to steer this process to the end and that's what I did.

Menzel
The fact that many people thought that the process was tainted, largely because Commissioner Kiplagat was at the helm, the commission didn't receive much funding from the international community, right?

Wanjala
Yes.

They had thought it was going to be a whitewash commission that was not

going to come up with a good report or have any good recommendations.

Menzel
So, it sounds to me like many people became somewhat afraid of the commission because they thought it would spoil the whole process or that it might ruin their reputation. They thought it would be better to let the commission dissolve all together.

Wanjala
I think they wanted to use Kenya to test if a people-led Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission could work. Most truth-seeking commissions are led by the governments.

Menzel
All this was coming primarily from the lawyers, particularly those who had connections with human rights groups, right? So, your take was probably that this was the best we're going to get for now. Let's run with it, because who knows if we'll get another chance. That's why you decided to take over the commission, so at least women would have a voice and there would be some process, instead of no process at all.

Wanjala
Yes. So, for the rest of our work, Kiplagat stepped aside. Among the lawyers that remained were: Ronald Slye, a professor from Seattle University, Margaret Shava, the Kenyan commissioner, Ojienda, another Kenyan commissioner, and Chawatama, a judge from Zambia. We also had a diplomat, the late -- he passed away -- Berhanu Dinka, who was from Ethiopia and worked closely with Kofi Annan. There was also a representative from the Kenyan Navy, Major General Ahmed. So again, it was dominated by lawyers, but I was there to provide the perspective of a peacebuilder and Ambassador Dinka was from political science. We also had Mohammed from the military.

Menzel
But, if I'm correct, I think you lost the support of the human rights community and the civil society in Kenya, right?

Wanjala
Yes. They didn't support. For some of them, this was because of their vested interest. Who is Tecla Wanjala to be on this commission as peacebuilder, especially since they were the ones who had already formed transitional justice networks? I think most of them expected to be steering the process, instead of the people who were selected.

Before I took over I called the coordinator of PeaceNet, the person who had taken over my work. And I told him, "I have to make this decision. But before I do it, I want you to assure me that I'm not going to be alone, that I'm going to have the support of the peacebuilding community." And he assured me. And it was true, they supported me. They supported the process.

But guess what? They had thought it was going to be a whitewash commission that was not going to come up with a good report or have any good recommendations. After the report

came out, they were shocked.

I remember now that most of them, including the human rights activists, had to scramble to organize retreats to look at the report and how to implement it.

Menzel
From the people that I spoke to from the community, some also said that they made a mistake. They realized this halfway through the process and tried to come back on board. I guess they would probably agree with that statement because they also saw that they weren't going to get another transitional justice process down the line. That was the only thing that they had, and they had abandoned it. And then I think, later on, when the report was almost written, a lot of them came back and supported the process, right?

Wanjala
Yes, they came back, and we were okay with this. We wanted those who wanted to monitor the process to come and participate in it. But, actually, their refusal to participate in the whole process was a significant mistake; although, I'm happy that, at least, they're acknowledging that. It was a significant mistake because we could have done much better work if they had come onboard to support us all along. The amount of work we had was overwhelming.

If you look at the mandate, it has one of the broadest mandates any truth commission has ever had. They could have helped us with dealing with corruption and other issues. I'm happy that they regret their decision, but the good thing is at least they have been pushing for the implementation of the recommendations of the report.

Stahl
I would like to ask you about this mandate because it was really broad.[16] Wasn't it too much?

Wanjala
Yes, it was too much. And the time was too short. We had only two and a half years. The good thing was that during our first retreats we had learned from other past commissions that truth commissions are only there to paint a global picture with the hope that other issues can be followed up on later.

What we did was to try and carve out what we could, focusing on issues like corruption. We wanted to collaborate with existing institutions and the good thing was that Kenya had already set other transformative initiatives in place.

For example, we have the Kenya National Commission of Human Rights that looked at human rights issues. They had also set up the Land Commission. Since land was a very emotive topic during the investigation, the Land Commission was important. When it came to issues of healing and reconciliation, we had the National Cohesion and Integration Commission. If you were to look at institutions in Kenya, they were already there and could continue the work that needed to be done on the issues that we were investigating. All that we had to do was to paint a global picture and come up with a national narrative on the

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issues that were under investigation.

Stahl
Could you also gain information from the work of these other commissions?

Wanjala
Yes. We invited them. In fact, the beauty of this truth commission was to get a confirmation from the government that, yes, the government agencies had perpetrated historical injustices that needed to be dealt with because, even before the Truth Commission was set up, we had institutions that documented most of what we investigated. Like the Kenya Human Rights Commission, the religious institutions had been documenting most of these violations. There were over 30 investigation mechanisms that we were mandated to look at. For most of the recommendations, we just had to go back to those and look at what the former commissions and inquiries had reported and adopt their recommendations. The mandate had asked us to look at all of the former commissions so that we could adopt their recommendations.

When we were coming up with statements, we invited those who had documented these issues to share any information or reports they had with us. Can you imagine that some groups refused to do that?

Our report was just an affirmation of what we already knew, with the government at the center. They had set up this body through an act of Parliament to investigate that. That was the only added advantage. Some of the issues had already been looked into. In fact, the civil society was somehow saying, “We had already done this. What are you coming to do?” But, actually, only now was it an official record. Although the report is stuck in Parliament, the media continue to call for it to be implemented which means that it cannot be buried forever. It’s actually a major political tool.

The international community tried to sabotage.

Menzel
In 2008, the International Center for Transitional Justice came into the picture. They helped you with organizing the process of writing and researching, right?

Wanjala
Yes, of course. There were also others. Among the international institutions that came out to support was the German Embassy. The others thought that the Truth Commission was going to overshadow the International Criminal Court (ICC). I think I would not be wrong to use the term sabotage here. The international community tried to sabotage.

The human rights organizations almost derailed our work. We had to write a very strong letter that was distributed to all the international institutions in Kenya on how their support of human rights, particularly some of the NGOs in Kenya, was actually sabotaging our work. That is when they stopped and let us do our work.

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I will be forever be grateful that Margit Hellwig-Bötte, who was then the German ambassador to Kenya.[17] She supported a very key area of our investigation. We didn't want a Kenyan to oversee that area. We had our own directors, researchers, and communication experts, but we wanted the director in charge of the investigation to be an outsider to protect us from future blame. The German Embassy gave us that person. They also seconded somebody to work with us.

Stahl
Can you explain a little bit more about what happened with the ICC? What exactly did they do to interfere?

Wanjala
There was one commission that was set up to investigate the post-electoral violence and come up with a list of people who held the highest responsibility for instigating the violence. It was called the Waki Commission, named after the person who was responsible for the investigation.[18]

What he investigated in only three months, I remember participating in during the women's sessions. He came up with an envelope during the mediation, or perhaps just after it had concluded, I can't remember exactly, and he said, "I have an envelope here. In this envelope, there are names of people who hold the highest responsibility. The proposal is for Kenya to set up a mechanism, perhaps a tribunal or something similar, to investigate these names so that they can be prosecuted in a specified amount of time. If this time elapses, I will hand over the envelope to Kofi Annan and he will take it to the International Criminal Court."

During the debate in Parliament, some politicians were against creating an international mechanism to prosecute these individuals. Some of them favored the proposal for the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Of course, at the time they delayed forming this commission. The commission was set up almost two weeks after Waki handed over the envelope. Sorry, it actually wasn't two weeks at all, the commission's formation collided with the possibility that Kenyans were going to be taken to The Hague.

When the international community thought that the ICC might act, the commission was set up. The time had elapsed, but the commission was set up. Then they realized the government was only doing this because it favored having a commission versus going before the ICC. The international partners were pushing more for the ICC, which is why the commission did not get support.

At one point, Ocampo[19] came and visited Kenya. Around this time, we were going to conduct a pilot statement in Mount Elgon, the area we had chosen to investigate the ethnic clashes. I was told, "Oh, maybe you should not go to Mount Elgon now." But I also realized why they were stopping me. It was because Ocampo was coming and would be in Mount Elgon. They didn't want tension between the Truth Commission and the processes at The Hague.

I still don't know if I did the right or wrong thing. Some commissioners really wanted us to

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have a collaboration with the ICC, but I said, “No. That is an international mechanism. This is a local mechanism. Let us focus on our mandate.” I made this decision based on what we had learned from Sierra Leone, where there was a close collaboration that had impacted the local mechanism in a negative way.

Menzel
There was actually no cooperation, but the investigations of the ICC and the Truth Commission happened at the same time, and everybody was irritated about it.

Wanjala
Yes. There was a rumor that there was an attendant from the commission, too.

Stahl
We already talked a little bit about how you worked on fact finding, but you also told me that you went to villages and conducted interviews with the victims. Is that right?

Wanjala
The mandate had specific areas for us to investigate. The first thing we did was to come up with a form to take statements that highlighted these areas of investigation. Then we enlisted statement takers, trained them in the areas we were investigating and sent them to the communities to record statements for those who felt they had been impacted by the violations that we were investigating. They collected statements in every province in Kenya.

Due to the fact that we didn't just focus on the ethnic clashes, but also on issues of marginalization, but also social, economic, and gender issues, we had to collect statements throughout all of Kenya. In total, we received 40,000 statements. We selected from among these 40,000 statements some cases to conduct hearings on. From there, we conducted public and in camera hearings. The in camera hearings were for sensitive cases because we don't have a proper witness protection program in Kenya. We also conducted public hearings and invited selected people to come and share testimony about the violations.

We also invited the adversely mentioned people. We gave them an opportunity to come and also give their testimonies during the public hearings. But because there was no clear amnesty policy, many did not show the willingness to come and participate in the hearings. If we notified you and you did not come, we investigated and wrote our findings based on what we had found out.

So, we had these in camera and public hearings. We had a women’s dialogue. We had also thematic hearings on violations. For example, we had hearings specifically on gender violations and ones related only to children. For the children’s hearings, we conducted them in a way that you could see the commissioners having a dialogue with the child, but we concealed the identities of the children.

We also had what we called a conversation with women. In every place where we conducted hearings, we ensured we had another day where we held meetings with women to ensure that we understood the issues of gender.

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Apart from the individual hearings, we also had communal ones. We had elders come to talk on behalf of their ethnic communities. This way we could create a sense of balance and to ensure everybody felt that they had been heard. We started off the meetings with an elder from an ethnic group coming to talk about the injustices they felt had impacted their community before we moved to the individual hearings.

For the women's hearings, there were only women commissioners. However, the women, as much as we heard, also participated in the public hearings. There were some women, even if we gave them a space for an in camera hearing, that opted to talk in public, even about sensitive issues like rape. Of course, we allowed that.

What have I done to my nation?

Menzel
When you finally presented the report, one of the two guys that had been indicted by the International Criminal Court was President Uhuru Kenyatta. So, I guess that would have created a very strange situation, no?

Wanjala
Very strange, yes, because we handed the report over to the President when it was done.

Stahl
What were the reactions to the report?

Wanjala
Well, we handed over the report to the President. At the same time, we invited the media and they were also given copies of the report. Of course, they always go for what is news for them. For them, the news was the list of people we had recommended for prosecution and the list of people we had recommended for further investigation, which would lead to prosecution if they were found culpable.

Almost immediately, we had reactions. There were reactions, especially of the people who were adversely mentioned in the report who, of course, denied the allegations and said that the process had been unfair. I remember, after handing over the report, I went to a small hotel. I couldn't go home. I watched the news and the way the people who were listed as perpetrators denied their actions with a lot of emotion. I remember crying and asking myself, "What have I done to my nation?"

I received so many phone calls from the media to go and talk about it and I refused them all because, for me, from the African perspective, it would be like going to dance on the grave of a person who is already dead. I refused. I just cut myself off. They called, but I did not respond. So, overall, I would say that the reaction was bitter.

Stahl
Why did you feel like you had done something terrible to your nation?

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Wanjala
Looking at the way people reacted, I wondered if we were ready to look into our past. In some ways, I don't think we were ready to look into our past because the past was also very much the present.

I looked at the emotional denials. I looked at those people, and I knew that they were not alone. It was just unfortunate that the cases we picked to paint this global picture affected them. That is what I felt very bitter about at the time, and, unfortunately, the report still has not been implemented so they have not able to clear their names. Some of them have now passed on. That is why I felt bitter.

Stahl
Had you discussed this issue within the commission itself about how to deal with the names? For example, if you should publish them or if you should keep them secret and just pass them privately to prosecutors?

Wanjala
The mandate asked us to investigate the process, context, and circumstances. This included the people who were involved. Our job was to come up with a report. We were just following the mandate. The mandate was silent on this. I don't know. It was categorical that we were supposed to come up with the names of perpetrators, so we were just implementing the process according to the act that created the commission.

Stahl
After the immediate reaction of the media, how did things develop afterwards?

Wanjala
As always, the issues were in the media for some time. Apart from the media, one leader later took the commission to court. She accused the commission by saying that we relied too much in some areas of our report on the findings from one particular book, which she did not consider to be accurate. It didn’t matter, though, because immediately after we handed over the report we did not have much to do other than to start clearing out and dissolving the commission.

Stahl
So it was now completely in the hands of the Parliament or other government officials? Who was responsible for keeping the process going at this point?

Wanjala
After we handed over the report, the process was left in the hands of the government, especially the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice. As a result, even when we were taken to court, the case did not proceed because the commission was dissolved, and the government was now in charge of the report.

For some issues, we depended on three other commissions that we hoped were going to get involved in the future in monitoring and ensuring that the recommendations would be implemented. This was the Kenya National Human Rights Commission, the National Land

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Commission, and the Commission on National Cohesion and Integration. We were hoping that some of the institutions already in place would support the implementation of our recommendations.

Stahl
For you, what were the main recommendations? Can you just summarize them briefly?

Wanjala
The key is about acknowledgment and an apology, not just from the President but from the various institutions that perpetrated human rights violations. Other important recommendations included those about institutional reform, as well as those about restitution and reparation. In fact, we developed a guideline for reparations, recommendations on national healing and reconciliation, and recommendations on how to deal with gender-based sexual violence and marginalized communities.

Stahl
Were some of these recommendations implemented? How did the government deal with them?

Wanjala
After handing the report to the President, he duly handed it over to Parliament to debate it. Their job was to come up with the necessary act and also to sanction an implementation mechanism – we had proposed an implementation committee – so they could start implementing our recommendations. But, since 2013, the report has been stuck in Parliament. This means that, although the government is acting on some of the issues we raised, officially the report has not been sanctioned to be implemented.

Stahl
How did civil society react to this stagnation? Were there some organizations that started to pressure for implementation?

Wanjala
Yeah, many human rights groups have been at the forefront of lobbying for the government to implement the process. The opposition leaders have lobbied as well; although, I think they only do this for political reasons, especially in and around election time. We've had two elections since then, and during each, they used the report for campaign purposes. At the end of the day, I don't think that they're interested in the report being implemented. We also have a victims' network that has been active. We have various groups that were affected by some of the issues that we investigated, like the Nyayo torture chambers' victims.[20] They have been trying to push the government to implement.

During my time at the Robert Bosch Academy,[21] I've had time to reflect. I think that apart from lobbying, we should not just leave this process to the government. The government can implement some of our recommendations, but with some areas, I think there is need for the civil society to come in. This is particularly true when we talk about the issues of social healing or justice or issues of continued dialogue that were recommended.

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I don't like the way we just froze, as if we were not already working on some of these things before the commission came into existence.

Stahl
What did you do after the report was published? Did you go back to university?

Wanjala
There was nothing I could do. Actually, during the concluding stages of the report, I was just finalizing my thesis. After I completed and handed over the report is when I focused on completing my thesis. I completed my thesis and graduated from Southern Methodist University (SMU) in 2013. That is when I completed my PhD.

Stahl
Did you get involved somehow with pressuring the government for implementation, or did you leave that issue?

Wanjala
I think, by the time I finished, I had given it all that I could because, as you know, our Chair had problems, and he was forced to step aside and there was an investigation. During that time, I stepped in as Acting Chair. And I was even acting without a Vice Chair in place. Overall, I think the work took a toll on me.

By the time we handed over the report, I was just too tired to do anything. That is one thing. The second thing is that I feared to do any lobbying because, well, what should I say? Perpetrators fight back. And I was not in the good books with them. I was afraid. I just went quiet and focused instead on supporting the communities with their social healing.

Anytime I tried give my views through the media, I had sources telling me that some people we had listed would meet and wonder why I was given such a space. Most of them thought I had ruined their lives since I was the voice of the commission. They didn't want me to do anything else. By this point, I just wanted to wish away the commission.

Stahl
Did they threaten you?

Wanjala
I did not receive any death threats, but I knew at one point that I was being followed. Whenever I hired a taxi, they would say, "That vehicle has been following us for some time." So, no, I did not receive any direct threats. I think it was also that I was afraid.

In fact, after I handed over the report, I could not stay in my home. I had to stay away for almost two years, I think. As you may know, when Kenyans talk about home, we talk about where we work, not our permanent homes. When I talk of my home in Nairobi, that is where I stayed to work, but I also feared staying in my home because it was in one of the areas we had selected as a case to investigate more thoroughly the issue of ethnic clashes.

Stahl

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So then you decided to leave your country?

Wanjala
I did not decide to leave my country because, in Kenya or in the African context, it's not just you. I have children. I have my husband. I have extended family. I was offered the opportunity by the Robert Bosch Academy to come here on a fellowship. For me, this has been wonderful. Being away, I can sleep without waking up at any slight movement and work without looking left or right or behind me to see who is following me. Here, I don't care how I am dressed because people cannot identify me through my clothing. It has been a great opportunity.

Stahl
How did this connection to the Robert Bosch Academy come about?

Wanjala
In 2016, they organized a conference on dealing with the past, memorialization, and reconciliation, and I attended. When I attended, I was impressed by the way Germany as a nation was dealing with its past and I felt frustrated with my own situation. When I realized they offered this opportunity, I expressed interest. And, I'm happy that I was later given that opportunity.

Stahl
How do you think that this time in Germany helped you to deal with the situation in Kenya?

Wanjala
When I came I was wondering why so many nations, not just Kenya, set up truth commissions, use a lot of taxpayers' money, and come up with reports that never get published. Back home, these were the questions I was wondering. Having been the face of the commission, it pained me whenever I received phone calls from the people who – the witnesses, the victims, the survivors, those who came before us – inquiring, "So what is happening? When are we getting our reparation?" It was very frustrating that we had raised the expectations and the hopes of the victims, and after all of that, we had nothing to show. Some victims died without receiving any news of the outcome.

I was so frustrated. My time at the Robert Bosch Academy exposed me to many perspectives. They organized meetings for me to meet people, experts in this field, including Prof. Norbert Frei.

I think I'm less frustrated now than when I first came because I have come to realize that it's not just Kenya, but that truth commissions are almost always forced down the throats of political leaders because they are the same perpetrators of historical injustices. Still, we investigate them, come up with the recommendations, and expect them to sanction the implementation of the recommendations. So, I'm less frustrated about this and about the fact that perpetrators will always fight back. I also now know that, sometimes, the time is not right for a nation to investigate itself.

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I've now moved from frustration to thinking, "So what? What can I do in my own position?" I think this is what I'm taking away. Maybe I need to focus on supporting the victims, survivors, and communities in social healing, in continued dialogue, so that maybe they can resolve the conflicts using creative justice mechanisms at the community level.

I think another thing that I am going to focus on is my perspective as a woman. As a woman, knowing the emotions I went through on the commission, I feel for the women who came before the commission. And I'm not going to wait for this report to come out of Parliament and for it to be implemented. I already have all the information. I have the hindsight. I have the hearing documents. I think that what I'm going to do as a starting point is to amplify the voices of these women.

One of the programs that I hope to do, if I get the funding, is to document the stories of women through a program that I'm calling "Honoring the Pain and the Courage of Kenyan Women".

Overall, I think that this fellowship has been an eye opener. I will go back being more encouraged in terms of what I do. Of course, I will still continue to fear for my security. But when you can do nothing, what can you do?

Stahl
How would you judge the current situation in Kenya and the prospects of addressing the prosecution and implementation of those recommendations?

Wanjala
I think what needs to happen next is for that report to come out of Parliament. Once the report comes out and the cases that were presented for further investigation are looked into, leading either to prosecution or people's names being cleared, this will be the starting point. Those who were found culpable can be prosecuted, and those who, with the collection of further information can prove that they were not involved, can clear their names.

As I said before, as a commission, we did not have time to investigate to completion. We only painted a global picture. But, there were cases where we said, "This case needs further investigation, maybe leading to prosecution." The starting point, then, is for the report to leave Parliament and for Parliament to institute an implementation mechanism and the committee that will oversee it. We know that, although we have institutions like the Human Rights Commission, the Land Commission, and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, which might pick on some of the recommendations to implement, we also need a monitoring body. And it was this monitoring body that we proposed to be set up.

We also recommended a reparation act so that people who deserve to receive restitution or reparations will receive this. Actually, we developed everything. All that they need to do is to pass that act so that the report and its recommendations can be implemented in a structured way.

As I said, the government now is acting on some of the issues, but not in a structured way

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because the report is still stuck in Parliament. So, we need to continue lobbying for the government to get the commitment it needs to implement this report. The international community, if we still have something to call an international community, also needs to hold the Kenyan government accountable for what they promised the people through this report. Namely, that they would investigate historical injustices and gross violations of human rights and to ensure that all of the victims get justice and reparation.

Stahl
What do you think the prospects are of reaching some of these goals? Do you think that the current situation in Kenya will allow this?

Wanjala
Right now, there is what we call a handshake. There is an improved relationship between the President and the leader of opposition, Raila Odinga.[22] As a result, there is some semblance of peace. They now have a program they are calling Building Bridges, which was developed just after I left Kenya. However, I'm hoping that this Building Bridges program is not going to replace the implementation of TJRC report.

Stahl
Thank you for this interview and for sharing your insights with us.

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Fußnoten

1. On the so-called Saba Saba Day on July 7, 1990, protests demanding multiparty elections took place in Nairobi. Clashes with President Moi's paramilitary forces left many protesters dead.

2. Masinde Muliro (1922-1992) had been an anti-colonial activist and renowned politician in Kenya since the 1950s. 1989 he started campaigning for a return to pluralist politics. In 1991, he was among the founders of the Forum for Restoration of Democracy, which advocated to end the one-party system.

3. Odinga Odinga (1911-1994) had been a key figure in the country's struggle for independence and the first Vice-President (1964-1966) under Jomo Kenyatta. After 1966, he went into opposition. He was among the key opposition leaders to lobby for an end to the one-party system. He was also the co-founder of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy in 1991.

4. See footnote 2.

5. Since the end of the 1980s, various rebel groups had started fighting the dictatorship of Siad Barre (1969-1991). In 1991, Barre was overthrown, and various armed factions started competing for power.

6. Kenya's return to multiparty elections in 1992 was accompanied by violent clashes between members of various ethnic groups in different parts of Kenya. The sources and dynamics of this violence varied and were usually specific to each context. However, at the heart of many of these conflicts were disputes about land ownership that generally pitted members of allegedly more or less privileged ethnic groups against one another.

7. The December elections held in 1997 were won by President Daniel arap Moi, who had been in office since 1978. For the second time since 1992, different parties were allowed to participate.

8. The Kenya African National Union was a political party founded in 1960. KANU had been in power since the independence of Kenya in 1964.

9. After the 2007/08 election, the election process and results were questioned by domestic politicians and international observers. In the capital, post-election violence started out as clashes between supporters of different political parties and as police violence against protesters. However, the spreading violence soon acquired ethnic patterns, in the sense that people were attacked based on their (actual or alleged) group membership.

10. The Japan International Cooperation Agency is a Japanese development organization.

11. Kofi Annan (1938-2018) is a Ghanaian diplomat. He served as the Secretary General of the United Nations between 1997 and 2006.

12. Graça Machel (*1945) is a Mozambican politician and advocate for women's and children's rights. She is also the widow of both the former South African President Nelson Mandela, as well as the former Mozambican President Samora Machel.

13. Benjamin Mkapa (*1938) was the President of Tanzania between 1995 and 2005.

14. Bethuel Kiplagat was part of a meeting of the Kenyan Intelligence Committee held less than forty-eight hours prior to the security operation that resulted in the Wagalla massacre in 1984, during

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which approximately 5,000 people were killed.

15. Another commissioner.

16. The commission had the ability to investigate, analyze, and report on what happened between 1963 and 2008. They focused on the following areas: gross violations of human rights, economic crimes, illegal acquisition of public land, marginalization of communities and ethnic violence. They also examined the context in which the crimes had occurred and were tasked with educating the public about the commission's work.

17. Margit Hellwig-Bötte (*1958), 2009-2013 German Ambassador in Kenya.

18. The Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence, also known as the Waki Commission, was an international commission established by the Kenyan Government in 2008 to investigate the ethnic clashes that occurred after the 2007 elections.

19. Luis Moreno Ocampo (*1952) is an Argentine lawyer who served as the first Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court at The Hague from 2003 until 2012.

20. The "Nyayo House torture chambers" was a detention center where many opponents of the Moi government were tortured and killed by officials of the Special Branch (Secret Service).

21. Wanjala was at the Robert Bosch Academy during the 2017-2018 academic year.

22. Raila Odinga (*1945) was the Prime Minister of Kenya between 2008 and 2013. He was a member of the Orange Democratic Movement and, since 2013, has been a leader of the opposition.

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