



**MURANG'A COUNTY ASSEMBLY**  
**COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR**  
**ON ADDRESS OF THE COUNTY ASSEMBLY BY**  
**HON. DR. CHARLES WANYOIKE RUBIA, CBS, EGH**

The Chief Guest, Hon. Dr. Charles Wanyoike Rubia, CBS, EGH,

H.E. Deputy Governor, Gakure Monyo,

Hon. Senator, Kembi Gitura, Senator Murang'a County,

Honorable Members of Parliament,

Honorable Members of County Assembly,

Council of Eminent Persons of Murang'a,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hon. Dr. Charles Wanyoike Rubia (1923) is one the most influential makers of the history of modern Kenya. He served as Cabinet Minister, the First African Mayor of the City of Nairobi, "An extraordinary Diplomat' a member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency in Nairobi and a one time very successful businessman.

The Hon. Dr. Rubia was born in Kandara, Muranga in 1923. He attended various schools in Murang'a before proceeding to the Prestigious Alliance High School in 1941. After very intense training at the Posts and Telecommunications Training School in Tanzania graduating in 1943, he received a British Council grant to study British system of Local Government in The United Kingdom in 1959. He then enrolled in numerous professional training programmes in Nairobi which he successfully completed. Charles was now ready for

his next ground breaking job. In 1962, he became the first African Mayor of the City of Nairobi at a time when Kenya was transiting from colonial rule to self-government.

In 1962, as Mayor of Nairobi, he was instrumental and took part in a very crucial convention dubbed, "The Kenya we Want". This convention, which was an initiative of leading business, political and professional leaders of the time was funded by the private sector and their friends. It was intended to design and develop strategies and roadmaps to propel Kenya into a great Country in Africa and the world.

As Mayor of Nairobi, Hon. Dr. Rubia was one of the highest ranking diplomats in an "extra-ordinary capacity". He routinely hosted civic receptions at City Hall, Nairobi for every ambassador who presented his credentials to the new President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. He was awarded "The Freedom of The City of Nairobi" because of his extemporary work as Mayor of Nairobi.

In 1963, Hon. Dr. Rubia was invited to America under the State Department's Exchange Visitor/Foreign Leaders Programme where he greatly publicized The City of Nairobi and Kenya. He won acclaim from Hon. Tom Mboya and the first Prime Minister of Kenya Mzee Jomo Kenyatta for his 'best diplomatic service'

Charles, as he was fondly called by his peers represented Kenya on the Africanization Commission of the East African Common Services Organization. He served as a Director representing Kenya in The East African Development Bank Board.

In the corporate world, Charles Rubia also excelled. He served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kenya Mystery Tours. He served as a Director of more than a dozen companies and State Parastatals. He was the Founder and First Governor of The Red Cross in Kenya and several other voluntary/charitable organizations. He was a long serving member of the Committee of Muthaiga Country Club, where he is now a Life Member.

Hon. Dr. Rubia's achievements in the Local Government propelled him for high responsibilities at the National level. He served as

Member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency in Nairobi between 1969 to 1988. He served as an Assistant Minister during President Kenyatta's government. From 1979 to 1988, he served as a Minister in various government ministries under President Moi. These included the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Works, Housing and Planning. He was dropped from the Cabinet in 1988 when he lost his parliamentary seat in the now infamous Mlolongo voting system.

In a ballot that was said to be rigged, Rubia lost with 21% against his opponent with 71 %, before later in 1988 losing his position on the Board of the Commercial Development Corporation, an industrial parastatal. This started his transformation from a high flying Minister and Board Member of various Corporations to an agent for change.

In 1989, the Nairobi KANU branch suspended Rubia on grounds that he had participated in anti-government demonstrations and recommended that the national party expel him, together with 13 others, with the President promising to hunt down the advocates of multi-partyism "like rats."

He remained silent for several months, before joining forces with former Cabinet Minister Kenneth Matiba to take the defense of "political space" and civil liberties outside the confines of the Parliament and Office of the President, where both were accustomed to fighting their battles.

In May 1990, the two former Members of Parliament called a joint press conference to urge legalization of opposition parties. Several days later, they issued a 13 point statement on the merits of a multi-party system.

The events of June and early July were decisive with the Government rejecting the application for a license to hold public rallies. Prior to the scheduled date, Hon. Matiba and Hon. Rubia were detained under the Kenya's Preservation of Public Security Act, which allows indefinite detention without charge or trial on July 4, 1990.

Also detained were Raila Odinga, human rights lawyers, Mohammed Ibrahim and Dr. John Khaminwa as well as Mr. Gitobu Imanyara, all

of whom were held without charge or trial, with others like lawyers Paul Muite and Gibson Kamau Kuria going into hiding for several weeks.

Despite the two issuing a public statement that the rally had been called off, thousands turned up for the canceled rally which was forcibly broken up by police who fired at demonstrators and in protest. Demonstrations and clashes occurred in Nakuru, Murang'a, Nyeri, Nyandarua, Thika, Narok, and Kiambu in support of Hon. Matiba and Rubia.

The police and army suppressed this using indiscriminate deadly force. More than 100 died as a result of military and police action and 1000 people were arrested.

Hon. Rubia was arrested and held in Naivasha, Kamiti and Shimo la Tewa prisons and was released a year later, when word went to Moi that he was very sick and could die in jail. His efforts were not in vain as the push for multi-party democracy continued, with the result being the repealing of section 2A of the Constitution which stated that there would be no other political party.

It is through the efforts of Hon. Rubia, Hon. Matiba and others that Kenya is where it is today. With their agitation, multi-party democracy was introduced in Kenya. They are considered as the fathers of the political struggle and mentored many politicians.

But, is important for us to recognize that in his struggle, Rubia and especially his family had to sacrifice a lot for this country, with his businesses forced to close and his educated children lacking employment as no employers would hire them for fear of being on the “wrong side”.

The fruits of multi- party democracy are very visible today, and Kenya has made it to the list of Africa’s most democratic and open societies, with the expansion of the democratic space; the growth of numerous political parties and freedom of the people to elect leaders of their choice.

But, the other fruit of multi- party democracy is the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the reason why we as an Assembly are able to sit here today.

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, has summarized the gains that Hon. Rubia and all, fought for, with the greatest being Article 1 which states that “All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and shall be exercised only in accordance with the Constitution” thereby giving the power to the people of Kenya by bringing the government to the people.

The Constitution further gives the people rights under the Bill of rights and fundamental freedoms in Chapter 4, defining freedoms such as; expression, media, access to information, association, among others. This is another reason why Hon. Rubia lost his dignity fighting for people to enjoy these freedoms.

Through devolution, and the creation of the 47 counties, citizens are able to plan, and make decisions on their development needs, and further monitor how the funds for development are used at the county level, thereby giving power to the people.

Every leader should be willing to copy the example of Hon. Charles Rubia, in the sacrifices he made, the courage he had, as a true servant of the people and be able to take on any challenge, for the sake of the people we represent.

Today we celebrate a great man, a great leader, who sacrificed so much for the people without expecting anything in return. The least we can do is just like he did, is to become servants, whom have been called to perform important trusts in the Republic and advance the peace, prosperity and welfare of our Country and those whose interests have been committed to our charge.