

Mehdi Hasan	Tonight's guest is the leader of the opposition in Kenya. He is one of the country's most iconic politicians, some might say he's loved and loathed in equal measure by Kenyans depending on where you are in Kenya, depending where on the political spectrum you are. He's the son of the first vice president of Kenya, he himself was locked up in the 1980s, tortured when he was campaigning for greater democracy in Kenya. He served as Prime Minister of Kenya between 2008 and 2013, right now he's running for president again next year having run for president before. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Raila Odinga,
	Raila Odinga you've run for president of Kenya, three times you've lost. You're now running for a fourth time and you're already behind in the polls. Isn't it time maybe to get the hint from your fellow Kenyans that they don't want you as their president?
Raila Odinga	I think the answer should be that three times I've ran, two times I've won and I have been robbed two times.
Mehdi Hasan	You have robbed two times, when were the two times you were robbed, in 2007 and 2013?
Raila Odinga	13 correct.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, well let's talk about those very briefly, 2013 as you well know most of the international monitors from the Carter Centre, from the EU, from the Commonwealth said you lost fair and square. In 2007 most people agree that there was vote rigging, it was a very dodgy election to say the least but of course the independent commission that looked into the 07 election said that there was vote rigging on both sides. Aren't you just annoyed that you're not as good at vote rigging as your opponents.
Raila Odinga	I am proud that I am not as good at vote rigging so I don't think...
Mehdi Hasan	But you tried, both sides tried to rig that election, that's what the Independent Commission said.
Raila Odinga	Nothing could be further from the truth, we did not in 2007 try to rig and as you know that there was an exit poll by the International Republican Institute which was never published because the intervention of some other forces. But I assure you very clearly that I won fair and square.
Mehdi Hasan	But you're saying people on your side in all these elections never cheat, it's only the other side that cheats.

Raila Odinga	I'm saying that we never have any reason to cheat because we always were confident that we're going to win.
Mehdi Hasan	Maybe you should chat to one of your governors, James Ongwae who in 2013 was filmed handing out cash at election campaigns rallies, shouldn't you have a chat with him about not needing to cheat?
Raila Odinga	Of course if that had happened.
Mehdi Hasan	Well it did happen, it's on video.
Raila Odinga	I'm being told that maybe he was giving money to supporters. But if it is true that he was trying to corrupt an electoral process, that of course...
Mehdi Hasan	Have you not asked him?
Raila Odinga	I'm hearing it for the first time from you.
Mehdi Hasan	You're hearing it for the first time. You've never heard this allegation that one of your governors hands out cash? So you're going to chat t him after this show is over I'm sure.
Raila Odinga	Yes I will.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, you've said in the past that you will boycott the elections next year if there isn't a reform of the electoral commission, the IEBC. Given that reform that you want hasn't yet happened, will you be boycotting next year's presidential election?
Raila Odinga	No, we have not said we are going to be boycotting, we are saying that we don't think that we can have free elections with electoral commission as currently constituted and we are working towards reforming that.
Mehdi Hasan	If it's not reformed in time, will you boycott the presidential election?
Raila Odinga	I don't think that any serious person, the right thinking person would go into the gallows willingly so we will not go into the gallows. If the electoral commission is not properly reformed there would definitely be no reason for us to participate in the coming elections.

Mehdi Hasan	After your party lost in 2007, there were of course violent protests across the country, there was a violent crackdown by the government, thousands of Kenyans were killed, at least 40% of them by the police. Hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes, looting, arson, rape, vandalism. You say you want to avoid violence in the future and yet in 2014 you claimed people were so angry with the current government that they were 'willing to take the bullet' and so were you. Your Nairobi chairman said last October "in 2017 we only have one bullet remaining, for Raila to be president a few people must die". How is that not incitement to violence ahead of an election?
Raila Odinga	I think that he was completely misquoted. I saw the clip, he never said that "a few people must die", he said that "if they tried to rig again, we're not going to accept it".
Mehdi Hasan	When you say "not going to accept it", do you mean peacefully accept it or violently accept it?
Raila Odinga	...demonstrations are basically allowed in by our constitution, the protests if something isn't fair
Mehdi Hasan	When you say for example to the New York Times in 2014 that you're willing to take a bullet, that kind of talk is not helpful given what happened in Kenya in 2007.
Raila Odinga	I think that is also a misrepresentation, we never said that "we are prepared to take a bullet", we said that "we will not accept this just lying down".
Mehdi Hasan	The New York Times says they asked you "were you willing to take a bullet?", Mr Odinga tossed peanuts into his mouth and grunted yes, that's what The New York Times says.
Raila Odinga	Taking a bullet basically, it means that, yes, you're prepared to be shot.
Mehdi Hasan	In 2008 at the height of the violence, the protests, people were telling you to ask your supporters to calm down, to de-escalate and you said you "refused to be asked to give the Kenyan people an anaesthetic so that they can be raped". Is that not a provocative remark in the middle of violence?
Raila Odinga	It is not a provocative remark, people basically are protesting something that has been unfair. In other words you are basically tell the provocateur to stop his provocation.

Mehdi Hasan	And you've referred to the government of the time the government of Kibaki as provocateurs, you've pointed the finger at them for their violence. A lot of human rights' groups agree with you but the government carried out massive human rights abuses. Yet a lot of those groups also point the finger at you and your party for your role, not just in the mass action but in inflaming the situation. No Raila, no peace became a slogan across the country. Nearly a decade on are you willing to take some responsibility for the death and destruction that happened in your country?
Raila Odinga	You need to know that what happened in the country was all spontaneous, it was not planned. They were broadcasting the results live on all the three major channels, television and they show that I was leading the president by one million votes when all of a sudden the government ordered all the TV stations to stop live coverage.
Raila Odinga	Then when eventually the electoral commission went and announced what everybody knew it was a rigged result, the reaction was spontaneous.
Mehdi Hasan	But what about your role in calming it down rather than exacerbating it.
Raila Odinga	People are protesting...
Mehdi Hasan	No Raila no peace doesn't sound like a peaceful protest to me.
Raila Odinga	No but people are protesting what had happened.
Mehdi Hasan	I understand and everyone has a right to protest. But the violence. Do you agree with human rights watch who said in January 08 "we have evidence that ODM politicians" - your party - "and local leaders actively fomented post-election violence. In many communities ODM mobilisers organise, directed, facilitated violence unleashed by gangs."?
Raila Odinga	I totally disagree with that statement.
Raila Odinga	Because the government did carry out investigations, people were arrested, people were taken to court.

Mehdi Hasan	Some people were referred to the International Criminal Court as you know for crimes against humanity and yet the last two Kenyans who were still in front of the court were recently, the cases were dropped, thrown out against William Ruto, the vice president of Kenya, a former ally of yours, now an opponent. But here's the thing, the ICC ruled there was insufficient evidence against Ruto. It refused to acquit him. The presiding judge declared it a mistrial because of "troubling incidents of witness interference, and intolerable political meddling" and yet you went on Twitter and congratulated the vice president for getting off scot-free.
Raila Odinga	There are two things here, first I say that he has been on trial for the last seven years, without peace. But he did not acquit himself.
Mehdi Hasan	Well he hasn't been acquitted.
Raila Odinga	It's just the court which released him.
Mehdi Hasan	Yeah but not acquitted him, let's be clear on that.
Raila Odinga	And it's the court that I blamed, I say that it would have been better for Ruto to have gone through a full trial and then discharged for lack of evidence.
Mehdi Hasan	Hold on...
Raila Odinga	But saying that, the mistake is not the accused, the mistake is that of the court.
Mehdi Hasan	The presiding judge says that there was interference and witnesses and there was tampering, there was meddling, do you agree with it?
Raila Odinga	And I'm saying that yes, that is correct because as you remember the AU was basically pressurised to threaten to pull out of the ICC basically because of the Kenyan cases. There was an intolerable amount of interference by the Kenyan government.
Mehdi Hasan	If you become president next year will you take the Ruto case back there? Will you prosecute William Ruto for crimes against humanity?
Raila Odinga	Why should I?
Mehdi Hasan	Do you believe he committed crimes against humanity?
Raila Odinga	William Ruto was a member.
Mehdi Hasan	He was your ally at the time.
Raila Odinga	Yes exactly.

Mehdi Hasan	So you probably don't want to accuse him of crimes against humanity.
Raila Odinga	I see no evidence.
Mehdi Hasan	You see no evidence? So the case was all a sham trial, he should never have gone to the ICC?
Raila Odinga	You see it is like this, we as ODM were the first ones to write to the ICC and the UN Security Council saying that the government was committing genocide against our people.
Mehdi Hasan	Agreed and the ICC didn't just indict the government, they indicted people from your side so your plan backfired.
Raila Odinga	The PNU side of the government now then went and supposedly collected evidence against ODM supporters so I will always say that we as ODM did not organise any kind of violence.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay let's go to our panel who are waiting. Agnes Gitau is an adviser on trade and investment for East Africa, a regular commentator on African politics and economics, how much responsibility do you think Raila Odinga and his party the ODM should take for the violence that tore apart Kenya almost a decade ago?
Agnes Gitau	Our politicians must take accountability and the two men that are held responsible are the honourable Raila Odinga who was the party leader for ODM and former president Mwai Kibaki. These were the two names on the ballot paper. Kenyans were fighting because of a disputed election so it was up to these two men to say to their followers it stops now, not in my name. Had they done that and my question perhaps to you humbly honourable Raila, is there anything you could have done, that could have saved 1300 people?
Raila Odinga	I wish I was able to do so. First look at the whole incident in context. There was no way that Kibaki could have defeated me and people walked out of their homes and again demonstrating on the streets. What happened was there was an order by the government of shoot to kill.
Mehdi Hasan	No-one is defending what the government did here, I'm asking you and she's asking you, do you have any regrets for your role in that violence, yes or no? No regrets?
Raila Odinga	No.

Mehdi Hasan	Okay, let's go back to our panel. Parselelo Kantai is a Kenyan investigative journalist, editor of The New African, a former contributor to the Financial Times on these subjects. Was Raila Odinga responsible in your view? What role did he play in that conflict from your perspective?
Parselelo Kantai	I think it's impossible for honourable Raila to avoid taking some amount of responsibility for the violence. But I think as always happens with this debate there is I think a tragic misreading of what actually happened. The violence became the narrative, obscuring the fact that it was triggered by a heavily disputed election which was coming on the back of at least two years of agitation for change in which large swathes of the country were deeply unhappy and felt deeply betrayed. Instead what it had created was a deeply ethnicised political establishment that was operating on the politics of exclusion and excluding most of the country.
Mehdi Hasan	Let me bring in Nic Cheeseman who's Professor of African politics at the Africa Study Centre here at Oxford University. The chief justice of Kenya's Supreme Court, Willy Mutunga warned last October that Kenya could be plunged back into ethnic bloodshed if politicians don't stop "beating the drums of violence". From your perspective how concerned should we be, the world be, Kenyans be about a new round of violence next year after the presidential elections?
Nic Cheeseman	I think we should be very concerned. There's a real possibility that we take our eye off the ball because the last election was peaceful. There were a number of things that happened in the last election, we saw Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, two leaders who were said to have been responsible for some political violence in the past on the same side, we saw...
Mehdi Hasan	President and vice president.
Nic Cheeseman	President and vice president. Many of these things may not be the same in future elections and so to assume from a peaceful election in 2013 that the hurt and the pain of previous instances of injustice have gone away is a real mis-step.
Mehdi Hasan	What do you think Raila Odinga can do to prevent that violence from happening again, is there anything he can do?

Nic Cheeseman	I think one of the things that all of Kenya's politicians need to do is to take a little bit more responsibility for what has happened in the past. I think that's the case for both those who have got off on the ICC process, I think also in the case of the former Prime Minister. One of the things that I think is particularly for the prime minister to do is to come up with a positive argument for why Kenya should vote for him.
Mehdi Hasan	In a sentence, what's a positive reason to vote for you next year?
Raila Odinga	I will say that I represent 100% change as a movement that I lead here and we've actually shown it during the last coalition government. Everybody now agrees that the grand coalition government is probably the best form of government Kenya has had.
Mehdi Hasan	One quick question following on from what I asked the panel, how worried are you about a repeat of 2008's style violence next year?
Raila Odinga	Certainly very worried and that's the reason why I've said that we need to address factors that may lead us to a state of violence that we witnessed in 2008. This includes for example dealing with the issues of reforming the electoral commission, the issues of the security forces and the judiciary where we used to have serious problems with regard to the supreme court.
Mehdi Hasan	A lot of Kenyans say that one of the big issues for them when they're going to be voting next year is corruption, that's one of the big issues facing the country. A recent report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers ranked Kenya as the third most corrupt country in the world in terms of economic crimes. It's estimated that the average urban Kenyan pays 16 bribes per month. I want to ask you this, have you ever had to pay a bribe to get something done?
Raila Odinga	The question is "when," it's not "if" because, as you have said every Kenyan does it.
Mehdi Hasan	Including the former Prime Minister just to get certain things bureaucratically.
Raila Odinga	Certainly, not as Prime Minister.
Mehdi Hasan	Not as Prime Minister but as a former Prime Minister even you had to give a bribe, well that's got to be a first for this show. Let me ask the reverse of that question, have you been offered bribes?
Raila Odinga	Of course I've been offered bribes a number of times and each time I've resisted being bribed.

Mehdi Hasan	You've saved me my follow up question. You've said that there is no commitment to fight corruption by the Kenyatta government, the current Kenyan government, which allows "the cancer of corruption to spread" you've said. Across the system many would agree with you in your analysis of this government and the levels of corruption. The problem for you is that when you were in office under that grand coalition, the corruption situation wasn't that much better.
	It's been reported that nearly a third of the national budget may have gone missing every year through corruption while you were in office as the well-known Kenyan corruption whistle blower John Githongo has put it "you can't say one side is more corrupt than the other in Kenya, all sides seem to have their snout in the trough", all sides.
Raila Odinga	Certainly, you know that I was influential in appointing John Githongo into that position, what you call anti-corruption tsar. The thing is that when we came to government we to a certain extent reduced the amount of corruption among ourselves, unfortunately some of ourselves allowed themselves to get involved in this graft, so I'm saying that...
Mehdi Hasan	But you agree with John Githongo that all sides are on the take in Kenya? You accept your allies take bribes and steal money.
Raila Odinga	I do accept and I do accept, remember when I was Prime Minister, I suspended two ministers.
Mehdi Hasan	There was also one of your most loyal confidantes, Sarah Elderkin sent you an email in 2011 where she described the people around you "playing major roles, people who are playing major roles who are irredeemably corrupt" she said. She talked about "your office staff's blatant, well-known all over town corruption." That's one of your closest friends, a woman who helped you write your memoir emailing you to say, Raila the people around you are all corrupt.
Raila Odinga	And this was good because she was basically blowing the whistle.
Mehdi Hasan	And then you sacked all those people the next day when you got the email right?
Raila Odinga	I sacked a number of them.
Mehdi Hasan	Who did you sack?
Raila Odinga	Quite a number suspended.

Mehdi Hasan	How many sackings did you do?
Raila Odinga	I did about three or four.
Mehdi Hasan	On the basis of that email from Sarah Elderkin?
Raila Odinga	Yes.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay so you took action you're saying.
Raila Odinga	I did.
Mehdi Hasan	Can you tell us, tell our audience here in the Oxford Uni, when was the last time a Kenyan politician went to prison for corruption?
Raila Odinga	Of course a few people were charged but most of the time...
Mehdi Hasan	That's not an answer to my question, when was the last time a high profile minister or politician was put behind bars specifically on corruption charges?
Raila Odinga	I don't remember.
Mehdi Hasan	I don't think there is one, that's why.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, let's go back to our panel. Agnes how would you assess Raila Odinga and his party's record in government of tackling corruption in terms of next year's election and bringing in a change candidate as Raila just mentioned?
Agnes Gitau	Honourable Raila, I would want to say what is that change? There is nothing tangible that you have given us so that we can appoint you as president.
Agnes Gitau	How are you going to tackle corruption right now as you've heard we are rated third in the world as the most corrupt country? I know you have exposed corruption but that's not good enough, you have been in politics for 30 years, yet are your policies sustainable to fight corruption?
Raila Odinga	Corruption exists basically in every country, even this country or the United States. The difference is what action is taken when those people are found.
Mehdi Hasan	Will you put people behind bars? We've just discussed that there's no-one behind bars. In this country people go behind bars.
Raila Odinga	Certainly, certainly.

Mehdi Hasan	You guarantee that? Okay, let's go back to the panel. Parselelo, Raila Odinga talked about the coalition, the grand coalition that he was Prime Minister of being the most successful government that Kenyans look back on in its history, is that a fair assessment in your view?
Parselelo Kantai	If there's one thing to be remembered for, it's for the 2010 constitution and for delivering the 2010 constitution. There is the infrastructure to actually begin to detoxify Kenyan politics by devolving it, devolving power.
	It is not as if people have not embraced the new constitution all around. But there still remains this feeling more than ever of division and exclusion.
Mehdi Hasan	Nic Cheeseman, before I bring back Raila Odinga, he presents himself as the change candidate, is he a viable, non-corrupt change candidate that Kenya needs in your view?
Nic Cheeseman	I think he can be but I think one of the things that many people would ask him is, one of the things we want to see is a change in the way that government is done on a day-to-day basis. Is your own party run in the way that you would want the country to be run? One of the things people have said is that the internal party democracy within the ODM is as problematic, if not more problematic than the internal party democracy within for example the ruling party.
Mehdi Hasan	Do you want to respond to Nic and Parselelo?
Raila Odinga	On the issue of constitutionalism, it was the duty of the current regime to implement it. Unfortunately this government has done everything to undermine this new constitution.
Mehdi Hasan	Next year you're running for president for a fourth time, if you lose is there going to be number five, are you going to go for a fifth attempt, fifth time lucky?
Raila Odinga	I've said also that I don't want to impose myself on the people. I want to talk about next year, I don't want to speculate on the future, I don't know that I'm going to be alive.
Mehdi Hasan	On that rather philosophical note we will take a break. In part two of Head to Head we'll be talking about Kenya's war against Al-Shabab which was launched on Raila Odinga's watch in government. Join me after the break for Head to Head.
Break	

Mehdi Hasan	Welcome back to Head to Head on Al Jazeera English. My guest today is the former Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga here in the Oxford Union. Raila when you were Prime Minister back in 2011, Kenya went to war in Somalia to try and defeat al-Shabab. You said “we will fight until the enemy is defeated”. Well since then the enemy hasn’t been defeated, it’s grown in size and scope. 90% of all quote un-quote terrorist attacks in Kenya since 2008 taking place after your country’s Somalia offensive. Do you accept now that it was a mistake to go to war and that you’ve gotten bogged down in an unwinnable conflict?
Raila Odinga	al-Shabab were carrying out skirmishes, sporadic attacks including kidnapping of people, Kenyans and also tourists in our country. So it’s reached a stage when this was no longer tolerable. Our economy was being weakened seriously so in the security council we took a decision to push back al-Shabab and secure the border. That’s why we call it in Swahili Operation Linda Nchi, protect the country.
Mehdi Hasan	But it didn’t do what it said, it didn’t protect the country.
Raila Odinga	No, what happened once we were in there, it then became apparent from the security advice that unless the port of Kismayo was liberated, the job that we had done would come to nothing because Kismayo was the main supply point for al-Shabab. We did ask for international support from the EU and the US and that was not forthcoming.
Raila Odinga	We liberated Kismayo single-handedly. We should then have come back and sealed our border as we had intended but then we allowed ourselves to move in and we had also joined Amisom forces.
Mehdi Hasan	The African Union forces.
Raila Odinga	African Union forces, this was not contemplated.

Mehdi Hasan	Okay but that's not the reason why there are all these attacks inside of Kenya. There are attacks inside of Kenya because you decided to go and pick this, you made this big military operation, not looking at what happened in other countries, you look at what the United States had done in Iraq, Afghanistan, you see the blow back. Today a report in the Nation newspaper shows there were nine times more attacks, nine times more attacks in the four years after your military intervention than in the four years before your intervention. That's a counter-productive intervention.
Raila Odinga	This is what exactly, they were saying that that decision was taken outside our own advice. We should have withdrawn at that time and come and sealed the border and protect our country which was the original mission of our office.
Mehdi Hasan	So as president would you withdraw all Kenyan forces from Somalia?
Raila Odinga	What we are saying it's not really a retreat or a withdrawal as such, what we are saying is that we pull back our soldiers so that we seal the border and give technical and strategic support to Amisom forces.
Mehdi Hasan	It seems like you just went in in a hurry with no exit strategy, no plan, no anticipation of the attacks that were going to come.
Raila Odinga	I said that we went there, we call it Operation Linda Nchi to protect the country.
Mehdi Hasan	So you had an exit strategy at the time?
Raila Odinga	Exactly.
Mehdi Hasan	And it just fell apart, because of whose fault was it that it fell apart?
Raila Odinga	The regime of the day.
Mehdi Hasan	And yet in January of this year after 63 Kenyan soldiers were killed you said "we must stand together and take the battle to them". It doesn't sound like you're interested in pulling back or sealing your border, it sounds like you want to carry on fighting.
Raila Odinga	No, no.
Mehdi Hasan	Sealing your border, sounds like you want to carry on fighting.
Raila Odinga	Everywhere talking about this, we are talking not just as-, as Kenya, the whole of AU,

Raila Odinga	because we are now in there, you don't just wake up tomorrow and-, and say you're-, you're pulling out, you say that you must have an exit strategy, this is what we have told the government, have a clear exit strategy that as we move who comes in to fill the vacuum.
Mehdi Hasan	What kind of timescale is this exit strategy happening over?
Raila Odinga	One, two years, that-, that is up to the government.
Mehdi Hasan	No but if you're president next year what kind of timeframe are we talking about?
Raila Odinga	We talk about one year or-,
Mehdi Hasan	Within one year of becoming president you would want to execute an exit strategy?
Raila Odinga	Yes.
Mehdi Hasan	And would you be willing to enter into negotiations, peace talks with al-Shabab, even indirectly?
Raila Odinga	You see the thing is that how do you negotiate with terrorists? That is a question.
Mehdi Hasan	Well every leader says that but eventually ends up doing it. The United States said that about the Taliban, and now they're talking to the Taliban in Afghanistan indirectly.
Raila Odinga	I'm trying to say that you need to look-, you need to look at the whole Somali strategy. Because up-, up to now we have been unable to develop strong authority in Mogadishu which can be able to-, to take the responsibility of protecting the country.
Mehdi Hasan	And you've always cast yourself as a protector of the poor, defender of the downtrodden, but ever since the military intervention. Ethnic Somalis in Kenya, Muslims in Kenya, have been unfairly targeted, harassed, arrested, say human rights groups. Has the war in Somalia fuelled religious and ethnic tensions in Kenya and doesn't that therefore make it a recruiting sergeant, a propaganda tool, for al-Shabab?
Raila Odinga	I think that profiling is a very dangerous thing, and I think that unfortunately this is what has been the case, that as al-Shabab has attacked the ethnic Somalis have been profiled. Many Somalis who live in Eastleigh were arrested and taken to a camp within the town and we did protest that that was very, very unfair.

Mehdi Hasan	But many would say your protests ring hollow given that the war started on your watch and the backlash started on your watch. It all flows from the initial intervention.
Raila Odinga	At our time we did not profile ethnic Somalis in Kenya at all, they are Kenyans and it is the responsibility of every government to protect the lives and property of its citizens.
Mehdi Hasan	Do you believe this government is doing that? The current Kenyan government?
Raila Odinga	I don't think so, I think that um somehow they are [designating] the ethnic Somalis,
Mehdi Hasan	Okay.
Raila Odinga	And Muslims, I think, and that is not right.
Mehdi Hasan	Let's go back to our panel. Parselelo Kantai is a Kenyan investigative journalist, editor of The New African, a former contributor to the Financial Times, what do you make of Raila Odinga's decision to support the war in Somalia then, and his talk about exiting now?
Parselelo Kantai	I've never understood not so much why the government, the [grand] coalition government chose to go into Somalia, but how they did it, going into Somalia in the way that they went in 2011 has obviously created a huge dilemma for the government right now.
Parselelo Kantai	But there's another question which is the fact that many young Kenyans from, what we can call southern Kenya who were born Christians have converted to Islam and are converting to Islam and joining al-Shabab, and the question is why.
Mehdi Hasan	Agnes Gitau is an advisor on trade and investment for East Africa, regular commentator on African politics and economics. Agnes was the decision to go to war against al-Shabab a rushed decision? Has it clearly backfired in your view?
Agnes Gitau	There was a need to go to Somalia then, but I want to clarify Kenya is not at war with Somalia. Somalia is a strategic partner for Kenya and a stable Somalia means a stable Kenya. Was there a rush? Maybe there was at that time but it's clear that our mission has been successful. Mogadishu is fairly stable now,
Mehdi Hasan	You think nine times as many terrorist attacks after the intervention as before is successful?

Agnes Gitau	That's-, so we need now to focus-, it's been successful for Somalia but not for Kenya unfortunately, so Kenya has paid the price but it's now our time to ensure that we have a plan with the blessing of the AU to exit Somalia at the right time.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, I think many Somalis would say they've paid the price even more. Nic Cheeseman is associate professor of African politics at the Africa Study Centre here at Oxford University. In terms of communal ethnic violence directed at Somalis or Muslims more broadly as a result of the al-Shabab intervention, where do you stand on that?
Nic Cheeseman	I think it's something that we haven't seen so much of historically in Kenya. One of the things that is worrying if you look at the survey data over the last ten years is there is an increasingly distinctive set of voting patterns that split along religious lines as well as ethnic lines.
	And one of the things that we know is that many of the Muslim communities of Kenya live in areas that are also historically marginalised and so there's an overlap between economic marginalisation and being a part of a religious minority, and that's a dangerous combination. There's a big role for his party to play here if they can in bringing people together into a national party and preventing that kind of political fragmentation.
Mehdi Hasan	I've got to ask you this question, you once claimed you were first cousins with President Barack Obama (laughter). You're not though are you?
Raila Odinga	I-, I never did claim that I was first cousins,
Mehdi Hasan	You told the BBC's World Today in January 2008 that Obama's father was your maternal uncle.
Raila Odinga	Yes, by extension yes because-,
Mehdi Hasan	But Obama's uncle says, "No, Mr Odinga is not a blood relative." (laughter)
Raila Odinga	I'm not. I'm not, but my mother and Obama's father come from the same clan.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, there's a tribal relationship-,
Raila Odinga	Yes.
Mehdi Hasan	Not a blood relationship?
Raila Odinga	No, no, no.

Mehdi Hasan	Okay just sticking with Obama very briefly, when he visited Kenya last summer he criticised Kenya's record on gay rights. Homosexual relations are illegal in Kenya. Do you still believe gay couples found engaging in homosexual acts should be arrested as you said in 2010?
Raila Odinga	No I-, I will say that this is a matter of choice, and therefore if people, you know, it is not African but we will say that people are allowed and free that-,
Mehdi Hasan	But you said they should be arrested if they're caught in the middle of an act.
Raila Odinga	No, no, no that was-,
Mehdi Hasan	You were caught on tape saying that.
Raila Odinga	I was quoted out of context.
Mehdi Hasan	It's always out of context (laughter).
Raila Odinga	I was addressing a rally in my constituency, Kibera.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, so just to be clear you don't think gay couples in Kenya should be arrested?
Raila Odinga	No, no, no, they didn't-, they didn't say-, I didn't say they should be arrested.
Mehdi Hasan	Would you arrest gay couples as president of Kenya?
Raila Odinga	I've much more important things to deal with than-, than arresting [gays].
Mehdi Hasan	That's not an answer to my question. (applause)
Raila Odinga	I've-, I've said I have more important things than arresting [gays].
Mehdi Hasan	You're not confirming or denying whether you're going to arrest gay couples if you're president?
Raila Odinga	No, the answer is no, that's what I'm telling you ...
Mehdi Hasan	No, okay, we finally got to a no. Okay, let's go to our audience who've been patiently waiting here in the Oxford Union. We've discussed elections, vote-rigging, violence, corruption, we've talked about the war in Somalia against al-Shabab. Who would like to make some points, ask some questions briefly? We'll go to this lady in the third row.
Woman in audience	Mr Odinga, security is about the most important thing in Africa and terrorists thrive on division, they thrive on national conflicts. Are you not better off combining with the current government, having a cohesive approach in actually tackling terrorism within Kenya?

Raila Odinga	I have always said each time there has been a terrorist attack the first person I've called or who has called me is the president, and each time we have given him assurance that at times like this there's no government or opposition. We all chant together as Kenyans to deal with this. So we are united in as far as the issue fighting terrorism is concerned, there's no conflict about that, but aside from that you need to know that we are a country, there's a role for the government and a role for opposition and I do believe that as the leader of the opposition I'm playing my role very effectively, even by the UK standards.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, let's go back to the audience (applause), let's go-, let's go to the lady at the front, and then we'll go to the gentleman right at the back.
Woman in audience	You were an MP for Kibera for 20 years. This is known as one of the biggest slums in Africa. It still doesn't have vital facilities such as clean water and toilets. Why didn't you manage to change things there as both an MP and Prime Minister, and if you can't sort out your own constituency can you really govern the whole of Kenya?
Raila Odinga	Thank you, a very good question. As Prime Minister I was five years and I did start a slum upgrading programme, the only slum upgrading programme that exists in Kibera was started by me. So I did something when I was in government, I could not do anything much when I was in the opposition but we started other projects right there, like we started building proper toilets in the area, we brought water into Kibera at that time and we also started road construction.
Man in audience	With the collapse of the ICC case is there a role for the ICC in Africa going forward given that the AU were actually working against the success of the ICC?
Raila Odinga	Number one is the AU and the ICC, I've said it is hypocritical relationship. The AU has not been honest with themselves because they are saying that the ICC targets African leaders, and I've said it's hogwash, nothing could be further from the truth. Most of the African leaders who were before the ICC have been referred there by Africans themselves.
Mehdi Hasan	Will you be sending Kenyans to The Hague when you're president? If you're president?
Raila Odinga	If you ask me when I come to power I will set up a local tribunal which was recommended by the Waki commission, to try to investigate and try those who are guilty of violating

Mehdi Hasan	Okay, let's go to the gentleman in the third row and then I'll come to the lady in the second row. Do you want to wait for the microphone to come to you?
Man in audience	I want to ask a question about press freedom. Last year 65 journalists in Kenya were violently assaulted, one was murdered, an editor, brave editor. You as a champion of democracy, if you return to power what would you do to reverse this deteriorating press freedom situation in your country?
Raila Odinga	Freedom of the press is something that we have fought so hard to achieve in Kenya unfortunately the current Jubilee government does not believe in the freedom of express (sic)
	Senior reporters are being sacked right now merely because they are writing articles which are critical of the government. If I come to power I will ensure that we restore the freedom of the media in the country.
Mehdi Hasan	I promised this lady here in the second row and then I want to go back to the back.
Woman in audience	I'm quite ashamed to admit that as a Kenyan it is a very tribal country and if you came into power do you think that you would do some miracle in such a way that a Kikuyu would be able to vote for a Luo and a Luo would be able to vote for a Kikuyu? (applause)
Mehdi Hasan	And just for the purpose of our global audience, you're a Luo politician and the president is a Kikuyu politician.
Raila Odinga	Yes, yes, yes, certainly but look at it this way, you have to look at the history, it has not always been like that. When Kenyatta was the, the first Kenyatta, Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned my father who was a Luo, Oginga Odinga, led the campaign for release of Kenyatta.
	In 2002 I myself came up and said "Kibaki Tosha." (applause) Kibaki is a Kikuyu with whom we had stood together and I stood up and said we must support Mr Kibaki as the candidate, and I'm a Luo. I went and campaigned and the Luos voted for Kibaki 98.5 percent for Kibaki (applause).
Mehdi Hasan	Of the three, just to be clear, of the three presidents Kenya's had, the Luos have never had a president of Kenya, correct me if I'm wrong. Do you believe that's a deliberate thing that's been done to your tribe?
Raila Odinga	No, it is relative because Kenya's only 53 years old, and Kenya has 42 different tribes, so it's not only the Luos who have not had the presidency.

Mehdi Hasan	Well Kalenjin has had a president in Daniel Arap Moi, and the Kikuyus, so I'm just wondering if you believe that's a deliberate targeting of your tribe?
Raila Odinga	Kikuyu, Kalenjin and another Kikuyu, and now they are talking about another Kalenjin, but I'm just saying-, (laughter & applause)
Mehdi Hasan	For the global audience it's hard to keep up but it's a very good question, I'm glad you raised the subject. Um let's go-, I said I'd go back to the audience there, let's go to gentleman in the middle there
Man in audience	A quick question. Mr Odinga, you have been very critical of African presidents who have refused er to ob-, basically obey the presidential terms, and yet in 2010 you appeared to campaign for Yoweri Museveni. I'm just wondering whether that incident basically compromised your ideal and your message on criticising African leaders.
Mehdi Hasan	You think there's a double standard campaigning for the Ugandan president?
Man in audience	Exactly, exactly.
Raila Odinga	No actually I did not campaign for Yoweri Museveni, I just joined him on the campaign (laughter) and the...
Mehdi Hasan	That's a real technical difference. "I did not campaign for him but I joined him on his campaign." Okay.
Raila Odinga	And I was basically using it to address the Ugandan people because I don't choose leaders for other African countries, Uganda included, but I have been very strong on the issue of respect for time limits and I have been also very critical of President Museveni as well.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, that lady there?
Woman in audience	Thank you. Mr Odinga, do you feel that corruption has impeded efforts by the Kenyan government to fight al-Shabab and make Kenyans safer? And if so what would you do differently to tackle corruption in the security sector?
Raila Odinga	Security sector requires reform so that you can deal with this issue of corruption to reform the police and make it a truly people's police. The same thing also with the military. So we want to first improve the living conditions of the security forces, the remuneration, the housing, and also the character, so that it can be an effective force in...
Mehdi Hasan	Okay.

Raila Odinga	in fighting terrorism.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay, I want to go to the lady and the gentleman there, but before I want to go to the back this gentleman there in the back, yes with the hat.
Man in audience	I campaign for you more than anybody in London here in 2007.
Raila Odinga	Yes.
Man in audience	And I wrote to you asking you to work with the Kikuyus, you refused to work with the Kikuyus. Now [we're] somewhere else, are you going to work with the Kikuyus? (laughter)
Mehdi Hasan	Did you say you campaigned for Raila Odinga in 2007?
Man in audience	I campaigned for him, he's my brother-in-law.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay. (laughter)
Man in audience	I campaigned in 2007.
Mehdi Hasan	Could be an awkward family reunion later (laughter),
Mehdi Hasan	Are you going to work with the Kikuyus?
Raila Odinga	But the thing is I work with so many Kikuyus, one of my legal advisor, Mr [Paul Mwangi], is a Kikuyu. I've got so many Kikuyus working for me it is [strange] that Kikuyus have not voted for me because basically there is this propaganda that is being spread by ethnic chauvinists to keep them away from me.
Mehdi Hasan	Lady here.
Woman in audience	People of my age when we grew up Raila was the man, we all-, you were our hero, but it looks like that name is going. Do you think it's wise putting the presidential bid aside and becoming an Africa advisor on leadership and politics? Don't you think there is a Nelson Mandela in you?
Mehdi Hasan	I'm not-, (applause)
Raila Odinga	Thank you v-, thank you very much my sister...
Mehdi Hasan	To be fair, Nelson Mandela became president first (applause).
Raila Odinga	Yes before he-, (laughter)
Mehdi Hasan	J-, just for the record (applause).
Raila Odinga	I could do better, [there's the answer for you.]
Mehdi Hasan	Okay (laughter), so once you're president then you're going to take over. Gentleman there in the third row, yes I promised, yes in the grey suit, yes you.

Man in audience	if you happen to decide to run in 2017 and you win what would you do to reverse this trend?
Raila Odinga	It is true that Kenya is one of the most unequal societies, that the gap between the haves and have-nots is very huge and that is the reason why we are saying that, you know, our policy is saying we are a social democratic movement and we're going to address the issue of distribution of wealth or resources and opportunity in the country to ensure that there is some kind of equity.
Man in audience	Ahead of 2017 um there's growing factionalism within CORD, the coalition that you're a part of. What is your strategy to overcome this to ensure that you have enough votes in the election?
Raila Odinga	I don't think that there is discord in CORD. CORD is fairly united. What we were talking about is who is going to be a candidate, other people who are declaring, that in my view is democracy. So I [think you] can say that I don't want to impose myself on the people, only when the people want me is when I'll be a candidate.
Mehdi Hasan	A lot of outside observers look at Kenyan politics and sometimes get a bit confused because there seems to be always shifting alliances. One minute you're with William Ruto, one minute you're not. Everyone swaps from one election to another you choose different allies.
Mehdi Hasan	But many would say if you had underlying principles and ideologies you wouldn't be able to shift partners all the time in a quite cynical way.
Raila Odinga	People say politics makes very strange bedfellows (laughter). You know, Mandela could not have worked together-,
Mehdi Hasan	Yeah but keep the same bedfellows though is what some might say (laughter).
Raila Odinga	I'm saying Mandela could not have worked with De Klerk who represented the regime that had taken him to prison, so there is what you call strategic alliances which you make and the rest are tactics.

Mehdi Hasan	One last question; you stood against Uhuru Kenyatta in 2013, you're hoping to stand against him again in 2017. His father was the very first president of Kenya and your father was his vice president, the first vice president of Kenya. 50 years later two sons are fighting over the presidency. Isn't it time for Kenya and for Kenyan politics to move beyond these two political dynasties of the Kenyattas and the Odingas (applause) and have some fresh faces, some new names, some fresh faces at the top? Isn't it time?
Raila Odinga	How I would love to see that happen. The thing-, the decision (laughter) [is] the Kenyans, the decision is not Uhurus or Railas.
Mehdi Hasan	Well you could both step aside.
Raila Odinga	No (laughter), the Kenyans can as well shunt us aside.
Mehdi Hasan	Okay.
Raila Odinga	It is not Raila Odinga imposing himself on the people, it's the people who'll vote for Raila Odinga because of what Raila Odinga represents, and that's my view, it's an exercise in democracy.
Mehdi Hasan	And on that note we're going to have to leave it there. Raila Odinga, thanks for joining me on Head To Head (applause), thanks to our audience here in the Oxford Union, thanks to our panel of experts, thanks for watching at home. This debate will continue, Head to Head will be back next week, thank you. (applause)