



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM  
RUTO, PHD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENSE  
FORCES HIGHLIGHTING GLOBAL DEMOCRACY  
PARTNERSHIP**

**MAY 20TH, 2024**

**CARTER PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM,  
ATLANTA**



**Jason Carter, Chair of the Carter Center Board,**

**Dr Paige Alexander, CEO of Carter Center,**

**Dr Meredith Evans, Director of the Carter Presidential Library and Museum,**

**Congresswoman Nikema Williams,**

**Amb. Meg Whitman,**

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good afternoon,**

1. It is a great privilege for me to be here today at this iconic center, a hub of noble endeavors and a fitting tribute to the global legacy of a distinguished American leader and humanitarian.
2. I thank the leadership of this center for hosting and providing me with a unique opportunity to honor an exemplary American whose commitment to leadership, governance, democracy, and human welfare has made him a respected global citizen. His political career may have concluded, but his influence as a leader endures. And as President Jimmy Carter turns 100 years this October, I wish him good health and happiness in retirement.
3. My visit here reminds me of the first State Visit by a Kenyan leader to the U.S. in 1980, when President Carter invited President Moi. President Carter continued his engagement with Kenya through his work at this center, where he remains a respected global advocate, especially for victims of overlooked conflicts and humanitarian crises.



4. President Jimmy Carter's legacy and the efforts of this center are vividly alive in Kenya. In 1994, with substantial support from the center, Kenya became one of the first countries to stop the transmission of guinea worm disease. Today, Kenya stands as a more confident democracy, thanks in part to President Carter's personal support and the center's institutional contributions.
5. This center is founded on a deep commitment to human rights and alleviation of human suffering. Its impactful work has improved millions of lives worldwide by contributing to conflict resolution, promoting democratic norms, building accountable institutions, and supporting disease prevention.
6. The commitment of this center reflects our own values and governance principles, highlighting the common heritage that unites Kenya and the United States, in our strategic partnership of shared objectives centered on human well-being, security, and dignity.
7. The historical events which define the essential character of Kenya and the United States of America as proud, free and democratic nations though centuries apart, are identical.
8. At the height of Kenya's liberation struggle, the US, a global democratic giant, became a natural ally of our freedom fighters. Our independence benefited from the loyal support of celebrated American progressive leaders and iconic civil rights champions.
9. The legacy of this early partnership was evident in the contributions of American Jurist Thurgood Marshall who helped in the writing of our first Constitution and continues to define our political culture of debate, negotiation, and compromise, helping us navigate challenges and make necessary progress.



10. This collaboration also sowed the mustard seed of people-to-people collaboration in the form of the historic student airlift programme, initiated by President J.F. Kennedy, a program which enabled hundreds of young Kenyans to pursue higher education in U.S. colleges and universities, equipping our newly independent nation with a cadre of well-educated and skilled leaders. These strategic and thoughtful interventions, reflect our shared values, and empowered our young nation to stand confidently on its own and forge a path that we celebrate today. Tomorrow, we expand this historic collaboration, with five Kenyan Universities signing a student exchange program with their American counterparts to celebrate our shared progress and broaden the knowledge horizon and experience of both Kenyan and American students.
11. We have never looked back neither in our determined quest to implement ambitious development programmes, nor in our commitment to our partnership. We continue on a path of an open society, strongly committed to greater accountability and transparency, with robust engagement of civil society organisations who serve as catalysts for societal progress, amplifying the voices of the people and ensuring their active participation in governance.
12. As a fundamental component and watchdog of our civic space, the media in Kenya both national and international, ensures that an informed citizenry is the backbone of our democracy, driving development and supporting open government.
13. Recognising that accountability and integrity are essential for enhancing democratic governance, the fight against corruption is a fundamental imperative. With the support of our partners, we continue to strengthen our entire criminal justice system, including investigations, prosecutions, and judicial processes. We are also enhancing all capabilities; human, financial,



operational and technological, including hiring a record 46 judges in the last one and a half years.

14. It is crucial to view these developments as the natural consequences of our constitutional framework, which establishes a representative democracy, mandates the separation of powers, enforces checks and balances, and prevents any single branch from acquiring absolute power. Additionally, it enshrines fundamental rights and freedoms, empowers citizens to actively participate in processes that affect their interests, and safeguards the freedom of expression and assembly.
15. Our Constitution also safeguards equality, inclusion, and affirmative action for women, the marginalised, and minorities. It requires the State to support citizens in realising their full potential and transforms expectations around social services and attendant opportunities into fundamental human rights while demanding a responsive and accountable government as both a state obligation and a citizen's right.
16. Since the people of Kenya are the ultimate holders of all sovereign power, leaders, have an irrevocable covenant to return to the ballot every five years, to renew their social contract with the citizens. We celebrate the right of every Kenyan to choose their political representatives and participate in public decisions, as a fundamental principle of democratic governance.
17. Over time, our election management commission has gained significant capacity and legitimacy as an impartial arbiter steadily building voter confidence. Transparent electoral processes, including the use of electronic systems for voter registration, election validation, and results transmission, ensure the integrity of our elections making every vote count and every voice to be heard.



18. To further ensure electoral integrity, a comprehensive and predictable constitutional framework exists for election dispute resolution. Notably, the Supreme Court has resolved presidential election disputes four times, including the annulment of the 2017 election, in which I was a participant.
19. It is quite fitting that I delved into a detailed examination of the evolution of our country's electoral institutions and democratic credentials, given that 2024 is an unprecedented year for democracy. This year, nearly two billion voters in 90 countries, including the United States and 18 African nations, will go to the polls. Importantly, this robust democratic engagement counters a growing wave of narrow nationalism, intolerance, targeting of minorities, violent political contests and other anti-democratic tendencies.
20. In several countries, we have seen unconstitutional changes of government that have threatened democratic gains. Consequently, this is a crucial time for reflecting on the need to strengthen democracy worldwide. Many countries are in economic and debt distress occasioned by climate change and compounded by an unjust international financial architecture and an imperfect multilateralism associated with the free market economy. We now run the escalating risk of democracy and free market being associated with poverty and suffering, lending credence to the widespread lamentation that democracy is or has been on the retreat in many parts of the world, including Africa.
21. Later this week, I will have the privilege to engage with members of the American Congress to make a case for many countries in Africa, including Kenya seeking a just international financial architecture that will afford developing countries concessionary development financing to support our economies, build resilience against the effects of climate change, drive our belief in a free market economy and energise our democratic enterprise.



Kenya hosted World Bank's IDA-21 replenishment summit 3 weeks ago, bringing together the African continent and the World Bank to urge our development partners led by the U.S to enhance their contribution to the concessional window of the World Bank so as to support developing countries. I believe the United States of America has a historic opportunity to lead the free world in dealing with this economic situation and give meaning to democracy and free market economy, worldwide, Kenya included.

22. Needless to say, it is a busy period for the Carter Center, and I am deeply grateful to Dr. Paige Alexander and her team for their effort and patience in organising this event.
23. As we strengthen our democratic values, we recognise their alignment with shared aspirations of humanity. Like the United States, we believe that the fulfilment of Kenya's destiny is inseparably intertwined with the overall well-being of humanity. In this context, Kenya has been and will continue to be a leader in the search for sustainable solutions to regional and global challenges.
24. The war in Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, and the fighting in Sudan, South Sudan, Eastern DRC, the Sahel, and terrorism in Somalia all demand greater collaboration and strategic global leadership. Kenya is leading the institutional reform of the African Union to enhance its role in economic development, peace, security, and stability across Africa, and to foster infrastructure development. The United States of America has a significant opportunity to collaborate with Kenya and the broader African continent in building the institutional capabilities necessary for economic prosperity, peace, and security for the 1.4 billion people in Africa.



25. Kenya has always stood as a pillar of shared values, offering refuge and hope to many fleeing persecution and humanitarian crises. Through strong partnerships with countries like the US, we are actively fighting global terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crimes such as piracy, human trafficking, and drug trafficking, significantly contributing to a safer and freer world. As the climate crisis poses an existential challenge to all life on Earth, Kenya has taken a leading role in defining this challenge and mobilizing a global response that matches the scale and urgency needed to restore ecological balance and secure our planet.
26. We are at the forefront of forging regional and global cooperation, which has expanded our role in pursuing sustainable peace both regionally and internationally. Since independence, Kenya has participated in 47 peace support missions worldwide. Following UN Security Council Resolution 2699 of 2023, we are leading the Multinational Security Support Mission, driven by our firm belief that the responsibility to support Haiti lies with all nations and peoples who value self-determination, freedom, peace and democracy.
27. The enduring legacy of President Jimmy Carter illustrates the profound impact an individual can have on history and the advancement of democracy and justice. Reflecting on President Carter's commitment to a freer, safer, healthier, and more just world, we are called to honor his contributions to humanitarianism and solidarity, and his steadfast advocacy for the well-being of individuals and the creation of inclusive, equitable, and just societies.





28. In today's complex global landscape, it is crucial to reaffirm and resolutely uphold timeless principles of democracy and freedom. We look forward to enhancing our partnership with the United States and the Carter Center to build a stronger Kenya. For this reason, I anticipate a continued and expanded partnership with the Carter Center to strengthen our democracy, enhance our capabilities in ensuring human security, and foster prosperity among all peoples.

**Thank you.**

