

**Former 'bigwigs' start to fall**  
**Africa Analysis**  
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NAIROBI. The spectacle of William Ruto, once-mighty minister under former president Daniel arap Moi, being arrested and forced to spend the night in police cells brought a rare smile to Kenyans' faces. His dramatic fall from grace makes him the first ex-minister to face charges for corruption, 14 months after being voted out of office.

Ruto is due in court on 26 May, charged with falsely obtaining KSh77m by selling off 28 hectares of government land to the government-owned Kenya Pipeline Corporation in 2001. Former lands commissioner, Sammy Mwaita, has also been charged while the former president's son, Gideon Moi, was summoned to give his side of the story to the Criminal Investigation Division. It is alleged that Gideon exerted pressure on the parastatal chief to buy the land.

Ruto, 37, is widely disliked for his hot-tempered arrogance. His meteoric rise began in the lead up to Kenya's first multiparty elections in 1992 when he abandoned a zoology degree to become a leading member of the Youth for Kanu campaign, best known for dishing out suitcases of cash to potential voters.

Kenyans have waited a long time to see such former untouchables fall. Despite its promise to crack down on graft, the ruling National Rainbow Coalition has yet to conclude a single high profile corruption case. President Mwai Kibaki's war on corruption is becoming as partisan as Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa's, only even less effective as Moi appears to have been granted immunity, it is rumoured, for helping to track down the billions looted during his rule.

Opposition leader, Uhuru Kenyatta, accurately accuses the government of applying 'selective justice' by failing to investigate its own ranks, stuffed with last minute defectors from the Moiera. Ethics and governance permanent secretary John Githongo's promises to 'fry more big fish' lack credibility amid mounting evidence that members of the new establishment are just as corrupt as those they have replaced.

Vice-president and home affairs minister, Moody Awori, his permanent secretary, Sylvester Mwaliko, and finance counterpart, Joseph Magari, and principal immigration officer, Henry ole Ndiema, are all due to be questioned in parliament over a KSh2.7bn passport scandal in which some KSh1.7bn is likely to have been pocketed. After receiving bids from three reputable international firms for passport lamination machines, the Treasury's director of government information technology services, Wilson Sitonik, rejected them all as unqualified. Instead, the contract was given to Anglo Leasing and Finance at three times the original price, without competitive bidding.

The Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC), supposedly the apex of the war on graft, is fast becoming a victim of realpolitik. The recent sending home of its 32 investigation officers is seen as a move to block them from pursuing 'hot files' involving a cabinet minister and a senior judicial officer. Efforts to choose a director for the anti-corruption body are also mired in controversy. Government-favourite Justice Aaron Ringera has been nominated by KACC's advisory board, despite not even applying for the job. While Ringera chaired investigations that drove 23 corrupt

judges and 80 magistrates into early retirement last year, he has since been labeled a government stooge. His ruling, preventing parliament from enacting a new draft constitution, has infuriated most of the House -- whose approval is needed to confirm his appointment. Kenyans can only watch in frustration as politics, not justice, settles comfortably into the driving seat.