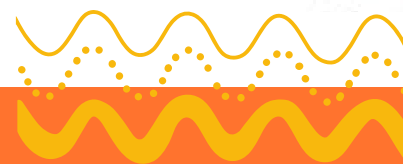


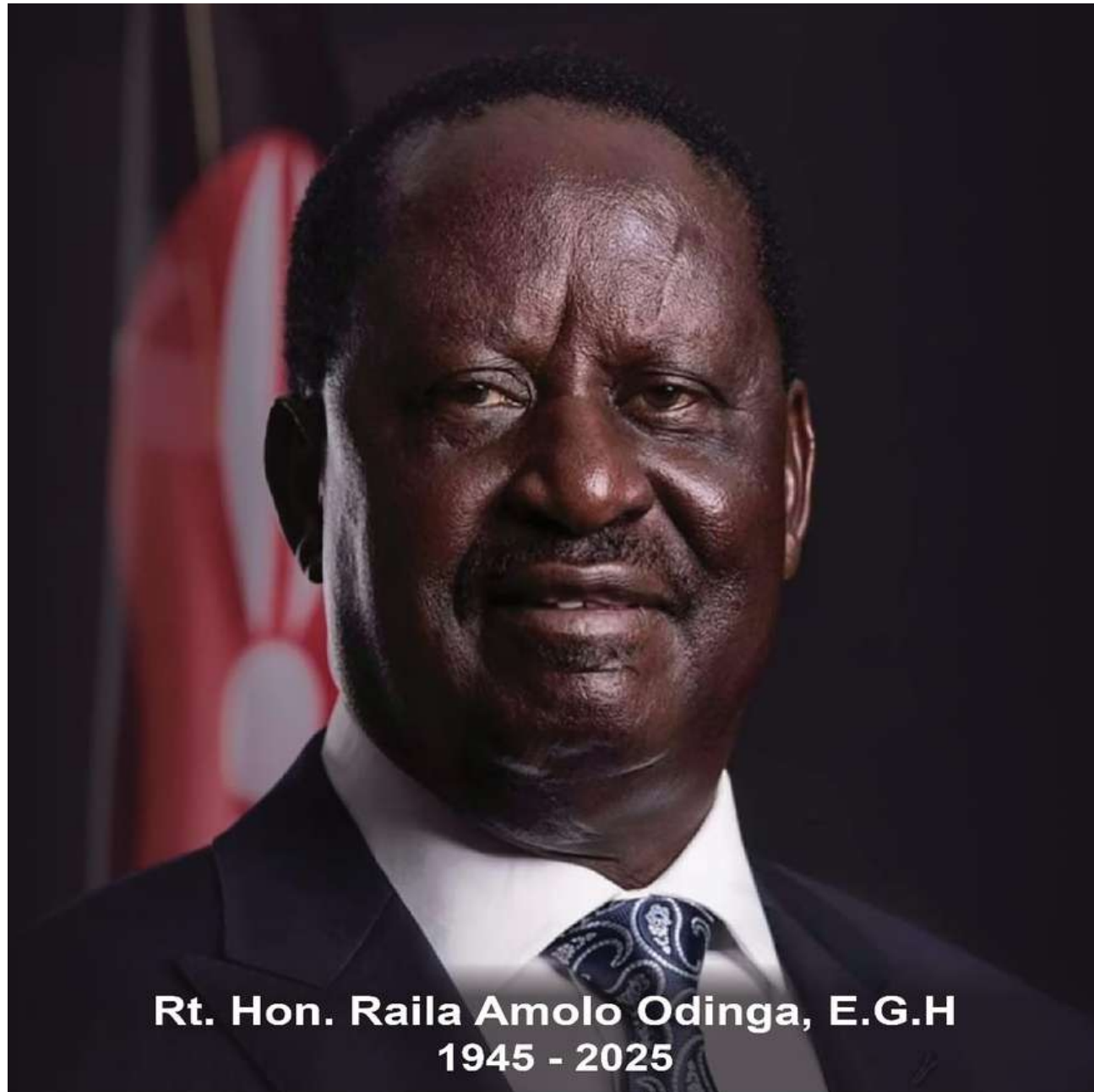
THE FLAME THAT LIT A CONTINENT

RAILA AMOLO ODINGA

1945-2025



A Life Forged in Fire and Faith



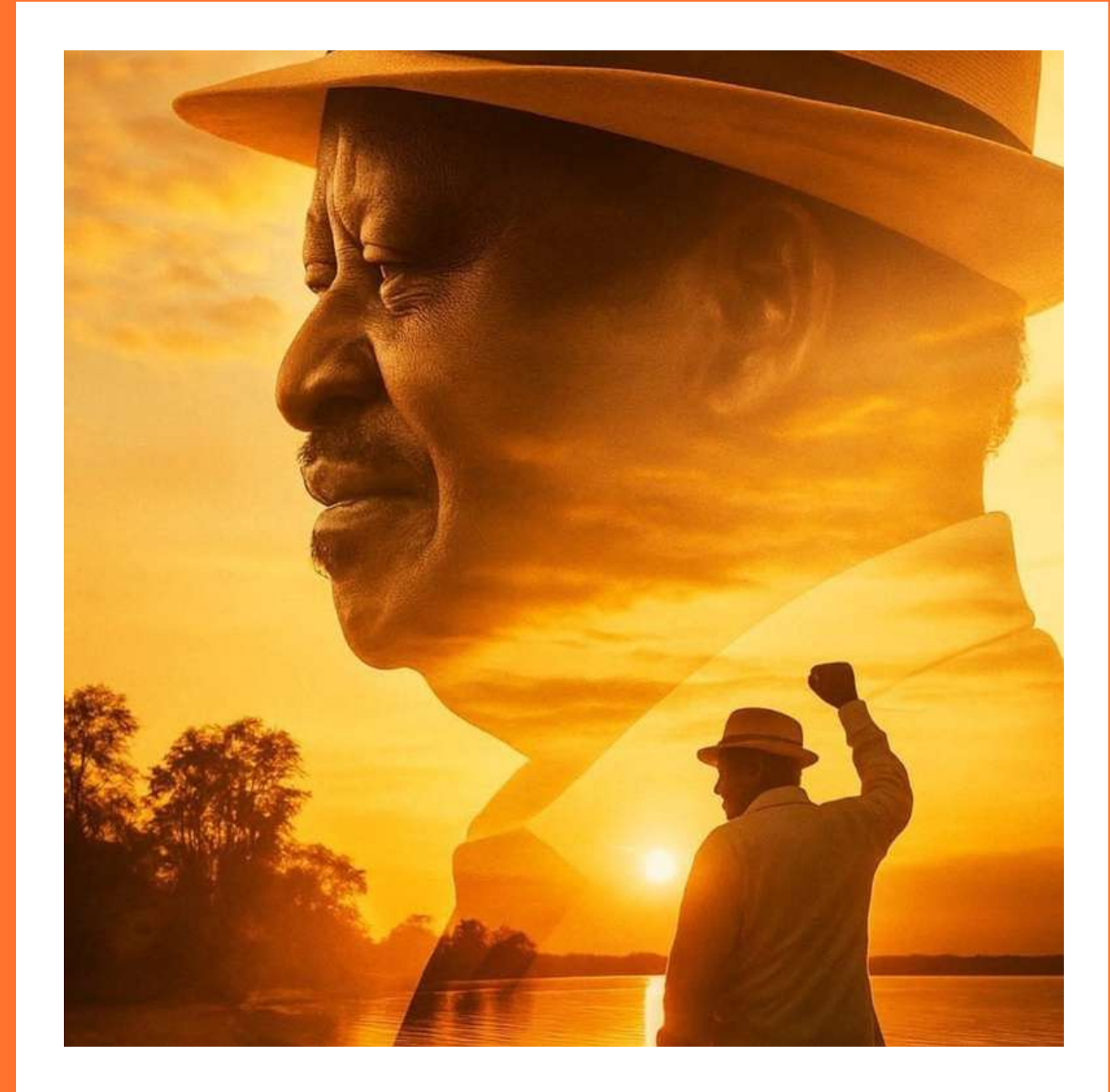
Born in 1945, Raila's life was a map of our continent's toughest battles and brightest hopes. He was shaped in the darkest of places, from the brutal cells of Nyayo House, yet he emerged not with bitterness, but with a fiercer vision for light. He stood on podiums across Africa, not for prestige, but for principle.

He was a man who knew the weight of a prison cell and the roar of a million-strong crowd. He was not a man without controversy—a figure who stirred passionate debate because he believed that quiet compliance was a greater sin than loud dissent. Yet, beyond the podiums and the protest chants, we also remember the man: his booming laugh that could fill a room, the glint in his eye, a personal warmth that disarmed even rivals. This was the whole, complex man we grieve.

He never quite captured the presidency, a fact that pained his supporters deeply. Yet, his true victory was never a title; it was the conviction he lit in millions of us—that a better Kenya, a better Africa, is not just a dream, but a demand.



The news of Raila Odinga's passing felt like a sudden, deep silence after a lifetime of thunder. There's a hollow space now, a profound sense of a chapter closing before we were ready to turn the page. For so many of us, Raila wasn't just a political figure; he was a stubborn, unwavering presence—a constant in our daily struggles for justice and fairness. To call him "Baba" was not mere politics; it was an acknowledgment of a shared struggle, a protective, if sometimes turbulent, force in our collective story. His absence sits heavily in the room, a silence where there was once a roar.



Rt. Hon Raila Amolo Odinga

Raila Stood For:

01

Democracy and Devolution: He fought tooth and nail for the Kenya 2010 constitution, believing power should belong to the people, in their own communities.

02

Justice and Inclusion: His voice roared for the voiceless, for electoral transparency, and for the simple dignity of every Kenyan, especially the marginalized.

03

Pan-African Solidarity: He saw borders as colonial relics and believed in our shared destiny as Africans.

04

Youth Empowerment: Even as a veteran, he never saw youth as leaders of "tomorrow," but as essential partners for today.



Our Compass in the Grief: Carrying the Torch

At the Youth For Tax Justice Network, we feel this loss acutely. In our work, we see his reflection. And in this moment of sorrow, we find our resolve hardening. Grief, for us, cannot be a passive endpoint; it must be fuel. Raila's legacy is not a relic to be preserved in glass—it is a toolkit for the work that remains.



What Raila Lived For:

Democratic reform, no matter the cost

A fierce fight for the marginalized

Africa, united and self-determined

Trust in the next generation

What We Must Now Embody:

Unyielding, youth-led policy advocacy

The relentless pursuit of tax justice and debt cancellation

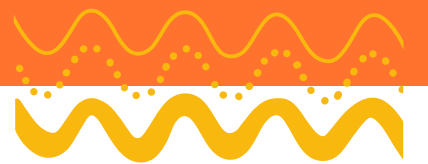
Building strategic partnerships across the continent

Centering youth in every campaign, every mobilization



The Enigma..

His roar may be quieted, but its echo is now our own voices. It's in the policy brief we write at 2 a.m., in the art we create for justice, in the unapologetic demand for a fairer world. He taught us that reform is not a single victory; it is the relentless rhythm of a movement.





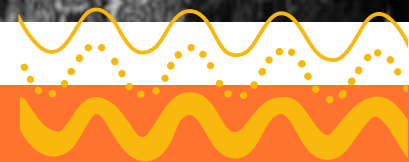
So, to the young changemakers of Africa, feeling this weight and this wonder:

- We are allowed to mourn. We are allowed to feel the ache of this loss. But then, we must wipe our tears and look forward with the same defiant hope he always carried.
- Our mourning is a season, but our mission is a lifetime. Raila's battles were not the end of the war; they laid the foundation for ours.
- He fought to embed justice, equity, and people's power into our continent's foundation; now we must be the guardians of that spirit, ensuring those values are not just words on a page but a lived reality for all.
- He was jailed for multi-party democracy; now we must fill that democratic space with our voices, our votes, and our own leadership.
- He championed a united Africa; now we must build its digital and economic arteries for climate and tax justice.



The tools he fought to place in our hands—the laws, the freedoms, the hope—are now ours to wield. Let us honor the whole of his journey—the triumphs and the scars—by building a future so just and free that it becomes his greatest testament.

Raila Odinga walked through fire so our path would be clearer. He bore the brunt of the struggle so our shoulders could be stronger.





The flame is not extinguished. It has been passed. Let us be the generation that makes it an inferno!



***By Jon Kafuko
Programs Manager,
Youth For Tax Justice Network***



Youth For Tax Justice Network