

The erosion of traditional values, customs, taboos, norms, and artistic expressions has become increasingly apparent

African Culture

The Historical Context of African Culture:



The Decline of African Cultural Identity: Western Influence and the Diminishing of Traditions

Introduction

Across African ethnic groups, the erosion of traditional values, customs, taboos, norms, and artistic expressions has become increasingly apparent. As the continent modernizes, cultural identity faces mounting challenges from Western education, media, and globalization. Today's younger generations often perceive indigenous traditions as outdated or even pagan, favoring Western ideologies and lifestyles. This shift has deeply impacted African society, from the way marriages are conducted to the loss of communal traditions that once defined the continent's rich



African Cultural Identity

Contd Page 10

US senator meets man mistakenly deported to El Salvador

US Supreme Court Globe



Page 12

AI and media

China hosts seminar for developing nations

Asia



Page 16

Omotola Jalade Ekeinde Africa's Most Decorated Film Star And A Continental Icon Film



Page 18

Food Security In Africa

Food security remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the African continent today

Africa



Page 20

It's Okay If They Leave Him When Broke P 4

Motivation Page 8 The Silent Ache: When Being A Good Father Isn't Enough

News Backpage Travel Smart in 2025: How Kenyan Travellers Can Navigate Rising Airfares



The Diaspora Times Global

A Passionate Storyteller Through Photography Debora Chepngeno Mentors His Students

1. Briefly tell us who you are and more about you.

My name is Debora Chepng'eno, I was born and raised in Narok, where I completed my primary education from Class 1 to 8. After that, I moved to Kericho for my Form 1, then transferred to Nairobi for my Form

2 to 4. My passion for storytelling and photography led me to pursue a diploma in journalism, which I studied for two years. I did my college training at NIBS, and after graduating, I was retained to teach in the same institution. Currently, I work in the Technical Department of

Journalism at NIBS, where I mentor and train upcoming journalists. My journey from student to educator in the same school is something I take great pride in.

2. What motivated you to become who you are now?

Photography was my gateway into journalism. Capturing moments and telling stories through images ignited my desire to delve deeper

Contd Page 14



OUR PRECIOUS PRIDE!



Karibu, Tutaruze Pamoja!

Ruto Must Go? The Real Battle Is Bigger Than One Man

By: Dr. Hesbon Owila
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- This is no ordinary alliance. It is a coalition forged in fire, ambition, and survival—an alliance steeped in Kenya's most defining political moments. From their rivalry during the bloody 2007 elections to the "handshake" era and now a shared stake in a broad-based government, Ruto and Raila have become the twin pillars of a power structure that has little regard for ideology and every regard for power.
- The same Raila Odinga who once branded Ruto the "High Priest of Corruption" now shares political ground with him, as if Kenya's painful history were a stage play to be re-scripted at will. Together, they exemplify what Chinua Achebe warned about in *A Man of the People*—a ruling elite loyal not to citizens, but to the maintenance of power itself.

President William Ruto's recent remarks—first declaring himself invincible, then musing that he would retire to farming if Kenyans rejected him—betray a man caught between confidence and crisis. These conflicting declarations haven't gone unnoticed. They follow a wave of unprecedented public backlash, where chants of "Ruto Must Go" now follow him wherever he goes—loud, raw, and spontaneous.

But this isn't mere protest. It is an uprising born of betrayal. A disillusioned generation has risen, fed up with a regime that promised transformation but delivered disappointment. This is not an opposition-led movement. There are no visible organizers, no single political space to pin it on. The fury erupts in nightclubs, football stadia, and public gatherings—anywhere a microphone or moment arises. Any politician seen to align with the regime becomes a target.

Ironically, this anger has given new life to some of the most unlikely figures. Even the former Deputy President—once a key figure in the same system—has found renewed credibility simply for criticizing the regime. The irony is not lost on Kenyans, who remember the silence of these critics when they once enjoyed the spoils of power.

And yet, amid the noise and fury, a deeper, more ominous question persists: can anyone defeat the Ruto-Raila axis?

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President William Ruto. File photo

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Achebe's fictional Chief Nanga was adored by the people, but beneath the charm lay corruption, entitlement, and ruthless self-preservation. Kenya today stands eerily close to this tragic fiction: a fragmented opposition, a manipulated public, and a recycled elite rotating power among themselves while masquerading as adversar-

ies. This is why defeating the entrenched Ruto-Raila alliance will take more than chants and outrage. It demands clarity, vision, and leadership. The anger must be organized, the energy mobilized, and the movement redefined—not merely to unseat a president, but to redirect the course of the nation.

The opposition must rise—not around personalities, but around principles. They must speak to the lived frustrations of ordinary Kenyans. That means confronting corruption, inequality, youth unemployment, and the disillusionment of a generation that sees no future in politics as usual.

But herein lies the Herculean task: Kenya's opposition often mirrors the very regime it seeks to replace. It is riddled with ego, tribal calculations, and legacy

leaders out of step with the mood of the nation. What Kenyans crave is not another populist saviour with flowery promises—they want a leader with vision, discipline, and moral clarity. One who sees beyond the next election to the next generation.

The so-called "People's Loyal Opposition," rising from the ashes of Azimio, must do the unthinkable: unite under a single, credible candidate and offer a coherent alternative. Not just to win, but to begin a new era—an era of accountability, inclusivity, and transformation. If "Ruto Must Go" is to be more than a slogan, it must be backed by a strategy. The opposition must build a first-round landslide so overwhelming that no rigging machine—however sophisticated—can stand against it. Even rigging has limits. It cannot overcome

a tsunami of people power united by purpose and clarity. That can only happen if egos are shelved and alliances are formed around values, not individuals.

Kenyans must demand a fresh start—not just a regime change. For if the opposition defaults to the old script of personality cults and tribal arithmetic, it will have handed Ruto and Raila a second term on a silver platter.

And yet, even as the people chant "Ruto Must Go," they must remain alive to the sanctity of democratic process. We have the tools to transfer leadership peacefully, and we must use them. The hour is late. The people are restless. And history is watching.

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OPINION

If They Can Leave Her When Pregnant, It's Okay If They Leave Him When Broke

By: Athuman Said
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Worth Noting:

Jane's story is not unique. A report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) in 2023 revealed that nearly 35% of pregnant women in urban areas experience some form of abandonment—either emotional, financial, or physical—by their partners. Pregnancy changes a woman's life permanently. Besides the physical transformation, the hormonal changes and emotional toll are immense. To be left alone during such a critical time not only affects the woman but also the child.

On the flip side, men too go through periods of vulnerability—chief among them being financial instability. The pressure to provide and be the “man of the house” is heavily ingrained in many cultures.

For decades, women have silently carried the weight of emotional betrayal, especially during the most vulnerable phases of their lives pregnancy being one of them. Pregnancy, often romanticized in movies and advertisements, is in reality a demanding period both physically and emotionally. Yet, countless women have been left to face it alone. Some men, overwhelmed by the weight of responsibility or simply disinterested, choose to abandon their partners when they need them the most. Conversely, when men go through difficult financial times—be it job loss, business collapse, or general hardship—society expects unconditional support from their partners. A woman who walks away from a broke man is instantly labeled a “gold-digger” or “materialistic,” while little is said about the men who walk out on their pregnant partners.

“I was seven months pregnant when he said he wasn't ready for a child,” narrates Jane M., a 27-year-old single mother from Nairobi. “He blocked me on all platforms. No explanation. Just silence.”

Jane's story is not unique. A report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) in 2023 revealed that nearly 35% of pregnant women in urban areas experience some form of abandonment—either emotional, financial, or physical—by their partners. Pregnancy changes a woman's life permanently. Besides the physical transformation, the hormonal changes and

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On the flip side, men too go through periods of vulnerability—chief among them being financial instability. The pressure to provide and be the “man of the house” is heavily ingrained in many cultures. When they lose their jobs or businesses, men face not just the reality of poverty, but also a blow to their ego and identity. “I lost my job during COVID and things went downhill,” says Thomas K., a 32-year-old engineer. “My girlfriend left. She said I was no longer the man she fell in love with. I felt worthless.” Stories like Thomas's highlight that men too face emotional abandonment, especially when they can no longer offer material support. Society often forgets that men, like women, need emotional support and validation. Financial hardship should not translate to diminished human worth.

The core of this issue lies in reciprocity. If a man can walk away from a woman during pregnancy—arguably the hardest time in her life—then is it not fair for a woman to walk away from a man when he's broke? This isn't about revenge or tit-for-tat. It is about fairness, empathy, and rethinking our expectations of love and loyalty. Both scenarios reflect abandonment in times of need. Yet, society often condemns only one side—typically the woman. She is told to “build with him,” to “stay loyal,” and to “hold



him down.” But who holds the woman down when she is at her lowest? Relationships should be built on mutual respect, commitment, and emotional support. Whether one partner is pregnant or the other is financially down, both deserve understanding and loyalty. Dr. Caroline Murugi, a psychologist based in Nairobi, believes that “modern relationships are struggling because people enter them with unrealistic expectations and gendered scripts.” According to her, “Support should be mutual. It should not be demanded only of women or only of men. The moment we start expecting equal effort from both sides, we'll have healthier relationships.”

This conversation also opens up a wider dialogue about gender roles in modern society. For too long, women have been expected to endure suffering in silence. They are expected to stay with abusive, absent, or irresponsible partners because “a woman must endure.” Meanwhile, men have been allowed to retreat at the first sign of difficulty in a relationship—especially when it involves emotional or long-term responsibility. But today's generation is challenging those narratives. More women are walking away from relationships that do not serve them. More men are speaking up about emotional struggles and seeking help. The tide is turning.

“If they can leave her when

pregnant, it's okay if they leave him when broke” is more than a catchy statement. It is a reflection of societal hypocrisy and a call to action. It invites us to examine the way we define loyalty, love, and commitment. It asks: why is one partner expected to stay through storms while the other gets to walk away? In the end, every human being deserves to be supported through life's storms—be it pregnancy or poverty. True love is tested not when the skies are clear but when the clouds gather. Let's hold each other down—not because of societal pressure, but because we believe in mutual care and compassion.

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Turkish intelligence chief meets Hamas delegation to mull aid to Gaza

By: Xinhua
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ANKARA, (Xinhua) – Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin met with a Hamas delegation on Saturday to discuss ways to deliver humanitarian aid to war-ravaged Gaza, semi-official Anadolu Agency reported. The meeting was between Kalin, head of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization, and the Hamas delegation led by Muhammad Darwish, head of Hamas' Shura Council. Anadolu quoted anonymous security sources as saying that the two sides discussed measures to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza by coordinating international efforts. The report said they also reviewed "the current state of initiatives aimed at halting Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza and achieving a permanent, comprehensive ceasefire," adding that the meeting addressed "the need for a united stance against Israel's plans to forcibly displace the people of Gaza." Israel resumed intense strikes on the Gaza Strip on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire with Hamas and blocking the flow of aid to the enclave.



US

U.S. tariffs threaten Arab non-oil exports: UN agency

By: Xinhua
xxxxxxxxxxxx

BEIRUT, (Xinhua) -- A sharp rise in U.S. trade protectionism is placing Arab economies under mounting pressure, endangering 22 billion U.S. dollars' worth of non-oil exports, according to a policy brief released Saturday by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Jordan emerges as the most vulnerable, with nearly a quarter of its total exports bound for the United States. Bahrain is also flagged due to its heavy dependence on aluminum and chemical exports to the U.S. market. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates could see disruptions to roughly 10 billion dollars in U.S.-bound re-exports, a result of U.S. tariffs on goods originally produced in third countries, said the brief. The ESCWA brief also warns of growing financial strains across Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies, which are contending with a sharp drop in global oil prices. Further

financial challenges loom for non-GCC states. ESCWA projects that Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia will collectively face an additional 114 million dollars in sovereign interest payments in 2025, driven by rising global bond yields amid investor uncertainty. These higher borrowing costs risk tightening national budgets and delaying development initiatives, it said. Earlier this month, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order amid widespread opposition, imposing so-called "reciprocal tariffs" on its trading partners worldwide.



US President Donald Trump

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Motivation

The Silent Ache: When Being A Good Father Isn't Enough



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande

@themtkenyatimes

Introduction

Modern fatherhood carries far greater expectations than simply being present; fathers are now expected to be providers, emotional supporters, and active participants in every aspect of family life. Society pushes men to balance career success with deep family engagement, often demanding sacrifices that go unrecognized. While many fathers work tirelessly to meet these expectations, their efforts are often overshadowed by societal pressures that measure their worth through financial stability rather than emotional investment. The burden of these compounded roles can lead to burnout, strained relationships, and, in some cases, the painful loss of families who fail to see the immense weight men carry. The challenge of modern fatherhood is not merely fulfilling duties but navigating an environment where contributions are often undervalued, making men feel unseen despite their unwavering commitment.

The Understanding Of Family

There's a narrative deeply ingrained in our understanding of family: be a good man, a devoted father, a steadfast provider, and you will build a lasting home. You wake before the sun, pour your energy into work, ensure the rent is paid, remain loyal, get a farmhouse, acquire some properties, drive a reasonable car, take your children to a nice private school, and perhaps even whisper prayers for the well-being of your wife and children. You follow the blueprint society handed you. Yet, a harsh reality confronts many men today: you can do all of these, embody the ideal, and still watch your family dissolve before your eyes. The loss isn't necessarily born from failure in the conventional sense. It stems from a feeling that modern fatherhood itself is a precarious structure, a potential trap where fulfilling expectations paradoxically leads to ruin. You strive to do everything right – protect, provide, stay faithful – only to find yourself on the wrong side of a closed door with little sounds of other crying men next door. She leaves, the children follow her path, and the home you built brick by painstaking brick fades into a collection of poignant memories you always loved and those that you won't want to remember. The responsibilities, however, often



remain tethered to you. The bills continue to arrive, a stark reminder of a life you no longer fully inhabit. Simultaneously, the story of why it all fell apart can shift, morphing in the retelling. If you dare to challenge this new narrative, to raise your voice against the perceived injustice, labels are quickly applied: 'toxic,' 'unstable,' the very 'reason she left.' You paid the piper, fulfilling your end of the bargain, yet she now dictates the tune, and the melody is one of your inadequacy, and, in the end, she is with another man - happily with your kids. Where are you this time? Behind bars or a distance away because the law says so.

Cruel Irony

Therein lies a cruel irony. The rules you diligently followed – loyalty, protection, provision, love, availability – become redefined in the aftermath. Loyalty is twisted into weakness, being a provider becomes merely fulfilling an obligation you were to, not leading. The very qualities once encouraged are now cited, perhaps subtly, perhaps overtly, as reasons for the fracture. The outcome feels like a betrayal not just of personal trust, but of a societal contract: you end up divorced, battling feelings of depression, and treated as disposable toilet paper that can get a drop of water and drains down with water.

The Alienating System

The system, too, can feel alienating. The courts might deliver rulings 'in the best interest of the child,' yet that interest sometimes translates into severely limited contact, leaving a father grappling with the pain of separation from his children, because there is a restriction order not to come closer to the children or to the wife. Financial obligations often continue, sometimes clouded by devastating doubts about paternity, fueled by statistics suggesting infidelity is not uncommon. Men find themselves burdened, emotionally and financially, sometimes for children they are legally, or even biologically, told are not theirs, yet the wallet remains responsible, just because the children bears his surname. Society watches, sometimes cheering on the narrative of the departing woman, while the man is left navigating therapy sessions, his survival and resilience going largely unacknowledged, because he is supposed to do more as he is a man.

The Man Is Always Wrong

Blame often finds its way back to the man. Whispers suggest 'he must have missed the signs,' or 'he chose poorly,' or 'he wasn't discerning enough.' Yet, when prominent figures, even men of deep faith, experience the same painful separation, does it mean they failed spiritually? Or does it point to a more complex, perhaps unsettling possibility: that sometimes, people change, masks

are dropped, and decisions are made unilaterally, leaving devastation in their wake? The reasons cited might not be infidelity, but a sense of an 'expired timeline,' a yearning for a different lifestyle, or a feeling that the man, despite his efforts, was simply not 'enough' – not rich enough, fun enough, or aligned with fleeting trends of nowadays. As a man, you have just to understand that 'if the speedometer is finished, it is just finished.'

The Echoes Of Pain

The quiet house echoes with the hollowness of absence. The heart grows weary under the weight of grief and the sting of platitudes like 'real men fight for their families,' dismissing the battles already fought, the emotional blood already shed and tears of pain already cried. The devastating truth, as felt by these men, is stark: you can be a great father, pour your soul into your family, and still lose everything. In this equation, love, effort, and loyalty feel insufficient, their value diminished simply because they were offered by a man. While debates may rage and denials fly, for the men who have lived this silent ache, the experience is an undeniable, deeply buried truth.

The Wound That Society Rarely Acknowledges

The silent suffering of men, masked by duty and resilience, is a wound that society rarely acknowledges.

From their earliest years, they are taught to suppress pain, to push forward, to endure without complaint. They give everything - time, effort, sacrifices - to provide and protect, believing that love is shown through unwavering commitment. Yet, in the end, so many find themselves discarded, left behind by the very people they devoted their lives to. Society demands more, yet rarely stops to ask whether these expectations leave men drained, hollowed out by the relentless pursuit of being enough. Their love, their labor, their presence - it all becomes invisible when measured against standards that never truly appreciate the weight they carry.

This quiet agony should not be the fate of men who have given everything. The world must learn to see them, to recognize their worth beyond what they provide, beyond their strength or sacrifices. No man should bear the pain of losing his family simply because he was trying too hard to keep them together. Men need space to be vulnerable, to be human - not just providers or protectors. It is time to shift the narrative, to embrace fatherhood and partnership with fairness and understanding. Until then, countless men will continue to suffer in silence, their pain unseen, their sacrifices forgotten, and their love taken for granted.

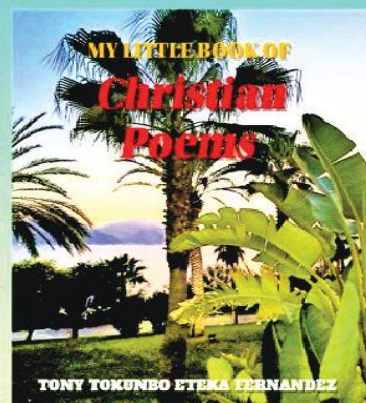
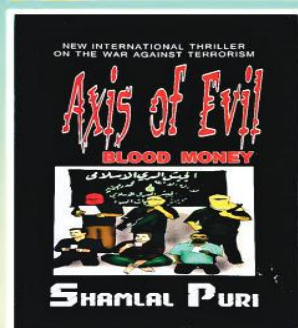
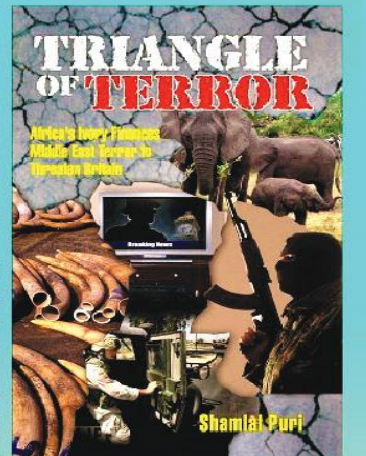
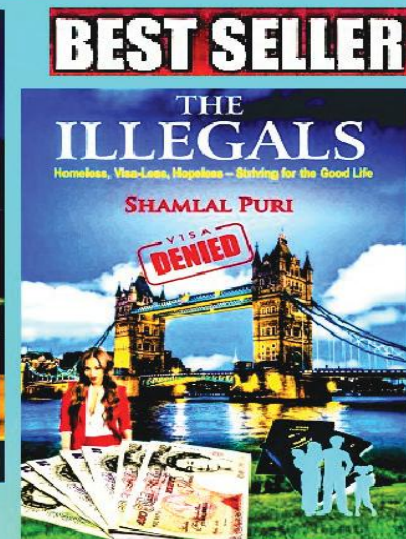
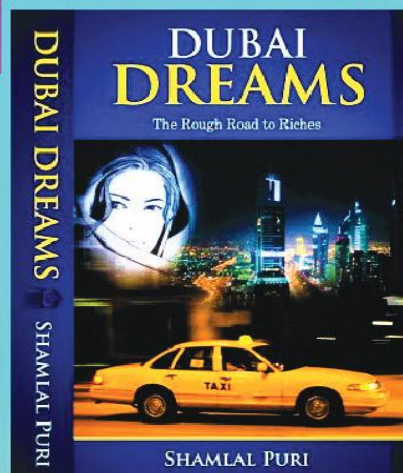
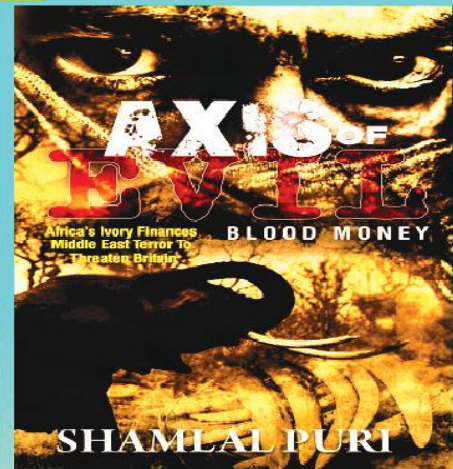
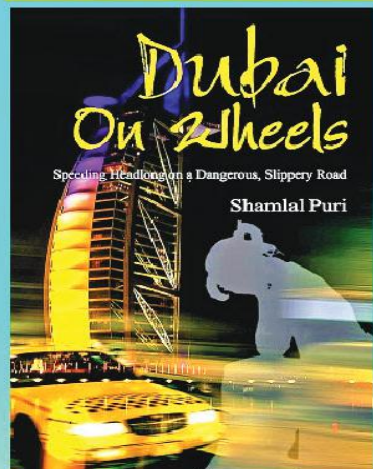
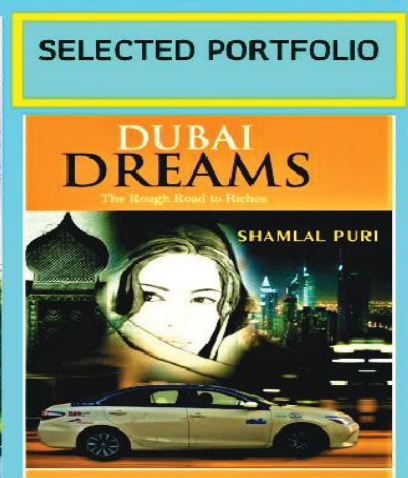
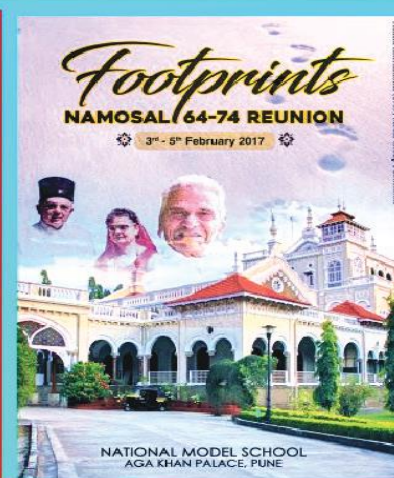
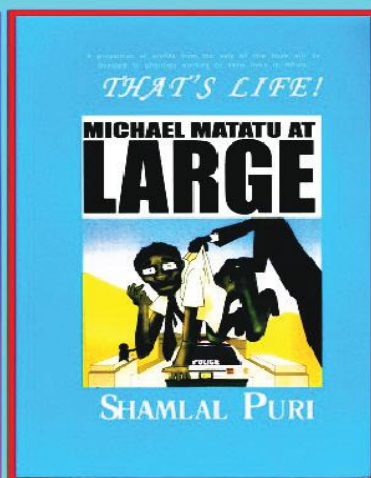
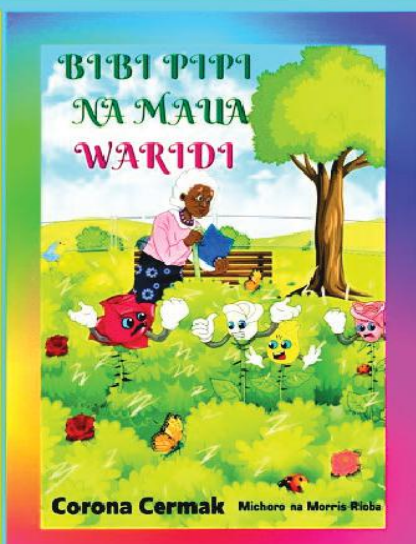
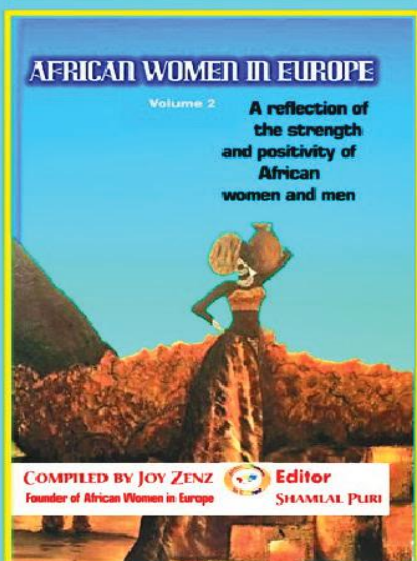
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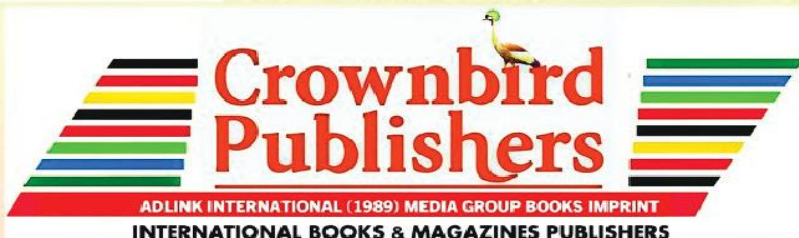
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Africa News

The Decline of African Cultural Identity: Western Influence and the Diminishing of Traditions



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande

@themkenyatimes

Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

Western education has been one of the primary drivers of cultural transformation, reshaping how younger generations perceive their heritage. African students are often taught from a curriculum that prioritizes Western historical perspectives while minimizing indigenous knowledge. Subjects related to traditional African medicine, folklore, or governance are either absent or reduced to footnotes in academic discourse. Consequently, young Africans grow up learning about Shakespeare, Newton, and Plato while remaining unaware of their own ancestors' contributions to philosophy, medicine, or governance. This bias reinforces the misconception that African culture is inferior or irrelevant in modern society. Media further accelerates this shift, promoting Western ideals as aspirational while portraying African customs as backward. Hollywood's depiction of Africa often centers on poverty or war, neglecting the continent's rich traditions and intellectual heritage.

heritage. The prevalence of white weddings, celebrated with grandeur while traditional African ceremonies are dismissed as naive and satanic in nature, further reflects how African culture is being overwritten. As this transformation accelerates, it is critical to ask: what are the long-term consequences of Africa's cultural shift, and how can tradition coexist with modernization without being discarded?

The Historical Context of African Culture

African societies have historically been built on strong communal values, with traditions serving as the foundation for social order, identity, and generational continuity. Cultural customs dictated rites of passage, marriage, governance, and even conflict resolution. Whether through oral storytelling, dance, or rituals, indigenous knowledge systems preserved history and ethics for centuries. Each ethnic group had distinct customs, yet they shared a universal reverence for community and ancestry. These traditions fostered deep respect for elders, collective decision-making, and spiritual practices that were central to daily life. However, colonialism disrupted this structure, imposing Western ideologies that displaced indigenous knowledge and institutions. The introduction of foreign religions, educational systems, and governance models gradually weakened Africa's self-sufficiency, forcing traditional customs into the margins.

The Role of Western Education and Media

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African Cultural Identity

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Media further accelerates this shift, promoting Western ideals as aspirational while portraying African customs as backward. Hollywood's depiction of Africa often centers on poverty or war, neglecting the continent's rich traditions and intellectual heritage. Western influence in fashion, entertainment, and lifestyle convinces many young Africans that success means adopting foreign customs rather than embracing their own. The impact is visible in everyday life; where English or French are preferred over indigenous languages, and traditional attire is replaced with Western fashion. Over time, this immersion in external ideals results in a loss of cultural pride, with African identity being reshaped to fit Western standards.

Decline in Traditional Practices and Customs

The diminishing of traditional African rites of passage is a glaring example of cultural erosion. Once considered crucial milestones, ceremonies marking adulthood, marriage, and leadership selection are vanishing,

replaced by Western conventions that do not align with African communal values. Young people increasingly favor foreign engagement and wedding traditions over indigenous matrimonial customs. Parents who once arranged marriages within clans based on lineage and compatibility now struggle as their children prioritize Western-style unions, dismissing traditional matchmaking as outdated. Similarly, initiation rites, which once prepared young men and women for adulthood, are now either abandoned or viewed as unnecessary, satanic, and lacking democracy of the right to choose a partner.

Furthermore, African taboos and spiritual beliefs, once essential to moral and ethical teachings, are now ridiculed or rejected outright. Beliefs in ancestral guidance and respect for sacred lands are dismissed as superstition, replaced by rigid Western doctrines that fail to acknowledge indigenous wisdom. While modernization has undoubtedly improved access to education and healthcare, it has also encouraged a rejection of African identity, leaving younger generations disconnected from practices that once sustained communal harmony.

The Influence of White Weddings Over Traditional Marriages

One of the most visible signs of cultural transformation is the rise of Western-style weddings, which have overshadowed traditional African matrimonial ceremonies. Across the continent, extravagant white weddings, complete with designer gowns and grand receptions, are now perceived as the only proper way to marry. Traditional weddings, once rich with symbolism and community participation, are increasingly seen as primitive or embarrassing. Many African couples feel pressured to conform to Western expectations, often spending excessive amounts of money to stage weddings modeled after Hollywood or European standards.

These Western weddings strip marriages of their cultural depth, replacing indigenous rituals with commercialized celebrations that lack historical significance. Traditional African marriages were once social contracts between families, cemented through meaningful ceremonies that involved elders, symbolic exchanges, and collective blessings. Today, however, the sanctity of marriage is overshadowed by consumerism, with couples prioritizing wedding

aesthetics over the values that sustain unions. This shift reflects the broader loss of African identity, where foreign influences dictate how Africans celebrate life's most meaningful events.

Religious Framing: Paganism vs. Christianity and Western Ideals

The decline of African traditional beliefs is further reinforced by Western religious framing, which dismisses indigenous spirituality as paganism. Many African societies historically practiced ancestor worship, herbal medicine, and spiritual divination, integrating them into everyday life. However, colonial-era missionaries condemned these practices, labeling them as satanic and replacing them with Christianity and Western interpretations of morality. Today, many young Africans refuse to engage with their ancestral traditions, believing them to be demonic or incompatible with modern faith and life.

Western religious influence has led to the abandonment of indigenous ceremonies, such as libation rituals, fertility dances, and healing rites, which were once revered for

Contd Page 11

Africa News

The Decline of African Cultural Identity: Western Influence and the Diminishing of Traditions



African Cultural Identity

Contd from Page 10

Worth Noting:

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their deep spiritual meaning. Many African churches discourage traditional customs, convincing followers that adopting Western-style religious practices equates to moral and social superiority. This rejection of local beliefs has contributed to the severing of generational ties, as younger Africans grow increasingly estranged from the traditions that once bound their communities together.

Loss of Traditional Rites of Passage

African traditional rites of passage, once central to the fabric of communal life, have diminished under the weight of modernization, urbanization, and Western influences. Birth ceremonies, which traditionally involved rituals welcoming newborns into the spiritual realm of ancestors, have become less common in many African societies and young generation has opted for baby-shower systems, originated from the Western cultures. Previously, elders performed purification rites to protect the child from evil spirits and ensure their integration into the family lineage. Today, hospital births and Western medical practices dominate, reducing the

role of traditional midwives and spiritual healers. The decline in these ceremonies weakens communal ties, as childbirth, once considered a sacred event, has become a private medical process with minimal connection to ancestral traditions.

Similarly, naming ceremonies, once a public affirmation of a child's place in society, have lost their prominence. In many African cultures, names were carefully chosen based on circumstances surrounding birth, lineage, or spiritual significance, often involving elaborate rituals where elders bestowed names linked to ancestry or historical events. These ceremonies reinforced communal bonds and ensured continuity of cultural identity. However, with the adoption of Western naming conventions, many families now opt for English or French names, sidelining traditional ones. Additionally, the sacred act of consulting elders or spiritual guides for the child's name has been replaced by individual parental decisions, further diminishing the collective wisdom once embedded in this practice. Adulthood initiation rites, which marked the passage from childhood to maturity, have also declined signifi-

cantly. In many African societies, boys and girls underwent structured rites, such as seclusion, mentorship, and physical endurance tests, to prepare them for their roles as adults. These rites instilled values of responsibility, leadership, and respect for traditions, ensuring that young individuals understood their obligations to their families and communities. With modern schooling and urban lifestyles, these ceremonies are increasingly seen as outdated or impractical. Many young people transition into adulthood without the communal guidance that initiation rites once provided, leading to a loss of discipline, identity, and cultural grounding.

Traditional weddings and death rites, once vital markers of life transitions, are also being overshadowed. Marriage was historically a union between families rather than individuals, involving extended discussions, dowries, and rituals that secured the couple's connection to their ancestors. Today, Western-style white weddings dominate, sidelining indigenous marital customs. Similarly, death and burial rites, which honored the deceased through elaborate rituals ensuring their

transition into the ancestral realm, have been reduced to brief, standardized ceremonies influenced by foreign religious practices. In the past, funerals involved mourning periods, purification rituals, and storytelling to commemorate the individual's life and preserve their spiritual presence within the community. As burial customs shift toward modern simplicity, Africa risks losing the deep-rooted traditions that once bonded generations together in a shared spiritual heritage. Preserving these rites requires conscious efforts to reintroduce cultural education and reaffirm the value of communal practices in shaping African identity.

Restoring Cultural Identity

The erosion of African culture is not merely a shift in social preferences, it is a gradual erasure of the continent's historical identity. While modernization has brought undeniable benefits, it has also fostered cultural amnesia, where younger generations dismiss traditions that once defined African societies. The glorification of Western education, media, weddings, and religious ideals has come at the cost of losing indig-

enous languages, customs, and communal values that sustained African civilizations for centuries. This transformation threatens the survival of cultural heritage, pushing Africa further into a global system where its identity is dictated rather than preserved.

Yet, all is not lost. Across the continent, cultural revival movements are emerging, advocating for the protection and promotion of African traditions. From reintroducing indigenous languages in schools to reclaiming traditional rites of passage, there is a growing awareness that Africa must balance modernization with heritage. Governments, educators, and communities must actively invest in cultural preservation, ensuring that future generations do not grow up seeing their identity as inferior. True progress lies in embracing Africa's rich history, customs, and values while adapting them to the modern world. Without such efforts, Africa risks losing more than just traditions - it risks losing itself.

Globe

US senator meets man mistakenly deported to El Salvador

A US senator has met a man who Trump administration officials have acknowledged was deported in error from Maryland to a mega-prison in El Salvador.

By: BBC
xxxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- In its judgement, the three-judge panel said: “The government is asserting a right to stash away residents of this country in foreign prisons without the semblance of due process that is the foundation of our constitutional order.”
- Mr Ábrego García’s lawyers are suing the US government for sending him to a mega-prison in El Salvador in March, in what the Trump administration has admitted was an error.
- The Supreme Court has ordered the US government to “facilitate” his return.
- Photos shared by Van Hollen and Mr Bukele are the first sight of the Maryland resident since his deportation.
- “I said my main goal of this trip was to meet with Kilmar. Tonight I had that chance,” the Democratic senator posted on social media.

A US senator has met a man who Trump administration officials have acknowledged was deported in error from Maryland to a mega-prison in El Salvador.

Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen posted photos of his meeting with Kilmar Ábrego García, whom the administration has refused to return to the US despite an order from a federal judge.

After the meeting, which appeared to take place in a hotel, El Salvador’s President Nayib Bukele said the detainee would remain in the country’s custody.

The White House has accused Mr Ábrego García of being a member of the transnational Salvadoran gang MS-13, a designated foreign terrorist organisation, which his lawyer denies.

The meeting came amid an escalating showdown between the US president and the courts over the case.

Later on Thursday, a federal court ruled against the Trump administration in case which could mean government officials are deported over the deportation. In its judgement, the three-judge panel said: “The government is asserting a right

to stash away residents of this country in foreign prisons without the semblance of due process that is the foundation of our constitutional order.”

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“I said my main goal of this trip was to meet with Kilmar. Tonight I had that chance,” the Democratic senator posted on social media.

“I have called his wife, Jennifer, to pass along his message of love. I look forward to providing a full update upon my return.” Video shows alleged gang members deported by US in El Salvador mega-jail

The White House called the visit “disgusting” and said it showed that Democrats side with “an illegal alien MS-13 terrorist” while Pres-

ident Trump stands with law-abiding Americans.

Mr Ábrego García’s lawyers deny he has any gang affiliation and maintain he has never been charged with, nor convicted of any crime.

Before the meeting, the senator said he was stopped by armed guards on his way to Cecot, the maximum-security prison where Mr Ábrego García has been detained. Van Hollen arrived in the country on Wednesday hoping to secure the release of Mr Ábrego García, who had been living in Maryland.

The senator did not offer an update on Mr Ábrego García’s status in his social media posts, but said more information would be released upon his return to the US.

Mr Ábrego García’s wife celebrated the news and said her “prayers have been answered”.

She said her family still has many questions and will continue fighting for his release.

During his trip, Van Hollen said he also met with the country’s vice-president and asked that they open the doors so Mr Ábrego García could leave the prison, a request he says was rejected.

On X, El Salvador’s president reposted photos of the senator meeting Mr Ábrego García and appeared to poke fun at social media speculation that the inmate had died in custody.

President Bukele commented that Mr Ábrego García had “miraculously risen from the ‘death camps’ & ‘torture’ in the ‘tropical paradise of El Salvador’.

“Now that he’s been confirmed healthy, he gets the honor of staying in El Salvador’s custody,” the president added.

Mr Ábrego García was living in Maryland before he was deported on 15 March with scores of Salvadorans and Venezuelans to the Center for the Confinement of Terrorism (Cecot) in El Salvador.

Maryland Judge Paula Xinis ruled that Mr Ábrego García’s removal from the country breached a 2019 court order that had granted him legal protection from deportation. Watch: ‘I miss you so much’, says wife of Salvadoran deported by mistake

Trump administration officials have conceded the deportation was an “administrative error” although the

White House insists there was no mistake.

The Republican president’s allies have argued the deportation is making good on his campaign promise to keep Americans safe.

They have cited a restraining order filed by Mr Ábrego García’s wife on 5 May 2021, in which she alleged four instances of domestic violence against her by him.

Ms Vasquez Sura told Newsweek on Wednesday that she and her husband had worked through their difficulties, including by counselling.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters at a briefing on Wednesday: “He [Mr Ábrego García] will never live in the United States of America.”

She was joined by the mother of a Maryland woman, Rachel Morin, who was murdered in August 2023 by an alleged fugitive from El Salvador, in a separate case.

NEWS PAPER



IN BUSINESS

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WORLD

A Passionate Storyteller Through Photography

Debora Chepngeno Mentors His Students



By: Alfred Lobawoi
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

“On a personal level, I invest in learning, attend media-related events, and follow professionals in the field to stay sharp and inspired. Follow your passion and trust the process. Don't be afraid to start small—every step matters. Be open to learning, even from criticism. Most importantly, believe in your unique voice and talents.”

into storytelling, leading me to pursue journalism and eventually share my knowledge through teaching.

3. What does your ideal day look like?

An ideal day involves engaging lectures, interactive discussions with students, and perhaps an afternoon dedicated to photo editing or exploring new storytelling techniques. It's a balance of teaching, learning, and creative exploration.

4. What is your favorite aspect of your work?

Witnessing students grasp complex concepts and apply them creatively is incredibly rewarding. Their growth and enthusiasm fuel my passion for teaching.

5. What is the hardest part of what you do?

Keeping up with the rapidly evolving media landscape poses a challenge. Ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and comprehensive requires continuous learning and adaptation.

6. Have you ever incurred challenges in your work? Please tell us about it.

Yes, I've faced several challenges, especially in the early stages of teaching. Transitioning from a student to a lecturer in the same institution came with high expectations. I had to quickly adapt to a new level of responsibility and earn the respect of my students and colleagues. Another challenge has been ensuring students remain engaged in an age of short attention spans and fast-changing media trends. But through creativity, hands-on learning, and patience, I've managed to overcome most of these hurdles.

7. How do you foster yourself to keep moving?

I keep myself going by constantly reminding myself why I started—my passion for photography and storytelling. I also draw inspiration from my students' progress. Seeing them develop their skills and succeed motivates me to keep pushing. On a personal level, I invest in learning, attend media-related events, and follow professionals in

the field to stay sharp and inspired.

8. Do you advertise your work? If yes, tell us how it has helped you.

Yes, I do. I use social media platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn to share my work, especially photography and class projects. It has really helped build my professional network, opened opportunities for collaborations, and even attracted potential students who are curious about the journalism field. It also helps in building a personal brand and showing the world what we do in our department.

9. What advice would you like to give someone that wants to be you?

Follow your passion and trust the process. Don't be afraid to start small—every step matters. Be open to learning, even from criticism. Most importantly, believe in your unique voice and talents. The media world needs people who are bold, creative, and dedicated, so stay true to your goals and stay consistent.

10. Given a chance, what impact would you bring to the world, nation, and to yourself?

I would create platforms that empower young journalists, especially from rural areas like where I come from. I'd work on promoting ethical journalism and visual storytelling, using media as a tool for positive change. For the nation, I'd love to be part of shaping a responsible media culture. And personally, I want to grow into a respected media trainer and mentor, continually contributing to both my students' and my own development.

11. If someone wants to check your work and what you do, where can they find you? Your handles?

Tiktok, youtube, linkedin @deboratechnicaldirector media, facebook and instagram deborachepngenocheeruyot



Debora Chepngeno

WORLD

US will 'move on' from Ukraine peace talks if no progress soon

By: BBC
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- Following a meeting with European leaders in Paris about a potential ceasefire on Thursday, Rubio told reporters on Friday: "We need to determine very quickly now – and I'm talking about a matter of days – whether or not this is doable" in the short-term.
- "If it's not going to happen, then we're just going to move on," he said about truce talks.
- He said it was clear that a peace deal would be difficult to strike but there needed to be signs it could be done soon. Trump had said before he re-entered office that he would stop the fighting in the first 24 hours of his presidency.
- Rubio's comments come as Russian strikes on Ukraine continue. On Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a post on X that Russia had launched a volley of missile attacks that killed two people.

The US will abandon trying to broker a Russia-Ukraine peace deal within days unless there are clear signs a truce can be reached, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has warned. "We're not going to continue with this endeavour for weeks and months on end," Rubio said, adding that the US had "other priorities to focus on". Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and has placed a number of conditions on any potential ceasefire. Rubio's comments come just hours after Ukraine took the first step towards signing a minerals deal with Washington that intends to set up an investment fund for Ukraine's reconstruction. Following a meeting with European leaders in Paris about a potential ceasefire on Thursday, Rubio told reporters on Friday: "We need to determine very quickly now – and I'm talking about a matter of days – whether or not this is doable" in the short-term. "If it's not going to happen, then we're just going to move on," he said about

truce talks. He said it was clear that a peace deal would be difficult to strike but there needed to be signs it could be done soon. Trump had said before he re-entered office that he would stop the fighting in the first 24 hours of his presidency. Rubio's comments come as Russian strikes on Ukraine continue. On Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a post on X that Russia had launched a volley of missile attacks that killed two people. The US warning about peace talks follows separate news that Ukraine and the US signed a memorandum of intent on Thursday stating that the countries intend to establish an investment fund for the reconstruction of Ukraine as part of an economic partnership agreement. The aim is to finalise the deal by 26 April, the memo published by the Ukrainian government says. The document provides no details on natural resources, but previous leaks have suggested the deal has been ex-

tended beyond minerals to control of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, as well as its oil and gas. Ukrainian negotiators have tried to resist Trump's demands that a joint investment fund would pay back the US for previous military aid, but have seemingly accepted his claim that it would help the country recover after the war ends. The US has so far resisted providing Kyiv with security guarantees to support any future ceasefire. The memo said the "American people desire to invest alongside the Ukrainian people in a free, sovereign and secure Ukraine". Zelensky had been hoping to use the deal to secure a US security guarantee in the event of a ceasefire deal, telling European leaders last month that "a ceasefire without security guarantees is dangerous for Ukraine". The White House argues the mere presence of US businesses would put off Russia from further aggression, but that did not exactly work when they invaded in 2022. Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko announced the

signing of the memorandum on X, with pictures of Svyrydenko and US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent separately signing the document over an online call. "There is a lot to do, but the current pace and significant progress give reason to expect that the document will be very beneficial for both countries," Svyrydenko wrote. Bessent said the details were still being worked out but the deal is "substantially what we'd agreed on previously." The memo said technical discussions were held in Washington DC as recently as 11 and 12 April. Trump hinted at the deal during a press conference with Italian leader Giorgia Meloni, saying "we have a minerals deal which I guess is going to be signed on (next) Thursday... And I assume they're going to live up to the deal. So we'll see. But we have a deal on that." Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, an MP and the chair of Ukraine's parliamentary committee on EU Integration, told the BBC the Ukrainian Parliament will have "the last word" in

the deal. She added: "I hope that there will be enough reasoning to ensure that whatever is signed, and if it is going to be ratified that it is in the interest of our country and our people." A minerals deal had been temporarily blown off course after Trump's public shouting match with Zelensky at the White House in February. Since then, US and Ukrainian negotiators have met to discuss how to end the war, with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha gathering with Rubio and Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff in Paris on Thursday. Sybiha said they had "discussed the paths to a fair and lasting peace, including full ceasefire, multinational contingent, and security guarantees for Ukraine".

Diaspora

AI and media: China hosts seminar for developing nations

A high-level international seminar focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and media development in developing countries is currently underway in China's capital, Beijing.

By: Bruhan Makong
xxxxxxxxxxxx

A high-level international seminar focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and media development in developing countries is currently underway in China's capital, Beijing.

The training, organized by the Research and Training Institute (RTI) of the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA) of China, brings together 30 participants from multiple developing nations.

These include government officials, academic experts, media professionals, and content creators.

The program, which kicked off on April 15, is part of China's broader efforts to promote international cooperation, technological exchange, and capacity building in the global media landscape. It is sponsored by China's Ministry of Commerce.

Participants are drawn from a number of countries, including Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Lesotho, Egypt, Trinidad, Grenada, Cameroon, Nigeria, Bahrain, Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Ghana.

The seminar features a comprehensive curriculum designed to strengthen participants' understanding of AI and its integration into media.

The program explores key topics such as China's national development and modernization, the evolution of its media industry, innovative trends in media convergence, and the role of AI in modern communication.

Participants will benefit from in-depth training on media convergence and the practical application of AI technologies in media production, distribution, and audience engagement.

Through a series of lectures, case studies, and thematic discussions, the seminar aims to promote cross-border knowledge exchange and enhance professional skills.

Key training sessions include insights into China's development model and modernization with Chinese characteristics, technical overviews of China's broadcasting and online audiovisual sectors, and the integration of AI in media—covering areas such as short video production, online



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content strategies, and social media communication. Hands-on training and field visits to leading media institutions are also part of the agenda.

Participants will also attend the China International Broadcasting and Television Information Network Exhibition (CCBN), Asia-Pacific's largest event for broadcast and film technology.

The training emphasizes shared learning, offering opportunities for participants to present their own case studies and engage in peer dialogue.

The seminar features a

lineup of key speakers, including Yan Ni, Deputy Director-General at the Department of International Cooperation, NRTA; Xia Jixuan, former Deputy Director of China Radio International and Vice President of the China Public Relations Association; and Hong Li, Professor of International Communication at the Communication University of China.

Other notable speakers include Zeng Qingjun, Deputy General Manager at China Radio and Television Network Group; Niu Rui, Senior Engineer and Director

at the Radio, Film and Television Design and Research Institute; Zhang Yanqiu, Director of the Africa Communication Research Center at the Communication University of China; and Ji Deqiang, Vice Dean at the Institute for a Community with a Shared Future and a leading scholar in international communication.

Beyond technical training, participants will also enjoy cultural experiences, including visits to iconic heritage sites such as the Great Wall, the Temple of Heaven, and the Summer Palace.

As the largest education and

training institution under the NRTA, RTI has positioned itself as a key platform for international media education and capacity building.

With nearly two decades of experience in international training and media diplomacy, RTI has conducted over 250 programs since 2005, reaching more than 6,300 participants from 163 developing countries.

The institute specializes in high-level training in areas such as media convergence, digital storytelling, and emerging broadcasting technologies.



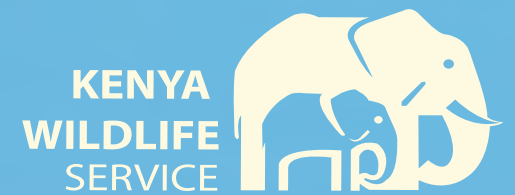
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Film

Omotola Jalade Ekeinde: Africa's Most Decorated Film Star And A Continental Icon

By: Athuman Said
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

In the world of African cinema, few names evoke as much admiration, influence, and longevity as Omotola Jalade Ekeinde. Known affectionately to fans as "Omosexy", she is not just an actress she is a phenomenon. With a career that has spanned over three decades, featuring more than 300 films, Omotola has risen to become Africa's most awarded film star and one of the most beloved public figures in Nigeria and across the African continent.

Omotola's journey to stardom began in 1995 when she made her acting debut in the critically acclaimed film *Venom of Justice*. However, it was her role in *Mortal Inheritance* later that same year that catapulted her into the limelight. In the film, she played a sickle cell patient who falls in love with a man without the disease a role that was both emotionally demanding and socially significant. Her performance was lauded by critics and audiences alike, marking the beginning of a stellar career. Following her breakout, Omotola quickly became a household name with a string of blockbuster films including *Scores to Settle*, *Blood Sisters*, *Games Women Play*, *My Story*, *All My Life*, and *Last Flight to Abuja*. These roles showcased her exceptional versatility effortlessly transitioning from vulnerable and emotional characters to powerful, assertive women battling the complexities of love, betrayal, and survival. Her acting style natural, immersive, and deeply emotive won her fans not only in Nigeria but across the African continent and in diaspora communities around the world.

Omotola's outstanding performances have earned her a long list of prestigious accolades. She has received Best Actress in a Leading Role at the Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA), the Best Actress Award at the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA), and multiple recognitions from the Nigeria Entertainment Awards, among others. Her international acclaim reached a new high in 2013 when she was listed among Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World a rare honor for an African film star. She was also recognized at the Monte Carlo Television Festival and invited to join the Academy



Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, Nigerian Actress

of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the body responsible for the Oscarssolidifying her global relevance. In an age where digital presence defines stardom, Omotola has not lagged behind. She maintains a strong and active presence on social media, with millions of followers across platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Her content ranging from behind-the-scenes film footage, family life glimpses, fashion showcases, to advocacy draws massive engagement from fans across Africa. What sets her apart is her ability to connect with people at a personal level. She speaks

directly to her audience, not from a pedestal, but from the heart. Her authenticity, humor, and warmth have cemented her status as one of Nigeria's most loved public figures, transcending generational divides. Omotola is also a philanthropist, a singer, UN WFP Ambassador, and a fierce advocate for human rights and youth empowerment. Through her Omotola Youth Empowerment Programme (OYEP), she has impacted thousands of young Nigerians, encouraging them to pursue their dreams with confidence and discipline. Her voice has also been instrumental in campaigns

against domestic violence, poverty, and gender inequality. In 2005, she briefly explored music, releasing her debut album *GBA* (Grace Beyond Ability), showing her dynamic range as an entertainer. Though she chose to prioritize acting, her brief musical stint reminded fans of her multifaceted talent. Omotola Jalade Ekeinde represents the very best of African cinema not just through awards, but through the inspiration she provides to millions of aspiring actors, especially young women. Her story is a testament to what can be achieved through resilience, hard work, and an unshake-

able belief in oneself. Even today, she continues to remain relevant, starring in high-profile projects, collaborating with international filmmakers, and setting trends in fashion and lifestyle. Whether gracing the red carpet at film festivals or participating in humanitarian efforts, Omotola does it with grace, strength, and the confidence of a queen. As African cinema grows in global stature, Omotola remains its most dazzling jewel a living legend who has not only earned her crown but continues to wear it with pride and purpose.

Worth Noting:

- Omotola's outstanding performances have earned her a long list of prestigious accolades. She has received Best Actress in a Leading Role at the Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA), the Best Actress Award at the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA), and multiple recognitions from the Nigeria Entertainment Awards, among others. Her international acclaim reached a new high in 2013 when she was listed among Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World a rare honor for an African film star. She was also recognized at the Monte Carlo Television Festival and invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the body responsible for the Oscarssolidifying her global relevance.
- In an age where digital presence defines stardom, Omotola has not lagged behind. She maintains a strong and active presence on social media, with millions of followers across platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

YOUR OPINION IS INVALUABLE

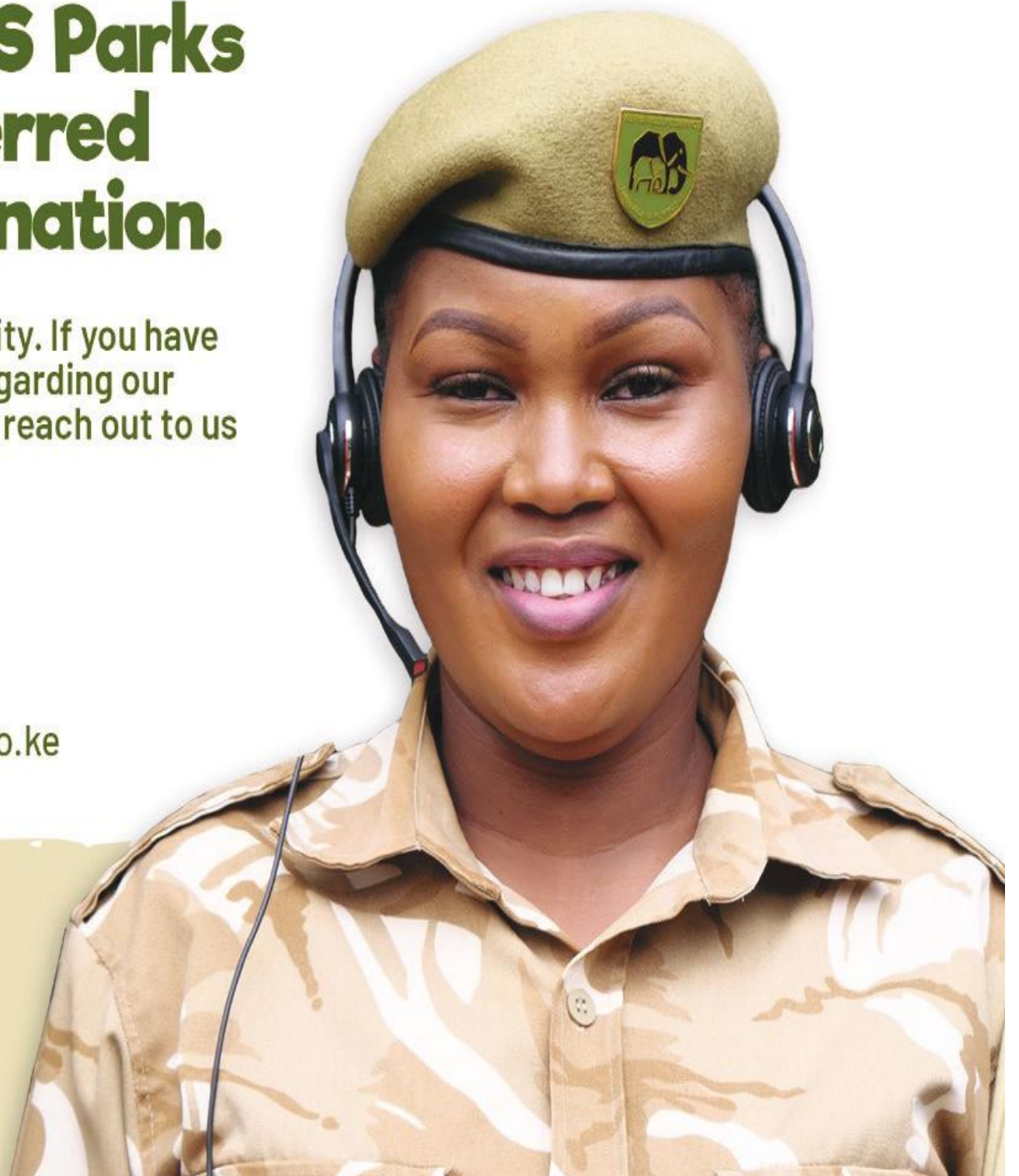
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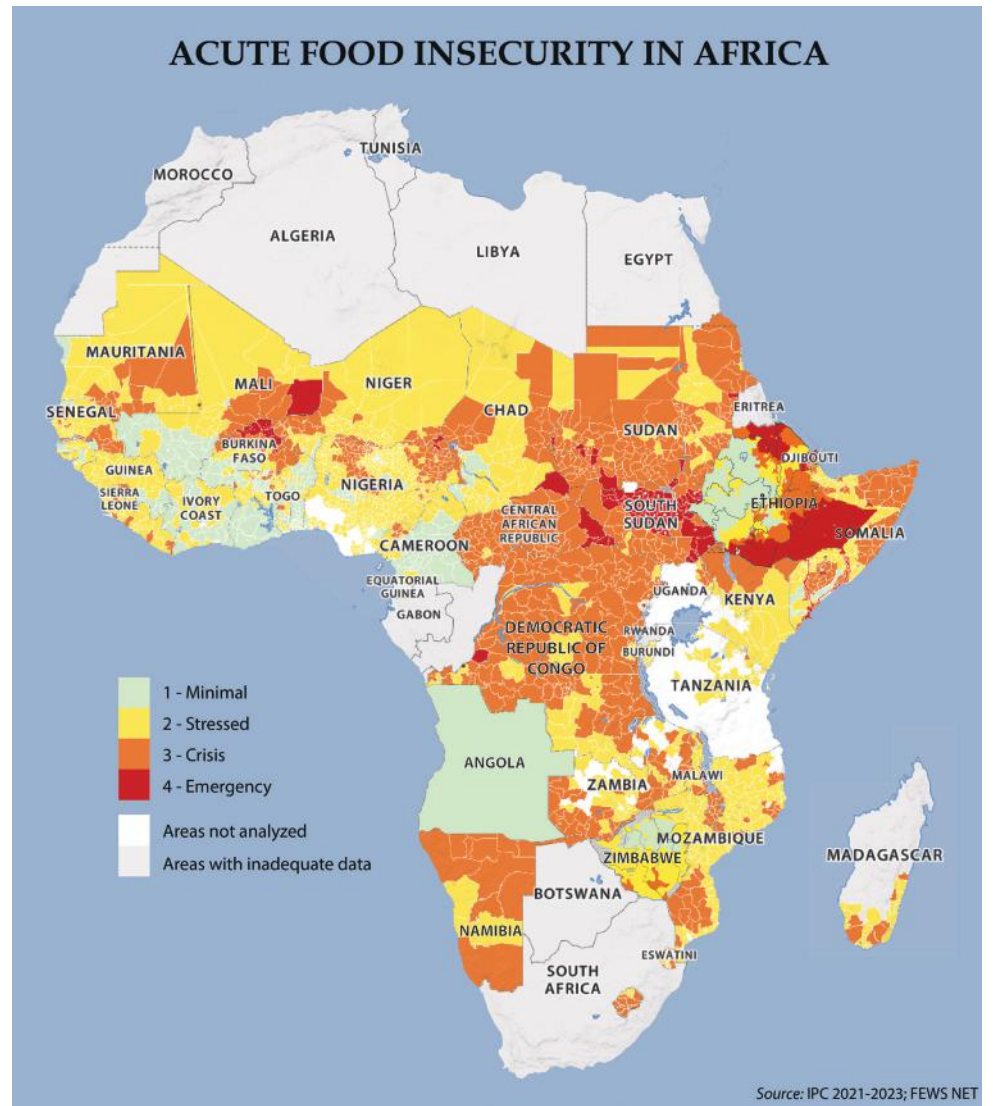
Food Security In Africa

Food security remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the African continent today. Despite being richly endowed with natural resources and possessing a youthful and energetic population, Africa continues to struggle with feeding its people adequately and sustainably.

By: Evans Asikoyo
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Food security remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the African continent today. Despite being richly endowed with natural resources and possessing a youthful and energetic population, Africa continues to struggle with feeding its people adequately and sustainably. Food security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Unfortunately, in many parts of Africa, this goal is far from being achieved. The paradox of food insecurity in Africa lies in the continent's vast agricultural potential. It is estimated that Africa holds over 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land, yet millions of its people suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition. According to recent reports, over 140 million Africans are facing acute food insecurity, with some countries such as Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo experiencing famine-like conditions. The reasons behind this persistent crisis are complex and multifaceted. One of the primary contributors to food insecurity in Africa is climate change. The continent is particularly vulnerable to its effects due to its reliance on rain-fed agriculture. Unpredictable weather patterns, prolonged droughts, floods, and rising temperatures have severely affected agricultural productivity. In arid and semi-arid regions, climate-related disasters have led to crop failure and livestock losses, leaving communities without food or income. Additionally, environmental degradation, including deforestation and soil erosion, has further weakened the land's ability to support agriculture. Another major factor is conflict and political instability. Armed conflicts disrupt farming activities, displace populations, and destroy infrastructure necessary for food production and distribution. Countries in regions such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa have witnessed food systems col-

lapse as a result of prolonged insecurity. Political instability also affects government investment in agriculture and weakens institutional frameworks needed to support farmers. Infrastructure deficits also play a significant role. Many rural areas in Africa lack adequate roads, storage facilities, and market access. As a result, farmers struggle to transport their produce to markets or preserve it after harvest, leading to high levels of post-harvest loss. In some countries, up to 30% of food produced is lost before it reaches consumers. This not only reduces food availability but also discourages production. The rapid population growth in Africa further compounds the issue. With the population expected to double by 2050, food demand is increasing at a faster rate than production. This widening gap poses a major threat to future food security. At the same time, the agricultural sector remains underdeveloped and underfunded. Smallholder farmers, who produce the majority of food on the continent, often lack access to modern farming inputs, irrigation, extension services, and financial support. Without these resources, their productivity remains low. Additionally, Africa's heavy dependence on food imports makes it vulnerable to global price shocks and supply disruptions. While imported food can help bridge the gap during times of shortage, over-reliance on external sources undermines the development of local food systems and creates long-term dependency. Despite these challenges, there are ongoing efforts to improve food security in Africa. Many countries are beginning to invest more in agricultural transformation. The promotion of climate-smart agriculture, use of improved seed varieties, and the expansion of irrigation are steps in the right direction. Digital technologies are also revolutionizing agriculture. Mobile platforms now provide farmers with weather forecasts, market information, and financial services. Innovations such as Kenya's M-Farm and Nigeria's Hello Tractor are improving efficiency and ac-



cess to essential services. Efforts to empower women and youth in agriculture are also showing promise. Women play a crucial role in food production, yet they often face barriers such as limited access to land and credit. Empowering them can significantly boost agricultural output. Similarly, encouraging youth to engage in agribusiness and innovation is vital for the future of the sector. Regional initiatives such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

aim to enhance cooperation, increase investment in agriculture, and boost intra-African trade. These initiatives have the potential to transform Africa's agricultural landscape and improve food security across borders. Nevertheless, more must be done. Sustainable solutions must focus on building climate resilience, improving infrastructure, investing in research, and strengthening food systems from production to consumption. Governments should prioritize policies that support smallholder farmers, promote land rights, and facilitate access to affordable finance

and markets. In conclusion, food security in Africa is a critical issue that affects not only health and nutrition but also economic development and social stability. The road to achieving food security is complex, but it is not impossible. With the right investments, political will, and inclusive strategies, Africa can overcome its food challenges and unlock its vast agricultural potential. The future of the continent depends not only on feeding its people today but on building resilient systems that will nourish generations to come.



Worth Noting:

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- The rapid population growth in Africa further compounds the issue. With the population expected to double by 2050, food demand is increasing at a faster rate than production. This widening gap poses a major threat to future food security. At the same time, the agricultural sector remains underdeveloped and underfunded. Smallholder farmers, who produce the majority of food on the continent, often lack access to modern farming inputs, irrigation, extension services, and financial support. Without these resources, their productivity remains low.

Diaspora

Niger Ends Ties with China in Dramatic Shift from Longstanding Alliance

In a stunning flex of nationalist muscle, Niger's military junta has expelled top Chinese oil executives and shuttered a landmark Chinese hotel—tearing through the facade of Beijing's long-touted "win-win cooperation" with Africa.

By: Ankit K.
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Worth Noting:

• Niger's Oil Minister Sahabi Oumarou made the stakes plain. The average monthly salary for a Chinese employee in Niger, he said, is \$8,678. For a Nigerien in the same role? Just \$1,200. "We are not satisfied with the way in which wealth is distributed between the state of Niger and the partner," Oumarou said—a diplomatic understatement for a nearly sevenfold pay gap.

• To drive the point home, the government also revoked the operating license of the Soluxe International Hotel in Niamey—a lavish, eight-hectare symbol of Sino-Nigerien cooperation inaugurated in 2013. The Tourism Ministry cited "discriminatory practices and abusive prohibition of access to other nationalities," unauthorized expansion, and data manipulation to dodge tourism levies. Once a crown jewel of China's soft power in West Africa, the hotel now stands as a symbol of broken promises.

In a stunning flex of nationalist muscle, Niger's military junta has expelled top Chinese oil executives and shuttered a landmark Chinese hotel—tearing through the facade of Beijing's long-touted "win-win cooperation" with Africa.

The abrupt move saw executives from three major Chinese oil firms—China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Société de Raffinage de Zinder (SORAZ), and the West African Oil Pipeline Company (WAPCO)—given just 48 hours to leave the country. According to the Alliance of Sahel States, these companies had shown a "flagrant disregard" for Niger's sovereignty over its natural resources.

This isn't just a diplomatic fallout. It's a clear and calculated rejection of what many Nigeriens see as decades of exploitative, one-sided arrangements masked as development partnerships.

The junta's accusations paint a classic picture of neocolonial resource extraction: refusal to adopt fair wage scales, failure to meet local supplier quotas, lack of investment in local talent, and a deliberate stonewalling of technology transfers.

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criminatory practices and abusive prohibition of access to other nationalities," unauthorized expansion, and data manipulation to dodge tourism levies. Once a crown jewel of China's soft power in West Africa, the hotel now stands as a symbol of broken promises.

These moves are no accident. Last August, the junta issued Ordinance No. 2024-34, aimed at ensuring "national wealth goes primarily to the benefit of Nigeriens." The Chinese companies' alleged defiance of this vision made their removal inevitable.

It also marks a broader shift in Niger's foreign policy. The junta has cut military ties with traditional Western partners like the U.S. and France, seized a French-operated uranium mine, and begun cozying up to Russia and Turkey.

Some analysts argue the fallout with China also has financial roots. Sources

suggest Beijing declined to extend further loans after Niger hit SORAZ with steep tax demands. CNPC, which owns 60% of SORAZ, had reportedly agreed to a \$400 million investment as collateral for future oil deliveries—but the junta allegedly failed to uphold its end of a 2024 memorandum of understanding. Production at SORAZ has halted, and the government is now rerouting fuel imports through Nigeria, sidelining Chinese infrastructure.

The evicted executives are said to have landed in Lomé, Togo. Their firms now face an uncertain future in a country where rebel attacks and border tensions already plague Chinese investments, particularly the Niger-Benin pipeline.

The junta's move echoes similar shifts in neighboring Mali, where the military has detained foreign mining bosses and seized gold in a bid to assert national control

over extractive industries. For Beijing, long eager to position itself as Africa's friendlier development partner, Niger's actions deliver a rude awakening. The message from Niamey is unambiguous: the era of foreign resource extraction without meaningful local benefit is over—regardless of whether the investor hails from the West or the East.

As Ibrahim Hamidou, head of communications for Prime Minister Ali Lamine Zeine, put it: "We simply ask the companies to pick a Nigerien sub-contractor when possible, and that a majority of the sub-contractors shouldn't be Chinese." In short: play by Niger's rules—or don't play at all.

The author is an Assistant Professor in International Relations, National Defence University
Ankit K.

Anti-Trump administration protesters turn out for rallies in the US

Demonstrators decry what they see as threats to the nation's democratic ideals.



People hold placards during the Protect Migrants, Protect the Planet protest in New York City [Caitlin Ochs/Reuters]

Worth Noting:

- In Manhattan, protesters rallied against continued deportations of immigrants from the steps of the New York Public Library.

- “No fear, no hate, no ICE in our state,” they chanted, referring to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

- Thomas Bassford drove from Maine to Massachusetts to witness the reenactment of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and “the shot heard ’round the world” on April 19, 1775, that heralded the start of the US war of independence from Britain.

- The 80-year-old retiree said he believed Americans today are under attack from their own government and need to stand up against it. “This is a very perilous time in America for liberty,” he told The Associated Press news agency, adding: “I wanted the boys [his grandsons] to learn about the origins of this country and that sometimes we have to fight for freedom.”

Opponents of President Donald Trump's administration have taken to the streets in droves across the United States to decry what they say are threats to the nation's democratic ideals, including deportations of immigrants and mass firings of government workers.

The protests on Saturday ranged from rallies in midtown Manhattan and in front of the White House in Washington, DC, to a demonstration at a Massachusetts commemoration marking the start of the American Revolutionary War 250 years ago.

The protests come just two weeks after similar nationwide protests against the Trump administration drew thousands of participants.

Organisers said they're protesting against what they view as Trump's violations of civil rights and the US Constitution, including efforts to deport hundreds of immigrants and scale back the federal government by firing thousands of government workers and in effect shutter entire agencies.

In Manhattan, protesters rallied against continued deportations of immigrants from the steps of the New York Public Library.

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sometimes we have to fight for freedom.”

Elsewhere, protests were planned outside Tesla car dealerships against billionaire Trump adviser Elon Musk and his role in downsizing the federal government while still others organised community-service events, such as food drives, teach-ins and volunteering at local shelters.

Some of the events drew on the spirit of the American Revolutionary War, calling for “no kings” and resistance to tyranny.

Boston resident George Bryant was among those who

turned out in Concord. He told The Associated Press he was concerned Trump was creating a “police state” in America as he held up a sign saying, “Trump fascist regime must go now!”

The Trump administration, among other things, has moved to shut down Social Security Administration field offices, cut funding for government health programmes and scale back protections for transgender people.

In Washington, DC, Bob Fasick said he came out to the rally outside the White House out of concern about

threats to constitutionally protected due process rights as well as Social Security and other federal safety-net programmes.

“I cannot sit still knowing that if I don't do anything and everybody doesn't do something to change this that the world that we collectively are leaving for the little children, for our neighbours is simply not one that I would want to live in,” said a 76-year-old retired federal employee from Springfield, Virginia.

Source: The Associated Press

US revokes nearly 1,500 student visas: Who are the targets?

Hundreds of students have had their visas cancelled and find themselves in limbo.

By: Alia Chughtai
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Hundreds of students and recent graduates have seen their visas revoked by immigration officials since United States President Donald Trump took office for a second time on January 20, 2025, with several also arrested.

Many of the targets of the visa revocations and arrests are students who participated in pro-Palestine protests which erupted on campuses across the country in 2024 amid Israel's brutal war on Gaza. Others are individuals with more indirect links to Palestine – or those who have shown support for Gaza on social media.

The Trump administration alleges that these students spread anti-Semitism and pro-Hamas sentiment on campus – a claim students, lawyers and activists have all rebutted. Jewish activists and groups have been at the forefront of many of the most prominent protests in the US against the Gaza war.

Others have had visas removed after minor legal infractions – a speeding ticket or other traffic violations, for instance.

Here's what we know about the scale of visa revocations, the number of universities they span and some of the students who have been targeted:

How many students have had their visas revoked?

In late March, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the administration had revoked an estimated 300 student visas.

But the real number is higher – much higher.

Estimates vary. At the higher end is the American Immigration Lawyers Association's count, according to which more than 4,700 students have been removed from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement-maintained database known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information Systems (SEVIS).

Yet even more conservative tabulations point to a number comfortably more than 1,000. The National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) estimates that as of April 17, there are reports of about 1,400 students who now face deportation. According to Inside Higher Ed, the US-based higher education publication, 1,489 students had lost their visas as of April 17.

How many universities have been affected?

According to Inside Higher Ed's count, more than 240 universities and colleges across the US have had student visas revoked.

Colleges affected include private universities such as Harvard and Stanford, large public colleges and institutions such as Ohio State Uni-

versity and the University of Maryland, as well as some small liberal arts colleges.

Why are the visas being revoked and what are the options?

The Trump administration claims it is trying to stop activists from taking over campuses.

"We are not going to be importing activists into the United States. They're here to study. They're here to go to class. They're not here to lead activist movements that are disruptive and undermine the – our universities," Rubio said on March 28.

But many students have reported that they have had their legal status in the US terminated without any notice.

Several among them, like Mahmoud Khalil, Mohsen Mahdawi and Momodou Taal, were active on social media in pro-Palestine protests on campuses.

However, according to Mohammad Ali Syed, who leads an immigration practice group in Washington, DC, others have had visas revoked for past traffic violations or, in some cases, with no clear explanation.

"This widespread action has led to legal challenges and raised concerns about due process and the impact on US higher education institutions," said Syed, who emphasised that international students ought to consult with immigration lawyers promptly to explore legal remedies and protect their rights.

"Students can file lawsuits in federal courts, asserting violations of due process and seeking to restore their legal status. For instance, students at Michigan universities have initiated legal actions against the Department of Homeland Security, alleging that their F-1 statuses were terminated without sufficient notice or explanation," he said.

In urgent situations, he added, students may request temporary restraining orders (TROs) to prevent deportation and reinstate their status while legal proceedings are ongoing. Federal judges in states like Montana have granted such orders to protect students from immediate removal, he said.

"Many universities are actively assisting affected students by providing legal resources, liaising with federal authorities, and offering academic accommodations," Syed said. "For example, George Mason University has engaged with federal officials to understand the rationale behind visa terminations and is exploring legal options to support its international students."

How are visa cancellations affecting campuses?

Hafsa Kanjwal, an associate professor at Lafayette College, a liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, says there is a large amount of fear and uncertainty on college campuses for both students and faculty. People are having to rethink travel plans in case they are not allowed back into

the country.

"Some students and faculty don't have a place to 'go back' to, given the political turmoil in their respective places of origin," she told Al Jazeera. "While some colleges and universities are taking a more proactive approach, they are in the minority. It seems most campuses have not really provided reassurances to international students and faculty to address their concerns, especially around what kinds of accommodations will be made for them to address these changing developments." Another faculty member, a naturalised citizen at a state college who wished to remain anonymous due to any issues that may arise from him speaking freely, said international students are afraid.

Many of them – even those who have not staked out political positions publicly – are deleting their social media profiles and are terrified that some small mistake, anything they posted or said, might get them abducted and deported, ruining their education, he said.

"I remember being a green card holder and engaging in politics. We understood that as long as we remained within the bounds of the law, we had the right to express our opinions and engage in politics," he recalled.

"I actively took part in [protests against] both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars and spoke openly against War on Terror policies like drone strikes," he said. "What the Trump administration wants to do is communicate to immigrants and international students that their rights here are in fact privileges and contingent on them staying in line, and more broadly they want to shut down pathways to immigration by targeting green card holders.

"At the same time, they see universities and colleges as bastions of liberal and left-wing politics and they want to leverage the politics around Palestine to discipline universities and force them to crack down on liberal and left content in classrooms," he added.

Which students and graduates have been affected?

Mahmoud Khalil, 30

- Date of arrest: March 8

- Nationality: Algerian Palestinian

- Institution: Columbia University graduate

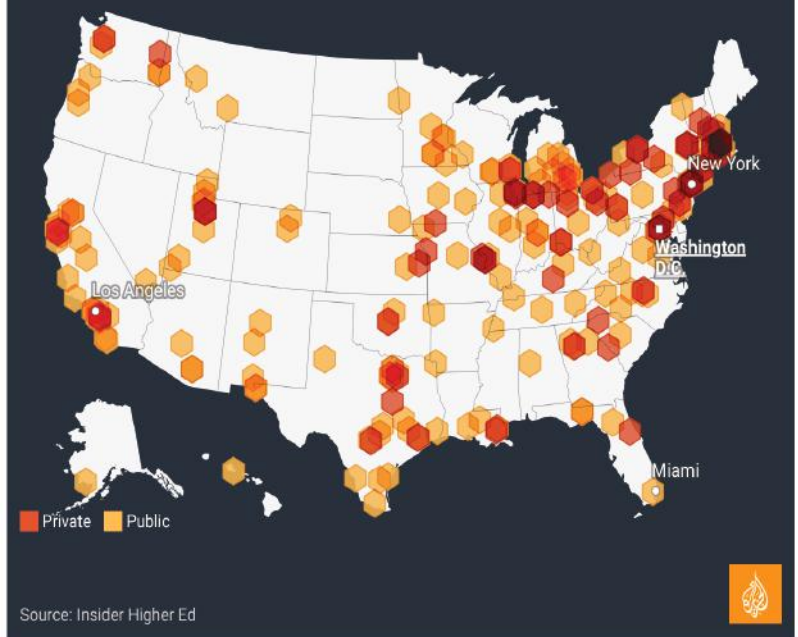
- Legal status in the US: Green card holder

- How was he arrested? Last month, ICE agents arrested Mahmoud Khalil, a recent Columbia University graduate who was the lead negotiator for Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD) during the campus protests last year. He was taken from his university-owned New York City apartment while his US citizen wife, Noor Abdalla, who is pregnant, recorded the arrest on her phone. This marked the first publicly known student deportation effort of its kind under the Trump

Trump's crackdown on international student visas

As of April 17, more than 240 US colleges and universities have identified at least 1,487 international students and recent graduates whose visas have been revoked by the Trump administration, according to a tally by Inside Higher Ed.

Click on the hexagons below for more information



administration.

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security, Tricia McLaughlin, alleged Khalil "led activities aligned to Hamas, a designated terrorist organisation", but no evidence for this was provided. Abdalla said the agents did not show a warrant while making the arrest. Khalil was transferred to an ICE processing facility in Jena, Louisiana.

At the time of arrest, Khalil was a permanent resident with a green card. When the ICE agents were told that Khalil had a green card, they said this would be revoked.

- Charges: He is not known to have been charged with any crime.

However, Rubio posted the link to a news article about Khalil's arrest, captioning it: "We will be revoking the visas and/or green cards of Hamas supporters in America so they can be deported." Khalil's case has drawn widespread scrutiny as rights advocates accuse President Donald Trump's administration of cracking down on free speech and pro-Palestine activism under the guise of fighting anti-Semitism.

The administration is trying to deport Khalil under a rarely used provision of an immigration law that gives the secretary of state the power to remove any non-citizen whose presence in the US is deemed to have "adverse foreign policy consequences".

Khalil is being held at LaSalle Detention Center in Jena, Louisiana.

Rumeysa Ozturk, 30

- Date of arrest: March 26

- Nationality: Turkish

- Institution: Tufts University

- Legal status in the US: Student visa

- How was she arrested? Security camera footage shows six individuals in plainclothes taking Ozturk into custody in late March near her apartment in Somerville, Massachusetts. Some of these officers were partially covering their faces. Oz-

turk had headed out alone to meet her friends for Iftar, the evening meal to break her Ramadan fast.

- Charges: She is not known to have been charged with any crime.

On March 26, 2024, Ozturk co-wrote an opinion piece for her university's student news website, the Tufts Daily, with four other students. In this piece, the authors criticised the institute's president, Sunil Kumar, who sent an email dismissing resolutions passed by the Tufts Community Union Senate, which called for the university to divest from companies linked to Israel and "acknowledge the Palestinian genocide".

Ozturk's lawyer, Mahsa Khanbabai, filed a petition in a Boston federal court, arguing that Ozturk had been unlawfully detained. As a result, US District Judge Indira Talwani ordered US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) not to move Ozturk out of Massachusetts without 48 hours' notice.

Despite this, Ozturk was moved to Louisiana within a day, according to her lawyer.

US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin wrote in an X post on March 26: "DHS + ICE investigations found Ozturk engaged in activities in support of Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization that relishes the killing of Americans." McLaughlin did not specify what these activities were.

On Saturday, April 19, a federal judge in the United States ordered the government to transfer her to Vermont for the court to assess legal challenges to her detention.

Travel Smart in 2025: How Kenyan Travellers Can Navigate Rising Airfares

In 2025, Kenyan travellers — like their global counterparts — are navigating an increasingly complex and costly travel landscape

By: Joseph Kithitu
xxxxxxxxxx



Hemingways Watamu is one of Kenya's premier luxury beach destinations on the Indian Ocean.

Worth Noting:

- At the top of the list is early planning. Booking flights well in advance remains one of the most effective ways to secure better fares. At Hemingways Travel, we strongly advise working with certified travel consultants — especially those accredited by the Kenya Association of Travel Agents (KATA). These professionals use advanced tools to access deals not readily available on public search engines.

- Flexibility is another powerful tool. Shifting travel dates to off-peak periods can lead to substantial savings on both airfares and accommodations. Even high-demand destinations like Dubai, Zanzibar, or London become far more affordable — and less crowded — outside peak holiday seasons.

- For the corporate sector, rising costs have led to leaner travel policies. Businesses now demand tighter planning, with many requiring international bookings at least 21 days in advance. Business class is often replaced by economy, and where feasible, virtual meetings are being prioritized. The message is clear: efficiency and sustainability now guide travel decisions.

In 2025, Kenyan travellers — like their global counterparts — are navigating an increasingly complex and costly travel landscape. Airfares continue to climb, driven by a mix of global economic pressures and sweeping industry changes. While the hikes may not match the steep spikes of recent years, they're still hitting the wallets of families planning holidays and businesses managing tight travel budgets. Several forces are fueling these rising costs. Airlines are grappling with everything from soaring aircraft leasing fees and volatile exchange rates to interest rate increases, political instability, and global supply chain disruptions. Even basic necessities like spare parts for aircraft are harder to come by. Add to that the cost of landing rights and taxes across different jurisdictions, and it's clear why fares are rising. Unfortunately, it's the end consumer who bears the brunt.

But this doesn't mean that travel is off the table. With thoughtful planning and smart strategies, travel can still be affordable and rewarding. At the top of the list is early planning. Booking flights well in advance remains one of the most effective ways to secure better fares. At Hemingways Travel, we strongly advise working with certified travel consultants — especially those accredited by the Kenya Association of Travel Agents (KATA). These professionals use advanced tools to access deals not readily available on public search engines. Flexibility is another powerful tool. Shifting travel dates to off-peak periods can lead to substantial savings on both airfares and accommodations. Even high-demand destinations like Dubai, Zanzibar, or London become far more affordable — and less crowded — outside peak holiday seasons. For the corporate sector, rising costs have led to leaner

travel policies. Businesses now demand tighter planning, with many requiring international bookings at least 21 days in advance. Business class is often replaced by economy, and where feasible, virtual meetings are being prioritized. The message is clear: efficiency and sustainability now guide travel decisions. At Hemingways Travel, we've adapted by investing in powerful technology that offers clients a wide range of fare options tailored to their needs and budgets. Our global partnerships allow us to deliver seamless and cost-effective services, no matter where our clients are headed. We blend local knowledge with a global reach to deliver both value and quality. Sustainability is also reshaping travel choices. Travellers are becoming more mindful of their carbon footprints and want to travel responsibly. Airlines are increasingly turning to Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), and

eco-conscious hotels are investing in greener operations — from solar energy to reducing single-use plastics. While these changes are vital for the planet, they also contribute to higher prices. Still, sustainability doesn't have to mean unaffordability. With the right planning and guidance, travellers can make greener choices — like flying with lower-emission airlines or booking locally owned accommodations that support communities — without stretching their budgets. This is where travel management companies like Hemingways Travel come in. We assist with everything from navigating complex visa requirements and offering 24/7 support during disruptions to providing expert advice on sustainable and cost-effective travel options. In today's unpredictable travel environment — marked by delays, shifting regulations, and geopolitical uncertainties — having a trusted travel advisor is

more important than ever. To Kenyan travellers in 2025, my message is this: Be proactive. Plan early. Partner with the right experts. Travel remains one of life's most enriching experiences. With careful planning, it doesn't have to be overwhelming — or unaffordable. Choose off-peak travel windows. Understand your destination in advance. And most importantly, work with experienced, certified travel professionals who understand the ever-changing dynamics of the travel industry and can help you make smart, informed decisions. Prices may rise — but so can your travel opportunities. With the right mindset and support, Kenyan travellers can continue to explore the world confidently, affordably, and sustainably. Managing Director, Hemingways Travel Dr. Joseph Kithitu