

The conflict in eastern DRC has persisted for decades

USA-Rwanda

USA-Rwanda agreement concerning the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo :



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Kenya Kwanza's Dwindling Promise — and a Thin Thread of Hope

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The USA-Rwanda Agreement on the DRC Conflict: A Diplomatic Breakthrough or a Strategic Gamble?

By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande

Introduction

The recent USA-Rwanda agreement concerning the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) marks a significant diplomatic intervention aimed at stabilizing the Great Lakes region. Signed in Washington, the agreement seeks to halt military support for armed groups, establish a joint security coordination mechanism, and pave the way for economic investment in the mineral-rich territories of eastern DRC. While hailed as a step toward peace,



Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo on April 25, 2025 signed a Declaration of Principles at the US Department of State in Washington, D.C., facilitated by Secretary of State Marco Rubio. (Photo: Courtesy)

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Ukraine's Minerals Deal with the United States: Economic Partnership or Strategic Risk?

Introduction

The Ukraine-United States minerals deal, signed after weeks of negotiations, is heralded as a crucial step toward economic recovery for Ukraine. The agreement grants Washington access to Kyiv's rare earth minerals in exchange for the establishment of

an investment fund, a move that has ignited considerable debate. While presented as a mutually beneficial economic partnership, the deal carries profound strategic and geopolitical implications.

As Ukraine navigates post-war economic uncertainty, this agreement

could serve as either a catalyst for growth or a threat to national sovereignty. The balance between foreign investment and autonomy over strategic resources is delicate, and history warns that such agreements can lead to dependence rather than empowerment. This essay critically

examines the deal, considering its economic opportunities and risks, along with the geopolitical dimensions that could shape Ukraine's fu-

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The Impact Of Water Scarcity On School Enrollment In Africa

By: Evans Asikoyo
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

• These communities are also characterized by high levels of informal employment. In Kenya, approximately 83% of the working population is employed in the informal sector. Many residents of Kibera engage in casual labor, small-scale vending, and domestic work—activities that offer little job security or income stability. Similarly, Nigeria's informal sector accounts for about 65% of national employment.

• In Makoko, residents rely on fishing, petty trade, and other unregulated forms of employment. These economic constraints limit families' ability to prioritize education, as children are often needed to supplement household income or assist with domestic chores, including fetching water from distant sources.

• In rural areas, the situation is no better. In Ethiopia, about 70% of the labor force is employed in agriculture, a sector that remains vulnerable to climate variability and lacks reliable income.



Water is an essential component of life, and its role in education is often underestimated. In many African countries, particularly in slum communities and rural areas, the lack of access to clean and reliable water directly affects school enrollment. This challenge is further compounded by the economic hardships faced by families in these areas, many of whom depend on informal and unstable employment. The combination of water scarcity and economic strain creates a complex barrier to education that disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, especially girls.

In urban slums such as Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, and Makoko in Lagos, Nigeria, schools often lack the most basic water and sanitation facilities. In Kibera, for example, the absence of clean water contributes to poor hygiene conditions, leading to frequent outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dys-

entery. As a result, parents are often reluctant to send their children to such unsafe learning environments. In Makoko, a community built on stilts over water, schools face constant challenges due to flooding and lack of potable water, which discourages consistent school attendance.

These communities are also characterized by high levels of informal employment. In Kenya, approximately 83% of the working population is employed in the informal sector. Many residents of Kibera engage in casual labor, small-scale vending, and domestic work—activities that offer little job security or income stability. Similarly, Nigeria's informal sector accounts for about 65% of national employment. In Makoko, residents rely on fishing, petty trade, and other unregulated forms of employment. These economic constraints limit families' ability to prioritize education, as children are often needed to supplement

household income or assist with domestic chores, including fetching water from distant sources.

In rural areas, the situation is no better. In Ethiopia, about 70% of the labor force is employed in agriculture, a sector that remains vulnerable to climate variability and lacks reliable income. In Uganda, agriculture also dominates the rural economy, but youth unemployment stands at approximately 13.3% nationally, with rates significantly higher in isolated areas. These employment challenges affect educational outcomes, as children in rural families are frequently tasked with fetching water, working on farms, or caring for siblings while their parents work.

The impact of water scarcity on school enrollment is particularly severe for girls. In many African societies, girls are responsible for collecting water, a task that can take several hours each day. This not only re-

duces the time available for schooling but also contributes to high dropout rates. Moreover, schools that lack proper sanitation facilities are often unable to support menstruating girls, further increasing absenteeism and school withdrawal.

To address these challenges, a multifaceted approach is needed. Governments must invest in water infrastructure in schools by drilling boreholes, installing rain-water harvesting systems, and providing clean sanitation facilities. Additionally, partnerships with NGOs and private sector organizations can help fund and implement sustainable WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) programs. These programs have proven to improve school attendance, particularly among girls.

Furthermore, improving economic conditions in slum and rural areas is crucial. Policies that promote decent work, vocational training, and small enterprise development can help

reduce the economic pressures that force children out of school. When families are financially stable and schools are equipped with clean water, education becomes a more viable and attractive option.

In conclusion, water scarcity and economic hardship are two intertwined barriers to school enrollment in many African communities. By ensuring that schools have access to clean and reliable water—and by addressing the employment challenges that families face—governments and stakeholders can pave the way for increased enrollment and a brighter future for Africa's children. Education should not be a privilege dependent on clean water; it should be a guaranteed right supported by it.

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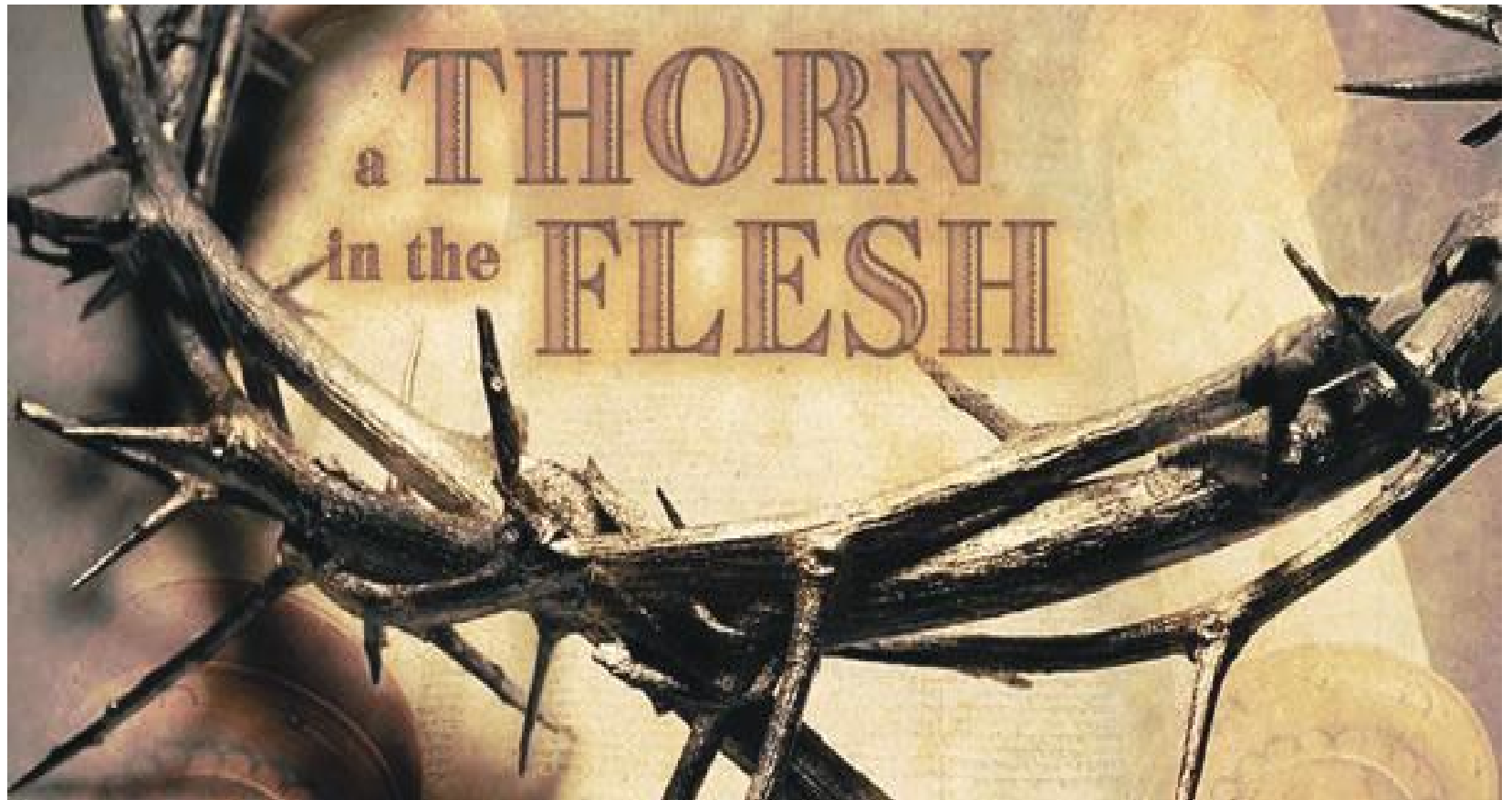
Education

Academic Dishonesty, A Thorn In The Flesh

By: Victor Mutisya
xxxxxxxxxxxxWorth
Noting:

Living in a culture that emphasizes on meritocracy and credentials over Integrity and skills, shortcuts have become almost inevitable on the way to success. Shortcuts of climbing the academic pinnacle have replaced hard work and resilience. When success in life is only seen in the lens of academic prowess, the desire to succeed and the fear to fail comes in through the door, while integrity simultaneously jumps out through the window.

Martin Luther King Jr denotes that, intelligence plus Character is the true goal of education. I suppose true success can only be a bridge between skills and credentials. Wait, but not anymore. What the culture now teaches us is, it doesn't matter the means, the end justifies. In other words, it means it doesn't matter how you get something provided you get it.



Imagine a society where professionals earn their way to the top through dishonesty means. For instance, imagine of a doctor or an engineer or a driver who has earned the title through falsehood. Dishonesty destroys confidence and brings social chaos, so says Robert Greene. Academic dishonesty in particular, forfeits not only the way of getting skills but cements incompetence. In the long run it affects not only the individual involved but the society at large. In essence it does not just give unfair advantage to those who engage in it but also releases under-qualified individuals into the job market.

Living in a culture that em-

phasizes on meritocracy and credentials over Integrity and skills, shortcuts have become almost inevitable on the way to success. Shortcuts of climbing the academic pinnacle have replaced hard work and resilience. When success in life is only seen in the lens of academic prowess, the desire to succeed and the fear to fail comes in through the door, while integrity simultaneously jumps out through the window. Martin Luther King Jr denotes that, intelligence plus Character is the true goal of education. I suppose true success can only be a bridge between skills and credentials. Wait, but not any more. What the culture now teaches us is, it doesn't

matter the means, the end justifies. In other words, it means it doesn't matter how you get something provided you get it.

Conceived by the desire to succeed, academic dishonesty gives birth to skills deficit in the job market. This causes reduced productivity which in turn ails our economy. Compromised workplace integrity and practices become rampant and along the way some negative ideologies become embedded on culture. For instance in our Nation, it's believed that to succeed the most important factor is 'connection'. By the way, any average Kenyan has heard of River Road where many believe that you can get whatever grade,

for any level of education from any institution of your choice provided you have the 'connection'. As a result of such 'connections' we not only compromise our means of production but as well all other systems in our country.

Often taking root in High Schools during internal and National exams, academic dishonesty finds its way into higher education institutions. I doubt how many Kenyans for instance have not heard about 'Mwakenya'. But still we complain when we suffer one way or another in the hands of people who have earned their titles dishonestly. This ranges from doctors to political leaders who get into service with-

out acquiring the skills and expertise that is required to handle real world field challenges. Such individual cause menace and end up hurting 'waliokuwa na wasiokuwa'

In conclusion, academic dishonesty erodes the very essence of our existence. It is a vice that requires a collective action to tackle. Using stricter academic credential verification processes, developing plagiarism detection tools and reforming assessment routines is very key towards combating academic dishonesty. Otherwise we will continue to suffer from 'mwiba wa kujidunga' inflicted on us by unripe human capital in the job market.

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OPINION

Kenya's 2027 General Elections: Will Rigathi Gachagua Become The Jacob Zuma Of Kenya?

By: Kamomonti Wa Kiambati
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Rigathi Gachagua, the second Deputy President

Worth Noting:

• Rigathi Gachagua shares similar traits. Known for his no-nonsense, often blunt rhetoric, Gachagua has positioned himself as a voice for ordinary Kenyans, particularly those from rural areas. His speeches, laced with pro-worker and pro-poor sentiments, have helped him carve a niche as a politician who understands the struggles of everyday Kenyans. His background as a former District Officer and his long history in public service also add to this perception, giving him credibility among a segment of the population that feels overlooked by mainstream political elites.

• As Kenya approaches the 2027 elections, Gachagua's populism may play a crucial role in shaping his political fortunes. Like Zuma, he has cultivated a base of support that sees him as an advocate for the common man. His emphasis on economic development, job creation, and the empowerment of rural communities could resonate with voters who feel left behind by Nairobi's political class.

Kenya's 2027 general elections promise to be a defining moment in the country's political landscape. One name that is becoming increasingly prominent in discussions around these elections is that of Rigathi Gachagua, the second Deputy President. His rising influence, political persona, and controversies have led some to draw comparisons between him and former South African president Jacob Zuma. Both men are known for their populist appeal, their ability to resonate with the ordinary citizen, and the controversies that have shaped their careers. The comparison between Gachagua and Zuma, particularly in the context of the 2027 elections, raises important questions about the future of Kenyan politics. One of the defining characteristics of Jacob Zuma's political rise was his ability to connect with South Africa's poor and working-class citizens. Zuma, often seen as a "man of the people," successfully cultivated a populist image that set him apart from his more technocratic predecessors. His charisma, informal approach, and command of Zulu culture allowed him to build a powerful grassroots following, especially within rural and economically marginalized areas. Despite being embroiled in numer-

ous corruption scandals, his supporters remained loyal, largely due to his ability to present himself as a champion of their struggles. Rigathi Gachagua shares similar traits. Known for his no-nonsense, often blunt rhetoric, Gachagua has positioned himself as a voice for ordinary Kenyans, particularly those from rural areas. His speeches, laced with pro-worker and pro-poor sentiments, have helped him carve a niche as a politician who understands the struggles of everyday Kenyans. His background as a former District Officer and his long history in public service also add to this perception, giving him credibility among a segment of the population that feels overlooked by mainstream political elites. As Kenya approaches the 2027 elections, Gachagua's populism may play a crucial role in shaping his political fortunes. Like Zuma, he has cultivated a base of support that sees him as an advocate for the common man. His emphasis on economic development, job creation, and the empowerment of rural communities could resonate with voters who feel left behind by Nairobi's political class. However, like Zuma, Gachagua is no stranger to controversy. Zuma's presidency was defined by numerous scandals, most notably the

Nkandla scandal, where he was accused of using state funds to upgrade his private residence. Throughout his presidency, Zuma was also dogged by allegations of corruption, leading to multiple court cases and an eventual forced resignation. Yet, his support base remained resilient, largely because they believed he was being targeted by political enemies seeking to undermine his populist agenda. Similarly, Rigathi Gachagua has faced his share of controversies. Since assuming the Deputy Presidency, he has been implicated in allegations of financial misconduct, with some investigations suggesting possible involvement in corruption. These allegations have led to public discourse about his integrity, with critics arguing that his political career could face a significant challenge if the controversies continue to accumulate. However, like Zuma, Gachagua's supporters remain loyal, dismissing these accusations as politically motivated. They argue that his enemies are attempting to derail his political ambitions due to his unfiltered critique of the political status quo. The comparison here is striking. Both Zuma and Gachagua have managed to maintain strong political followings despite the allegations against them. Their

ability to survive controversy stems from their populist appeal, which insulates them from political fallout. In both cases, their supporters are quick to attribute the accusations to political machinations rather than substantive issues of governance or ethics. Jacob Zuma's time in power was marked by significant influence over South African politics. He was able to navigate the political landscape effectively, using his populist appeal to stay relevant even as his presidency became increasingly scandal-ridden. Despite his eventual resignation in 2018, Zuma remains a powerful figure within South Africa's political landscape, often wielding influence behind the scenes. Rigathi Gachagua could follow a similar trajectory. With former position as Deputy President, Gachagua held considerable sway within Kenyan politics. As Kenya approaches the 2027 elections, his influence is likely to grow, particularly if he consolidates his power base and continues to appeal to disenfranchised voters. If he manages to navigate the controversies surrounding him and maintain his grassroots appeal, Gachagua could emerge as a central figure in the post-2027 political landscape, much like Zuma did in South Africa. However, the big question

is whether Gachagua's influence will be beneficial for Kenya in the long run. Zuma's presidency is often cited as a period of economic stagnation, political corruption, and growing inequality in South Africa. Some fear that if Gachagua follows the same path, Kenya could face similar challenges. On the other hand, Gachagua's supporters argue that his leadership style is exactly what Kenya needs to address longstanding issues of inequality and economic underdevelopment. As Kenya prepares for the 2027 general elections, the comparison between Rigathi Gachagua and Jacob Zuma offers an interesting lens through which to analyze the Deputy President's political trajectory. Both men are populists who have managed to retain strong support despite facing significant controversies. While it remains to be seen whether Gachagua will follow in Zuma's footsteps completely, his ability to navigate Kenya's complex political landscape will undoubtedly shape the country's future. Whether he becomes Kenya's Jacob Zuma depends on how he handles the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

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Motivation

Protection of children's rights and a practical approach



By: Erkabayeva Shahnoza
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- Another vital aspect is legal accessibility. Often, legal systems are too complex or intimidating for children and their families. Child-friendly procedures, including simplified complaint mechanisms and legal aid services, are necessary. In some countries, children can directly approach special ombudsmen or child protection services. These institutions must not only exist but be adequately funded and staffed with professionals trained in child psychology and welfare law.

- Moreover, the enforcement of laws protecting children often suffers from systemic weaknesses—corruption, underreporting of abuse, or lack of coordination between agencies. For example, in cases of domestic violence or sexual abuse, children may be discouraged from reporting due to fear, shame, or family pressure. Authorities may also lack the sensitivity or will to intervene. Legal protection is meaningless if the system fails to respond. In terms of policy, governments must go beyond punitive measures and invest in preventive strategies.

Children represent the most vulnerable segment of society, yet they also embody its future. Ensuring their rights is not only a moral duty but a legal obligation recognized globally. In theory, most nations uphold children's rights through constitutions, civil codes, and international treaties. But the real measure of progress lies in how these rights are implemented in everyday life. The gap between written law and actual practice often determines whether children thrive or suffer in silence. The foundation for global recognition of children's rights is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), adopted in 1989. It outlines key rights every child should enjoy: the right to life, development, protection from abuse, access to education, participation in social life, and expression of views. This document has been ratified by almost every country, making it one of the most universally accepted legal frameworks in the world. However, ratification does not guarantee realization. Despite global commitments, millions of children still face poverty, child labor, trafficking, violence, and lack of access

to education or healthcare. These issues expose the deep discrepancy between legal protection and practical application. One of the critical challenges in implementing children's rights is lack of awareness—not just among adults, but children themselves. Many children are unaware that they have rights, let alone how to protect them. This makes them easy targets for exploitation, neglect, and abuse. Therefore, a key step in protecting children's rights is education—both formal and informal—that teaches children about their rights and how to assert them. In schools, curriculums should include age-appropriate lessons on children's rights and responsibilities. This can help young people recognize when their rights are being violated and understand the role of institutions that are meant to protect them. Teachers, social workers, and healthcare professionals must also receive training to identify and address violations in a child-sensitive manner. Another vital aspect is legal accessibility. Often, legal systems are too complex or intimidating for children and their families. Child-

friendly procedures, including simplified complaint mechanisms and legal aid services, are necessary. In some countries, children can directly approach special ombudsmen or child protection services. These institutions must not only exist but be adequately funded and staffed with professionals trained in child psychology and welfare law. Moreover, the enforcement of laws protecting children often suffers from systemic weaknesses—corruption, underreporting of abuse, or lack of coordination between agencies. For example, in cases of domestic violence or sexual abuse, children may be discouraged from reporting due to fear, shame, or family pressure. Authorities may also lack the sensitivity or will to intervene. Legal protection is meaningless if the system fails to respond. In terms of policy, governments must go beyond punitive measures and invest in preventive strategies. This includes improving living conditions, ensuring access to quality education and healthcare, and supporting families in poverty. When children grow up in safe, nurturing environments, the risk of rights violations decreases

dramatically. Technology, while often a threat to child safety through cyberbullying or exploitation, can also be harnessed as a tool for empowerment. Online platforms can provide legal information, confidential reporting channels, and support networks. NGOs and governments should collaborate to develop digital tools that are accessible, anonymous, and secure for children in need. Furthermore, child participation must be prioritized. Children should have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, from family matters to policy-making. Youth councils, school parliaments, and national consultations allow children to express their opinions and contribute to shaping a society that reflects their needs and dreams. One must also recognize the diverse realities of children across regions. A child in an urban center might face very different challenges compared to one in a rural village. Legal frameworks must be adaptable to local contexts and inclusive of marginalized groups—disabled children, minority communities, refugees, or children in conflict zones. International cooperation

is essential. Issues like child trafficking, migration, or online abuse transcend borders. Shared databases, joint investigations, and international legal support can improve protection mechanisms. No child should fall through the cracks due to jurisdictional limitations or diplomatic inertia. In conclusion, protecting children's rights is not a one-time legal achievement but an ongoing societal commitment. Laws must be alive—reflected in the way children are treated in homes, schools, courts, and communities. While legal texts provide the structure, it is the dedication of people—parents, educators, lawmakers, and children themselves—that gives those words true power. A world where every child is safe, heard, educated, and valued is not just an ideal—it is a responsibility we must strive to fulfill, every day.

Erkabayeva Shahnoza, 2nd year student of the Faculty of Philology and Arts, Urgench State University named after Abu Rayhon Beruni

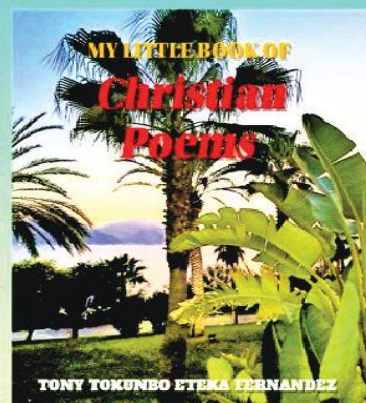
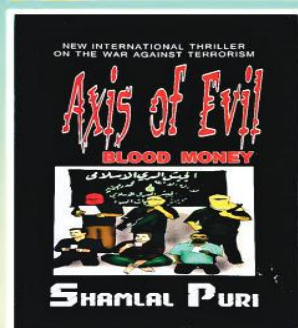
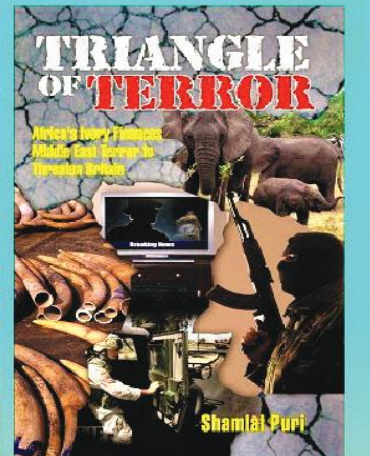
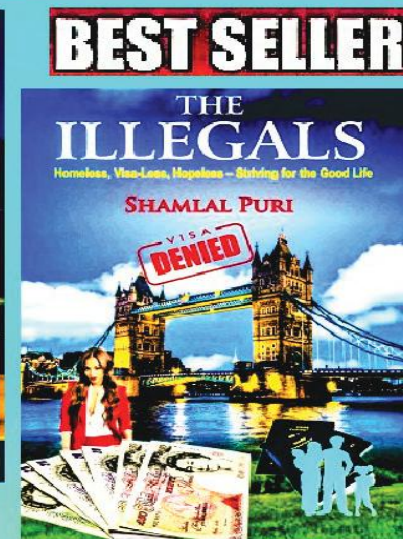
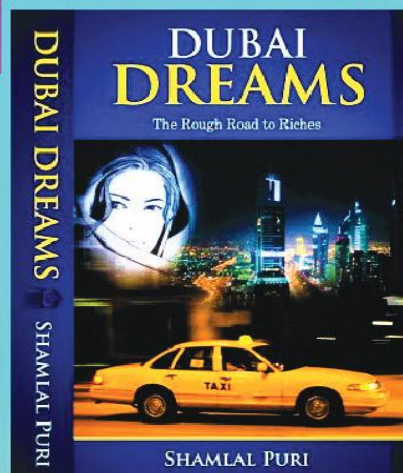
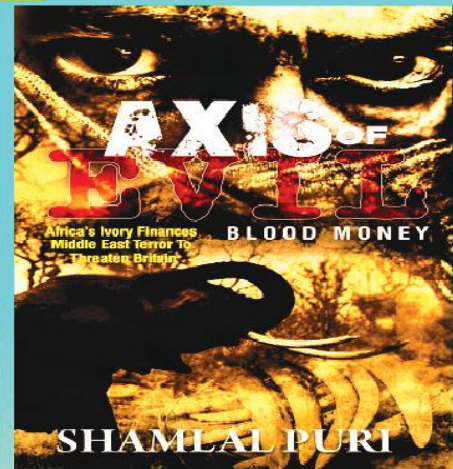
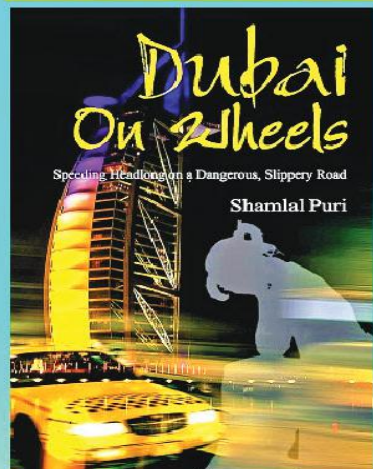
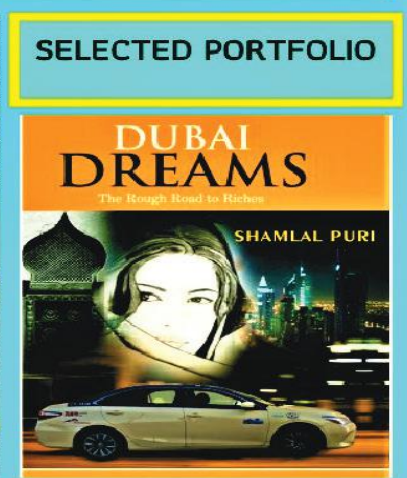
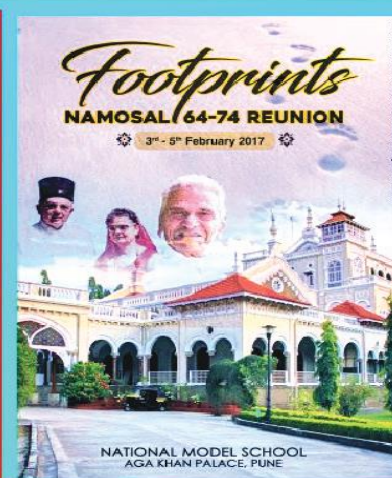
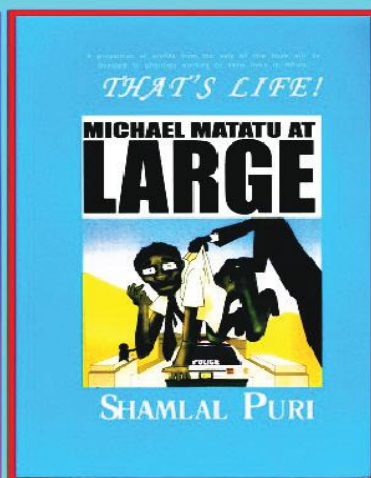
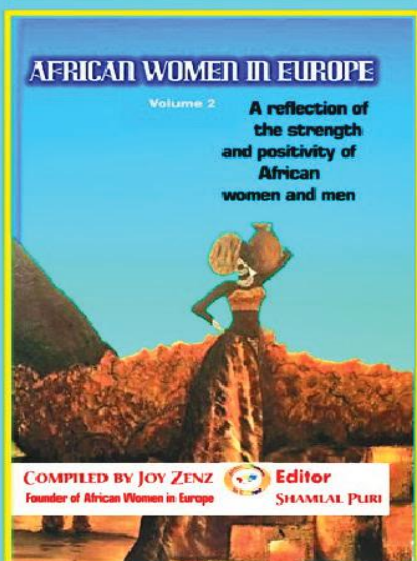
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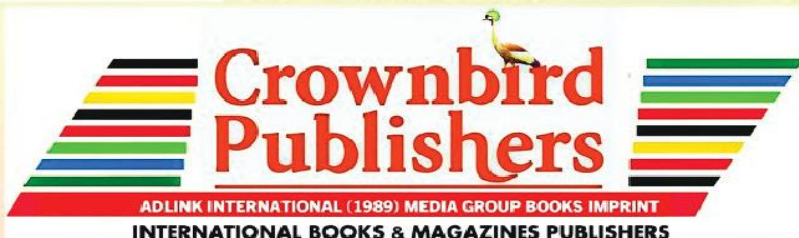
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US News

The USA-Rwanda Agreement on the DRC Conflict: A Diplomatic Breakthrough or a Strategic Gamble?



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
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Therese Kayikwamba Wagner, left, Marco Rubio, center, and Olivier Nduhungirehe in Washington, DC, on April 25. Photographer: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

Worth Noting:

- For Rwanda, the agreement presents both opportunities and risks. On one hand, it allows Kigali to strengthen diplomatic ties with Washington, securing economic investments and international legitimacy. However, the requirement to withdraw support for M23 rebels could weaken Rwanda's strategic influence in eastern DRC, potentially exposing it to security threats from rival factions.
- Uganda, though not a direct signatory, will be affected by the shifting power dynamics in the region. If Rwanda reduces its military presence, Uganda may seek to expand its own influence, potentially leading to new territorial disputes. Additionally, Uganda's economic interests in DRC's mineral sector could be challenged by increased American investments, altering trade patterns.
- For DRC, the agreement offers a pathway to stability, but at a high cost. The influx of foreign investments may boost economic recovery, yet it also raises concerns about resource sovereignty. If American firms dominate mineral extraction, DRC risks becoming economically dependent on external actors, limiting its ability to control its own wealth.

the agreement raises critical concerns regarding its long-term implications for Rwanda, Uganda, DRC, and Africa as a whole.

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the agreement, examining its key provisions, geopolitical motivations, and economic consequences. Additionally, it explores the potential risks associated with this deal, including sovereignty concerns, regional instability, and economic dependencies that could shape the future of the Great Lakes region.

Background: The Conflict in Eastern DRC

The conflict in eastern DRC has persisted for decades, fueled by ethnic tensions, rebel insurgencies, and competition over mineral resources. The presence of armed groups such as M23, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), and various militia factions has exacerbated instability, leading to mass displacement, human rights violations, and economic disruption.

Rwanda has long been accused of supporting M23

rebels, a claim it has repeatedly denied. Meanwhile, Uganda has also been implicated in cross-border military interventions, further complicating the security landscape. The USA's involvement in brokering this agreement signals a renewed effort to de-escalate tensions, but the underlying geopolitical interests must be critically examined.

Key Provisions of the Agreement

The USA-Rwanda agreement outlines several core commitments, including:

1. Cessation of Military Support for Armed Groups – Both Rwanda and DRC have pledged to refrain from providing state military assistance to non-state armed factions operating in eastern DRC.
2. Joint Security Coordination Mechanism – A bilateral security framework will be established to monitor and counter armed groups, ensuring that both nations uphold their commitments.
3. Economic Invest-

ment in Mineral-Rich Regions – The USA has committed to investing billions of dollars in DRC's mining sector, with Rwanda also negotiating a separate minerals deal to enhance its economic prospects.

4. Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity – Both nations have agreed to resolve disputes through diplomacy, rather than military force or hostile rhetoric.

5. Monitoring and Compliance Measures – A follow-up committee, including representatives from the USA, Qatar, France, and the African Union, will oversee the implementation of the agreement.

While these provisions appear promising, the practical execution of the agreement remains uncertain, given the historical complexities of the conflict. **Geopolitical Implications**
Impact on Rwanda
For Rwanda, the agreement presents both opportunities and risks. On one hand, it allows Kigali to strengthen diplomatic ties with Washington, securing economic

investments and international legitimacy. However, the requirement to withdraw support for M23 rebels could weaken Rwanda's strategic influence in eastern DRC, potentially exposing it to security threats from rival factions.

Impact on Uganda
Uganda, though not a direct signatory, will be affected by the shifting power dynamics in the region. If Rwanda reduces its military presence, Uganda may seek to expand its own influence, potentially leading to new territorial disputes. Additionally, Uganda's economic interests in DRC's mineral sector could be challenged by increased American investments, altering trade patterns.

Impact on DRC
For DRC, the agreement offers a pathway to stability, but at a high cost. The influx of foreign investments may boost economic recovery, yet it also raises concerns about resource sovereignty. If American firms dominate mineral extraction, DRC risks becoming economically dependent on external actors, limiting its ability to control its own wealth. **Impact on Africa at Large**

The broader African implications of this agreement revolve around regional security and economic autonomy. While the USA's involvement may reduce immediate violence, it also reinforces Western influence in African affairs. The reliance on foreign mediation rather than African-led solutions could undermine continental sovereignty, setting a precedent for external intervention in future conflicts.

Potential Negative Impacts

1. Sovereignty Concerns
The agreement places significant control over DRC's mineral wealth in the hands of American investors, raising fears of economic neo-colonialism. If DRC cannot independently regulate its resources, it risks becoming a supplier rather than a beneficiary of its own natural wealth.
2. Regional Instability
While the agreement aims to reduce armed conflict, the withdrawal of Rwandan military support could create power vacuums, al-

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By:
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President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Felix Tshisekedi, meeting with his Rwandan counterpart, Paul Kagame

Worth Noting:

- While the agreement aims to reduce armed conflict, the withdrawal of Rwandan military support could create power vacuums, allowing new rebel factions to emerge. Additionally, Uganda may seek to expand its influence, leading to new territorial disputes.
- The reliance on American investments could limit local economic development, as foreign firms control extraction, pricing, and trade policies. If Rwanda and DRC fail to negotiate equitable revenue-sharing agreements, they may struggle to benefit from their own resources.
- The agreement may strain relations between Rwanda and Uganda, as both nations compete for influence in DRC. Additionally, European stakeholders may feel sidelined, given the USA's dominant role in shaping the region's economic future.

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3. Economic Dependencies
The reliance on American investments could limit local economic development, as foreign firms control extraction, pricing, and trade policies. If Rwanda and DRC fail to negotiate equitable revenue-sharing agreements, they may struggle to benefit from their own resources.

4. Diplomatic Tensions
The agreement may strain relations between Rwanda and Uganda, as both nations compete for influence in DRC. Additionally, European stakeholders may feel sidelined, given the USA's dominant role in shaping the region's economic future.

5. Long-Term Uncertainty
Previous peace agreements in DRC have failed to produce lasting stability. If implementation challenges arise, the agreement may collapse, leading to renewed violence and economic setbacks.

Past Peace Agreements in the DRC and Why They Failed
The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been the epicenter of multiple peace agreements aimed at resolving its prolonged conflicts, yet many of these agreements have failed to bring

lasting stability. The reasons for their failure often stem from political manipulation, lack of enforcement mechanisms, external interference, and deep-rooted economic interests tied to the region's vast mineral wealth. Additionally, the role of foreign powers, including the United States, in African conflicts has often been controversial, raising concerns about neo-colonial influence rather than genuine peace-building efforts. This article explores past failed agreements in the DRC, the necessity of African-led solutions, and the question of Africa's capability to resolve its own conflicts.

1. The Lusaka Agreement (1999)
The Lusaka Agreement, signed in 1999, was one of the earliest attempts to end the Second Congo War, involving multiple African nations. The agreement called for a ceasefire, withdrawal of foreign troops, and the deployment of UN peacekeepers. However, it failed due to:

- Lack of commitment from signatories, as rebel groups continued fighting despite the agreement.
- Weak enforcement mechanisms, with no clear consequences for violations.
- Foreign interference, as Rwanda and Uganda maintained military

presence in eastern DRC, undermining the peace process.

2. The Sun City Agreement (2002-2003)
The Sun City Agreement, part of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, aimed to establish a transitional government and integrate rebel factions into the political system. While it led to the formation of a power-sharing government, it failed because:

- Key rebel groups, such as RCD-Goma, were excluded, leading to continued insurgencies.
- Political elites manipulated the process, prioritizing personal gains over national stability.
- Lack of trust among factions, preventing genuine cooperation.

3. The Nairobi Agreement (2007)
The Nairobi Agreement was signed between DRC and Rwanda, focusing on disarming the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda), a rebel group operating in eastern DRC. It failed due to:

- Rwanda's continued involvement in supporting other armed groups, undermining the agreement's credibility.
- Weak implementation, as the FDLR remained active despite diplomatic efforts.
- Absence of regional consensus, with Uganda and Burundi pursuing sepa-

rate interests.

4. The Addis Ababa Peace Framework (2013)
The Addis Ababa Framework Agreement, backed by the United Nations and African Union, sought to end rebel activities and promote regional cooperation. Despite initial optimism, it failed because:

- M23 rebels resumed fighting, showing the agreement lacked enforcement power.
- DRC's weak governance, preventing effective implementation.
- Foreign economic interests, as mineral exploitation continued fueling conflict.

These agreements demonstrate that peace efforts in the DRC have repeatedly collapsed due to external interference, political manipulation, and economic exploitation. The failure of these agreements underscores the need for African-led solutions rather than foreign-imposed frameworks.

Why America Should Not Be a Peace-Breaker in African Conflicts
The United States has historically played a complex role in African conflicts, often intervening under the guise of peace-building while pursuing strategic economic and geopolitical interests. In the case of the DRC, American involvement has been both direct and indi-

rect, influencing military operations, economic policies, and diplomatic negotiations. However, there are several reasons why America should not dictate peace processes in Africa:

1. Historical Interference and Unintended Consequences
The U.S. has a history of supporting factions in African conflicts, often fueling instability rather than resolving it. For example:

- During the Cold War, the U.S. backed Mobutu Sese Seko, whose corrupt regime contributed to DRC's long-term instability.
- In Somalia, U.S. military interventions have often exacerbated tensions rather than stabilizing the region.
- In Libya, U.S.-led NATO operations led to the collapse of the state, triggering widespread chaos causing the killing of Libyan president, Muammar Qaddafi.

2. Economic Interests Over Genuine Peace
The DRC is rich in minerals, including cobalt, coltan, and gold, which are essential for global industries. American corporations have economic stakes in the region, raising concerns that U.S. involvement in peace agreements is driven by resource control

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Prince Harry tells BBC he wants 'reconciliation' with Royal Family

The Duke of Sussex has told the BBC he "would love a reconciliation" with the Royal Family, in an emotional interview in which he said he was "devastated" at losing a legal challenge over his security in the UK

By:BBC
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Worth Noting:

- "There have been so many disagreements between myself and some of my family," he added, but had now "forgiven" them.
- "I would love reconciliation with my family. There's no point continuing to fight any more, life is precious," said Prince Harry, who said the dispute over his security had "always been the sticking point".
- The prince had wanted to overturn changes to his security that were introduced in 2020 as he stepped down as a working royal and moved to the United States.
- Saying that he felt "let down", he described his court defeat as a "good old fashioned establishment stitch up" and blamed the Royal Household for influencing the decision to reduce his security.

The Duke of Sussex has told the BBC he "would love a reconciliation" with the Royal Family, in an emotional interview in which he said he was "devastated" at losing a legal challenge over his security in the UK.

Prince Harry said the King "won't speak to me because of this security stuff", but that he did not want to fight any more and did "not know how much longer my father has".

The prince spoke to BBC News in California after losing an appeal over the levels of security he and his family are entitled to while in the UK.

Buckingham Palace said: "All of these issues have been examined repeatedly and meticulously by the courts, with the same conclusion reached on each occasion."

After Friday's court ruling, the prince said: "I can't see a world in which I would bring my wife and children back to the UK at this point." "There have been so many disagreements between myself and some of my family," he added, but had now "forgiven" them.

"I would love reconciliation with my family. There's no point continuing to fight any more, life is precious," said Prince Harry, who said the dispute over his security had "always been the sticking point".

The prince had wanted to

overturn changes to his security that were introduced in 2020 as he stepped down as a working royal and moved to the United States. Saying that he felt "let down", he described his court defeat as a "good old fashioned establishment stitch up" and blamed the Royal Household for influencing the decision to reduce his security. Asked whether he had asked the King to intervene in the dispute over security, Prince Harry said: "I never asked him to intervene - I asked him to step out of the way and let the experts do their jobs."

The prince said his treatment during the process of deciding his security had "uncovered my worst fears". He said of the decision: "I'm devastated - not so much as devastated with the loss that I am about the people behind the decision, feeling as though this is okay. Is it a win for them?"

He continued: "I'm sure there are some people out there, probably most likely the people that wish me harm, [who] consider this a huge win."

Prince Harry said the decision to remove his automatic security entitlement impacts him "every single day", and has left him in a position where he can only safely return to the UK if invited by the Royal Family - as he would get sufficient security

in those circumstances.

The prince said changes to his security status in 2020 had impacted not just him, but his wife and, later, his children too.

He went on to say: "Everybody knew that they were putting us at risk in 2020 and they hoped that me knowing that risk would force us to come back."

"But then when you realise that didn't work, do you not want to keep us safe?"

"Whether you're the government, the Royal Household, whether you're my dad, my family - despite all of our differences, do you not want to just ensure our safety?"

Asked whether he missed the UK, he added: "I love my country, I always have done, despite what some people in that country have done... and I think that it's really quite sad that I won't be able to show my children my homeland."

Prince Harry said he would not be seeking a further legal challenge, saying Friday's ruling had "proven that there was no way to win this through the courts".

"I wish someone had told me that beforehand," he said, adding that the ruling had been a "surprise".

He continued: "This, at the heart of it, is a family dispute, and it makes me really, really sad that we're sitting here today, five years later, where a decision that was

made most likely, in fact I know, to keep us under the roof."

Prince Harry spoke to the BBC shortly after losing his latest legal challenge against the UK government over the level of security he and his family are entitled to when visiting.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the prince's case, which hinged on how an official committee made the decision to remove his eligibility for automatic, full-scale protection in line with what other senior royals receive.

On Friday, the court ruled that Prince Harry had made "powerful" arguments about the level of threat he and his family face, but said his "sense of grievance" did not "translate into a legal argument".

His legal complaint centred around a committee called the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures (Ravec), which authorises security for senior royals on behalf of the Home Office, and was chaired at the time by Sir Richard Mottram.

Under the committee's regulations, Prince Harry argued, his case should have been put before Ravec's Risk Management Board (RMB), which would have assessed the threats to his and family's security - but that did not happen.

On Friday, senior judges

said the committee had diverged from policy when making its 2020 decision over the prince's security, but concluded it had been "sensible" to do so because of the complexity of his circumstances.

Prince Harry said his "jaw hit the floor" when he found out a representative of the Royal Household sat on the Ravec committee, and claimed Friday's ruling had proved its decision-making process was more influenced by the Royal Household than by legal constraints.

He claimed there had been "interference" by the Royal Household in the 2020 decision, which he said resulted in his status as the most at-risk royal being downgraded to the least at risk "overnight".

"So one does question how that is even possible and also the motive behind that at the time," he added.

Prince Harry called on UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to intervene in his security case, and to overhaul how the Ravec committee operates.

In a statement released later on Friday, the prince said he would write to Cooper to "ask her to urgently examine the matter and review the Ravec process".

UK News

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By:
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Worth Noting:

- The failure of past peace agreements in the DRC highlights the dangers of foreign-imposed solutions. While the USA and other Western nations claim to support peace, their involvement often serves economic and geopolitical interests rather than genuine stability. Africa has the institutions, expertise, and historical understanding to resolve its own conflicts, but it must strengthen governance, reduce economic dependencies, and assert diplomatic sovereignty.
- The future of African peace-building lies in African-led solutions, where regional organizations, local leaders, and grassroots movements take charge of conflict resolution. If Africa is to break free from cycles of instability, it must reject external manipulation and embrace self-determined strategies for lasting peace.
- The USA-Rwanda agreement represents a diplomatic milestone, but its long-term success depends on effective implementation. While it offers economic opportunities, it also raises critical concerns about sovereignty, regional stability, and economic dependencies.



rather than humanitarian concerns.

3. Undermining African Sovereignty

When foreign powers dictate peace agreements, African nations lose control over their own political and security decisions. This creates dependency on external actors, preventing Africa from developing independent conflict-resolution mechanisms.

4. The Risk of Neo-Colonialism

U.S. involvement in African conflicts often mirrors neo-colonial strategies, where interventions serve Western interests rather than African stability. This approach reinforces economic exploitation, leaving African nations vulnerable to external manipulation. Instead of imposing solutions, the U.S. should support African-led initiatives, allowing regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) to take the lead in peace-building efforts.

African Conflicts Need African Solutions

The idea that African conflicts require African solutions is rooted in the belief that local actors understand the complexities of their

own challenges better than foreign powers. Africa has the capacity, institutions, and expertise to resolve conflicts, but external interference often undermines its ability to do so.

1. The Role of the African Union (AU)

The AU has established peacekeeping missions, such as:

- AMISOM in Somalia, which has helped stabilize the country.

- The African Standby Force, designed to respond to crises.

- Mediation efforts in Sudan and South Sudan, preventing further escalation.

2. Regional Organizations as Peace Brokers

Organizations like ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD have successfully mediated conflicts, proving that African-led diplomacy works. For example:

- ECOWAS intervened in Liberia and Sierra Leone, leading to peace agreements.

- SADC played a role in Zimbabwe's political transition, preventing civil unrest.

3. Cultural and Historical Understanding

African leaders and institutions understand the historical, ethnic, and socio-po-

litical dynamics of conflicts better than foreign actors. Western interventions often fail because they lack cultural context, leading to misguided policies.

4. Strengthening African Governance

Instead of relying on foreign mediation, Africa must strengthen its governance structures, ensuring that peace agreements are enforced by African institutions rather than external forces.

Is Africa Capable Enough to Solve Its Own Problems?

Africa is more than capable of solving its own conflicts, but several challenges hinder its ability to do so:

1. Weak Institutions and Governance

Many African nations struggle with corruption, weak governance, and political instability, making peace enforcement difficult. Strengthening institutions, rule of law, and democratic governance is essential for effective conflict resolution.

2. Economic Dependencies

Foreign economic control over African resources limits Africa's ability to negotiate peace independently. African nations must develop self-sufficient economies to reduce reliance on external actors.

3. External Interference

Western nations often undermine African-led peace efforts, imposing their own solutions rather than allowing regional organizations to lead. Africa must assert its sovereignty in diplomatic negotiations.

4. Need for Stronger Regional Cooperation

African nations must strengthen regional alliances, ensuring that conflict resolution is a collective effort rather than individual state interventions.

Conclusion

The failure of past peace agreements in the DRC highlights the dangers of foreign-imposed solutions. While the USA and other Western nations claim to support peace, their involvement often serves economic and geopolitical interests rather than genuine stability. Africa has the institutions, expertise, and historical understanding to resolve its own conflicts, but it must strengthen governance, reduce economic dependencies, and assert diplomatic sovereignty.

The future of African peace-building lies in African-led solutions, where regional organizations, local leaders, and grassroots movements take charge of conflict resolution. If Africa is to break free from cycles

of instability, it must reject external manipulation and embrace self-determined strategies for lasting peace.

The USA-Rwanda agreement represents a diplomatic milestone, but its long-term success depends on effective implementation. While it offers economic opportunities, it also raises critical concerns about sovereignty, regional stability, and economic dependencies.

For Rwanda, Uganda, and DRC, the challenge lies in balancing foreign investments with national interests, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of autonomy. Africa, as a whole, must remain vigilant, advocating for African-led solutions rather than external interventions that may prioritize foreign agendas.

As the world watches, the question remains: Will this agreement bring lasting peace, or will it become another chapter in the cycle of conflict and foreign influence?

WORLD

Ukraine's Minerals Deal with the United States: Economic Partnership or Strategic Risk?



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande

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Background of the Deal

Ukraine is rich in minerals, holding deposits of 22 of the 50 materials deemed critical by the U.S. Geological Survey. These minerals, including lithium, titanium, and rare earth elements, are vital for electronics, clean energy technologies, and military equipment. However, Russia's invasion has severely disrupted access to these resources, with reports indicating that up to 40% of Ukraine's mineral deposits are currently under Russian occupation.

The United States has long sought alternative sources for rare earth minerals, particularly amid escalating tensions with China, which dominates global production. The agreement, though initially delayed by disputes between U.S. and Ukrainian officials, was ultimately signed by U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Ukraine's First Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko. The strategic timing suggests that both nations view this as an opportunity to reshape global supply chains while addressing Ukraine's economic vulnerabilities.

Key Provisions of the Agreement

The minerals deal outlines a multi-layered partnership, consisting of the following provisions:

1. **Access to Rare Earth Minerals:** The United States will gain direct access to Ukraine's mineral resources, including lithium, titanium, and graphite.

2. **Establishment of an Investment Fund:** The US-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund will be jointly managed, with neither side holding dominant control.

3. **Revenue Allocation:** 50% of all revenue from Ukrainian oil, gas, and mineral licenses will be directed toward financing the investment fund.

4. **Economic Recovery Goals:** The U.S. presents the deal as an accelerator for Ukraine's post-war economic recovery and a mechanism to compensate for American military aid.

On paper, this arrangement appears mutually beneficial, yet its execution raises concerns about resource sovereignty, financial dependency, and strategic vulnerabilities.

Ukraine's Rare Earth Mineral Wealth

Rare earth minerals have become indispensable in modern industrial applications, from electric vehicle batteries to military hardware. With the global shift toward green energy, the demand for rare earth elements like neodymium and dysprosium has surged, placing mineral-rich nations in strategic positions.

Historical Challenges in Ukraine's Mining Sector

Ukraine's mining sector, despite its immense potential, has long faced structural and technical limitations that have hindered its growth. One of the most significant challenges is its outdated infrastructure and lack of investment in extraction technologies. Many of the country's mining operations still rely on antiquated equipment and inefficient extraction methods, making production costly and reducing overall competitiveness in the global market. Unlike leading mineral-producing nations that have modernized their mining infrastructure to maximize efficiency, Ukraine's sector has remained underdeveloped due to years of insufficient funding and technological stagnation. This lack of modernization has created barriers to scaling up mineral extraction, making it difficult to capitalize on the country's vast reserves of rare earth minerals and other critical resources.

Beyond technical limitations, regulatory uncertainty has discouraged foreign participation in Ukraine's mining industry. Investors and multinational mining corporations often hesitate to engage in Ukraine's resource sector due to inconsistent policies, unclear legal frameworks, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Fluctuating legislation surrounding mineral rights, taxation policies, and environmental regulations creates an unpredictable business climate that deters long-term investment. Furthermore, the absence of a strong, transparent governance structure for resource allocation and licensing further complicates efforts to attract stable foreign capital. Without comprehensive reforms to ensure clarity and efficiency in resource management, Ukraine risks losing out on crucial economic opportunities tied to its mineral wealth.

Adding to these internal challenges, geopolitical instability has severely disrupted access to Ukraine's most valuable mineral deposits. The ongoing conflict with Russia has directly impacted mining regions, with reports indicating that up to 40% of Ukraine's metal deposits are currently under Russian control. This territorial uncertainty prevents Ukraine from fully utilizing its mineral reserves, while also posing national security concerns related to external exploitation. Additionally, geopolitical tensions have strained Ukraine's ability to establish long-term international mining agreements, as global investors remain



US Treasury secretary Scott Bessent and Ukrainian first deputy prime minister Yulia Svyrydenko after the deal signing this week © Yulia Svyrydenko via Facebook/Reuters

wary of investing in a region fraught with instability. Addressing these historical challenges will require a strategic combination of technological modernization, regulatory reform, and geopolitical resilience to unlock Ukraine's full mining potential.

Global competition for these minerals has made Ukraine's untapped resources a geopolitical battleground, where partnerships must be carefully structured to preserve national interests.

Investment Fund: Economic Growth or Resource Dependency?

While the investment fund promises economic revitalization, concerns persist regarding Ukraine's governance over its own resources. The joint nature of fund management, where neither Ukraine nor the U.S. holds dominant control, raises questions about whether Ukraine can independently dictate its mineral extraction policies. Without a clear framework ensuring that Ukrainian authorities retain final decision-making power, the risk of external interference looms large. Resource-rich nations have, in the past, seen similar agreements evolve into mechanisms for foreign control, where initial promises of economic development eventually led to reduced national autonomy over strategic sectors. If Ukraine does not establish strong safeguards, it may find itself navigating a partnership where decisions regarding its own mineral wealth are influenced by external actors with competing interests.

Additionally, the depth of U.S. influence in shaping Ukraine's mineral extraction policies remains a critical concern. Given Washington's strategic interests in securing rare earth minerals, the United States may push for policies that prioritize American industrial demands rather than Ukraine's long-term economic self-sufficiency. This ar-

agement could set a precedent where Ukraine becomes a supplier rather than a true partner, leaving little room to develop domestic industries around its mineral wealth. Historically, similar resource deals have led nations into a cycle of export dependence, where raw materials are extracted and shipped abroad without local value-added processing, keeping economic benefits concentrated outside the country. If Ukraine wishes to maximize its economic advantage, it must negotiate provisions ensuring that its mineral wealth directly contributes to national industrial growth, rather than merely serving external markets.

Perhaps the most pressing issue is Ukraine's potential debt dependency, as reliance on American financing could create an unsustainable economic model. The agreement frames the investment fund as a means of recovery, but a significant portion of mineral revenues are already committed to repaying past U.S. aid. This raises concerns that Ukraine's financial obligations could gradually escalate, leaving the nation locked in a cycle of economic reliance rather than fostering true independence. Many developing countries have experienced similar scenarios, where foreign investments came with hidden financial strings, ultimately limiting their ability to diversify economic strategies. While capital injections from the U.S. may provide an initial boost, Ukraine must ensure mechanisms for self-sufficiency to avoid falling into the trap of long-term financial servitude. The key question remains: Does Ukraine truly benefit from this deal, or is it structured to favor U.S. interests? If history serves as a guide, Ukraine must tread carefully to ensure that its mineral wealth does not become a lever for external control, but rather a foundation for economic sovereignty.

Economic Implications for Ukraine

Potential Benefits

One of the most promising benefits of the Ukraine-United States minerals deal is the potential for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to modernize Ukraine's extractive industries. Historically, Ukraine's mining sector has struggled due to outdated infrastructure and limited investment, preventing efficient utilization of its vast mineral reserves. Increased American investment could upgrade extraction technologies, improve processing techniques, and optimize resource management, making Ukraine a stronger player in the global minerals market. With modernized facilities and access to advanced machinery, Ukraine could enhance its production output, ensuring that its valuable rare earth minerals are extracted and refined competitively. If properly implemented, FDI could transform Ukraine's resource sector into a cornerstone of its economic recovery, reducing inefficiencies and increasing national revenue.

Another key benefit of the agreement is the potential for massive job creation within Ukraine's mining and mineral processing industries. Expanding mining operations would require a skilled workforce, leading to thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities across different sectors. Jobs in engineering, logistics, transportation, and environmental management would see growth, providing economic stability for Ukrainian citizens who have faced job displacement due to the ongoing conflict. Additionally, the emergence of a more technologically advanced mining industry could drive further employment in scientific research and mineral exploration, fostering a generation of specialists and engineers who would contribute to

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Ukraine's long-term industrial development. A well-regulated employment strategy could ensure that these jobs are sustainable, offering livelihood security for the Ukrainian workforce.

Finally, technological advancement through U.S. expertise may significantly improve Ukraine's ability to process and refine minerals locally, allowing the country to capture more value in the supply chain. Rather than solely exporting raw materials, Ukraine could develop domestic capabilities in mineral refinement, producing high-value products such as battery components, industrial metals, and electronic-grade materials. With the right strategic investments, Ukraine could move beyond being just a supplier of raw minerals, instead establishing itself as a manufacturer in global industries such as renewable energy and aerospace technology. This would not only increase Ukraine's economic independence but also position it competitively in global markets, ensuring long-term profitability and sustainable economic diversification. However, to fully realize these benefits, Ukraine must implement careful oversight to ensure that foreign investments align with national priorities rather than merely serving external interests.

Potential Risks

1. Loss of Sovereign Control Over Resources

Allowing foreign access to Ukraine's strategic mineral wealth reduces its ability to independently shape its economic future. The 50% revenue allocation clause, which diverts half of Ukraine's mineral earnings into a joint investment fund, raises concerns about whether Ukraine can effectively prioritize its national development needs. Historically, resource-rich nations that entered similar agreements have faced long-term economic constraints, where foreign entities gain disproportionate control over extraction policies. While foreign investment can modernize Ukraine's mining industry, the risk lies in external influence dictating extraction quotas, trade policies, and pricing mechanisms, leaving Ukraine with limited sovereignty over its own resources. If Kyiv does not establish clear governance protections, this partnership may unintentionally weaken its ability to independently manage its mineral wealth, turning its resources into leverage for external powers rather than a tool for national growth.

2. Economic Dependency on the

U.S.

The financial structure of this deal places Ukraine in a position of dependency on American investment, raising concerns about long-term sustainability. If the U.S. decides to alter the agreement, reduce funding, or shift its strategic priorities, Ukraine could face severe economic instability. The reliance on U.S. financing creates a scenario where Ukraine's reconstruction and industrial development are directly tied to the continuation of American financial support, leaving little room for independent economic maneuvering. Historically, developing nations that have relied on external financing for major industrial projects often struggle to adapt when foreign investors withdraw, resulting in stalled development and financial crises. Ukraine must ensure that while foreign investment is welcome, it does not replace efforts to build self-sustaining industries, avoiding the pitfall of becoming economically tethered to American aid.

3. Geopolitical Consequences

Strengthening its economic partnership with the United States will undoubtedly reshape Ukraine's global alliances, but it may also heighten geopolitical tensions. The deal effectively positions Ukraine closer to American interests, further isolating it from Russia—a nation that still controls a significant portion of Ukraine's mineral-rich territories. This alignment could provoke retaliatory measures from Moscow, which may seek to block Ukraine's mining operations, disrupt trade routes, or even escalate economic warfare strategies. Additionally, European allies may feel sidelined by this agreement, as American firms gain dominant access to Ukraine's resources, potentially reducing opportunities for European economic partnerships. Given Ukraine's long-term goal of integrating with the European market, it must carefully navigate these diplomatic concerns to avoid alienating strategic European allies while maximizing the benefits of its U.S. partnership.

4. Legal and Political Challenges

The ratification process for the agreement has already sparked political disagreements between Ukraine and the U.S., indicating potential future governance hurdles. Washington has insisted on simultaneous approval of the investment fund, whereas Ukraine has argued that the fund agreement must first be ratified by its parliament. This conflict underscores the complexity of balancing foreign interests with national sovereignty, as Ukraine must ensure full legislative control over agreements affecting its mineral wealth and economic future. If Ukraine's parliament rejects or delays ratification, diplomatic tensions could emerge between Kyiv and Wash-



US Treasury secretary Scott Bessent and Ukrainian first deputy prime minister Yulia Svyrydenko after the deal signing this week © Yulia Svyrydenko via Facebook/Reuters

ington, potentially affecting other economic and security agreements. The success of this deal depends on Ukraine's ability to navigate legal complexities, ensuring that while foreign investment is welcomed, it does not override Ukraine's legislative authority in governing its own resources and financial policies.

Strategic Risks: Exploitation or Fair Partnership?

Transparency Issues

The joint management structure of the US-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund raises serious concerns about decision-making transparency and Ukraine's ability to retain sovereign control over its mineral wealth. While the deal ostensibly allows both parties equal authority in managing investment distribution, the reality of power dynamics in international agreements suggests that Ukraine may have limited influence over key policy decisions. Historically, similar partnerships between developing nations and global superpowers have resulted in disproportionate external control, where the wealthier partner—often the foreign investor—exerts more influence over the terms of engagement. In Ukraine's case, the risk lies in the subtle erosion of economic autonomy, where policies regarding mineral extraction, pricing, and revenue allocation are not dictated solely by Ukrainian interests but are shaped to accommodate broader U.S. industrial and strategic goals.

Moreover, the lack of clearly defined oversight mechanisms within the agreement increases the likelihood of external interference in Ukraine's internal resource governance. If foreign firms and government bodies—particularly those representing U.S. interests—hold indirect control over investment fund distribution, Ukraine's policymakers may find themselves constrained in shaping

extraction policies to align with national priorities. There is also the looming risk of opaque financial practices, where the allocation of profits and mineral revenues becomes clouded by bureaucratic complexity, making it difficult for Ukrainian stakeholders to track, manage, and benefit equitably from the deal. To safeguard Ukraine's economic interests, stringent accountability provisions must be enforced, ensuring that the joint fund operates with full disclosure of financial transactions, equal decision-making authority, and an independent oversight body capable of addressing concerns regarding external influence.

Environmental Consequences

As Ukraine prepares to scale up mineral extraction under this agreement, the potential environmental impact of intensified mining operations must be scrutinized. Rare earth mineral extraction, particularly in conflict-affected regions, often leads to severe ecological disruption, affecting soil stability, water sources, and biodiversity. The urgency to boost economic recovery may push Ukraine toward rapid industrial expansion, but without strict environmental regulations, this development could come at a significant cost to natural ecosystems. Mining activities—especially those involving elements like lithium and graphite—require extensive chemical processing, generating hazardous waste that, if mismanaged, could lead to long-term environmental degradation. Additionally, the introduction of foreign mining firms under this partnership may lead to profit-driven extraction, where industrial priorities override ecological sustainability. If Ukraine fails to implement stringent regulatory frameworks, mining operations may proceed without adequate environmental protections, putting fragile ecosystems at risk.

Beyond direct extraction concerns, the deal does not explicitly mandate environmental protections, leaving room for ambiguous compliance measures. In regions already devastated by conflict, an influx of industrial activity could further strain local communities, exacerbating water shortages, soil contamination, and land degradation. To mitigate these risks, Ukraine must integrate strict environmental safeguards into the agreement, enforcing policies that limit extraction in ecologically sensitive areas, require sustainable waste disposal methods, and establish independent environmental monitoring agencies. While resource development presents an opportunity for economic growth, it must not undermine Ukraine's long-term sustainability goals, as reckless mineral exploitation could leave the nation economically vulnerable and environmentally compromised in the future.

Absence of Security Guarantees

Despite the economic significance of this minerals deal, one glaring omission stands out: the absence of explicit security guarantees for Ukraine. Given Ukraine's precarious geopolitical position, strengthened economic ties with the United States should logically be accompanied by robust security commitments. However, this agreement focuses solely on resource access and investment, without integrating provisions for U.S. military or defense support. This is particularly concerning given that Russia continues to occupy significant mineral-rich territories in Ukraine, posing direct threats to the nation's resource sovereignty. If Ukraine intensifies mineral extraction efforts in territories at risk of Russian interference, it may inadvertently trigger new security challenges, where e c o - n o m -

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America

Apple says most US-bound iPhones will be made in India, not China

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Worth Noting:

- The company said revenues for the first three months of the year rose 5% from the same period last year, to \$95.4bn.
- Amazon, another tech giant whose results were being closely watched for signs of tariff damage, likewise said sales were holding up, rising 8% year-on-year in its North America e-commerce business in the most recent quarter.
- It forecast similar growth in the months ahead.
- “Obviously no one of us knows exactly where tariffs will settle or when,” said Amazon boss Andy Jassy, while noting that the firm has emerged from periods of disruption – like the pandemic – stronger than before.
- “We’re often able to weather challenging conditions better than others,” he said. “I’m optimistic this could happen again.”

Apple says it is shifting production of most iPhones and other devices to be sold in the US away from China, which has been the focus of President Donald Trump’s tariffs.

The majority of the iPhones bound for the US market in the coming months will be made in India, while Vietnam will be a major production hub for items like iPads and Apple Watches, chief executive Tim Cook says. It comes as the technology giant estimated that US import taxes could add about \$900m (£677.5m) to its costs in the current quarter, despite Trump’s decision to spare key electronics from the new tariffs.

The Trump administration has repeatedly said it wants Apple to move production to America.

The estimate comes as firms around the world are scrambling to respond to the huge shifts in global trade triggered by Washington’s trade policies.

On a call with investors on Thursday to discuss the firm’s financial performance, the Apple boss seemed keen to draw attention to its investments in the US.

Mr Cook opened the discussion with a reminder of the company’s plans to invest \$500bn across several US states over the next four years.

Made in India

He also said Apple is shifting its supply chain for US-bound products away from China, but it is India and Vietnam that are poised to be major beneficiaries of that move.

“We do expect the majority of iPhones sold in US will have India as their country of origin,” Mr Cook said.

Meanwhile, Vietnam will be the chief manufacturing hub “for almost all iPad, Mac, Apple Watch and AirPods product sold in the US.”

China will remain the country of origin for the vast majority of total products sold

outside the US, he added.

Apple shares had plummeted after Trump announced his administration would levy “reciprocal tariffs” on products imported to the United States, with the aim of persuading companies to manufacture more in the US.

But his administration faced significant pressure to moderate its plans. Shortly after the tariffs went into effect, it announced that certain electronics, including phones and computers, would be exempted.

Uncertainty reigns

For now, trade turmoil has left Apple’s sales unscathed. The company said revenues for the first three months of the year rose 5% from the same period last year, to \$95.4bn.

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New positioning

The shift of the iPhone supply chain to India was “impressive” according to Patrick Moorhead, chief executive of Moor Insights & Strategy.

“This is a marked change from what [Cook] said a few years back when he said that only China can build iPhones,” Mr Moorhead said. “There is lots of progress

that Apple must show here but it’s a pretty good start,” he said.

Amazon is also repositioning itself to increase resilience in the face of the tariffs.

The company said it working to make sure it had a diversity of sellers and Mr Jassy said he felt the firm was well-positioned for the months ahead, pointing to the firm’s scale and its role supplying everyday essentials.

For now, it said sales had not been hurt by the tariff turmoil. If anything, executives said the business may have benefited from some customers starting to stockpile. Overall sales jumped 9% to \$155.7bn in the first three months of 2025, compared with the same period last year, while profits surged more than 60% year-on-year to roughly \$17bn.

WORLD

Ukraine's Minerals Deal with the United States: Economic Partnership or Strategic Risk?

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ic assets become military targets. Without assurances from Washington regarding Ukraine's defense, this deal may leave Ukraine economically exposed and strategically vulnerable.

Historically, nations entering resource agreements with global powers have often assumed that economic partnerships naturally extend to security assurances, yet this assumption has repeatedly led to unmet expectations. Ukraine must recognize that economic cooperation does not guarantee military protection, meaning Kyiv must strategically negotiate additional defense commitments to reinforce its national security posture. The U.S. benefits greatly from this minerals deal, as access to Ukraine's critical raw materials will strengthen its global supply chain in competition with China, but Ukraine must ensure that its own interests, including security priorities, are addressed within the framework. If the deal fails to incorporate diplomatic or military guarantees, Ukraine may find itself financially dependent on American investment while remaining militarily exposed, creating a dangerous imbalance in this partnership.

To counter these risks, Ukraine should advocate for explicit security clauses, ensuring that Washington commits to defensive cooperation, intelligence-sharing, or additional military aid beyond economic support. Strengthening both economic and security alliances will allow Ukraine to maximize the benefits of this agreement without compromising its sovereignty or safety, ultimately ensuring that its resource wealth does not become a liability in ongoing geopolitical conflicts.

Conclusion: A Balanced Perspective
The Ukraine-United States minerals deal presents both economic opportunities and strategic risks. While foreign investment can revitalize Ukraine's mining sector, the agreement must be carefully structured to prevent long-term resource dependency and external control. The country's rare earth mineral wealth is a powerful economic asset, but without well-defined safeguards, Ukraine risks losing sovereign authority over its resource management. Instead of viewing the deal as a simple economic recovery initiative, Ukraine must approach it as a negotiation for long-term autonomy, ensuring that mineral revenues fuel national development rather than merely serving foreign interests. To strike this balance, Ukrainian policymakers must adopt proactive strategies that reinforce economic independence while leveraging in-



A photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office shows Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (right) and President Trump, talking as they attend the funeral of Pope Francis in the Vatican, April 26.
Ukrainian Presidential Press Service/AP

ternational partnerships to secure technological advancements.

To mitigate risks, Ukraine must renegotiate revenue-sharing agreements, ensuring that a significant portion of mineral profits remains under national control. The current 50% allocation toward the investment fund raises concerns that Ukraine's economic trajectory may become dictated by external obligations rather than domestic priorities. A more equitable revenue model, allowing Ukraine to retain greater financial autonomy, would reduce the risk of economic exploitation while preserving sovereignty over long-term industrial policy. Strengthening domestic mineral taxation policies and structuring contracts to prevent excessive foreign profit extraction will be crucial in securing Ukraine's rightful stake in its mineral wealth. Furthermore, strict environmental safeguards must be implemented to prevent unsustainable extraction practices. The urgency of post-war reconstruction should not come at the expense of ecological stability, particularly given the chemical-intensive processes involved in rare earth mineral extraction. Without comprehensive regulations, Ukraine's natural ecosystems could suffer irreversible damage, jeopardizing future generations. Establishing independent environmental monitoring bodies, requiring foreign firms to meet rigorous sustainability standards, and developing policies to rehabilitate mined land will be essential in balancing industrial expansion with ecological preservation. Sustainable development must be prioritized to ensure that

Ukraine's mineral wealth remains a long-term economic asset rather than a short-lived exploitation venture.

Ukraine must also demand transparency mechanisms in the investment fund, ensuring that decision-making authority remains balanced and not disproportionately influenced by U.S. interests. The joint governance model raises concerns that Washington may exert outsized control over Ukraine's resource policies, potentially compromising national sovereignty. Establishing strict oversight provisions, requiring full disclosure of fund allocations, and ensuring Ukraine has veto power on extraction-related decisions will help counter external influence. Additionally, Ukraine must diversify its partnerships, seeking investment from European and Asian stakeholders to reduce dependency on a single foreign power. By engaging multiple international players, Ukraine can maximize economic competition, ensuring stronger negotiation leverage while mitigating risks associated with over-reliance on American financing.

Ultimately, Ukraine must strategically leverage its mineral wealth not just as a resource for foreign investors but as a foundation for broader economic independence. By developing domestic mineral processing industries, strengthening internal supply chains, and using resource revenues to fuel local technological innovation, Ukraine can transform mineral wealth into a lasting pillar of national economic resilience. The minerals deal should not merely position Ukraine as a supplier

of raw materials to global markets, but instead establish it as a competitive player in rare earth technology and mineral refinement. If Ukraine navigates the complexities of this agreement with strategic foresight and firm policy enforcement, it can ensure that its mineral wealth serves long-term national interests rather than external economic dependencies.

Final Thoughts

The Ukraine-United States minerals deal represents a pivotal moment in Ukraine's economic and geopolitical trajectory. With vast untapped rare earth mineral resources, the nation stands at a crossroads, one path leading toward economic revitalization and industrial modernization, the other toward potential resource dependency that could limit its sovereign decision-making power. While foreign investment offers Ukraine an opportunity to rebuild key industries, it must be pursued without sacrificing national autonomy over mineral wealth. The ability to effectively govern its own resources will determine whether Ukraine emerges stronger and self-reliant or increasingly beholden to external interests.

For Ukraine, this deal provides the framework for economic expansion, but the success of this partnership depends on its ability to set firm boundaries ensuring that investments serve national priorities rather than external agendas. Without carefully structured revenue-sharing agreements, transparent oversight mechanisms, and diversified trade partnerships, Ukraine risks falling

into the cycle of export dependency, where its mineral wealth fuels foreign industries while its domestic sector remains underdeveloped. The ability to leverage strategic resources for internal industrialization and long-term economic resilience will be the true test of this agreement's viability.

Beyond the economic implications, Ukraine must also consider the geopolitical ramifications of aligning its resource strategy with U.S. interests. Strengthening ties with Washington enhances global market access, but it may also heighten tensions with Russia and European allies, who may view American dominance in Ukraine's extractive industry with skepticism. Balancing this partnership with broader international cooperation, engaging with European and Asian investors, and ensuring multi-level diplomatic negotiations will be critical in preventing geopolitical isolation. Economic strength must coincide with diplomatic agility, as resource governance is inseparable from foreign policy considerations.

Ultimately, Ukraine stands on the precipice of transformation, where strategic mineral wealth can either bolster its industrial foundation or compromise its economic independence. The effectiveness of this agreement will depend on whether Ukraine takes charge of its own resources, developing policies that protect sovereign control and national interests. The world is watching, and Ukraine must decide, will it emerge as an empowered economic force, or entangled in a web of long-term dependence?

Diaspora

Top Alibaba Official Urges Developing Nations to Invest in Sovereign Cloud for Data Security

Developing countries have been urged to prioritise investment in sovereign cloud solutions to strengthen data security and retain control over their digital infrastructure.

By: BRUHAN MAKONG
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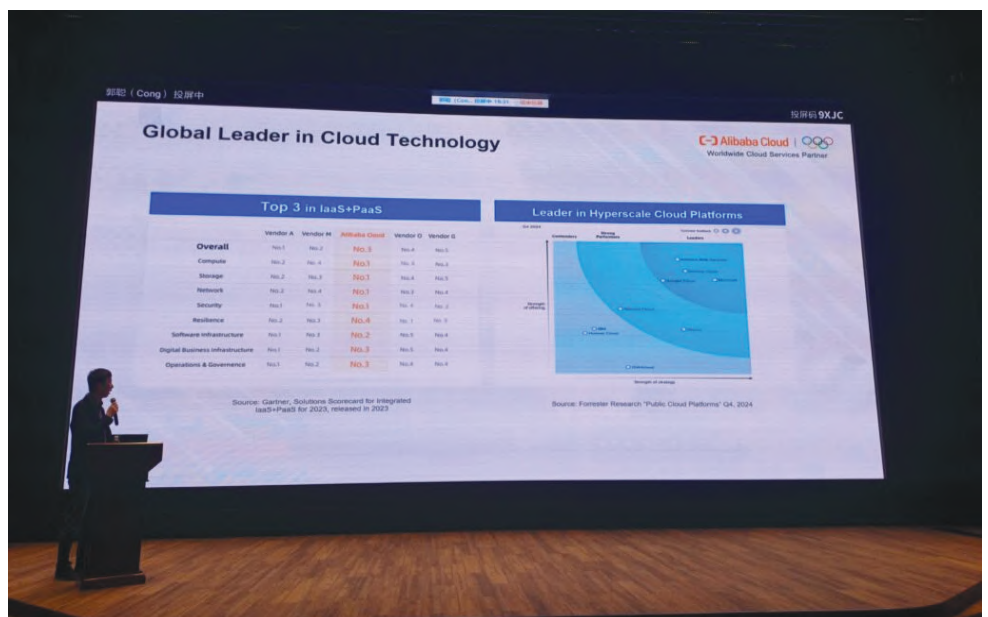


Worth Noting:

- Chen cited Alibaba Cloud's partnership with BCX Telecom in South Africa as a successful case, where Alibaba provided the technology while BCX managed operations independently. The approach, he said, is currently in use across more than 10 countries in collaboration with national telecoms.
- He acknowledged the high costs associated with setting up and maintaining data centres, calling for strong local partnerships and clear digitalisation strategies to ensure sustainability.
- "Cloud technology is just the beginning. Countries need a long-term vision, and we're here to support them in building and implementing high-level digital projects," he added.
- Founded in 2009, Alibaba Cloud is China's largest cloud computing provider and the market leader in the Asia Pacific, according to Gartner. It operates 87 availability zones across 29 regions globally.

Developing countries have been urged to prioritise investment in sovereign cloud solutions to strengthen data security and retain control over their digital infrastructure. Speaking during a lecture to delegates attending a training on Artificial Intelligence and Media in Developing Nations in China, Rex Chen, Director of Public Sector at Alibaba Group International, stressed the importance of localised cloud strategies tailored to national data sovereignty needs. "This is a great opportunity and the right time for countries to invest in sovereign cloud solutions," said Chen during the delegation's tour of Alibaba Group headquarters in Hangzhou. "These technologies allow governments and organisations to maintain full control over their data and infrastructure." Chen explained that sovereign cloud differs from traditional cloud services by giving full operational control to the client—typically a government agency or national telecom operator—while Alibaba Cloud only supplies the technology. "In sovereign cloud solutions, we do not access the data centres. Everything is operated by the client to ensure maximum security," he said. "We are the only provider with this model—other vendors often want to

control the data." Chen cited Alibaba Cloud's partnership with BCX Telecom in South Africa as a successful case, where Alibaba provided the technology while BCX managed operations independently. The approach, he said, is currently in use across more than 10 countries in collaboration with national telecoms. He acknowledged the high costs associated with setting up and maintaining data centres, calling for strong local partnerships and clear digitalisation strategies to ensure sustainability. "Cloud technology is just the beginning. Countries need a long-term vision, and we're here to support them in building and implementing high-level digital projects," he added. Founded in 2009, Alibaba Cloud is China's largest cloud computing provider and the market leader in the Asia Pacific, according to Gartner. It operates 87 availability zones across 29 regions globally. Chen also highlighted Alibaba's growing use of artificial intelligence, from model training to deployment, which has enhanced operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making. He pointed to recent innovations such as Qwen2.5-VL, a visual-language AI model capable of interpreting voice and visual cues, and the AI-powered Quark app,



which now serves over 200 million users in China. In July 2023, Alibaba Cloud made history by enabling

remote video production for the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympics, marking the first time cloud infrastructure

has replaced satellite for primary broadcast delivery.



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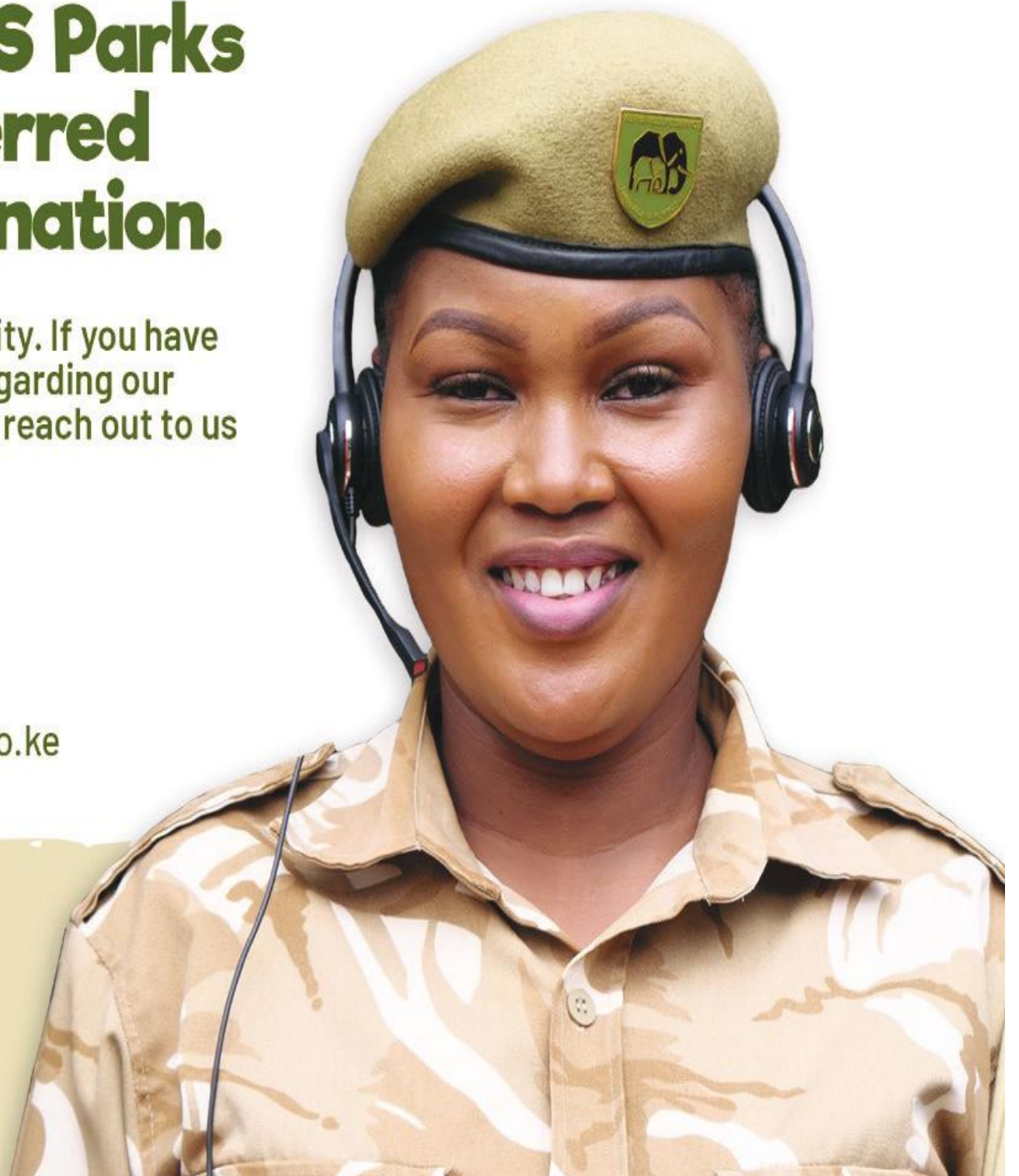
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Diaspora

Dr. Hesbon Owila: Kenya Kwanza's Dwindling Promise — and a Thin Thread of Hope

In the lead-up to the 2022 elections, Kenyans were not simply bombarded with lofty promises, as in the past.

By: Hesbon Owila
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In the lead-up to the 2022 elections, Kenyans were not simply bombarded with lofty promises, as in the past. They were offered dreams that felt reachable — promises that resonated with Wanjiku's everyday struggles. The Kenya Kwanza campaign captured the hopes of millions, vowing to dismantle systems of exclusion and deliver dignity to the ordinary citizen.

For those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, the vision was irresistible: a promise of dignity, even prosperity. Yet today, those same Kenyans are asking hard questions — not because things remained stagnant, but because life under this regime has arguably worsened.

Those who overwhelmingly placed their faith in this leadership have, over the past year, watched their belief crumble. Across towns and cities, the lament is almost uniform: paylips raided mercilessly, a battered healthcare system serving corrupt interests, a broken higher education model tilted against the poor, and a general slide into a darker, more insecure socio-economic space.

This sense of betrayal cuts deeper precisely because the promises once felt so personal, so believable. The anger that fueled the Gen Z-led civil disobedience was not born simply from bad governance, but from the sharp sting of disillusionment — the realization that the real hustlers were deceived to enthrone a regime that now responds with brute force, abductions, and disappearances.

Yet even in this bleak atmosphere, a potential reprieve has emerged. The President's recent visit to China offers the regime something it has lacked since its inception: a tangible narrative of progress.

The deals inked — particularly the dualling of the Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit-Malaba highway and the long-delayed funding for Phase 2B of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) extension to Kisumu — are no small wins. They are major infrastructural projects that could, if properly managed, be transformative.

For a government desperate to demonstrate delivery,



President William Ruto

these projects offer more than ribbon-cutting ceremonies. They provide a thin but crucial lifeline — a chance to claim real progress amid mounting public anger.

But the critical question remains: Will these projects truly change the fortunes of this regime? Will the loans and investments finally uplift Wanjiku, or will they simply become expensive trophies, swallowed up by corruption, mismanagement, and cronyism — the most glaring monuments of this administration?

There is also the uncomfortable contradiction that cannot be ignored: this is the same leadership that campaigned fiercely against borrowing and bloated government structures. Today, it borrows heavily while expanding a broad-based, amorphous government that mocks ideals like separation of powers and democratic oversight.

Drawing from Dambisa Moyo's seminal book, *Dead Aid*, critics warn that loans to regimes without accountability and institutional checks do not foster devel-

opment; they fund oppression, enrich elites, and leave nations poorer and more vulnerable.

The imminent risk we face following these mega projects is clear: without effective checks and balances, without an empowered Parliament and Judiciary, loans and aid become little more than free money for the ruling elite. It is telling that rogue elements are already mounting an onslaught against the Judiciary — the one institution still constructively pushing back against executive excesses.

The regime would save itself by embracing, not stifling, criticism. Leaders and ordinary citizens alike must have the liberty and latitude to critique the government. Constructive criticism is essential if these loans are to serve the public interest rather than entrench political survival tactics.

Otherwise, the likelihood is all too familiar: corruption will flourish, patronage networks will deepen, and the mega projects will become political props rather than engines of real development. This could ultimately spell

the regime's downfall.

Kenya has already seen the dangers of using infrastructure projects as mere symbols of "development" — often poorly planned, overpriced, or unsustainable. The fertilizer scandal — where donated fertilizer was sold to naïve farmers by regime-connected mandarins — was only one recent example of expedient narratives masking deep rot.

To redeem itself, the regime must manage these Chinese-funded projects with utmost transparency and accountability. The President must guarantee that Kenya will not be shackled with an unsustainable debt burden that will haunt future generations.

Granted, the SGR extension from Nairobi to Kisumu, Malaba, and into Uganda deepens China's footprint in East Africa, anchoring its Belt and Road Initiative even more firmly on the continent. But Kenya must leverage this critical logistics corridor from Mombasa into Central Africa and beyond into the Atlantic hinterland.

This demands a bold shift:

investing in a modern port at Kisumu, entrenching manufacturing in the region, and ensuring that this corridor is not just an import highway, but a robust export pathway. Establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along the corridor is critical. Governors heaping praise on the President must now exercise leadership by working collaboratively to develop SEZs that genuinely uplift local communities.

An opportunity presents itself — to deliver real, life-changing development at both national and county levels. A mindset shift is required: the regime must stop focusing on what it is "doing" and instead focus on real, tangible changes in the lives of Wanjiku.

Only then can this thin thread of hope, born of China's investments, be woven into a stronger fabric of national renewal.

Dr. Hesbon Owila is a Media and Political Communications Researcher.

Worth Noting:

• This sense of betrayal cuts deeper precisely because the promises once felt so personal, so believable. The anger that fueled the Gen Z-led civil disobedience was not born simply from bad governance, but from the sharp sting of disillusionment — the realization that the real hustlers were deceived to enthrone a regime that now responds with brute force, abductions, and disappearances.

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Mental Health Issues Among Youth

In today's era of globalization, life has become easier in many ways. Technologies have developed, the flow of information has intensified, and opportunities have expanded.



By: Madina Ikramovna Hakimova .
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

The fast pace of modern life, the pressures of the digital world, the pursuit of idealized lives shown on social media, and excessive expectations from parents and society all place immense pressure on the minds of young people. Every harsh word, lack of attention, comparison, or criticism leaves invisible but deep scars on their mental state.

According to statistics from the World Health Organization, one in five adolescents worldwide suffers from a mental health issue. Suicide ranks among the leading causes of death among youth in many countries. This shows the need to address mental health at a societal level.

Mental health is a person's emotional stability, satisfaction with life, self-confidence, and the ability to build healthy relationships with others. Even if they appear healthy on the outside, many young people are mentally exhausted, feel hopeless, and have lost direction. What are the roots of this problem?

Introduction:

In today's era of globalization, life has become easier in many ways. Technologies have developed, the flow of information has intensified, and opportunities have expanded. But has external progress managed to eliminate internal issues? Unfortunately, no. Especially among young people, mental health problems are becoming more widespread. Every day on social media, in the news, and in real life, we encounter youth who appear healthy on the outside but are broken, lonely, and depressed on the inside. They do not speak of their pain because society still chooses to ignore this suffering. Untreated mental health issues threaten not only individuals but also the well-being and progress of entire communities. That's why this issue is one of the most pressing problems of our time.

Today's youth are the foundation of tomorrow. Their knowledge, health, and worldview shape the future. However, one critical aspect of this foundation is increasingly neglected: the mental health of youth. Most of the time, when we speak of health, we think

of physical illnesses. But the human psyche, inner world, and emotions require care and attention just like physical health. Nowadays, anxiety, loneliness, depression, lack of self-confidence, and feelings of hopelessness are common among youth. Surprisingly, many people dismiss these as mere "bad moods." In reality, these may be warning signs.

The fast pace of modern life, the pressures of the digital world, the pursuit of idealized lives shown on social media, and excessive expectations from parents and society all place immense pressure on the minds of young people. Every harsh word, lack of attention, comparison, or criticism leaves invisible but deep scars on their mental state.

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Main Part:

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faction with life, self-confidence, and the ability to build healthy relationships with others. Even if they appear healthy on the outside, many young people are mentally exhausted, feel hopeless, and have lost direction. What are the roots of this problem?

1. Social Pressure:

Young people feel compelled to become perfect in all aspects—academics, work, appearance. Any mistake is labeled as "failure" or "weakness."

2. Internet and Social Media:

Seeing only the "highlight reels" of others' lives on social media leads young people to compare themselves, which breeds insecurity, envy, and depression.

3. Family and Environmental Misunderstanding:

A child who isn't allowed to express themselves retreats into their own world. Phrases like "You're a boy, don't cry!" or "Don't overthink it!" further suppress them emotionally.

4. Lack of Psychological Support:

In many families and

schools, discussing psychological problems is seen as shameful or unnecessary. This deepens the issue.

Mental health is a key indicator of quality of life. Without emotional stability, a person's ability to learn, work, or contribute to society diminishes. Unfortunately, today's youth face inner turmoil that is often overlooked. This poses a threat not only to one generation but to the stability of society as a whole.

Today's youth are sensitive and emotional, yet live under constant pressure. While technological advancement provides new opportunities, it also brings psychological risks. Every young person seeks purpose and a place in society. However, on this journey, they encounter invisible barriers such as depression, loneliness, and neglect. To overcome these obstacles, they need not only education but also understanding and emotional support.

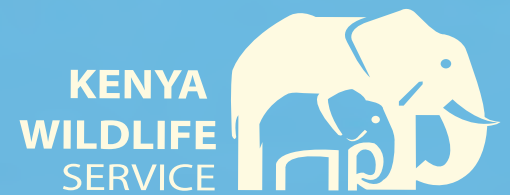
Therefore, mental health should be regularly discussed in schools, colleges, universities, and families. Environments where youth can openly seek help must be created. Promoting psychological awareness is a

necessity of our time. The belief that "asking for help is not weakness, but strength" must be instilled in every heart.

Parents must learn to understand their children not only through their grades or achievements but also through their feelings and moods. Teachers should monitor students' mental well-being and strive for sincere communication. And most importantly, every individual must learn to see the loneliness behind someone's smile and hear the cry behind their silence.

If we learn to listen to and understand our youth, our society will be healthier. Never forget: emotional pain is invisible, but if left untreated, it can lead to the gravest consequences. Every young soul is a universe. Protecting this universe with care and compassion is our human duty.

Madina Ikramovna Hakimova is a first-year student of the General Medicine Department, Faculty of Medicine, Alfraganus University.






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Kenya-China: A Bold Blueprint for a Shared Future

President William Ruto's recent state visit to China marks a pivotal moment in Kenya's foreign policy and economic direction.

By:
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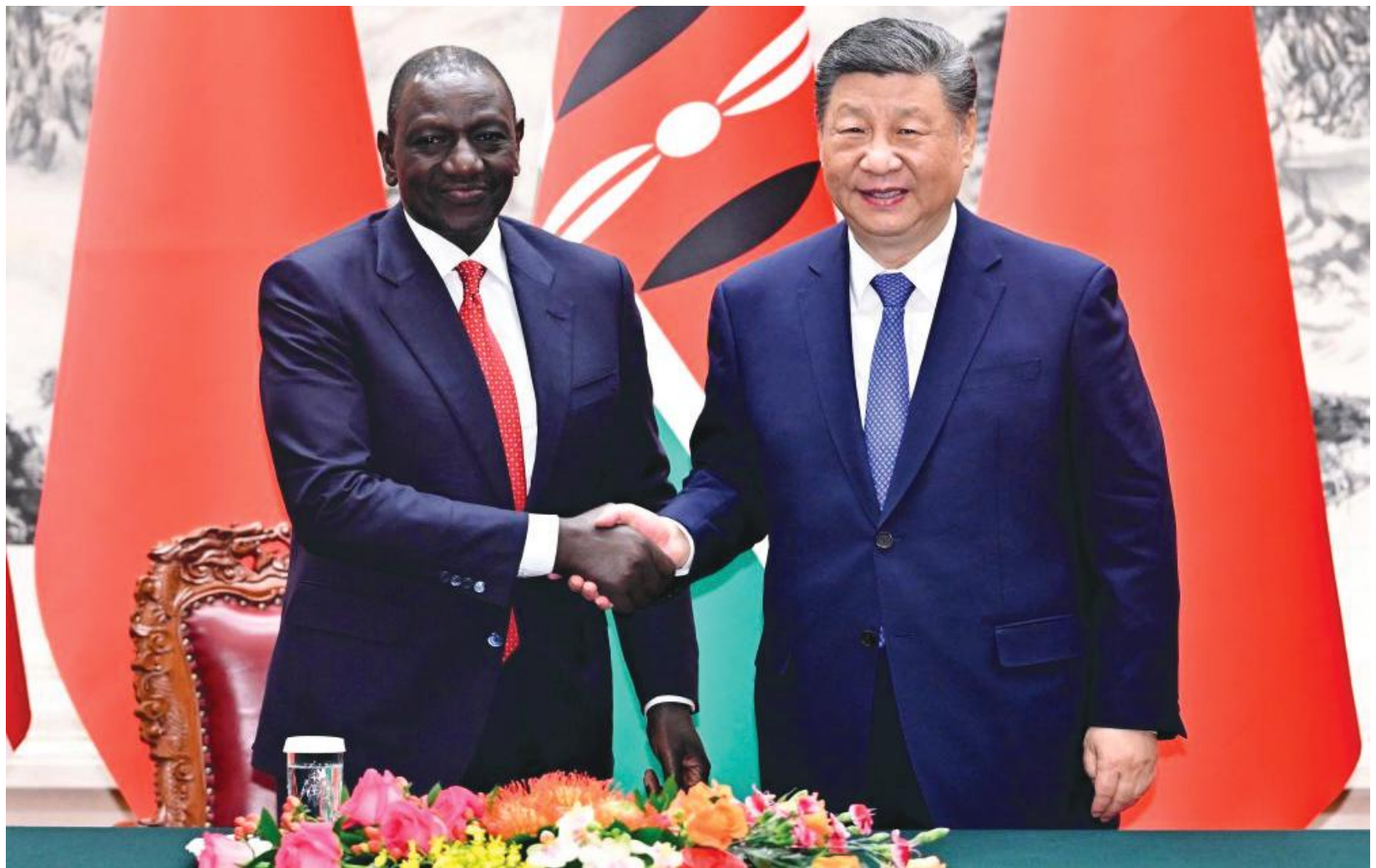
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Worth Noting:

- Equally important is the mutual pledge to defend core interests and resist external interference. Kenya's strong reaffirmation of the One-China policy reflects principled diplomacy and adherence to the international law doctrine of non-interference. At a time of intensifying global rivalry, such clarity of purpose is both rare and commendable.

- The synergy around global initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative also deserves recognition. These frameworks shift the development conversation from charity to partnership. Kenya's growing leadership in climate negotiations and AI governance demonstrates that we are not mere beneficiaries but active contributors to shaping the Global South's future.

- Of course, concerns about deepening ties with China—ranging from debt dependency to opaque project terms—are not unfounded. They must remain part of our national dialogue. But rather than retreat from strategic partnerships, Kenya's opportunity lies in negotiating smarter, implementing more effectively, and governing with transparency.



Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Kenyan President William Ruto at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, April 24, 2025

President William Ruto's recent state visit to China marks a pivotal moment in Kenya's foreign policy and economic direction. The Joint Statement issued by both governments signals a deepening of ties that is strategic, ambitious, and firmly grounded in mutual benefit. At the core of this evolving partnership is the vision of building an "all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era." This relationship affirms Kenya's agency, draws on China's development experience, and underscores the urgent need for African nations to recalibrate their global partnerships toward more equitable and sustainable outcomes. The renewed focus on high-quality Belt and Road cooperation—aligned with Kenya's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and Vision 2030—is particularly promising. For years, Kenya has wrestled

with the "missing middle": the disconnect between major infrastructure projects and the development of local industries. The current commitment to integrate industrial growth, job creation, and sustainability marks a fresh and hopeful chapter—one that deserves close attention and stewardship.

Equally important is the mutual pledge to defend core interests and resist external interference. Kenya's strong reaffirmation of the One-China policy reflects principled diplomacy and adherence to the international law doctrine of non-interference. At a time of intensifying global rivalry, such clarity of purpose is both rare and commendable.

The synergy around global initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative also deserves recog-

nitition. These frameworks shift the development conversation from charity to partnership. Kenya's growing leadership in climate negotiations and AI governance demonstrates that we are not mere beneficiaries but active contributors to shaping the Global South's future.

Of course, concerns about deepening ties with China—ranging from debt dependency to opaque project terms—are not unfounded. They must remain part of our national dialogue. But rather than retreat from strategic partnerships, Kenya's opportunity lies in negotiating smarter, implementing more effectively, and governing with transparency.

Efforts to expand trade—especially by increasing Kenyan exports to China—could yield transformative benefits for farmers, manufacturers, and small enterprises. Joint initiatives in smart cities, AI,

green technology, and modern agriculture offer Kenya the chance to leapfrog traditional development paths and build a future-ready economy.

Yet, the success of these grand visions depends on their impact on ordinary Kenyans. The Standard Gauge Railway offers a cautionary tale: ambition must be balanced with affordability. Future projects must prioritize local content, technology transfer, and skills development.

Internally, Kenya must strengthen its systems to manage new investments transparently, maintain debt sustainability, and ensure that all initiatives serve national interests. Parliamentary oversight, public engagement, and professional negotiation should not be seen as obstacles but as critical safeguards of long-term prosperity.

Finally, as China and Kenya commit to being steadfast

partners for global peace, a true test of this alliance will be their shared commitment to "African solutions for African problems." Supporting the African Union's peace and security architecture and elevating Africa's voice in global governance must be foundational pillars of this partnership.

In sum, President Ruto's visit to China was more than a diplomatic success—it was a call to action. Kenya's policymakers, businesses, and citizens must think bigger, act bolder, and demand more from international cooperation. If guided with foresight and integrity, the China-Kenya partnership can become a powerful model for Africa and the wider Global South.

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