



**China's Landmark Private Sector Promotion Law To Fortify Economy Resilience, Vitality**

China's top legislative body passed the private sector promotion law on Wednesday, establishing a legal backing for the steady and healthy growth of the vast sector, including more than 57 million private firms and over 100 million self-employed individuals. As China's first fundamental legislation dedicated to the private sector, the new law will bolster confidence

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**News >> KTDA - MS  
Chairman Urges Tea  
Farmers To Enhance  
Quality**


P. 8. Tea farmers across the country have been urged to enhance quality of their produce to maximise returns



**News >> Farmers Pledge  
To Support Leasing Of  
Four Sugar Factories**

P. 12. The Kenya National Federation of Sugarcane Farmers and the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation and Allied Workers (KUSPAWU) have welcomed the government's move to lease out four sugar factories namely Nzoia, Chemilil, Muhorono and Sony.

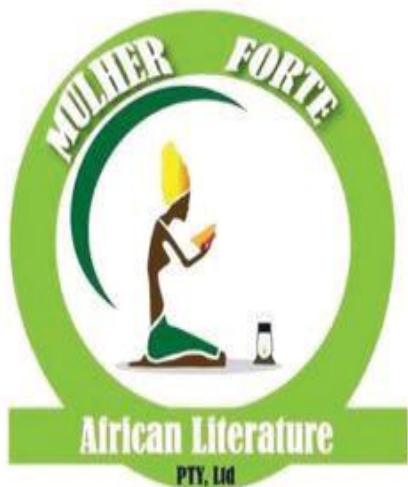
# Ruto: Finance Bill 2025 Will Bring Great Benefits

 President William Ruto announced yesterday that the proposed Finance Bill 2025 will offer significant benefits to Kenyans. He says the Bill has been thoughtfully crafted to stimulate economic growth, deliver efficiency, enhance competitiveness, and expand opportunities. Courtesy of the new bill, Ruto explained that pensions and gratuity payments for workers in both the private and public sectors will be tax-free starting from the next financial year. Speaking at Uhuru Gardens Stadium in Nairobi during this year's Labour Day celebrations, he expressed the government's commitment to workers' welfare.



President William Ruto

STORY ON PAGE 9



*Let the pen flow.*



# President Ruto Leads Labour Day Celebrations

By: MKT Reporter  
@themtkenyatimes

*Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures*

President William Ruto yesterday led the marking of 60th celebrations at Uhuru Gardens in Nairobi.

The president noted that the government was taking bold and measurable steps to make Kenya truly self-reliant by growing the economy, supporting enterprises and uplifting workers.

He disclosed that to boost workers take-home pay, employers will now apply tax reliefs and exemptions directly when calculating PAYE, eliminating delays for employees.

Further, he revealed, all pension and gratuity payments for public and private sectors will be tax-exempt, honouring our retirees and protecting their dignity as the government appreciated their invaluable contribution, which has helped Kenya emerge as the sixth-largest economy in Africa.



Editor's Desk



The Mt. Kenya Times

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## NEWS IN BRIEF



The Nyeri National Polytechnic fraternity led by Chief Principal Dr David Mwangi (3rd right) recently visited Full Care Medical Limited Company for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The primary objective of the MOU is to establish a partnership focused on job-related training and employment opportunities. Currently, the company has employed 1,000 youths, and with the completion of its second phase expected by July, it anticipates creating employment for an additional 5,000 youths, primarily targeting fashion design graduates. The Polytechnic is preparing to release 100 graduates who will soon join the company's workforce.



Othaya Constituency Member of Parliament Wambugu Wainaina alias Kirima (in White T-shirt) spent his Labour day by giving out fruit seedlings to some of his constituents where he distributed more than 2,500 avocado seedlings to some farmers across the four wards. During the event, the MP encouraged the residents to continue working hard and keep investing in long-term initiatives. He thanked the Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development Mutahi Kagwe for donating the seedlings.



Building on the momentum, yesterday Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) officials trained farmers in Murungaru on rapid seed-potato multiplication using Rooted Apical Cutting (RAC) technology. They gained hands-on experience by setting up demonstration plots with high-yielding potato varieties — Shangi, Wanjiku, and UNICA. The training emphasized good agronomic practices and climate-smart innovations aimed at boosting potato productivity. Appreciation to ASARECA, KALRO, NPC-Kenya, FiPS-Africa, and Egerton University for their continued commitment to empowering farmers across counties.



Former Nyeri Senator Eng. Ephraim Maina on Wednesday appeared in public where he urged the government to intensify its fight against corruption stating that the funds lost to graft could significantly contribute to national development in Health, Education and Agriculture. Appearing in Mathira for the first time since he lost in the last General Elections, Eng Maina was at the funeral of his cousin, the late Erastus Waigwa Weru who was buried at his farm at Ragati village near Karatina town.



Principal Secretary for Child Welfare Services, Carren Agen'go held a high-level breakfast meeting aimed at advocating for increased investment in Kenya's child protection workforce. The forum brought together key stakeholders—including Members of Parliament, Senators, Government officials, civil society organizations, and development partners—to emphasize the crucial role played by social workers, child protection officers, and other frontline professionals in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children. The Government of Kenya, in collaboration with development partners, remains committed to strengthening child protection systems to ensure these professionals are adequately trained, resourced, and supported. In attendance were representatives from; the National Treasury, Parliamentary Service Commission, Public Service Commission, UNICEF Kenya, World Bank, World Vision, ILO, Lumos Foundation, UNODC, Terre des Hommes (TDH), SOS Children's Villages, World Food Programme (WFP), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Plan International Kenya, Save the Children, ChildFund, and Mtoto News.



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- 23<sup>rd</sup> May - Official Opening Day
- 24<sup>th</sup> May - Family Fun Day

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# Ruto Fulfills Pledge To Educate Vulnerable Nairobi Girls

By: Beth Nyaga

@themtkenyentimes

## Worth Noting:

• “To support this transition, we are constructing 23,000 new classrooms across the country. Nairobi alone will benefit from an additional 240 classrooms, with Ksh 1 billion already allocated,” he said.

• He added that the Nairobi classrooms should be completed within 90 days.

• He also pledged to build a new school in Mabatini, Mathare Constituency, to tackle educational challenges in the area.

President William Ruto has fulfilled a promise he made earlier this year to support the education of vulnerable girls from Nairobi County.

The Head of State committed in March 2025 to sponsor ten needy girls from each of Nairobi’s 17 constituencies to join PCEA Booth Girls’ High School in Ngong Forest, a pledge he has now honoured.

On Wednesday, President Ruto hosted the students, their parents, and teachers for a breakfast meeting at State House, Nairobi, where he emphasised his commitment to ensuring access to quality education for all children, regardless of background.

“This initiative targets girls from needy homes who would otherwise struggle to access education. I instructed the Ministry of Education to identify deserving students, and I will personally pay their school fees,” said the President.

The sponsorship package covers tuition, uniforms, and shopping. The President also revealed that he is supporting over 200 students at PCEA Booth Girls’ High School.

In support of the institution, the Teachers Service Commission has deployed teachers, further strengthening the school’s ability to deliver quality education.

Nairobi leaders present at the event included MPs Phelix Odiwuor (Lang’ata), Beatrice Elachi (Dagoretti North), Anthony Oluoch (Mathare), Timothy Wanyonyi (Westlands), and Nairobi Woman Representative Esther Passaris.

President Ruto reiterated the government’s commitment to addressing the shortage of classrooms across the country, particularly to facilitate the



President William Ruto.

transition from Junior to Senior Secondary under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

“To support this transition, we are constructing 23,000 new classrooms across the country. Nairobi alone will benefit from an additional 240 classrooms, with Ksh 1 billion already allocated,” he said.

He added that the Nairobi classrooms should be completed within 90 days.

He also pledged to build a new school in Mabatini, Mathare Constituency, to tackle educational challenges in the area.

On the broader support for needy learners, the President announced plans for a joint framework between

the National Government and County Governments to facilitate scholarship and bursary disbursement.

“I have directed the Ministry of Education to work with the Council of Governors to create a legally sound framework for delivering scholarships through both levels of government,” said Ruto, calling education “the greatest equaliser.”

The President also provided an update on the Affordable Housing Programme, saying the initiative is on track and that new homeowners would soon receive keys to their houses.

Calling for unity among leaders, President Ruto urged politicians to set aside political differences and focus on delivering development to the people.

“This is not the time for politics. Let us use the opportunity we have to transform the nation and deliver tangible change,” he said.

Lang’ata MP Phelix Odiwuor, popularly known as Jalang’o, thanked the President for his efforts to improve PCEA Booth Girls’ High School and support vulnerable families.

“You have touched the lives of many deserving parents,” said Odiwuor.

Dagoretti North MP Beatrice Elachi praised the President for engaging with grassroots communities in Nairobi, adding, “No other President has done this before.”

Mathare MP Anthony Oluoch encouraged the students to seize the opportunity and excel in their studies.

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# KTDA - MS Chairman Urges Tea Farmers To Enhance Quality

By: MKT Reporters  
 @themkenyatimes

Tea farmers across the country have been urged to enhance quality of their produce to maximise returns.

Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA-MS) chairman Solomon Muriithi Maina alias Solo said with good quality tea, farmers were poised to receive good proceeds.

He said plucking diverse quality tea was the reason different factories paid farmers differently.

In a significant development for local tea farmers, Solo commissioned a new tea collection center in Kiaritha-ini area, Iria-ini Ward, Mathira constituency.

The initiative of the local farmers to have a tea collection center in the area has in the past stalled due to lack of funds as well as appropriate land for erecting it.

However, when the farmers approached the tea body boss through area MCA David Kabatha, he undertook to see the project started and completed.

This is a major step towards improving access to the market for local tea farmers.

Until yesterday, area farmers had to take their produce to Ihwagi, which is three kilometres away, subsequently incurring extra costs.

According to Solo, tea should take minimum time from when it was picked to processing to maintain quality.

The new facility is expected to streamline tea collection, reduce transportation challenges, and enhance income opportunities for hundreds of smallholder farmers in Iria-ini ward.

The new tea collection center will benefit local farmers by providing a centralized location to sell their harvest, potentially increasing their income. This will streamline the process of tea production, ensuring better quality control," said Solo.

The project is also likely to lead to more tea production in the area as well as creating job opportunities and boosting the local economy.

The modern facility, which took only a few weeks to be completed will be serving over two hundred small - scale farmers in Kiaritha-ini, Kiamwangi and Muhuhi areas.

"For years, tea farmers in Kiaritha-ini and its surrounding areas faced the challenge of transporting their produce over long distances to the Ihwagi Tea Collection Center," noted the Ragati tea factory chairman John Kario who thanked the sponsor for alleviating the farmers suffering.

Solo urged both the national and coun-

ty governments to set aside resources to build new buying centres across the country and rehabilitate the old ones as tea is the second highest income earner and needs concerted efforts.

"By assisting tea farmers the two levels of government will be enhancing wider tax bases as well as boosting much needed foreign exchange", noted the KTDA(MS) boss.

"This facility which serves as a hub for high volumes of tea collection, has often been overwhelmed by the sheer amount of produce coming from local farmers," opined the Ragati factory chairman.

"Recognizing this issue, the Chairman pledged during a public meeting a few months ago to support the construction of a new facility to better serve the community's needs; a promise he has kept", declared Kario amid thunderous cheers from the farmers.

He extended his gratitude to the community and the diligent construction team, whose combined efforts will be pivotal in completing the project as soon as possible.

The decision to build the new tea collection center aligns with ongoing advocacy for the quality handling of tea, which is essential to securing better prices in the market.

By improving the logistics of tea collection, farmers hope to enhance the overall efficiency of their operations and boost their earnings.

Many of the benefits this new center will bring, not only in terms of convenience but also in fostering economic growth in the region.

The initiative exemplifies the power of collaboration between local leadership and the farming community to address critical issues impacting their livelihoods.

Solo clarified that he used his money to build the centre contrary to claims that he used KTDA-MS resources.

Local leaders led by area MCA David Kabatha, his Magutu counterpart Jackson Kabingu and Julius Kamiri (Konyu) lauded the new project saying it will benefit the tea farmers directly.

Such sentiments were aired by Ragati factory directors Wanderi, Miano and Ndoria.

At the same time, Solo commissioned a new Bodaboda shed which is adjacent to the tea collection centre.

Locals residents lauded Solo's generosity saying they will reciprocate in case he will need their support in any way.

Those who spoke also declared with unwavering support for former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua saying they were solidly behind him in all his initiatives.



KTDA-MS chairman Solomon Muriithi Maina alias Solo being welcomed at Kiaritha-ini area yesterday.



KTDA-MS chairman Solomon Muriithi Maina alias Solo briefing journalists at Kiaritha-ini yesterday



The new tea collection center built under the sponsorship of KTDA-MS chairman Solomon Muriithi Maina alias Solo.



The bodaboda shed erected under the sponsorship of KTDA-MS chairman Solomon Muriithi Maina alias Solo. Photos/Courtesy.

# Finance Bill 2025 Will Bring Great Benefits To Kenyans, Says President Ruto

By: Eric Biegon  
@themkenyatimes



President William Ruto speaking at Uhuru Gardens Stadium in Nairobi during this year's Labour Day celebrations.

## Worth Noting:

- In response to the complaint by Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) Secretary-General Francis Atwoli regarding some employers not implementing the 6 per cent minimum wage increase awarded in 2024, the President directed the Ministry of Labour to ensure that employees receive their entitled wages without discrimination.

- "It's unacceptable for employers not to implement the minimum wage increase. The Ministry of Labour should ensure this issue is addressed," President Ruto said.

- The President also highlighted that the government has made significant progress in addressing the long-standing shortage of teachers by hiring 76,000 over the past two years, with an additional 20,000 tutors set to be hired in January 2026.

President William Ruto announced yesterday that the proposed Finance Bill 2025 will offer significant benefits to Kenyans. He says the Bill has been thoughtfully crafted to stimulate economic growth, deliver efficiency, enhance competitiveness, and expand opportunities.

Courtesy of the new bill, Ruto explained that pensions and gratuity payments for workers in both the private and public sectors will be tax-free starting from the next financial year.

Speaking at Uhuru Gardens Stadium in Nairobi during this year's Labour Day celebrations, he expressed the government's commitment to workers' welfare.

To improve workers' take-home pay, President Ruto stated that employers will now be required to apply eligible tax reliefs and exemptions directly when calculating Pay As You Earn (PAYE). This marks a significant shift from the current system, where these reliefs must be claimed from the Kenya Revenue Authority.

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al Francis Atwoli regarding some employers not implementing the 6 per cent minimum wage increase awarded in 2024, the President directed the Ministry of Labour to ensure that employees receive their entitled wages without discrimination.

"It's unacceptable for employers not to implement the minimum wage increase. The Ministry of Labour should ensure this issue is addressed," President Ruto said.

The President also highlighted that the government has made significant progress in addressing the long-standing shortage of teachers by hiring 76,000 over the past two years, with an additional 20,000 tutors set to be hired in January 2026.

He noted that his administration has substantially reduced the teacher shortage, which stood at 116,000 in 2022.

"We have set aside KSh2.4 billion to hire an additional 20,000 intern teachers starting January 2026," the President announced.

Additionally, he pointed out that the government has allocated KSh1.6 billion for the capacity building of teachers and another KSh1 billion for promotions.

"These investments have improved the student-teacher ratio, enhanced literacy and numeracy outcomes, and created stable employment in communities across the country," he said.

Furthermore, President Ruto assured Kenyans of his commitment to advancing the nation's development.

He emphasized the need for leaders to focus on service delivery, noting that elections are two years away.

"We can't make progress as a country if we don't make the right decisions. I want to promise the people of Kenya that I will always make the right decisions to change the destiny of this country," he said.

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi praised President Ruto's efforts in transforming the country, stating that Kenya is the largest economy in East and Central Africa.

"We should all know that the biggest threat to a nation is not terrorism, but the collapse of institutions. Our institutions have been solid because of the good leadership of President Ruto," he said.

Labour Cabinet Secretary Alfred Mutua called for an end to sexual

harassment in the workplace, urging managers to create safe and respectful environments for all employees.

Mr Mutua noted that his office has received numerous complaints regarding harassment and warned that this unethical behaviour must cease.

He emphasised the importance of discouraging inappropriate conduct and specifically urged managers to refrain from engaging in sexual relationships with junior staff.

COTU Secretary-General Francis Atwoli appealed to Kenyans to embrace peace and unity, urging them to reject any attempts to sow discord among their communities.

He pointed out that residents in some areas of Africa, including Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo, are suffering greatly due to instability.

"As Kenyans, we must guard the peace we are enjoying for the sake of prosperity," he said.

The COTU leader urged employers to implement President Ruto's directive regarding the 6 per cent wage increase announced during last year's Labour Day celebrations.

# State Moves Towards Achieving Universal Health Coverage

By: Ekuwam Sylvester  
@themtkenyatimes

The new Social Health Authority (SHA) is a major step by the government towards achieving the country's Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The Authority Ag. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Robert Ingasira has highlighted the various innovations embraced by the medical scheme to ensure effective health services delivery to the citizens like digital enrolment and biometric identification, which draws its data from the National Registration Bureau (NRB) data base, electronic claims processing; fraud detection systems using artificial intelligence (AI) and Health Information Exchange among others.

Ingasira spoke when addressing the members of the public during the Second Annual Regulatory Authorities and Agencies (RAAs) Conference in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu county under the theme, "The Urgent Fortification of the Responsiveness by Regulators to the Campaign on the Revitalization and Re-energization of Regulatory

Authorities and Agencies, with the byline being, Strengthening Regulators; Enhancing Compliance."

Ingasira pointed out that the SHA (SHI Act) created in 2023 replaced the old NHIF system in order to make sure everyone can get health care without financial problems and aims to improve healthcare for all Kenyans through the three funds, namely, The primary Healthcare Fund (PHCF), Social health Insurance Fund (SHIF) and Emergency Chronic and Critical Illness Fund (ECCIF).

The Ag. CEO emphasized that the SHI Act is guided by principles of universal coverage, which ensures access to essential services for all Kenyans; a contributory basis, which involves contributions from individuals, employers and government; risk pooling, where contributions are pooled to create a fund for paying for healthcare services for all members; and the principle of equity, which ensures contributory amounts are proportionate to income levels to ensure fair participation across income brackets.

Noting that the SHA is more advantageous compared to the old NHIF, Ingasira urged Kenyans to register in



Robert Ingasira

numbers, noting that the SHA systems are all working across all public hospitals from Level 1 to Level 6.

He revealed that the current statistics show that the total registration stands at 21.8 million, with 6.38 million dependents, a total claim value of Sh56.7 billion, 1.5 million total number of patients treated, and 2.4 million

total visits, while some 4.6 million Kenyans have undergone means testing.

The Ag. CEO called for adequate funding for PHCF, ECCIF, indigents, strong collaborations and partnerships with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the National Government Administrative Officers

(NGAOs), full integration, automation and digitalization, sustained public awareness, as well as inclusivity of special groups and others in order to streamline services.



# Rogue Churches Exposing Followers To Cultic Life

By: MKT Reporter  
@themtkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

- The Shakahola exposé is a recent phenomenal example of why the Presidential taskforce on review of laws governing religious organisations in Kenya was proposed.
- At the same time, the recent activities in Rongo in Migori County, where two bodies, including that of a General Service Unit (GSU) officer, were found buried at the Melkio St. Joseph's Missions of Messiah Church compound illegally, point out a further need for urgent reinforcement of the taskforce report.
- The Church's evil activities came into the limelight when the family members of a GSU officer who hails from Kisumu County died in March in the company of his wife while on transit to the Rongo-based Church and was hurriedly buried within the compound of the Church.

For the longest time, the freedom of the Church has been guided by its religious norms, cultures and rules, while adhering to state rule under the then-old 1963 Constitution and the recent 2010 Constitution.

The Church, since independence days, has operated on its guided religious norms with a lot of freedom to worship, as well as operate businesses.

However, the mushrooming of churches in the recent past has brought to limelight serious issues that forced the state to form a Presidential taskforce to review some of the laws governing religious organisations in Kenya.

As of 2023, more than 4,000 churches had been registered in the country.

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The Church's evil activities came into the limelight when the family members of a GSU officer who hails from Kisumu County died in March in the company of his wife while on transit to the Rongo-based Church and was hurriedly buried within the compound of the Church.

The Rongo-based Church with ques-

tionable doctrines has now been shut down by authorities following the rescue of 57 worshippers who resided within the premises while believing in suspicious religious beliefs.

In the last decade, a lot of cult-like religious institutions have emerged, with entities like Yesu Wa Tongaren in Bungoma and the Shakahola massacre in Kilifi county that left over 200 people dead, shocking the nation.

The Kisumu-based Coptic Church is another one that has been engulfed in controversy over the years, with some members of the public accusing the Church leader, Father John Pesa, of practicing cultism.

The long list also includes a pastor of the New Foundation Church in Chakama, Magarini Constituency, Kilifi County, who was recently arrested over the deaths of Church members after tree-climbing rituals in pursuit of healing and freedom.

The Melkio Messiah Church has all the makings of a cult and according to the residents of Opapo village, where the Church has operated with a lot of secrecy for decades, the Church's dead spiritual leader was also buried within the Church's compound and was referred to as Halleluhya.

The 57 believers of the Melkio Messiah Church who were arrested during the police crackdown declined medical treatment.

They instead resorted to reciting their Church teachings and rites, further triggering public beliefs that the Church has radicalized them into some retrogressive religious life.

The congregants also refused to return to their respective homes, sparking alarm among families and authorities that led to their detention in various police stations for the next 30 days.

The 2004 Presidential Taskforce on review of laws governing religious organisations in Kenya, chaired by Rev. Mutava Musyimi, had recommended reforms to curb religious extremism.

However, according to the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, Kipchumba Murkomen, the Cabinet is set to consider the report by the Presidential taskforce before it is transmitted to Parliament for consideration.

According to Migori County Commissioner Mutua Kisilu, the Melkio Messiah Church's registration was irregular, having been filed as a company rather than a religious institution.

Lack of clear laws restricting the opening of churches in Kenya is one of the reasons for the emergence of cult-like churches in the country.

Umbrella bodies like The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), established in 1913 during the Missionary era to provide a clear guideline on church operations as well as to advocate for peace, justice and human rights in Kenya, with core values of integrity, stewardship and professionalism, have no clear path on how to restrict Churches to existing religious laws.

The NCCCK, just as the 2010 constitution under the Bill of Rights, where every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, does not have clear rules

on how churches can be managed or restricted.

According to Lilian Adhiambo, the sister of the deceased GSU officer at Melkio Messiah church, security agencies and the community should play their rightful roles to avoid such incidents in the future.

She revealed that the family had been living in agony over the last month since her brother was buried at the Rongo-based Church.

"I am urging the state to be very keen in identifying this misleading church that brainwashes our brothers and sisters into cultic activities," Adhiambo pleaded.

Nyanza Regional Commissioner Florence Mworora, while on a visit at the Melkio Church, warned that the government will not spare any unregistered Church entities in an effort to curb religious radicalization.

Mworora said that a looming crackdown on unregistered Churches will not spare anyone, cautioning government officials who collude with unregistered entities that their days were numbered.

Meanwhile, the Presidential taskforce on review of laws governing religious organisations in Kenya under the stewardship of Rev. Mutava Musyimi had proposed that individuals who operate unregistered churches and other religious organisations, risk a fine of up to Sh5 million, or three years in jail, or both if the proposed bill becomes law.

# Farmers Pledge To Support Leasing Of Four Sugar Factories

By: Joseph Ng'ang'a  
@themtkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

- Kagwe says the leasing process is ongoing and will not be finalized before the issues facing both groups are resolved.
- “Next week I have a series of meetings with various stakeholders, including the Members of Parliament, the sugar caucus and the county governors of the areas where these factories are located. We cannot do this arbitrarily; there is leadership in that area that cannot be ignored; we cannot ignore the unions; we cannot ignore the farmers’ representatives,” Kagwe stated.
- The CS insisted that nobody will be allowed to take over the factories before they are properly vetted and can meet the conditions set by the government, saying that the negotiations are still going on to ensure that when they lease out the factories, the interests of farmers and workers are protected.



Mutahi Kagwe..

The Kenya National Federation of Sugarcane Farmers and the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation and Allied Workers (KUSPAWU) have welcomed the government’s move to lease out four sugar factories namely Nzoia, Chemilil, Muhorono and Sony.

The process is being overseen by a committee led by Kenya Sugar Board Chief Executive Officer Jude Chesire.

The committee and the two unions have already met with the Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe, who reassured them that the leasing will not be done without the input of farmers and workers.

Kagwe says the leasing process is ongoing and will not be finalized before the issues facing both groups are resolved.

“Next week I have a series of meetings with various stakeholders, including the Members of Parliament, the sugar caucus and the county governors of the areas where these factories are located. We cannot do

this arbitrarily; there is leadership in that area that cannot be ignored; we cannot ignore the unions; we cannot ignore the farmers’ representatives,” Kagwe stated.

The CS insisted that nobody will be allowed to take over the factories before they are properly vetted and can meet the conditions set by the government, saying that the negotiations are still going on to ensure that when they lease out the factories, the interests of farmers and workers are protected.

Kagwe explained that the National Treasury, represented at the meeting by the Director General, Public Investments and Portfolio Management, Lawrence Kibet, moved to assure farmers and workers that all pay arrears will be paid.

The CS moved to reaffirm the government’s commitment to farmers and workers that all dues will be paid before the handover of the factories to the lessees who are still being vetted.

On their part, the Kenya National

Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, represented by its National Secretary General, Kilion Osur Anyango, welcomed the move to lease out the four factories.

According to Anyango, farmers had put their support behind leasing in their submissions to the Sugar Taskforce led by former Agriculture CS Peter Munya and the then Kakamega Governor Wycliffe Oparanya.

“We are ready for the factories to be leased out, farmers were very clear during the public participation stage that we do not want the factories to be privatized. From our experience with private sugar millers,” they are paying farmers on a weekly basis and without fail,” said Anyango.

He added that leasing will enable farmers under the four factories to enjoy the same benefits as he asked the Regulator, Kenya Sugar Board, to standardize weighbridges to ensure fairness and transparency.

“The process of leasing has been slowed by court cases filed by different parties; we ask that a Sugar Arbi-

tration committee be put in place to settle such matters out of court,” said Anyango.

On its part, the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation and Allied Workers (KUSPAWU), led by General Secretary Francis Wangara, welcomed the government’s assurances on the payment of workers.

KUSPAWU also asked the government to ensure that the lessees who win the rights to take over the four factories honor the current Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) between the factories and unions.

“We welcome the government’s proposal to have a one-year period under which no employees will lose their jobs as the lessees assess the factories and determine their labor needs. No employee should earn less than what they are earning under the current CBA,” Wangara said.

To further stabilize the sector, Kagwe confirmed that the ministry has finalized on the new regulations to operationalize the Sugar Act.

# Residents Decry Increased Alcoholism In Parts Of Gatanga

By: Bernard Munyao

@themtkenyatimes

Residents of Kigoro area in Gatanga sub-county, want the Murang'a county government to take stern action against illegal bars and other alcohol outlets operating in the area.

The residents held a peaceful demonstration at Kigoro shopping centre, expressing their concerns after the body of a middle-aged man was found outside one of the local bars.

The deceased had reportedly gone missing for two days, only for his body to be found lying outside the bar.

The agitated residents argued that the deceased was apparently addicted to alcoholism, and his death could have been caused by heavy drinking.

The locals claimed there is only one

shop in the centre, and more than 10 bars wondering how the liquor outlets were licensed.

They stated that most men from the area have indulged themselves in excessive drinking, thus becoming irresponsible.

One of the residents, Rebecca Wangui, faulted the county administration for failing to regulate the number of bars in the area.

She noted that the proliferation of bars in the area has lured many young men into alcoholism, reducing them into zombies.

“Once our husbands and sons step out of home, their first stop is in a bar, and they spend the entire day drinking, which is wasting away their lives.

We want all the bars in this area closed indefinitely because they are even operating during daytime, which is against the law,” observed Wangui



He continued, “A few weeks ago, we buried another man who died of alcohol-related complications, and I know of a few other people who cannot get

out of bed because their health has since deteriorated.”

Meanwhile, alcoholism remains a menace in the central Kenya region,

leading to numerous deaths over the years, despite concerted government efforts to eradicate the vice.

# Shock And Mixed Reactions As Kasipul MP Ong'ondo Were Is Shot Dead In Nairobi

By: Correspondent

Kasipul Constituency in Homa Bay County has been thrown into mourning—and controversy—following the assassination of its MP, Charles Ong'ondo Were, in a brazen shooting in Nairobi.

Were, serving his second term under the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party, was gunned down Wednesday evening near City Mortuary by assailants on a motorcycle. According to police, the attack was premeditated and well-executed.

A statement from police spokesman Muchiri Nyaga on Thursday described the shooting as a “heinous and senseless crime,” adding that no arrests had been made so far. “The nature of this crime appears to be both targeted and premeditated,” said Nyaga, affirming the National Police Service’s commitment to a thorough investigation.

Eyewitnesses said the MP was seated in a white Toyota Crown at a traffic light when two men on a motorcycle approached. One of them

alighted, walked to the car’s passenger side, opened fire, and fled. Were’s driver and another passenger rushed him to Nairobi Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

The MP’s killing has reignited debate in his restive constituency, where he was both feared and followed. While some mourners praised him as a loyal ODM stalwart and ally of Governor Gladys Wanga, others pointed to a troubled legacy marred by allegations of political violence.

Immediately after news of his death broke, disturbing images surfaced online showing individuals allegedly attacked or killed for opposing his leadership. Some residents blamed him for sponsoring goons to intimidate political rivals—accusations he had consistently denied.

Earlier this year, locals had demanded his arrest following violent incidents that left several youths injured, and in some cases, dead. One incident involved a rival aspirant’s vehicle being smashed during a funeral attended by Were.

Were had also expressed fears for his own safety, once telling mourn-



Kasipul MP Charles Ong'ondo Were was shot dead by unknown assailants at City Mortuary round about on April 30, 2025

ers that unnamed politicians were plotting to assassinate him. He had recently been angling for the Homa Bay ODM chairmanship.

Speaker of the National Assembly Moses Wetang'ula condemned the murder, calling it a national tragedy.

“The loss of Hon. Were is not just a tragedy to his family and the people of Kasipul, but a great loss to the nation,” he said, directing that the investigation findings be tabled before Parliament.

While the motive remains unclear,

theories circulating online suggest links to escalating political tensions in Kasipul, where Were was a polarising figure.

The police have vowed to leave no stone unturned in bringing the perpetrators to justice.

## Afterlife



We all begin with birth, then life,  
Then death, then the afterlife,  
Then reincarnation, a new life,  
Then that life, then death, the afterlife  
And another reincarnated life.

That begins with birth, then life, once  
more,  
Then death, afterlife, resurrection, we  
are born;  
To live life, suffer death, experience the  
afterlife.

Once more be reincarnated, once more  
being born,  
Once more live a life;  
Once more experience death and the  
afterlife,

One last time, be reincarnated...

Then we are born again to realise it was  
a lie.  
Another life, another death, another  
afterlife;  
Reincarnated again.

Born, lived, cried, died, afterlife,  
Resurrection, born one more time,  
Lived, lies, cried, died.

Afterlife, resurrection, born again;  
Found religion, lived, died, afterlife.

Reincarnation, change the station,  
Play me a new tune, not this 'Here  
comes another Son'.

He lived, he loved, he couldn't, but he  
sang,

A song of hope;  
A song called No Tomorrow

Written by:- Guneet Malik

## When You Become A Mother



You will understand a mother's worth –  
only when you become a mother yourself!

"Mother" – such a short word, yet it  
embodies the whole universe, the image of  
paradise.

Mother... a selfless, sacrificing woman  
who has forgotten herself for the sake of  
her children.

From the moment we are born, we are  
met with a pair of kind eyes, warm hands  
– it is the gaze and embrace of a mother.  
A mother's love and warmth for her child  
are incomparable to anything else in the  
world.

Even if she doesn't eat or wear good  
clothes herself, she says, "It's for my  
child."

We were all raised in this warmth, in this  
boundless love.

We grew up. But somewhere along the  
way, we forgot something...  
We became independent and began to act  
as if we raised ourselves.

Our attitude toward our mother changed.  
Did we really forget?

Did we forget how she nurtured us, how  
she gave up her own desires,  
How she gave us her last piece of bread,  
How she clothed us while sacrificing her  
own comfort,  
How she dedicated her whole life to us,  
abandoning her dreams and goals?

Maybe it's because we forgot, that now  
we raise our voices at her.  
When she asks for a favor, our expression  
changes.

When she gives us advice, we act as  
though we know better,  
As if we've lived longer and seen more  
than her.

We dismiss her words, elevate our own  
opinions, and believe we're smarter.  
We think we are above her.

Is it really so hard to simply say,  
"Yes, Mom,"

"Alright, you are right, Mom,"  
"Thank you for everything, Mom"?"  
Why does our pride stop us from saying  
these words?  
Does our tongue suddenly become tied?

Maybe that's why...  
We hesitate to say these to the one who  
gave us her all.  
And all she wanted was to feel that same  
love back from us.

Yet when we show off our independence,  
Even then she says, "You're still my child."  
Even if we hurt her, she says, "You came  
from me, and I will always love you."

We have become free individuals.  
But must we really become mothers  
ourselves to understand a mother's  
worth?

Perhaps it's not too late.  
Perhaps we can still say:  
"I love you, Mom,"  
"Mom, take some rest, I'll do the chores,"  
"You are right, Mom,"  
"Thank you, Mom, for everything."

Dear friend, there are countless people  
who want to say these words but no  
longer have the chance.

So many wander in pain, unable to find  
their mother's scent.

One day we will become parents too.  
We will pour our love and warmth into our  
children.

They will grow up.

And when we try to guide them, they  
may say they are independent.  
When we ask for help, they may respond  
with frustration.  
When we yearn for affection, they may  
say they are busy.

Then, our hearts will ache, and we will  
truly understand the value of our own  
mothers.

But by then... it might be too late.  
We may no longer be able to say:  
"I love you, Mom..."

Umida Anvarovna Kocherova, 2nd-year  
student of the Faculty of Medicine,  
Pharmacy direction, AlFraganus University,  
Tashkent

## Mvua Imetuvamia



Nimekolea winoni, nimejitoza kingoni,  
Niliyoshuhudiani, nayapepesa machoni,  
Ilikuwa kijijini, kwetu madongoporoni,  
Njooi mtusaidie imetulemea.

Dalili mvua kuchao, hakika ni ya mawingu,  
Wakihenga wasemao, yaka fungana  
kipingu,  
Yakaezeka makao, tongojini kwa  
machungu,  
Njooi mtusaidie imetulemea.

Ilitanda tandawazi, kwote ni kuka furika,

Nataka usaidizi, wezekanavyo haraka,  
Tumekazika kiuzi, itatuteka mateka  
Njooi mtusaidie imetulemea.

Man'yumba si yamesombwa, hatuna sisi  
makao,

Madarasa yamekumbwa, na maji yake  
faraa,

Kijamii tumekumbwa, msongo  
wamawazia,

Njooi mtusaidie imetulemea.

Nawaita narudia, msisahau wananchi,  
Twahitaji halisia, msitotoe si uchi,  
Kimbieni kututia, Twaumia si wafichi,  
Njooi mtusaidie imetulemea.

Mtunzi: Malenga Mugo Romeo  
Lakabu: Langu Jicho  
Mahali: Nyandarua

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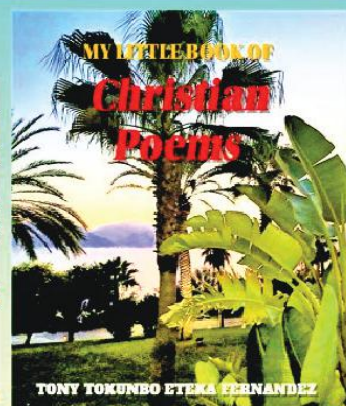
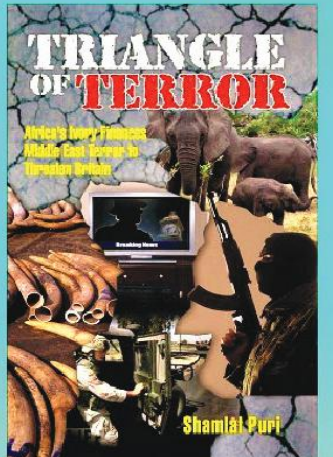
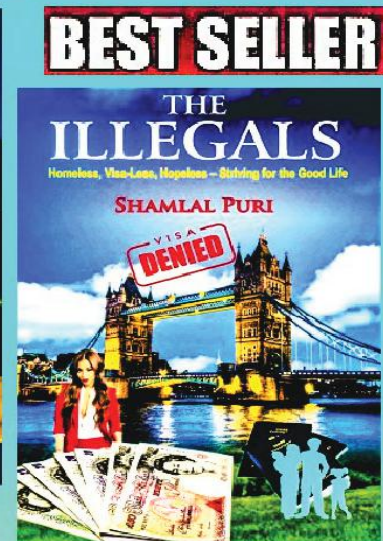
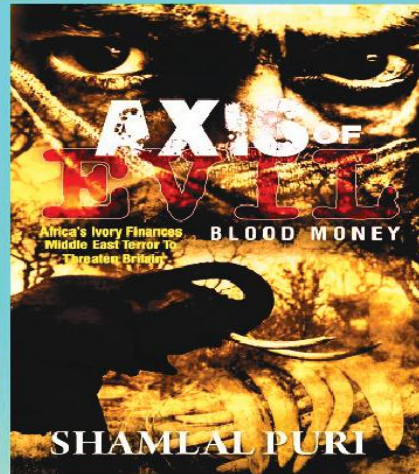
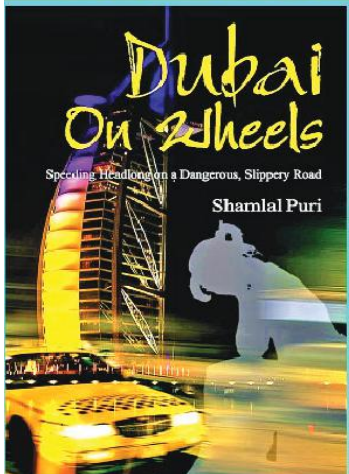
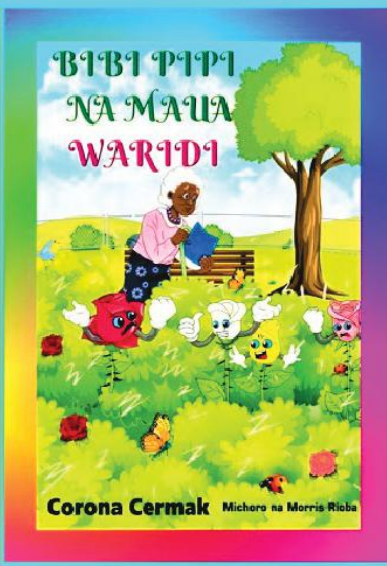
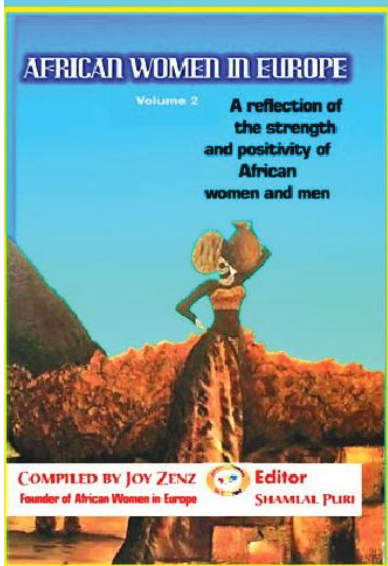
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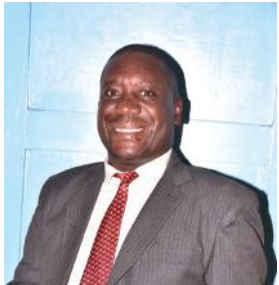
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# BUSINESS

## Un-locking the Boda Boda Industry for Success



By: Raphael Ndakala Atanda  
@themtkenyentimes

### Worth Noting:

- It has been reported that the most prevalent crimes related to the two-wheeler transport industry are causing death by dangerous riding, injuries, general stealing, breaching of public order and creating disturbance, theft of motorcycles, assault, and robbery. It is also claimed that 1,900 riders and their passengers die annually due to preventable incidents. Lack of regulation and training compounds the menace. There is need for urgent safety measures.
- This sector plays a big role in transportation, entrepreneurship and overall economic contribution in Kenya. The vehicles are used for transport of people or as last mile distribution for goods, yet it remains highly unregulated.

The motorcycle taxi industry, commonly known as boda boda in Kenya, is an important and critical mode of transportation in Kenya that offers affordability and convenience. The term originally referred the carrier business of smuggling goods by bicycle and motorcycle operators across the Uganda-Kenya border in the 1980's and 1990's (border to border).

The sector faces significant setbacks that always make headlines for wrong reasons since it is not regulated for safety, security and health. Critics accuse the industry for fatal accidents, criminal activity, safety concerns and reckless riding, leading to its negative exposure. It is said it is a favourite mode of transport for criminals.

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This sector plays a big role in transportation, entrepreneurship and overall economic contribution in Kenya. The vehicles are used for transport of people or as last mile distribution for goods, yet it remains highly unregulated.

Douglas Kivoi writing in a blog re-affirms that the boda bodas filled a gap in the absence of reliable efficient transport across Kenya, in both urban and rural areas, addressing the problem of poor transport infrastructure and network.

But why is this sector not regulated? Is it because there is no political will and that the highly politicised sector serves as a good campaign tool? The sector has no licensing, is not well organized and has 'no single body'. There are also many cases of police harassment and bribery. On matters environment, there is need to curb air pollution due to the motorcycle emissions.

The boda boda sector employs many young Kenyans, and is a source of livelihood to many. The industry supports the social, human, physical, personal and financial needs of the owners, operators and their dependants. Its economic contribution is suggested to be Kes 1 billion shillings



George Rubiri, the General Manager of C&G (Trading) Limited, Sarah Waithaka, a boda boda rider from Nairobi and David Njoroge of Salaba Motors, Kitui admire the TVS HLX 125 during its launch in February 2024.

daily, from an average of 15 rides in a day. This is according a survey done by Car & General in 2020. Its fuel consumption has an immense tax contribution. Each motorcycle consumes around Kes 300 of petrol each day, the treasury collects an estimated Kes 60 billion annually in fuel taxes.

According to a report by the National Transport and Safety Authority of 2018, there were 1,400 registered motorcycles in Kenya. Today, estimates suggest there are over 2.5 million motorcycles registered in Kenya, with a significant portion used as boda-bodas and puts the number of riders is at between 1.5 to 1.8 million. The UN estimates that 5 million people benefit from their income.

In the chaos that characterise the entire transport sector in Kenya, there is need for serious policy and legal interventions. Going forward, the government needs to formalise the industry. There is need for training and licencing. The infrastructure also needs to be improved to accommodate commercial motorcycles since the growing need for safety and professionalism in the industry cannot be ignored.

But there is light at the end of the tunnel. There are opportunities emerging with electric boda bodas

and ride-hailing apps. So much is going on in localisation of several parts that is aiming are enhancing industrialization in Kenya. Car & General, for example, has its assembly plant for its motorcycles in Nakuru. They also opened the first complete helmet manufacturing plant, Boda Plus Limited, in 2021.

Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale had proposed the Public Transport (Motorcycle Regulation) Bill 2023 that sought to regulate the boda boda industry. However, the bill was withdrawn following a spirited outcry from the riders nationwide. The bill had proposed that riders undergo a training course before operating commercial motorcycles. They were to join registered co-operative societies and register with the county governments in order to ensure proper control and accountability. It also proposed installing tracking tools and required riders to have valid employment contracts with the owners.

Other measures included boda bodas being branded with specific colours, displaying registered number platers both at the back and front to enhance identification and regular vehicle inspections. It had given county governments authority to introduce their own regulations. A fine of 20,000

shillings had been proposed for people caught riding on pedestrian walkways and 100,000 shillings or a one-year jail term for riders who either threatened or harmed other people. It had proposes a three year grace period to allow for compliance if this law had sailed through. However, the Boda Boda Association of Kenya was up in arms as soon as the bill was tabled in the National Assembly.

The lesson learnt is that for such efforts to succeed, there is need for all stakeholders – riders, manufacturers, distributors, regulators and government agencies to work together to make this industry more prosperous. There is no doubt that two-wheeler business is important to the Kenyan economy and that the boda boda sector cannot just be wished away. But is there political will to do all these?

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# China's Landmark Private Sector Promotion Law To Fortify Economy Resilience, Vitality

Source: Xinhua Editor: huaxia

## Worth Noting:

- China's socialist market economy operates under a framework where public ownership, manifested by entities such as state-owned enterprises, is the mainstay while multiple forms of ownership coexist. The private sector, including private enterprises and individual businesses, is a major component of the non-public economy.

- The new law enshrines into legal doctrine the long-standing principle of "unswervingly consolidating and developing the public sector and unswervingly encouraging, supporting, and guiding the development of the non-public sector." It also explicitly states that promoting the private sector's sustained, healthy and high-quality development is a long-term major national policy.

- It marks the first time these principles have been codified, providing stronger legal protection for private businesses, according to Yang Heqing, an official with the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

**BEIJING, (Xinhua)** -- China's top legislative body passed the private sector promotion law on Wednesday, establishing a legal backing for the steady and healthy growth of the vast sector, including more than 57 million private firms and over 100 million self-employed individuals.

As China's first fundamental legislation dedicated to the private sector, the new law will bolster confidence among the vast community by improving the business environment, fostering innovation, and ensuring fair competition -- key steps to sustaining high-quality growth in the world's second-largest economy amid growing external uncertainties, experts noted in the latest episode of the China Economic Roundtable, an all-media talk show hosted by Xinhua News Agency.

## STRONG SHOT OF REASSURANCE

China's socialist market economy operates under a framework where public ownership, manifested by entities such as state-owned enterprises, is the mainstay while multiple forms of ownership coexist. The private sector, including private enterprises and individual businesses, is a major component of the non-public economy.

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"The legislation reflects China's clear stance and firm resolve to support private-sector growth," said Liu Min, deputy director of the National Development and Reform Commission's private economy development bureau, a new institution set up in 2023 by the country's top economic planner to coordinate efforts to facilitate private-sector development.

The passing of the law was warmly welcomed by many entrepreneurs.

The law transforms policy support into legal guarantees, giving entrepreneurs greater reassurance and motivation to keep moving forward,



said Qi Xiangdong, chairman of cybersecurity firm Qi-Anxin and vice chairman of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce.

"The rule of law is the best business environment," Qi said.

## ALL-ROUND, TARGETED PROMOTION

The legislation takes direct aim at some of the biggest challenges facing private businesses, with specific mandates to address the community's major concerns.

From ensuring fair market access and financing opportunities to enhancing services and promoting standardized operations, the legislation provides concrete measures to encourage, support, and guide private-sector growth. "The law adopts a problem-oriented approach," Yang noted, as both external factors and internal weak links affecting the private sector's development have been taken into consideration.

By incorporating lessons from past reforms and practical experience, the law refines relevant institutions and measures and ensures alignment with existing laws, Yang said.

Qi, a veteran entrepreneur, highlighted the law's focus on scientific innovation and facilitating financing for the private sector, which is critical for sectors like cybersecurity, where long development cycles require stable cash flow.

China in recent years has stepped up efforts to channel more financing support to the private sector, most of which are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As of the end of March, the outstanding amount of inclusive micro and small loans increased by 12.2 percent year on year,

with loans to technology-based SMEs growing by over 20 percent.

## BIG ROLE TO PLAY AHEAD

The law was timely for China's economy, which faces increasing impact from external shocks. Boosting the private sector, a heavyweight in manufacturing, digital economy, green tech and many other fields, is seen as essential to consolidating the country's sustained economic recovery.

In 2024, private enterprises contributed over half to China's foreign trade and tax revenue, while accounting for more than 80 percent of urban employment. More importantly, they are playing a major role in sharpening the country's innovation edge, generating over 70 percent of China's technology innovation achievements.

"The private sector is a vital force in advancing China's modernization and serves as an important foundation for the Chinese economy's high-quality development," said Sheng Laiyun, deputy head of the National Bureau of Statistics.

China's private sector has posted positive growth momentum recently, echoing the overall upward economic trajectory.

In the first quarter (Q1), some 1.98 million new private enterprises were registered nationwide, marking a year-on-year increase of 7.1 percent, surpassing the average growth rate of the past three years. Investment by the private sector reversed its decline from the previous year by increasing 0.4 percent year on year in Q1.

Official data released on Wednesday showed that business confidence of China's manufacturing and service enterprises remain robust, with their index gauging business expectations both remaining in the expansionary territory in April.

Qi said the company will focus on what high-tech firms do best -- innovating, upgrading industries, and competing globally. "We're now better positioned to become a more creative, competitive, and responsible driving force in this new era."



# Zambia's Ever Shinning Scribe- Molly Kumar

By: Paula .O.M Otukile

📧 @themtkenyatimes

1. Who are you?

My Pen Name is Molly Kumar. My real name is Harbir Kaur, which means God's Warrior. I grew up in India. I can write reams about my life in India. But that is for another day. I got married and came to Zambia twenty-one years ago. I have lived almost half of my life here in this beautiful continent. I received writing genes from my grandfather. He gave me the pet name Molly, as there was presumably a well-known writer by the same name. Was it his intuition at work? Presently, I address myself as an author. It has taken me many years to accept myself into this role. Women tend to wear many hats, and in these hats, they seek the one that resonates viscerally with their desires. Mine has been writing.

I write weekly columns for Zambian newspapers(Daily Nation and Diggers). I write books for children(I have five titles to date). I also do poetry. I love fictional short stories and have written a few. People label me a Children's author, but writing has no boxes. I am aware of my capabilities and know I can write in any Genre. However, I enjoy seeing children reading my books, and I am exploring my potential further. I have opened a YouTube channel called Molly's Nest of Stories to create content for children. It's gratifying and broadens my identity. Who am I? I am what my intellect thinks – I could be! I am what people think of me! I am what people perceive of me. I am still getting to know myself. Maybe at the fag end of my life, I would be able to describe who am I?

Currently, I have zero desire to contain this vast potentiality.

2. What does award nomination mean to you?

This nomination has evoked extreme gratitude. It's humbling -- to stand alongside my fellow authors and represent

Zambia. I am overwhelmed, mostly, on account of being accepted into the fold..

3. What do you think of Mulher Forte African literature?

It's a remarkable, collaborative endeavor to bring creatives under one umbrella. This continent has many tales that are calling out for visibility; Tales of endurance, tales of struggles, tales of resilience, and whatnot! It is

time to make Africa gleam.

4. How are the book sales in Zambia?

My books have sold out. Initially, I thought a lack of cohesive reading culture was why my books were not selling. However, being consistent with promotion and presence at book fairs and events helped with the book sales. Also, being confident about my content enthused my readers.

I think many authors set their book prices too high. It's understandable that they wish to make money, but competition is stiff. At a high price, readers would rather buy books by known, renowned authors.

5. \*How do you feel about writing in Africa?

It's a great time to be a writer in Africa. The continent is vibrant and conflicting. It is replete with narratives that are unknown to the world outside. Nonetheless, the literary sector has plenty of room to grow and prosper.

6. \*What can be done to improve book sales?\*

We had a conference recently, which was aimed at promoting the literary sector. We have awards that provide the necessary impetus. Book fairs, book launches, publishing events, book bookstore promotions are all great ways to spread awareness and increase sales. Navigating social media tools is also important in this day and age.

7. Are Zambians a reading nation?

All nations, including nations mired deeply in conflicts and wars, are reading nations. Reading is a necessity for many, a pleasure for some, and a desire for a few. Zambia's reading habit is in a nascent stage. Global exposure is bound to enhance it.

8. \*Digital literacy how is it in your country?

An advanced economy has skillful mastery over digital use. Zambia is developing, and awareness about digital know-how and integration is slowly increasing. However, the way things are moving in this generation, it won't be a surprise if digital literacy peaks earlier than expected.

9. \*Do you plan to make ebooks? Any plans of audio books?

Ebooks, yes, all my books except one or two are available in this format on Amazon, flipkart .

I made my first children's audio-book, which is available on my YouTube channel- Molly's Nest of Stories. It's an evolving platform for me.

10 What category have you been nominated so far?

I have been nominated for a children's book

11. Who is your local role model?

I will be honest and say that ordinary people have moved me to such an extent that I consider them as real Champions. I do not have any local role models. I admire people and their tenacious nature.

12 Where do you see yourself in ten years in literature?

Creating heart-warming stories. Just being closer to an understanding of this universe and capturing my learnings in words.

13. The concept of Unity, what can Unity do to authors?

It can motivate them to soar above and beyond their naturally ordained capacities. It can assist them in forging masterpieces. Unity and support in life can help overcome any setbacks.

14. Do you have background training in writing?

A diploma in Television Journalism and a natural flair for crafting emotions in words.

15. \*What do you understand by copyrights?\*

To protect your work from plagiarism and intellectual theft, copyrights provide legal safety nets to creators.

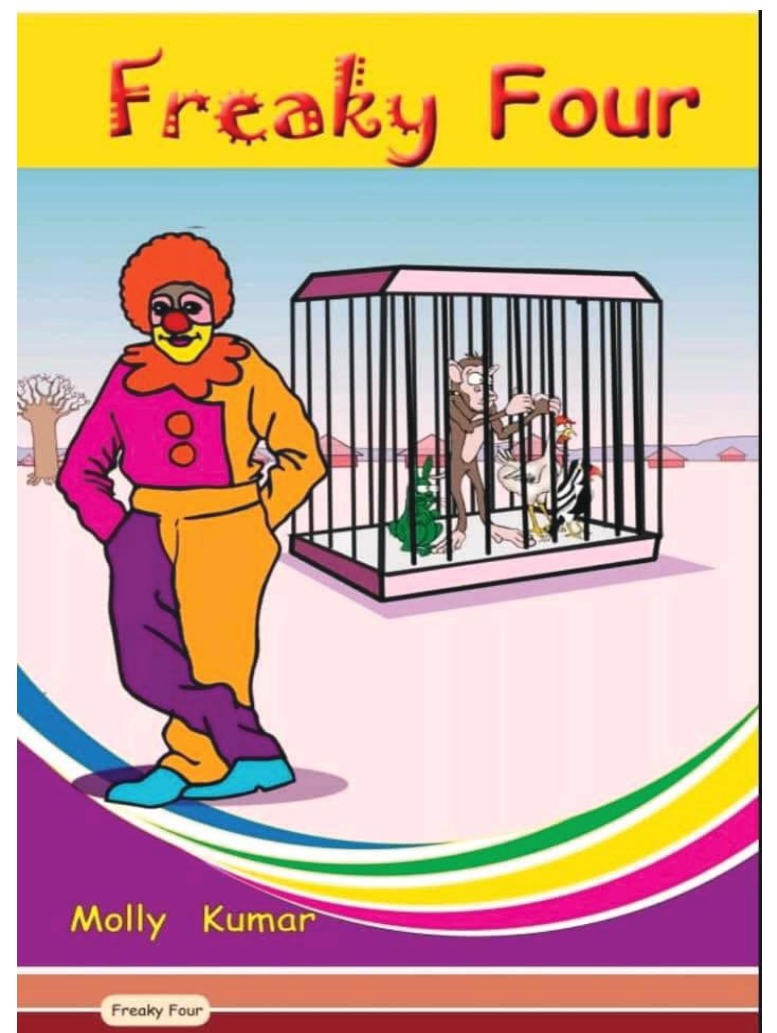
16. Have you protected your books? Yes, I have registered four titles with PACRA.

17. Your advice to upcoming authors.

In the race to publish books, content must not be sacrificed. Books are like jewels that must be preserved carefully. But should fake jewels be given the same amount of care? A book is not just the cover. A book is what it contains.

18. Your last word.

I am humbled to be nominated. I sincerely thank my fellow writers, organizers, and all those who considered me worthy of this honour.



Molly Kumar

Freaky Four

# Reforming Laws And Taking Action: Addressing Violence Against Women And Children In Namibia



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande  
@themkenyaintimes

## Introduction

Namibia, like many nations, faces a harrowing crisis of violence against women and children. The recent spate of killings and assaults, some involving children as young as four, has sparked outrage across the country and the global diaspora. These heinous acts, often linked to witchcraft, illuminati beliefs, sangomaism, or drug abuse, have left communities grappling with fear and grief.

Public outcry has manifested in marches, petitions, and social media campaigns, yet the cycle of violence persists. While raising awareness is crucial, the solution lies in severe action against culprits and comprehensive legal reforms to protect the vulnerable and deter future crimes. This article explores the scope of the crisis, the limitations of current responses, and the urgent need for legal and societal reforms to ensure justice and safety for all.

## The Scope of the Crisis: A Nation in Distress

Namibia has witnessed a disturbing rise in violence against women and children, with cases of abuse, rape, and murder sparking national outrage. The brutality of these crimes, often involving children as young as four or five, has left communities reeling and demanding justice. While some incidents are linked to substance abuse, others are rooted in harmful cultural practices and beliefs.

## Recent Cases That Shook the Nation

One of the most harrowing cases occurred in Okahandja, where the body of five-year-old Ingrid Maasdorp was discovered under a bridge in a riverbed. The child had suffered severe physical assault and showed signs of sexual violence. Her tragic death raised urgent questions about the safety of Namibia's children and the effectiveness of law enforcement in preventing such crimes.

Another devastating incident took place in Windhoek's One Nation in-



formal settlement, where two young children perished in a fire after being left in the care of their older sibling while their mother was at work. This tragedy highlighted the vulnerabilities faced by children in impoverished communities, where inadequate supervision and unsafe living conditions put lives at risk.

The case of eight-month-old Simone Roy, who was killed by her own parents, further underscored the alarming trend of violence against children. Similarly, the disappearance of Spencer Nakale in 2020 remains unresolved, with his family still seeking answers and justice.

In Otavi, a two-year-old boy was brutally murdered by his father, who struck the child's head with a concrete pole until he died. This act of unimaginable cruelty was one of several reported cases of child abuse and neglect in Namibia over recent months.

## Historical Cases That Highlight the Crisis

The Marthinus Pretorius Case (2022): Pretorius was convicted of multiple counts of rape and human trafficking involving minor girls. His crimes were particularly shocking because his own daughter was the same age as his victims. He was sentenced to 35 years in prison.

The David Kido Case (2017): Kido was convicted of murder, rape, and assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm. His crimes were

committed within a domestic relationship, highlighting the dangers of gender-based violence in households. He was sentenced to 32 years in prison.

The Gerson Uri-Khob Case (2013): Uri-Khob was convicted of murdering his wife by stabbing her eight times. The case underscored the prevalence of domestic violence in Namibia. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

The Shannon Wasserfall Case (2020): Shannon Wasserfall's disappearance and murder ignited nationwide protests demanding justice. Her remains were discovered months after she went missing, sparking outrage over femicide and ineffective law enforcement.

The Magdalena Stoffels Case (2010): Magdalena, a young student from Windhoek, was brutally raped and murdered. Her case remains one of the most shocking gender-based violence incidents in Namibia's history, leading to calls for tougher sentences for perpetrators.

## The Role of Substance Abuse and Cultural Practices

Alcohol and drug abuse have been identified as major contributors to violence against women and children. Experts argue that the growing inability of citizens to advocate for mental health support exacerbates the crisis, leading to unchecked aggression and abuse.

Harmful cultural practices also

play a role. Some communities still adhere to patriarchal traditions that normalize violence, particularly against women and children. Clinical psychologist Shaun Whittaker has pointed out that racism and patriarchy contribute to cultural violence, where children are expected to endure suffering as part of their upbringing.

Additionally, financial pressure and denial of paternity often lead to neglect and abuse. Many children are abandoned or left in the care of elderly relatives who lack the resources to provide adequate protection.

## The Role of Witchcraft in Ritual Killings

The belief in witchcraft and its association with ritual killings is a deeply rooted and complex issue in Namibia and other parts of Africa. These practices are often tied to cultural, spiritual, and economic motivations, creating a dangerous environment for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children.

In some communities, witchcraft is believed to hold the power to influence prosperity, health, and success. This belief has led to the horrifying practice of ritual killings, where human remains, often those of young children, are used in ceremonies or as offerings to achieve specific outcomes. These outcomes may include business prosperity, curing illnesses, or gaining supernatural protection or powers.

Cases of Ritual Killings in Namibia  
Namibia has seen several cases where ritual killings were suspected to be linked to witchcraft. For example:

The 2012 Case in the Kavango Region: A young boy was found mutilated, with body parts missing. It was believed that his remains were used in a ritual to bring wealth to the perpetrators.

The 2015 Case in Zambezi: A teenage girl was killed, and her body was discovered with missing organs. Community members speculated that her organs were harvested for ritual purposes.

The 2020 Case in Oshikoto: A child's body was found in a shallow grave, with evidence suggesting that the killing was part of a ritual sacrifice.

These cases highlight the brutal reality of how deeply ingrained beliefs in witchcraft can lead to violence and exploitation.

Cultural and Economic Motivations  
The motivations behind these acts are often a mix of cultural and economic factors:

Business Prosperity: Some individuals believe that using human remains in rituals can bring financial

# Reforming Laws And Taking Action: Addressing Violence Against Women And Children In Namibia

Contd from page 20

success or protect their businesses from failure. This belief is perpetuated by traditional healers or witch doctors who claim to possess supernatural powers.

**Curing Illnesses:** In certain cases, body parts are believed to have medicinal properties that can cure diseases or ailments. This has led to the targeting of vulnerable individuals, including children and people with albinism.

**Supernatural Protection:** Ritual killings are sometimes carried out to gain protection from perceived enemies or to ward off bad luck. This belief is particularly strong in communities or individuals where fear and superstition dominate daily life.

## The Impact on Communities

The fear of witchcraft and ritual killings has a profound impact on communities. It creates an atmosphere of mistrust, where individuals are afraid to speak out or seek justice. Victims' families are often ostracized, and the stigma surrounding these practices makes it difficult to address the issue openly.

## Addressing the Issue

To combat the prevalence of ritual killings and their link to witchcraft, a multifaceted approach is needed:

**Education and Awareness:** Communities must be educated about the dangers of harmful beliefs and practices. Public awareness campaigns can help dispel myths and promote understanding.

**Legal Reforms:** Laws must explicitly prohibit ritual killings and the use of human remains in ceremonies. Perpetrators should face severe penalties to deter future crimes.

**Community Engagement:** Traditional leaders and healers should be involved in efforts to eliminate harmful practices. Their influence can be instrumental in changing cultural norms.

**Support for Victims:** Families of victims need access to counseling and support services to cope with the trauma and stigma associated with ritual killings.

The fight against ritual killings and the misuse of witchcraft requires a collective effort from governments, communities, and individuals. By addressing the root causes and challenging harmful beliefs, Namibia can work towards a safer and more

just society.

Certainly! Here's an expanded and in-depth analysis of A Call for Urgent Action, incorporating legislative reforms, community engagement, and collective responsibility.

## A Call for Urgent Action: Breaking the Cycle of Violence

The rising number of violent crimes against women and children in Namibia demands immediate and decisive action. While protests, petitions, and social media campaigns have raised awareness, they have not been enough to prevent further tragedies. The solution lies in comprehensive legal reforms, stronger law enforcement, community engagement, and a shift in societal attitudes.

### 1. Legislative Reforms: Strengthening the Law

Namibia's legal framework must be reinforced to ensure swift and severe punishment for perpetrators of violence against women and children. While existing laws provide some protection, gaps in enforcement allow criminals to evade justice.

#### Stricter Sentencing and Harsher Penalties

- The Constitution and Criminal Procedure Act must be amended to impose mandatory life sentences for perpetrators of rape, murder, and child abuse.

- Courts should eliminate leniency in sentencing, ensuring that convicted criminals serve their full sentences without parole.

- Repeat offenders must face automatic harsher penalties, preventing them from re-entering society and committing further crimes.

#### Improving Law Enforcement Efficiency

- Specialized Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) units should be established within the police force to handle cases with urgency and sensitivity.

- Law enforcement officers must undergo mandatory training on handling cases of abuse, ensuring they approach victims with empathy and professionalism.

- The Police Amendment Bill has introduced provisions to enhance law enforcement capabilities. However, further amendments are needed to prioritize crimes against women and children.

#### Judicial System Overhaul

- Namibia's judicial system



must fast-track cases related to gender-based violence and child abuse, ensuring that victims receive justice without unnecessary delays.

- The Namibia Government Gazette has published updates on legal reforms, but more needs to be done to streamline prosecution processes and prevent case backlogs.

- A national database of offenders should be created to track criminals and prevent them from re-offending.

### 2. Community Engagement: Changing Societal Norms

While legal reforms are crucial, community involvement is equally important in preventing violence and protecting vulnerable individuals.

#### Educational Initiatives

- Schools must introduce mandatory comprehensive lessons on gender equality, consent, and human rights, ensuring that children grow up understanding the importance of respect and safety. Life Skills as a subjects must be expanded in that area.

- Community workshops should be held to challenge harmful cultural beliefs that normalize violence against women and children.

- Traditional leaders must be involved in advocating against ritual killings, ensuring that outdated practices do not continue to harm innocent lives.

- Target groups should be

identified so that specific initiatives go to such groups. Most of the offenders do not watch TV, listen to radio or even go on social media where such information is shared. Initiatives should go to where offenders are likely to be.

#### Support for Victims

- Safe houses and shelters must be established across Namibia to provide refuge for victims of abuse.

- Psychological counseling and rehabilitation programs should be government-funded, ensuring that survivors receive the support they need to heal.

- Community-based watch groups should be formed to monitor suspicious activities and report potential threats to law enforcement.

### 3. Collective Responsibility: Mobilizing Citizens for Change

The fight against violence requires active participation from all sectors of society. Citizens, activists, policymakers, and law enforcement must work together to create a safer future.

#### Holding Leaders Accountable

- The government must prioritize legislative reforms that protect women and children.

- Opposition parties and civil society organizations must pressure lawmakers to enact stricter laws and improve law enforcement efficiency.

- The Commonwealth has supported Namibia's drive for just laws, but continued international collaboration is needed to strengthen legal protections.

#### Public Awareness Campaigns

- Nationwide campaigns should be launched to educate citizens on reporting abuse and seeking help. Campaigns must target the right locations and right people.

- Social media movements must shift from awareness to action, encouraging citizens to demand policy changes.

- The Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC) has emphasized the importance of citizen involvement in legal reforms, reinforcing the need for collective action and thus it shall continue to do so.

### Conclusion: A United Front Against Violence

Namibia stands at a crossroads. The country can either continue to witness the tragic cycle of violence or take decisive action to reform laws, strengthen law enforcement, engage communities, and mobilize citizens. The time for passive outrage is over, real change requires action.

By implementing stricter laws, improving law enforcement, educating communities, and holding leaders accountable, Namibia can create a future where women and children are safe, protected, and empowered.

**Sports >>** \*The 2025 WRC Safari Rally attracted over 400,000 people, the biggest attendance since the event returned to the global championship calendar in 2021.

## Organisers: 2025 Wrc Safari Rally Attracted Record Numbers



**By: Capital Sport**

The 2025 WRC Safari Rally attracted over 400,000 people, the biggest attendance since the event returned to the global championship calendar in 2021. Speaking on Wednesday, Safari Rally CEO, Charles Gacheru also announced that preparations for the 2026 event were already underway.

“From the FIA reports, we can see that we had huge viewership for this rally, 400 percent more impressions, 53 percent more engagements; the data is telling us the public is responding to what we are doing.

“The Rally Village worked very well. We estimate that we had over 400,000 people through the rally week which is an incredible number. We are urging the public to be patient next year so that we avoid the crazy traffic that we had on the final day,” Gacheru said.

He was speaking during the official debrief of the 2025 WRC

Safari Rally that was the third round of this year’s championship that ran from March 20-23. Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT championship leader, Welshman Elyfn Evans took the coveted crown ahead of Hyundai Motorsport duo, Ott Tanak and world champion Thierry Neuville who rounded off the podium in that order.

“The public also responded to us moving the start of the rally to outside City Hall and we had a huge crowd.

“We did the same on the final day bringing the prize-giving to Hell’s Gate and the response was overwhelming,” Gacheru added. Besides switching the start and prize-giving, organisers added a new stage, Mzabibu, that was the home to the first ever Rally Village, which proved to be a big hit.

Besides thousands of local fans, rally enthusiasts travelled from neighbouring Uganda and Tanzania and from as far as Finland and Estonia to cheer for their fa-

avourite drivers.

The final day on Sunday, March 23 saw the Moi South Lake Road that connects the lake side resorts in Naivasha come to a standstill as thousands poured in to witness the climax of the gruelling rally at Hell’s Gate National Park.

The debrief saw the Safari Rally chief meet key stakeholders in the organisational structure of the event including but not limited to Radio, Safety Caravan, TIV, Timing Team, and Stage Commanders and Safety Officers.

“Despite the challenges faced, they demonstrated exceptional dedication. I’m ecstatic to finally meet the force behind this global spectacle. I am truly impressed with the performance of our teams on the ground,” the CEO remarked.

The 2026 WRC Safari Rally will be the last edition under the current contract between Kenya and the WRC Promoter who run the annual championship on be-

half of world body the FIA.

“Preparations for the 2026 WRC Safari Rally are already underway,” noted Mr. Gacheru. “The teams will be actively working on planning, execution timelines, and delivering on set objectives.”

The Kenyan Government and WRC Promoter revealed during this year’s edition that negotiations were underway to extend the partnership that will keep the Safari Rally in the global calendar beyond next year.

The WRC Safari Rally is one of the most legendary and demanding events in the FIA World Rally Championship.

Celebrated for its rugged terrain and breathtaking Kenyan landscapes, it draws top international rally teams and motorsport fans from around the globe.

Beyond the excitement, the rally significantly contributes to Kenya’s tourism, sporting legacy, and economic growth.

# SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS  
SCORES  
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# GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>>** \*Patrick Essombe and Alpha Onyango scored in each half as Gor Mahia beat Kariobangi Sharks to qualify for the semis of the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) Cup at the Dandora Stadium yesterday evening.

# Gor Slaughter Sharks To Storm FKF Cup Semis



Gor Mahia's Shariff Musa celebrates his goal against Sofapaka. PHOTO/RAYMOND MAKHAYA

**By: Capital Sport**

Patrick Essombe and Alpha Onyango scored in each half as Gor Mahia beat Kariobangi Sharks to qualify for the semis of the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) Cup at the Dandora Stadium yesterday evening.

Essombe scored his first goal since joining K'Ogalo in January this year after Samuel Kapen had latched onto a misplaced pass in the middle of the park before threading it through to the forward.

The Ugandan still had much to

do and showed strength to shake off his marker before firing past Kariobangi Sharks goalkeeper Sebastian Wekesa.

William 'Kanu' Muluya's charges dominated the game with their usual 'tiki-taka' football but were let down by poor finishing and resolute defending by the league champions.

Having come into the game in the 70th minute, Onyango justified his inclusion with the second goal, 14 minutes later.

A cross from the right by Ben Stanley Omondi was miscued by the Sharks backline, allowing the

ball to fall kindly in the box for the Kakamega High School alumnus, who slotted past Wekesa in the goalmouth.

Giant-killers of Nairobi In an earlier quarterfinal tie at the same venue, National Super League (NSL) side Nairobi United continued their fairytale run with a 2-0 victory over Kakamega Homeboyz.

Frank Ouya scored in the first half off a mistake by Homeboyz keeper Ibrahim Wanzala.

Isaac Omweri cemented their place in the last four with the sec-

ond goal in the 55th minute after a counterattack put him 1-v-1 with Wanzala.

At the Sportpesa Arena in Murang'a, hosts Murang'a Seal beat Ulinzi Stars 3-2 to relieve themselves of their poor run in the league.

# SPORTS NEWS



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## Seasoned Zambia Author Sydney Muponda



By: Paula Otukile  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Correspondence

1.

7. Are Zambians a reading nation?  
We are on our way, but more awareness and accessibility are needed to foster a reading culture.

8. Digital literacy—how is it in your country?  
Digital literacy is improving, but there is still a significant gap. Efforts to enhance access to technology and training are vital.

9. Do you plan to make ebooks?  
Yes, most of my books are available as ebooks on Amazon.

Any plans for audiobooks?  
Absolutely! This will help capture a segment of consumers who prefer listening to reading.

10. What category have you been nominated for so far?  
Fiction.

11. Who is your local role model?  
Stephen Mpushi and Prof Dickson Mwansa

12. Where do you see yourself in ten years in literature?  
As a major stakeholder in the creative and arts sector.

13. The concept of Unity—what can Unity do for authors?  
Unity fosters collective voices, facilitates the exchange of synergies, and creates networks for success towards the common goal of the Africa we want.

14. Do you have background training in writing?  
Initially self-taught, I later honed my skills through workshops and academic pursuits, culminating in a Masters and PhD specialising in Educational Literacy and Development.

15. What do you understand by copyrights?  
Copyrights safeguard one's intellectual rights and investments, ensuring ownership of moral, legal and economic rights of the work.

16. Have you protected your books?  
Yes, I have registered copyrights at PACRA, deposited works at the National Archives of Zambia, and granted mandates to ZARRSO.

17. Your advice to upcoming authors?  
Welcome as you embark on your journey to Publish and never Perish. Start writing, invest in learning from experts to maintain quality. Research, and craft original and au-



thentic works. Building your brand and networking will set a solid platform for marketing and distribution.

18. Your last word?  
Gratitude. Let us collaborate for greater gains in literature beyond borders.

Who are you?

Sydney Muponda, PhD is a storyteller, publisher and academic wise a literacy expert. I am the visionary behind SOTRANE Publishers, an institution dedicated to amplifying the voices of many authors and storytellers.

2. What does award nomination mean to you?  
It is humbling and serves as proof that the craft I put out resonates with others.

3. What do you think of Mulher Forte African literature?  
It's a fantastic initiative that the continent needs! Collaborating to celebrate and honour excellence in the literary space is crucial for our growth.

4. How are book sales in Zambia?  
Currently average. There is a need for quality investment in branding and publicity to secure a fair market share. The public must be educated on the value of written works in homes and institutions, as current bookstore commission structures are unfriendly.

5. How do you feel about writing in Africa?  
Writing in Africa is growing and holds promise for creatives. It helps preserve our heritage and culture, though it faces threats from AI and the rise of self-publishing in terms of quality.

6. What can be done to improve book sales?  
Creating networks and advocating for an author-owned national store and book distribution system is essential.

