

Often tipped as a potential Nobel laureate, Mr. Ngugi (pronounced GOO-ghee) spent many years in exile to avoid the wrath of a government he criticized.

Novelist, playwright and memoirist

Mr. Ngugi's life and writing unfolded in lock step with the stirrings of emancipation in British-run East Africa:



Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Writer Who Condemned Colonists and Elites, Dies at 87:

Mr. Ngugi composed the first modern novel in the Gikuyu language on prison toilet paper while being held by Kenyan authorities. He spent many prolific years in exile.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a groundbreaking novelist, playwright and memoirist whose writings explored the iniquities and ambiguities of colonialism in his native Kenya as much as the misdoings of the postcolonial elite, and who led a passionate campaign for African authors to eschew the languages of foreign occupiers, died on Wednesday in Buford, Ga. He was 87. His son Nducu confirmed the death, in a hospital. He did not specify a cause. Often tipped as a potential Nobel laureate, Mr. Ngugi (pronounced GOO-ghee) spent many years in exile to avoid the wrath of a government he criticized. For several



Mr. Ngugi in 2012. His life and writing unfolded in lock step with the stirrings of emancipation in British-run East Africa.Credit...Leonardo Cendamo/Getty Images

decades, he taught comparative literature and English as a professor at the University of California, Irvine. His work inspired successive generations of African writers, along with contemporaries like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, both of Nigeria. His canon drew enthusiastic praise, beginning with his debut novel, "Weep Not, Child," in 1964. It is the story of Kenyan brothers whose family must confront the challenges of the Mau Mau rebellion against British rule. The book has been called the first major

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The Fall of Yugoslavia: A Deep Dive into Its Fragmentation and the Interests Behind It

Abstract

The fall of Yugoslavia in the 1990s was one of the most complex geopolitical disintegrations of the 20th century. Far from being a spontaneous unraveling of ethnic hostilities, it was the culmination of political manipulation, economic interests, foreign interventions, and nationalist agendas. This article explores the internal and external actors behind the dissolution and assesses their motivations - military, economic, and geopolitical.

1. Introduction: The Balkan Powder Keg

The disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) between 1991 and 1999 was a watershed moment in European history. Unlike other Eastern Bloc collapses, Yugoslavia's descent was marked by brutal wars, ethnic cleansing, and international tribunals. The root causes were layered:

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Abductions, torture a threat to US interests in East Africa: Senator Risch

By: Bruhan Makong
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Worth Noting:

- Although the senator did not name specific countries, his remarks come amid increasing concerns about political repression, enforced disappearances, and crack-downs on civil liberties in several East African nations.
- Senator Risch's comments follow a recent outcry from Washington over the alleged mistreatment of two prominent East African activists — Ugandan journalist and rights advocate Agather Atuhaire, and Kenyan photojournalist and social justice crusader Boniface Mwangi — during a visit to Tanzania.
- The US Bureau of African Affairs expressed “deep concern” over the reported violations and called for a full investigation into the alleged abuse.

The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has raised the alarm over a surge in abductions and torture cases across East Africa, warning that the trend poses a “direct threat” to regional stability and American interests.

The committee's chair and ranking Republican, Senator Jim Risch, said the escalating human rights violations reflect weakening institutions and a growing culture of impunity in the region.

“Rising abductions and torture in East Africa signal more than abuse — they expose state decay and impunity,” Risch said in a statement Thursday.

“That's a direct threat to regional stability, security, and U.S. interests.”

Although the senator did not name specific countries, his remarks come amid increasing concerns about political repression, enforced disappearances, and crackdowns on civil liberties in several East African nations.

Senator Risch's comments follow a recent outcry from Washington over the alleged mistreatment of two prominent East African activists — Ugandan journalist and rights advocate Agather Atuhaire, and Kenyan photojournalist and social justice crusader Boniface Mwangi — during a visit to Tanzania.

The US Bureau of African Affairs expressed “deep concern” over the reported violations and called for a full investigation into the alleged abuse.

“The United States is deeply concerned by reports of the mistreatment in Tanzania of two East African activists — Ugandan activist Agather Atuhaire and Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi,” the Bureau said in a statement on May 24.

Ugandan activist awarded



Senator Jim Risch/FILE/US Senate

The US noted that Atuhaire, a well-known anti-corruption campaigner, had received the prestigious International Women of Courage Award from the US Department of State in 2024.

The award honors women who demonstrate exceptional bravery and leadership in promoting peace, justice, human rights, and gender equality.

“We call for an immediate and full investigation into the allegations of human rights abuses,” the Bureau added, further urging governments in the region to ensure accountability for those responsible for acts of torture or other rights violations.

Details surrounding the alleged mistreatment remain unclear, and Tanzanian authorities have yet to issue an official response to the allegations or to Washington's calls for accountability.

Atuhaire and Mwangi are

widely recognized across East Africa for their activism, often using their platforms to advocate for government accountability, transparency, and the protection of civil liberties.

The two were part of a delegation of activists who had traveled to Tanzania to observe the trial of opposition leader Tundu Lissu, a vocal critic of President Samia Suluhu.

Lissu faces treason charges and has been barred from participating in the country's upcoming October 2025 elections.

Shrinking civic space

According to Ugandan media reports, Atuhaire was later found abandoned near the Mutukula border between Tanzania and Uganda, while Mwangi was discovered at the Horohoro border between Tanzania and Kenya.

Human rights organizations across East Africa

have echoed US concerns, warning of a shrinking civic space and rising intimidation of dissenting voices.

In a separate incident earlier this year, prominent Tanzanian activist Maria Sarungi Tsehai — an outspoken critic of President Samia Suluhu Hassan — was abducted in Nairobi, Kenya, by armed men and released several hours later.

Tsehai recounted being manhandled, choked, and shouted at by four unidentified men who forced her into a vehicle. She believes the attack was an attempt to access her social media accounts and silence her whistleblowing efforts.

“I am sure that the reason for the abduction was to get access to my social media and [because of] the whistleblowing job that I do,” she said, adding that her abductors repeatedly asked how to unlock her phone.

Tsehai fled to Kenya in 2020 seeking asylum after threats

from the government of the late President John Magufuli.

She blamed Tanzanian authorities for the incident, alleging collaboration between Kenyan and Tanzanian agents.

Kenya has previously faced criticism for enabling foreign security operations on its soil, raising concerns over violations of international law.

In 2024, Ugandan opposition leader Kizza Besigye was reportedly abducted in Nairobi by Ugandan security agents and forcibly taken across the border to face a military court.

While the Ugandan government claimed Kenya assisted in the operation, Kenyan officials denied any involvement.

Kenya has also faced scrutiny over a series of disappearances allegedly linked to state security agents, particularly following youth-led anti-government protests in June last year.

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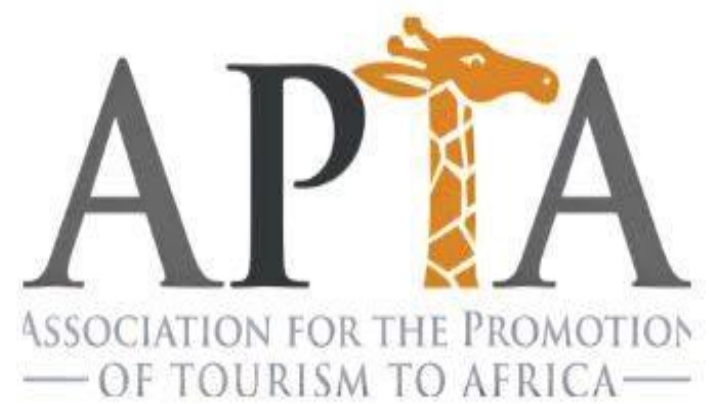
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ART

The Creative Writers

By: D. Brinda
xxxxxxxxxxxxWorth
Noting:

The group has also hosted several online poetry competitions, awarding certificates and prizes to winners to encourage writers. To date, six online poetry competitions have been held, and regular attendance certificates are given to consistent contributors. The best reviewer certificates are also awarded, and a cash reward challenge has been introduced to motivate reviewers. The e-certificates issued by the group are significant, bearing the signatures of dignitaries.

Through its innovative approach and commitment to nurturing creativity, The Creative Writers group has become a vibrant community of writers, poets, and learners. Under Mrs. Brinda's guidance, the group continues to inspire and empower its members, promoting a love for writing and self-expression.

The Creative Writers group has been a beacon of creativity and inspiration since its inception on May 22, 2020. Founded by Mrs. Brinda, a renowned teacher and poet from Tamil Nadu, India, the WhatsApp group was started during the pandemic lockdown to engage students and teachers in various activities that foster knowledge sharing and skill enhancement. The group's focus areas include writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

From humble beginnings with a handful of members, the Creative Writers group has grown to boast over 400 active members, comprising teachers and students. Mrs. Brinda, an accomplished author and poet, has been instrumental in shaping the group's unique approach. Each day, members are presented with chosen topics and selected backgrounds, allowing them to think, write, and reflect on their work. The poems are then converted into videos and uploaded to the Creative Writers YouTube channel, preserving the creative output for posterity.

The group has also hosted several online poetry competitions, awarding certificates and prizes to winners to encourage writers. To date, six online poetry competitions have been held, and regular attendance certificates are given to consistent contributors. The best reviewer certificates are also awarded, and a cash reward challenge has been introduced to motivate reviewers. The e-certificates issued by the group are significant, bearing the signatures of



The Creative Writers

dignitaries. Through its innovative approach and commitment to nurturing creativity, The Creative Writers group has become a vibrant community of writers, poets, and learners. Under Mrs. Brinda's guidance, the group continues to inspire and empower its members, promoting a love for writing and self-expression.

One of the Creative Writers group's most notable achievements is the publication of six anthologies, which has helped nurture many budding authors. The group has also made significant contributions to various magazines, including Namaste India and the Times of India newspaper,

Student Edition. In a remarkable display of patriotism and unity, the writers of the Creative Writers Group came together to salute the Indian Armed Forces, creating a world record by authoring 150 books by 113 authors. This achievement earned them a place in the IWR Book of Records.

The Creative Writers group's objectives are multifaceted, aiming to improve writing and thinking skills, foster creativity, and provide a platform for all to express their imaginations and emotions through writing. The group operates in the evening hours, from 7 pm to 10 pm, with simple yet thought-provoking topics and captivating back-

grounds that inspire members to write creatively. A unique aspect of the group is the Aspirant group, which allows teachers to correct and rectify errors, helping students learn from their mistakes. The group has also introduced an open mic session, where students participate without fear, shedding inhibitions and gaining confidence. Their performances are recorded and uploaded, allowing them to watch previous performances and improve.

The group regularly provides appreciation certificates to its members. Additionally, the Creative Writers Bi-monthly e-magazine showcases students' latent talents, featuring cre-

ative writings, drawings, and artwork.

In conclusion, the Creative Writers group has blossomed into a global platform, fostering talent, building confidence, and igniting creative voices across borders. The group's achievements serve as a testament to the power of literature and community spirit, inspiring aspiring writers everywhere.

D. Brinda.
Creative Writers
Teacher
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“When we ignore sex workers’ mental health, we ignore our shared humanity,” says Valerie Aura

On International Sex Workers Day, the Nguvu Change Leader also advocates for the destigmatisation of this vulnerable group

By: **Rajashree Saha**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Human Rights Watch, in its World Report 2025, states that violence against women and girls, including high femicide rates, is seeing a disturbing spike in Kenya. It adds that 15 percent of women and girls have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and 13 percent of girls are married by the age of 18. Nearly 83 percent of women and girls experience at least one form of obstetric violence during pregnancy, childbirth, or the post-partum period.

In this scenario, sex workers, especially, are at great risk as their lives are marked by stigma and they lack easy access to justice. They are vulnerable not just to mental health challenges such as depression but also to sexually transmitted diseases. On International Sex Workers Day (June 2), Nguvu Change leader Valerie Aura is highlighting the harsh realities faced by sex workers across Kenya, calling for systemic change and supporting this marginalised group’s struggle for dignity and ba-

sic rights.

With Kenya currently gathering public views through its Presidential Taskforce on GBV and Femicide, there is a critical opportunity to centre the voices of those too often excluded, like sex workers, to address long-standing gaps in policy and protection. But unless they are included in the conversation along with other marginalised survivors, the reforms risk replicating the same systemic blind spots. Their experiences must also inform the country’s response and align with the African Union’s groundbreaking Convention to End Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG).

“The system, as well as society, treats sex workers as an invisible group that should remain in the shadows. The criminalisation of sex work, along with the fear of arrest and lack of safe spaces, adds to their trauma. This also keeps them from accessing health services and cuts them off from regular care, let alone mental well-being interventions. This situation must change. They are citizens of this country, with every right to medical care and justice, including mental health care,” says Valerie Aura.



She believes mental health and trauma support should be tailored to their needs, and public awareness campaigns should be launched to reduce stigma and promote equality. Valerie has already launched an Online Petition demanding structural change at the grassroots level

to ensure mental health support for survivors of violence, including sex workers. Her campaign is driven by her own experience but her vision also encompasses the stories of many others who are overlooked and marginalised systematically. She struggled

to access therapy and psychosocial support after leaving home due to violence and abuse, and believes that free mental health care for GBV survivors, including sex workers, is essential to build a more just society in Kenya.

GBV

Intimate Partner Violence In The Shadow Of Broader GBV Initiatives

By: **Faith Mwangi**
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In Kenya’s fight against gender-based violence, a troubling disparity has emerged that reveals the country’s skewed priorities in protecting women. While the government has pledged to invest up to 50 million USD in GBV prevention and response by 2026, intimate partner violence, which affects over 40% of Kenyan women according to recent demographic surveys, remains inadequately addressed despite being the most prevalent form of violence women face.

This gap becomes stark when examining resource allocation and public attention. High-profile campaigns against female genital mutilation, child marriage, and sexual violence in schools receive substantial funding and donor interest, while the violence happening behind closed doors continues with limited intervention. The most common threat to women’s safety receives proportionally the least support in Kenya’s gender-based violence response

strategy.

Kenya’s single National Gender-Based Violence Toll-Free Helpline, 1195, serves the entire country of over 50 million people, highlighting the inadequacy of current support systems for IPV survivors. Unlike other forms of GBV that benefit from specialized programs, dedicated courts, and focused campaigns, intimate partner violence services remain fragmented and underfunded. Women experiencing domestic violence must navigate understaffed police stations, overwhelmed courts, and limited shelter options, while other GBV survivors access specialized services designed specifically for their situations.

This uneven response reflects deeper cultural attitudes that view intimate partner violence as a private matter, creating a policy blind spot where IPV receives less public outrage and political attention. Research in Nairobi’s informal settlements reveals that while support services can mitigate IPV’s impact, few survivors seek help due to social norms that discourage service use.

The consequences extend beyond individual suffering. Women experiencing IPV face higher rates of



depression, anxiety, and physical health problems, while their children witness violence that perpetuates cycles of abuse. The economic impact affects household income and national productivity, yet unlike

other forms of GBV where economic arguments drive policy responses, IPV’s costs remain largely uncalculated and unaddressed. True progress requires ensuring that intimate partner violence receives

attention and resources proportional to its devastating impact on Kenyan women, not just inclusion in broader strategies that prioritize more visible but less common forms of gender-based violence.

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US-CHINA

Trump administration to ‘aggressively’ revoke visas of Chinese students

By: BBC
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Worth Noting:

- On Monday, Rubio, who is America’s top diplomat, ordered US embassies around the world to stop scheduling appointments for student visas as the state department prepares to expand social media vetting of such applicants.
- Estimates indicate there were around 280,000 Chinese students studying in the US last year.
- Chinese nationals used to account for the bulk of international students enrolled at American universities, though that has recently changed.
- From pandemic-era restrictions to worsening relations between the two countries, their number has dropped in recent years, according to US state department data.
- Rubio said in Wednesday’s statement: “Under President Trump’s leadership, the US State Department will work with the Department of Homeland Security to aggressively revoke visas for Chinese students, including those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields.”



US President Donald Trump

President Donald Trump’s administration says it will “aggressively” revoke the visas of Chinese students studying in the US. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement the move would include “those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields”. Criteria will also be revised to “enhance scrutiny” of future visa applicants from China and Hong Kong, Rubio added. Relations between Beijing and Washington have plummeted in recent months as a tit-for-tat trade war erupted between the two superpowers sparked by Trump’s tariffs. On Monday, Rubio, who is America’s top diplomat, ordered US embassies around the world to stop scheduling appointments for student visas as the state department prepares to expand social media vetting of such applicants. Estimates indicate there were around 280,000 Chi-

nese students studying in the US last year. Chinese nationals used to account for the bulk of international students enrolled at American universities, though that has recently changed. From pandemic-era restrictions to worsening relations between the two countries, their number has dropped in recent years, according to US state department data. Rubio said in Wednesday’s statement: “Under President Trump’s leadership, the US State Department will work with the Department of Homeland Security to aggressively revoke visas for Chinese students, including those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields. “We will also revise visa criteria to enhance scrutiny of all future visa applications from the People’s Republic of China and Hong Kong.” The Trump administration has already moved to deport a number of foreign stu-

dents, while revoking thousands of visas for others. Many of these actions have been blocked by the courts. It has also frozen hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for universities. The president sees some of America’s most elite institutions, such as Harvard, as too liberal and accuses them of failing to combat antisemitism on campus. Many US universities rely on foreign students for a significant chunk of their funding – as those scholars often pay higher tuition fees. A number of international students have been reeling from the planned visa changes. Some told the BBC they wished they had never opted to study in the US. “I already regret it,” said a 22-year-old master’s student from Shanghai, who did not want to be named for fear of jeopardising a visa to study at the University of Pennsylvania. Beijing has not yet responded to the US move to revoke

the visas of Chinese students specifically. But China responded earlier on Wednesday to the Trump administration’s move to cancel student visa appointments globally. “We urge the US side to earnestly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of international students, including those from China,” an official was quoted as saying. An official memo, reviewed by the BBC’s US partner CBS News, on Tuesday instructed US embassies across the world to remove all open appointments for students seeking visas, but to keep already-scheduled appointments in place. Last week, a judge temporarily blocked the Trump administration’s attempt to strip Harvard of its ability to enrol international students. The ruling came after America’s oldest university filed a lawsuit against the administration. The White House accused the judge hearing the case of having a “liberal

agenda”. On Wednesday, Harvard said in a court filing that revoking its certification to host international students could inflict irreparable harm on the university. In a declaration filed with the court motion, Harvard international office director Maureen Martin said the move was causing “significant emotional distress” for students and scholars. She wrote that students were skipping graduation ceremonies, cancelling international travel and in some cases seeking transfer to other colleges. Some had also reported fears of being forced to return to countries where they face active conflict or political persecution, according to the court filing.

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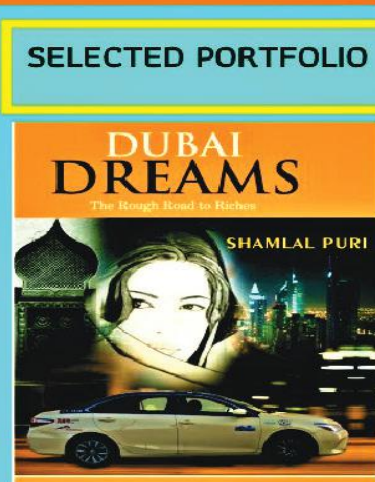
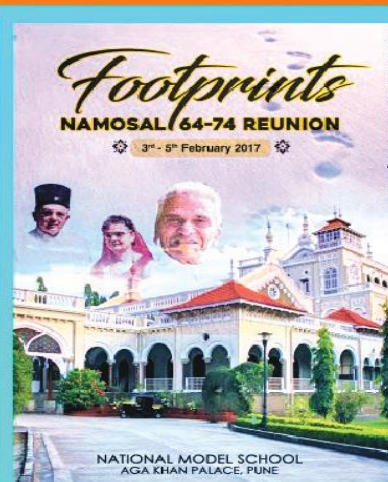
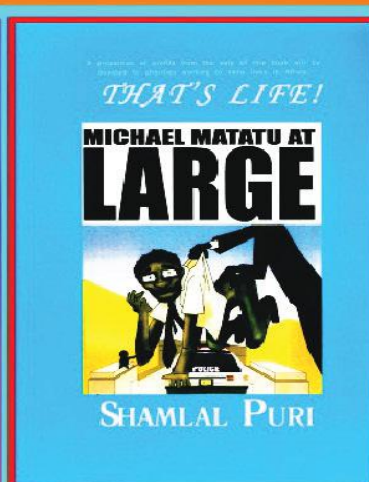
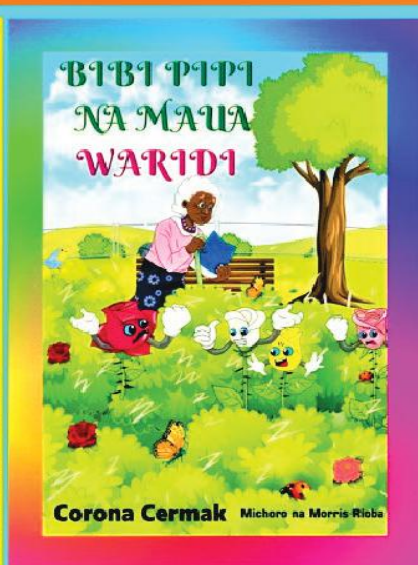
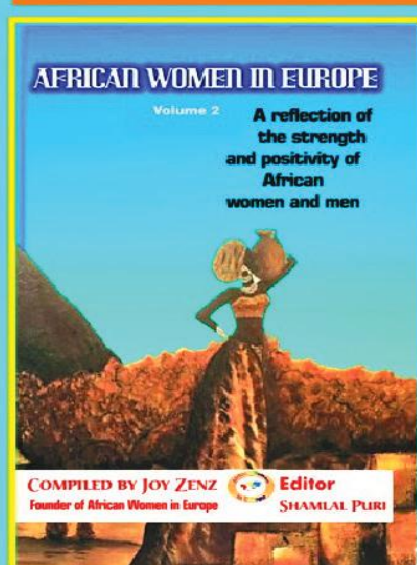
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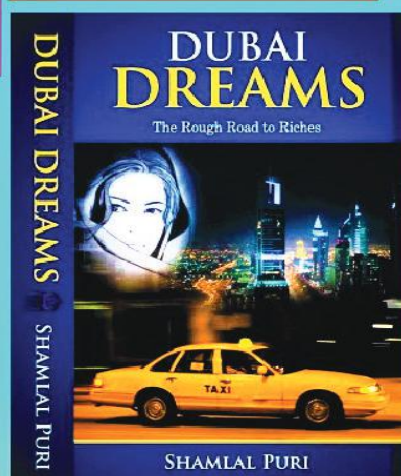
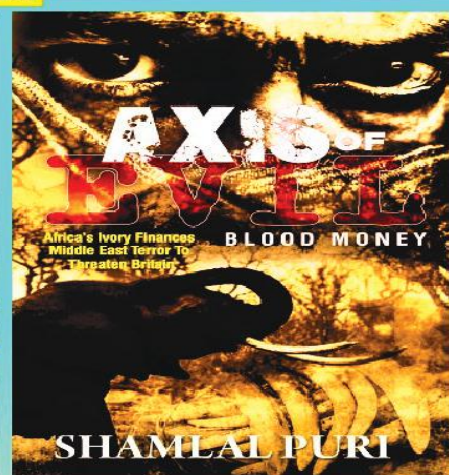
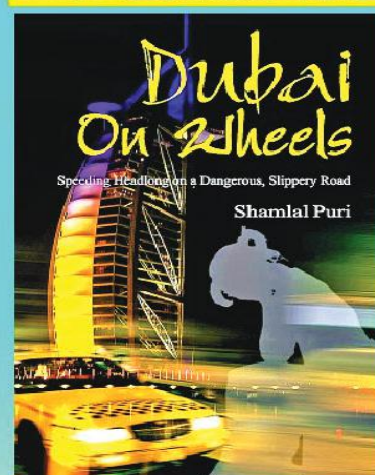
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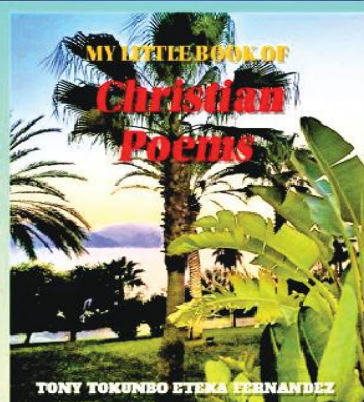
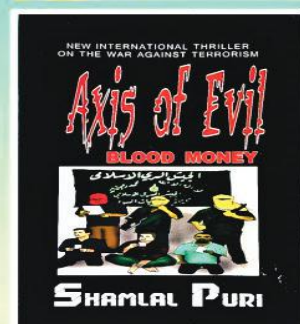
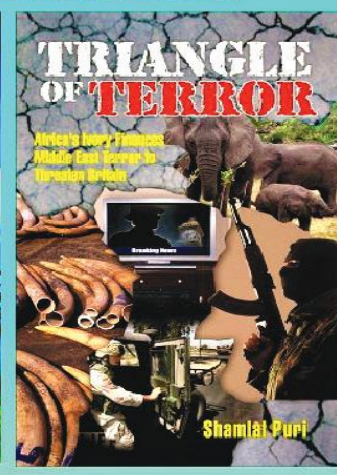
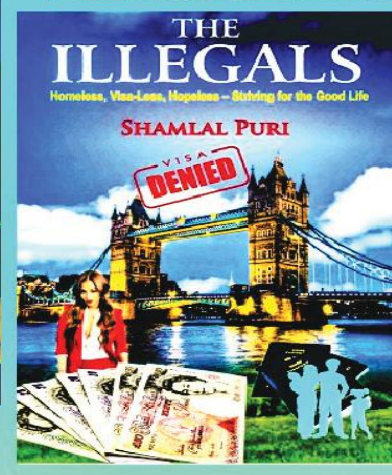
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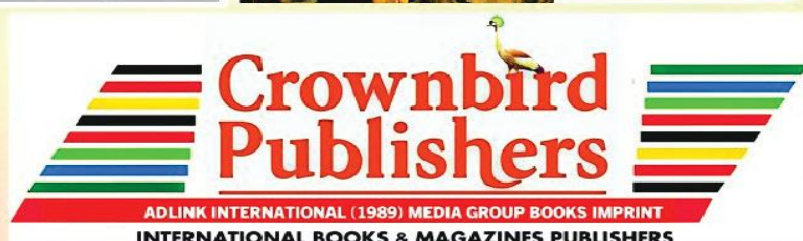


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African News

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Writer Who Condemned Colonists and Elites, Dies at 87:

Mr. Ngugi composed the first modern novel in the Gikuyu language on prison toilet paper while being held by Kenyan authorities. He spent many prolific years in exile.

By: Alan Cowell
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Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

- By contrast, "Devil on the Cross," published in 1980 and composed in his native tongue as "Caĩtaani Mũtharabaa-Inĩ," is regarded as the first modern novel in the Gikuyu language, spoken by the country's largest ethnic group, the Kikuyu. The book, about thieves who vie for supremacy by stealing from the people, sent Mr. Ngugi on a career writing in his own language and subsequently translating his work into English.
- He wrote "Devil on the Cross" on prison toilet paper while detained by Kenyan authorities for a year without trial because of a play he wrote. Writing in The New York Times Book Review in 2018, the author Ariel Dorfman said the book was a "narrative of the devilish temptations he faced and the ruses used to thwart his jailers as he sat writing night after night in his cell." The novel, Mr. Dorfman wrote, "shows Ngugi in full command of his craft."

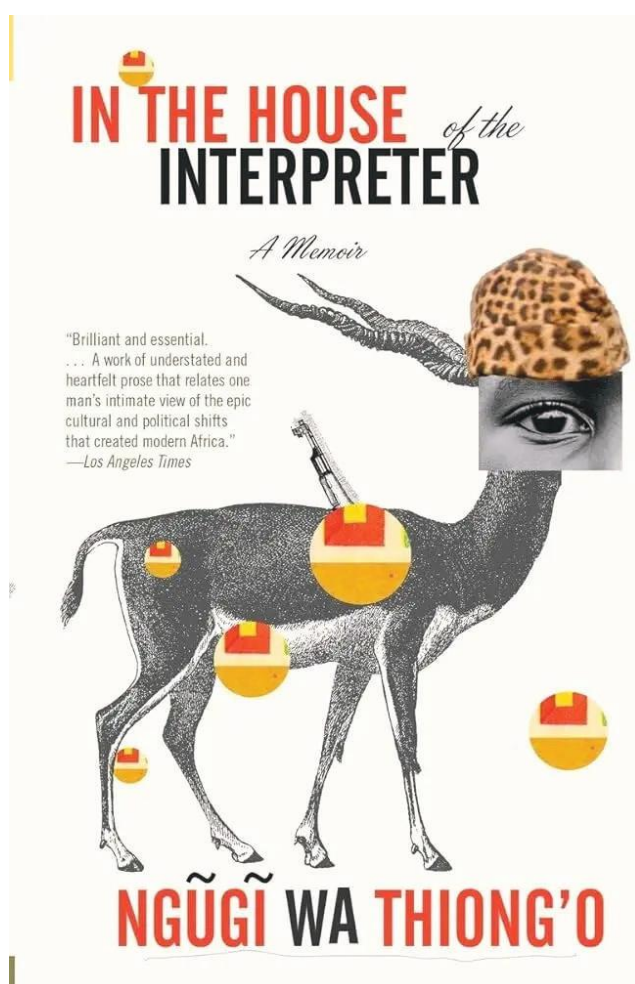
novel in English by an East African author.

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Mr. Ngugi's life and writing unfolded in lock step with the stirrings of emancipation in British-run East Africa. He lived in Uganda, which secured independence in 1962, and in Kenya, both before and after its independence in 1963. It was a life freighted by the subtleties and shifts of a momentous era buffeted by what a British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, in 1960 called "the wind of change." While Mr. Ngugi was educated at Kenya's British-run Alliance High School — a prestigious institution designed to mold an African elite in the image of the colonizers — other members of his family were caught up in the Mau Mau uprising against those same outsiders. A brother became a freedom fighter against the British, and another sibling was shot to death.

When Mr. Ngugi returned home from Alliance for the first time, he found that his home settlement had been destroyed, its population herded into a so-called protected village set up by the British authorities to cement control of their colonial subjects. "The hedge of ashy leaves that we planted looks the same, but beyond it our homestead is a rubble of burned dry mud, splinters of wood, and grass," he wrote



After Mr. Ngugi was educated at Kenya's British-run Alliance High School, he wrote in "In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir" (2012), he returned home to find that his home settlement had been destroyed by the British authorities. Credit... Knopf Doubleday

in a memoir, "In the House of the Interpreter," published in 2012. "My mother's hut and my brother's house on stilts have been razed to the ground. My home, from where I set out for Alliance three months ago, is no more."

But colonialism was only one part of his life's trajectory, much of it set against a backdrop of violence. The experience of detention persuaded him to seek exile in 1982, first in Britain and later in the United States.

But on his return to Kenya in 2004, he and his family were the victims of a nightmarish attack. Intruders broke into an apartment where they were staying, attacked Mr. Ngugi and raped his wife, Njeeri. That episode was most likely rooted in vengeance by his foes, but it also reflected the criminality that had flourished during Kenya's corrupt independence. "It wasn't a simple robbery," Mr. Ngugi told The Guardian in 2006. "It was political — whether by remnants of the old regime or part of the new state outside the main current. They hung around as though waiting for something, and the whole thing was meant to humiliate, if not eliminate, us."

Indeed, Mr. Ngugi's work

was heavily intertwined with the politics of the era, and his thinking about the far-reaching impact of imperialism on African sensibilities played a central role in a much broader debate. In 1986, he published a collection of essays, "Decolonizing the Mind," which traced what he depicted as a corrosive colonial intent to supplant Indigenous languages with the language of the occupier so as to seal the mental subjugation of the colonized.

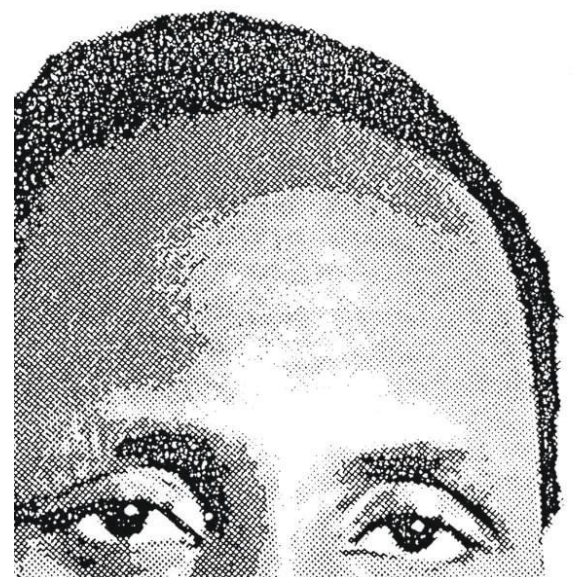
In 2023, Carey Baraka, a Kenyan writer who interviewed Mr. Ngugi for The Guardian, asked whether "Kenyan English or Nigerian English" had become "local languages." Mr. Ngugi rejected the notion. "It's like the enslaved being happy that theirs is a local version of enslavement," he replied. "English is not an African language. French is not. Spanish is not. Kenyan or Nigerian English is nonsense. That's an example of normalized abnormality. The colonized trying to claim the colonizer's language is the sign of the success of enslavement. It's very embarrassing." Asked if there were such a thing as a "good colonialist," he disputed the notion.



Ngugi wa Thiong'o in 2006. His groundbreaking novels, plays and memoirs explored the iniquities and ambiguities of colonialism in Kenya. Credit...Mark Boster/Los Angeles Times, via Getty Images

NGŨGĨ WA THIONG'O *Decolonising the Mind*

THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE
IN AFRICAN LITERATURE



In 1986, Mr. Ngugi published a collection of essays that traced what he depicted as a corrosive colonial intent to supplant Indigenous languages with the language of the occupier. Credit... James Currey Ltd./Heinemann

"It doesn't matter if you're carrying a gun or a Bible, you are still a colonialist," he said. "Of course I'd rather face the colonialist with the Bible than the one with the gun, but in the end, both

the Bible carrier and the gun carrier are espousing the same thing."

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African News

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Writer Who Condemned Colonists and Elites, Dies at 87:

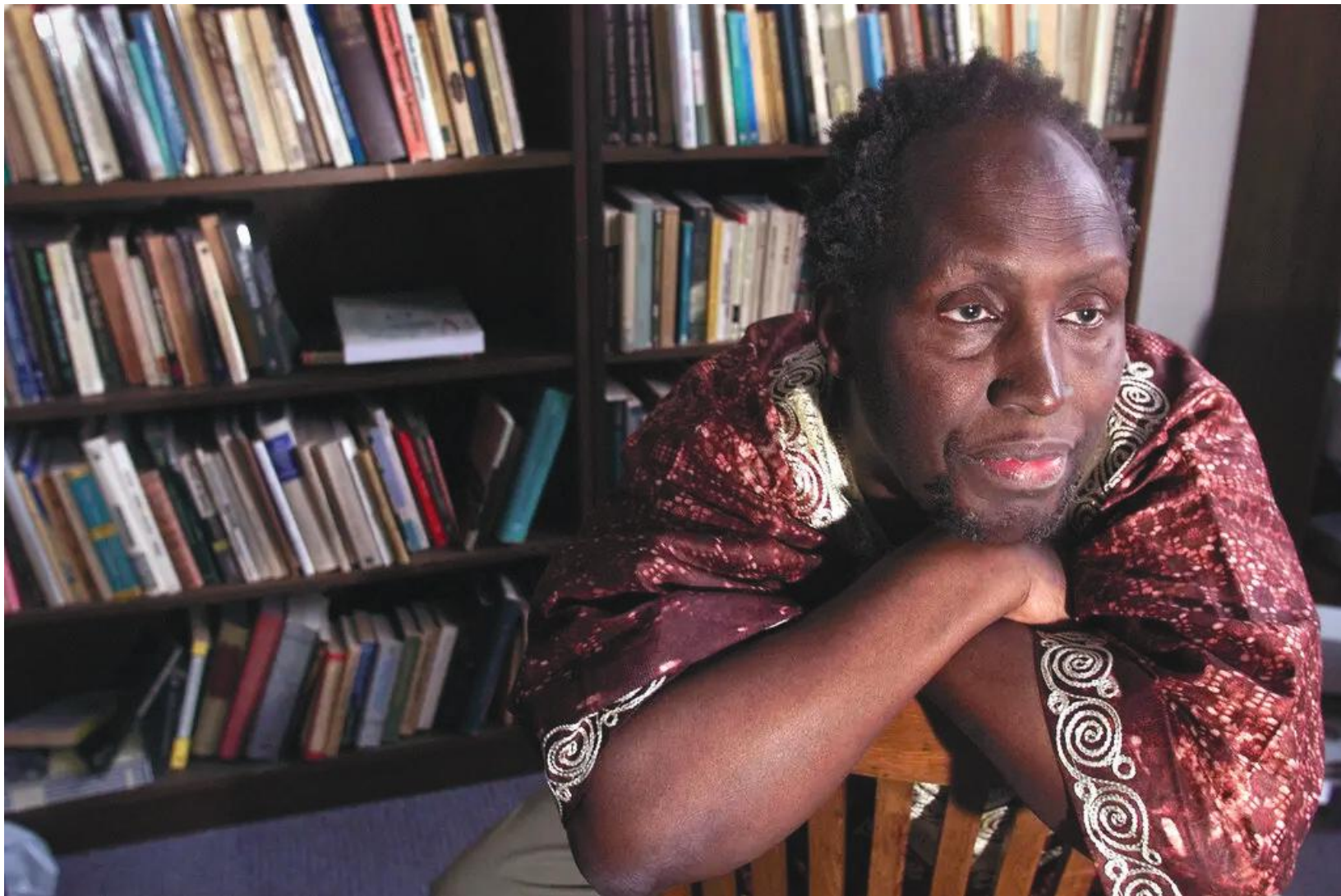
Mr. Ngugi composed the first modern novel in the Gikuyu language on prison toilet paper while being held by Kenyan authorities. He spent many prolific years in exile.

By: Alan Cowell
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Contd from Page 10

Worth Noting:

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- But on his return to Kenya in 2004, he and his family were the victims of a nightmarish attack. Intruders broke into an apartment where they were staying, attacked Mr. Ngugi and raped his wife, Njeeri. That episode was most likely rooted in vengeance by his foes, but it also reflected the criminality that had flourished during Kenya's corrupt independence.
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Mr. Ngugi in 2001. His experience of detention in Kenya persuaded him to seek exile in 1982, first in Britain and later in the United States. Credit...Richard Perry

Mr. Ngugi was born on Jan. 5, 1938, in the Limuru district, north of Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, which was then under British colonial rule. He grew up in a large, rural family, the son of a polygamous father and his third of four wives, Wanjiku wa Ngugi, who encouraged him to seek a good education. During his early years, Kenya became convulsed by an uprising against colonialism that the British authorities labeled the Mau Mau revolt. Mr. Ngugi said the name was a misnomer designed to minimize and distract from the rebellion's aims of securing land and freedom for the Kenyan people. The rebels' true name, he said, was the Land and Freedom Army. Like many Kenyan families, his had an ambiguous relationship with the guerrillas fighting British rule. An elder brother, Good Wallace, was a freedom fighter. Another, Kabae, sided with the British, and a third, Tumbo, was a police informant — an activity that inspired "Grain of Wheat," Mr. Ngugi's third novel. Another brother, Gitogo, was shot to death in the back by British forces after failing to halt when ordered to because he was deaf.

In 1964, Mr. Ngugi married his first wife, Nyambura. In 2024, one of their sons, Mukoma wa Thiongo, accused his father of abusing and marginalizing her, writing on the social media platform X that she would seek refuge at his grandmother's house. The accusation sparked discussions across literary, cultural and social spheres on whether it was appropriate. Of Mr. Ngugi's 10 children, four are published authors: Tee Ngugi, Mukoma wa Ngugi, Nduku wa Ngugi and Wanjiku wa Ngugi. They survive him, as do his other children, Kimunya, Ngina, Njoki, Bjorn, Mumbi and Thiong'o K., as well as seven grandchildren. After his studies at the Alliance, Mr. Ngugi won a place at Makerere University in neighboring Uganda, which at that time was a cultural and intellectual hub of the emerging Africa of independent nations. It was at Makerere that his emergence as a writer began. He recorded this period of his life in a memoir, "Birth of a Dream Weaver," published in 2016. Writing about it in *The Times Book Review*, Michela Wrong, a British writer, said "Birth of a Dream Weaver" showed Mr. Ngugi finding "his creative voice

just as a continent is finding its freedom." "The convictions he forms," she wrote, "will last a lifetime: the quest for African dignity and self-realization, a rejection of Western hegemony, a passionate call for Africans to tell their own story in their own Indigenous languages." Some of those perceptions underpinned his works, including the acclaimed "Petals of Blood" (1977), which cast a searing light over the post-colonial era. Mr. Ngugi went by his Western baptismal name, James Ngugi, until after the publication of "A Grain of Wheat" in 1967. By 1970 he had adopted the name Ngugi wa Thiong'o as an expression of his African heritage and identity, in line with his decision to write only in his native language. He translated most of his work from Gikuyu into English, reaching a much broader audience. His decision to write in Gikuyu determined much of his subsequent output. In 1977, he was an author, with Ngugi wa Mirii, of "Ngaahika Ndeenda," a drama in Gikuyu with the English title "I Will Marry When I Want." It was produced in an open-air peo-



A performance of the drama "Ngaahika Ndeenda" ("I Will Marry When I Want"), of which Mr. Ngugi was a co-author, in Kenya in 2022. It had been banned there in 1977. Credit...Tony Karumba/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

ple's theater with ordinary Kenyans acting the parts. For six weeks it had a successful run, but then the authorities chose to demolish the theater and send the author to prison without a trial. That was the beginning of the year in which Mr. Ngugi composed "Devil on the Cross" on toilet paper. His incarceration also produced a prison diary, published in 1980 under the title "Detained," which further cemented his credentials as a writer and an activist seeking to expand Africa's sense of its own freedom. After his release and his voyage into exile, Mr. Ngugi was a rare visitor to Kenya as his global reputation flourished. With "Wizard of the Crow," published in English in 2006 and set in a fictional African land called Aburiria, Mr. Ngugi "has flown over the entire African continent and sniffed out all of the foul stench rising high into the air," Jeff Turrentine said in a review in *The Times*. But, he added, "from that altitude he can also see a more hopeful sign: large masses of people coming together, sharing triumphant stories and casting spells."

Ash Wu contributed reporting. After a long career as a foreign correspondent for The New York Times based in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, Alan Cowell became a freelance contributor in 2015, based in London.

USA

Trump tariffs can stay in place for now, appeals court rules

By: BBC
xxxxxxxxxx



US President Donald Trump

Worth Noting:

- “The political branches, not courts, make foreign policy and chart economic policy,” it said in the filing.
- Shortly before Thursday’s tariff reprieve from the appeals court, White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt told a press briefing: “America cannot function if President Trump, or any other president, for that matter, has their sensitive diplomatic or trade negotiations railroaded by activist judges.”
- Trump blasted the lower court ruling on Thursday in a social media post, writing: “Hopefully, the Supreme Court will reverse this horrible, Country threatening decision, QUICKLY and DECISIVELY.”
- Wednesday’s decision by the little-known trade court in New York would void tariffs imposed by Trump in February on goods from China, Mexico and Canada, which he justified as a move intended to address a fentanyl smuggling.

US President Donald Trump can keep collecting import taxes for now, an appeals court has said, a day after a trade ruling found the bulk of his global tariffs to be illegal. A federal appeals court granted a bid from the White House to temporarily suspend the lower court’s order, which ruled that Trump had overstepped his power by imposing the duties. Wednesday’s judgement from the US Court of International Trade drew the ire of Trump officials, who called it an example of judicial overreach. Small businesses and a group of states had challenged the measures, which are at the heart of Trump’s agenda and have shaken up the world economic order. In its appeal, the Trump administration said the decision issued by the trade court a day earlier had improperly second-guessed the president and threatened to unravel months of hard-fought trade negotiations. “The political branches, not courts, make foreign policy and chart economic policy,” it said in the filing. Shortly before Thursday’s tariff reprieve from the appeals court, White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt told a press briefing:

“America cannot function if President Trump, or any other president, for that matter, has their sensitive diplomatic or trade negotiations railroaded by activist judges.” Trump blasted the lower court ruling on Thursday in a social media post, writing: “Hopefully, the Supreme Court will reverse this horrible, Country threatening decision, QUICKLY and DECISIVELY.” Wednesday’s decision by the little-known trade court in New York would void tariffs imposed by Trump in February on goods from China, Mexico and Canada, which he justified as a move intended to address a fentanyl smuggling. The lower court’s decision would also dismiss a blanket 10% import tax that Trump unveiled last month on goods from countries around the world, together with higher so-called reciprocal tariffs on trade partners, including the EU and China. The 1977 law Trump invoked to impose many of the tariffs, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, did not allow for such sweeping levies without input from Congress, the lower court said. But its ruling did not affect

Trump’s tariffs on cars, steel and aluminium, which were implemented under another law. The White House has suspended or revised many of its duties while trade negotiations grind on. But the appeals court decision allow the tariffs to be used for now while the case is litigated. The next hearing is on 5 June. On Thursday, another federal court overseeing a separate tariffs case reached a similar conclusion to the trade court. Judge Rudolph Contreras found the duties went beyond the president’s authority, but his ruling only applied to a toy company in the case.

What happens next?

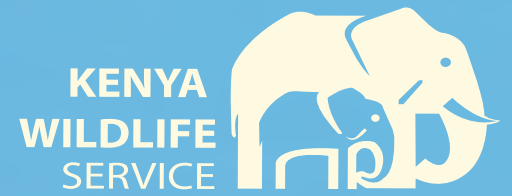
Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro told reporters on Thursday: “You can assume that even if we lose [in court], we will do it [tariffs] another way.” No court has struck down tariffs on cars, steel and aluminium that Trump imposed citing national-security concerns under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. He could expand import taxes under that law to other sectors such as semiconduc-

tors and lumber. The president could also invoke Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which he invoked for his first-term tariffs on China. A separate 1930 trade law, Section 338 of the Trade Act, which has not been used for decades, allows the president to impose tariffs of up to 50% on imports from countries that “discriminate” against the US. But the White House seems more focused for now on challenging the court rulings. The matter is widely expected to end up at the Supreme Court.

‘Power grab’

Lawyer Ilya Somin, who helped work on the case brought by businesses before the trade court, said he was “guardedly optimistic” the ruling would ultimately be upheld on appeal. He noted that the trade court order came from justices appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents, including one by Trump himself. “It’s not normal for the president of the United States to make such an enormous power grab and start the biggest trade war since the Great Depression,” he said. But Terry Haines, founder

of the Pangaea Policy, which advises firms on Washington policies, said he thought “the president is probably going to be given the benefit of the doubt” by the courts. Business owners, while expressing hope, said they did not yet feel like the situation was resolved. “I was incredibly happy and relieved but I’m also still very cautious,” said Kara Dyer, the owner of Boston-based Story Time Toys, which makes toys in China and imports them to the US for sale. “It’s just been so chaotic and so impossible to plan as a business,” she said. “I want this to work its way through our court system so we have a little bit more certainty about what tariffs will be in the future.” Dmitry Grozoubski, a former trade negotiator who represented Australia at the World Trade Organization, said the court battle had weakened Trump’s ability to use the duties for leverage over other countries. “It will be a lot harder for him to raise tariffs in the future,” he said. “This was ultimately a negotiation in which President Trump was threatening other countries with a big stick and that stick just got considerably more ephemeral.”



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WORLD

The Fall of Yugoslavia: A Deep Dive into Its Fragmentation and the Interests Behind It



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

- Western media consistently portrayed the conflict through a simplistic ethnic lens, often demonizing Serbs while portraying other groups as victims. While atrocities occurred on all sides, this narrative helped justify foreign intervention and frame the breakup as a moral necessity rather than a geopolitical maneuver.
- The media's selective coverage paved the way for NATO's interventions and shaped public perception in favor of the wars, sanctions, and post-war restructuring.
- Russia, weakened after the Soviet Union's collapse, could not protect Serbia from NATO. Although traditionally allied with Serbia, Moscow's economic and political crises in the 1990s left it unable to meaningfully influence the course of the war. This opened the door for unchallenged NATO dominance in the region.
- Germany was one of the earliest and most decisive external actors to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991. This was not a neutral act but a calculated geopolitical move rooted in long-standing historical, cultural, and economic ties.

from ethnic and religious divisions to foreign interventions and international financial manipulation. While the internal ethnic tensions were certainly real, the role of global powers - primarily Germany, the United States, and NATO - was equally decisive. To understand the fall, we must examine both internal instability and the strategic economic and military motives of global actors.

2. A Historical Background: The Yugoslav Mosaic

Yugoslavia was created after World War I and restructured after World War II into a federation of six republics - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia - and two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Under Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the country operated under a non-aligned socialist framework, balancing between the East and West during the Cold War. Tito's death in 1980, the rise of nationalism, the economic crisis of the 1980s, and the loss of centralized authority created a power vacuum that set the stage for its collapse. However, these internal fractures alone don't explain the timing and nature of the violent disintegration.

3. Economic Decline and IMF Interference

3.1 The 1980s Economic Crisis

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Yugoslavia's economy began to falter under foreign debt, inflation, and stagnation. The global oil crisis and rising interest rates deepened economic woes. In 1982, Yugoslavia turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for help. Their assistance came with strings attached: austerity, market liberalization, and structural adjustments.

3.2 The IMF's Role in Destabilization

IMF reforms hit the working class and federal system hardest, eroding Tito's socialist legacy. Regional disparities worsened: Slovenia and Croatia, the wealthier republics, resented subsidizing the poorer republics like Kosovo and Macedonia. These economic tensions

fueled political nationalism and calls for secession. Moreover, the decentralization of economic power weakened the federal government. The IMF's economic "shock therapy" effectively dismantled the federal economic control, a step that inadvertently promoted regional autonomy and competition, destabilizing unity.

4. The Rise of Nationalism and Fragmentation

4.1 Milosevic and Serbian Nationalism

Slobodan Milošević rose to power in Serbia on a wave of Serb nationalism, promising to protect Serbs in Kosovo and elsewhere. His moves to centralize power in Belgrade antagonized Slovenia and Croatia, which began seeking independence.

4.2 Slovenia and Croatia: Economic Motives for Secession

Slovenia and Croatia were economically more advanced and felt burdened by poorer republics. Their push for independence in 1991 was not just nationalist but economically motivated - they sought integration into Western Europe and the EU, which they viewed as more promising than remaining in a crumbling socialist federation.

5. Germany's Strategic Role in Yugoslavia's Fall

5.1 Germany's Recognition of Croatia and Slovenia

Germany, newly unified in 1990, was the first major power to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 - despite international calls for negotiation. This move encouraged secession and made conflict inevitable. Germany's motivation was twofold: economic interests in the Adriatic and Balkans, and historical ties with Croatia and Slovenia. It also sought to assert itself in the post-Cold War European order, challenging the French-British dominance in EU foreign policy.

5.2 Economic Interests and Historical Links

German companies had historical commercial ties with Slovenia and Croatia. The



breakup allowed for new investment avenues and control over ports and energy routes in the Adriatic. Germany's rapid recognition served its long-term economic and geopolitical objectives.

6. The United States and NATO: Strategic Military Interests

6.1 U.S. Hesitation and Later Involvement

Initially, the U.S. was reluctant to intervene. However, by mid-1990s, it shifted strategy - realizing that NATO's credibility was at stake in Bosnia, and later in Kosovo.

6.2 NATO's Role and Military Strategy

The 1995 NATO bombing campaign against Bosnian Serbs and the 1999 campaign in Kosovo (Operation Allied Force) highlighted NATO's growing post-Cold War role. The interventions served multiple purposes:

Demonstrate NATO's utility post-USSR.

Secure influence in the Balkans, a geopolitically vital corridor.

Undermine Russian influence in Serbia.

6.3 Kosovo: A Strategic U.S. Military Foothold

After the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia and the de facto independence of Kosovo, the U.S. established Camp Bondsteel - one of the largest U.S. military bases in Europe. Kosovo became a strategic outpost for U.S. influence near the Russian sphere.

7. The Role of Western Media and Propaganda

Western media consistently portrayed the conflict through a simplistic ethnic lens, often demonizing Serbs while portraying other groups as victims. While atrocities occurred on all sides, this narrative helped justify foreign intervention and frame the breakup as a moral necessity rather than a geopolitical maneuver.

The media's selective coverage paved the way for NATO's interventions and shaped public perception in favor of the wars, sanctions, and post-war restructuring.

8. Russia's Limited Influence and Serbia's Isolation

Russia, weakened after the Soviet Union's collapse, could not protect Serbia from NATO. Although traditionally allied with Serbia, Moscow's economic and political crises in the 1990s left it unable to meaningfully influence the course of the war. This opened the door for unchallenged NATO dominance in the region.

9. The Aftermath: Winners and Losers

9.1 Who Benefited?

9.1.1. Germany's Economic Partners and Strategic Access

Germany was one of the earliest and most decisive external actors to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991. This was not a neutral act but a calculated geopolitical move rooted in long-standing historical, cultural, and economic ties. Prior to the breakup, Slovenia and Croatia were the most economically developed republics of Yugoslavia, with well-established industries and in-

frastructure. Germany saw in them natural allies and future economic partners within a growing European Union framework. By supporting their independence, Germany positioned itself to dominate post-Yugoslav economic recovery and trade, especially in the Adriatic region. German banks and corporations moved swiftly into Slovenia and Croatia, investing in their emerging markets and capitalizing on privatization schemes. Beyond economics, Germany's role in the breakup allowed it to assert itself as a post-reunification power in European foreign policy, challenging the traditional leadership of France and the UK within the EU.

9.1.2. US and NATO's Military Expansion and Influence

While the United States initially hesitated to get involved in the Yugoslav wars, its strategic calculus shifted as the conflict deepened. The instability in the Balkans provided an opportunity for the U.S. to repurpose NATO in the post-Cold War era, demonstrating its continued relevance after the Soviet Union's collapse. Military interventions in Bosnia (1995) and later in Kosovo (1999) under NATO command allowed the U.S. and its allies to establish a permanent military presence in the region. The most prominent example of this is Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, which became one of the largest American military bases in Europe. This not only solidified U.S. influence in the Balkans but also helped counterbalance

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WORLD

The Fall of Yugoslavia: A Deep Dive into Its Fragmentation and the Interests Behind It

By:
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Contd from Page 14

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- This not only solidified U.S. influence in the Balkans but also helped counterbalance growing Russian interests in Serbia and the surrounding area. NATO's role in the Yugoslav wars thus helped to expand its geographical reach and political mandate, transitioning from a Cold War defense alliance into an instrument for global intervention and Western strategic dominance.

growing Russian interests in Serbia and the surrounding area. NATO's role in the Yugoslav wars thus helped to expand its geographical reach and political mandate, transitioning from a Cold War defense alliance into an instrument for global intervention and Western strategic dominance.

9.1.3. Western Corporations and the Seizure of Privatized Assets

The fall of Yugoslavia and the subsequent collapse of its socialist economic system opened the floodgates for Western corporate interests. As the newly independent republics rushed to adopt market economies under IMF and World Bank guidance, massive privatization programs were launched - often under conditions of corruption, weak regulation, and post-war desperation. Western multinationals, banks, and investment firms exploited this vacuum to acquire state-owned assets in industries such as energy, telecommunications, manufacturing, and mining at cut-rate prices. Countries like Croatia and Serbia saw a sharp influx of foreign capital that was more extractive than developmental, with profits often repatriated abroad. Moreover, these corporations wielded significant influence over policy-making in these fragile economies, shaping labor laws and trade regulations to favor international investors over domestic needs. Thus, the disintegration of Yugoslavia not only marked a geopolitical shift but also a major economic transformation in favor of Western capital.

9.2 Who Lost?

9.2.1. Yugoslavia's citizens, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo, suffered mass atrocities, displacement, and economic ruin

The citizens of Yugoslavia, particularly those in Bosnia and Kosovo, bore the brunt of the violent disintegration. In Bosnia, the multiethnic population was engulfed in one of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe since World War II, marked by systematic ethnic cleansing, mass rapes, and the infamous Srebrenica genocide, where over 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were killed by Bosnian Serb

forces. The war displaced more than 2 million people, turning vibrant towns into graveyards and refugee camps. In Kosovo, ethnic Albanians faced brutal repression under Slobodan Milošević's regime, which led to an insurgency by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and a subsequent NATO bombing campaign that left thousands dead and hundreds of thousands displaced. Beyond the physical violence, the social fabric of communities was torn apart by fear, distrust, and trauma. Infrastructure was decimated, schools and hospitals were destroyed, and local economies collapsed, leaving generations to rebuild from ruins while grappling with unresolved wounds and psychological scars.

9.2.2. Serbia, internationally isolated and demonized, faced sanctions and bombing

Serbia, seen by many in the West as the aggressor due to Milošević's nationalist policies and military actions, became the target of heavy international sanctions and military intervention. From 1992 onward, Serbia was subjected to comprehensive UN sanctions that crippled its economy, caused hyperinflation, and plunged the population into poverty. These sanctions severely limited access to international trade, foreign investment, and even basic humanitarian aid. During the Kosovo conflict in 1999, Serbia endured a 78-day NATO bombing campaign that destroyed bridges, factories, power stations, media centers, and even the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. Thousands of civilians were killed or wounded, and essential infrastructure was ruined, setting Serbia's development back by decades. The country was diplomatically isolated, culturally stigmatized, and economically strangled, while its leadership faced international criminal indictments. Even after Milošević's fall, Serbia struggled to shake off the image of a pariah state and continues to grapple with the political and economic consequences of its role in the wars.

9.2.3. The region, still unstable, fractured into weak



economies reliant on Western aid and investment

The fall of Yugoslavia transformed a relatively self-sufficient socialist federation into a patchwork of fragile states with small, weak economies. The wars left infrastructure in tatters, industries shuttered, and trade routes severed. Many of the newly independent states lacked the institutional capacity or economic resilience to function effectively, resulting in high unemployment, pervasive corruption, and political instability. The once-integrated markets were fragmented, and cross-border cooperation became difficult due to lingering animosities. As a result, the region became heavily dependent on international financial institutions, NGOs, and Western governments for reconstruction, development, and governance. EU accession processes became the primary geopolitical goal, often used as leverage by the West to impose neoliberal reforms and political concessions. Instead of developing strong, independent economies, many Balkan states became donor-dependent, with limited sovereignty in economic policymaking. This dependency has led to brain drain, social unrest, and political stagnation, hindering the region's ability to fully recover and thrive decades after the wars ended.

10. Arguments and Counterarguments

Argument 1: The Fall Was Inevitable Due to Ethnic Tensions

Counterargument: While ethnic tensions existed, they were inflamed by political elites and external actors.

Had there been genuine international mediation and support for a peaceful transition, the wars could have been avoided.

Argument 2: NATO Intervened for Humanitarian Reasons

Counterargument: While human rights violations occurred, NATO's actions aligned with strategic military goals - such as weakening Russian influence and establishing military bases - not merely moral imperatives.

Argument 3: Germany Acted in Good Faith

Counterargument: Germany's early recognition of secessionist states was a calculated geopolitical move to secure influence in the post-Cold War Balkans, regardless of the consequences.

Post-Yugoslav States: Economic Independence and Lingering Conflicts from the Yugoslav Breakup

Here is an analysis for each of the former Yugoslav republics, assessing their current economic independence and whether they continue to face conflicts - either active or inherited - from the breakup of Yugoslavia:

1. Slovenia
Slovenia is the most economically successful and politically stable of the former Yugoslav republics. It joined the European Union and NATO in 2004 and adopted the euro in 2007. Its well-developed infrastructure, strong export sector, and skilled workforce have helped it achieve high living standards, with a GDP per capita comparable to some Western European nations.

Slovenia has largely transitioned into a modern, service-oriented economy with significant integration into EU markets. It has managed to preserve a functioning welfare system and maintains sound fiscal management. Economically, Slovenia is widely seen as fully independent and self-sustaining. In terms of conflict, Slovenia has experienced minimal internal or external disputes since its brief 10-day war of independence in 1991. The absence of a large ethnic Serb population and its geographic distance from the Balkan conflict zones shielded it from the more violent aftermath of Yugoslavia's collapse. While it has had minor disputes with Croatia over border demarcations (notably the Piran Bay), these have not escalated into major political crises or violence. Slovenia, in effect, escaped much of the historical burden that continues to weigh on its Balkan neighbors.

2. Croatia
Croatia has made significant progress since the end of its war of independence (1991-1995), which saw widespread destruction and displacement. It joined the European Union in 2013 and has built a tourism-driven economy supplemented by industry, agriculture, and services. Croatia is more economically stable than several of its neighbors, with moderate foreign investment, improved infrastructure, and access to EU structural funds. Nonetheless, it still faces challenges such as youth unemployment, emigration, and regional economic disparities. While it is broadly economically in-

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Diaspora

Remembering Eternal Light Of Nairobi's Poets:
Vijay 'Arun' Puri

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Vijay 'Arun' Puri, the well-known Nairobi-based Asian diaspora poet and writer, fondly known as Vijay Arun, passed away in Mumbai, India, on May 21. He was 90. He was the light of many poetry sessions when he lived in Kenya and was much loved by those who had the fortune to hear his poems.

His name was Vijay (victory), so he never admitted defeat. Always smiling, he went on to succeed in many different areas — from a professional in the Nairobi City Council to a poet, from a memory trainer to a stage and later film actor, from a yoga practitioner to a master of ceremonies, from managing a children's home to a marketing executive... he wore many hats with aplomb.

He was born in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, on November 9 1935 and attended Punjab University in Chandigarh.

Former Nairobi veteran journalist Kul Bhushan, now living in retirement in New Delhi, paid a glowing tribute to a friend of six decades.

"Having known him for over sixty years while living in Nairobi and later in India, I have lost a sincere friend — indeed, a family member," he said.

"On learning of his illness, I did not want to call him and waited until he had stabilised. We connected on social media. He sent me a rousing patriotic Hindi poem after Operation Sindoor, which I appreciated."

"The next day, he wrote a single word in Hindi — "Thanks." Happy that he was doing well, I was dumbfounded and stunned when I received a post that he had left his body. The sudden and unexpected news blast was still shaking me when I shared it with my family, who had all known him so well."

Kul recalled, "It was in the mid-sixties that I came to know him after I joined a major newspaper in Nairobi. He invited me to a function of the Punjabi Kavi Sabha at a five-star hotel. Intrigued, I attended the event to find that a local African-origin leader — who did not know a word of Punjabi — was the guest of honour, and a group of local poets, mostly Sikhs, recited their poems. Arun was the master of ceremonies, and the event continued after the local leader excused himself."

"This marked the launch of many such events, and as I came to know him better, I requested that he compose a poem for my son's birthday in 1968. Gladly, he obliged, and it

was the highlight of the party. Forty years later, when he came to visit me in Delhi, he recalled that poem perfectly. Memory Master!" Kul said/ It was amazing to discover that he was an expert memory trainer who claimed to memorise an entire telephone directory! Although this was never challenged, his instant recall of phone numbers and poems proved him right. He trained many people to improve their memories. "Later, he invited me to a Punjabi play in which he was acting. After I wrote a review, it attracted more footfall. His love of acting became his passion, as he worked in dozens of plays, notably Loona by Batalvi. With the tide of Africanising civil service jobs after Kenya's independence, he quit his job. He launched himself as a theatre producer, investing his savings in a significant production, Adrak Ke Panjje. The theme of this play, family planning — not palatable to local audiences — was a factor in its poor box office performance."

True to his name, he never gave up and tried other pursuits. From managing a children's home to advertising marketing, he made his mark. He married Sneh, a classical music professor from Amritsar, Punjab. A delightful person with an endearing and loving attitude, her voice reminded listeners of the immortal singer Begum Akhtar.

After his return from India with his wife, the couple never looked back. They performed at concerts, organised musical events, and even sponsored artists from other countries — including the famous Sufi singer Reshma, who even stayed with them.

Later, he left for a tour of Britain with Sneh and a tabla (percussion) artist. They stayed with a famous former Kenyan broadcaster and poet, the late Chaman Lal Chaman, formerly of the Voice of Kenya, London Broadcasting Company (LBC) and BBC Asian TV, and held the audience spellbound with Sneh's singing. At the same time, Arun conducted the event with a poetic dimension. Similarly, a short tour of Mauritius was also a great success.

Sneh set up her music school at a prestigious venue in Nairobi and held regular concerts to public applause.

After the birth of their son, Manu, they moved back to Bombay, where Arun could act in films and Sneh could sing and teach music. With his contacts — including Bhajan Samrat Anup Jalota and others — Arun made his debut in movies and also in TV serials.

At the same time, Sneh became popular as a singer and music teacher. After many challenges, they had settled well in their own home in suburban Mumbai.

His wife Sneh predeceased him, and Arun bore this humongous loss with fortitude. As a devout Arya Samaji and a committed yoga practitioner, he went on with life — writing poems, attending poetic symposiums,



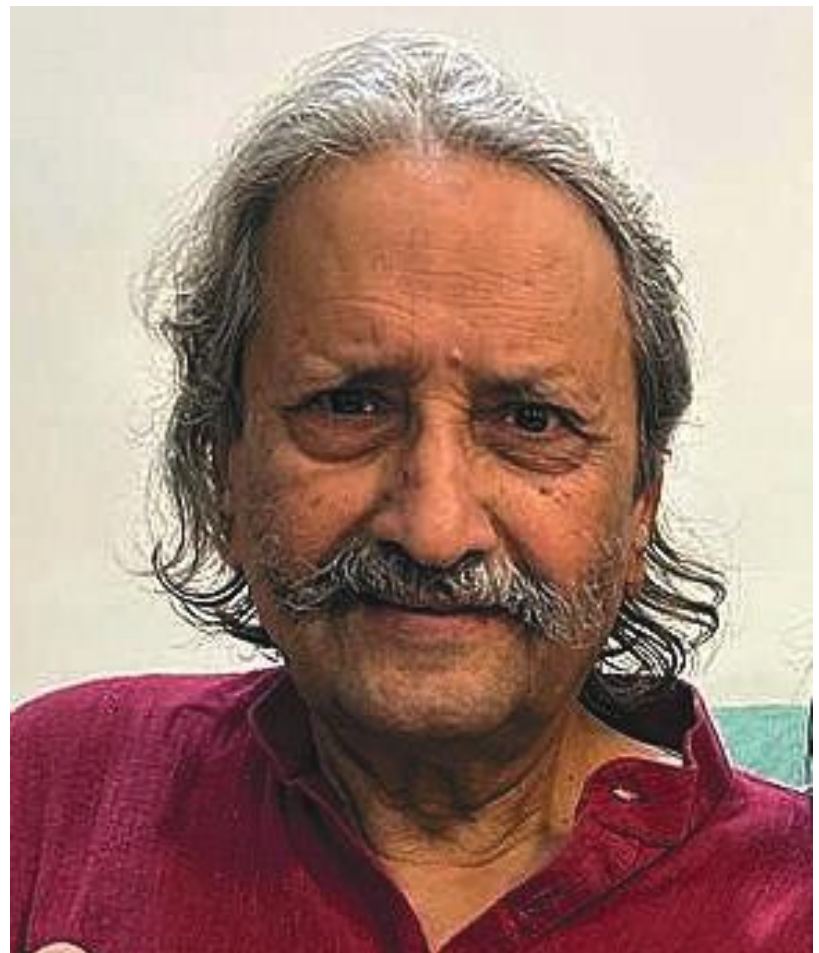
Late Vijay 'Arun' Puri, an accomplished poet and author in Nairobi and later in Mumbai, who passed away at the age of 90 in Mumbai, India. Photo Courtesy.

and persisting with his poetry until he published and launched his book of poems, which became his resounding achievement.

Vijay Arun Puri is survived by his son, Manu, his daughter-in-law, Jalpa, and grandson, Aarya, who doted on him. He recently travelled with them to his roots in Punjab to rekindle his past.

He promised me to celebrate his century but left a few months short of ninety years, which would be this November.

"Arun demands an emotional, poetic farewell, which, alas, is not the forte of a newspaper editor. And yet, he lives strong in our happy memories and deep in our loving hearts. Adieu, Arun, you are eternal," said Kul.



Veteran journalist Kul Bhushan... We were friends for over 60 years in Kenya and India. Photo Courtesy

The Fall of Yugoslavia: A Deep Dive into Its Fragmentation and the Interests Behind It

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Worth Noting:

- The fall of Yugoslavia and the subsequent collapse of its socialist economic system opened the floodgates for Western corporate interests. As the newly independent republics rushed to adopt market economies under IMF and World Bank guidance, massive privatization programs were launched - often under conditions of corruption, weak regulation, and post-war desperation. Western multinationals, banks, and investment firms exploited this vacuum to acquire state-owned assets in industries such as energy, telecommunications, manufacturing, and mining at cut-rate prices.
- Countries like Croatia and Serbia saw a sharp influx of foreign capital that was more extractive than developmental, with profits often repatriated abroad. Moreover, these corporations wielded significant influence over policy-making in these fragile economies, shaping labor laws and trade regulations to favor international investors over domestic needs. Thus, the disintegration of Yugoslavia not only marked a geopolitical shift but also a major economic transformation in favor of Western capital.

dependent, Croatia remains vulnerable to global market shifts and still depends on EU support in some sectors. In terms of conflict inheritance, Croatia still deals with unresolved war crimes, lingering interethnic tensions, and issues regarding Serb minority rights and returnees. Politically, Croatia has made strides in reconciliation, but nationalist rhetoric occasionally resurfaces, especially during elections. Relations with Serbia remain tense at times, often triggered by wartime memory politics and historical grievances. Although the country is not embroiled in active conflict, the social and psychological wounds of the Yugoslav wars continue to shape aspects of domestic and regional politics.

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bosnia and Herzegovina remains one of the most fragile and divided states that emerged from Yugoslavia. Its economy is weak and highly dependent on remittances, foreign aid, and EU development funds. Unemployment remains high - particularly among youth - and corruption is pervasive. The complex power-sharing system established by the Dayton Agreement in 1995 has led to administrative inefficiencies, political deadlock, and limited economic sovereignty. The country is far from economically independent, with many sectors underdeveloped and reforms stalled by political fragmentation between the Federation (Bosniak-Croat) and Republika Srpska (Serb). Conflict-wise, Bosnia has not returned to war, but it remains deeply divided along ethnic lines. Republika Srpska frequently threatens secession, and nationalist leaders routinely question the legitimacy of the Bosnian state. The legacy of the war continues to affect inter-ethnic trust, political cooperation, and state-building efforts. While overt violence has ceased, the political and social climate is tense, and international oversight - particularly by the Office of the High Representative - is still considered essential to maintain stability. Bosnia is arguably still dealing with the most unresolved issues from the Yugoslav breakup.

4. Serbia
Serbia has struggled with both economic development and political rehabili-



tation since the wars of the 1990s. Although it has seen periods of economic growth and is developing stronger ties with the EU, China, and Russia, its economy remains relatively underdeveloped compared to EU standards. Serbia's public sector is bloated, private investment is inconsistent, and rural areas lag behind urban centers. While the country has a degree of economic independence, it remains reliant on foreign direct investment, remittances, and political partnerships, particularly with China and Russia, to compensate for its EU accession delays and geopolitical balancing. Serbia continues to deal with unresolved conflicts inherited from Yugoslavia, particularly the status of Kosovo. Although Kosovo declared independence in 2008, Serbia does not recognize it and tensions regularly flare along the Kosovo-Serbia border. Diplomatic normalization efforts mediated by the EU have stalled, and the potential for renewed clashes - particularly in Serb-majority areas of northern Kosovo - remains a serious concern. Serbia also continues to grapple with its wartime legacy, facing international scrutiny over unresolved war crimes and nationalist rhetoric. The shadow of Yugoslavia's collapse still looms large over its politics and foreign policy.

5. North Macedonia
North Macedonia, formerly the Republic of Macedonia, has made significant strides

since gaining independence peacefully in 1991, but it has faced serious internal and external challenges. Economically, it remains one of the poorer Balkan countries, with modest growth and a high reliance on foreign aid, remittances, and limited industry. However, political reforms and foreign investment have helped improve stability. The name dispute with Greece, which delayed its NATO and EU integration for years, was finally resolved in 2019, and North Macedonia joined NATO in 2020. It still relies heavily on EU financial and diplomatic support and is not yet economically independent. Conflict-wise, North Macedonia endured a brief internal conflict in 2001 between ethnic Albanian insurgents and Macedonian forces, which ended with the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Although the agreement helped stabilize the country, ethnic divisions remain sensitive, and political parties are often organized along ethnic lines. Tensions between the Slavic majority and Albanian minority occasionally resurface, and the state continues to balance national identity issues inherited from both the Yugoslav breakup and its disputes with neighboring countries. While no active conflict exists today, the country remains vulnerable to political instability rooted in its complex post-Yugoslav legacy.

6. Montenegro
Montenegro, the smallest of the former Yugoslav republics,

became independent in 2006 following a peaceful referendum. Since then, it has pursued Western integration, joining NATO in 2017 and becoming a candidate for EU membership. Its economy is primarily service-based, with a heavy reliance on tourism, foreign investment, and aid. While it has achieved some level of economic autonomy, the small size of its economy and dependence on seasonal tourism make it vulnerable to global economic shocks. It continues to struggle with corruption, public debt, and unemployment, suggesting only partial economic independence. Although Montenegro avoided the wars of the 1990s, it inherited several post-Yugoslav tensions. Internally, divisions remain over national identity - whether Montenegrins are distinct from Serbs - and over relations with Serbia. The 2020 political shift brought pro-Serbian parties into power, fueling tensions between pro-Western and pro-Serbian factions. Occasional protests and political instability reveal that, while Montenegro is not in conflict, it is still navigating unresolved identity and sovereignty issues rooted in its Yugoslav past. The legacy of its close alliance with Serbia during the 1990s continues to influence its internal and external political dynamics.

11. The Legacy of Yugoslavia's Breakup

The region remains politically fragile. Bosnia is effectively a failed state held together by international oversight. Kosovo's status remains contested. Serbia still feels wronged, while EU integration has been uneven and slow. Meanwhile, the story of Yugoslavia has become a template - sometimes positively, sometimes not - for foreign intervention, regime change, and redrawing borders in the post-Cold War world.

12. Conclusion: A Manufactured Collapse?

The fall of Yugoslavia was not merely the result of ancient hatreds or ethnic strife. It was a modern geopolitical collapse, catalyzed by international economic restructuring, strategic military interests, and the ambitions of foreign powers - especially Germany, the United States, and NATO.

Understanding Yugoslavia's fall requires a multi-layered analysis - acknowledging both internal failures and the undeniable influence of external actors who exploited a weakening state for their own gain.

The tragedy of Yugoslavia is that its people paid the highest price for a conflict that served the strategic and economic interests of powers far beyond its borders.

Unpacking Sexual Violence: Consent, Trauma, And The Path To Justice



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Sexual violence is a global crisis, a profound violation of human rights that leaves indelible scars on individuals and societies. It is a complex issue, often shrouded in silence, stigma, and pervasive misconceptions. This article will delve deep into the multifaceted nature of sexual assault, exploring the fundamental concept of consent, the devastating impact on survivors, the arduous journey through reporting and the justice system, the critical importance of believing those who come forward, the global prevalence of sexual violence, and the nuanced intersection of sex work with the paramount principle of consent.

The Cornerstone of Consent: A Clear and Ongoing "Yes"

At the heart of any discussion about sexual activity lies the concept of consent. Legally and ethically, consent is the cornerstone. It is not merely the absence of a "no," but rather an affirmative, enthusiastic, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement to engage in each specific sexual act. Consent must be:

Voluntary: Freely given, without any coercion, pressure, threats, intimidation, or fear. This means that consent cannot be obtained through duress or manipulation. An individual under the influence of drugs or alcohol to the point of incapacitation, or who is unconscious or asleep, cannot give consent.

Affirmative: Demonstrated through clear words or actions that indicate a willing and active participation. Silence, passivity, or a lack of resistance should never be interpreted as consent. A clear verbal "yes" or other outward demonstration of free choice is necessary.

Ongoing: Consent is not a one-time agreement. It must be present for every single sexual act and can be withdrawn at any point during a sexual encounter. Consenting to one activity, or having consented to an activity in the past, does not imply consent for other activities or for the same activity at a later time. For example, agreeing to kiss someone does not grant permission for further sexual acts. Having sex with someone previously does not imply consent for future encounters.

Specific: Consent must be given for each specific act. A person might consent to one form of sexual contact but not another.

Crucially, power dynamics can significantly impact the voluntariness of consent. Relationships where there is a clear imbalance of power – such as employer-employee, teacher-student, or doctor-patient – can make true, free consent difficult or impossible to ascertain, as the individual in the subordinate position may feel compelled to agree due to fear of reprisal or to gain favor.

The legal definitions of rape and sexual assault vary across jurisdictions, but they consistently revolve around the absence of consent. Generally: Rape typically refers to non-consensual penetration (vaginal, anal, or

oral) by a sex organ or object.

Sexual Assault is a broader term encompassing any non-consensual sexual act, including unwanted sexual touching, coercion into sexual acts, or exposure to sexual acts without consent.

It's vital to debunk common myths that often surround consent. The idea that a victim must physically resist, that certain clothing implies consent, or that previous sexual history dictates future consent, are all dangerous falsehoods that perpetuate victim-blaming and obscure the true nature of sexual violence. Consent is about respect, communication, and mutual understanding, where "no" means no, and anything less than a clear "yes" means no.

The Profound Impact: Surviving Sexual Assault

The aftermath of sexual assault is often a deeply traumatic and life-altering experience, leaving survivors to grapple with a complex array of psychological, emotional, and physical consequences. The impact is highly individual, with no "right" or "wrong" way to respond, and can manifest immediately after the assault or emerge much later.

Psychological and Emotional Impacts:

Trauma and PTSD: Many survivors experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), characterized by intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, hypervigilance, and avoidance of anything that reminds them of the assault. These symptoms can be debilitating, disrupting daily life, relationships, and work.

Depression and Anxiety: Persistent sadness, hopelessness, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, changes in sleep and appetite, and thoughts of self-harm or suicide are common symptoms of depression. Anxiety, panic attacks, and a pervasive sense of unease are also frequently reported.

Shame, Guilt, and Self-Blame: Despite the perpetrator being solely responsible, survivors often internalize shame, guilt, and self-blame, questioning their actions, their clothing, or their choices, which can hinder their healing process.

Fear and Trust Issues: A profound sense of fear, distrust of others (especially potential romantic partners), and difficulty forming or maintaining healthy relationships are common. The world can feel unsafe, and intimacy can become challenging.

Disassociation: Some survivors experience disassociation, a detachment from their thoughts, feelings, memories, or even their body, as a coping mechanism during or after the assault.

Anger and Irritability: Feelings of intense anger, often directed inward or outward, and increased irritability are also common emotional responses.

Identity Shift: Survivors may feel that their identity has been irrevocably altered, struggling to reconcile their pre-assault self with their post-assault reality.

Physical Impacts

Immediate Injuries: Physical injuries such as cuts, bruises, tears, soreness, and swelling may occur during the assault.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Pregnancy: Survivors are at risk of contracting STIs, including HIV, and facing unintended pregnancies.

Chronic Pain and Somatic Symp-



toms: Some survivors develop chronic pain conditions, digestive issues, headaches, or other physical ailments as a result of the trauma.

Sleep Disturbances: Insomnia, nightmares, and other sleep disturbances are frequently reported, further exacerbating psychological distress.

Changes in Appetite and Eating Disorders: Fluctuations in appetite, overeating, or developing eating disorders can be a response to the trauma.

The impact of sexual assault is long-lasting, and survivors often require comprehensive support, including therapy, medical care, and community resources, to navigate their healing journey. The silence and stigma surrounding sexual violence can make it incredibly difficult for survivors to seek help, underscoring the critical need for a supportive and empathetic societal response.

The Arduous Path to Justice: Reporting and the Criminal Justice System For many survivors, the decision to report sexual assault to law enforcement is an incredibly difficult one, fraught with emotional, psychological, and practical challenges. The journey through the criminal justice system can often be as traumatizing as the assault itself, leading to low reporting rates and high attrition rates in sexual assault cases.

Barriers to Reporting

Stigma and Shame: Deep-seated societal stigma and personal shame are major deterrents. Survivors often fear judgment, disbelief, or being blamed for what happened.

Fear of Not Being Believed: A pervasive fear that their story will be doubted, scrutinized, or dismissed by police, prosecutors, or even their own community, is a significant barrier.

Re-traumatization: The process of recounting the assault repeatedly, often to multiple individuals (police, medical examiners, lawyers), can be incredibly re-traumatizing, forcing survivors to relive the painful experience.

Lack of Evidence: Sexual assaults often occur in private, with no witnesses and little to no physical evidence, making prosecution challenging. Survivors may feel that there isn't enough "proof" to support their claim.

Distrust in the Justice System: Historical and cultural distrust of authorities, particularly among marginalized communities, can prevent reporting. Survivors may believe the system is not designed to protect them or deliver justice.

Emotional and Psychological Im-

pact: The immediate aftermath of an assault can leave survivors in a state of shock, confusion, or emotional numbness, making it difficult to immediately engage with official processes.

Fear of Reprisal: Survivors may fear retaliation from the perpetrator or their associates, particularly if the assailant is known to them.

Lack of Support: Inadequate support services, language barriers, and a lack of culturally appropriate resources can further isolate survivors.

Challenges within the Justice System Investigation and Evidence Gathering: Sexual assault investigations are notoriously complex. Officers may lack specialized training in trauma-informed interviewing, leading to re-traumatization or inconsistent accounts. Gathering forensic evidence can be challenging and time-sensitive.

Prosecution Difficulties: Prosecutors must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the sexual act occurred without consent and that the accused knew or was reckless as to the absence of consent. This can be challenging when cases rely heavily on victim testimony and often lack corroborating evidence.

Cross-Examination and Defense Tactics: In court, survivors may face aggressive cross-examination, where defense attorneys attempt to discredit their testimony, question their credibility, or suggest alternative narratives. This can be deeply humiliating and distressing.

"He Said, She Said" Scenarios: Without concrete physical evidence or witnesses, sexual assault cases can often devolve into a "he said, she said" scenario, which can be emotionally draining and legally precarious for survivors.

Low Conviction Rates: Globally, conviction rates for sexual assault remain stubbornly low compared to other violent crimes, contributing to a perception that the justice system fails survivors. This attrition can be disheartening for those who pursue legal action.

Secondary Victimization: The process itself can lead to "secondary victimization," where survivors feel further harmed or betrayed by the institutions meant to protect them. This can occur through insensitive questioning, disbelief from authorities, or a protracted, intrusive legal process.

Despite these immense challenges, many courageous survivors choose to report, driven by a desire for

justice, to prevent others from being harmed, or to reclaim a sense of agency. Their resilience in navigating a system that is often not designed to support them is truly remarkable.

The Imperative of Belief: Why "Believe Survivors" Matters

In the face of the profound challenges survivors encounter when disclosing sexual assault, the simple act of "believing survivors" becomes a powerful and essential act of support and solidarity. This mantra is not about bypassing due process or automatically declaring guilt; rather, it is about creating an initial environment of empathy and trust that is crucial for healing and for encouraging reporting.

Why Belief is Crucial

Encourages Disclosure: When survivors feel they will be believed, they are more likely to come forward and seek help. The fear of disbelief is a primary reason for silence.

Validates Experience: Being believed validates a survivor's traumatic experience, affirming that what happened to them was real and not their fault. This is fundamental to counteracting feelings of shame and self-blame.

Facilitates Healing: A supportive and believing response can be the first step on a survivor's healing journey. It provides a sense of safety and allows them to process their trauma without the added burden of fighting for credibility.

Counters Victim-Blaming: Believing survivors directly challenges the pervasive culture of victim-blaming that often accompanies discussions of sexual assault. It shifts the focus from the survivor's actions to the perpetrator's responsibility.

High Truthfulness Rate: Research consistently shows that false reports of sexual assault are rare, typically ranging from 2-10%, a rate comparable to false reports for other violent crimes. The vast majority of disclosures are true, making initial skepticism unwarranted and harmful.

Reduces Isolation: When survivors are met with skepticism or disbelief, they often retreat into isolation, compounding their trauma. Belief fosters connection and reduces feelings of loneliness.

Empowerment: Being

Unpacking Sexual Violence: Consent, Trauma, And The Path To Justice

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believed empowers survivors to reclaim their voice and agency, which are often stripped away by the act of assault. "Believe survivors" is a call to listen with an open mind, to offer compassion, and to understand that a survivor's account, even if it seems fragmented or inconsistent due to trauma, is their truth. It acknowledges that the primary hurdle for many survivors is simply getting their story heard and accepted, rather than immediately being subjected to doubt. This initial belief does not preclude a thorough investigation by law enforcement, but it establishes a foundation of support that is vital for the survivor's well-being and for the potential pursuit of justice.

The Global Scope: Prevalence of Sexual Violence
Sexual violence is a pervasive human rights violation affecting millions worldwide, transcending geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries. While comprehensive data can be challenging to collect due to underreporting and varying definitions, global statistics paint a grim picture of its widespread prevalence. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), global estimates indicate that approximately 1 in 3 women (30%) worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime, with most of this violence perpetrated by intimate partners. While intimate partner violence accounts for the majority, a significant percentage of women also report having been sexually assaulted by non-partners.

Key statistics and trends highlight Gendered Violence: Sexual violence disproportionately affects women and girls. While men and boys can also be victims, the vast majority of perpetrators are male, and the victims are overwhelmingly female.

Intimate Partner Violence: A substantial portion of sexual violence occurs within intimate relationships, often alongside other forms of abuse. This highlights the complex dynamics of power and control within relationships.

Non-Partner Sexual Violence: A significant percentage of women also experience sexual assault by individuals other than their partners, including strangers, acquaintances, or family members. Data for non-partner sexual violence can be more limited, but its prevalence is undeniable.

Underreporting: The true scope of sexual violence is significantly underestimated due to pervasive underreporting. Factors like shame, fear of retaliation, distrust in the justice system, and societal stigma contribute to many assaults going unreported.

Conflict and Humanitarian Crises: In conflict zones and humanitarian emergencies, sexual violence is often used as a weapon of war, with devastating consequences for individuals and communities. Displacement and instability exacerbate vulnera-

bilities.

Vulnerable Populations: Certain groups are at heightened risk of sexual violence, including women and girls with disabilities, indigenous women, LGBTQ+ individuals, migrants, and refugees.

Long-term Consequences: Beyond the immediate trauma, sexual violence has severe long-term health consequences, including increased risk of STIs (including HIV), unintended pregnancies, chronic pain, mental health disorders, and higher rates of suicide.

Economic Impact: Sexual violence also has a significant economic impact, affecting individuals' ability to work, participate in education, and contribute to society, and placing a burden on healthcare and justice systems. International organizations like the UN Women and the WHO are actively working to raise awareness, improve data collection, support survivors, and advocate for stronger legal frameworks and prevention strategies to combat sexual violence globally. The sheer scale of the problem underscores the urgent need for collective action and a fundamental shift in societal attitudes towards consent and gender equality.

Sex Work and the Unwavering Right to Consent
The intersection of sex work and sexual violence is a complex and often misunderstood area, fraught with societal prejudices and legal ambiguities. It is critical to establish unequivocally that engaging in sex work does not negate or diminish an individual's fundamental right to consent. Any sexual act performed without explicit, enthusiastic, and ongoing consent within the context of sex work is, by definition, sexual assault or rape.

Understanding Consent in Sex Work
Negotiated Services: Sex work, in its consensual form, involves the negotiated exchange of specific sexual services for compensation. The terms of this exchange should be clearly defined and agreed upon by all parties.

Specific Consent: Consent given for one specific service does not automatically extend to other services. For example, agreeing to a particular act does not imply consent for additional or different acts.

Withdrawal of Consent: Just like in any other sexual encounter, consent can be withdrawn at any time, even if payment has been made or services have begun. If a sex worker states they no longer consent, or if their non-verbal cues clearly indicate withdrawal of consent, the activity must stop immediately. Continuing without consent is sexual assault.

Payment Does Not Equal Perpetual Consent: The act of receiving payment for sexual services does not grant a client indefinite or unlimited access to a sex worker's body. Consent remains paramount and can be rescinded.

Power Imbalances and Coercion: While consensual sex work exists, it is also a field where individuals can be highly vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, and coercion. These situations, where consent is absent or



fundamentally compromised, are not sex work but rather forms of sexual exploitation and violence. It is crucial to distinguish between consensual sex work and exploitation.

Challenges Faced by Sex Workers Regarding Consent and Safety

Criminalization: In many jurisdictions, sex work is criminalized, either fully or partially. This criminalization drives sex workers underground, making them more vulnerable to violence and exploitation, and less likely to report assaults due to fear of arrest or further stigmatization. It also makes it harder for them to access legal protection and support services.

Stigma and Discrimination: Sex workers often face immense social stigma and discrimination, which can lead to their experiences of sexual violence being dismissed or disbelieved by law enforcement, healthcare providers, and the wider community.

Lack of Legal Protection: Where sex work is illegal, sex workers may not have the same legal protections as other workers, making it difficult to seek justice for crimes committed against them. Perpetrators may act with impunity, knowing their victims are less likely to report.

Exploitation and Trafficking: The lines between consensual sex work and human trafficking or exploitation can be blurred, and vulnerable individuals are often forced or coerced into sexual acts. It is vital to recognize that such situations are inherently non-consensual and constitute grave human rights violations.

Difficulty in Reporting: Fear of arrest, disbelief, and re-traumatization can create significant barriers for sex workers who experience sexual assault to report to the police.

Myths and Misconceptions: Harmful myths persist, suggesting that sex workers cannot be raped, or that payment automatically implies consent for any sexual act. These misconceptions are dangerous and directly contribute to the vulnerability of sex workers to sexual violence.

Advocacy for Sex Workers' Rights
Human rights organizations and sex worker-led advocacy groups widely advocate for the decriminalization of consensual adult sex work. They

argue that this approach, rather than criminalization, is the most effective way to:

Enhance Safety: By bringing sex work out of the shadows, decriminalization can create safer working conditions, allow for better regulation, and enable sex workers to report violence without fear of legal repercussions.

Improve Health Outcomes: Decriminalization can facilitate access to healthcare, including sexual health services, for sex workers.

Uphold Human Rights: It aligns with the principles of bodily autonomy, dignity, and freedom from violence and discrimination for all individuals, regardless of their profession.

Combat Exploitation: By differentiating consensual sex work from exploitation and trafficking, law enforcement can better focus resources on prosecuting genuine cases of forced labor and sexual slavery.

The fundamental principle remains clear: consent is non-negotiable. No profession, no agreement, and no payment can ever justify or excuse sexual acts performed without clear, enthusiastic, and ongoing consent. Sexual assault within the context of sex work is still sexual assault, and survivors deserve the same rights, protection, and access to justice as any other survivor of sexual violence.

The Path Forward: Collective Responsibility and Change
Addressing sexual violence requires a multi-pronged approach that goes beyond legal frameworks and delves into societal attitudes, education, and support systems. The profound impact of sexual assault, the arduous journey for survivors seeking justice, and the global prevalence of this violence underscore the urgent need for comprehensive and sustained action.

Key areas for change include:
Comprehensive Education: Implementing comprehensive consent education programs from a young age, focusing on healthy relationships, communication, and respect for bodily autonomy.

Challenging Harmful Norms: Actively dismantling patriarchal attitudes, gender stereotypes, and rape myths that contribute to a culture of sexual violence and victim-blaming.

This requires critical examination of media representations, language, and cultural practices.

Trauma-Informed Response: Ensuring that all first responders, healthcare professionals, and legal personnel are trained in trauma-informed care, providing empathetic and supportive responses to survivors.

Strengthening Legal Frameworks and Enforcement: Reviewing and strengthening laws related to sexual violence, ensuring they are aligned with international human rights standards and effectively prosecute perpetrators. This includes addressing issues of consent, evidence, and victim support within the justice system.

Support Services: Investing in and expanding accessible, comprehensive support services for survivors, including crisis hotlines, counseling, medical care, legal aid, and safe housing.

Engaging Men and Boys: Actively engaging men and boys in prevention efforts, fostering positive masculinities, and challenging norms that normalize aggression or sexual entitlement.

Research and Data Collection: Improving the collection of accurate data on sexual violence to better understand its prevalence, patterns, and impact, informing evidence-based prevention and response strategies.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Sex Work: Advocating for the decriminalization of consensual adult sex work to improve the safety, health, and human rights of sex workers, allowing them to report violence without fear. Ultimately, preventing and responding to sexual violence is a shared responsibility. It requires a societal shift towards a culture of consent, respect, and accountability, where every individual's bodily autonomy is revered, and survivors are met with unwavering belief and support on their path to healing and justice. The silence around sexual violence must be broken, and the voices of survivors amplified, to pave the way for a world free from this pervasive human rights abuse.

Diaspora

Writing As A Journey To The Self

By: Jakhongir NOMOZOV
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Our guest in this edition is the renowned Korean poet and writer, translator and journalist, laureate of numerous international literary awards, Vice President of the Korea Institute for Peace and Cooperation, and Doctor of Political Science (PhD), Byeong Cheol KANG.

—Let’s begin our conversation with Korean literature... In your opinion, what are the unique characteristics of Korean literature?

—The spirit of Korean literature is deeply rooted in history, emotion, and collective experience. Central to it is the concept of “han”—a uniquely Korean sentiment of sorrow and endurance, reflecting the nation’s struggles and hopes. This emotional depth gives Korean literature its powerful resonance. While shaped by universal literary traditions, Korean literature is especially marked by reflections on historical trauma—such as the Japanese occupation, the Korean War, and national division—often portraying individuals caught in the tide of greater historical forces. A key strength lies in its blend of tradition and innovation. From classical forms to modern experiments like one-line poems, Korean literature embraces change while honoring its roots. It also mirrors the country’s competitive social landscape, pushing boundaries in form and content. Contemporary Korean writers are increasingly addressing issues of gender, class, and identity, giving rise to diverse and personal voices. With the help of the internet, Korean literature now reaches a global audience more rapidly, expanding its influence and cultural exchange.

—Which literary genres do you feel most connected to? What draws you particularly to these genres?

—The literary genres I feel most deeply connected to are poetry and short stories. Poetry captivates me with its condensed emotional power and lyrical beauty. A single line of verse can contain an entire universe of emotion, memory, and meaning. Short stories also strongly draw me in. I particularly enjoy the twists and turns that reveal how an individu-

al’s life can be interpreted in unexpected ways. This sense of discovery and insight continues to move me and draws me ever deeper into the world of literature.

—Do you think it is important for a writer to discover and express their true “self”? How does the search for identity manifest in your own work?

—Yes, I believe it is very important for a writer to discover and express their true self. Writing is not simply about crafting beautiful sentences; it is about honesty, authenticity, and an inner dialogue. When a writer sincerely faces their memories, emotions, values, and sometimes contradictions, their work gains depth, clarity, and a powerful resonance. Readers naturally sense when a voice is genuine. In my own work, the search for identity is a recurring theme. Whether I write poetry or fiction, I am continually drawn to questions such as: What kind of identity does a human possess? How is my individual identity related to the identity of humanity as a whole? How am I connected to language and to others? Sometimes, I explore these questions through personal reflection; other times, through characters who experience struggles with belonging, change, and the confusion of memory. Especially within the context of Korean literature, where collective history and personal experience are deeply intertwined, discovering the self is a journey that moves between tradition and modernity, the private and the political. For me, writing is a process of self-recognition and redefinition, and I believe that this journey itself gives literature its lasting significance.

—As a writer, what kind of philosophical worldview do you adhere to? How does this worldview influence your literary creations?

—As a poet and writer, I am drawn to a philosophical worldview that embraces human complexity, the Buddhist concept of impermanence, and interconnectedness. I see life not as a series of fixed absolutes but as a constantly changing flow where contradictions coexist—joy and sorrow, certainty and doubt, individuality and community.

This perspective encourages me to explore characters and themes with nuance and empathy rather than seeking simple answers. This worldview deeply influences my literary work. I often focus on the fluidity of identity and the ways people navigate history, memory, and relationships. I am particularly interested in how individuals find meaning amid uncertainty and change, and how personal stories intersect with larger social and historical forces. I also pay attention to the fact that people with absolute certainty have perpetrated mass atrocities. When looking at their personalities, there is a tendency to pursue absolute good while believing that many evil people must be punished. My writing aims to reflect this complexity through layered narratives, poetic language, and open-ended questions rather than clear resolutions. Ultimately, I believe literature’s role is to mirror the richness of human experience—embracing both its beauty and ambiguity—and to invite readers into a profound dialogue about existence.

—How do you maintain a balance between freedom and responsibility as a writer?

—I believe that maintaining a balance between freedom and responsibility as a writer is important. On one hand, writing requires creative freedom—the ability to explore ideas, emotions, and forms without constraint. However, this freedom of expression comes with responsibility: responsibility to the truth, to the subjects represented, and to the readers. Especially when dealing with sensitive topics or real experiences, I am always careful to consider the ethical impact my words may have.

—What kind of mental or emotional preparation do you undertake before beginning the creative process? What emotional experiences does the act of writing bring you?

—Before beginning the creative process, I take time to calm my mind and prepare my emotions. I usually do this through quiet meditation or introspection, helping me settle mentally and open myself to inspiration. I try to clear away distract-



ing thoughts and focus on the feelings, memories, or questions I want to explore through writing. Sometimes, I reflect on personal experiences or immerse myself in the atmosphere related to the theme of my work. Visiting meaningful places or noting down emotions felt while witnessing beautiful landscapes during travels also greatly helps my creative process.

—How important is it for a poet to express their inner pain?

—It is very important for a poet to express their inner pain. Poetry is a special tool that can transform intense

emotions into art. When inner pain accumulates, it makes a person unhappy. Through honest expression in poetry, a poet can elevate their pain into beauty and create a strong sense of empathy and connection with readers. This allows the poet to heal and give meaning to their personal suffering, while also offering readers an opportunity to ease or heal their own pain. Through poetry, inner pain can reveal universal truths about human vulnerability, resilience, and hope.

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Diaspora

Writing As A Journey To The Self

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—What are the most challenging issues you face as a creative individual?

—As a creative individual, one of the most challenging issues I face is maintaining a balance between inspiration and consistent effort. Creativity often comes unpredictably, so when inspiration is lacking, I focus on reading and practicing writing regularly. Another difficulty is balancing economic livelihood with creative focus. When I have to work to make a living, it becomes hard to write with ease and freedom. Overcoming the anxieties of life and maintaining confidence in my own voice is a difficult challenge. External pressures such as time constraints, financial concerns, and audience expectations also place a heavy burden on the creative process.

—What is your perspective on the interaction between literature and politics? How do they influence one another?

—Literature and politics interact very closely and influence each other in complex ways. Literature often serves as a mirror of society, capturing political realities, social struggles, and ideological conflicts. Through novels, poetry, and essays, writers can critique power structures, give voice to the marginalized, and imagine alternative futures. In this way, literature becomes a form of political engagement and resistance. Authoritarian regimes often suppress poets and writers who are critical of the government. Politics, in turn, shapes the conditions in which literature is created and received. Political systems, censorship, and social policies determine what can be freely expressed and what is suppressed. Historical events and political climates also affect the themes, styles, and urgency of literary works. For example, during times of oppression or upheaval, powerful literary movements often emerge that challenge authority and call for change. In the case of Korea, while freedom of expression was once restricted in the past, it is now widely protected and openly practiced. Ultimately, literature and politics are in constant dialogue, and together they contribute to our understanding of identity, justice, freedom, and community. This dynamic interaction enriches both fields and deepens our way of perceiving the world.

standing of identity, justice, freedom, and community. This dynamic interaction enriches both fields and deepens our way of perceiving the world.

—What are your thoughts on the future of Korean literature? In what ways can contemporary writers contribute to that future?

—I believe the future of Korean literature is full of great potential and possibility. As Korean society becomes increasingly globalized and diverse, Korean literature is also evolving—expanding in its range of themes, styles, and voices. The emotional depth and cultural richness that form the tradition of Korean literature still resonate powerfully, and they are now being expressed in more diverse and innovative ways. Korean literature is open and eager to engage with and learn from the world. Most importantly, writers must preserve their individuality and authenticity while actively participating in open dialogue. When the truth of personal experience is shared through literature with global citizens, it becomes a powerful force that fosters empathy, understanding, and cultural exchange. As today's writers cross both national and artistic boundaries and broaden their perspectives, the future of Korean literature will become more vibrant, inclusive, and globally meaningful.

—How have significant historical and political events in Korea inspired you? How are these events reflected in your works?

—Significant historical and political events in Korea have given me profound emotional and intellectual inspiration. Events such as the Japanese occupation, the Korean War, the division of the Korean Peninsula, and the democratization movements have not only left deep marks on the collective consciousness of the Korean people but have also strongly shaped my identity and sense of purpose as a writer. I try to find points of empathy by imagining how global citizens may have felt in comparison to what Koreans experienced during these periods. These moments of shared historical emotion often appear in my works—sometimes directly through



the stories of characters who lived through those times, and sometimes symbolically, through universal human emotions such as migration, longing, and hope. I am especially drawn to the lives of those quietly swept up by history. Forgotten voices, untold stories, and the moral questions that arise amid oppression and change captivate me. In my poetry and fiction, I aim to show that history is not just a backdrop, but a living force that continues to influence our emotions, relationships, and choices today. Through literature, I strive to keep memory alive, to offer a space for healing and dialogue, and to reflect deeply on how we are beings who live within, yet also transcend, history. For example, I once found myself mesmerized by the beauty of a birch forest in Poland. In that moment of enchantment, I suddenly missed the sunlight of my homeland. This led to the realization that migrants around the world must also feel a deep yearning for their places of origin. The image of people living in beautiful and safe countries still aching for their war-torn or impoverished homelands moved me deeply. The lives of countless refugees are not only the lives of today's global citizens, but also mirror the lives of our own an-



cestors.

—What aspects of Korean cultural heritage do you strive to explore? How has this exploration influenced your creativity?

—The aspects of Korean cultural heritage I seek to explore include traditional memory, folk tales, language, and especially the deep, uniquely Korean emotion known as “han” I am also deeply interested in the transmission of stories across generations, the tension between Confucian values and modern individualism, rituals and family structures, and the influence of oral traditions on identity formation. However, my greatest focus is on the impact of the Buddhist heritage. The process of exploring Buddhist cultural elements has profoundly influenced my creative work. The Buddhist worldview, which

expansively transcends time and space, greatly aids in explaining and understanding the fundamental, existential questions of human nature. This exploration of Buddhist culture has led me to realize that local identity and global empathy are not in conflict. On the contrary, the deeper the exploration, the more common human experiences emerge that connect across religions and borders. This awareness strengthens my writer's voice and enables me to create stories and poetry that are culturally specific yet emotionally universal.

Interview conducted by:
Jakhongir NOMOZOV
Member of the Azerbaijan
Journalists' Union.
Special correspondent for the
“Mt. Kenya Times”
newspaper.

Worth Noting:

—What kind of mental or emotional preparation do you undertake before beginning the creative process? What emotional experiences does the act of writing bring you?

—Before beginning the creative process, I take time to calm my mind and prepare my emotions. I usually do this through quiet meditation or introspection, helping me settle mentally and open myself to inspiration. I try to clear away distracting thoughts and focus on the feelings, memories, or questions I want to explore through writing. Sometimes, I reflect on personal experiences or immerse myself in the atmosphere related to the theme of my work. Visiting meaningful places or noting down emotions felt while witnessing beautiful landscapes during travels also greatly helps my creative process.

Exporting Risk? An Investigative Analysis Of Vaccines And Medicines “Not For Use” In The West But Targeted At Africa



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

1. Introduction - Framing the Dilemma

In recent years, observant researchers, health practitioners, and even concerned citizens across Africa have noticed a curious and troubling trend. Pharmaceutical products, especially vaccines and experimental treatments, often carry labels stating: “Not for use in the USA, Canada, or EU countries.” Even more alarming, some are labeled specifically as “For use in Africa” or “For use in developing countries only.” This seemingly simple disclaimer raises critical questions: Why are these products, developed in Western laboratories and backed by global pharmaceutical giants, deemed unfit or restricted for use in the countries that produce them? Why are these same products then exported and deployed in mass public health campaigns across the Global South - particularly in Africa?

This discrepancy is not just a matter of regulatory differences or international health policy. It strikes at the heart of global pharmaceutical ethics, colonial legacies in medicine, and Africa’s vulnerable dependence on external health solutions. In a continent where local production of medicine is almost nonexistent, and where millions depend on imported drugs for survival, Africa is at a crossroads. Are African lives being treated as experimental commodities? Or is this a misunderstood but necessary mechanism in a global system of health innovation and disease control?

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed this discrepancy. Some vaccines administered widely in Africa had not received full regulatory approval in the West, and in some cases, were rejected altogether. Yet they were distributed by international organizations in massive public health campaigns. Similar concerns surround malaria, cholera, HPV, and tuberculosis vaccines.

In this investigative article, there is a deep dive into the production and distribution of Western-developed medicines and vaccines that are barred for domestic use yet actively exported. The article scrutinizes the roles of pharmaceutical companies, international health agencies, and regulatory bodies. It also examines the historical context of medical experimentation in Africa, the continent’s fragile pharmaceutical infrastructure, and what this means for sovereignty, safety, and self-reliance in African health systems. From the

ethics of emergency authorizations to the economic interests of Big Pharma, this article provides a fact-based, critical, and nuanced discussion.

The article asks the uncomfortable but necessary question: Is Africa safe in the hands of pharmaceutical giants whose products they themselves would not consume?

2. Understanding the Label: “Not for Use in the USA/EU”

Labels indicating that a medicine or vaccine is “Not for Use” in developed countries typically mean the product has not been approved by that country’s regulatory agency. For example, the FDA, EMA, and Health Canada follow stringent requirements in terms of safety, efficacy, and long-term testing before approving any drug. If a pharmaceutical product fails to meet these standards, it cannot be legally sold or administered within those jurisdictions. However, those same products are often rebranded and exported to developing countries where oversight is weaker.

Such labels also act as legal shields for pharmaceutical companies. In the event of adverse reactions or deaths in Western countries, companies are liable for lawsuits and massive financial penalties. These risks are reduced when exporting to Africa, where legal redress systems are often weak or nonexistent. For pharmaceutical giants, Africa represents a lucrative, underregulated market, protected by global aid funding, humanitarian language, and legal impunity.

The reality is that these disclaimers are not mere regulatory notes but powerful ethical signposts. They indicate the existence of a dual standard in global healthcare where African lives are, intentionally or otherwise, subject to lower protection and less scrutiny.

3. The Regulatory Loopholes and Fast-Tracking in Developing Countries

One reason pharmaceutical companies can export unapproved drugs

to Africa is the existence of emergency use authorizations and special pathways created by the World Health Organization (WHO) and national governments. WHO’s pre-qualification program, meant to streamline access to essential medicines in low-income countries, is often used by countries lacking strong drug regulation systems. While the intent is noble, it also opens the door to less tested or experimental medicines.

In Africa, most countries do not have their own Food and Drug Authority equivalent, or if they do, these institutions are poorly funded and highly dependent on foreign data and WHO endorsements. As a result, drugs that have not passed full Phase III trials or that use older and riskier adjuvants may still be approved quickly if the perceived benefits outweigh risks in a public health emergency. This fast-tracking process is easily manipulated, especially by powerful donors, NGOs, and multinational pharmaceutical companies.

4. Historical Context: Medical Experimentation in Africa

Africa’s relationship with Western medicine has been shaped by a long and painful history of exploitation. During the colonial era, African subjects were routinely used in vaccine and drug trials without consent. From syphilis experiments in the Belgian Congo to forced sterilizations and contraceptive trials in South Africa, the continent has seen egregious medical abuses.

This historical memory persists. In 1996, Pfizer conducted an unauthorized clinical trial of an experimental meningitis drug, Trovan, in Nigeria. The trial led to the deaths of several children and permanent injuries in others. The resulting legal battle highlighted the continued vulnerability of African populations to unethical pharmaceutical practices. Today, the shadow of these past abuses looms large over contemporary concerns about double standards in vaccine distribution.

5. Case Studies of Controversial Vaccines and Medicines Sent to Africa

Several specific cases underscore the pattern of exporting questionable or under-tested drugs to Africa:

1. Trovan (Pfizer, 1996): An Experiment Amid Crisis

In 1996, during a deadly meningitis outbreak in Kano, northern Nigeria, Pfizer conducted a clinical trial of an experimental antibiotic called Trovan (trovafloxacin) on nearly 200 children. At the time, Trovan had not been approved for pediatric use in the United States due to serious safety concerns, including risks of liver damage and death. Without fully informed consent from the children’s parents and with inadequate ethical oversight, Pfizer administered the drug alongside a control group that received a reduced dose of ceftriaxone, a standard treatment.

The trial resulted in the deaths of 11 children, while others suffered long-term disabilities such as brain damage, paralysis, or loss of sight and hearing. Allegations emerged that the documentation used to justify the trial had been backdated and that ethical approval had never been properly obtained. After years of legal battles, including a 2001 lawsuit by the Nigerian government and individual families, Pfizer eventually settled the case in 2009 by agreeing to pay \$75 million. However, the incident left a deep scar, symbolizing how multinational pharmaceutical companies have at times exploited African emergencies to bypass regulatory standards that would be unthinkable in Western countries.

This case exposed not only the vulnerabilities in African health systems but also the asymmetry in ethical standards applied globally. It remains a cautionary tale about the consequences of conducting clinical research in crisis zones without transparency, informed consent, or robust oversight.

2. HPV Vaccines: Africa as a Regulatory Exception

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines, such as Cervarix and Gardasil, have been heralded for their potential to prevent cervical cancer. However, in several African countries, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, versions of these vaccines were administered with adjuvants (immune-response boosters) that had either not been widely used or were not approved for the same demographic populations in Europe or North America.

These formulations included AS04, an adjuvant based on monophosphoryl lipid A, which had raised concerns in some scientific circles about potential links to autoimmune disorders and chronic fatigue-like syndromes. In parts of Africa, the vaccines were distributed in mass campaigns funded and promoted by international organizations like GAVI and WHO, often with limited post-vaccination monitoring, especially in rural areas. Critics argue that proper informed consent, community education, and long-term follow-up on side effects were inadequate or absent, leaving many questions about the potential long-term impacts of these vaccination campaigns.

Moreover, the socio-economic context—low health literacy, limited media freedom, and high trust in foreign aid—meant that adverse events were rarely reported or investigated thoroughly. While HPV vaccines have undeniable public health value, their rollout in Africa, with formulations and oversight that would not be permitted elsewhere, raises legitimate concerns about double standards in global health ethics.

3. COVID-19 Vaccines: A Two-Tiered Vaccine World

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many African countries received vaccines through the COVAX initiative, a global partnership led by Gavi, CEPI, and the WHO. However, the rollout was often delayed and limited in scope, leaving many African countries with only one or two vaccine options, while wealthier nations had access to a wider range of vaccines and faster delivery times.

Exporting Risk? An Investigative Analysis Of Vaccines And Medicines “Not For Use” In The West But Targeted At Africa

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promote equitable vaccine access. While well-intentioned, the program also exposed the hierarchy in vaccine quality. Several vaccine brands delivered to African nations—including Covaxin (India), Sinopharm (China), and Sputnik V (Russia)—never received full approval from the U.S. FDA or the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and were rejected or avoided by wealthier nations.

In some cases, such as with Astra-Zeneca, doses were sent to African countries after being pulled from circulation in Western countries due to concerns about blood clotting. Others, like Sinopharm and Sinovac, were approved under emergency use listings, but faced doubts over transparency in clinical trial data and long-term efficacy. Moreover, infrastructure challenges meant that cold chain requirements were not always met, and follow-up for adverse events was minimal.

This created a de facto two-tier vaccine system: high-income nations received mRNA-based vaccines with extensive testing and regulatory oversight, while African countries were expected to accept what was available, often without the same scrutiny. Though millions were vaccinated and some protection achieved, the uneven standards and limited choice raise profound ethical questions about global solidarity, vaccine diplomacy, and medical autonomy.

4. Antimalarial Drugs: A Market Flooded with Substandard Medications

Malaria remains one of Africa's deadliest diseases, killing hundreds of thousands annually, especially children under five. To combat it, international donors have pumped billions of dollars into supplying antimalarial drugs, primarily through initiatives such as the Global Fund, USAID, and UNICEF. However, numerous investigations have revealed that many of these donated drugs—especially artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs)—are substandard or counterfeit.

The WHO has acknowledged that over 15% of antimalarial drugs in sub-Saharan Africa may be substandard or falsified, with some estimates placing the number even higher. These drugs often contain less than the required dose, improper ingredients, or none of the active ingredient at all. Poor procurement practices, lack of stringent regulatory oversight, and decentralized donor distribution channels have allowed these medicines to enter the public supply chain—undermining treatment effectiveness, increasing resistance, and costing lives.

Moreover, many local drug regulatory authorities are underfunded

and politically weak, unable to enforce rigorous testing or reject questionable consignments. In some cases, African countries have accepted bulk shipments of antimalarials with expired shelf lives or without sufficient quality certification, simply because rejecting them would mean leaving populations without any treatment. This dangerous trade-off highlights how Africa's dependency on donor-funded medicine leaves it vulnerable not only to poor-quality drugs but also to long-term health crises driven by drug resistance.

These case studies demonstrate that Africa often receives pharmaceutical products that would not meet the minimum regulatory or ethical standards elsewhere.

6. The Role of Global Health Institutions: WHO, GAVI, Gates Foundation

Global health institutions often act as intermediaries between pharmaceutical companies and African governments. WHO, GAVI, the Global Fund, and the Gates Foundation play significant roles in funding, procuring, and recommending medicines and vaccines. While their contributions to disease reduction are undeniable, their influence also creates a power imbalance. These organizations often bypass local oversight structures in the name of efficiency or urgency.

Moreover, they are not neutral players. The Gates Foundation, for instance, invests in pharmaceutical companies and simultaneously funds global vaccine campaigns, raising questions about conflicts of interest. WHO's dependence on voluntary funding from the same donors it is supposed to regulate weakens its impartiality. This convergence of interests often leaves African countries unable to push back against questionable medical interventions.

7. Economic and Political Incentives for Western Countries

Western nations have both economic and political incentives to export unapproved or surplus drugs to Africa. Pharmaceutical companies avoid the cost of destroying expired or unsold products. They also secure tax incentives and favorable public relations by donating or selling these products at discounted rates through humanitarian channels. Politically, vaccine diplomacy helps strengthen alliances and influence policy in recipient countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, countries like China and Russia also used vaccine donations to expand their geopolitical reach in Africa. Western countries were quick to follow suit, often offloading vaccines nearing expiry.

8. Africa's Pharmaceutical Landscape: Dependence and Underdevelopment

Africa imports over 70% of its pharmaceuticals. Most countries lack the infrastructure, capital, or regulatory systems to manufacture essential medicines locally. This dependence on external sources makes Afri-



can nations vulnerable to medical dumping, price manipulation, and supply chain shocks.

Local pharmaceutical industries are underdeveloped due to years of policy neglect, lack of investment, intellectual property restrictions, and poor access to research data. Until this situation changes, Africa will remain dependent on whatever drugs the global North decides to supply - approved or not.

9. Ethical Concerns and the Debate on Medical Apartheid

Critics have called the unequal distribution of medicines and vaccines a form of 'medical apartheid,' where the lives of people in poor nations are treated as less valuable. The notion that unapproved or lower-quality drugs are acceptable for Africans but not for Westerners reflects a colonial mindset masked by humanitarian rhetoric.

Ethicists argue that all human beings, regardless of geography, race or skin color, deserve equal standards of medical care and protection. Anything less constitutes a violation of human rights. Africa's health sovereignty is undermined when it becomes a passive recipient of medical products not considered safe or good enough for others.

10. Interviews and Opinions from African Medical Experts

One Namibian doctor (name withheld for ethical reasons), warns: "We are always told these drugs are safe. But when we ask for raw data or phase trial results, they are not available. That is unacceptable."

A South African pharmacologist based in Namibia (name withheld), notes: "The lack of transparency and informed consent in vaccine campaigns funded by foreign donors is deeply worrying. Our governments must reclaim regulatory power."

These voices echo a growing chorus of African professionals demanding stronger local institutions, independent oversight, and transparent partnerships.

11. Is Africa Safe? A Critical Risk

Assessment

Given current trends, Africa is not safe. Its dependence on external pharmaceutical products without independent verification exposes its populations to unknown risks. The lack of robust pharmacovigilance means that adverse effects often go unreported or uninvestigated.

Moreover, the absence of legal and ethical accountability creates a permissive environment for pharmaceutical overreach. Until Africa develops its own regulatory frameworks, manufacturing plants, and research capacity, it will remain vulnerable to being used as a testing ground.

12. What Can Be Done? Solutions and Paths to Pharmaceutical Sovereignty

Africa must invest in domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing. Regional hubs, such as in South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia and or Egypt, should be supported to produce vaccines and medicines locally. Governments must also develop or strengthen independent regulatory agencies.

Educational institutions need to train the next generation of pharmacists, researchers, and bioethicists. Additionally, Africa must demand greater transparency and insist on equal standards when receiving foreign aid or drug donations.

13. Conclusion: Towards Ethical Equity and Future of Medical Sovereignty in Global Health

Africa deserves more than to be treated as a passive recipient in the global health chain. It deserves transparency, respect, and equity - not just in rhetoric, but in policy, production, and partnership. The labeling of certain medicines and vaccines as "not for use in the USA, Canada, or EU" while simultaneously directing them to African populations is not just a regulatory footnote; it is a symptom of a global double standard that undermines African dignity, health, and autonomy.

This is not merely a matter of policy - it is a moral crisis. When life-saving drugs and vaccines are deemed unsuitable for Western populations but are nonetheless shipped to African nations - often with little scrutiny or public awareness - it sends a clear, if unspoken, message: African lives are less valued. Whether cloaked in the language of humanitarian aid, development assistance, or emergency response, these practices erode public trust and deepen the divide between the global North and South.

Africa's future health security cannot be outsourced. It must be built on a foundation of scientific self-determination, regulatory independence, and ethical accountability. A continent with 1.4 billion people, immense intellectual capital, and rising political consciousness cannot afford to remain at the mercy of foreign pharmaceutical interests or geopolitical donors whose motivations may not always align with public health.

True health sovereignty means developing robust local pharmaceutical industries, strengthening regulatory bodies like the Africa Medicines Agency (AMA), and investing in homegrown research and development. It means demanding full disclosure of clinical trials, ingredients, and safety standards - not as a favor, but as a right. It means ending dependency and moving toward a future where Africa can make and control its own medical destiny.

The era of double standards - however veiled in humanitarianism - must end. The global health community must recognize Africa not as a testing ground or a secondary market, but as an equal stakeholder. Only then can we begin to repair the legacy of exploitative medicine and build a future where no child, no mother, no elder is ever treated as expendable.

The time for reform is not tomorrow. It is now!

Kenya, Slovenia ink foreign service training pact for Kiswahili and Slovene

Kenya and Slovenia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a framework for regular political consultations including a language exchange arrangement.

By: Jeremiah Wakaya
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Worth Noting:

- The political consultations framework will serve as a platform for Kenya and Slovenia to coordinate positions on international affairs, deepen understanding of each other's foreign policy priorities, and promote people-to-people linkages.
- Language training in Kiswahili and Slovene is expected to enhance cultural fluency and communication within diplomatic circles, enabling closer collaboration and fostering deeper cultural appreciation between the two nations.
- President Ruto said the MoU on political consultations complements a broader agenda of expanding cooperation between Kenya and Slovenia in key strategic sectors.
- He cited Slovenia's global leadership in sustainable agriculture and digital governance as areas of interest for Kenya.



President Ruto receives Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar at the start of her 3-day State Visit to Kenya on Saturday, May 31, 2025/PCS

Kenya and Slovenia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a framework for regular political consultations including a language exchange arrangement. The agreement, signed at the start of Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar's State Visit to Kenya on Saturday, sets out cooperation in foreign service training—with an emphasis on the mutual exchange of language proficiency in Kiswahili and Slovene. President William Ruto said the MoU reflects the shared commitment by both countries to deepen diplomatic dialogue and enhance collaboration on regional and global issues of mutual concern. "To provide institutional support for our growing partnership, we have signed

a Memorandum of Understanding on political consultations," Ruto announced during a joint press briefing at State House Nairobi. "This will establish a framework for regular diplomatic dialogue and consultations on bilateral, regional and global issues. It also includes cooperation in foreign service training, including in the Kiswahili and Slovene languages." Diplomatic and cultural ties The political consultations framework will serve as a platform for Kenya and Slovenia to coordinate positions on international affairs, deepen understanding of each other's foreign policy priorities, and promote people-to-people linkages. Language training in Kiswahili and Slovene is expected to enhance cultural fluency

and communication within diplomatic circles, enabling closer collaboration and fostering deeper cultural appreciation between the two nations. President Ruto said the MoU on political consultations complements a broader agenda of expanding cooperation between Kenya and Slovenia in key strategic sectors. He cited Slovenia's global leadership in sustainable agriculture and digital governance as areas of interest for Kenya. The countries also agreed to scale up joint projects in smart agriculture, beekeeping, biodiversity conservation, and health technology. "We reaffirmed our commitment to deepening cooperation across a broad range of priority sectors, including agriculture, digital transfor-

mation, health, energy, environment, trade, and climate action," President Ruto said. He expressed confidence that the new diplomatic framework and enhanced cooperation would advance shared interests in peace, prosperity, and sustainable development. "Looking ahead, we are confident that Kenya and Slovenia will deepen our strategic partnership to advance our shared interest in sustainable development, peace and prosperity for the benefit of our peoples and the globe," President Ruto. Madaraka Day and Future Outlook President Pirc Musar is scheduled to join President Ruto at the Madaraka Day celebrations in Homa Bay County on June 1, where Kenya will mark 61 years

since gaining internal self-rule. President Musar's visit is the first by a Slovenian Head of State to Kenya and symbolizes a renewed diplomatic momentum. She was officially received by Prime Cabinet Secretary and Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi on Saturday at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, before proceeding to State House for bilateral talks with President Ruto. The two leaders discussed a wide range of issues spanning trade, education, agriculture, climate change, regional peace and security, and digital transformation.