

Uganda's Electoral Commission has declared Yoweri Kaguta Museveni the winner of yet another presidential election.

## Yoweri Museveni

With 71.65 percent of the vote, the 81-year-old leader secured his seventh term in office. :



### Museveni's Endless Rule:

## Four Decades of Elections, Repression, and the Betrayal of Uganda's Democratic Dream

#### A Familiar Announcement

On January 15, 2026, Uganda's Electoral Commission declared Yoweri Kaguta Museveni the winner of yet another presidential election. With 71.65 percent of the vote, the 81-year-old leader secured his seventh term in office. His closest challenger, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu—better known as Bobi Wine—garnered 24.72 percent. The announcement came after days of tension, marked by a nationwide internet blackout, heavy military deployment, and reports of ballot stuffing. For Ugandans, the moment was déjà vu. The script was



Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

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## Keep Your Record Clean: A Guide For Young Africans On Avoiding Criminal Records

Your fingerprints are more than just the unique patterns on your fingertips - they're your permanent identity in the eyes of the law. Once they enter the criminal justice system under the wrong circumstances, they can follow you for life. As a young person in Africa, the choices you

make today will shape your opportunities tomorrow. Understanding how to keep your fingerprints "clean" is essential for protecting your future.

**What Does It Mean to Keep Your Fingerprints Clean?**

When we talk about keeping your fingerprints clean, we're not talking about washing your hands. We mean keeping your fingerprints out of the criminal database - ensuring that when authorities check your records, they find nothing that could harm your future prospects. A clean re-

cord opens doors; a dirty one closes them, often permanently.

**The Moment That Changes Every-**

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# EU Set to Sign Landmark Trade Agreement With India

By: Agencies  
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- **India's relationship with the European Union has emerged as a key pillar of its global strategy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's long-term planning framework. This alignment has taken shape as both India and Europe confront economic uncertainty, geopolitical fragmentation, and the growing need for strategic coherence in a more competitive international environment.**
- **India's strong economic growth, expanding trade footprint, defence modernisation, and rising defence exports have reinforced its global standing, while Europe has increasingly sought reliable partners beyond traditional alignments.**

The European Union is preparing to formalise its most expansive trade agreement with India, with senior EU leaders expected to travel to New Delhi to finalise the pact, according to multiple media reports.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is reported to have briefed Members of the European Parliament in a closed-door session, confirming that the agreement would be signed within the month and would not extend to agricultural sectors. Von der Leyen, alongside European Council President António Costa, is expected to sign the agreement with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a visit to New Delhi scheduled between January 25 and 27, 2026.

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India's strong economic growth, expanding trade footprint, defence modernisation, and rising defence exports have reinforced its global standing, while Europe has increasingly sought reliable partners beyond traditional alignments.

At the core of this convergence is a shared emphasis on strategic autonomy. For India, this principle has guided its foreign policy in 2025, enabling engagement with major powers without full alignment to any single bloc. Rather than remaining passively non-aligned, New Delhi has actively expanded partnerships, transforming



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

strategic autonomy into tangible diplomatic and economic influence.

This posture has carried particular relevance for Europe. In 2025, the European Union has faced a prolonged inflationary crisis that has placed sustained pressure on the euro and exposed structural weaknesses in European economic governance. As global economic competition intensifies, Europe has been forced to reassess whether it can function as a unified economic and monetary power capable of absorbing prolonged shocks.

Within this context, India's model of economic resilience and institutional continuity has gained relevance for European policymakers seeking lessons beyond traditional Western frameworks.

India's multi-aligned diplo-

macy was visible on several global platforms in 2025. At the 17th BRICS Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in July, leaders prioritised strengthening cooperation among emerging economies, with a focus on development financing, technology, global governance reform, and the interests of the Global South. Despite internal differences, the summit's joint declaration reinforced BRICS' role as a platform for emerging economies, while strengthening India's positioning ahead of its assumption of the bloc's presidency in 2026.

India also played an active role at the 2025 G20 Summit in Johannesburg, where discussions centred on climate action, economic resilience, and development financing amid geopolitical tensions and the absence

of some global leaders. The final declaration reaffirmed commitments to multilateral cooperation and support for developing countries, reflecting priorities advanced by India and other emerging economies. The hosting of the summit in Africa for the first time further underscored the growing prominence of the Global South in global decision-making.

Domestically, political cohesion under Modi's government has provided a foundation for strategic patience and long-term policy planning. Economic reforms aimed at maintaining stability and sustaining growth continued through 2025, reinforcing investor confidence despite global headwinds.

Within this framework, relations with Europe have gained prominence. New

Delhi has increasingly viewed European states as like-minded partners capable of helping balance major global powers. At the same time, Europe's rising defence spending and renewed geopolitical focus have signalled a growing convergence with India's strategic interests, particularly in areas of investment, advanced technology, and security cooperation.

Economic growth has remained central to India's global influence. In 2025, the country sustained one of the highest growth rates among major economies, with GDP expanding by approximately 6.7 per cent, exceeding 8 per cent in one quarter, driven by strong domestic demand and investment.

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## INDIA

# India Rises to 80th in Henley Passport Index 2026 as Global Mobility Gap Widens

By: Agencies  
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## Worth Noting:

- Singapore retained its position as the world's most powerful passport for the third consecutive year, allowing visa-free access to 192 destinations.
- Japan and South Korea shared second place with access to 188 countries.
- A group comprising Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland ranked third with 186 destinations.
- Fourth place went to Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, and Norway, each with access to 185 destinations.
- The top five was completed by Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United Arab Emirates, each offering access to 184 destinations.

India has climbed to 80th place in the Henley Passport Index 2026, tying with Algeria and granting Indian passport holders visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 55 countries.

The improvement from 85th position last year reflects gradual gains in diplomatic outreach and expanding international travel access, though India remains far behind the world's top-ranking passports.

The annual index, which assesses 227 destinations worldwide, ranks passports based on the number of countries their holders can access without a prior visa.

### What the ranking means for Indian travellers

India's rise to 80th place signals modest progress in global mobility, offering Indian travellers greater freedom than some neighbours. However, with access to just 55 destinations, large parts of the world still require visas, underscoring persistent travel barriers for Indian citizens.

The ranking comes as India rolls out e-passports, part of broader efforts to modernise travel documentation and ease international movement for its citizens.

World's strongest passports in 2026

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cess to 188 countries.

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### UAE's historic climb

The UAE recorded one of the

most notable gains, jumping five places to fifth. The rise reflects sustained diplomatic engagement and visa liberalisation, allowing the Emirati passport to surpass countries such as New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, Iceland, and the United States.

### South Asia shows mixed progress

Across South Asia, mobility outcomes remain uneven. Pakistan moved up slightly to 98th, with visa-free access to 31 countries, keeping it near the bottom of the global rankings.

Bangladesh climbed to 95th, offering access to 37 destinations, but also continues to rank among the world's lowest.

At the bottom of the index are countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

### A widening global mobility divide

The Henley Passport Index shows that the gap between the world's strongest and weakest passports has widened to 168 destinations, highlighting deep global inequalities in travel freedom. Christian H. Kaelin, chair-

man of Henley & Partners, said passport privileges play a critical role in shaping opportunity, security, and economic participation, with mobility advantages largely concentrated in wealthier and politically stable nations.

While countries such as India and Bangladesh are making incremental gains, the index shows that citizens of lower-ranked countries continue to face significant restrictions in an increasingly interconnected world.

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# Is Zimbabwe's Education System Failing Its Youth?

By: **Norman Mwale**  
[The PenPusher]  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Zimbabwe's education system, once the envy of Africa, is facing a crisis. Despite escalating pass rates, many learners are left without viable employment opportunities, leading to a surge in street kids, drug abuse, and petty crime. The country's youth unemployment rate is alarmingly high, with over 47% of young people jobless, and only 15% completing upper secondary education. This mismatch between skills produced by the education system and labour market demands is a major concern. The government's allocation to education has been inconsistent, falling short of the 20% target agreed upon under the Dakar Declaration of 2000. In 2022, the allocation was 13.4%, increasing to 14.2% in 2023 and 17.7% in 2024. This inadequate funding has resulted in outdated textbooks, poorly maintained facilities, and low teacher morale. The Skills Development Strategy aims to address these gaps by embedding STEM, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy into the curriculum, repositioning TVET institutions, and strengthening academia-industry collaboration. However, more needs to be done to ensure Zimbabwe's youth are equipped with rele-

vant skills for the job market. I believe the government should prioritise job creation, invest in infrastructure development, and foster stronger industry-academia partnerships. Zimsec should review its curriculum to make it more relevant to the economy's needs. It's time for decisive action to address these challenges and unlock the potential of Zimbabwe's youth. The situation is dire, with many young people feeling disillusioned and resorting to unscrupulous means to survive. The government must take practical steps to create an investor-friendly environment, resuscitate industry, and provide opportunities for its youth. The future of Zimbabwe hangs in the balance. In response to these challenges, Zimsec has begun reviewing its curriculum to incorporate more practical skills and vocational training. However, the pace of reform remains slow, and many argue that more radical changes are needed to address the crisis. Zimbabwe's education system, once a beacon of excellence in Africa, has experienced a significant decline. In the 1980s, it was among the top 5 in the continent, but now it's facing numerous challenges. The country's literacy rate, once comparable to other African countries, is struggling to keep pace. Several factors have contributed to this decline, including inadequate funding, with the gov-



Student studying at home

ernment allocating only 17.7% of its budget to education in 2024, short of the 20% target. The economic downturn, teacher shortages, and poor infrastructure have also taken a toll. As a result, Zimbabwe's education system is now grappling with

issues like low completion rates, inadequate resources, and a mismatch between skills produced and labor market demands. The consequences of inaction will be severe, with Zimbabwe risking a lost generation of young people.

The country needs to act now to create a more relevant and effective education system that prepares its youth for the challenges of the 21st century.

## VIEWPOINT

# Mnangagwa's Gamble: Can He Win Zimbabwe's 2028 Elections?

By: **Norman Mwale**  
[The PenPusher]  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa's bid for re-election in 2028 hangs in the balance, with his party, ZANU-PF, pushing for a constitutional amendment to extend his term to 2030. This move has sparked intense debate, with critics accusing Mnangagwa of clamping down on dissent and undermining democracy. Since taking over in 2017, Mnangagwa's presidency has been marked by a mix of achievements and failures. On the one hand, he has launched several high-profile projects, including infrastructure development and agricultural initiatives, aimed at revitalizing Zimbabwe's economy. However, these efforts have been overshadowed by allegations of corruption, human rights abuses, and a dire economic situation, with hyperinflation and mass unemployment plating the country.

The people of Zimbabwe remain skeptical about Mnangagwa's leadership, with many questioning his commitment to democratic principles. The 2023 elections, which saw Mnangagwa win a second term, were marred by allegations of ir-

regularities and voter suppression. Key factors influencing Mnangagwa's prospects include Zimbabwe's struggling economy, exacerbated by drought and corruption, which may work against him. Tensions between Mnangagwa and Vice President Constantino Chiwenga could weaken the party, while the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) and other opposition parties may galvanize support against him. Global criticism of Zimbabwe's human rights record and governance may also intensify.

Mnangagwa's achievements include infrastructure development, such as roads and energy projects, agricultural initiatives like the Command Agriculture programme, and efforts to attract foreign investment. However, his failures are stark, including economic mismanagement leading to hyperinflation and unemployment, allegations of corruption and human rights abuses, and a crackdown on dissent and opposition voices.

As Zimbabwe heads towards 2028, Mnangagwa's ability to navigate these challenges will determine his electoral prospects. However, with growing discontent and opposition, his path to victory is far from certain. The international community will be watching closely, and the outcome will likely depend on



Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa

Mnangagwa's ability to address Zimbabwe's pressing economic and governance issues.

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undermining democracy. The people of Zimbabwe remain skeptical about Mnangagwa's leadership, with many questioning his commitment to democratic principles.

The international community is also watching closely, with the United States imposing sanctions on Mnangagwa and other Zimbabwean officials over human rights abuses and corruption. The economic situation in Zimbabwe is dire, with hyper-

inflation and mass unemployment plating the country. Mnangagwa's Vision 2030 initiative, aimed at transforming Zimbabwe into an upper-middle-income economy, has been linked to his political longevity, but critics argue it masks authoritarian consolidation.

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# Using Project-Based Technology In Literature Lessons: Specific Features

*In modern education, fostering students' independent thinking, creative activity, and practical skills is one of the key pedagogical tasks. Among contemporary teaching methods, project-based technology plays a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process.*



By: Mamatova Mahbuba  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



## Worth Noting:

This approach develops critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, and teamwork competencies. In literature education, project-based technology enables students to deeply understand literary works, analyze authorial ideas, and freely express their perspectives. For instance, teaching the classic work *Devonu Lug'otit-Turk* through project-based activities enhances students' lexical knowledge, understanding of the historical development of Turkic languages, and interest in national and cultural heritage.

Project-based activities in literature are classified according to content and pedagogical purpose into four main types: informational projects, research projects, creative projects, and practical projects. Each type develops specific skills such as information collection and systematization, research methodology, creative thinking, and practical application of knowledge. Implementing these projects in academic lyceum literature classes improves students' independent thinking, research competence, aesthetic perception, and problem-solving skills, ultimately increasing engagement and learning effectiveness.

### Annotation (Abstract)

In modern education, fostering students' independent thinking, creative activity, and practical skills is one of the key pedagogical tasks. Among contemporary teaching methods, project-based technology plays a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process.

Project-based technology serves to organize pedagogical activities through goal-oriented, research-based, and practical tasks, positioning students not as passive recipients of knowledge but as active participants who independently acquire, analyze, and apply knowledge. From a pedagogical perspective, the essence of project-based technology lies in exposing students to problem situations, encouraging independent solutions, and presenting results as practical outputs.

This approach develops critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, and teamwork competencies. In literature education, project-based technology enables students to deeply understand literary works, analyze authorial ideas, and freely express their perspectives. For instance, teaching the classic work *Devonu Lug'otit-Turk* through project-based activities enhances students' lexical knowl-

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### Keywords

Project-based learning, literature education, creative projects, research projects, practical projects, pedagogical technology, student competencies, independent thinking.

### Types of Projects in Literature Education

1. Informational Projects  
Informational projects involve gathering and systematizing information on a specific topic. Students may collect data individual-

ly or in groups from online resources or oral histories from older generations in their communities. The gathered information is then organized and shared with others.

These projects develop skills in data collection, classification, and presentation, enabling students to become effective communicators and knowledge organizers.

### 2. Research Projects

Research projects focus on investigating a scientific problem or question independently. They include problem identification, hypothesis formulation, data collection and analysis, and conclusion drawing.

Research projects can be classified into several categories:

- Theoretical research: analyzing sources, texts, and academic literature.

- Practical research: based on experiments, surveys, or observations.

- Comparative research: comparing multiple texts, authors, or methods.

- Problem-based research: addressing a specific issue, with students proposing solutions.

A structured research project in academic lyceum literature may follow this framework:

Project topic → Problem and relevance → Research

aims and objectives → Research object and subject → Research methods → Main part (analysis) → Conclusion and recommendations → References

### 3. Creative Projects

Creative projects aim to develop students' imagination, artistic thinking, and independent creative activity. Unlike repetition of known material, students produce new outputs such as texts, stage performances, videos, presentations, or collections. The focus is on creative outcomes and authorship.

Types of creative projects include:

- Literary-creative projects (stories, poems, essays, dramatic scenes)

- Literary-analytical projects (essays, reviews, free analyses)

- Staging projects (dramatization of literary works)

- Media and digital creative projects (videos, podcasts, slides, infographics)

- Integrative creative projects (combining literature, music, and visual arts)

A structured creative project may follow:

Project topic → Idea and aim → Creative tasks → Implementation stages → Created product → Results and presentation → Conclusion and evaluation criteria

### 4. Practical Projects

Practical projects focus on applying knowledge to produce real-life outcomes or useful products. They are highly effective in literature education and may include manuals, methodological recommendations, wall newspapers, booklets, or stage productions.

Main types of practical projects include:

- Educational-practical projects (used in class)

- Methodological-practical projects (guides for teachers and students)

- Social-practical projects (educational and moral projects)

- Integrative practical projects (combining literature, ICT, and arts)

A structured practical project may follow:

Project topic → Problem and rationale → Aims and objectives → Practical significance → Implementation stages → Created product → Results and conclusions → Presentation and application

Practical projects consolidate theoretical knowledge, develop professional competence, improve problem-solving skills, and prepare students for real-life activities.

Mamatova Mahbuba Abdulboqi qizi, 2nd-year Master's student, Namangan State Pedagogical Institute

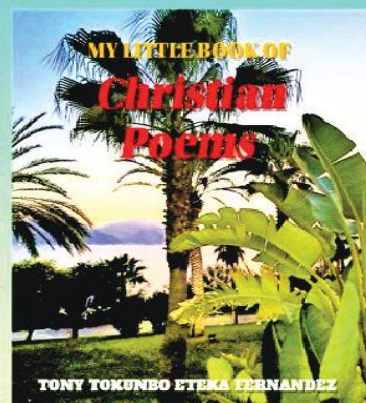
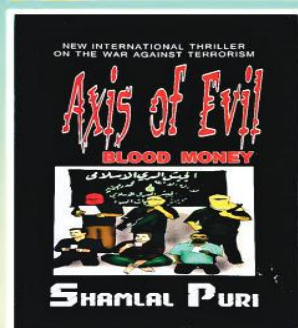
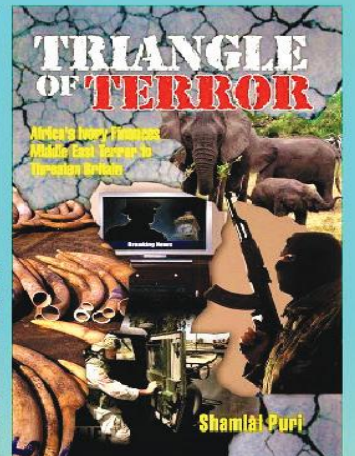
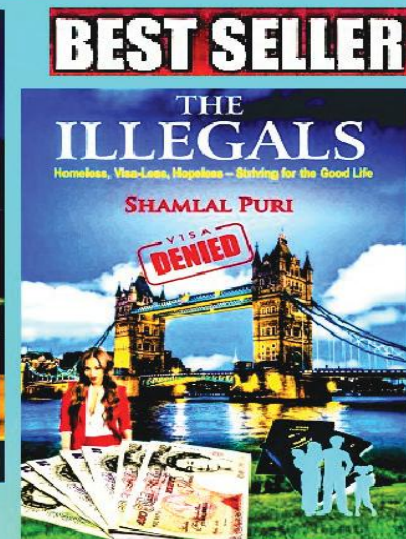
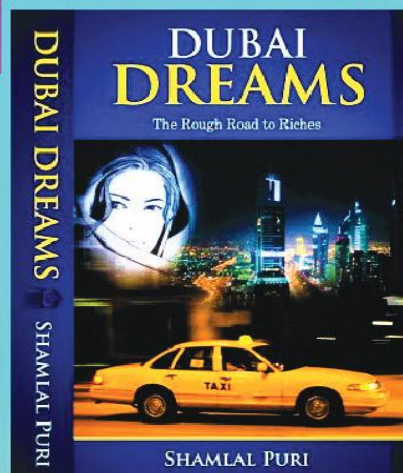
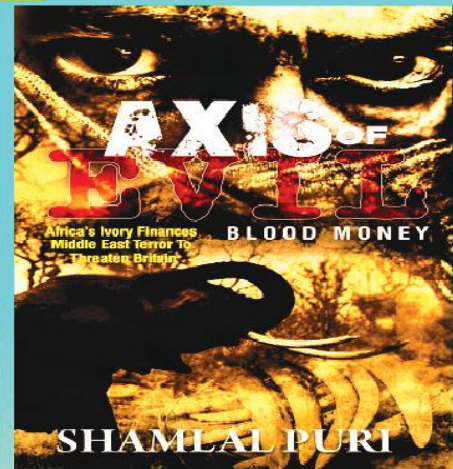
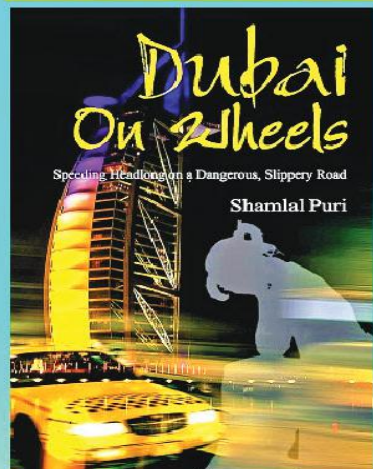
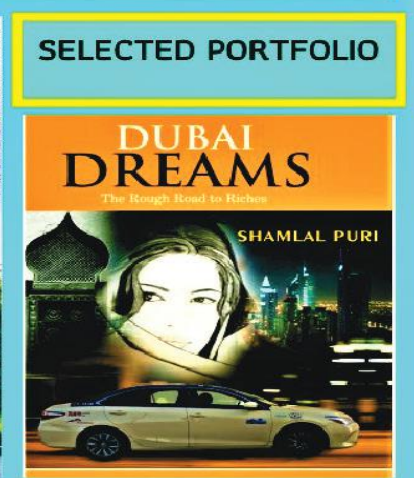
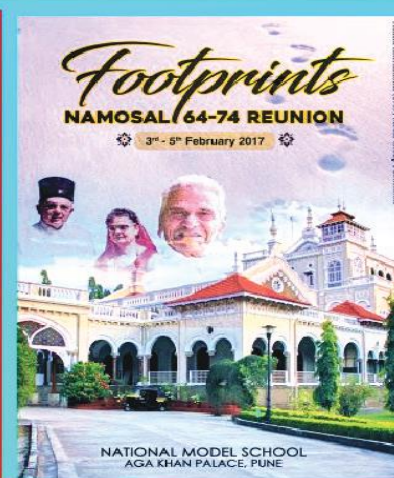
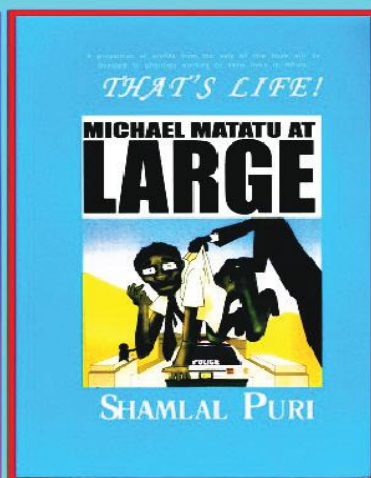
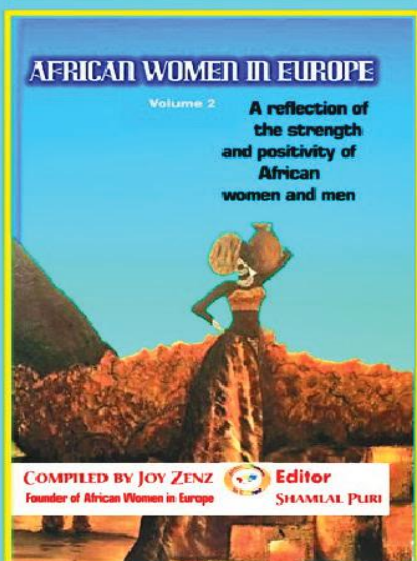
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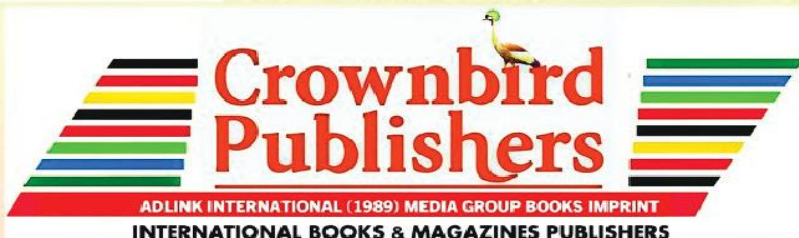
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# Museveni's Endless Rule: Four Decades of Elections, Repression, and the Betrayal of Uganda's Democratic Dream

By: David Kimani and Grace

Wanja

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## Worth Noting:

- Museveni's rise to power in 1986 was dramatic. After a five-year guerrilla war against Milton Obote and Tito Okello, his National Resistance Army marched into Kampala. He promised a "fundamental change," vowing to end dictatorship and usher in democracy. His rhetoric resonated with a nation weary of coups and civil war.
- Yet the seeds of authoritarianism were already sown. Museveni introduced the "Movement System," banning political parties under the guise of preventing sectarianism. Elections would be held, but only within the framework of his National Resistance Movement (NRM). It was a clever maneuver: democracy in appearance, dictatorship in practice.
- Ten years into his rule, Museveni organized Uganda's first presidential election. His opponent, Paul Ssemogerere, represented the Democratic Party. Museveni won with 74 percent of the vote. International observers noted irregularities, but hailed the election as progress.



Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

familiar: Museveni wins, the opposition cries foul, and the world watches as democracy is suffocated under the weight of repression. To understand how Uganda arrived here, one must revisit the long arc of Museveni's electoral history since 1986—a story of promises betrayed, opponents brutalized, and power consolidated at all costs.

### The Revolutionary Beginning

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tarianism. Elections would be held, but only within the framework of his National Resistance Movement (NRM). It was a clever maneuver: democracy in appearance, dictatorship in practice.

### 1996: The First Election

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Opposition figures, however, complained of harassment, restricted campaigning, and the misuse of state resources. The pattern was set: Museveni would allow elections, but never genuine competition.

### 2001: Besigye's Challenge

The 2001 election introduced Museveni's most formidable rival: Dr. Kizza Besigye, a former ally turned

critic. Besigye accused Museveni of corruption and authoritarianism. His campaign energized Ugandans hungry for change.

Museveni responded with violence. Besigye's supporters were beaten, arrested, and intimidated. Museveni won with 69 percent, but the Supreme Court acknowledged widespread irregularities. Still, it upheld the results, cementing the judiciary's role as a rubber stamp for the regime. Besigye's emergence marked the beginning of a cycle: opposition leaders rise, inspire hope, and are crushed by the state.

### 2006: Term Limits Removed

By 2006, Museveni had already engineered a constitutional amendment scrapping presidential term limits. Facing Besigye again, he secured 59 percent of the vote. The campaign was brutal: Besigye was arrested on charges of rape and treason, spending much of the campaign in court.

International observers condemned the election as neither free nor fair. Museveni's willingness to weaponize the judiciary and security forces against opponents was undeniable. The promise of 1986 was fading fast.

### 2011: Oil and Patronage

The 2011 election unfolded against the backdrop of Uganda's discovery of oil reserves. Museveni promised prosperity, but his campaign relied heavily on patronage. State resources were deployed to secure loyalty, while the military ensured compliance.

Besigye, once again his main rival, was repeatedly arrested during protests. Museveni won with 68 percent. The election highlighted his reliance on state machinery to maintain power, while the opposition was systematically weakened.

### 2016: Age Limit Battles

In 2016, Museveni faced Besigye yet again. He won with 60 percent, amid allegations of ballot stuffing and intimi-

dation. Besigye was arrested multiple times, including on election day.

The following year, Museveni pushed through another constitutional amendment—this time removing the presidential age limit of 75. Parliamentarians who opposed the amendment were beaten inside the chamber, a chilling symbol of Uganda's descent into authoritarianism. Museveni had cleared the path to rule indefinitely.

### 2021: Bobi Wine's Rise

The 2021 election introduced a new face of resistance: Bobi Wine, a pop star turned politician. Representing Uganda's youthful population, Wine galvanized millions with his message of change. His rallies drew massive crowds, his music became anthems of defiance, and his candidacy symbolized generational renewal.

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## African News

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Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu

Museveni responded with unprecedented brutality. Wine was arrested, his rallies banned, and his supporters killed in clashes with security forces. On election day, the internet was shut down nationwide. Museveni won with 58 percent, but Wine rejected the results, calling them fraudulent. The world watched as Uganda's democracy crumbled under the weight of repression. Wine's cries echoed those of Besigye before him, reminders that Uganda's democratic dream had been repeatedly betrayed.

### 2026: The Seventh Term

Five years later, the cycle repeated. Museveni, now 81, faced Wine again. The internet blackout returned, opposition agents were arrested, and security forces surrounded polling stations. Museveni's 71.65 percent victory was announced amid widespread disbelief. Wine alleged that his home was raided, his family placed under house arrest, and his campaign crippled by intimi-

ation. The election underscored Museveni's refusal to relinquish power, even as his health and age raised questions about succession.

Ugandans, weary of repression, watched as their hopes for change were once again dashed.

### The Brutalization of Opponents

Across four decades, Museveni's opponents have faced a consistent arsenal of repression:

- Arrests and Detentions: Besigye was jailed repeatedly; Wine was placed under house arrest.

- Violence: Security forces have killed protesters, beaten opposition supporters, and raided homes.

- Judicial Harassment: Opponents face trumped-up charges, from treason to rape.

- Media Suppression: Journalists are arrested, newspapers censored, and the internet shut down.

- Military Deployment: Soldiers patrol streets during elections, intimidat-

ing voters.

This systematic brutalization has ensured Museveni's victories, but at the cost of Uganda's democratic soul.

### The Legacy of Endless Rule

Museveni's longevity is both extraordinary and tragic. Once hailed as a liberator, he has become the archetype of the African strongman. His rule reflects the paradox of liberation movements that morph into authoritarian regimes.

Uganda's institutions—parliament, judiciary, electoral commission—have been hollowed out, serving the presidency rather than the people. The opposition, though resilient, remains battered and fragmented. For ordinary Ugandans, elections have become rituals of despair rather than hope.

### Regional and International Context

Museveni's rule has also shaped East Africa's geopolitics. Uganda has played a key role in regional peace-

keeping missions, from Somalia to South Sudan. Western powers, particularly the United States and the European Union, have tolerated his authoritarianism in exchange for stability and military cooperation. This international complicity has emboldened Museveni. While condemning election irregularities, foreign governments continue to provide aid and military support. For Ugandans, the message is clear: democracy is secondary to geopolitics.

### The Betrayal of a Generation

Uganda's youthful population—over 75 percent under the age of 30—has borne the brunt of Museveni's repression. Bobi Wine's rise symbolized their yearning for change. His music spoke to their frustrations, his candidacy embodied their hopes. Yet their voices have been silenced. Internet blackouts, arrests, and violence have stifled their activism. The betrayal of this generation is perhaps Museveni's most

enduring legacy: a nation where youth are denied the chance to shape their future.

### Conclusion

As Museveni embarks on his seventh term, Uganda stands at a crossroads. The promise of 1986 has long evaporated, replaced by repression and stagnation. Bobi Wine's cries of foul echo those of Besigye before him, reminders that Uganda's democratic dream has been repeatedly betrayed.

Museveni's story is no longer one of liberation, but of domination—a cautionary tale of how power, once seized, can be wielded indefinitely through fear and force.

Uganda's future remains uncertain. But one truth is clear: Museveni's elections since 1986 have not been contests of ideas, but battles of survival, fought on a terrain where opponents are brutalized, institutions compromised, and democracy sacrificed at the altar of one man's ambition.

## DENMARK

# Arctic Faultlines: Denmark Pushes Back as Washington Threatens Greenland Takeover

By: Diaspora Times Team  
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## Worth Noting:

• Carney's visit to Beijing was historic. He became the first Canadian prime minister to set foot in China in nearly a decade. The last few years had been marked by acrimony: tit-for-tat tariffs, disputes over detained citizens, and Canada's alignment with U.S. trade penalties against Beijing. Yet, the October 2025 encounter between Xi and Carney in Gyeongju, South Korea, had already signaled a tentative thaw. That meeting opened the door to deeper discussions, and by January 2026, both leaders were ready to announce tangible progress.

• Xi framed the moment as a "turnaround," emphasizing that healthy and stable relations were not only in the interest of both countries but also vital for global peace and prosperity. Carney, for his part, described China as a "more predictable partner than Washington," a remark that underscored Canada's growing unease with the volatility of U.S. trade policy.

The icy expanse of Greenland, long seen as a remote frontier of glaciers and fjords, has suddenly become the epicenter of a geopolitical storm. In Washington, Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and Greenland's Foreign Minister Vivian Motzfeldt stood before reporters to dismiss claims that Chinese warships patrol the Arctic island or that Beijing has sunk vast sums into Greenlandic investments. Their words were not just a rebuttal of misinformation—they were a defiant stand against mounting pressure from the United States, where President Donald Trump has openly threatened to seize Greenland for "national security" reasons.

The clash reveals a deeper struggle over the Arctic's future, where climate change, resource competition, and military anxieties converge. It is a story of sovereignty, suspicion, and the fragile balance of alliances in a world where the Arctic is no longer a frozen backwater but a contested frontier.

### Washington's Narrative of Threat

For months, President Trump has insisted that Greenland is vulnerable to Chinese and Russian encroachment. He has painted vivid images of warships lurking off its icy coasts and investments quietly buying influence in its towns. "We need Greenland for the purpose of National Security," Trump declared on social media, warning that NATO should lead the way in securing it before rivals do. Yet Denmark's intelligence tells a different story. "According to our intelligence, we haven't had a Chinese warship in Greenland for a decade or so," Rasmussen said pointedly. "There are no Chinese warships along the coast of Greenland. Nor are there any massive Chinese investments." His words were echoed by Motzfeldt, who stressed that Greenland's boundaries had been clearly defined and would not be redrawn by external pressure.

The Danish position is clear: Washington's narrative is exaggerated, if not outright false. Analysts agree. Studies of China's Arctic footprint show limited activity—scientific research stations, small-scale mining interests, and shipping ambitions under the "Polar Silk Road" initiative. But the grand vision of Chinese fleets dominating Greenland is far from reality.

A Meeting of Allies, a Clash of Visions  
The hour-long meeting at



Protesters with Greenlandic flags attend a "Greenland is for Greenlanders" demonstration in front of the United States embassy in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, on Wednesday. Denmark will immediately beef up its military presence in Greenland, the nation's Ministry of Defence said just before talks were to start in Washington over US President Donald Trump's threats to take over the Arctic island. THOMAS TRAASDAHL / AFP

the White House between Rasmussen, Motzfeldt, Vice President JD Vance, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio was described as "frank and constructive." Yet beneath the diplomatic language lay a fundamental disagreement. Trump's insistence on Greenland's strategic importance was unwavering. "The problem is there's not a thing that Denmark can do about it if Russia or China wants to occupy Greenland, but there's everything we can do," he told reporters. Denmark's response was equally firm. "It's clear that the president has this wish of conquering over Greenland. We made it very, very clear that this is not in the interest of the kingdom," Rasmussen said. His words carried a warning: any forced takeover would not only violate sovereignty but could fracture NATO itself. "This is 2026—you trade with people, but you don't trade people," he told Fox News earlier, emphasizing that Greenland's population cannot be treated as bargaining chips.

**Greenland's Voice**  
Greenland, though geographically vast, is home to just 56,000 people. Its autonomy within the Kingdom of Denmark has grown steadily, with control over domestic affairs and aspirations for eventual independence. Motzfeldt's presence in Washington was symbolic: Greenland is not a passive territory to be spoken for, but an active participant in its own destiny.

Her message was measured but firm. "We have clearly defined our boundaries, and

from that point, it will be very good to look forward," she said. For Greenlanders, the debate is not abstract. It touches on their right to self-determination, their cultural identity, and their future in a warming Arctic where melting ice is opening new shipping lanes and resource opportunities.

**China's Arctic Ambitions**  
China's Foreign Ministry responded to Washington's accusations with sharp words. "The Arctic bears on the common interests of the international community," spokeswoman Mao Ning said. "China's activities in the Arctic are aimed at promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development. They are in line with international law." Indeed, China has declared its ambition to become a "polar great power" by 2030. It has invested in Arctic research, shipping routes, and limited mining projects. But many of its proposals in Greenland—such as airport construction and rare earth mining—have been blocked, often under U.S. pressure. Analysts note that China's presence in Greenland remains modest compared to the sweeping claims made by Trump.

**Public Opinion in America**  
If Trump envisions a U.S. takeover of Greenland, his citizens do not share the enthusiasm. According to the 2025 Chicago Council Survey, more than nine in ten Americans opposed using U.S. troops to invade Greenland and make it part of the United States. The poll revealed a deep skepticism

about military adventurism in the Arctic, reflecting broader fatigue with foreign interventions.

This disconnect between presidential rhetoric and public sentiment underscores the fragility of the takeover narrative. While Trump frames Greenland as a linchpin of national security, ordinary Americans see little appetite for another geopolitical gamble.

### NATO at Risk

Denmark has warned that any unilateral U.S. move to seize Greenland would spell disaster for NATO. "That would be the end of NATO," Rasmussen said bluntly. The alliance, already strained by disputes over burden-sharing and divergent strategies, could fracture if Washington attempted to override the sovereignty of a fellow member state.

Canada has already voiced solidarity with Denmark. Prime Minister Mark Carney reaffirmed Ottawa's support, stressing that NATO's core principles are not up for debate. "We are NATO partners with Denmark. Our full partnership stands," Carney said. His words highlight the broader stakes: Greenland is not just a Danish territory, but a test of alliance unity in the face of U.S. pressure.

**The Arctic's Rising Stakes**  
Why Greenland? The answer lies in geography and climate. As ice melts, the Arctic is opening to shipping, resource extraction, and military positioning. Greenland's location between North America and Europe makes it a strategic outpost. Its vast reserves of

rare earth minerals add economic allure. For Washington, controlling Greenland would mean securing a foothold in the emerging Arctic theater.

But for Denmark and Greenland, the stakes are existential. Sovereignty, identity, and the right to chart their own future are on the line. The specter of external takeover evokes memories of colonialism, a history Greenlanders are determined not to repeat.

### Conclusion: A Frozen Frontier, A Heated Debate

The dispute over Greenland is more than a quarrel about ships and investments. It is a clash of narratives: Washington's vision of looming threats versus Copenhagen's insistence on sovereignty and reality. It is a test of alliances, a measure of public opinion, and a reflection of the Arctic's transformation from frozen wilderness to geopolitical battleground. Denmark and Greenland have drawn their red lines. China insists its Arctic role is peaceful. Americans themselves are wary of military adventurism. Yet Trump's rhetoric continues to escalate, raising the question: will Greenland remain a symbol of sovereignty, or become the next flashpoint in a world where power and paranoia collide?

For now, the icy island stands firm, its leaders rejecting the false images painted from afar. The Arctic may be melting, but Greenland's resolve is frozen solid.

# NEWS PAPER



## IN BUSINESS

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## WORLD

# Keep Your Record Clean: A Guide For Young Africans On Avoiding Criminal Records



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande  
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## Worth Noting:

- Alcohol and substance abuse dramatically increase your chances of making life-altering mistakes. Drunk driving, public fighting, theft to support drug habits, and possession of illegal substances all lead directly to the fingerprinting desk at the police station. What starts as weekend fun can end with permanent consequences.
- Theft and property crimes often seem minor to young people. Taking something from a shop, stealing a phone, breaking into a car - these might feel like small acts, but they're serious crimes. Theft, fraud, and housebreaking create permanent records that will haunt you when you apply for jobs, loans, or travel documents.
- Violence and assault can happen in moments of anger. A schoolyard fight, a confrontation at a nightclub, or a domestic dispute can escalate quickly. Assault charges, especially those causing serious injury, create records that mark you as violent - a label that's nearly impossible to overcome in professional settings.



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Many young Africans don't realize how quickly life can change. One poor decision, one moment of peer pressure, one night of recklessness can result in an arrest. Once you're fingerprinted for a criminal offense, that moment becomes part of your permanent history. Even if you're young, even if it's your first mistake, serious offenses create records that follow you into adulthood.

### Common Traps Young People Fall Into

Understanding the situations that lead young Africans into the criminal justice system is the first step in avoiding them.

Peer pressure and group crimes are perhaps the most dangerous trap. Your friends convince you to participate in shoplifting, housebreaking, or vandalism. You might think you're just going along for the ride, but the law sees you as an accomplice. When everyone gets arrested, everyone gets fingerprinted. The excuse "I was just there" won't keep your record clean.

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Violence and assault can happen in moments of anger. A schoolyard fight, a confrontation at a nightclub, or a domestic dispute can escalate quickly. Assault charges, especially those causing serious injury, create records that mark you as violent - a label that's nearly impossible to overcome in professional settings.

Sexual offenses carry perhaps the most devastating long-term consequences. What might seem like a misunderstanding or a moment of poor judgment can result in charges that permanently brand you as a sex offender. These convictions affect not just employment but your ability to live freely in soci-

ety.

Fraud and cybercrime are increasingly common among tech-savvy youth. Using someone else's identity, creating fake documents, online scams, or unauthorized access to computer systems might seem like victimless crimes, but they're taken extremely seriously and create permanent records.

### The Real Cost of a Dirty Record

As a young person, you might think you understand the consequences, but the reality is often far worse than you imagine.

Your dream career becomes unreachable. You study hard, earn your degree, and apply for your dream job in banking, government, teaching, or law enforcement. Then comes the background check. Your application is rejected not because you're unqualified, but because of something you did years ago. The education you worked for becomes less valuable because doors are permanently closed.

International opportunities disappear. Many countries refuse visas to people with criminal records. That scholarship abroad, that job opportunity in South Africa or Europe, that dream

of seeing the world - all become complicated or impossible because of your record.

Your community reputation suffers. In Africa's close-knit communities, word spreads. Your criminal record becomes known, affecting not just you but your family's standing. Parents feel shame, younger siblings face questions at school, and your name carries a stigma.

Financial doors close. Banks are reluctant to give loans to people with criminal records, especially for fraud or theft. Starting a business, buying a home, or accessing credit becomes significantly harder.

Relationships and family planning are affected. A criminal record can affect your ability to adopt children, work in schools where your own children attend, or even maintain custody in divorce proceedings. The impact extends beyond you to the family you hope to build.

### How to Keep Your Record Clean

The best strategy is simple but requires discipline and awareness: avoid situations that could lead to criminal charges.

Choose your friends wisely. The people you surround yourself with influence your

choices. If your friends are involved in criminal activities, drinking excessively, or engaging in risky behavior, distance yourself. Real friends don't pressure you into situations that could ruin your life. One loyal, law-abiding friend is worth more than a dozen who lead you into trouble.

Stay away from drugs and excessive alcohol. These substances impair your judgment and lower your inhibitions, making you far more likely to commit crimes or find yourself in dangerous situations. If you're at a party where illegal drugs appear, leave. If friends are drinking and planning to drive, don't get in the car. These moments of decision define your future.

Respect other people's property and rights. It sounds basic, but many young people don't internalize this principle. Don't take what isn't yours, no matter how small. Don't vandalize property, even as a prank. Don't use violence to solve disputes. Respect costs you nothing; the consequences of disrespect can cost you everything.

Think before you act on-

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WORLD

# Keep Your Record Clean: A Guide For Young Africans On Avoiding Criminal Records

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## Worth Noting:

- Sexual offenses carry perhaps the most devastating long-term consequences. What might seem like a misunderstanding or a moment of poor judgment can result in charges that permanently brand you as a sex offender. These convictions affect not just employment but your ability to live freely in society.
- Fraud and cyber-crime are increasingly common among tech-savvy youth. Using someone else's identity, creating fake documents, online scams, or unauthorized access to computer systems might seem like victimless crimes, but they're taken extremely seriously and create permanent records.
- Your dream career becomes unreachable. You study hard, earn your degree, and apply for your dream job in banking, government, teaching, or law enforcement. Then comes the background check. Your application is rejected not because you're unqualified, but because of something you did years ago. The education you worked for becomes less valuable because doors are permanently closed.

line. The digital world feels anonymous, but it isn't. Cyberbullying, hacking, sharing intimate images without consent, online fraud - all of these leave trails and carry serious legal consequences. Your social media presence should reflect the professional person you want to become.

Walk away from confrontations. Pride isn't worth a criminal record. If someone insults you, challenges you to a fight, or tries to provoke you, walk away. There's no shame in avoiding violence; there's only shame in throwing away your future over a momentary ego boost.

Understand consent and boundaries. Sexual assault and harassment charges destroy lives. Ensure you have clear, enthusiastic consent in all intimate situations. Respect when someone says no. Understand that being drunk doesn't excuse your behavior - it makes you more criminally liable.

Get help when you need it. If you're struggling with anger, addiction, depression, or trauma, seek help from counselors, religious leaders, or mental health profes-

sionals. Many young people commit crimes because they're dealing with untreated emotional or psychological issues. Getting help is strength, not weakness.

**What If you've Already Made Mistakes?**  
If you've already been arrested or have a criminal record, your future isn't necessarily over, but you must act strategically.

Learn from it immediately. Don't minimize what happened or blame others. Take full responsibility and commit to never repeating the mistake. This mindset shift is essential for genuine rehabilitation.

Complete all legal requirements. If you have community service, probation, or other court-ordered requirements, complete them fully and on time. Demonstrating responsibility now can help mitigate the damage.

Seek legal advice. Consult with a lawyer about whether your record might be expunged, especially if you were a juvenile or if the charges were minor. Some records can be cleared, but you need professional guid-

ance. Build a positive track record. Volunteer in your community, pursue education, maintain steady employment, and stay completely out of trouble. When employers do see your record, they'll also see evidence of genuine change and rehabilitation.

Be honest when required. If an application asks about criminal history, be honest but brief. Focus on what you've learned and how you've changed. Lying about your record and being discovered later is worse than being upfront initially.

**A Special Word About Juvenile Mistakes**  
If you're under 18, you might think you have more leeway, and in some cases, you do. Juvenile records are sometimes treated differently than adult records. However, serious crimes committed by juveniles can still result in permanent records, and the moment you turn 18, you're fully in the adult system. Don't waste your youth thinking you're immune to consequences. The habits you build now - good or bad - will follow you into

adulthood. Your Future Is Worth Protecting

You have dreams. Maybe you want to be a doctor, a pilot, a businessperson, a teacher, or a public servant. Maybe you want to travel the world, start a family, or make your parents proud. All of these dreams are achievable - but only if you protect them now by keeping your record clean. Every time you're faced with a choice that could lead to trouble, ask yourself: "Is this worth my future?" Is stealing that item worth never working in banking? Is that fight worth losing your teaching license? Is that drunk drive worth never traveling abroad? The answer is always no.

**The Power Is in Your Hands**  
Unlike many things in life, this is entirely within your control. Your fingerprints will only enter the criminal system if you make choices that lead there. No one can force you to commit crimes. Peer pressure is real, but your future is more real. Temporary excitement isn't worth permanent consequences. Africa needs young people with clean records who can

lead, innovate, and build the nation's future. The country needs teachers, doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, and public servants with integrity. By keeping your record clean, you're not just protecting yourself - you're positioning yourself to contribute meaningfully to your community and country.

**Make the Commitment Today**  
Decide right now that you will protect your future by protecting your record. Share this commitment with someone you trust - a parent, mentor, or friend who supports your goals. When you're tempted to make poor choices, remember what's at stake.

Your fingerprints are unique to you. They represent your identity, your potential, and your future. Keep them clean, keep them out of the criminal database, and keep your opportunities unlimited.

*The choice is yours. Choose wisely. Remember: One moment of poor judgment can create a lifetime of barriers. Your future self is counting on the decisions you make today. Make them count.*

## China-Canada

# Beijing Reset: Xi and Carney Chart a New Course for China-Canada Relations

By: Diaspora Times Team  
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## Worth Noting:

• The Beijing summit was not just about bilateral ties. It was a signal to the world that China and Canada were willing to collaborate on global challenges. Xi emphasized multilateralism, calling for cooperation within the UN, G20, and APEC. Carney echoed the sentiment, arguing that better relations with China could strengthen global governance systems “under great strain”.

• For Africa, Latin America, and other regions watching closely, the reset carried implications. Canada’s renewed engagement with China could open doors for trilateral cooperation in areas like green technology, agriculture, and infrastructure. The symbolism of a Western democracy forging closer ties with Beijing also challenged narratives of inevitable decoupling between China and the West.

• Xi’s emphasis on cultural and educational exchanges was not incidental. Over 125 Canadian companies participated in the 2025 China International Import Expo in Shanghai, marking a record-high presence. Tourism, student exchanges, and cultural programs are expected to expand under the new partnership. For ordinary Canadians and Chinese, these initiatives could soften perceptions hardened by years of political disputes.

A Handshake That Resonates

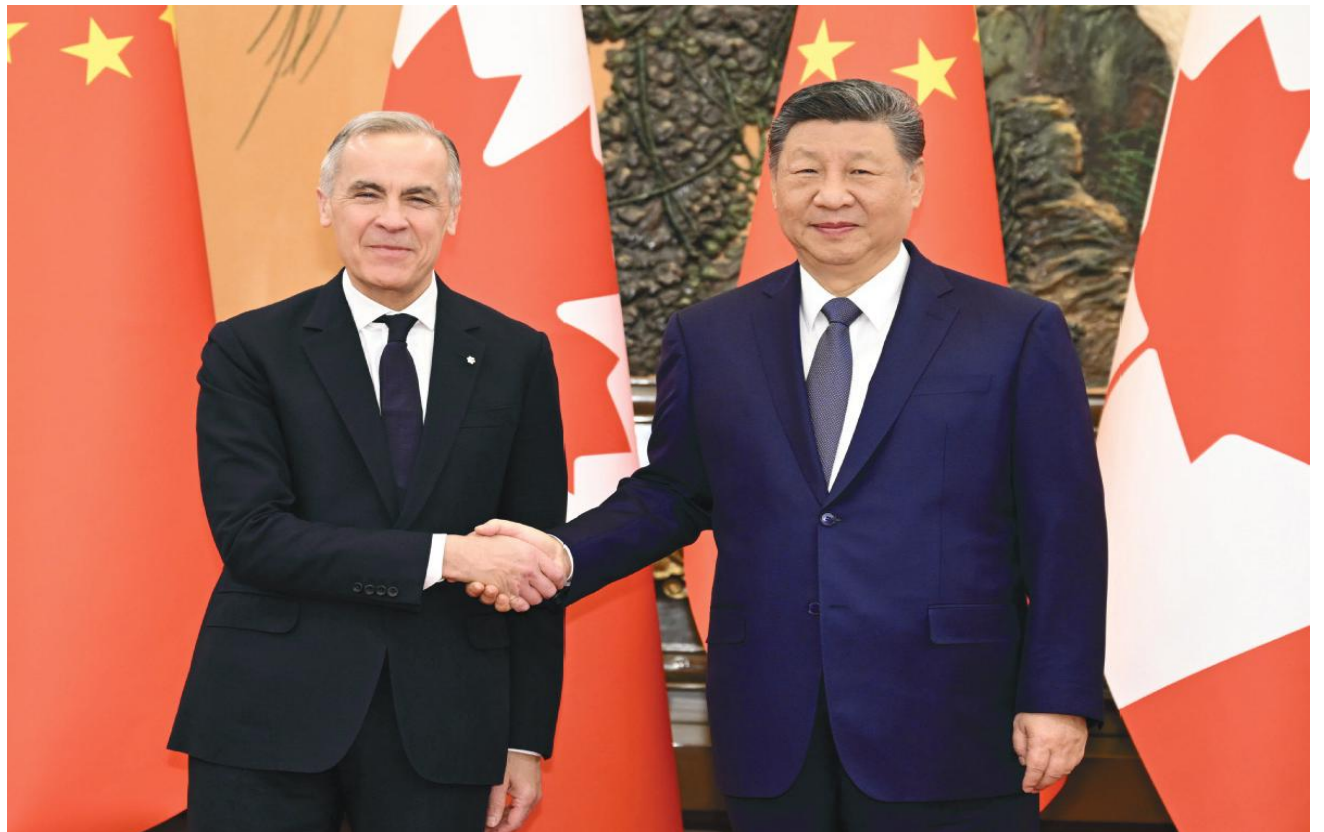
On January 16, 2026, the cavernous halls of Beijing’s Great Hall of the People witnessed a handshake that carried weight far beyond its ceremonial symbolism. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney clasped hands in a gesture that signaled not only the thawing of frosty relations but also the deliberate crafting of a new chapter in China-Canada ties. For two nations that have spent much of the past decade locked in suspicion, tariffs, and diplomatic estrangement, the meeting was more than diplomatic theater—it was a recalibration of global alignments in an era of shifting power balances.

A Meeting Years in the Making

Carney’s visit to Beijing was historic. He became the first Canadian prime minister to set foot in China in nearly a decade. The last few years had been marked by acrimony: tit-for-tat tariffs, disputes over detained citizens, and Canada’s alignment with U.S. trade penalties against Beijing. Yet, the October 2025 encounter between Xi and Carney in Gyeongju, South Korea, had already signaled a tentative thaw. That meeting opened the door to deeper discussions, and by January 2026, both leaders were ready to announce tangible progress. Xi framed the moment as a “turnaround,” emphasizing that healthy and stable relations were not only in the interest of both countries but also vital for global peace and prosperity. Carney, for his part, described China as a “more predictable partner than Washington,” a remark that underscored Canada’s growing unease with the volatility of U.S. trade policy.

**The Tariff Breakthrough**

The most immediate outcome of the Beijing summit was economic. China agreed to slash tariffs on Canadian canola oil from a punishing 85 percent to just 15 percent, while Canada dropped its U.S.-aligned 100 percent tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, reverting to the most-favored-nation rate of 6.1 percent. The deal was hailed as a breakthrough, not only for Canadian farmers and automakers but also for the broader effort to di-



President Xi Jinping meets with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Jan 16, 2026. [Photo/Xinhua]

versify trade away from the United States.

For Carney, the tariff relief was a political victory. Canadian canola producers, who had been squeezed by Chinese restrictions since 2019, now saw a pathway back into one of their largest markets. Meanwhile, Canadian consumers gained access to cheaper Chinese EVs, a move that dovetailed with Ottawa’s climate commitments. Xi, too, walked away with a win: greater access for Chinese manufacturers in North America and a symbolic demonstration that Beijing could reset relations with a G7 nation despite Western skepticism.

**Xi’s Four Pillars of Partnership**

Xi outlined four proposals to guide the future of China-Canada relations:

1. Mutual Respect: Both nations must respect sovereignty and political systems, avoiding interference in internal affairs.
2. Common Development: Economic ties should be based on win-win cooperation, with China’s high-quality development offering opportunities for Canadian businesses.
3. Mutual Trust: People-to-people exchanges in education, culture, tourism, and sports should form the bedrock of relations.
4. Collaboration: In a divided world, China and Canada should champion multilateralism, working together in forums like the UN, G20, and APEC.

These pillars were not mere rhetoric. They reflected Beijing’s broader diplomatic strategy: to present itself as a reliable partner in contrast to the unpredictability of U.S. politics, and to frame bilateral ties as part of a global push for “a community with a shared future for humanity.”

**Carney’s Calculated Gamble**

Carney’s pivot toward China was not without risks. Canada’s economy remains deeply intertwined with the United States, its largest trading partner. Yet, Trump’s erratic tariff policies and Washington’s increasingly confrontational stance toward Beijing have left Ottawa searching for alternatives. Carney’s gamble is that Canada can carve out a middle path—maintaining its alliance with the U.S. while deepening economic ties with China. Domestically, the move has support. A December 2025 Ipsos poll found that 54 percent of Canadians favored stronger trade ties with China. For Carney, the Beijing visit was not just diplomacy; it was a response to public sentiment and economic necessity.

**Historical Context: From Trudeau to Carney**

Canada’s relationship with China has always been complex. Pierre Trudeau recognized the People’s Republic of China in 1970, years before the United States did. Since then, ties have oscillated between cooperation

and confrontation. The past decade saw some of the lowest points, including the detention of Canadian citizens in China and Ottawa’s alignment with U.S. sanctions. Carney’s visit marked a deliberate attempt to reset that trajectory. By invoking history, Xi reminded Carney that the relationship had endured ups and downs for over 55 years. The message was clear: both nations had the experience to navigate differences and the incentive to build a more stable future.

**The Global Dimension**

The Beijing summit was not just about bilateral ties. It was a signal to the world that China and Canada were willing to collaborate on global challenges. Xi emphasized multilateralism, calling for cooperation within the UN, G20, and APEC. Carney echoed the sentiment, arguing that better relations with China could strengthen global governance systems “under great strain”.

For Africa, Latin America, and other regions watching closely, the reset carried implications. Canada’s renewed engagement with China could open doors for trilateral cooperation in areas like green technology, agriculture, and infrastructure. The symbolism of a Western democracy forging closer ties with Beijing also challenged narratives of inevitable decoupling between China and the West.

**Beyond Economics: People-to-People Ties**

Xi’s emphasis on cultural and educational exchanges was not incidental. Over 125 Canadian companies participated in the 2025 China International Import Expo in Shanghai, marking a record-high presence. Tourism, student exchanges, and cultural programs are expected to expand under the new partnership. For ordinary Canadians and Chinese, these initiatives could soften perceptions hardened by years of political disputes.

**Conclusion: A Reset with Global Ripples**

The handshake in Beijing was more than diplomatic theater. It was the culmination of months of negotiation, the product of political calculation, and a reflection of shifting global realities. For Xi, it was an opportunity to showcase China’s ability to mend ties with a Western power. For Carney, it was a chance to diversify Canada’s economic future and respond to domestic pressures. Whether the reset endures will depend on how both nations navigate inevitable tensions—human rights concerns, geopolitical rivalries, and the shadow of U.S. influence. Yet, for now, the Beijing summit stands as a reminder that even in a fractured world, nations can choose cooperation over confrontation.

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## Diaspora

## Swami Muskurake Brings Joy, Vision, and Spirit of Service



By: Maya Madkoriya  
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Swami Muskurake Ji, known in civilian life as Shri Shailendra Vyas, is a remarkable smiling sage in the Indian city of Ujjain, whose very name reflects his essence — a radiant smile, positivity, and an innate simplicity.

His life is a testament to the quiet strength that lies in gentleness and humility.

He is celebrated not merely for his cheerful presence but for the profound impact he has on the people around him.

Through humour, warmth, and thoughtful expression, he uplifts spirits, dispels tension, and spreads an atmosphere of goodwill wherever he goes.

For him, joy is not just an emotion but a guiding principle. His philosophy rests upon the belief that—“Happiness is the foundation of life; harmony is its path, and service to society is its purpose.”

His endeavour is not limited to entertainment; instead, he seeks to instil hope, mental peace, and a constructive outlook in society. His ability to convey profound truths in simple, relatable words makes him an inspirational figure of the present era.

His family of followers stands as a beautiful reflection of Ujjain's ancient cultural heritage—an exemplary balance of tradition and modern education, of values and progress, and of social responsibility and spiritual grounding.

Every member of this distinguished family embodies: mutual respect, harmony, and affection, the ability to connect with people from all walks of life, a deep reverence for Indian cultural values, and an equally strong commitment to contemporary learning and personal excellence.

This is a family that not only upholds noble ideals but also inspires others to embrace positivity, cultural pride, and human dignity in their daily lives.

Swami Muskurake Ji and his family actively participate in various cultural, religious, and social endeavours.

They remain dedicated to respectfully promoting India's rich cultural and spiritual traditions, contributing to community events and social welfare activities, and introducing the timeless heritage of Ujjain to the younger generation with sincerity and devotion.

Their conduct, infused with humility and kindness, has encouraged many to cultivate inner calm, self-confidence, and an optimistic



Swami Muskarand (second row sitting on the extreme right ) with his family and followers in Ujjain, India.

approach to life.

The extraordinary life of Shailendra Vyas, where wisdom meets warmth, is worthy of recounting.

In the ancient heart of India, where the holy river Kshipra flows like a hymn of eternity, where time itself bows before the mighty Mahakal, a radiant soul was born — Shailendra Vyas, affectionately known to the world as Swami Muskuraake.

Born on 24 December 1964 in Badnagar, in Ujjain, his childhood name was Mohan, though within his home, he was lovingly called Santosh. From this sacred soil of saints, poets, and philosophers, emerged a man whose life would harmonise intellect, spirituality, and human compassion.

His family is rooted in Sacred Learning His father, Rajendra Vyas, was a scholar of the Vedas, Puranas, and classical Indian scriptures: his mother, Anuradha Vyas, a devoted homemaker, embodied grace and inner wisdom.

Together, they nurtured young Shailendra in an atmosphere steeped in Sanskrit hymns, discipline, and devotion.

Fluent in Sanskrit, Hindi, and English, he inherited not only academic brilliance but also the spiritual calm that later became his life's signature — a serene smile that could dispel despair.

After completing his early education in Badnagar, Shailendra moved to Ujjain and graduated from the Government Science College. His professional journey began with the State Bank of Indore and Surat, but destiny had more profound

plans for him.

A man of many talents — writer, thinker, humourist, educator — he left his secure job in 1987 and ventured to Mumbai, seeking a creative career in the vibrant world of cinema. Opportunities were opening before him, yet his parents' affectionate persuasion drew him back home. Respecting their wishes, he chose a life of service over stardom — joining the education department as a senior teacher.

On 26 January 1989, he married Hema Vyas, an accomplished English lecturer, in a union not only of two minds but of shared ideals.

Their family blossomed with the birth of their son, Swami Vyas, in 1992. True to his name, Swami grew into a brilliant software engineer based in Bengaluru. Their daughter, Sahiba Vyas, is a graceful and eloquent lawyer practising in Delhi, carrying forward her father's integrity and compassion.

While fulfilling his duties as a teacher, Shailendra Vyas transcended conventional boundaries. He devoted himself to empowering girls and differently-abled students through education, sports, and cultural initiatives.

His dynamic mentorship inspired hundreds of young people to discover their inner strength.

Under his guidance, several students excelled nationally — among them Jitendra Singh Kushwah, His belief was simple yet profound: education must awaken both intellect and empathy.

For his unparalleled contribution to education, culture, and social

welfare, he received numerous honours, including 2001: Governor's Award by Dr Bhai Mahavir, Governor of Madhya Pradesh; 2004: President's Award conferred by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India; 2005: Governor's Honour by Dr Balram Jakhar, Governor of Madhya Pradesh.

He also received the Joshi Award for literary excellence in humour and satire.

Yet, despite this glittering constellation of awards, Shailendra remained grounded — a man whose dignity flowed not from recognition but from righteousness.

Beyond classrooms and community halls, Shailendra Vyas ventured into the deeper realms of spiritual science. At Thiruvananthapuram, he participated in the world-renowned Prapanch Yagna, a cosmic ritual conducted by saints and scholars for global peace and universal balance. Here, spiritual wisdom and scientific insight merged — a rare confluence he always advocated.

The Birth of 'Swami Muskuraake' came at a when there was depression during the dark and desolate days of the COVID-19 pandemic. His luminous persona came forth in a new avatar — Swami Muskuraake (literally, "The Smiling Sage"). Through his social media videos and live sessions, he infused anxious hearts with courage and laughter.

He authored two celebrated books: "Corona Bhagavat" — a humorous spiritual chronicle of the pandemic, and "Hasya Oxygen" — a bouquet of laughter and life philosophy. These works turned despair into delight

and gave readers a reason to smile amid uncertainty.

During Ujjain's grand Mahakal processions, Swami Muskuraake's attire itself becomes a moving mosaic of India's diverse traditions. His garments symbolise the unity of the North, South, East, and West — portraying the very spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. Even in his daily life, his attire reflects a blend of elegance and simplicity — a visible testament to the grace of Indian culture.

For Shailendra life is not a pursuit of fame but a celebration of purpose. He often says that "a smile is the shortest distance between two souls." His laughter is not mere amusement; it is meditation in motion — a reminder that spirituality need not always wear a solemn face. His work with numerous NGOs in promoting education, sports, and cultural inclusivity has made him a living example of the modern Indian saint — rooted in tradition yet relevant to the times.

Today, Swami Muskuraake stands as a beacon of optimism — a man who blends the gravity of a sage with the lightness of a poet.

From his humble beginnings in Badnagar to his contributions on national and international platforms, his journey embodies the timeless Indian principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — "The world is one family."

*Our writer: Maya Madkoriya is an author and a practising lawyer in Bhopal, India*

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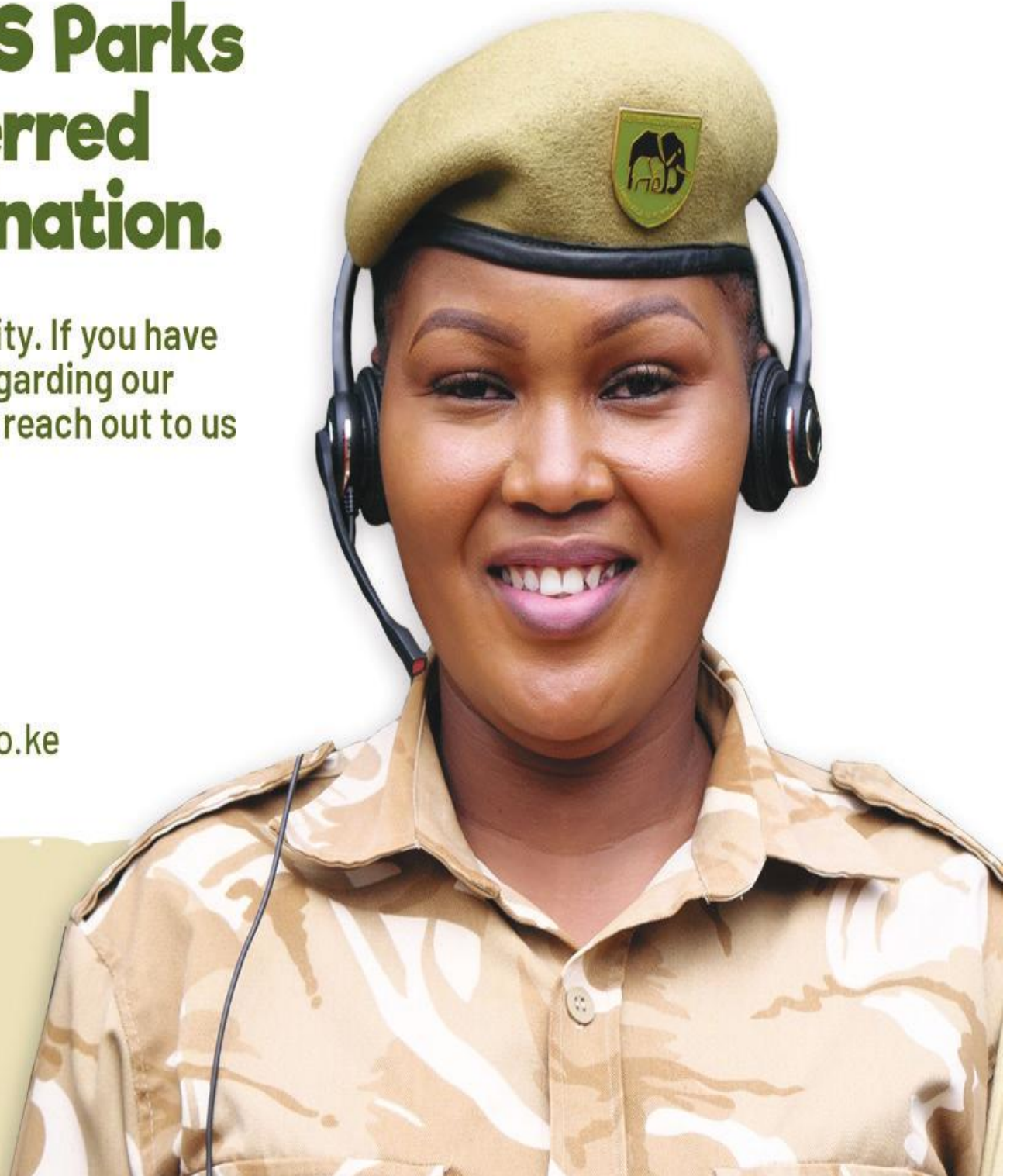
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## Diaspora

## Kenya's Affordable Housing Revolution: Policies, Projects, And Market Trends Across The Country

By: David Nyaga  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

At the heart of the initiative is the Boma Yangu platform, a digital marketplace where prospective homeowners can register, save, and select their preferred housing units, with tailored payment plans designed to accommodate low and middle-income earners. Through this portal, Kenyans from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the housing programme, which also integrates rent-to-own and mortgage pathways intended to broaden access to formal housing finance. However, despite significant investment, uptake has not yet matched government expectations, with fewer than 300,000 registrations reported against a target of more than half a million in recent performance reviews.

Across the country, affordable housing projects are visibly taking shape and reshaping residential landscapes. In Nairobi's Starehe Sub-County, the government is constructing 4,096 modern homes, spanning affordable units, market pricing options, and social housing categories, with prices starting as low as Ksh 640,000 for a single-room unit. These developments are strategically placed to provide decent housing close to key transport and employment nodes, while also relieving pressure on informal settlements.

Kenya's affordable housing agenda has emerged as one of the most transformative social and economic policy efforts in recent memory, seeking to provide decent homes for millions of citizens who have long struggled with high rental costs, urban overcrowding, and limited access to formal housing finance. Anchored in the Affordable Housing Act, 2024, which gives legal effect to the constitutional right to accessible and adequate housing, the programme is built on a foundation of public mobilisation, legislative backing, and innovative delivery models aimed at expanding homeownership and improving living standards across urban and rural counties alike. The Government of Kenya, under the leadership of President William Ruto, has championed this agenda as part of a broader Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) that links affordable housing with job creation, market modernisation, and community upliftment. The national strategy aims to deliver at least 200,000 affordable homes annually, with an overall target of 500,000 completed units by the end of 2026, and up to 1 million homes by 2027 through partnerships with counties, the private sector, and public financing mechanisms.

At the heart of the initiative is the Boma Yangu platform, a digital marketplace where prospective homeowners can register, save, and select their preferred housing units, with tailored payment plans designed to accommodate low and middle-income earners. Through this portal, Kenyans from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the housing programme, which also integrates rent-to-own and mortgage pathways intended to broaden access to formal housing finance. However, despite significant investment, uptake has not yet matched government expectations, with fewer than 300,000 registrations reported against a target of more than half a million in recent performance reviews. Across the country, affordable housing projects are visibly taking shape and reshaping residential landscapes. In Nairobi's Starehe Sub-County, the government is constructing 4,096 modern homes, spanning affordable units, market



pricing options, and social housing categories, with prices starting as low as Ksh 640,000 for a single-room unit. These developments are strategically placed to provide decent housing close to key transport and employment nodes, while also relieving pressure on informal settlements.

In coastal Kilifi County, the Tezo Affordable Housing Project was launched with the aim of constructing 1,000 units of mixed housing types, along with social amenities such as playgrounds, green spaces, and community centres. President Ruto underscored the importance of local participation in construction, highlighting that Jua Kali artisans and graduates from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions would be central to the project's labour force, a model that links housing delivery with livelihood opportunities.

Across eastern Kenya in Machakos County, the President personally handed over keys to 176 new homeowners who had secured homes through the Boma Yangu platform, marking a milestone in transforming aspirations into tangible ownership. During this visit, Ruto also oversaw the groundbreaking of Phase Two of the Machakos affordable housing estate, projected to add 570 additional units and generate employment for local youth. The tour included inspections of market infrastructure projects such as the Mutituni Modern Market, part of a

broader push to modernise economic hubs alongside housing.

The programme's reach stretches further with high-impact developments like the Boma Yangu Wote Pool Affordable Housing Estate in Makeni County, where 7,755 units are under construction alongside supporting infrastructure including commercial stalls, a shopping centre, and recreational areas designed to create self-sustaining communities. President Ruto's presence at the commissioning of this project highlighted the government's intention that "no region will be left behind," reinforcing the narrative that affordable housing is both a social right and an engine for inclusive growth.

While these projects illustrate progress and ambition, challenges persist. Government performance data reveals that only a portion of targeted units have been delivered within set timelines, with 1,795 finished units recorded in one recent period, a small fraction of the annual goal of 200,000. Nevertheless, where homes have been completed including newly occupied houses in Mukuru, Homa Bay, and Bondeni (Nakuru) demand has been high, with occupancy rates exceeding expectations, demonstrating strong latent demand for formal, affordable housing.

Moreover, housing delivery is generating wide economic impacts. Government reports indicate that the affordable housing programme has created

hundreds of thousands of jobs, including more than 244,000 direct and indirect opportunities for Kenyans, with significant participation from TVET graduates and artisanal sectors. These employment effects extend beyond construction to encompass local supply chains, service providers, and community businesses all integral to sustaining local economies.

In addition to housing units, the programme incorporates broader community infrastructure. Low-cost internet access has been introduced in some estates through partnerships with service providers, offering connectivity at approximately Ksh 300 per month, aimed at closing the digital divide and enhancing opportunities for education, e-commerce, and remote work for residents.

Financing remains a critical dimension of the initiative. Officials have acknowledged a substantial financing gap, with calls for increased private sector participation to bridge a shortfall of billions needed to scale housing delivery sustainably. Partnerships with commercial banks, retirement benefit schemes, and mortgage innovators are being pursued to unlock additional capital and expand access to mortgage products for prospective buyers.

Despite hurdles, the policy and legal framework continues to strengthen. The Affordable Housing Act not only institutionalises the housing levy and establishes an Affordable Housing

Fund but also sets out categories of housing tailored to different income brackets, from social housing for low-income households to middle-income and rural affordable units, ensuring that the programme addresses diverse needs across Kenya's socio-economic spectrum.

Kenya's affordable housing revolution is as much about transforming communities as it is about constructing buildings. From urban centres to peri-urban towns and rural hubs, affordable housing projects are catalysing local markets, creating jobs, modernising infrastructure, and offering new opportunities for families to own homes. While timelines and targets remain ambitious, the government's sustained engagement at the highest levels including direct presidential oversight and county-level advocacy underlines a commitment to expansive social housing coverage.

As the programme advances toward its 2026 and 2027 benchmarks, its long-term success will hinge on continued policy refinement, private sector collaboration, improved financing mechanisms, and increased public participation through platforms like Boma Yangu. Ultimately, the goal remains clear: to create a Kenya where decent, affordable homes are accessible to all, sparking inclusive growth and empowering citizens to build stable and prosperous futures in communities across the country.

## Diaspora

# Lighting the Last Mile: How Bomet's Power Connections Reflect Kenya's Energy Promise

*As part of the nationwide effort focused on extending access to grid electricity to underserved rural homes and businesses, Wandayi undertook an extensive tour of Bomet County to launch several Last Mile Connectivity Projects.*

By: James Kilonzo Bwire  
xxxxxxxxxxxxx



Cabinet secretary of Energy and Petroleum James Wandayi Accompanied by Area MP Richard in Bomet East Constituency

## Worth Noting:

Accompanied by Area MP Richard in Bomet East Constituency, Wandayi began his engagements in Koita Village, Kikeres Ward, where he unveiled and flagged off construction materials for the Koita Last Mile Connectivity Project. This moment carried deep significance for residents who have waited years for reliable electricity. The launch signaled a shift from promises to action, offering renewed hope to households and small businesses that have long operated on the margins of the national grid.

From Koita, Wandayi proceeded to Kembu Village in Kembu Ward and later to Bukunye Primary School in Chemaner Ward, where he officially groundbroke the Kembu and Bukunye LMCP projects being implemented by Kenya Power and Lighting Company. These initiatives underscored the government's focus on connecting not only homes, but also key social institutions such as schools, which are vital to community development.

Cabinet secretary of Energy and Petroleum James Wandayi has once again demonstrated the government's commitment to transforming the lives of ordinary Kenyans through practical and people-centered leadership. As part of the nationwide effort focused on extending access to grid electricity to underserved rural homes and businesses, Wandayi undertook an extensive tour of Bomet County to launch several Last Mile Connectivity Projects. His presence in the county was more than symbolic; it represented a clear statement that rural communities remain central to Kenya's development agenda and that access to energy is a foundational pillar of inclusive growth.

Accompanied by Area MP Richard in Bomet East Constituency, Wandayi began his engagements in Koita Village, Kikeres Ward, where he unveiled and flagged off construction materials for the Koita Last Mile Connectivity Project. This moment carried deep significance for residents who have waited years for reliable electricity. The launch signaled a shift

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The visit continued in Bomet Central Constituency, where Wandayi was joined by Area MP Richard Kilel to launch the Chemamul Teri Dairy Center LMCP Project in Chesoen Ward. This project stood out for its direct link to the local economy, particularly dairy farming, which is a mainstay of livelihoods in the area. Reliable electricity at the dairy center is expected to improve milk handling,

reduce post-harvest losses, and increase farmers' incomes, demonstrating how energy access can directly strengthen rural economies. From Chesoen, the Cabinet Secretary proceeded to Cheboigong Village within Silibwet Township Ward, where he launched another LMCP project and engaged the wananchi in an open public forum. This interaction allowed residents to voice their expectations and reaffirmed the importance of citizen participation in development initiatives.

The Energy Ministry are making steady progress towards universal accessibility targets, and the activities witnessed in Bomet County provide tangible evidence of this momentum. The Last Mile Connectivity Projects are not isolated undertakings but part of a broader national vision to ensure that no Kenyan is left behind in the energy transition. For communities like those in Koita, Kembu, and Cheboigong, electricity means more than lighting homes; it opens doors to entrepreneurship, improves access to information, enhances se-

curity, and raises overall living standards. Schools such as Bukunye Primary stand to benefit from improved learning environments, while health facilities and water projects can operate more efficiently with stable power supply.

Beyond the immediate benefits, Wandayi's hands-on approach sends a powerful message about accountability and delivery. By personally flagging off materials, breaking ground, and engaging residents, the Cabinet Secretary reinforced confidence in public institutions and placed responsibility squarely on implementing agencies to deliver results. The involvement of local leaders ensured that national policies were grounded in local realities, increasing the likelihood that projects would be protected, utilized, and sustained by the communities they are meant to serve.

The tour of Bomet County highlighted the broader truth that rural electrification is a catalyst for dignity, equity, and opportunity. It reflects a development model that recognizes energy as

a basic enabler of social and economic transformation rather than a privilege for a few. As Kenya continues to pursue its universal electricity access goals, the experiences from Bomet offer a clear lesson: progress is most meaningful when it reaches the last mile and touches everyday lives.

In the end, the launches in Koita, Kembu, Bukunye, Chemamul Teri, and Cheboigong symbolize more than infrastructure development; they mark a renewed social contract between the state and its citizens. James Wandayi's visit reaffirmed that effective leadership is visible, engaged, and responsive. As construction begins and connections are made, the people of Bomet County stand at the threshold of new possibilities, illuminated by the promise that development, when thoughtfully implemented, can indeed reach every corner of the nation.

# My little thief of a child or the human sun shining in the dark night

*Although the story “My Naughty Son” by Gʻafur Gʻulom was written in 1965, the events it describes date back to the early 20th century, that is, the turning period of 1917 and the difficult living conditions of the people during that time.*



By: Uktamova Sevinch Uktam  
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## Worth Noting:

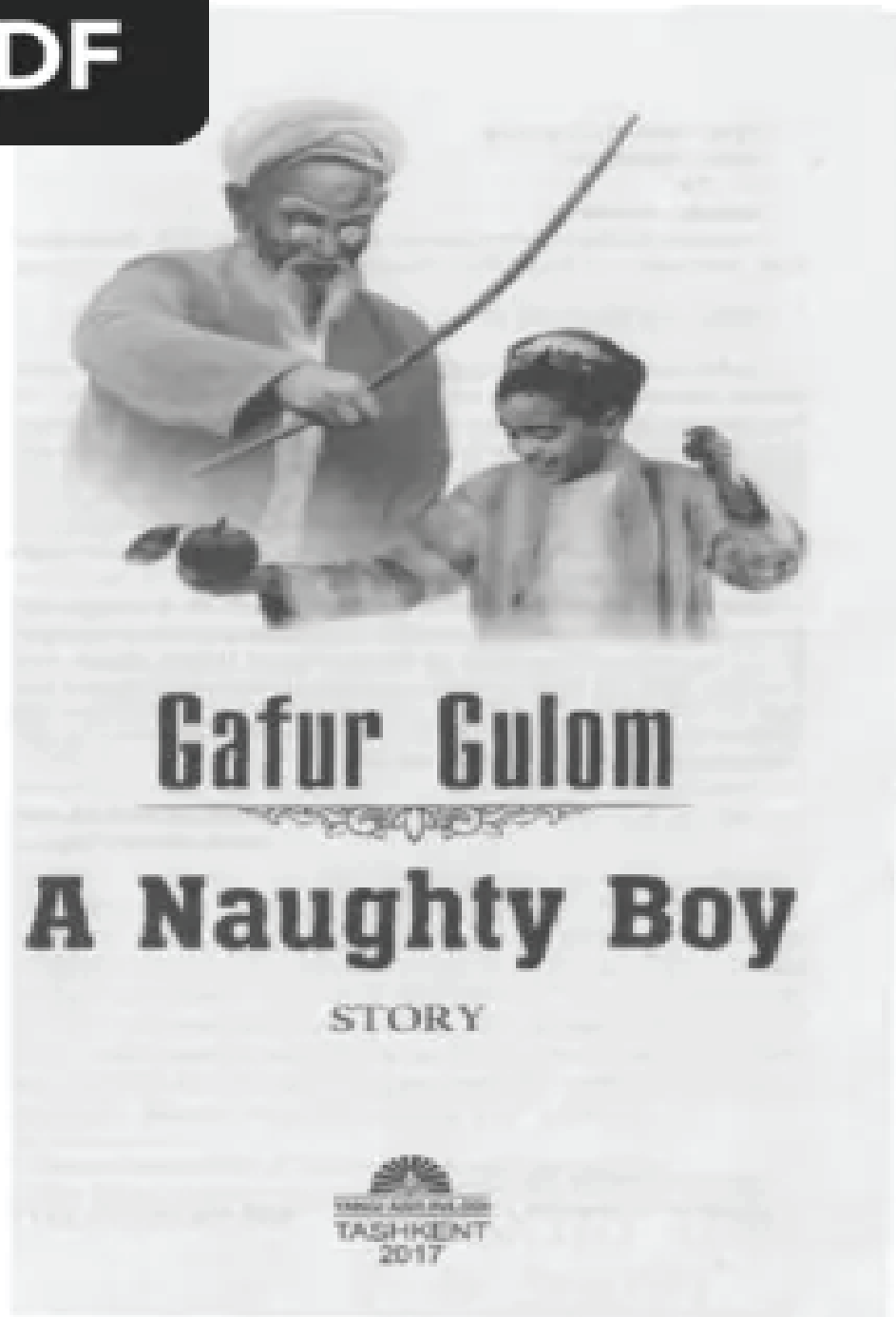
I was especially moved by the image of the Black grandmother. She is over 80, a woman who has tasted the bittersweetness of life and seen much. Yet her heart... that heart is still pure and full of love like that of a child. The state of the grandmother, who lies awake at night thinking about the future of orphans, profoundly shook me. She has forgotten fatigue, hardship, and loneliness, dedicating the rest of her life to sharing love with others. When I see women like her, I am reminded once again of just how brave Uzbek women are.

From a legal perspective, this story reveals the complex relationship between crime and morality. Based on the aforementioned circumstances and events, the author makes the reader ponder the question, ‘Who should be blamed, the thief or the society that put him in this situation?’

Although the story “My Naughty Son” by Gʻafur Gʻulom was written in 1965, the events it describes date back to the early 20th century, that is, the turning period of 1917 and the difficult living conditions of the people during that time. The work is not only about a thief who enters a house and Roqiya bibi, who talks with him, but through them, it depicts the fate of an entire nation, poverty, the struggle for life, humanism, and the spirit of compassion. This story is realistic, and its writing dates back to the war years. The work begins with the following lines: “Many years have passed since our father died. This year, in the spring of the seventeenth year, we were separated from our mother as well and were left utterly orphaned.” These lines set the tone of the work, meaning it is about not only the destiny of a single family but also the fate of the entire nation left orphaned and scattered.

The story is told from the perspective of an orphan child, that is, in the voice of the writer. Gʻafur Gʻulom became an orphan early, losing his father at the age of nine and his mother at fifteen. For this reason, we can say that he was able to write feeling the pain and truth in every sentence of the work, as someone who had personally experienced orphanhood and the difficult moments of life. Let us analyze this work from the viewpoint of the environment of that era and the present-day legal era.

The inner experiences of the boy, who is the protagonist of the work, contain an invisible sorrow alongside his innocence. His delight in saying, “A thief even came to our house,” may seem funny at first glance, but in reality, it reveals a very sad situation. This joy stems from their poverty having reached such a level that even a thief was imagined to see them as human beings. The boy envisions boasting about this event to his friends the next day, but immediately a doubt arises within him: “Will they believe it?” Through these sentences, one can sense the extremely harsh, impoverished environment of that time. However, there was once a time when a large pot boiled in that house. There was once a time when the hearts of this family were



whole too!

Throughout the work, we witness the intense yet bitterly truthful conversation between Grandma Roqiya and the thief. Through this dialogue, the author naturally and vividly reveals the inner world, internal pains, and the harsh conditions of the time experienced by two destitute individuals — Grandma Roqiya and the thief. Therefore, it is important to analyze the conversation between the characters. When the thief asks, ‘What are you imagining, Grandma?’ Roqiya responds, ‘What could I be imagining? I think about the future of these four orphans, my child. You can see the state of the times yourself — life is harder than stone, and bread is as precious as a camel’s eye.’ This response naturally draws the attention of any reader. Through this brief dialogue, the author powerfully illuminates the difficulties of those years, the impact of political

and economic turmoil on the lives of ordinary people, and especially how heavily the shoulders of poor families were burdened.

I was especially moved by the image of the Black grandmother. She is over 80, a woman who has tasted the bittersweetness of life and seen much. Yet her heart... that heart is still pure and full of love like that of a child. The state of the grandmother, who lies awake at night thinking about the future of orphans, profoundly shook me. She has forgotten fatigue, hardship, and loneliness, dedicating the rest of her life to sharing love with others. When I see women like her, I am reminded once again of just how brave Uzbek women are.

From a legal perspective, this story reveals the complex relationship between crime and morality. Based on the aforementioned circumstances and events, the author makes the reader ponder the question, ‘Who

should be blamed, the thief or the society that put him in this situation?’ From a legal standpoint, theft is a crime, but in my opinion, a true, just-minded lawyer must first determine what drove the criminal to commit this offense. In law, there is a concept called the ‘structure of a crime,’ which examines not only the act itself but also the reasons that prompted it. Although the thief in the story committed the crime consciously, the root of the situation, that is, the motive, was material poverty, social inequality, and lack of opportunities. In such circumstances, the real purpose of justice is not only to punish but also to strengthen social assistance and the system of legal protection. The events of the work, if they occurred in the present day, could lead to criminal liability under Article 169 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In reality, from a legal standpoint, no one is

born saying ‘I will become a criminal.’ There are always reasons that drive a person to commit such acts, even today, such as poverty, need, or an unfavorable environment.

As is known from the work, the protagonist himself did not want to take up theft as a profession. It was the circumstances of that era and the worries of making a living that forced him to it. At this point, it is appropriate to quote the following sentences spoken by the thief, who is the protagonist of the story: “With four mouths to feed, I put myself in danger, facing fire and the edge of Ali’s blade. Otherwise, if I wanted to work, I have strength in my arms and my mind and senses are intact. Do you think I enjoy this thieving profession that I’m forced to do now? I was a perfectly decent child of

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# My little thief of a child or the human sun shining in the dark night

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Do you think I enjoy this thieving profession that I’m forced to do now? I was a perfectly decent child of a simple potter. The times went awry. They used to say that the war would stop after Kerensky became the ruler. But it doesn’t seem to be stopping anytime soon; everything is still as tough as it used to be.”

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The thief’s words, “I will risk life and limb to get four loaves of bread,” clearly reflect the difficult economic situation of that time. He is actually the child of a strong, hardworking, and sensible bricklayer. However, war, political instability, and the struggles of survival forced him onto the path of theft. The thief openly admits that he does not like this profession, but life has forced him into it. The author mentions that the hopes during Kerensky’s era that the war would end were not fulfilled, and that only those fortunate enough to have influence benefited, which points to the social inequalities of that time. Through these sentences, the author emphasizes that the essence of theft lies not in the crime itself, but in the hardships of life. Nevertheless, the characters in the work manage to retain their humanity. Even today, when the sense of mutual compassion among people is diminishing, it is significant that the characters were able to preserve their identity during a time when life was so difficult. For instance, Roqiya addressing the thief as ‘my poor child’ and the thief also speaking closely to her as ‘grandma’ is a clear testament to humanity. When analyzing the work, it is appropriate to cite the following sentences between the characters: ‘Last night, I took two of the apples you gave me, and we’ll have tea together.’

— No, grandmother,” said the thief, “I will tear open a coat and give it, but I cannot drink tea, because if the day breaks, you will recognize me. I really haven’t covered my face too much; I am cautious, I’m ashamed.” — Oh my, are you leaving the blessed house empty-handed, my child? Take something with you. Wait, what can you take... oh yes, by the way, there is a half-pud (approximately 8 kg) pot in the kitchen. In the past, our house was full of people, and we used to cook pilaf in a large pot. It seems we’ve angered God, because from that large, bustling house-



G’afur G’ulom

hold, only these four orphans are left. Eh-ha, when would they have cooked in the big pot... Take this with you. You can sell it and earn for your day, you thief child.” Through these sentences, Roqiya bibi’s kindness toward the thief is clearly seen. Even though she was poor herself, she didn’t want the thief to go hungry and suggested drinking tea together. The thief, however, out of caution and fear of being recognized, politely refused. Then the old woman, not wanting to leave him empty-handed, even offered the old half-pud pot. Although this cauldron is the only memento left from the blessed days of the past, Aunt Rokia wants it to help the thief in his daily life. This scene poignantly reveals the old woman’s generosity and the fact that the thief is not really a bad person, but a victim of the times.

In the final part of the story, the thief’s gentle and honorable attitude toward the old woman reveals his true na-

ture. He refuses to take the cauldron and says to leave it for the orphans. This shows that the thief is not evil, but rather a person forced into this path by difficult circumstances. His words, “These days will pass too,” express the people’s hope for the future despite hardships. The old woman, in turn, bids farewell to the thief affectionately, saying ‘come visit.’ This reflects the old woman’s generous, kind, and folk-wise nature, valuing people for their circumstances rather than their faults. The author’s concluding statement, ‘I knew him, but I never told anyone,’ expresses human respect and compassion towards the thief. Through this, the work emphasizes the necessity of judging a person not by their outward appearance or mistakes, but by their heart and intentions.

In conclusion, it can be said that although G’afur G’ulom’s story “My Thieving Child” reflects the difficult and turbulent years of the

First World War, its content has not lost its relevance for today. The work deeply portrays the hardships of the time and the value of human virtues. The thief character in the story is depicted as a person who, due to the difficulties of life and the responsibility of raising orphaned children, has resorted to an inevitable path, yet retains honesty, love, and moral feelings in his heart. He considers not only the needs of his own family but also the care and compassion for orphans and the needy in society.

The grandmother’s kindness and wise advice, her generosity towards the thief, are considered one of the most important aspects of the story. It highlights the importance of judging a person not by their appearance or mistakes, but by their intentions and purity of heart. Through this, the author gives the reader a profound lesson on human values, compassion, tolerance, and the necessity of making the right choices

in life situations. Through the conversation between Roqiya Bibi and the thief, the author implies that, at that time, people were often forced into crime by the circumstances of the era and the hardships of life.

The work also raises issues such as social inequality in society, the living conditions of orphaned and needy children, and the hardships of the times. The story encourages the reader to feel not only the realities of life but also the beauty of the human soul and the value of humanity. For this reason, the story ‘My Only Son is a Thief’ is a work that has not only literary but also moral and aesthetic impact.

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## Sonatrach-Ghana National Petroleum Corporation Research and Development Partnership Signals Africa's Energy Future is Innovation-Led

*Facilitated by APPO Secretary General Farid Ghezali, the strategic partnership strengthens research and development within the oil and gas sector*

By: Diaspora Times Team  
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### Worth Noting:

- The African Energy Chamber (AEC) welcomes the agreement and expresses its full support for Sonatrach and GNPC in advancing African-led R&D collaboration. The agreement signifies APPO as not only an instrumental part in facilitating the partnership but a central force in bringing all parties together to ratify this important deal.
- Under the leadership of Ghezali, APPO continues to showcase its commitment to unifying nations - as well as the broader industry - to reach decisive agreements such as this one. The partnership also reflects a growing recognition among national oil companies (NOC) that innovation, technology and knowledge-sharing are essential to unlocking value, reducing costs and ensuring Africa remains competitive in a rapidly evolving global energy market. The AEC believes that this collaboration is expected to move the entire industry into its next phase of development.

Algeria's state-owned oil company Sonatrach and the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the auspices of the African Petroleum Producers Organization (APPO), formalizing plans for a strategic partnership focused on research, development and innovation (R&D) in the oil and gas sector. Signed in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo - the headquarters of APPO - and in the presence of APPO's recently appointed Secretary General Farid Ghezali, the MoU establishes a framework for assessing joint opportunities, sharing expertise and creating structured working mechanisms to support the development of hydrocarbon resources for energy security and sustainable development across Africa.

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such as high-definition processing and interpretation, artificial intelligence-enabled subsurface analysis, 4D seismic and real-time reservoir modeling. The agreement also covers digital wells and digital oilfields, enhanced and improved oil recovery, stratigraphic exploration objectives, integrity and corrosion management and oil and gas valorization - capabilities that directly improve recovery rates, extend the life of producing assets and maximize returns from existing infrastructure. The partnership also integrates energy transition and environmental priorities alongside core upstream development. Areas of cooperation include carbon footprint reduction, low-carbon industrial solutions, hydrogen and green technologies, as well as water and waste treatment and air pollution mitigation. This reflects a pragmatic African approach: developing hydrocarbons responsibly while embedding sustainability and emissions management into project design and operations from the

outset.

The agreement comes at a critical time for both markets. For Ghana, the MoU signals a commitment to leveraging innovation to revitalize oil production as the nation looks to revive oilfields, diversify the industry through gas and support broader regional energy growth. With 17 oil and gas projects scheduled for development by 2027, Ghana is working to expand exploration, ramp up production and deepen private sector participation. Recent milestones point to a strong resurgence across the market. Just this month, Kosmos Energy announced that it successfully drilled and completed the J-74 well - part of the larger 2025-2026 Jubilee field development campaign. In partnership with the GNPC and Tullow, the company plans to drill 20 wells at Jubilee under a \$2 billion upstream expansion plan, five of which are planned for 2026. Alongside oil Ghana is advancing gas developments under efforts to monetize its over 2.1 trillion cubic feet of available

resources. Projects such as a planned second processing plant - with a capacity of 150 million standard cubic feet per day - are underway and will complement operational facilities such as the Atuabo Plant.

As one of Africa's biggest oil and gas producers, Algeria is well-positioned to support Ghana's hydrocarbon goals. The country is advancing its own ambitious hydrocarbon strategy, anchored by a five-year plan endorsed by Sonatrach that will mobilize up to \$60 billion in investment. The program prioritizes sustained exploration and production to offset natural decline, alongside the modernization and expansion of downstream infrastructure to strengthen value addition, boost export capacity and enhance long-term energy security. Through this strategy, Algeria is reinforcing its role as a continental energy leader while generating technical expertise and operational know-how that can be leveraged through partnerships with peers such as GNPC. By prioritizing R&D, embracing technology

and aligning hydrocarbons development with sustainability objectives, Sonatrach and GNPC are setting a strong precedent. The AEC commends both companies and APPO for advancing an African-led model that supports energy security, economic growth and sustainable development across the continent.

"APPO continues to showcase a commitment to advancing Africa's hydrocarbon development. This MoU shows that African NOCs are investing in innovation to secure the continent's energy future. Research and technology are critical to producing oil and gas more efficiently and sustainably, while supporting the broader energy transition. Africa needs oil and gas to develop, and partnerships like this ensure those resources deliver long-term value for our people," stated NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman, AEC.