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Africa

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What's in a Name?: Africa's Long War Against Colonial Identity

By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande

THE INDIGENEOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES' NAMES



man who had been waiting his whole life to say something, that the country he now led would no longer answer to the name the French had given it. Upper Volta - a name derived from a river, bestowed by colonial cartographers who never asked the people living along its banks what they called home - was dead. In its place rose Burkina Faso: Land of Upright People. Sankara did not simply change a word on a map. He told his country, and the world, who his people were.

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Kenya must act now, not celebrate too early

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Breaking the Silence on Preventable Stillbirths in Kenya



Designing Low-Latency Architectures for East African Users

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Ida Odinga's Appointment Signals Kenya's Climate Diplomacy Ambition

By: Grace Wanja
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Worth Noting:

- During her vetting, Ida Odinga pledged to advance Kenya's climate diplomacy and strengthen partnerships to ensure climate initiatives deliver tangible socio-economic benefits, especially for vulnerable populations. "Kenya and Africa are emerging as global leaders in climate action through frameworks such as the National Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027)," she told the Committee, emphasizing her intent to align environmental diplomacy with both the Sustainable Development Goals and Kenya's national development priorities.
- She added that she would promote multi-stakeholder cooperation to implement resolutions adopted at the United Nations Environment Assembly, stressing that consensus-building and coalition engagement were skills she had honed through her founding of the League of Kenya Women Voters and her work across civil society.

President William Ruto has formally appointed Ida Betty Odinga, widow of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, as Kenya's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a move that has drawn both national and international attention for its symbolism and substance. The appointment, announced in a Gazette Notice dated February 27, 2026, followed unanimous approval by the National Assembly on February 24, with legislators endorsing the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations, which found Ida suitable for the role based on her leadership experience, commitment to environmental advocacy, and proven integrity. "In exercise of the powers conferred by Article 132 (2) (e) of the Constitution of Kenya, I, William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, appoint Ida Betty Odinga, as Ambassador and Permanent Representative in the Foreign Service of the Republic of Kenya," read the Gazette Notice, underscoring the constitutional authority behind the decision. Felix Koskei, Head of Public Service, in a letter to Speaker Moses Wetang'ula, described Ida's nomination as recognition of her lifelong service to Kenyans and her exemplary role in advancing female leadership, noting, "Her work is a testament to selfless leadership, courage, and a sustained commitment to advancing women's education and empowerment." During her vetting, Ida Odinga pledged to advance Kenya's climate diplomacy and strengthen partnerships to ensure climate initiatives deliver tangible socio-economic benefits, especially for vulnerable populations.

"Kenya and Africa are emerging as global leaders in climate action through frameworks such as the National Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027)," she told the Committee, emphasizing her intent to align environmental diplomacy with both the Sustainable Development Goals and Kenya's national development priorities. She added that she would promote multi-stakeholder cooperation to implement resolutions adopted at the United Nations Environment Assembly, stressing that consensus-building and coalition engagement were skills she had honed through her founding of the League of Kenya Women Voters and her work across civil society. "UNEP remains the only UN headquarters located in the Global South and domiciled in Nairobi. We must leverage that position to enhance Kenya's leadership in environmental governance," she stated, highlighting the strategic importance of UNEP's Nairobi base. Her background in advocacy and coalition-building, including her leadership of the Ida Odinga Trust focusing on nutrition and education initiatives across Africa, and her collaboration with the late Nobel laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai in environmental advocacy, were cited as evidence of her capacity to navigate multilateral diplomacy. Ida's emphasis on mobilising resources to support UNEP's global mandate resonated with legislators who viewed her appointment as both a domestic milestone and an international opportunity. Raila Odinga, speaking after the confirmation, praised the decision, saying, "Ida has always been a champion of justice, education, and the environment. Her appointment is not just a recognition of her work, but a recognition of Ken-



Ida Odinga

ya's role in global climate leadership." President Ruto himself reiterated the strategic importance of the appointment, noting, "Kenya must lead from the front in climate diplomacy, and Ida Odinga brings the experience, credibility, and passion to ensure our voice is heard." International observers have also weighed in. The African Union Commission welcomed the appointment, describing it as "a strong signal of Kenya's commitment to environmental governance and female leadership." UNEP officials in Nairobi expressed optimism, with one senior representative quoted as saying, "Ambassador Odinga's background in advocacy and education will be invaluable in advancing UNEP's mission at a time when climate challenges demand urgent action." Civil society groups in Kenya echoed the sentiment, with the Green Belt Movement recalling her collaboration with Prof. Maathai and stating, "Her appointment continues the legacy of Kenyan women leading global environmen-

tal advocacy." The editorial lens must sharpen here: Ida Odinga's appointment is not merely a political gesture; it is a strategic move that positions Kenya at the heart of global climate diplomacy. It reflects the country's ambition to leverage UNEP's Nairobi headquarters as a platform for African leadership in environmental governance. It also underscores the growing recognition of women's leadership in diplomacy, with Ida's career embodying the intersection of advocacy, education, and coalition-building. Her appointment comes at a time when climate change is not just an environmental issue but a socio-economic challenge, affecting livelihoods, food security, and national development. By placing a seasoned advocate at UNEP, Kenya signals its intent to shape global conversations and ensure that African perspectives are not sidelined. The voices of leaders capture the significance of the moment. President Ruto's declaration frames the appointment as a constitutional and

strategic act. Raila Odinga's tribute underscores the personal and national symbolism. Felix Koskei's letter highlights the values of integrity and empowerment. Ida's own words reflect a vision of diplomacy rooted in consensus and tangible outcomes. Together, these voices create a narrative of continuity, ambition, and responsibility. The editorial truth is clear: Ida Odinga's appointment is both historic and forward-looking. It honors her lifelong service while entrusting her with a mandate that extends beyond Kenya to the global stage. It is a reminder that diplomacy is not just about representation but about advocacy, leadership, and vision. The closing line must be as sharp as the opening: Ida Odinga's voice will now carry Kenya's climate ambition to the world, ensuring that Nairobi is not just UNEP's home but the heartbeat of global environmental governance.

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African Union Commission

AU Commission Warns US-Israel Strikes on Iran Risk Global Peace

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Worth Noting:

The appeal comes amid rising tensions following reported Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iranian military-linked sites, which triggered threats of retaliation from Tehran and raised fears of a broader regional confrontation.

Chairperson Youssouf urged all concerned actors to prioritise diplomatic engagement, including ongoing international mediation efforts facilitated by Oman. "Sustainable peace can only be achieved through diplomacy, not through force," he reiterated, underscoring the importance of reviving dialogue channels to prevent further deterioration and uphold the international rules-based order.

The African Union Commission has issued a stark warning that coordinated military strikes by the United States and Israel against Iranian targets represent a grave threat to global peace and stability, urging all parties to return to diplomacy through Oman-facilitated talks. Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf said he was "deeply concerned" by the reported escalation, describing the strikes as "a serious intensification of hostilities in the Middle East" and cautioning that further confrontation could have far-reaching consequences beyond the region. "The Chairperson calls for restraint, urgent de-escalation, and sustained dialogue," the AU statement read, stressing that all actors must act in full accordance with international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter to safeguard peace and security. The Commission warned that continued confrontation risks worsening global instability, with serious implications for energy markets, food security, and economic resilience, particularly in Africa where many countries are already grappling with economic pressures and conflict-related challenges.

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to prioritise diplomatic engagement, including ongoing international mediation efforts facilitated by Oman. "Sustainable peace can only be achieved through diplomacy, not through force," he reiterated, underscoring the importance of reviving dialogue channels to prevent further deterioration and uphold the international rules-based order. Regional fallout intensified after the United Arab Emirates confirmed that one civilian was killed when debris from intercepted Iranian ballistic missiles fell in a residential area. In a statement, the UAE Ministry of Defence said its air defence systems "dealt with the missiles with high efficiency and successfully intercepted a number of missiles" launched toward the country. Authorities reported that falling debris caused material damage in a residential neighbourhood and resulted in the death of a civilian of Asian nationality. The ministry described the incident as a "blatant attack" and a "dangerous escalation," highlighting the risks of civilian casualties as the confrontation spreads beyond military targets. Iran, meanwhile, vowed retaliation, with reports of explosions in several cities including Tehran. Iranian officials declared that the strikes would not go unanswered, while U.S. President Donald Trump confirmed that "major combat operations" were underway and sharply criticised Iran's stance in ongoing nuclear



AU Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf

negotiations, signalling a hardening of positions as diplomatic efforts falter. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended the strikes, saying, "We will not allow Iran or its proxies to destabilize our borders," while Saudi Arabia warned that "the region cannot afford a descent into full-scale war." The European Union urged de-escalation, warning that "a regional war would devastate global stability," and the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary added, "This is a moment of grave danger; dialogue must prevail." Russia condemned the strikes as "a violation of international law and sovereignty," while China called for "restraint and respect for the principles of non-interference."

The confrontation has already disrupted regional air travel, with several international airlines suspending

operations due to airspace closures. Oil markets reacted sharply, with prices surging amid fears of supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global shipping lane. Analysts noted that the escalation could trigger wider economic shocks, recalling the tanker wars of the 1980s and the Gulf War of 1991, when Middle Eastern conflicts reverberated across global markets. The editorial truth is clear: the killing of Iranian leaders and the subsequent strikes are not merely military acts but seismic political events that risk unraveling years of painstaking negotiations, from the Iran nuclear deal to regional security dialogues.

The voices of leaders capture the gravity of the moment. Trump's declaration frames the strikes as necessary retribution, Iran's vow of retaliation underscores the risk of

escalation, Netanyahu's insistence on security reflects Israel's readiness for confrontation, Saudi Arabia's warning highlights the fragility of regional peace, and the AU's call for restraint reflects Africa's concern that instability will ripple far beyond the Middle East. Together, these statements paint a picture of a world standing at the edge of a dangerous precipice. The closing line must be as sharp as the opening: the AU Commission's warning is not just about the Middle East—it is about the future of global peace, reminding the world that diplomacy, not force, remains the only path away from the brink.

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LAW

Justice Isaac Lenaola Elected President of Sierra Leone Court

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Worth Noting:

- The election of Lenaola, a seasoned jurist with more than two decades of judicial experience, marks a significant moment for both Kenya and Sierra Leone. The Court, established to handle residual matters after the conclusion of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, continues to supervise sentences, protect witnesses, preserve archives, and support national prosecution authorities. During the plenary, judges deliberated on amendments to court rules, reviewed the draft stocktaking report, and examined the institution's funding, while also considering the 12th Annual Report covering activities for 2025.
- Justice Lenaola, who joined the Court in 2013, expressed gratitude for the confidence placed in him. "This election is not about me alone, but about the collective responsibility we carry to ensure justice is preserved and the legacy of the Special Court is safeguarded," he said in his acceptance remarks. He added: "Our mandate is clear — to uphold the rule of law, protect witnesses, and ensure that the sacrifices made in pursuit of justice in Sierra Leone are never forgotten."

Justice Isaac Lenaola of Kenya's Supreme Court has been elected President of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, following a two-day plenary session held at The Hague, Netherlands, on February 27, 2026. The announcement, made in an official statement by the Court, confirmed that Lenaola, who previously served as Vice President, will now lead the institution tasked with overseeing the remaining judicial obligations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Justice Andrew Hatton was elected Vice President, while Justice Tonia Barnett was chosen as Staff Appeals Judge, with all officials set to serve renewable two-year terms.

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Justice Hatton, who has served at the Court since 2013 and previously held judicial roles in the United Kingdom and Kosovo, emphasized continuity and collaboration. "We must continue to strengthen the institution's credibility and ensure that our work remains relevant to the people of Sierra Leone and the international community," Hatton said. "Justice is not static; it requires vigilance



Justice Isaac Lenaola

and adaptation."

Justice Barnett, who joined the Court in 2021 and has served in Sierra Leone's judiciary since 2017, underscored the importance of inclusivity. "Our role is to ensure that justice is not only done but seen to be done, especially for those who bore the brunt of conflict," she said. "We must remain steadfast in protecting witnesses and supporting national authorities."

The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone was established to conclude the work of the Special Court, which was set up in 2002 to prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's civil war. The Special Court secured landmark convictions, including that of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who was sentenced to 50 years in prison for aiding and abetting war crimes. The Residual Court now ensures that sentences are enforced, witnesses are protected, and archives are preserved for future generations.

Lenaola's election has been welcomed in Kenya, where he is widely respected for his judicial independence and contributions to constitutional law. Having joined the Kenyan judiciary in 2003, Lenaola rose to the Supreme Court, where he played a pivotal role in landmark rulings on electoral disputes and constitutional interpretation. He also served as Presiding Judge of the Constitutional and Human Rights Division at the High Court in Nairobi and as Deputy Principal Judge at the East African Court of Justice between 2011 and 2018.

Kenya's Chief Justice Martha Koome congratulated Lenaola, describing his election as "a testament to Kenya's growing influence in international justice." She said: "Justice Lenaola has consistently demonstrated integrity, courage, and wisdom. His leadership at the Residual Special Court will strengthen the global fight against impunity." Sierra Leone's Attorney General Mohamed Lamin

Tarawallie also welcomed the election, noting: "Justice Lenaola's experience will be invaluable in ensuring that the Court continues to serve Sierra Leone's people. The preservation of archives and witness protection are critical to our national reconciliation."

International observers have praised the election as a step toward reinforcing the Court's credibility. Dr. Fatou Bensouda, former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, remarked: "Justice Lenaola's election reflects the importance of African leadership in international justice. His track record speaks for itself, and his stewardship will ensure that the Court remains a beacon of accountability." The Court's future challenges include securing sustainable funding, maintaining witness protection programs, and ensuring that archives remain accessible to scholars and the public. Analysts warn that without adequate resources, the Court risks losing momentum. Lenaola acknowledged

these concerns, stating: "We must be innovative in securing resources, but our commitment to justice will not waver. The world must remember that the fight against impunity is never over."

The election of Lenaola, Hatton, and Barnett signals continuity and renewal for the Residual Special Court. It underscores the enduring relevance of international justice mechanisms in addressing the legacies of conflict. For Sierra Leone, the Court remains a symbol of accountability and reconciliation. For Kenya, Lenaola's leadership represents a proud moment of international recognition. For the world, it is a reminder that justice, though slow, remains relentless.

Justice Lenaola's election is not just a victory for one man, but a reaffirmation that the pursuit of justice knows no borders.

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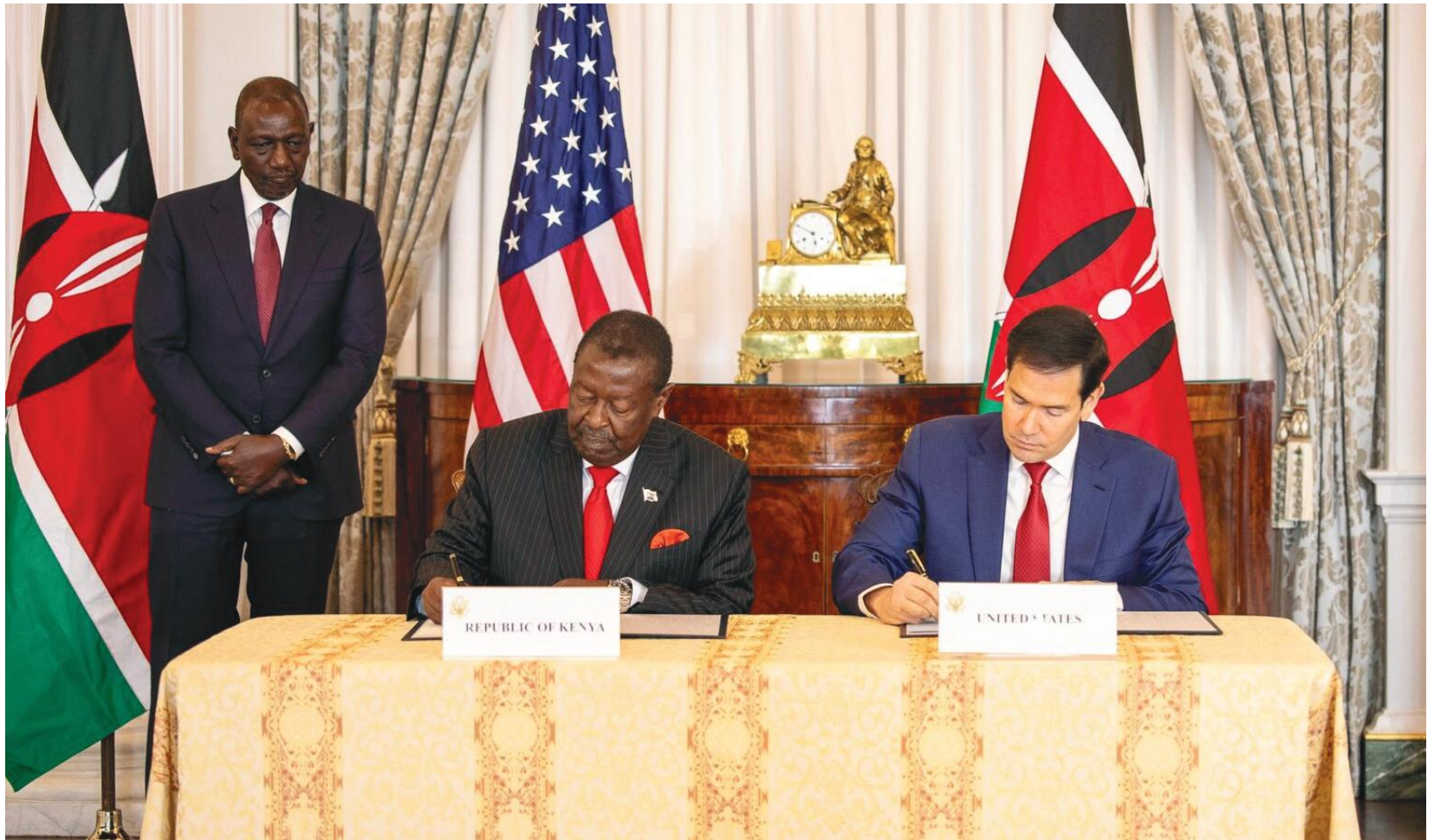
OPINION

Kenya must act now, not celebrate too early

By: Pankaj Bedi
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Worth Noting:

- Equally commendable was the role played by the Kenyan Embassy in Washington, which represented Kenya with clarity, urgency, and professionalism during a complex and time-sensitive process. Their engagement ensured that Kenya's position was articulated credibly and forcefully. That collective effort matters. It signals seriousness, intent, and credibility.
- But it must also be said candidly and responsibly: AGOA's extension only buys time. It does not buy competitiveness.
- The extension has temporarily calmed the market. Buyers who were cancelling orders have paused. Factories have avoided abrupt shutdowns. Jobs have been protected, but for now. However, apparel manufacturing does not operate quarter to quarter. It operates on seasonal order cycles.
- In a matter of months, as buyers place orders for the next season, the same questions will return with greater urgency: Is Kenya cost-competitive? Is it structurally viable? Can it sustain scale beyond short-term preference windows?



The agreement—signed during a ceremony witnessed by President William Ruto—marks the first time the long-standing Kenya-US health partnership is being anchored in formal, legally binding frameworks/PCS

First, let us give credit where it is due. The Government of Kenya, and particularly President William Ruto, deserves recognition for the decisive diplomatic engagement that helped secure the temporary extension of AGOA. At a critical moment, the President clearly deployed political capital in Washington, preventing immediate disruption to export orders and safeguarding thousands of jobs. Equally commendable was the role played by the Kenyan Embassy in Washington, which represented Kenya with clarity, urgency, and professionalism during a complex and time-sensitive process. Their engagement ensured that Kenya's position was articulated credibly and forcefully. That collective effort matters. It signals seriousness, intent, and credibility. But it must also be said candidly and responsibly: AGOA's extension only buys time. It does not buy competitiveness. The extension has temporarily calmed the market. Buyers who were cancelling orders have paused. Factories have avoided abrupt shutdowns. Jobs have been protected, but for now. However, apparel manufacturing does not operate quarter to quarter. It operates on seasonal order cycles. In a matter of months, as buyers place orders for the next season, the same questions will return with greater urgency: Is Kenya cost-

competitive? Is it structurally viable? Can it sustain scale beyond short-term preference windows? If these questions remain unanswered, today's relief will give way to renewed panic, followed by quiet disengagement. The global trade environment has shifted again, and not in Kenya's favour. Bangladesh has now been granted zero-tariff access for apparel exports into the United States. Kenya, outside AGOA certainty, faces tariffs of around 10 percent. This is not a marginal difference. It is decisive. Bangladesh is already approximately 20 percent cheaper than Kenya at the factory gate, driven by scale, lower financing costs, logistics efficiency, energy pricing, and a mature manufacturing ecosystem. Add a 10 percent tariff disadvantage, and Kenyan apparel becomes commercially unviable for long-term sourcing programs. In that context, AGOA's duty-free access, while valuable, becomes insufficient on its own. Buyers respond to arithmetic, not sentiment. As panic around Bangladesh subsidies and tariff parity returns, buyers will gravitate back to familiar, lower-cost ecosystems. Kenya risks becoming an opportunity-buy market, used intermittently rather than strategically. That is not how sustainable industries are built. Kenya's challenge is not effort or intent. It is structure.

Despite repeated acknowledgement at the highest policy levels that Kenya carries a roughly 20 percent structural cost disadvantage, meaningful, coordinated cost-mitigation has yet to materialize. Energy, logistics, financing, compliance overheads, and operational inefficiencies continue to erode competitiveness. Even with AGOA or a reciprocal trade agreement, an expensive producer cannot win consistently. Market access creates opportunity, but only competitiveness converts opportunity into growth. This reality is already visible in Kenya's performance in the European Union market, where competitors such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Egypt in North Africa enjoy duty-free access, deeper supply ecosystems, and faster speed-to-market than Kenya currently offers. Trade policies can change overnight, but cost structures do not. Despite goodwill, diplomacy, and policy intent, Kenya's apparel exports have remained largely stagnant for nearly a decade, placing the country toward the lower end of African export performance. This stagnation persists even as peer African countries have expanded capacity, diversified buyers, and strengthened industrial ecosystems. The implication is clear: preferences alone do not build industries. Competitiveness does.

President Ruto has consistently emphasized job creation, particularly for the youth. Export-driven manufacturing remains one of the few sectors capable of delivering large-scale, formal employment across skill levels. Global supply chains are being reconfigured. Trade tensions have opened a window, and new investors are exploring alternatives beyond traditional hubs. But the line between companies coming and failing versus coming and prospering is thin. Even long-established firms are under strain. Kenya must offer not just market access, but a foundation for growth, not survival. If Kenya is to convert this moment into durable industrial growth, three priorities must move urgently from discussion to execution. First, Kenya must continue pushing for a long-term AGOA extension, with rules of origin remaining unchanged. Predictability is essential for buyer confidence, supply-chain planning, and investment decisions. Second, Kenya should aggressively pursue reciprocal trade agreements delivering zero-tariff access while preserving AGOA-equivalent rules of origin. In an increasingly transactional global trade environment, reciprocal arrangements may receive greater priority. This could work to Kenya's advantage. As a first mover, Kenya can

attract new investments across multiple export-oriented sectors, positioning itself as a strategic manufacturing hub rather than a temporary alternative. Third, and most critically, Kenya must decisively reduce the 20 percent structural cost disadvantage faced by export manufacturers. No trade framework can substitute for competitiveness. Kenya does not lack intent, opportunity, or goodwill. What it needs now is speed, coordination, execution, and bold decision-making. The shift from slow, incremental growth to an aggressive export-led strategy requires decisions that only the President can take. This is a moment for President Ruto to act boldly and decisively, resetting the growth trajectory and giving wings to export-driven manufacturing. Because in global manufacturing, countries do not lose relevance suddenly. They lose it gradually, season by season, order by order, while believing they still have time. That time is now.

The writer is the Apparels Manufacturers and Exporters (EPZ) Sector Chair and a Board Member of Kenya Association of Manufacturers and can be reached at info@kam.co.ke.

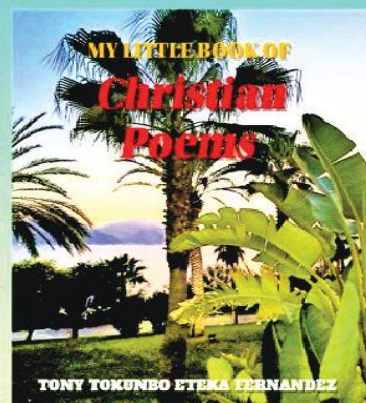
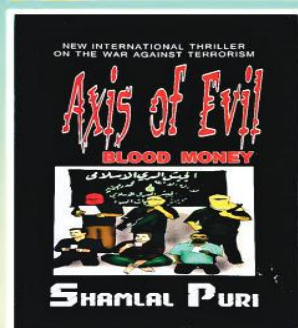
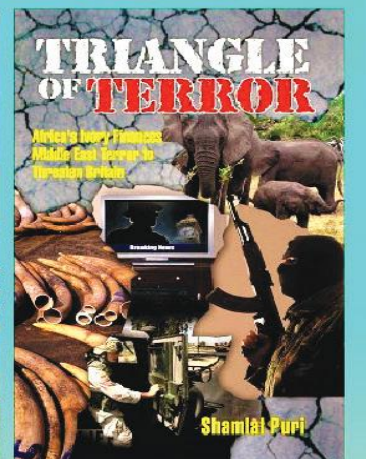
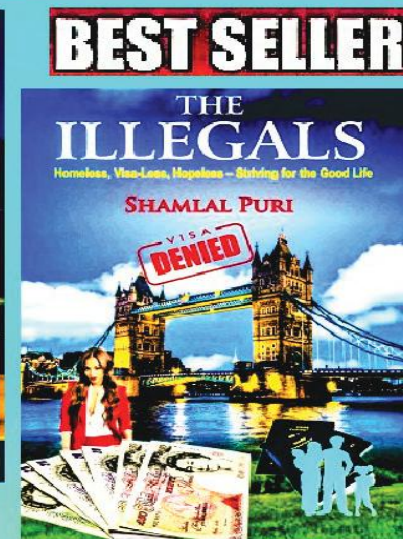
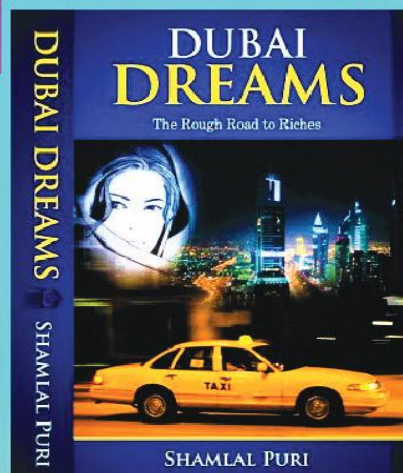
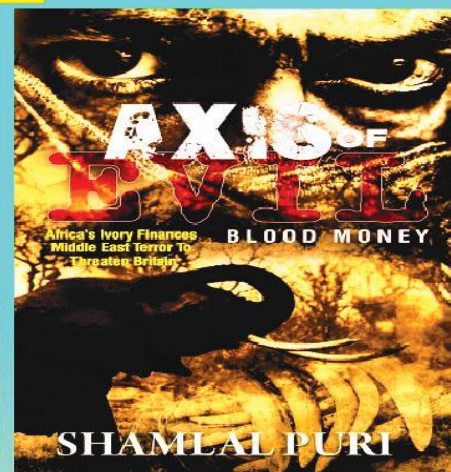
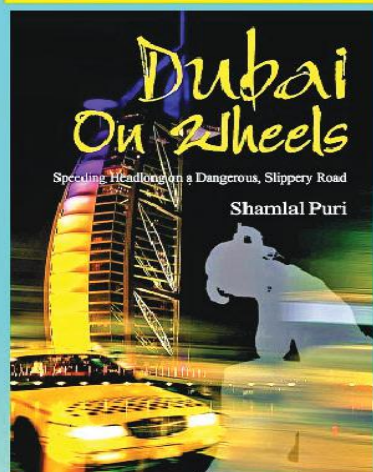
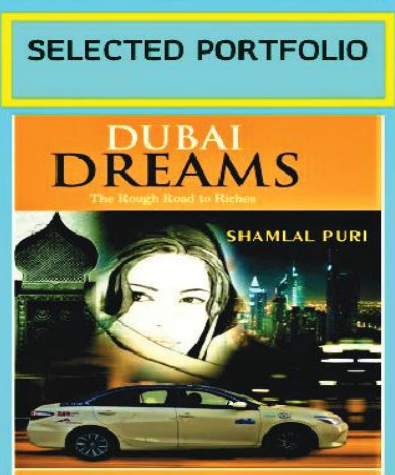
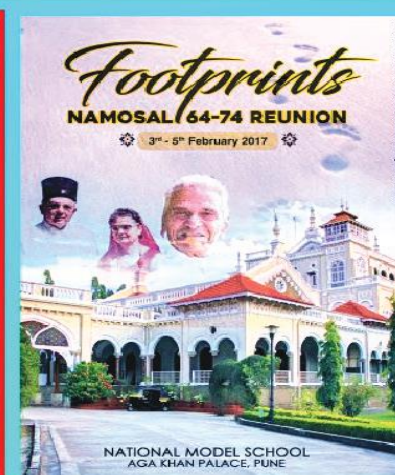
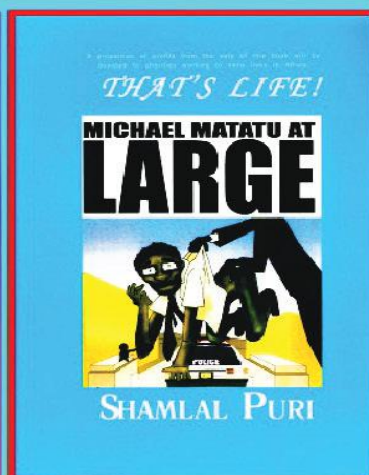
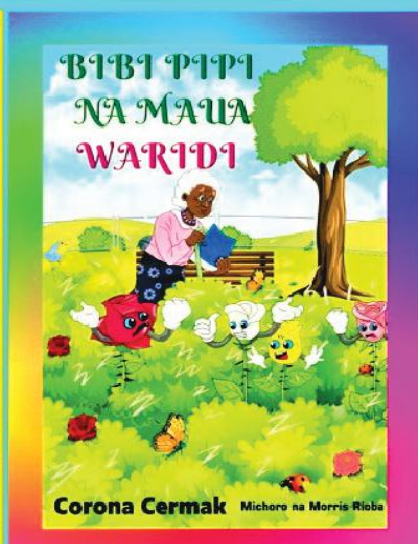
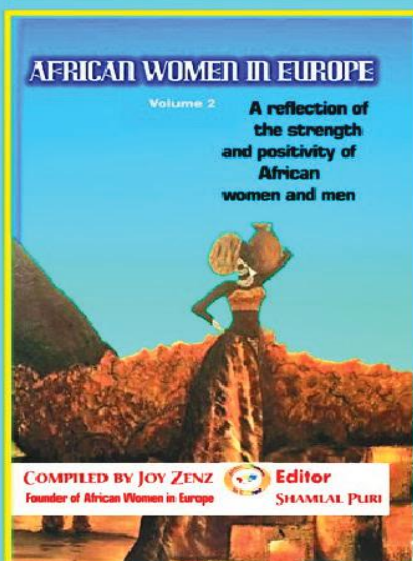
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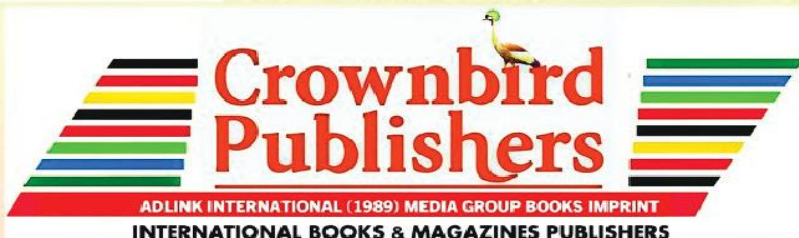
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African News

What's in a Name?:**Africa's Long War Against Colonial Identity**

By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

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Worth Noting:

• When European powers convened at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 to divide Africa among themselves, they did something that history books sometimes reduce to the drawing of arbitrary lines on a map. But they did something more insidious than that, too: they named what they took. They named it after themselves, after their rivers, after their ambitions, after their heroes. The act of naming was the act of claiming. It was a way of saying: this place is now ours, and we will call it what we like.

• Southern Rhodesia was named for Cecil John Rhodes - a man who once declared his ambition to paint the entire map of Africa British red, who built his fortune on the forced labor of African miners, and who openly stated his belief in the racial inferiority of Black Africans.

This is what a name can do

The story of Africa's post-independence renamings is, at its core, a story about power - about who gets to define a people, who writes history into the landscape, and what it costs, in dignity and in solidarity, when those definitions are imposed from the outside. Across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, African nations have engaged in a sustained and deliberate act of self-redefinition, stripping away the labels applied by colonial powers and replacing them with names drawn from ancient kingdoms, indigenous languages, and the geography of the land itself. These were not bureaucratic exercises. They were political declarations, cultural reclamations, and, in many cases, acts of profound courage.

To understand why these renamings mattered - and why they continue to matter - you have to understand what colonial names were designed to do in the first place.

The Violence of Naming

When European powers convened at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 to divide Africa among themselves, they did something that history books sometimes reduce to the drawing of arbitrary lines on a map. But they did something more insidious than that, too: they named what they took. They named it after themselves, after their rivers, after their ambitions, after their heroes. The act of naming was the act of claiming. It was a way of saying: this place is now ours, and we will call it what we like. Southern Rhodesia was named for Cecil John Rhodes - a man who once declared his ambition to paint the entire map of Africa British red, who built his fortune on the forced labor of African miners, and who openly stated his belief in the racial inferiority of Black Africans. To live in a country named after such a man was not merely an inconvenience. It was a daily inscription of subjugation, a reminder, built into the very geography of identity, that this land had been claimed by someone who despised its people.

Gold Coast was named for what Britain extracted from



it. German South West Africa was named for who owned it. Upper Volta was named for a river feature of interest to French administrators. Dahomey was named after a specific kingdom, but in a way that fragmented and regionalized a far more complex political landscape. In each case, the name erased what had been there before: the civilizations, the empires, the trade routes, the languages, the centuries of history that preceded the arrival of European ships.

The Kenyan novelist and scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argued that colonialism's deepest wound was not physical but linguistic - that by controlling the language through which people understood the world, colonial powers could control how colonized people understood themselves. Place names are the most visible expression of this. They are the language of belonging, the words through which people assert: I am from here, and here has a name that I gave it.

The First Salvo: Ghana and the Grammar of Independence

On March 6, 1957, Kwame Nkrumah stood before a crowd of tens of thousands in Accra and announced that the Gold Coast was free. But he did not announce it as the Gold Coast. He an-

nounced it as Ghana.

The choice was both historical and political. The ancient Ghana Empire, which flourished between roughly the 6th and 13th centuries in what is now parts of modern Mali and Mauritania, was one of the great trading civilizations of medieval West Africa. It was not geographically identical to the modern state that adopted its name - a fact that critics pointed out at the time, and continue to point out - but that was almost beside the point. Nkrumah was not making a claim of direct territorial succession. He was making a statement about cultural depth, about civilizational continuity, about the fact that African history did not begin with European colonization.

Ghana set the template. Here was a newly independent nation refusing to define itself by its colonial export economy - the gold it had given to British merchants - and instead reaching back across centuries to claim a richer, older, more dignified heritage. It was an act that rippled outward across the continent, inspiring leaders and liberation movements who were watching carefully.

Pan-Africanism, the movement that Nkrumah championed more forcefully than perhaps any other leader of his era, held that African peoples shared a common struggle and a common des-

tiny - that the borders drawn by Europeans were artificial impositions that should not define African solidarity. Naming Ghana after a pan-regional ancient empire was an expression of exactly that philosophy: an insistence that African identity transcended the particular territories colonial powers had carved out.

Zimbabwe: Reclaiming the Ruins

When European explorers first encountered the Great Zimbabwe ruins in the 19th century, they faced a problem. The ruins - an extraordinary complex of stone enclosures and towers, built without mortar, spread across a hilltop and valley in the southern African interior - were clearly the work of a sophisticated and powerful civilization. But the prevailing ideology of the time insisted that Black Africans were incapable of such achievement. The solution, for many colonial commentators, was to attribute the ruins to Phoenicians, Arabs, or lost white tribes - anyone, in short, except the ancestors of the people who actually lived there.

It was not until the 20th century that archaeologists established definitively what the indigenous Shona people had always known: that Great Zimbabwe was built by their ancestors, beginning around the 11th

century, reaching its peak between the 13th and 15th centuries as the capital of a powerful kingdom that controlled the gold trade across a vast region. The ruins were, in the most literal sense, proof of African civilizational achievement - and colonial ideology had spent decades trying to explain them away.

When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the choice of name was therefore not just symbolic but polemical. It was a repudiation of the colonial lie about African history. It said: this civilization existed, it was ours, and our country carries its name. The transition from Rhodesia - a name that honored one of the most aggressive architects of colonial dispossession - to Zimbabwe was among the most charged renamings in African history, and among the most eloquent.

Robert Mugabe's subsequent trajectory - the corruption, the violence, the economic ruin that unfolded in the decades after independence - has complicated the narrative in painful ways. But the renaming itself, the gesture of reaching to the ancient ruins on the hilltop and saying this is who we are, remains resonant. Names outlast leaders. Zimbabwe will still be Zimbabwe long

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after the politics of its 20th century have faded into historical footnote.

Burkina Faso: The Name as Manifesto

Of all the renamings in African history, Thomas Sankara's transformation of Upper Volta into Burkina Faso in 1984 is perhaps the most philosophically audacious. Other leaders reached into the past to find a name - an ancient empire, a geographic feature, a forgotten kingdom. Sankara reached into the future. He named his country not for what it had been, but for what he wanted it to become.

Burkina Faso draws from two languages - Mooré and Dioula, the two most widely spoken indigenous languages in the country. Burkina means "people of integrity" or "upright people" in Mooré. Faso means "fatherland" in Dioula. The synthesis was deliberate: it honored linguistic plurality in a country of more than sixty ethnic groups, and it inscribed a moral vision into the national identity. The citizens of Burkina Faso were, by the very name of their country, people of integrity.

Sankara himself was one of the most extraordinary political figures of the 20th century - a man who refused a presidential salary, required his ministers to travel economy class, banned the use of government cars for personal use, and launched a nationwide literacy and vaccination campaign simultaneously. He was assassinated in 1987, at the age of 37, almost certainly with the involvement of his former ally Blaise Compaoré, who seized power and reversed many of Sankara's policies. But he could not reverse the name. Burkina Faso remained.

There is something quietly powerful about that fact. A name, once it takes root in a population's consciousness, becomes nearly impossible to uproot. It is spoken by children before they understand its politics, written on birth certificates, inscribed in passports, chanted at football matches. Whatever happens to the leader who chose it, the name persists. In this sense, renaming is one of the most durable acts a political leader can perform.

Namibia, Tanzania, Benin: Three Different Paths to the Same Destination

Not all renamings followed the same logic. The journey to Namibia, for instance, was not about ancient empires or moral manifestos - it was about connection to the land itself. The Namib Desert, from which the country takes its name, is one of the oldest deserts on Earth, stretching along the Atlantic coast in a landscape of extraordinary, otherworldly beauty. For a country that had spent decades defined by foreign ownership - first German, then South African - the adoption of a name drawn from the desert's own Nama language was a gesture of rootedness. We are this land. This land is ancient. We are ancient too.

Namibia's path to independence was particularly brutal. Under German colonial rule, the territory was the site of what historians now recognize as the first genocide of the 20th century: the systematic extermination of the Herero and Nama peoples between 1904 and 1908, in which an estimated 65,000-80,000 Herero and 10,000 Nama were killed. South Africa's subsequent apartheid with the same viciousness it applied at home. Against this backdrop, the adoption of a name in 1990 that came from the land itself - not from the people who had briefly and violently claimed ownership of it - carried a particular dignity. Tanzania's renaming tells a different story: one of construction rather than reclamation. When Tanganyika and Zanzibar united in 1964, neither name could absorb the other without implying dominance. The solution was a neologism - Tanzania, a portmanteau that encoded the union in its very syllables. It was a name that did not reach back but looked forward, insisting on a shared future for two distinct histories. The pragmatism of it was, in its own way, sophisticated: rather than forcing one identity onto another, the country invented a new identity that belonged to both.

Benin's renaming in 1975 from Dahomey illustrates yet another dimension of the project: the attempt to use a name to transcend ethnic division. Dahomey was historically associated with

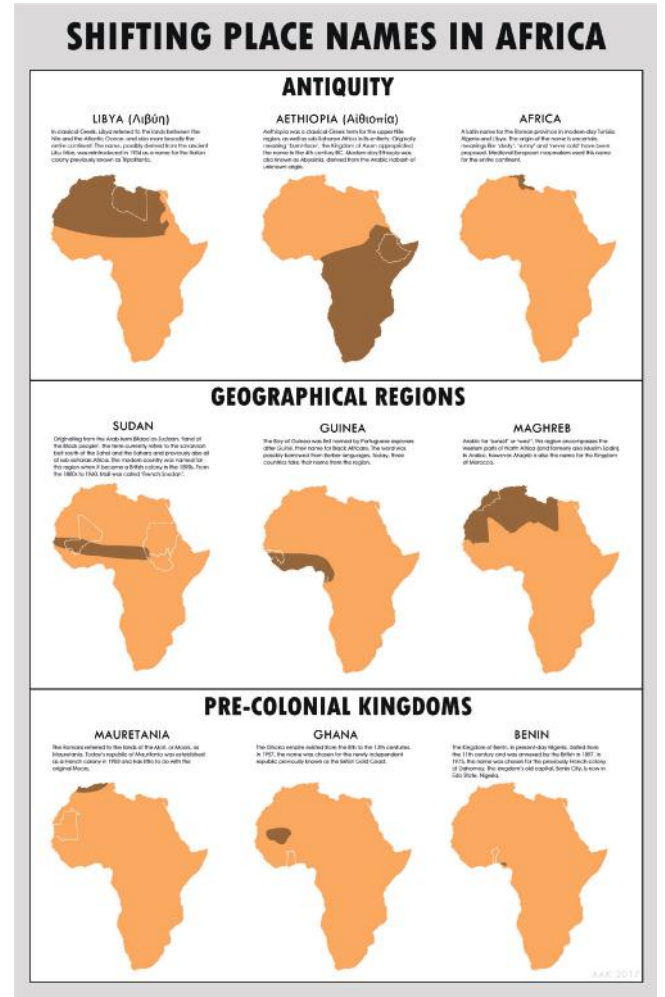
the Fon people and the powerful Dahomey Kingdom, but the modern state contained many other ethnic groups for whom that name carried no particular resonance - or worse, carried associations of historical domination. The Kingdom of Benin, which flourished in what is now southern Nigeria, was a broader cultural reference that could serve as a more inclusive symbol. The choice was not without its own complications - the Benin Kingdom was in Nigeria, not in the country that adopted its name - but it reflected a genuine attempt to find a name that could hold a diverse nation together.

The Assertion of Sovereignty: Côte d'Ivoire and the Politics of Translation

In 1986, the government of Côte d'Ivoire took a step that was less dramatic than its neighbors' full renamings but no less pointed: it formally requested that the world stop translating its name. The country, which had long been known in English as "Ivory Coast," in German as "Elfenbeinküste," and in various other languages as their respective translations of the same colonial-era designation, demanded that the French name - and only the French name - be used in all international contexts.

The move was an assertion of sovereignty over representation: a refusal to allow other countries to mediate national identity through their own linguistic frameworks. The insistence was taken seriously enough that the United Nations eventually adopted it, and international organizations gradually fell into line. The lesson was not lost on observers: a country has the right to be called what it calls itself, and other nations' convenience does not override that right. This may seem like a small thing. It is not. The practice of translating foreign names is a residue of the colonial era's assumption that the languages and naming conventions of European powers were the universal standard to which others should be adapted. The Côte d'Ivoire insistence was a crack in that assumption - small, but real.

Eswatini and the Long Tail of Decolonization



When King Mswati III announced in 2018 that Swaziland would henceforth be known as Eswatini - meaning "Land of the Swazis" in siSwati - some international commentators treated it as a curiosity, a royal whim, a story for the back pages. This reaction itself revealed something: a persistent tendency in Western media to treat African political gestures as eccentric rather than meaningful, to apply a condescension that would never be used for, say, a European nation's constitutional amendment. The renaming was straightforward in its logic. "Swaziland" is an anglicization of the country's name - a rendering in the language of the colonizer rather than the language of the people. Eswatini is simply what the Swazi people call their home in their own language. The change was an assertion that the country's official international identity should correspond to how its people actually speak of it - a position that is difficult to argue against, whatever one thinks of Mswati's governance in other respects. Eswatini's renaming is a reminder that decolonization is not a historical event with a fixed end date. It is an ongoing process, working its way through institutions, languages, maps, and names at an uneven pace. In 2018, more than half a century

after most of Africa's independence declarations, a nation was still completing the work of making its name its own.

A Global Phenomenon: Africa Was Not Alone

It is worth stepping back from the African context to note that the impulse to reclaim one's name is not culturally specific. It is, in fact, one of the most consistent features of the post-colonial condition worldwide. Persia became Iran in 1935 - not under colonial pressure, since Iran was never formally colonized, but under a nationalist government's drive to assert a distinct civilizational identity, differentiating the country from the orientalist associations that the name "Persia" had accumulated in the Western imagination. Ceylon became Sri Lanka in 1972, reasserting Sinhalese cultural identity after independence from Britain. Burma became Myanmar in 1989, though that particular renaming was contested internationally because it was imposed by a military junta, raising questions about who has the legitimate authority to rename a nation. The Myanmar case is instructive precisely because

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Worth Noting:

- Gold Coast was named for what Britain extracted from it. German South West Africa was named for who owned it. Upper Volta was named for a river feature of interest to French administrators. Dahomey was named after a specific kingdom, but in a way that fragmented and regionalized a far more complex political landscape. In each case, the name erased what had been there before: the civilizations, the empires, the trade routes, the languages, the centuries of history that preceded the arrival of European ships.
- The Kenyan novelist and scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argued that colonialism's deepest wound was not physical but linguistic - that by controlling the language through which people understood the world, colonial powers could control how colonized people understood themselves. Place names are the most visible expression of this. They are the language of belonging, the words through which people assert: I am from here, and here has a name that I gave it.

GRIEF

Johanna Ngeno: A Voice Silenced, A Legacy Echoing Through the Hills

Emurua Dikirr MP Johanna Ngeno's final hours before the fatal Mosop helicopter crash were spent much as many of his days had been—immersed in the lives of his constituents, attending public events, and responding to community concerns with the energy that had defined his three-term tenure.

By: DTG Correspondents
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Worth Noting:

• His last public appearance was celebratory, joining residents in Kapkugo, Tulwop Kony, and Endeless to honor musician Kim Kim's 35 years in entertainment, a reminder of his constant presence in community milestones. Hours earlier, he had posted a video from the helicopter over the Mara River, standing in solidarity with families searching for loved ones swept away by floodwaters. "My heart goes out to the families affected as they endure this painful and uncertain moment," he wrote, words that now carry haunting resonance. Just a day before, he presided over bursary allocations in Ilkerin Ward, continuing his long-standing commitment to education—a cause that defined much of his political career.

• Born in Narok County in 1972, raised in modest rural surroundings, Ngeno's journey from Mogondo Primary School to Maseno National School, then to Ukraine for international law studies, and later to Mount Kenya University and the University of Nairobi for advanced degrees, reflected a relentless pursuit of knowledge.

Emurua Dikirr MP Johanna Ngeno's final hours before the fatal Mosop helicopter crash were spent much as many of his days had been—immersed in the lives of his constituents, attending public events, and responding to community concerns with the energy that had defined his three-term tenure. The tragedy that claimed his life alongside six others in Chepkiep, Mosop Constituency, Nandi County, sent shockwaves across Narok and reverberated through Parliament, where Ngeno had carved a reputation as an outspoken, visible, and deeply engaged legislator. His last public appearance was celebratory, joining residents in Kapkugo, Tulwop Kony, and Endeless to honor musician Kim Kim's 35 years in entertainment, a reminder of his constant presence in community milestones. Hours earlier, he had posted a video from the helicopter over the Mara River, standing in solidarity with families searching for loved ones swept away by floodwaters. "My heart goes out to the families affected as they endure this painful and uncertain moment," he wrote, words that now carry haunting resonance. Just a day before, he presided over bursary allocations in Ilkerin Ward, continuing his long-standing commitment to education—a cause that defined much of his political career. Born in Narok County in 1972, raised in modest rural surroundings, Ngeno's journey from Mogondo Primary School to Maseno National School, then to Ukraine for international law studies, and later to Mount Kenya University and the University of Nairobi for advanced degrees, reflected a relentless pursuit of knowledge. His admission as an advocate of the High Court in September 2025 was a personal triumph, yet his public service had already left indelible marks. Before entering Parliament in 2013, he served as a director at the Agricultural Development Corporation, later winning re-election in 2017 and 2022, consolidating his base in Emurua Dikirr. In

the National Assembly, he was a fixture on committees ranging from Justice and Legal Affairs to Public Investments, and at the time of his death, chaired the Housing Committee. His emphasis on education—school transport initiatives, bursary expansions, and grassroots support—was widely credited with improving attendance in remote areas. Yet his career was not without controversy. In 2020, amid tensions over Mau Forest evictions, he was arrested for remarks deemed inflammatory, though later released on bond. Even then, he positioned himself as a bridge-builder, advocating for dialogue in disputes and pressing for security in volatile border regions. His sudden death has prompted tributes across the political spectrum. President William Ruto mourned him as "a dedicated servant of the people whose voice in Parliament was always for the ordinary mwananchi." Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua added, "Johanna was fearless, sometimes fiery, but always grounded in the needs of his people." Opposition leader Raila Odinga reflected, "We may have disagreed on many issues, but his passion for his constituency and his courage in debate were undeniable." In Parliament, colleagues spoke with raw emotion. One MP noted, "He was the kind of legislator who never missed a chance to speak up, whether on education, security, or development. His absence will be felt in every debate." Members of the public echoed similar sentiments, recalling his accessibility and willingness to attend even the smallest community gathering. "He was one of us," a resident of Emurua Dikirr said. "He never forgot where he came from." His life story is one of resilience and determination, rising from rural Narok to the national stage, never losing sight of the grassroots. His advocacy for education was not abstract policy but lived reality, ensuring children in remote villages had buses to take them to school and bursaries to keep them enrolled. His insistence on



Emurua Dikirr MP Johanna Ngeno

security was not political rhetoric but a response to real fears of cross-border clashes. His controversies, too, were part of his authenticity—he spoke with passion, sometimes too sharply, but always with conviction. The tributes from leaders across divides underscore the rare quality of his political presence: respected even by rivals, admired even by critics. His final hours, spent in solidarity with grieving families and in celebration with his community, encapsulated the duality of his career—serious in service, joyful in presence. His legacy is layered: a man of education who believed in lifting children from poverty through opportunity, a man of law who believed in justice tempered with compassion, a man of politics who believed in speaking truth even when inconvenient. His journey from Mogondo Primary School to the High Court was not just personal—it was symbolic of the aspirations of count-

less young Kenyans who see in his story the possibility of rising beyond circumstance. His tenure at the Agricultural Development Corporation reflected his commitment to agriculture and rural livelihoods, and his parliamentary service reflected his belief in oversight and accountability. His chairmanship of the Housing Committee was a testament to his focus on shelter and dignity for ordinary citizens. His controversies, particularly around Mau Forest, revealed the tensions between conservation and livelihood, but his willingness to confront such issues head-on showed his courage. His advocacy for youth involvement in governance was consistent, urging young people to see themselves not as passive voters but as active shapers of destiny. His sudden death leaves a vacuum, but also a challenge: to continue the work he began, to honor the causes he championed, and to remember the lessons of his life.

The editorial truth is stark: Johanna Ngeno's life was a tapestry of triumphs, controversies, and relentless service, woven together by a commitment to his people. His final hours, spent in solidarity and celebration, encapsulated the essence of his career—always present, always vocal, always engaged. His legacy will endure not in the halls of Parliament alone, but in the classrooms he supported, the roads he advocated for, and the communities he stood beside. The closing line must be as sharp as the opening: Johanna Ngeno's voice may be silenced, but the echoes of his service will continue to shape the hills and valleys of Narok and beyond.

African News

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it is complicated. It demonstrates that renaming, like any political act, is not automatically progressive simply by virtue of invoking indigenous identity. The same symbolic vocabulary - reclaiming an ancient name, asserting cultural authenticity - can be deployed by democratic liberators and authoritarian regimes alike. Context matters. Legitimacy matters. And the question of which communities within a diverse nation are represented by the chosen name matters enormously.

This is a question that African renamings have not always answered satisfactorily. The adoption of names drawn from specific historical kingdoms - ancient Ghana, Great Zimbabwe, the Kingdom of Benin - has sometimes privileged particular ethnic or cultural narratives over others within the same modern state. The ancient Ghana Empire was primarily associated with the Soninke people, not with the Akan, Ewe, or Ga peoples who make up much of modern Ghana's population. Great Zimbabwe was built by ancestors of the Shona, but Zimbabwe is also home to the Ndebele and many other communities. These are not trivial tensions, and honest engagement with the history of African renaming requires acknowledging them.

The Limits of the Symbolic: When Renaming Is Not Enough

There is a critique of the renaming project that comes not from defenders of colonialism but from within the tradition of African political thought itself. Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's founding president and one of the most clear-eyed political thinkers the continent produced, was broadly supportive of African cultural reclamation but skeptical of gestures that substituted symbolism for substance. What use is a new name, the argument goes, if the economic structures of colonial extraction remain intact? If the land is still in the hands of a settler minority, if the terms of trade are still set by former colonial powers, if the hospitals lack medicine and the schools lack books - what does it matter what the country is called?

This is a serious challenge, and it deserves a serious answer. The answer is not that renaming solves structural problems - it does not, and no serious advocate of decolonization has ever claimed it does. The answer is that symbols are not separate from politics; they are part of politics. The psychological dimensions of colonialism - the internalized inferiority, the deference to European cultural standards, the sense that African history and heritage were sec-

ond-rate or absent - were real and damaging, and they required real responses. A name that says we were here, we built great things, and we will call ourselves what we call ourselves is a response to that damage, even if it is not the only response, and not sufficient on its own.

Frantz Fanon understood this dynamic with great precision. In his analysis of the colonial condition, he wrote about how colonialism does not merely exploit the body but colonizes the mind - instilling in the colonized a sense that their own culture, history, and identity are inferior to those of the colonizer. The work of decolonization, he insisted, was therefore partly psychological: it required the reclamation of pride, of heritage, of the capacity to see oneself as a full human being with a history worth honoring. Renaming, in this framework, is therapy as well as politics - a way of interrupting the colonial narrative that had been written into the landscape.

What Names Do: Identity, Recognition, and the International Stage

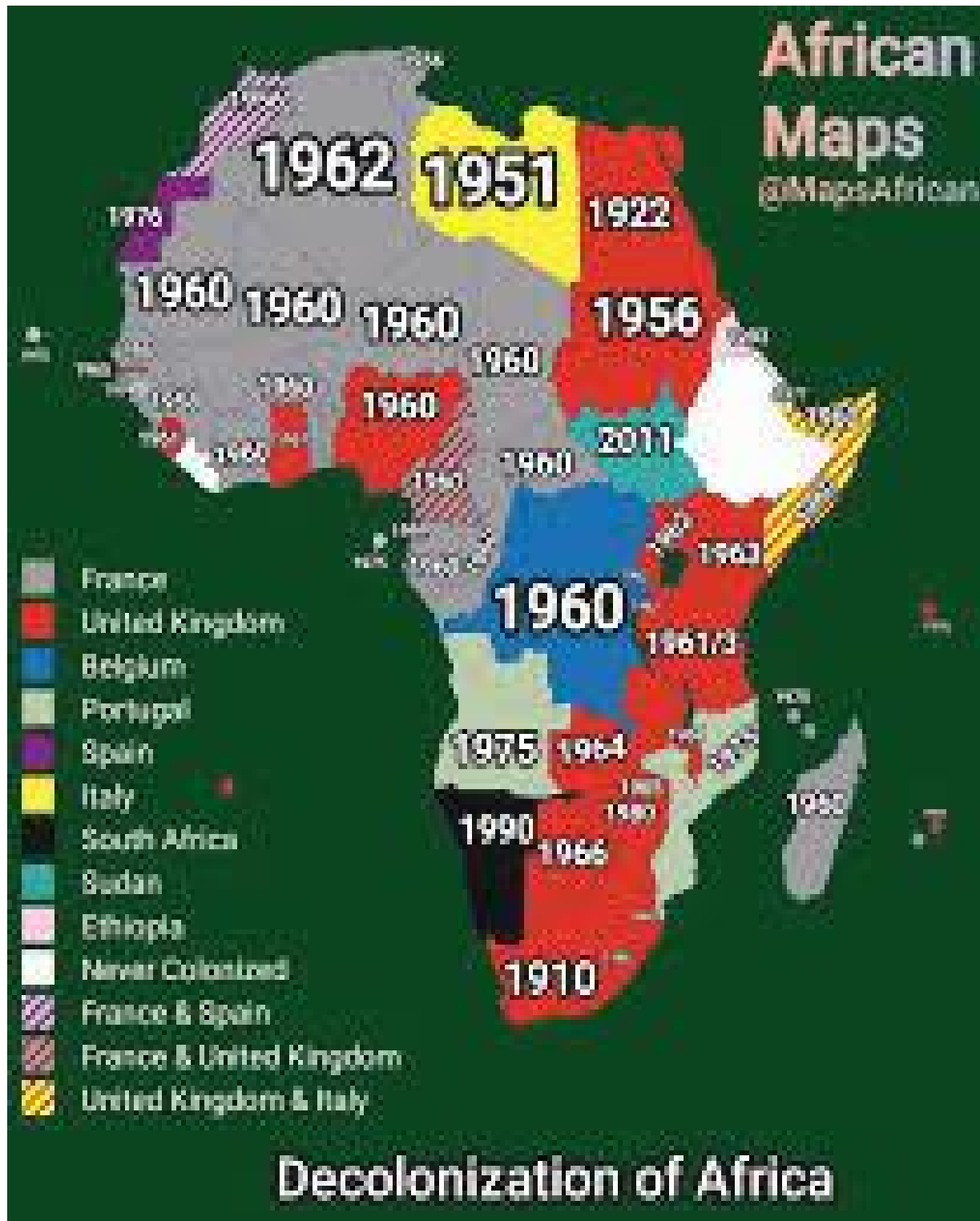
There is a moment, in the life of every newly renamed nation, when it takes its new name to the world - to the United Nations, to the African Union, to the diplomatic cables and trade agreements and international press. This moment is not trivial. It is, in a very literal sense, the moment when the nation introduces itself on its own terms.

International recognition of a name change is, in diplomatic terms, a form of respect. When the international community adopts a country's chosen name, it acknowledges that country's right to self-definition. When it refuses or drags its feet - as some former colonial powers did in response to African renamings - it is, deliberately or not, reasserting the colonial prerogative to define others. The French government's initial reluctance to use Burkina Faso, the British press's slow adoption of Zimbabwe, the persistent use of "Ivory Coast" in international media long after the government had formally objected: these were not innocent habits. They were the residue of an assumption that the names European powers had given to African territories were the "real" names, and that indigenous preferences were secondary.

That assumption has gradually eroded. The international press now uses Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, and Eswatini as a matter of course. United Nations documents use Côte d'Ivoire without translation. These may seem like small victories, but they are not: they represent a shift in the global understanding of who has the authority to name.

The Names We Carry Forward

In the summer of 2020, as protests erupted across the world in response



to the killing of George Floyd, statues of colonial figures began to fall. In Bristol, a statue of the slave trader Edward Colston was pulled from its plinth and thrown into the harbor. In Antwerp, a statue of King Leopold II - responsible for one of history's most atrocious colonial regimes in the Congo - was removed by the city. In the United States, monuments to Confederate generals came down across the South. Streets, schools, and public buildings named for slaveholders and colonizers were renamed.

These were not uniquely African debates. They were global debates, and they drew on exactly the same logic that had animated Africa's post-independence renamings decades earlier: the recognition that names matter, that the people and histories a community honors in its public spaces say something about what that community values, and that honoring the architects of oppression in the names of streets and schools sends a message - about whose pain counts, whose history matters, whose humanity is recog-

nized.

Africa, in this sense, was ahead of its time. The continent had been wrestling with these questions since the 1950s, finding its own answers, building its own vocabulary for the politics of naming. The world is now having the conversation that Africa began - and Africa's experience offers a body of evidence, a set of case studies, and a tradition of thought that the global debate would do well to engage seriously.

There will be those who argue, as there always are, that this is all distraction - that renaming buildings and countries does nothing for the poor, does nothing to close the wealth gap left by centuries of extraction, does nothing to dismantle the structural inequalities that colonialism built. They are right that names are not sufficient. They are wrong that names are irrelevant.

A name is where identity begins. It is the first thing a child learns about where they come from. It is the word that appears on passports and treaties and flags. It is the declaration a nation makes to the world about

who it is and what it values. When Thomas Sankara renamed his country Land of Upright People, he was not solving poverty. He was telling the people of Burkina Faso something about themselves - something they would carry with them into negotiations, into classrooms, into the long work of building a country.

That is not nothing. In the long history of colonialism's systematic effort to convince African peoples that their civilizations were minor, their histories brief, and their identities dependent on European definition, the act of naming oneself - clearly, loudly, and on one's own terms - is a form of resistance that should not be underestimated.

The Gold Coast is gone. Rhodesia is gone. German South West Africa is gone. Upper Volta is gone. In their place stand Ghana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Burkina Faso - names that belong to the people who live beneath them, drawn from their languages, their landscapes, and their histories. That, in the end, is what names are for.

WORLD

Designing Low-Latency Architectures for East African Users

Designing digital platforms that deliver fast, reliable and seamless experiences has become a defining challenge for technology companies worldwide.



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

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Worth Noting:

Latency, the delay between a user's action and the response from the server, is a critical performance metric for modern applications. For SaaS platforms and fintech systems, milliseconds matter. A payment authorisation request that takes too long to process can lead to transaction failures, abandoned interactions or degraded user trust. Real-time services such as fraud detection, trading platforms and collaborative SaaS tools require consistent sub-100ms round-trip times to feel responsive and reliable. Historically, these expectations have been shaped by experiences in markets with dense, high-capacity networks and extensive cloud infrastructure footprints closely situated to end-users.

In East Africa, however, much of the regional digital infrastructure has been shaped by decades of evolution from colonial-era networks and a reliance on international connectivity. While the picture is improving, many applications still depend on routing traffic to distant cloud regions in Europe or South Africa, where public cloud providers maintain their nearest large-scale data centres.



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In East Africa, however, much of the regional digital infrastructure has been shaped by decades of evolution from colonial-era networks and a reliance on international connectivity. While the picture is improving, many applications still depend on routing traffic to distant cloud regions in Europe or South Africa, where public cloud providers maintain their nearest large-scale data centres. Accessing infrastructure located thousands of kilometres away inherently increases round-trip times and can introduce jitter, inconsistent performance and reduced predictability, all of which

undermine user experience, particularly for fintech and SaaS use cases. Studies consistently show that leveraging local cloud and CDN nodes can slash latencies by up to 87% compared to relying on remote hubs outside the continent.¹

Undersea Cables and Regional Connectivity
A crucial part of the East African connectivity story is the role of undersea fibre-optic cables. Djibouti, in particular, has emerged as a major international gateway, hosting numerous submarine cable systems that link Africa with Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Systems such as EASSy and Asia-Africa-Europe 1 (AAE-1) deliver terabits of international bandwidth capacity, enabling network operators across the sub-region to connect to global traffic backbones with unprecedented capacity.²

The strategic importance of this connectivity cannot be overstated. For landlocked countries like Ethiopia, terrestrial fibre links from Djibouti are essential to bring international connectivity inland. Ethio Telecom's network, for example, now comprises some 23,000 km of fibre linking to submarine

cable landings, with significant capacity upgrades underway to support growing data traffic.³ For Tanzanian operators, landing points of EASSy and SEACOM along the coast in Dar es Salaam provide international access, reducing reliance on satellite or indirect routing that can dramatically increase latency.⁴

Nevertheless, relying solely on international links exposes regional applications to unavoidable latency penalties when services or data reside in distant cloud regions. The physical distance traffic must traverse, combined with variable routing through multiple network hops, can push round-trip times well above what more mature markets consider acceptable for real-time use cases.

Bringing Infrastructure Closer to Users

To achieve the low-latency performance that SaaS platforms and fintechs require, the underlying architecture must prioritise proximity between application logic, data storage and end users. This starts with local data centre deployment. Building cloud infrastructure facilities within or near the markets where users reside min-

imises the physical distance that data must travel. It also reduces dependency on international backhaul links for core service interactions. Wingu Africa's regional presence in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Tanzania reflects this approach. By establishing Tier III-certified carrier-neutral data centres and cloud nodes connected to both regional backbone networks and international submarine cables, the company creates strategic points of presence that can host application servers, cache frequently accessed content and support resilient networking. These facilities serve as local exchange and interconnection points, enabling SaaS and fintech platforms to run workloads nearer to their user base, thereby lowering latency and enhancing performance consistency.

Local infrastructure also facilitates more efficient content delivery and traffic management. Internet exchange points (IXPs), such as ADDIX in Addis Ababa hosted within Wingu's facilities, enable traffic to be exchanged between networks locally, rather than routing through distant transit hubs. This cuts down on unnecessary international

bandwidth use and reduces round-trip delays for intra-regional traffic.

Architectural Design Patterns for Low Latency

While physical proximity between users and infrastructure provides an essential foundation for low-latency performance, it must be reinforced by sound architectural decisions at both the application and network level. For SaaS and fintech platforms operating in East Africa, these design choices play a critical role in delivering consistent and responsive digital services.

A key consideration is the regional deployment of user-facing services. Hosting critical microservices and application endpoints within regional cloud nodes or edge locations reduces the distance data must travel, enabling faster response times. Where full localisation is not feasible, these components can synchronise asynchronously with central systems, ensuring performance at the user interface is not constrained by back-end processing.

Performance gains are fur-

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WORLD

Designing Low-Latency Architectures for East African Users

Designing digital platforms that deliver fast, reliable and seamless experiences has become a defining challenge for technology companies worldwide.

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Worth Noting:

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their strengthened through intelligent traffic routing and regional caching. By directing requests along optimal network paths and reducing unnecessary long-distance data transfers, platforms can achieve more predictable latency. Local caches and content delivery mechanisms are particularly effective for static assets and frequently accessed data, easing pressure on international links. Hybrid and multi-cloud architectures also support low-latency objectives by allowing organisations to place time-sensitive workloads on local infrastructure, while using global cloud platforms for less critical processing. This approach balances proximity with scalability and operational flexibility. Finally, observability and application design must account for network variability. Monitoring tools focused on network performance enable early identification of latency bottlenecks, while APIs and workflows designed with asynchronous processing ensure services remain responsive even when conditions fluctuate. Addressing these considerations early in the development lifecycle helps SaaS and fintech teams avoid

costly redesigns and deliver reliable performance as they scale.

Business and Competitive Impacts

The benefits of designing for low latency in East Africa extend beyond technical performance. For fintech platforms, faster transaction and API response times directly translate into improved conversion rates, reduced errors and heightened trust among users. Real-time analytics, fraud detection and market feeds become more reliable when network delays are minimised. For SaaS platforms offering collaboration tools, CRM systems or ERP solutions, responsiveness can be a deciding factor in customer satisfaction and retention. Latency also affects cost efficiency. Reducing reliance on distant cloud hubs can lower bandwidth transit costs, especially where international egress fees are significant. Local hosting enables companies to pay for infrastructure that is both closer and more aligned with their workflows, rather than incurring premium charges for international traffic. In Tanzania, for example, expanding local cloud and data hosting infrastructure

has been cited as a catalyst for startups, enterprises and government services to adopt more scalable digital operations.

The broader economic impact is tangible, too. East Africa's digital economy is on a growth trajectory, driven by rising mobile penetration, enterprise digitisation and fintech innovations. Investments in colocation, cloud infrastructure and network capacity underpin this growth, with projections showing significant expansion in public cloud markets across the region. Robust, low-latency digital infrastructure accelerates this trajectory by enabling more companies to launch and scale services with confidence.

Resilience and Future-Proofing

Designing for low latency also intersects with resilience and continuity planning. Network outages and submarine cable disruptions, while increasingly rare, can still significantly impact connectivity and performance. Building redundant paths, leveraging multiple undersea cable connections and diversifying network transit options can mitigate the impact of

such events. While recent cable disruptions have highlighted vulnerabilities in global route reliance, they also reinforce the value of local interconnection and infrastructure diversity in maintaining service continuity.

Looking forward, East Africa's digital infrastructure landscape is poised for continued evolution. Strategic projects such as the 2Africa cable system will vastly expand submarine capacity along Africa's coasts, further enhancing connectivity options for regional and international traffic.⁵ National digital transformation initiatives, such as Ethiopia's Digital Ethiopia 2030 strategy, emphasise the expansion of digital infrastructure and services, laying further groundwork for latency-optimised architectures to flourish.

Conclusion

For SaaS and fintech platforms targeting East African users, latency is not merely a technical metric but a core determinant of user experience, platform reliability and business competitiveness. Designing architectures that prioritise proximity through local hosting, intelligent network routing and per-

formance-aware application patterns can dramatically improve responsiveness, reduce costs and unlock new opportunities for innovation. By investing in carrier-neutral data centres, interconnection hubs and cloud environments across Djibouti, Ethiopia and Tanzania, are helping to lay the digital foundations that will power the next generation of services.

Nicholas Lodge, Co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer

America

Trump's Strike on Iran's Supreme Leader: A Middle East on Edge

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Worth Noting:

• The historical parallels are sobering. Analysts immediately recalled the U.S. drone strike that killed General Qassem Soleimani in January 2020, which triggered retaliatory strikes on American bases in Iraq and set the stage for years of heightened tension. The difference now is scale: Soleimani was a military commander, but Khamenei was the supreme leader, the symbolic and spiritual head of the Iranian state.

• Killing him is akin to decapitating the regime, a move unprecedented in modern geopolitics. Comparisons have also been drawn to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, which toppled Saddam Hussein but unleashed chaos that still destabilizes the region. The Gulf War of 1991 is another echo, when U.S. intervention reshaped Middle Eastern alliances and left scars that never fully healed. Each of these moments underscores the danger of believing that military strikes alone can secure peace.

The killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a U.S.-Israeli strike ordered by President Donald Trump has plunged the Middle East into its most dangerous moment in decades. Iranian state media confirmed his death, declaring, "To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return," while Trump insisted in a televised address that Khamenei was "one of the most evil people in history" and that his killing was "justice for the people of Iran." Within hours, Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks across Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, vowing that "the blood of our leader will not be shed in vain." The escalation has ignited fears of a regional war, with oil markets spiking, diplomatic channels scrambling, and ordinary citizens bracing for the fallout.

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Regional reactions reveal the depth of anxiety. Israel, a direct participant in the strike, reinforced its northern defenses. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared, "We will not allow Iran or its proxies to destabilize our borders." Saudi Arabia warned that "the region cannot afford a descent into full-scale war," while the UAE urged restraint, saying, "All parties must step back from the brink." Iraq, caught between U.S. mili-



Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

tary presence and Iranian influence, pleaded for calm, even as Tehran-aligned militias vowed revenge. Syria's government, long allied with Iran, proclaimed, "The martyrdom of Khamenei will ignite resistance across the region." Hezbollah in Lebanon echoed this, telling Al Jazeera, "This is not just Iran's fight; it is the fight of all oppressed peoples."

Western capitals reacted with alarm. The European Union urged de-escalation, warning that "a regional war would devastate global stability." The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary said, "This is a moment of grave danger; dialogue must prevail." Russia condemned the strike outright, calling it "a violation of international law and sovereignty," while China urged "restraint and respect for the principles of non-interference." The United States, however, doubled down, with Trump reiterating that "this operation was necessary to prevent a radical dictatorship from threatening peace and security."

For ordinary citizens across the region, the consequences are immediate. In Baghdad, residents expressed fear that their city could once again become a battlefield. In Beirut, families worried about Hezbollah's involvement dragging Lebanon deeper into conflict. In Riyadh and Dubai, concerns centered on economic fallout, with oil markets already spiking in response to the strikes. In Tehran, grief and anger mingled, with thousands gathering to mourn Khamenei and vow resistance. The editorial truth is sharp: the

killing of a supreme leader is not just a military act—it is a seismic political event. It raises questions about sovereignty, legality, and the future of diplomacy in a region already fraught with tension. The Middle East has long been a theater of proxy wars, shifting alliances, and fragile truces. This strike risks unraveling years of painstaking negotiations, from the Iran nuclear deal to regional security dialogues. It also risks emboldening extremist groups who thrive in chaos.

The voices of leaders capture the gravity of the moment. Trump's declaration that Khamenei was "evil" frames the strike as moral retribution. Iran's Revolutionary Guard countered with a vow: "We will strike at the heart of America's presence in the region." Netanyahu's insistence on security underscores Israel's readiness for prolonged confrontation. Saudi Arabia's warn-

ing highlights the fragility of regional peace. The EU's call for dialogue reflects the global fear of escalation. Russia's condemnation signals a geopolitical divide that could deepen. China's appeal for restraint reflects its growing stake in Middle Eastern stability, particularly through its Belt and Road investments.

The historical parallels deepen the editorial analysis. Soleimani's killing in 2020 showed how targeted assassinations can provoke retaliation without achieving long-term stability. The Iraq War demonstrated how regime change can unleash chaos. The Gulf War revealed how U.S. intervention reshapes alliances but leaves lingering instability. Each of these moments underscores the danger of believing that military strikes alone can secure peace. The killing of Khamenei may weaken Iran's leadership temporarily, but it risks galvanizing

resistance movements and destabilizing fragile states. It may embolden U.S. allies but also isolate Washington diplomatically. It may deter some aggressors but inspire others.

Economically, the impact is already visible. Oil prices surged by more than 10 percent in the immediate aftermath, with markets fearing disruption to Gulf exports. Shipping companies rerouted vessels away from the Strait of Hormuz, recalling the tanker wars of the 1980s. Refugee flows are expected to rise, with Iraq and Syria bracing for new waves of displacement. Global investors are watching nervously, aware that Middle Eastern instability often ripples into global recessions. The editorial must emphasize: peace in the Middle East is not just a regional concern—it is a global necessity.



U.S. President Donald Trump

The Diaspora Times Global



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Diaspora

The Ngungula Trade: Fuel Smuggling Between Angola and Namibia

The phenomenon of Namibians crossing into Angola to purchase cheaper fuel - and the subsequent illegal resale through “Ngungula” services - represents a complex intersection of economic pressures, regulatory frameworks, and technical considerations that affect both consumers and their vehicles.



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

Understanding the Cross-Border Fuel Economy

The phenomenon of Namibians crossing into Angola to purchase cheaper fuel - and the subsequent illegal resale through “Ngungula” services - represents a complex intersection of economic pressures, regulatory frameworks, and technical considerations that affect both consumers and their vehicles.

The Legal Framework: Why Ngungula is Illegal

Namibia's prohibition of informal fuel sales stems from several regulatory imperatives. The country's Petroleum Products and Energy Act governs the importation, storage, and distribution of petroleum products, establishing strict licensing requirements for anyone handling fuel commercially. These regulations exist for legitimate reasons: fuel is a hazardous substance requiring proper storage facilities, fire safety measures, and environmental protections that roadside vendors cannot provide.

When individuals transport fuel in containers from Angola for resale in Namibia, they violate multiple legal provisions. They bypass customs duties and taxes that fund national infrastructure, operate without the requisite business licenses, and create significant safety hazards by storing flammable materials in residential areas or vehicles. The Namibian government's enforcement actions - including imprisonment and substantial fines - reflect the seriousness with which authorities view these violations, not merely as revenue losses but as public safety threats.

Refinery Standards and Fuel Quality: The Technical Reality

The complaints about Angolan fuel damaging vehicle components merit serious technical examination. Fuel quality depends heavily on refinery processes and the specifications to which petroleum products are manufactured. Different countries maintain varying fuel standards, and these differences can have measurable

impacts on engine performance and longevity.

Modern fuel injection systems operate with remarkable precision, requiring clean fuel that meets specific standards for sulfur content, octane rating, water contamination, and particulate matter. When fuel falls below these specifications, several problems can emerge. High sulfur content accelerates corrosion in fuel systems and produces harmful emissions. Excessive water or sediment clogs fuel filters and can damage high-pressure injection pumps. Inconsistent octane ratings cause engine knocking and reduced efficiency.

Angola's fuel specifications historically differed from those in Namibia, which typically aligns its standards with South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) requirements or international specifications. The reported issues with injectors and fuel filters suggest potential concerns with filtration during refining, higher sulfur content, or contamination during storage and transport - problems that become compounded when fuel is stored improperly in makeshift containers for the Ngungula trade.

The informal nature of Ngungula exacerbates these quality concerns. Fuel transported in non-standard containers can pick up contaminants, experience temperature fluctuations that promote water condensation, and lack the careful handling that commercial distribution systems provide. What might be marginally acceptable fuel when properly dispensed at an Angolan service station becomes significantly degraded through informal transport and storage.

The Price Differential and Its Roots

The price gap driving this trade emerges from fundamental differences in how the two nations manage their petroleum sectors. Angola, as an OPEC member and significant oil producer, subsidizes fuel for domestic consumption, keeping prices artificially low despite the costs such subsidies impose on government budgets. Namibia, as a net fuel importer, prices petroleum products



to reflect international market rates plus taxes, transportation costs, and regulatory compliance expenses. This creates an economic arbitrage opportunity that border communities find compelling despite the legal risks. When the price difference reaches a certain threshold, some consumers rationally calculate that occasional purchases in Angola, or buying from Ngungula vendors, justify the savings even when factoring in potential fines or vehicle maintenance costs.

Pathways for Angola-Namibia Energy Cooperation

Rather than viewing this situation purely through an enforcement lens, both nations might benefit from exploring cooperative frameworks that address the underlying economic drivers while ensuring quality standards and regulatory compliance.

Joint Refinery Development

Namibia's recent offshore oil discoveries present an opportunity for regional cooperation. As Namibia develops its petroleum sector, partnerships with Angola - which possesses extensive refining experience - could yield mutual benefits. A joint refinery serving both markets could achieve economies of scale while harmonizing fuel specifications across the border region.

Harmonized Fuel Standards

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) provides an existing framework for regional standards harmonization. Angola and Namibia could work through SADC to align fuel specifications, ensuring that

products meeting Angolan standards also satisfy Namibian requirements. This would address the technical concerns about fuel quality while facilitating legitimate cross-border trade.

Border Fuel Zone Initiatives

Some countries with significant cross-border fuel price differentials have established special economic zones where fuel can be purchased at intermediate prices with simplified customs procedures. Such an arrangement along the Angola-Namibia border could reduce smuggling incentives while generating revenue for both governments and ensuring fuel quality through regulated dispensing facilities.

Information Sharing on Subsidy Reform

Angola has periodically attempted to reform its fuel subsidy system to reduce fiscal burdens. Namibia's experience managing an unsubsidized fuel market could inform these efforts, while Angola's production capabilities might eventually allow for export arrangements that benefit Namibian consumers through legitimate trade channels.

Recommendations for Stakeholders

For Namibian vehicle owners, the apparent savings from Ngungula fuel must be weighed against the real costs of potential vehicle damage, legal penalties, and the safety risks of storing fuel improperly. Even if Angolan fuel prices appear attractive, the total cost of ownership may favor using licensed Namibian service

stations that guarantee fuel quality and legal compliance.

For policymakers, pure enforcement approaches have proven insufficient to eliminate the trade. A comprehensive strategy should combine continued enforcement with efforts to narrow the price differential through regional cooperation, tax adjustments where fiscally possible, and public education about the technical risks of substandard fuel. For both nations, the current situation represents lost opportunity. The energy flowing informally across borders could instead support formal trade relationships, shared infrastructure development, and regional economic integration that benefits both countries' citizens while maintaining safety and quality standards.

Conclusion

The Ngungula phenomenon illustrates how economic pressures can drive people toward illegal activities despite genuine risks to their property and freedom. While enforcement remains necessary for public safety and revenue protection, sustainable solutions require addressing the underlying price differentials and quality concerns through regional cooperation. As Namibia develops its own petroleum resources and Angola continues evolving its energy sector, opportunities exist for partnerships that could transform this challenge into mutual benefit - replacing smuggling routes with legitimate trade channels that serve consumers, protect vehicles, and support both nations' development objectives.

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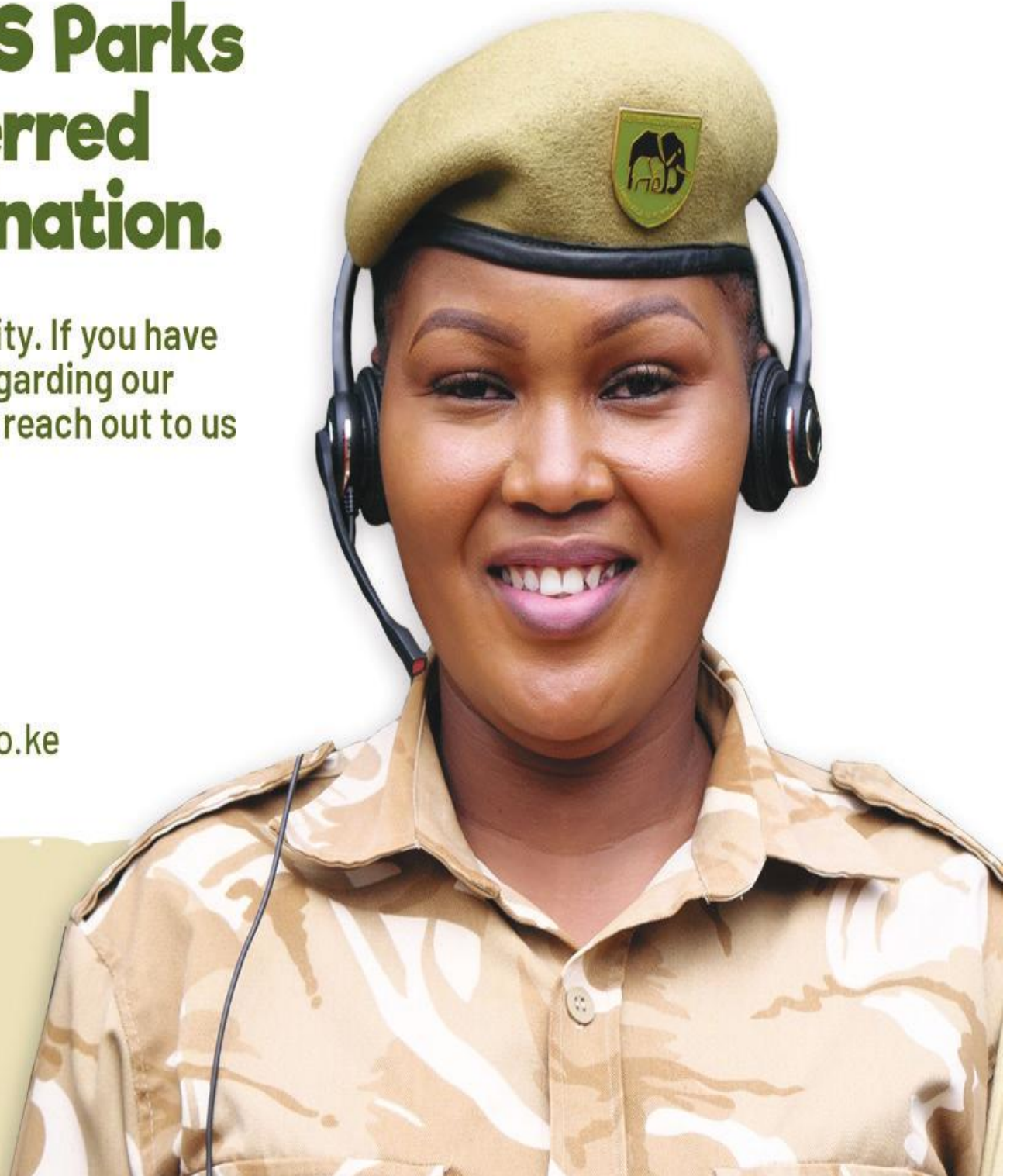
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Diaspora

DeepSeek's Nvidia Gamble Tests US Export Controls and Global AI Rivalry

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Worth Noting:

• The confirmation, first reported by Reuters, has already divided Washington policymakers. White House AI Czar David Sacks and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang argue that shipping advanced AI chips to China discourages competitors like Huawei from redoubling efforts to catch up with Nvidia and AMD. But China hawks warn that chips could easily be diverted from commercial uses to military applications, threatening U.S. dominance in artificial intelligence.

• "This shows why exporting any AI chips to China is so dangerous," said Chris McGuire, a former National Security Council official under President Joe Biden. "Given China's leading AI companies are brazenly violating U.S. export controls, we obviously cannot expect that they will comply with U.S. conditions that would prohibit them from using chips to support the Chinese military."

China's DeepSeek has trained its latest artificial intelligence model on Nvidia's most advanced chip, the Blackwell, despite a U.S. ban, according to senior Trump administration officials, in what could represent a direct violation of American export controls and a flashpoint in the intensifying technological rivalry between Washington and Beijing. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Blackwell chips were likely clustered at DeepSeek's data center in Inner Mongolia and that the company would attempt to remove technical indicators that might reveal their use. "We're not shipping Blackwells to China," the official stressed, underscoring U.S. policy that bars the export of Nvidia's crown jewel AI semiconductors to Chinese firms. Nvidia declined to comment, while the Commerce Department and DeepSeek did not respond to requests for clarification. The Chinese embassy in Washington countered sharply, saying Beijing opposes "drawing ideological lines, overstressing the concept of national security, expansive use of export controls and politicizing economic, trade, and technological issues."

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the Commerce Department currently bar shipments of Blackwell chips to China. In August, President Donald Trump briefly opened the door to Nvidia selling a scaled-down version of the Blackwell in China, but later reversed course, insisting the firm's most advanced chips should be reserved for U.S. companies. In December, Trump allowed Chinese firms to buy Nvidia's second most advanced chips, the H200, but shipments remain stalled over guardrails built into the approvals. "Chinese AI companies' reliance on smuggled Blackwells underscores their massive shortfall of domestically produced AI chips and why approvals of H200 chips would represent a lifeline," said Saif Khan, former director of technology and national security at the White House National Security Council.

The official declined to comment on whether the revelation would affect the administration's decision on H200 approvals, but added that DeepSeek's model likely relied on "distillation" of models made by leading-edge U.S. firms including Anthropic, Google, OpenAI, and xAI. Distillation involves having an older, more powerful AI model evaluate the quality of answers from a newer model, effectively

transferring the older model's learnings. Allegations of Chinese firms using U.S. models as training scaffolds have been raised before, with OpenAI and Anthropic warning that their intellectual property is being siphoned into rival systems. DeepSeek, based in Hangzhou, shook markets last year with AI models that rivaled some of the best offerings from the U.S., fueling concerns in Washington that China could catch up despite restrictions. The Information previously reported that DeepSeek had smuggled chips into China to train its next model, but Reuters' confirmation of U.S. government knowledge of Blackwell use at its Inner Mongolia facility has escalated the debate. The development underscores the difficulty of enforcing export controls in a globalized supply chain where chips can be diverted, resold, or smuggled.

The editorial lens must sharpen here: the DeepSeek case is not just about one company or one chip. It is about the future of global AI leadership, the credibility of U.S. export controls, and the balance between economic engagement and national security. The Blackwell chip represents the cutting edge of AI hardware, capable of training models with un-

precedented speed and efficiency. If Chinese firms are able to access it despite bans, the U.S. risks losing its technological edge. Yet restricting access too tightly could accelerate China's drive to develop domestic alternatives, potentially leading to a bifurcated global AI ecosystem.

The voices of leaders capture the tension. Trump's reversal on Blackwell exports reflects the political balancing act between commercial interests and security concerns. Nvidia's silence underscores the sensitivity of the issue for a company caught between its largest market and its home government. The Chinese embassy's denunciation frames the controls as politicization of trade. McGuire's warning highlights the security risks. Khan's analysis points to China's dependence on foreign chips. Together, these statements paint a picture of a world grappling with the implications of AI as both a commercial product and a strategic weapon.

The broader implications are profound. Energy markets, financial systems, and geopolitical alliances are increasingly shaped by AI capabilities. If China can train models on Blackwell chips, it could accelerate applications in surveillance, cyber warfare, and autonomous

weapons. If the U.S. tightens controls further, it risks disrupting global supply chains and alienating allies who depend on Chinese markets. The European Union has already urged caution, with officials in Brussels warning that "a technological cold war would devastate global innovation." Russia has condemned U.S. export controls as "economic coercion," while China insists it will continue to pursue AI development regardless of restrictions.

The editorial truth is clear: DeepSeek's use of Nvidia's Blackwell chips is a test case for the future of AI governance. It challenges the effectiveness of U.S. export controls, exposes the fragility of global supply chains, and raises urgent questions about how to balance innovation with security. The closing line must be as sharp as the opening: DeepSeek's gamble with Nvidia's Blackwell chips has not only tested U.S. export controls but has thrown down a gauntlet in the global race for AI supremacy, reminding the world that in the age of artificial intelligence, every chip is a weapon and every model a battlefield.

Diaspora

Sudan looks towards truce amid unrelenting bleeding

There is neither calm nor psychological stability in Sudan after nearly two years of war. Reports speak daily of civilian deaths and injuries, and of the destruction of vital facilities.

By: Agencies
xxxxxxxxxxxx

There is neither calm nor psychological stability in Sudan after nearly two years of war. Reports speak daily of civilian deaths and injuries, and of the destruction of vital facilities. Famine has gripped several areas, displacement continues unabated, and fear haunts citizens in their gatherings and daily shopping, amid an alarming humanitarian deterioration and indiscriminate air raids that do not hesitate to bombard civilian gatherings.

While United Nations data indicate that 33.7 million people across Sudan today require humanitarian assistance, international and UN calls are escalating daily for the declaration of a humanitarian truce during the war that has continued since mid-April 2023.

In this context, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump is preparing to send the final draft of a proposed UN mechanism to monitor a humanitarian truce in Sudan to the two parties to the conflict, according to what the U.S. President's Special Adviser for Middle East Affairs, Massad Boulos, revealed.

Boulos stated, during a session on Sudan at the Munich Security Conference, that work on preparing a mechanism to monitor a truce—seen as an entry point to a path that ultimately leads to a political process—has been ongoing for weeks in coordination with the United Nations.

He affirmed that President Donald Trump is determined to end the war in Sudan and put an end to the suffering of Sudanese living through what he described as the world's largest humanitarian catastrophe today.

He noted that the effort comes within the framework of the "international quartet," comprising the United States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

He explained that, in his capacity as a U.S. envoy, he maintains equal distance from both sides and does not favor one party over the other.

A Necessary Truce

Amid the deteriorating humanitarian situation, Sudanese activist Al-Shafie Khidir says that "experience shows that a truce in wars is not an end in itself, but achieves two objectives: responding to the humanitarian catastrophe and serving as a necessary and decisive gateway to building a bridge towards a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire."

He added that "with regard to the first objective, since the outbreak of the war in 2023, the lives of millions of Sudanese have turned into an



Sudan has been riven by violence since 2013 [Courtesy]

unbearable hell. The first and most urgent function of a truce is to make space for saving lives. Hospitals are operating outside service or have entirely ceased functioning, and they lack personnel, medicines, and surgical supplies."

He continued: "A truce allows the passage of medical relief convoys, the evacuation of the wounded and sick, and the temporary rehabilitation of health facilities, at the very least, so they can receive critical cases. A truce is the only means to prevent a comprehensive food catastrophe that could claim the lives of millions, particularly in areas affected by fighting."

He affirmed that "a truce provides a window of safety enabling international organizations to reach them and provide psychological and social support and protection from risks of violence and exploitation. It also allows families separated by the fighting to be reunited."

No Change in Positions

Since the outbreak of war, more than ten international and humanitarian mediation efforts have been presented to the parties to the conflict in Sudan, but they have not achieved the desired results due to Port Sudan's insistence on a military resolution.

In this regard, Africa Intelligence magazine revealed that the army commander in Port Sudan, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, has submitted his remarks to U.S. negotiators regarding the peace plan proposed by the U.S. presidential adviser for African affairs, Massad Boulos, without agreeing to any concessions or showing readiness for a political settlement thus far.

It indicated that al-Burhan responded to the initiative with official

remarks without demonstrating willingness to make concessions or accept any settlement formula, while the Rapid Support Forces affiliated with the government of the Sudan Founding Alliance "Tasees," led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), insist on removing Islamists and figures associated with the former regime of President Omar al-Bashir from the army and the regular military and security institutions.

Other Proposals

In another context, Kamel Idris Al-Tayeb, prime minister in Port Sudan, had put forward a proposal for a humanitarian truce in Sudan, but that initiative did not receive a welcome among Sudanese circles.

Commenting on it, Sudanese activist Al-Fadil Saeed Sanhoury said that without delving "into the texts of this initiative spoken of by Kamel Idris, prime minister of the de facto government in Port Sudan, we find that it does not go beyond a draft that can be called an initiative.

In truth, it is not of his own making but rather an initiative of the Islamic Movement regime that has returned to power anew following the coup of Abdel Fattah al-Burhan against the transitional government of the glorious December Revolution led by Dr. Abdalla Hamdok and the war of April 15, 2023."

He indicated that "the initiative is a draft to legitimize the retention of the other face of the National Congress Party and the Islamists and the military of the Islamic Movement, entrusted to Kamel Idris to market it. They seek to promote it despite its being stale and unsellable merchandise, deceiving the Sudanese people and the international community into believing that they seek

to achieve peace in Sudan and end the war they ignited deliberately and with prior intent and planning." He continued: "Kamel Idris presents the vision of the Islamic Movement and its military cadres on how to buy time and dilute positions for the government of al-Burhan in the face of regional and international efforts and proposed initiatives. All that occupies the mind of the prime minister of the de facto government in Port Sudan now is to continue spreading falsehoods and flimsy justifications to ensure the longest possible continuation and retention of his position."

Negotiations for Maneuvering Meanwhile, Sudanese observers speak of maneuvers carried out by the Sudanese army during its participation in negotiations, while simultaneously focusing on military mobilization to continue escalation. In this context, a journalistic investigation revealed a similar case during the Jeddah negotiations. At a time when the Kingdom was mediating peace, 17 tons of toxic gas were transported through its territory, with the vessel unloading its cargo at Port Sudan on August 9, 2024.

The investigation described the operation as a "diplomatic betrayal" of Saudi Arabia through the exploitation of its ports to smuggle materials used for military purposes without the knowledge of the authorities.

It explained that the case began when the director of the importing company, Colonel Anas Younes—an active-duty armed forces officer appearing in civilian attire to sign contracts and in military uniform on official assignments—used the name "Engineering Ports Company" as a civilian front, claiming specialization in water treatment to le-

gally justify the import of "chlorine" before customs.

According to the investigation, the material was shipped in 17 massive cylinders (Tonners), containers designated for military or heavy industrial use rather than civilian cleaning purposes, noting that such cylinders are the preferred military option for conversion into improvised bombs or chemical explosive barrels.

The operation was carried out in the summer of 2024 beyond international scrutiny, in parallel with peace negotiations at the Jeddah platform. Containers were transported from India to the Jeddah Islamic Port, where they remained for 18 days to arrange their transfer as transit goods.

The Sudanese army exploited facilities granted to Sudanese goods in Saudi Arabia to pass the shipment without thorough inspection of its military contents. On August 8, 2024, the cargo was loaded onto the vessel "ALAHMED," belonging to the Baaboud company, to ensure reliable commercial cover, following the route India-Jeddah-Sudan, at a time when international observers did not imagine that the Sudanese army would dare to use the ports of the intermediary state, Saudi Arabia, to smuggle chemical weapons.

Upon the arrival of the vessel Alahmed in Port Sudan, "the deception operation was crowned with success, and the weapon reached the army's hands, leaving Saudi Arabia in the position of a state whose infrastructure was exploited to support an illegitimate war effort without its knowledge."

FBI Purge Over Trump Documents Probe: A Nation's Institutions on Trial

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has fired at least half a dozen agents who played central roles in the 2022 investigation into President Donald Trump's retention of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate, according to multiple US media reports.

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Worth Noting:

• The Mar-a-Lago case itself was extraordinary. On August 8, 2022, FBI agents executed a search warrant at Trump's Florida residence, recovering more than 300 classified documents, including materials marked "Top Secret" and "SCI" (Sensitive Compartmented Information). Among them were records detailing US nuclear programs, defense capabilities, vulnerabilities to military attack, and plans for retaliation in the event of foreign aggression U.S. Department of Justice. Prosecutors argued that Trump had obstructed efforts to retrieve the documents, storing them in unsecured locations such as a ballroom, a bathroom, and his personal office Wikipedia.

• The Justice Department appointed Special Counsel Jack Smith to oversee the investigation, leading to Trump's indictment in 2023 on charges of obstruction and unlawful retention of national defense information Just Security. But in July 2024, Judge Cannon ruled that Smith's appointment was unlawful, collapsing the case. The DOJ appealed but dropped the matter after Trump's return to office, citing longstanding policy against prosecuting a sitting president.



U.S. President Donald Trump

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has fired at least half a dozen agents who played central roles in the 2022 investigation into President Donald Trump's retention of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate, according to multiple US media reports. The decision, ordered by FBI Director Kash Patel, has triggered outrage from the FBI Agents Association and raised profound questions about the politicization of America's premier law enforcement agency. The firings, confirmed in late February 2026, mark the latest chapter in a saga that has tested the resilience of US institutions, the rule of law, and the boundaries of presidential power.

The who, what, when, where, why, and how are clear. Who: at least six FBI agents and analysts. What: dismissed from the Bureau. When: February 2026. Where: Washington, D.C., and field offices nationwide. Why: their involvement in the Mar-a-Lago classified documents probe. How: by direct order of Patel, who has reshaped the Bureau since his appointment by Trump. The purge comes against the backdrop of Judge Aileen Cannon's July 2024 dismissal of the classified documents case, which prosecutors had argued in-

volved nuclear and defense secrets, and the Justice Department's subsequent decision to drop its appeal after Trump's election victory in November 2024.

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but dropped the matter after Trump's return to office, citing longstanding policy against prosecuting a sitting president.

The firings of the agents who carried out the Mar-a-Lago search have been condemned by the FBI Agents Association. "These actions weaken the Bureau by stripping away critical expertise and destabilizing the workforce, undermining trust in leadership and jeopardizing the Bureau's ability to meet its recruitment goals — ultimately putting the nation at greater risk," the association said in a statement. Patel, however, defended his decision, declaring: "The American people deserve an FBI that is not weaponized against them. We are cleaning house to restore integrity."

Trump himself celebrated the firings as vindication. "This proves what I've been saying all along — the FBI was corrupt, it was after me, and now the truth is coming out," he told supporters at a Florida rally. "They raided my home, they tried to destroy me, but we stood strong. And now justice is being served."

The fallout has been immediate. Democrats in Congress have called for hearings, with Senator Dick Durbin warning: "This is a

direct assault on the independence of federal law enforcement. We cannot allow the FBI to become a political arm of the presidency." Republicans, by contrast, have largely backed Patel's actions. Representative Jim Jordan said: "The FBI has been out of control for years. Director Patel is finally holding people accountable." The broader implications are profound. The FBI, once seen as a bulwark of American democracy, is now caught in the crossfire of partisan warfare. Its credibility, already battered by years of controversy, faces further erosion. Recruitment and retention have been strained by political attacks, and insiders warn that morale is at a historic low. "We are losing good people," said one agent who survived the purge. "The public doesn't see the damage this does to our ability to protect the country."

The Mar-a-Lago case was never just about documents. It was about the integrity of institutions, the limits of presidential power, and the resilience of the rule of law. The classified materials Trump retained included some of the nation's most sensitive secrets, and their unauthorized disclosure could have jeopardized national security, foreign rela-

tions, and the safety of US military personnel U.S. Department of Justice. The fact that the case collapsed on procedural grounds, rather than on the merits, has left many questioning whether accountability is possible when political power is at stake.

The firings of the agents who pursued the case underscore those doubts. They represent not just a personnel decision, but a broader struggle over the independence of law enforcement in an era of political upheaval. As one former senior FBI official put it: "This is not about accountability, this is about loyalty tests. The message is clear: if you investigate Trump, you risk your career."

The FBI's motto is "Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity." The purge of agents linked to the Mar-a-Lago probe raises the question of whether the Bureau can live up to those words in the years ahead. The firings may satisfy Trump's demand for loyalty, but they risk hollowing out the institution from within. The real casualty may not be the agents themselves, but America's faith in justice.

The FBI has fired its agents, but the deeper firing line runs through the heart of American democracy.

The war on terror feeds on Somalia's blood

By: Agencies
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Worth Noting:

- Somalia faces significant security challenges, especially with the expansion of Al-Shabaab in several areas and its success in carrying out suicide operations in the capital, Mogadishu.
- In this context, researcher Saeed Nada says the administration of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is grappling with multiple internal crises, the most dangerous of which is the increased activity of terrorist organizations.
- He explained: "Two main terrorist organizations operate in Somalia. The first, the oldest and most active and influential, is Al-Shabaab ('Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen'), affiliated with Al-Qaeda. The second, more recent and less active and influential, is ISIS in Somalia, or 'Somalia Province,' affiliated with ISIS."
- He pointed out that on March 5, 2025, Al-Shabaab militants attacked Somali army bases in the area of Awdeegle in the Lower Shabelle region of South West State. In a separate assault, the group's fighters targeted the areas of Hawaa Abdi and Lafole, located 15 kilometers from Mogadishu.

In early February 2026, the city of Baidoa in Somalia's South West State was gripped by a bloody day following clashes that left numerous dead and wounded. The city, home to more than 800,000 people, occupies a strategic position and ranks as Somalia's third-largest city. Fierce fighting erupted between South West State forces and rival armed groups amid a long-standing land dispute.

Officials and residents said the fighting, which began near a local market, spread to other parts of the city, resulting in casualties. The Minister of Information for South West State, Mohamed Ibrahim Bilal, described the opposing fighters as "bandits" seeking to destabilize security, affirming that state forces intervened swiftly and restored control.

"These were bandits attacking civilians and looting homes. All groups involved have now been neutralized," Mohamed Ibrahim Bilal told local media.

The clashes have once again drawn attention to the deteriorating security situation across various regions, particularly as armed movements advance in this fragile African nation.

Major Challenges
Somalia faces significant security challenges, especially with the expansion of Al-Shabaab in several areas and its success in carrying out suicide operations in the capital, Mogadishu.

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"Three days later, on March 18, 2025, the motorcade of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was struck by a roadside bomb as it passed



Smoke rises in the direction of Aden Adde airport in Mogadishu, Somalia, July 2, 2025, in this picture obtained from social media, Abdurahman Mohamed Arab/via REUTERS

through the El-Gabta junction near the presidential palace in the Hamar Jajab district of central Mogadishu.

The explosion, claimed by Al-Shabaab, killed at least eight civilians and injured others, while the president and his entourage survived." On April 6, 2025, the researcher added, Al-Shabaab militants seized the town of Aden Yabal in central Somalia, which had served as a principal launching base for government operations against the group. In a statement, the organization announced that its forces had taken control of ten military installations after intense clashes with government troops.

An Impossible Victory
Somalia's fragility is reflected in its security sector, which faces numerous challenges preventing it from fully carrying out its duties—whether in confronting Al-Shabaab or in extending security across the country's territory—according to Abdelkader Mohamed Ali.

The most prominent manifestation of the weakness of Somali security and military institutions, Mohamed Ali says, lies in the persistent need for the African mission supporting the Somali army in its fight against the movement since 2007.

Under its various names, the mission has undertaken tasks related to supporting government structures, training security forces, and

helping create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Another indicator of institutional fragility in Somalia, he notes, is the government's inability to combat entrenched corruption within state institutions, as clearly reflected in the rankings of Transparency International, where Mogadishu has consistently ranked at the bottom of the annual index for more than a decade.

"This reality casts a heavy shadow over Mogadishu's capacity to eliminate Al-Shabaab," he added, explaining that tribal and political connections often pave the way for individuals to assume sensitive military and security posts, negatively affecting institutional capabilities at both the planning and field levels, due to the neglect of standards such as competence, professionalism, and capability.

For his part, Somali journalist Al-Shafi'i Abtadoon said that the results of the war announced by the federal government were "disappointing and contrary to expectations of delivering a military defeat to Al-Shabaab within a year," as the Somali president had declared on more than one occasion.

However, the movement, employing guerrilla warfare tactics, has managed to dispel these repeated announcements heard by Somalis at home and abroad. He stressed that "the war

Somalia is waging against ideologically driven armed organizations will be long and of unpredictable outcome," particularly after leaks from U.S. military officials reinforced the hypothesis of growing ISIS influence in Puntland Federal State.

"The desire promoted by supporters of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to achieve a rapid military victory over Al-Shabaab has not materialized, and the president's speeches now carry little weight in the balance of battles or in tipping the scales in his favor," he added.

Additional Factors

Meanwhile, observers point out that internal instability within the Somali army has been one of the principal reasons why a military defeat of Al-Shabaab has proven impossible.

The United States suspended food rations to Somalia's elite Danab forces—trained under its partnership with Mogadishu in counterterrorism efforts—after informing Somali authorities that some members were stealing rations and reselling them.

According to Sudanese reports, this reflected the scale of corruption permeating Somali forces, further increasing allies' skepticism toward counterterrorism strategies.

In this context, the Somali government acknowledged that food rations allocated to the elite forces trained

and supported by the United States had been diverted.

On January 8 of this year, the United States announced the suspension of all aid provided to Somalia following allegations that a World Food Programme warehouse at Mogadishu port had been destroyed and food assistance seized.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement: "All U.S. assistance programs that directly or indirectly benefit the Federal Government of Somalia have been paused." It added: "The Administration of President Donald Trump applies a zero-tolerance policy towards waste, theft, or diversion of assistance."

It indicated that the measure was taken due to "unacceptable actions" by the Somali government, affirming that the continuation of aid depends on Somalia taking the necessary corrective steps.

In 2017, Washington suspended some military assistance to Somalia after the army failed to provide reports on allegations of corruption related to its use of food and fuel supplies.

Breaking the Silence on Preventable Stillbirths in Kenya

Why should anyone care about a baby who never cried, never drew a breath, never went home?

By: Dr. Richard Mogeni.
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Dr. Richard Mogeni Mogaka, Deputy Director of Reproductive Health and Head of the Maternal Fetal Medicine Department at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, and Chairman of the Kenya Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society-North Rift.

Worth Noting:

- Take Imani* a 24-year-old woman in Kisumu County. She arrived at a crowded county referral hospital after prolonged labour, exhausted and anxious. When no fetal heartbeat was detected, no one explained what would happen next. She waited for hours, her pain unmanaged, her fear ignored. When she finally delivered, there was no privacy, no counselling, no clear plan for follow-up. She went home physically weak and emotionally shattered, convinced – wrongly – that she had failed. Her story is not exceptional. It is routine.

- Stillbirths matter. They count. And they deserve more than silence.

- Globally, nearly 2 million babies are stillborn each year. More than 40 percent die during labor, a time when timely, skilled care can mean the difference between life and death. While deaths among children under 5 have declined by about half over the last two decades, progress in reducing stillbirths has lagged. Over the same period, global stillbirths declined by roughly one-third. That gap should trouble us.

Why should anyone care about a baby who never cried, never drew a breath, never went home? Because the way we respond to stillbirths reveals – often uncomfortably – how much we value women, motherhood, and life itself.

In labour wards across Kenya, a familiar pattern unfolds. Once an intrauterine fetal death is confirmed, something changes. Urgency softens. Monitoring slackens. Conversations fade. Attention shifts elsewhere. The baby is gone – and, quietly, the case seems finished. But it shouldn't be. A fetal death is not the end of care. For the woman, it marks the beginning of one of the most vulnerable moments of her life.

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Kenya loses an estimated 35,000 stillbirths every year— about 96 families grieving every day. More than half happen during labour itself. These are not random or unavoidable tragedies. They point directly to gaps in fetal monitoring, decision-making, staffing, referral systems, and the overall quality of intrapartum care in our facilities, particularly in high-volume county hospitals.

The clinical details matter.

Stillbirths are classified as either fresh – when death occurs during labour – or macerated, when death occurred earlier. This distinction is not academic. Fresh stillbirths force us to confront what is happening, or failing to happen, in our labour wards. They demand accountability.

Beyond the numbers lies a deeper problem : attitude. Stillbirth is often treated as inevitable, a tragic but “natural” outcome of pregnancy. This belief is not only wrong; it is dangerous. Many of the leading causes –maternal infections, hypertensive disorders such as pre-eclampsia, placental complications, prolonged or obstructed labour, and inadequate fetal monitoring – are all well-known, and largely preventable . Effective and affordable interventions exist. What is missing is their consistent application, and accountability when standards are not met.

When care stops after a fetal death, it is the mother who pays the price. Retained placenta, severe bleeding, sepsis, uterine rupture, and long-term psychological trauma are real risks. Pain and anxiety do not disap-

pear when a baby dies; they often deepen. Delivering bad news is not a courtesy – it is a clinical skill. Respectful maternity care does not end when a fetal heartbeat stops.

There is also an uncomfortable truth that must be stated plainly: unless there is a clear obstetric indication, intrauterine fetal death is not a reason for caesarean section. Surgery driven by fear, convenience, or poor counselling exposes women to unnecessary harm — both immediately and in future pregnancies.

Kenya has committed to the global Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere (EWENE) agenda, which calls for every maternal and perinatal death – including stillbirths – to be counted, reviewed, and acted upon through Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response. Counting stillbirths is not about assigning blame. It is about understanding why they happen – and preventing the next one.

So what must change?

First, counties must count and review every stillbirth, with particular attention to deaths during labor. Second,

labor wards need adequate staffing, functional fetal monitoring, and reliable referral and transport systems, especially in high-burden counties. Third, health workers must be supported and trained in compassionate communication and bereavement care. Fourth, women must be protected from unnecessary surgical intervention through clear guidelines and enforced accountability.

Finally, editors and policymakers must keep stillbirths visible. Silence enables neglect. Public reporting, candid review, and sustained attention save lives.

A baby may be stillborn. But our response must never be still.

*Name changed to protect identity.

Dr. Richard Mogeni Mogaka is the Deputy Director of Reproductive Health and Head of the Maternal Fetal Medicine Department at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, and Chairman of the Kenya Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society-North Rift.