

Economic sovereignty — the right of Namibians to own, control, and benefit from the country's strategic assets — is not an abstract principle enshrined in dusty legislation.

Starlink

Technology commentators have pointed out that Starlink's rejection is not necessarily final :



Sovereignty in the Sky: Why African Nations Are Right to Reject Starlink

By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande

On March 23, 2026, the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) formally published its rejection of Starlink's application for both a telecommunications service licence and radio spectrum access — dealing Elon Musk's SpaceX a significant setback in southern Africa. The decision was terse: no reasons were cited, no timeline offered, only a 90-day window for reconsideration. But its meaning is unmistakable. Namibia, a post-colonial democracy with strong eco-



Elon Musk owner and founder of Starlink

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Plastic Trash Made Valuable, Yet Unbought

Used and discarded indiscriminately, plastics often end up in gutters, on street corners, or burning in red-lit heaps at night. But inside the Material Recovery Facility in Accra, the same plastic is handled with care. Workers bend over piles of bottles, sachets, and polythene bags, sorting

them patiently by hand. What the city has rejected is being prepared for a second life. A few kilometres away, at the CSIR-Institute of Industrial Research, that second life takes shape. Melted plastic is poured into moulds and left to cool. Minutes later, what

was once waste hardens into something solid – a toilet seat, a pavement block, or an office item. The transformed product is useful, durable, and ready for use. Dr. Francis Boateng Agyenim watches this transformation often. To him, it's proof that plastic pollution can

be outsmarted. "Once we melt the plastic, we can mold it into anything valuable," he says.

But as he walks past shelves lined

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The World's Jugular: How the Strait of Hormuz Became the Most Dangerous Waterway on Earth

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

A 34-kilometre chokepoint between Iran and Oman carries a fifth of the world's oil — and since America and Israel struck Iran on 28 February, it has been effectively closed. The consequences, from pump prices in Nairobi to food costs in Lagos, are only beginning to be felt.

— At its narrowest point, the Strait of Hormuz is just 34 kilometres wide — barely the distance from London's Heathrow Airport to its city centre. Yet this sliver of grey-green water between Iran and Oman is, in the bluntest terms, the jugular vein of the global economy. And right now, it is being strangled.

Since the United States and Israel launched coordinated military strikes on Iran on 28 February 2026, the strait — through which roughly 20 million barrels of oil pass every single day — has been rendered effectively impassable. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps declared it closed. Tankers dropped anchor rather than risk missile fire. War-risk insurance premiums became prohibitive. The result is what the UN's trade body, UNCTAD, has described as a disruption to "one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints," sending shockwaves through energy markets, food supply chains and financial systems on every inhabited continent.

The numbers are staggering. According to the US Energy Information Administration, about 20 million barrels per day of crude oil and petroleum products moved through the strait in 2024 — equal to roughly one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption and more than a quarter of global seaborne oil trade. An additional 20 per cent of global liquefied natural gas trade — most of it from Qatar, bound for Asian buyers — also depends on this single passage. When it closes, there is no adequate alternative.

"The Countries of the World that receive Oil through the Hormuz Strait must take care of that passage, and we will help — A LOT!" — President Donald Trump, March 2026

The market reaction has been swift and brutal. Brent



crude prices surpassed \$100 per barrel on 8 March 2026 for the first time in four years, rising to \$126 per barrel at their peak. The Dallas Federal Reserve has modelled the economic fallout: a closure that removes close to 20 per cent of global oil supplies from the market during the second quarter of 2026 is expected to raise the average West Texas Intermediate oil price to \$98 per barrel and lower global GDP growth by an annualised 2.9 percentage points. For developing economies — including across Africa — the pain is sharper still, amplified by currency weakness and import dependency.

The crisis extends well beyond oil. The Gulf region produces nearly half of the world's urea and 30 per cent of its ammonia, with about one-third of global fertilizer passing through the strait. Urea prices have increased by 50 per cent since the start of the war. The LNG disruption is compounding the problem: reduced gas supplies are hampering fertilizer production at precisely the moment Northern Hemisphere farmers need inputs for the spring planting season. Corn yields, global food prices and livestock costs are all

at risk — consequences that will be felt most acutely by the world's poorest.

The closure has been described as the largest disruption to energy supply since the 1970s energy crisis — and the largest in the history of the global oil market. Iran has made 21 confirmed attacks on merchant ships as of mid-March, and its IRGC Navy has turned away vessels attempting to transit. The geopolitical mechanics are equally extraordinary: Iran announced it would allow only Chinese vessels to pass, citing Beijing's supportive stance. Subsequently, a bulk carrier operated by a Chinese firm transited the strait signalling "CHINA OWNER." One ship reportedly paid \$2 million to use an Iranian-controlled shipping channel north of Larak Island.

The diplomatic scramble among Western powers has exposed deep fractures in the transatlantic alliance. President Donald Trump, speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, demanded that other nations shoulder the burden of keeping the strait open.

"Why are we maintaining the Hormuz Strait when it's really there for China and many other countries? I'm demanding that these coun-

tries come in and protect their own territory — because it is their territory. It's the place from which they get their energy." — PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE, 15 MARCH 2026

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, while agreeing on the stakes, declined to be rushed into military commitment. In a formal read-out of his 22 March call with Trump, Downing Street confirmed the two leaders agreed that "reopening the Strait of Hormuz was essential to ensure stability in the global energy market." But Starmer was equally clear about Britain's limits.

"Let me be clear: that won't be, and it's never been envisioned to be, a NATO mission. We will not be drawn into the wider war." — PRIME MINISTER KEIR STARMER, LONDON, 16 MARCH 2026

The EU's response was equally cautious. After a ministerial meeting in Brussels, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas confirmed there was "no appetite in changing the mandate of operation Aspides, for now," the naval mission launched in the Red Sea in 2024. Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful warned that before any military

escalation, Europe needed clarity from Washington on what objectives were actually being pursued in Iran.

On 29 March, Pakistan hosted an emergency meeting with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to discuss reopening the strait through diplomatic channels — a signal that the region's middle powers are growing alarmed at the prospect of an indefinite closure managed solely by great-power confrontation.

For Africa and the Global South, the Hormuz crisis is not an abstraction. Higher oil prices feed directly into transport costs, electricity tariffs and food prices. Fertilizer shortages threaten the next harvest. Higher energy, fertilizer and transport costs may increase food costs and intensify cost-of-living pressures, particularly for the most vulnerable, UNCTAD warned. The world's jugular is being squeezed — and it is the poorest who bleed first.

A 34-kilometre strip of water should not hold the world to ransom. The fact that it does is the most damning verdict on a global order that has spent decades failing to resolve the conflicts that make such a crisis possible.

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Education

Degrees without doors: East Africa's broken promise of education

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

Education transformed East Africa from traditional subsistence lifestyles into modern societies. It brought electricity, piped water, hospitals, civic institutions, and technology. Parents sacrificed their dreams—cars, vacations, and comfort—to invest in their children's schooling. For them, education was not just a pathway; it was salvation. Graduates celebrated their achievements, only to face a harsh reality: unemployment, lack of networks, and closed doors. Instead of being embraced, they were treated as competitors by established managers and CEOs. The job market, entangled in nepotism and rigid structures, left many young professionals “wingless birds in the air.”

For decades, education has been heralded as the master key to opportunity in East Africa. It promised to unlock prosperity, modernity, and dignity for millions. Yet today, many graduates find themselves stranded—armed with degrees but denied the doors they were told would open. The question is no longer whether education is important, but whether the system itself has lost its power to deliver.

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This disillusionment has

bred disappointment, depression, and confusion among the youth—the very generation expected to carry East Africa forward. Without opportunities, their dreams collapse, and the region risks losing its most valuable resource: human capital. Concerns about gender imbalance have also surfaced, with the girl child empowered academically while the boy child often feels left behind. This imbalance has sparked debates about family stability and social cohesion. While empowerment of women is vital, the challenge lies in ensuring inclusivity—lifting both genders

together rather than pitting them against each other.

Education must be rethought, not abandoned. The solution lies in aligning education with market needs, vocational skills, and entrepreneurship. Governments must create enabling environments for job creation and innovation. Businesses should embrace graduates as assets, not threats. Gender equity must mean opportunity for all, fostering strong families and communities. East Africa's youth are not asking for handouts—they are asking for a chance. Education remains a pillar of progress, but it must be

retooled to meet the realities of today. If the lock has lost its key, then it is time to forge a new one—crafted from relevance, inclusivity, and opportunity. Only then can education reclaim its rightful place as the ladder to a brighter future.

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JUSTICE

From historical injustice to modern dignity: Why the UN declaration must inspire justice, reparations and inclusive global partnership



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

• For Africa and people of African descent, the declaration represents far more than symbolic acknowledgement, but affirms long standing historical truth: that the enslavement of Africans was not an isolated tragedy, but a deliberate and systemic global enterprise that shaped the foundations of modern economies and entrenched racial hierarchies that continue to influence global inequalities today.

• Entire empires and colonies rose on the forced labour of enslaved Africans. Ports flourished, industries expanded and fortunes accumulated through systems that commodified human beings and stripped millions of their dignity, culture and identity. Recognizing this reality is therefore is an essential step forward towards restoring historical injustices. Reparations should not be narrowly interpreted as financial compensation alone, rather they must represent a broader framework of restorative justice aimed at addressing centuries of economic and structural inequalities.

On Wednesday 25th March 2026, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a historic declaration recognizing the trafficking of enslaved Africans and the system of racialized chattel enslavement as the greatest crime against humanity. The vote marked a defining moment in the global struggle to confront one of the darkest chapters in human history.

The results of voting were revealing. One hundred and twenty-three countries supported the declaration, many from Africa and the Global South. Fifty-two countries abstained, largely from Europe and led by the United Kingdom, while three countries, the United States, Argentina and Israel voted against the resolution. Beyond the numbers, the voting pattern reflected the ongoing global tension between moral recognition and political hesitation when confronting the full implications of historical injustice.

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Entire empires and colonies rose on the forced labour of enslaved Africans. Ports flourished, industries expanded and fortunes accumulated through systems that commodified human beings and stripped millions of their dignity, culture and identity. Recognizing this reality is therefore is an essential step forward towards restoring historical injustices. Reparations should not be narrowly interpreted as financial compensation alone, rather they must represent a broader framework of restorative justice aimed at addressing centuries of economic and structural inequalities.

Meaningful reparative initiatives may include structured development investments in Africa, technology and knowledge transfer, debt restructuring, restitution of

cultural heritage removed from the continent, and expanded educational and research partnerships. Such initiatives would represent not charity, but a recognition of shared responsibility in correcting historical imbalances that still shape the modern global order.

This moment also presents Africa with an opportunity to reassess its global partnerships. Countries that openly recognize the historical injustices inflicted upon Africans and affirm the dignity and equality of African people provide a foundation for deeper cooperation based on mutual respect. Conversely, the reluctance or opposition demonstrated by some nations should encourage some thoughtful recalibration of diplomatic engagements to ensure that Africa's relationships are anchored in fairness, dignity and shared prosperity.

For Kenya, this global conversation carries immediate and practical implications. Labour migration has emerged as one of the countries' most significant economic lifelines. Thousands of Kenyans seek employment opportunities abroad each year, and remittance from the diaspora now represents one of the largest sources of foreign exchange for the national economy. These remittances sustain families, finance education, stimulate local economies and contribute significantly to national development. However despite this enormous economic contribution, the protection and welfare of Kenyan workers abroad have not always received the strategic attention they deserve.

Disturbing reports continue to emerge from several countries describing cases of labour exploitation, discrimination, poor working conditions and in some cases, outright human violations and deaths on vulnerable migrant workers. Such experiences do not only undermine the dignity of individuals affected, but also the national pride of a country whose citizens contribute so significantly to the global workforce.

Regrettably, the responses from key national institutions has often appeared reactive rather than proactive. The ministry of Labour and related regulatory agencies have at times demonstrated institutional laxity in establishing robust safeguards that ensure Kenyan workers are protected and accounted for before, during and after their employment abroad. Licensing and monitoring of recruiting agencies, enforcement of labour agreements and provisions of consular support remain areas requiring stronger oversight coordination.

Equally, diplomatic engagements must rise to meet the scale of the challenge. Kenya's foreign missions must move beyond the routine administrative roles and become active defenders of the rights and welfare of Kenyan citizens working abroad. Bilateral labour agreements should be negotiated and enforced with clear standards that guarantee fair wages, safe working conditions, access to legal resources and protection against exploitation.

Political leadership must also play a more visible role in championing the dignity

of Kenyan workers globally. Labour mobility is no longer merely a migration issue, but a strategic economic pillar of national developmental importance that deserves sustained policy attention and high-level advocacy.

Within this broader discussion lies another critical dimension that remains largely overlooked: the systematic exclusion of persons with disabilities from local and global labour opportunities. Despite loud pronouncement and well documented global commitments to equality and inclusion, foreign employment programmes remain overwhelmingly inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Even countries that project themselves as champions of human rights and social justice, like the US have demonstrated in their labour migration frameworks implicit exclusion of disabled individuals from participation.

This contradiction must be addressed direct. True human right leadership cannot coexist with systemic exclusion. Persons with disabilities possess immense talent, expertise and resilience, yet structural barriers continue to deny them equal access to economic opportunities both locally and internationally. Kenya must therefore adopt a policy framework that promotes inclusive labour mobility not on paper alone, but in action, that ensures persons with disabilities are not excluded from local and international opportunities. Equally, global labour markets must embrace inclusive employment practices that recognize ability, skill and competence

rather than perpetuating outdated stereotypes about disability.

Ultimately, the UN declaration recognizing the enslavement of Africans as the greatest crime against humanity is not merely a historic reflection/ It is a call to action. It calls upon the international community to confront difficult truths, pursue restorative justice and build partnerships based on equality rather than exploitation and exclusion. It challenges Africa to engage the world with confidence, strategic clarity and unity of purpose

For Kenya, it is also a reminder that the dignity of its citizens, whether at home or abroad, must remain a central pillar of national policy. Protecting migrant workers, strengthening diplomatic advocacy and promoting inclusive economic participation for persons with disabilities are not optional undertakings. They are obligations that flow directly from the values of human dignity, and equality that the global community now seeks to affirm.

The millions of Africans who endured the horrors of enslavement were denied their voices and their humanity. Today, their descendants must ensure that the lessons of history translate into justice, dignity, inclusion and opportunity for all.

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Motivation

From Lecture Halls to Mitumba Racks: The Quiet Hustle Helping Campus Students Survive

As the cost of living rises and financial support becomes increasingly uncertain, many Kenyan university students are turning to the thriving second-hand clothing trade to sustain themselves while pursuing their education.

By: Victoria Juma
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- For Faith Mutua, a second-year communication student, selling mitumba began as a simple way to solve a pressing problem that is rent.
- “I realised the money I was getting from home could not cover all the expenses,” Mutua says. “After paying rent and buying food, there was almost nothing left.”
- Mutua started small, buying a few trendy ladies tops and dresses from the Chuka local market using Sh2,000 she had saved. She washed and ironed them before posting photos on her WhatsApp status. Within a few days, most of the clothes were sold.
- Encouraged by the demand, she later began sourcing more fashionable pieces from Nairobi’s Gikomba Market, one of the country’s largest hubs for second-hand clothing.
- Today, she sells jackets, vintage jeans and hoodies to fellow students, sometimes making enough profit to cover all her expenses.

At dawn in Nairobi’s bustling Gikomba Market, sellers navigate the narrow pathways stacked with tightly wrapped bales of second-hand clothes. The air fills with the sounds of bargaining, rustling fabrics and the occasional cheer when someone discovers a fashionable gem hidden among the piles.

Among the seasoned traders are an unexpected group of entrepreneurs and university students. In a few hours, many of them will be seated in lecture halls attending classes. But before lectures begin, they are already working, selecting jackets, jeans and shirts they hope to resell later in the day to fellow students on campus.

Across universities in Kenya, selling mitumba imported second-hand clothing has quietly become one of the most common side hustles among students trying to keep up with the rising cost of living.

Turning Necessity into Opportunity

University life often comes with financial pressure. Rent, food, transport and learning materials can quickly stretch student budgets beyond their limits.

Even for students who receive financial support from parents or government loans, delays or limited funding often leave them

searching for additional sources of income.

According to research by the global survey firm Geo-Poll, about 71% of Kenyan youth engage in side hustles to supplement their income, highlighting a growing culture of entrepreneurship among young people aged between 18 and 35.

Within universities, this trend has become increasingly visible. Students are running small businesses ranging from photography and baking to online freelancing. Yet mitumba trading stands out because of its accessibility.

With just a few thousand shillings, a student can buy a small batch of clothes and sell them at a profit. For many young traders, identifying fashionable pieces such as oversized jackets, vintage denim and branded sportswear has become part of the business.

“Students want to look stylish but most cannot afford clothes from high-end fashion stores,” says Brian Mwangi, a third-year university student who sells thrifted jackets and hoodies on campus. “Mitumba allows them to dress stylishly without spending too much.”

Global conversations about sustainable fashion have also contributed to the popularity of thrift clothing, making second-hand outfits

not only affordable but also socially acceptable among young consumers.

A Student’s Hustle Story

For Faith Mutua, a second-year communication student, selling mitumba began as a simple way to solve a pressing problem that is rent.

“I realised the money I was getting from home could not cover all the expenses,” Mutua says. “After paying rent and buying food, there was almost nothing left.” Mutua started small, buying a few trendy ladies tops and dresses from the Chuka local market using Sh2,000 she had saved. She washed and ironed them before posting photos on her WhatsApp status. Within a few days, most of the clothes were sold.

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Today, she sells jackets, vintage jeans and hoodies to fellow students, sometimes making enough profit to cover all her expenses.

“Balancing business and school is not always easy,” she says. “But the hustle helps me avoid constantly asking my parents for money.”

Beyond the financial ben-

efits, Mutua says the experience has also taught her practical skills such as budgeting, marketing and customer relations, lessons she believes will remain valuable long after graduation.

Balancing Books and Business

Despite its advantages, running a small business while pursuing a university degree is challenging. Student traders often divide their time between attending lectures, sourcing new stock and marketing their products.

A typical day might involve morning classes, afternoon trips to markets and evening hours spent advertising clothes online or delivering orders around campus. The balancing act becomes even more challenging during exam periods when academic responsibilities increase. Yet many students say the hustle is worth the effort. Apart from generating income, running a small business equips them with practical skills such as negotiation, budgeting and time management.

“These are things you don’t learn in class,” says Mwangi. “But they help you understand how business really works.”

The popularity of mitumba trading among students also reflects the broader importance of the second-hand clothing industry in Kenya.

According to research by the Institute of Economic Affairs, the sector supports more than two million livelihoods in the country, making it one of the largest sources of employment in the informal economy.

At the same time, youth unemployment remains a major challenge. Data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics shows that young people aged between 18 and 34 make up a significant share of the country’s unemployed population, pushing many to explore entrepreneurial paths.

As evening settles over university campuses, a few students remain outside hostels arranging thrifted jackets and dresses neatly on small racks, hoping to make one more sale before the day ends. Their stalls may be modest, but the determination behind them is unmistakable.

Moving between lecture halls during the day and mitumba racks in the evening, these students represent a generation navigating economic uncertainty with creativity and resilience proving that sometimes the path to opportunity begins with something as simple as a second-hand shirt.

Victoria Juma, Second year, BA in Journalism and Mass communication student

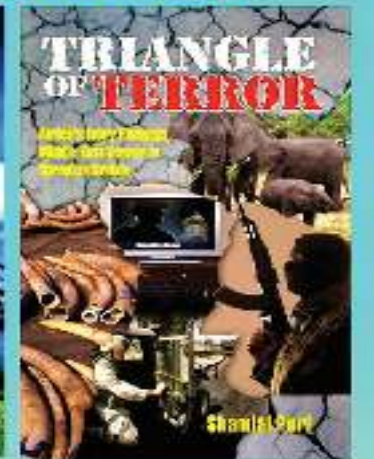
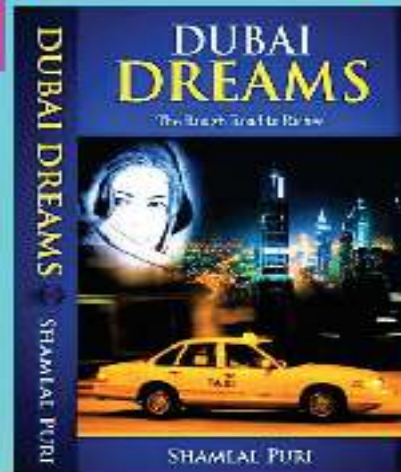
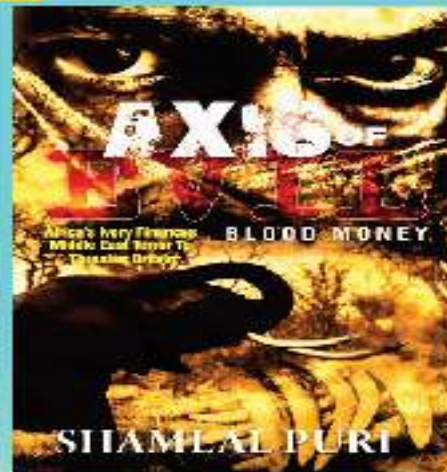
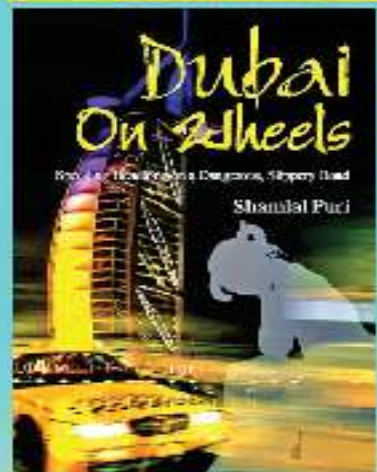
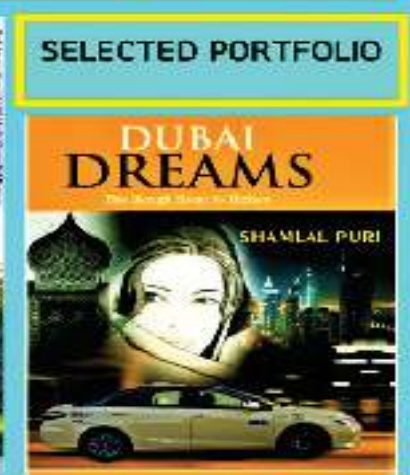
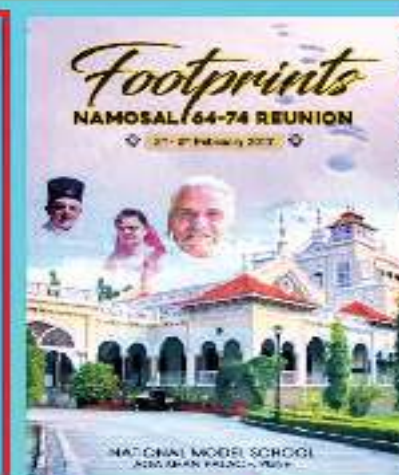
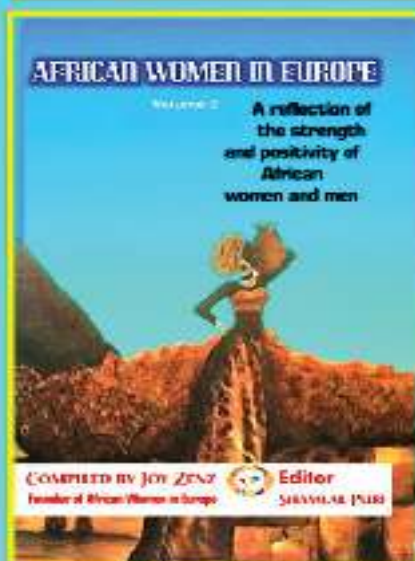
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African News

Sovereignty in the Sky: Why African Nations Are Right to Reject Starlink



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
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Worth Noting:

• When CRAN published its notice in the Government Gazette of March 23, 2026, it offered no explanation for why Starlink — operating through its local subsidiary, Starlink Internet Services Namibia (Pty) Limited — had been denied both a telecommunications licence and a spectrum licence. A spokesperson said a formal statement would follow. SpaceX did not respond to media requests for comment. The silence on both sides was, in its own way, eloquent.

• The decision did not arrive without history. In November 2024, CRAN had already issued a cease-and-desist order against Starlink, accusing the company of operating in Namibia without a valid licence, warning consumers not to purchase Starlink terminal equipment, and confiscating illegally imported terminals from residents. The company had been operating in the country in a legal grey zone — offering services to willing customers before completing the regulatory process that Namibian law requires.

conomic nationalism written into its communications laws, has drawn a line. It is not the first African country to do so, and it will not be the last. This article examines why Namibia made this decision, which other nations have taken similar stances, how the West continues to embrace the service that Africa resists, and what the deeper strategic motives behind Starlink's African push really are — and why African governments may be wise to push back.

Namibia's Rejection: The Letter and the Spirit

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The decision did not arrive without history. In November 2024, CRAN had already issued a cease-and-desist order against Starlink, accusing the company of operating in Namibia without a valid licence, warning consumers not to purchase Starlink terminal equipment, and confiscating illegally imported terminals from residents. The company had been operating in the country in a legal grey zone — offering services to willing customers before completing the regulatory process that Namibian law requires. This pattern of operating first and seeking permission later has become something of a SpaceX trademark on the continent. The formal application that followed the cease-and-desist order has now ended in outright refusal. And buried within the gazette notice is the detail that has caused the most comment: Starlink's local subsidiary had zero percent Namibian ownership. None. In a country whose communications law requires that no telecommunications company be controlled by non-Namibian citizens, and that foreign ownership not exceed 49 percent of any such entity,



submitting an application with 0% local equity was, at best, a gamble and, at worst, a provocation.

Namibian law has roots that matter here. The country spent decades under the thumb of South Africa's apartheid administration, gaining independence only in 1990 after a protracted liberation war. Economic sovereignty — the right of Namibians to own, control, and benefit from the country's strategic assets — is not an abstract principle enshrined in dusty legislation. It is a living political value. Telecommunications infrastructure, which enables economic participation, national security, education, and civic life, sits firmly in the category of strategic assets. Asking regulators to hand such infrastructure to a fully foreign-owned corporation without any local equity participation, in a country with this history, was an ask unlikely to be granted.

Technology commentators have pointed out that Starlink's rejection is not necessarily final. CRAN indicated the decision could be reconsidered within 90 days, either on the regulator's own initiative or following a petition from Starlink. Some analysts, including technology expert Nrupesh Soni, have characterised the outcome as a missed opportunity, noting that Starlink's technology could connect Namibia's farms, lodges, schools, and remote com-

munities almost overnight. The public consultations on the application — which drew over 1,100 submissions — saw most respondents supporting Starlink's entry. That wave of popular support was not enough.

The politics of this rejection are layered. Elon Musk, who was born in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1971 and emigrated to North America in the late 1980s, has made his impatience with African telecommunications regulation publicly known. When Starlink failed to secure a licence in South Africa due to that country's Black Economic Empowerment laws, Musk posted on his social media platform X that Starlink was being denied entry simply because he was 'not black.' That characterisation inflamed sentiment across the continent and reframed a regulatory compliance dispute as a culture war. African regulators noted the framing and drew their own conclusions about the sincerity of SpaceX's commitment to local partnership.

A Continent Divided: African Nations That Have Rejected or Restricted Starlink Namibia is far from alone. Across sub-Saharan and North Africa, a significant group of nations have either outright banned Starlink, restricted its operations, delayed licensing indefinitely, or forced the company to reverse course on earlier plans. The reasons vary, but they cluster around a shared anx-

xiety: that a foreign-owned satellite internet service operating without a local anchor poses threats that outweigh the connectivity benefits it promises.

South Africa: The Most Prominent Standoff

South Africa is the continent's largest economy and Elon Musk's country of birth, making it the most symbolically charged front in this regulatory conflict. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) requires that any licensed telecommunications operator ensure at least 30 percent of its shareholding is controlled by historically disadvantaged South Africans — a policy rooted in the country's post-apartheid transformation framework. SpaceX has consistently refused to comply with this requirement, citing a global policy against local equity dilution. Instead, the company has advocated for the adoption of Equity Equivalent Investment Programmes (EEIPs) — mechanisms used in other sectors that allow companies to meet empowerment obligations through targeted investment rather than share transfers.

In late 2025, South Africa's communications minister Solly Malatsi issued a policy directive instructing ICASA to explore the EEIP route. That directive drew fierce criticism from African National Congress members

of parliament, who accused Malatsi of tailoring regulation to suit a foreign billionaire's preferences. Civil society organisations, including Public Interest SA and the Black Business Council, argued that allowing exemptions would erode the integrity of South Africa's entire democratic regulatory framework. The debate is ongoing. Notably, the regulator told the BBC that Starlink had not even submitted a formal licence application as of the time of reporting. South Africa remains without Starlink services.

Cameroon: A Comprehensive Ban

Cameroon took some of the most decisive action of any African government against Starlink. In 2024, authorities banned the import of Starlink equipment, instructed customs officials to seize terminals at the border, and declared the service a national security threat on the grounds that, without a licence, Starlink was not subject to oversight by the country's Telecommunications Regulatory Board. Services were suspended and hardware confiscated. The government cited data security, digital sovereignty, and concerns about competition with licensed domestic providers. The ban remains in place, making Cameroon

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African News

Sovereignty in the Sky: Why African Nations Are Right to Reject Starlink

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one of the clearest examples of a government willing to enforce hard regulatory lines against satellite internet.

Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo: Bans Reversed Under Pressure

Zimbabwe banned Starlink in 2024, citing illegal usage, threats to national security, and lack of regulatory compliance. The ban was lifted a few months later after Starlink agreed to an exclusive partnership with a telecommunications firm owned by a businessman with close ties to President Emmerson Mnangagwa. That outcome raised eyebrows among regulatory analysts: it appeared that approval was granted not because SpaceX met Zimbabwe's policy criteria, but because the right political relationship had been brokered. The pattern — in which licence access depends less on compliance than on who picks up the phone — raises questions about whether such approvals serve the public interest or a narrower set of connected parties.

The Democratic Republic of Congo previously banned Starlink due to concerns that rebel groups operating in the country's volatile eastern regions would use unmonitored satellite internet to coordinate attacks. The ban was reversed in 2025, when a licence was approved. The DRC's conflict zones have long been a testing ground for satellite com-

munications — by militias, humanitarian organisations, and journalists alike — and the government's oscillating position reflects the genuine complexity of regulating technology that cannot be physically contained within borders.

Sudan, Uganda, and the Spectrum of Instability

In Sudan, Starlink is not legally operational but is widely used on the black market. The government banned the service citing threats to safety posed by rebel militants, particularly as the country descended into civil war from 2023 onwards. The Sudanese case illustrates a paradox: Starlink's ability to provide connectivity independent of state-controlled infrastructure is precisely what makes it valuable to civilians and aid workers — and precisely what makes it intolerable to governments engaged in information warfare against their own populations.

Uganda presents a different scenario. Starlink had begun attracting users in the country before completing the regulatory process. When authorities cited unauthorised and unlicensed use, the company ultimately withdrew its services rather than face legal penalties. Uganda's regulators framed the episode as an assertion of telecom sovereignty rather than a rejection of connectivity itself. The service is pending regulatory approval.

Egypt and Ethiopia: Protecting State Monopolies

Both Egypt and Ethiopia have kept Starlink at bay to protect state-owned telecommunications industries. Egypt's market is dominated by a government-linked telecom sector that would face direct competitive disruption from a satellite internet provider bypassing terrestrial infrastructure. Ethiopia's state-owned Ethio Telecom has been undergoing a gradual privatisation, and officials are wary of any external service that could fragment the market before that process is complete. In both cases, the concern is less about security and more about economic sovereignty — the right to determine how the country's communications sector develops and who profits from it.

Why the West Embraces What Africa Resists

The contrast between Starlink's reception in the Global North and its fraught history in Africa is stark, and it is not accidental. As of early 2026, Starlink is available in over 110 countries worldwide. The United States, where the company is headquartered, has the deepest penetration, with nationwide coverage including Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands, and over 2.5 million subscribers. Most European countries — including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Poland — have also approved

seeks to enter African markets with economic transformation requirements or strategic concerns about data sovereignty, it meets a different kind of scrutiny.

It is worth noting that Starlink is not universally welcome in the West either. Russia and Belarus have banned the service, viewing it as a tool of Western influence. China prohibits Starlink receiver imports and is developing its own satellite internet constellation. India, despite being the world's most populous democracy and a theoretically attractive market, had not granted Starlink a full operating licence as of early 2026, citing data sovereignty concerns, spectrum allocation disputes, and a preference for promoting domestic satellite internet projects. Even within Europe, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina do not yet have Starlink service.

The difference is that when India resists Starlink, the global technology press frames it as a regulatory barrier to progress. When African countries do the same, the framing tilts toward accusations of protectionism, autocracy, or incompetence. That asymmetry is not lost on African regulators and policymakers, who increasingly read the debate over Starlink through the same lens they apply to other episodes of external pressure on their economies.

What Does Starlink Really Want in Africa?

SpaceX's stated rationale for its African push is straightforward: connectivity. Sub-Saharan Africa has some of the world's lowest internet penetration rates. Rural communities across Namibia, the DRC, Uganda, and dozens of other nations lack reliable broadband access. Starlink's low-Earth-orbit satellite constellation, which by early 2026 had deployed over 10,700 satellites with a target of 12,000, can deliver download speeds of 100 to 200 megabits per second to virtually any point on the continent. The humanitarian case writes itself.

But the humanitarian narrative obscures a set of commercial and geopolitical im-

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African News

Sovereignty in the Sky: Why African Nations Are Right to Reject Starlink



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
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Technology commentators have pointed out that Starlink's rejection is not necessarily final. CRAN indicated the decision could be reconsidered within 90 days, either on the regulator's own initiative or following a petition from Starlink.

peratives that deserve closer examination. Africa is, quite simply, a market. With a population exceeding 1.4 billion people — projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050 — and rapidly growing smartphone penetration and digital economies, the continent represents one of the last major untapped subscriber pools for any global technology platform. As Starlink reaches saturation in North America and Europe, African growth is essential to its long-term revenue projections. As of December 2025, the company had over 9 million global subscribers and estimated 2024 revenues exceeding \$3.2 billion. The financial logic of African expansion is not charitable — it is existential.

There is also a data dimension that receives insufficient attention in mainstream coverage. When users connect through Starlink, their internet traffic does not travel through local servers or domestic infrastructure. It travels via satellite to international gateway stations, most of which are located in the United States. This means that data generated by African users — their browsing habits, communication patterns, financial transactions, health queries, educational records, and economic activity — is routed through infrastructure controlled by a US-registered corporation operating under US law. African-generated data can be stored, analysed, and potentially monetised overseas, well beyond the reach of African data protection frameworks.

The implications are significant. Legal scholars focusing on data sovereignty have demonstrated that aggregated datasets allow accurate reconstruction of behavioural and economic patterns, particularly when combined with external datasets. A government's tax revenues, a country's health trends, a community's economic activity — all of this becomes legible to whoever controls the gateway through which the data flows. African nations that have spent years developing data localisation policies — requiring that citizen data be stored and processed within national borders — would find those policies effectively nullified by Starlink's architecture.

The geopolitical picture is further complicated by reporting that the US State Department has actively lobbied multiple African nations, including the Gambia, Cameroon, and Lesotho, to approve Starlink licensing, reportedly offering development incentives and issuing warnings about reduced aid for non-compliance. This is not the behaviour of a neutral commercial actor seeking market access on merit. It suggests that Starlink's expansion in Africa is understood within US foreign policy circles as a strategic objective — a tool in the contest for influence over the continent's digital infrastructure, in direct competition with China's Digital Silk Road, which has spent two decades building surveillance-capable telecommunications networks across Africa through Huawei and other providers.

In this frame, African nations are not choosing between connectivity and isolation. They are choosing between competing external powers, each of whom wants to control the infrastructure through which African data flows and African populations communicate. That is a fundamentally different choice, and it deserves to be made with clear eyes.

The Case for Resistance: Why Rejection May Be the Wisest Move

The conventional argument against African regulatory resistance to Starlink runs as follows: Africa has a massive connectivity deficit, Starlink can close it, regulatory barriers prolong poverty and educational disadvantage, and the concerns about data sovereignty are speculative compared to the concrete benefits of broadband access. This argument is not without merit. Millions of African children attend schools without reliable internet. Rural health workers cannot access telemedicine platforms. Farmers cannot reach digital markets. These are real costs of the digital divide, and they fall on the most vulnerable populations.

But there is a counter-argument that deserves to be taken with equal seriousness. It begins with a question: connectivity on whose terms?

The Digital Colonialism



Concern

The phrase 'digital colonialism' is invoked frequently enough in this debate to risk losing its analytical edge. But the structural analogy it describes is precise. Colonial extraction operated by controlling the infrastructure through which value flowed — roads, railways, ports, banks — and ensuring that the profits of that flow accrued to the metropolitan power rather than the territory. Digital infrastructure — the cables, satellites, platforms, and data centres through which the information economy operates — functions analogously. Whoever controls the pipes controls the economy. Over 80 percent of African internet traffic is still routed through Europe, even when both the sender and receiver are on the continent. An email from Kampala to Nairobi is likely to travel through London or Frankfurt before arriving. This is not a technical necessity. It is a consequence of who built the infrastructure and on whose terms. Starlink does not address this structural imbalance. It deepens it. By bypassing African terrestrial infrastructure and routing traffic through US-based gateways, it does not empower African internet users — it gives them high-speed access to an architecture they do not own or control.

Nowhere in Africa does Starlink share ownership. In Nigeria, Starlink's terminal cost exceeded 400,000 naira — more than double

the country's minimum wage — and the monthly subscription exceeded 30 US dollars. In Kenya, the initial hardware cost was nearly 700 US dollars before public backlash forced a price reduction. In Rwanda, the government offered subsidies covering over 60 percent of costs just to make the service accessible. Across the continent, Starlink's pricing model means that the populations most in need of connectivity — rural, low-income, geographically remote — are the least likely to be able to afford it. The digital divide is not narrowed; it is replicated within Africa along new economic fault lines.

Tax Revenue and Economic Leakage

African tax authorities have raised a concern that cuts across ideological lines: Starlink's model allows it to reach customers and extract revenue from African economies without paying taxes or regulatory fees at rates commensurate with its market presence. One policy analyst described Starlink's model as 'economically lopsided, extracting value without contributing to local economies.' Traditional telecommunications operators — whether state-owned or private — build infrastructure, employ local staff, pay spectrum fees, contribute to universal service funds, and pay corporate taxes. These contributions fund schools, clinics, roads, and the very rural connectivity programmes that might

otherwise justify Starlink's presence.

A service that skims the most commercially attractive segments of the market while leaving the costs of rural rollout to local operators and governments is not a partner in African development. It is a free-rider on the investments of others. Regulatory frameworks that require local equity participation, tax compliance, and local employment are not obstacles to progress. They are the mechanisms through which foreign investment is made to serve national development rather than simply extract from it.

Security and the Ungovernable Network

The security concerns raised by multiple African governments are not paranoia. They are the legitimate expression of a regulatory challenge that has no easy answer. Starlink's architecture makes it extremely difficult for governments to exercise the kinds of oversight that they routinely apply to terrestrial telecommunications networks. Lawful interception — the ability of security agencies to monitor communications under court-authorized warrants — is technically complex and often effectively impossible with satellite internet operating through foreign gateways. Content regulation, data localisation, and emergency shutdown orders that governments can apply to domestic ISPs do not translate cleanly to a satellite service whose ground

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infrastructure is in another country.

This is not an argument for authoritarian surveillance. It is an argument for proportionate governance. Every country in the world — including the United States — requires telecommunications operators to have lawful interception capabilities. Sri Lanka, for example, placed a Starlink rollout on hold in March 2025, specifically because the licence granted did not include lawful interception provisions required for national security. The rollout was only cleared in July 2025 after SpaceX agreed to integrate oversight mechanisms. That negotiation should be the model — not the exception. In conflict-affected states like the DRC and Sudan, the risks are acute. When rebel groups, militias, or non-state armed actors can communicate through an encrypted satellite network that bypasses state telecommunications infrastructure, the consequences for civilian populations can be severe. African governments navigating active conflicts or fragile peace processes are not being unreasonable when they ask for regulatory arrangements that keep satellite internet within the ambit of national law.

The Precedent Problem

Perhaps the most important argument for regulatory firmness is the precedent it sets. If Starlink can enter African markets without complying with local ownership requirements, data localisation rules, or employment obligations — simply by applying political pressure and reframing regulatory requirements as discriminatory obstacles — then every subsequent foreign technology company will make the same arguments. The legitimacy of African regulatory frameworks, built over years of democratic deliberation, would be progressively eroded.

As the chairperson of Public Interest SA, one of the civil society organisations that challenged Starlink's South African lobbying effort, stated: if laws are changed for every foreign billionaire, the integrity of the democratic regulatory framework is compromised. That integrity is not a bureaucratic nicety. It is the foundation on which investment certainty, rule of

law, and equitable economic development rest. An Africa that bends its rules under external pressure is an Africa that will continue to be a raw material for other people's ambitions.

Towards a Better Deal: What Africa Should Demand

Rejecting Starlink's current terms is not the same as rejecting connectivity. The digital divide in Africa is real and urgent. Low-Earth-orbit satellite internet is a genuinely transformative technology. The question is not whether to embrace satellite internet, but on what terms.

Several African governments have shown that better terms are negotiable. Rwanda has used its negotiating leverage to secure government subsidies and institutional connectivity for schools and health facilities, rather than leaving market access entirely to price. Nigeria has pushed for infrastructure sharing arrangements with Starlink. Zambia and Malawi have licensed the service while maintaining requirements for local data handling. Amazon's Project Kuiper — which aims to rival Starlink with its own satellite constellation — offers African regulators an alternative that could be used as competitive leverage in negotiations with SpaceX. The African Union's Data Policy Framework, adopted in recent years, provides a continental blueprint for demanding more from foreign technology investors. By defining data as a strategic asset essential to innovation, inclusion, and digital transformation, the framework promotes policies that attract investment while protecting sovereignty. Governments that require sensitive data storage to remain within national borders, that insist on local equity participation, and that mandate meaningful employment and skills transfer, are not enemies of the digital economy. They are architects of a digital economy that serves African populations rather than simply passing through them.

Regional internet exchange points — facilities that allow African internet traffic to be routed within the continent rather than through European or American intermediaries — represent a long-term structural investment



WHY UGANDA'S MUSEVENI FEARS STARLINK?

that would fundamentally shift the power dynamics of African internet access. Combined with the licensing of satellite internet services on terms that include local partnerships and data localisation, such investments could deliver the connectivity benefits that Starlink promises without the sovereignty costs that its current model imposes.

The path forward is not isolation. It is negotiation from a position of self-respect.

Conclusion: Satellites Do Not Hover Above Sovereignty

Namibia's rejection of Starlink on March 23, 2026, was a quiet act of regulatory self-determination. It made no headlines in Silicon Valley. It was not accompanied by a presidential speech or a diplomatic incident. It was a notice in a government gazette, unsigned and unexplained, declining to grant a licence to a fully foreign-owned entity that had already been caught operating illegally in the country.

But in its quietness, it said something important. It said that Namibian law applies to companies with 10,700 satellites as much as it applies to companies with a single office on Independence Avenue. It said that the legacy of colonialism — including

the economic nationalism that post-independence Namibia has built into its telecommunications law — is not a historical curiosity to be waved aside by a company with a good broadband proposition. And it said, implicitly, that the promise of connectivity does not automatically confer the right to operate without accountability.

Starlink may yet return to Namibia. The 90-day review window remains open. If SpaceX is willing to structure a genuinely Namibian entity — with local equity, local employment, and data handling that stays within Namibian jurisdiction — the door is not permanently closed. The same is true across the continent. The question is whether SpaceX is willing to do business on African terms, or whether it will continue to seek access on the terms it dictates.

Africa has seen this story before. The companies that extracted rubber from the Congo, gold from the Rand, and minerals from across the continent did not come as conquerors. They came as providers — of employment, of infrastructure, of modernity. The terms of that provision, invariably, turned out to serve the providers rather than the provided-for. African governments that are asking hard questions about

data sovereignty, local ownership, and economic contribution before granting licences to Starlink are not anti-technology. They are anti-extraction. And after five centuries of being on the wrong end of that arrangement, they have earned the right to insist on something better. Satellites do not hover above sovereignty. And the skies over Africa are not a regulatory vacuum.

Sources and References

This article draws on reporting and analysis from: Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) Government Gazette, March 23, 2026; Windhoek Observer; TechWeez; Innovation Village; TechCentral; Space in Africa; The South African; Capital FM Kenya; The Spectator World; ACSUS Africa-US Forum; AllAfrica; New America Foundation; ICTworks; Statista; Wikipedia (Starlink); Sage Journals (Satellite Internet and the Disruption of Telecommunications Infrastructures in Cameroon, Georges Macaire Eyenga, 2025); and multiple original commentary and analysis sources. All factual claims have been cross-referenced against multiple independent sources.

WORLD

Plastic Trash Made Valuable, Yet Unbought

By: Afia Agyapomaa Ofosu .
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Worth
Noting:

- Across these countries, one consistent problem arises: making upcycled plastic products is often expensive. As a result, innovators must either sell at prices above what most buyers can afford or operate at a loss.

- Aliyu Sadiq points out that even training women in communities to make crafts and cooking fuels from agricultural waste has not led to significant market growth because the cost of production still outweighs the price people are willing to pay.

- At the same time, plastic pollution in Sub-Saharan Africa is a serious and growing concern. Scientific research estimates that the region generates around 17 million tonnes of plastic waste every year, a significant portion of which comes from everyday packaging and single-use plastics.

- Much of this waste is poorly managed. Studies indicate that roughly 70 percent of all municipal solid waste in the region — including plastics — is openly dumped rather than collected and treated through formal systems. This means plastic often ends up littering streets, clogging drains, polluting rivers, and harming ecosystems.

with finished products, another reality becomes clear: they are not leaving the lab. “As a scientist, when I see what we have created, I am happy,” he admits. “But the business community

In another part of Ghana, Mckingtorch Africa transforms plastics into school desks, shades, and roofing tiles. Its founder, Makafui Awuku, explains another part of the problem: “Most people do not care about sustainability. They care about price. My goal is to make my roofing tiles and desk boards so cheap and close to wood in price that they become a direct substitute.”

Across Borders, Similar Challenges

Built from plastic waste
The struggle to sell upcycled plastic products is not limited to Ghana.

Ecocycle, a circular economy organisation in Nigeria repurposes waste into useful solutions like plastic bottle toilets for school communities. But co-founder Aliyu Sadiq says commercialisation remains a major challenge. “A few people who are environmentally inclined are willing to pay more. But for the majority, they want what is cheap, affordable and beautiful,” he says. Even though these plastic toilets are strong and environmentally friendly, their production cost is higher than that of traditional construction methods, so people do not buy them.

A Promising Exception

Away from West Africa, in East Africa, Uganda presents a different picture. Walakira Bruno, founder of B-MANDELA Enterprises Ltd, reports that people are interested in buying upcycled plastic products—especially reusable bags. But he notes that education is key. After explaining how these products benefit both people and the environment, interest grows. “How are they better than local ones? Such trainings help,” he says.

Why Commercialisation Is Hard

Most African plastic goes to waste
Across these countries, one consistent problem arises: making upcycled plastic products is often expensive. As a result, innovators must either sell at prices above what most buyers can afford



Recycling workers sorting bottles Afia Agyapomaa Ofosu

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Recycling rates in Sub-Saharan Africa remain very low compared with many other parts of the world. While precise figures vary by country and data source, international development reports suggest that only a small fraction of plastic waste — roughly 10–12 percent — is recycled, with the rest being lost to dumping or informal



Office items made from plastic waste



A roof made from plastic waste

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WORLD

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By:
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Worth Noting:

- The innovators, scientists, and communities across this continent agree on one thing: upcycled plastic products have potential — but only if they can find buyers.
- Dr. Agyenim believes the next step is dialogue between scientists, businesses, and governments to determine how to make these products commercially viable.
- Experts also suggest that governments and private companies should consider policies that promote locally upcycled goods — for example, by reducing the importation of products that local innovators can make from recycled plastics.
- Additionally, Aliyu Sadiq insists that “Upcycling innovators do not just need applause for saving the environment — they need smart government incentives, public awareness, and practical training that make their circular products affordable, scalable, and commercially viable for the everyday consumer.”

disposal.

Science Offers New Hope

While businesses struggle, scientists are also working on breakthroughs. One innovation comes from Imperial College London, where researchers developed a Biotransformation (Polymateria) technology. This method makes conventional plastics biodegradable. When plastics with this technology are exposed to sunlight, heat, air, and moisture, they break down into harmless substances within about two years — leaving no microplastics or toxins behind.

This technology is now being introduced in Nigeria through a partnership involving Hercules Manufacturing and Oando Clean Energy. The goal is to tackle plastic pollution from ordinary single-use plastics such as bags and water sachets.

What Comes Next?

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A 2025 research study titled “Circular Economy Approaches for Plastic Waste Management in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges” highlights the economic promise of a circular economy. It notes that supporting waste collectors, recycling industries, and upcycling businesses could create jobs and reduce environmental harm — if governments provide the necessary technical



Washroom built with plastics in Nigeria Afia Agyapomaa Ofosu

and financial support.

Between Waste and Wealth

From the labs in Accra and markets in Kampala to communities in Nigeria, Africa’s innovators are finding creative uses for plastic waste. They are proving that what many call trash can become treasure — but only if the world learns to value these products.

The challenge now is not just innovation, but commercialisation — making products that individuals and institutions will choose to buy. If that happens, this could become more than a fight against pollution; it could become a new pathway to jobs, income, and a cleaner planet.

This report is part of the UK-Ghana ST&I Media Training.

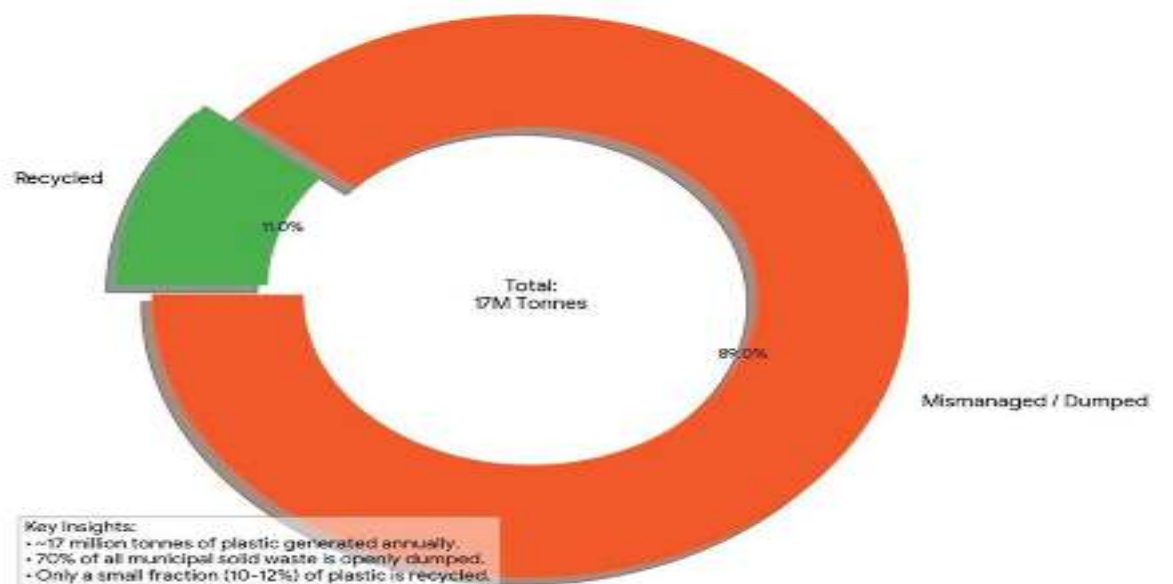
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A bag made from plastic Uganda Afia Agyapomaa Ofosu

Annual Plastic Waste Management in Sub-Saharan Africa



Uzbekistan

The legal force of electronic evidence in Uzbekistan



By: Toxirova Diyora Voxid
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Worth Noting:

- In recent years, Uzbekistan has undergone major institutional reforms aimed at promoting transparency, efficiency, and accessibility within its justice system. As part of the national digitalization strategy, the legal recognition of electronic evidence has become a crucial component of judicial modernization. Courts increasingly rely on digital data to resolve civil, administrative, and criminal cases, prompting the development of robust regulatory mechanisms to ensure reliability and authenticity.
- This paper analyzes the legal status, admissibility criteria, and evidentiary value of electronic evidence within the legal framework of Uzbekistan. In addition, it discusses the role of electronic signatures, data integrity mechanisms, and forensic expertise in determining the evidential weight of digital materials.

Abstract

The rapid digital transformation taking place in Uzbekistan has led to significant changes in the practices of evidence collection, verification, and evaluation in judicial and administrative proceedings. Electronic evidence—ranging from digital documents and electronic signatures to multimedia files and online communication records—has become an integral part of modern legal systems. This article examines the legal force of electronic evidence in Uzbekistan, analyzes the national legislation governing its application, and highlights existing challenges and future directions for strengthening digital justice.

Keywords:

Electronic evidence, digital document, electronic signature, admissibility, procedural law, cybersecurity, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

In recent years, Uzbekistan has undergone major institutional reforms aimed at promoting transparency, efficiency, and accessibility within its justice system. As part of the national digitalization strategy, the legal recognition of electronic evidence has become a crucial component of judicial modernization. Courts increasingly rely on digital data to resolve civil, administrative, and criminal cases, prompting the development of robust regulatory mechanisms to ensure reliability and authenticity.

This paper analyzes the legal status, admissibility criteria, and evidentiary value of electronic evidence within the legal framework of Uzbekistan. In addition, it discusses the role of electronic signatures, data integrity mechanisms, and forensic expertise in determining the evidential weight of digital materials.

1. Concept and Types of Electronic Evidence

Electronic evidence refers to any information stored, transmitted, or created in electronic form that may be used to prove or disprove facts in legal proceedings. In Uzbekistan, its definition and scope derive from several legislative sources, including the Civil Procedure Code, Criminal Procedure Code, the Law “On Electronic Document Turnover,” and the Law “On Electronic Digital Signature.”

Common forms of electron-



ic evidence include:

- Electronic documents (PDF, DOCX, XML formats)
- E-mail correspondence
- Social media and messaging platform data (Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram)
- Audio and video recordings
- Mobile phone and computer metadata
- Server logs and network traffic records
- Blockchain-based records
- Electronic transactions and bank statements
- Documents certified with an Electronic Digital Signature (EDS)

These types of evidence are recognized on par with traditional paper-based documents, provided that their authenticity and integrity can be demonstrated.

2. Legal Framework Governing Electronic Evidence
Uzbekistan’s legal system has progressively established norms that regulate the creation, processing, transmission, and use of electronic evidence.

2.1. Electronic Document Turnover

The Law “On Electronic Document Turnover” ensures that electronic documents have equal legal force with paper documents when they comply with established technical and procedural standards. The law defines the responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and government bodies in managing digital information.

2.2. Electronic Digital Signature (EDS)

The Law “On Electronic Digital Signature” recognizes EDS as a legally binding equivalent of handwritten signatures. An EDS provides:

- Identification of the signer
- Authentication of the document’s origin
- Protection against unauthorized changes

Courts treat documents verified by a qualified EDS as fully reliable evidence unless

proven otherwise.

2.3. Procedural Codes

The Civil Procedure Code and Criminal Procedure Code explicitly allow the submission of electronic evidence. They also establish rules for:

- Admissibility
- Collection procedures
- Preservation obligations
- Forensic examination of digital materials

These provisions create the legal basis for integrating digital data into judicial practice.

3. Admissibility and Evidentiary Weight of Electronic Materials

For electronic evidence to be deemed admissible, courts assess several key criteria:

3.1. Authenticity

The party submitting electronic evidence must prove that the data is genuine and has not been altered. Hash values, metadata analysis, secure system logs, and digital signatures play important roles in this verification process.

3.2. Integrity

Data must retain its original state from the moment of creation to its presentation in court. Chain-of-custody protocols are essential to ensure the evidential reliability of digital files.

3.3. Relevance

Courts evaluate whether the evidence is directly related to the disputed facts. For example, messaging records must clearly reflect the parties involved and the context of communication.

3.4. Expert Examination

In complex cases—especially those involving multimedia files, cybercrimes, or digital manipulation—courts may order a forensic digital analysis. Experts determine whether the content has been tampered with, identify metadata, and evaluate the authenticity of electronic signatures.

3.5. Procedural Compliance

Electronic evidence must

be collected and processed in accordance with legal requirements. Evidence obtained unlawfully, such as unauthorized access to private correspondence or hacked accounts, may be considered inadmissible.

4. Judicial Practice and Challenges

While Uzbekistan has built a solid legal foundation, several practical challenges remain in the effective use of electronic evidence.

4.1. Technical Expertise

Not all judges and legal practitioners possess the specialized knowledge required to evaluate complex digital materials. This can lead to inconsistent decisions or excessive reliance on expert examinations.

4.2. Cybersecurity Risks

Electronic evidence can be vulnerable to hacking, unauthorized alteration, or system failures. To ensure reliability, courts must adopt secure data management systems and maintain forensic integrity.

4.3. Standardization Gaps

Although regulations exist, some procedures—such as chain-of-custody requirements—are not yet fully standardized across institutions. This creates differences in how courts handle similar types of digital evidence.

4.4. International Data Issues

Cross-border digital data retrieval, especially from foreign servers or international platforms, remains a procedural obstacle. Mutual legal assistance agreements (MLAs) are essential for obtaining evidence stored abroad.

5. Prospects for Strengthening Digital Justice in Uzbekistan

To enhance the legal force and reliability of electronic evidence, several measures can be adopted:

- Development of unified national standards for digital evidence handling

Improving digital literacy among judges, prosecutors, and lawyers

Expanding the use of blockchain technologies for secure data authentication

Establishing specialized cyber-forensics centers within judicial structures

Strengthening cooperation with international platforms for cross-border data exchange

Increasing public awareness about the legal significance of electronic signatures and secure communication tools

These steps will support Uzbekistan’s broader goal of modernizing its justice system and integrating digital technologies into legal processes.

Conclusion

Electronic evidence has become an indispensable component of contemporary legal practice in Uzbekistan. Supported by comprehensive legislation and growing judicial experience, digital records now possess full legal force when their authenticity, integrity, and procedural correctness are established. Although certain challenges—such as technical expertise, cybersecurity, and standardization—persist, ongoing reforms signal strong progress toward a secure and technologically advanced judicial environment.

Toxirova Diyora Voxid qizi was born on 07.11.2006 in the Kibray district of the Tashkent region. Nationality: Uzbek In 2013, I entered secondary school No. 11 in the Kibray district of the Tashkent region and graduated in May 2024. In September 2024, I was admitted to the 1st year of Tashkent State Law University and am currently studying in the 2nd year.

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Kenya's Democracy on a Knife Edge: Political Intolerance Poisons the Well Ahead of 2027 Vote

From factional warfare inside the ODM to presidential warnings and civil society alarm, a country once celebrated for its resilient democracy is sliding toward the kind of toxic political culture that has historically preceded its worst crises.

By: VALENTINE LOKTAR
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Worth Noting:

- The picture that emerges is not yet one of imminent catastrophe. But it is one of a democracy whose guardrails are being tested — and whose leaders appear, in too many instances, to be pushing against them rather than reinforcing them.
- “The elections are in 2027, not February 2026,” Saboti Member of Parliament Caleb Amisi warned in January, in remarks that captured the absurdity of a political class apparently incapable of pacing itself. Amisi, speaking from within the Orange Democratic Movement — Kenya’s principal opposition vehicle — directed his frustration squarely at his own side. Factional tensions inside the ODM, he argued, were not merely unhelpful. They were “pushing some leaders toward extreme positions,” creating an environment in which intolerance toward reform-minded voices could hollow the party from within.

NAIROBI — With eighteen months still to run before Kenya goes to the polls, a familiar and dangerous storm is gathering on the political horizon: the gradual normalisation of intolerance, tribal posturing and personal venom that has, in the past, transformed electoral seasons into seasons of fear. In the opening quarter of 2026, the warning signs have multiplied with troubling speed. Party infighting has metastasised into open enmity. Senior politicians have traded insults where they once traded ideas. Civil society organisations, historically the conscience of Kenyan public life, have sounded increasingly urgent alarms. And even President William Ruto — himself a product of Kenya’s often bruising political school — has felt compelled to warn his peers that the direction of travel is dangerous. The picture that emerges is not yet one of imminent catastrophe. But it is one of a democracy whose guardrails are being tested — and whose leaders appear, in too many instances, to be pushing against them rather than reinforcing them. “The elections are in 2027, not February 2026,” Saboti Member of Parliament Caleb Amisi warned in January, in remarks that captured the absurdity of a political class apparently incapable of pacing itself. Amisi, speaking from within the Orange Democratic Movement — Kenya’s principal opposition vehicle — directed his frustration squarely at his own side. Factional tensions inside the ODM, he argued, were not merely unhelpful. They were “pushing some leaders toward extreme positions,” creating an environment in which intolerance toward reform-minded voices could hollow the party from within.

“Growing divisions within the party are becoming hostile and counterproductive. Intolerance toward reform-minded members could undermine the party’s future.” — SABOTI MP CALEB AMISI, JANUARY 2026

Amisi’s intervention was remarkable not for its novelty — internal party feuds are a perennial feature of Kenyan politics — but for its candour. His acknowledgement that senior ODM figures, including those close

to former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, were engaged in factional skirmishing that risked consuming the party’s energy long before any manifesto had been written, underscored a central paradox of Kenya’s political culture: that parties organised ostensibly around policy platforms routinely subordinate those platforms to personal and clan-based power struggles.

The tensions within the ODM have been particularly sharp at the level of party leadership. Competing factions aligned with figures such as Secretary-General Edwin Sifuna and firebrand MP Babu Owino have reportedly accused one another of disloyalty, with accusations of intolerance toward dissenting voices becoming a staple of internal communications. Such dynamics, political analysts caution, do not merely weaken opposition coherence — they model, for the broader electorate, a political culture in which difference is treated as treachery.

“Political violence or intolerance in any form should not be tolerated” — yet the rhetoric of Kenya’s leaders in 2026 suggests some have not received the message.

The deterioration is not confined to opposition ranks. By March 2026, a coalition of Kenyan human rights groups had published a formal condemnation of what they described as a “rising incidence of insults, intolerance, and personal attacks” among the country’s political leaders — figures from both the ruling Kenya Kwanza coalition and the opposition Azimio camp. The groups were pointed in their language, accusing politicians of “irritating and embarrassing Kenyans through constant use of abusive language” and warning that such conduct was corrosive to the democratic norms that underpin peaceful electoral competition.

The civil society statement drew on a well-documented pattern. Kenya’s political discourse has long been marked by rhetorical excess. But observers note a qualitative shift in 2026: where previously politicians might trade barbs on social media while preserving a veneer of institutional respect, increasingly the abuse has migrated into formal polit-



ical settings — party rallies, parliamentary corridors, broadcast interviews. The line between partisan theatre and genuine hostility, never particularly firm in Kenya, is being erased.

“Political violence or intolerance in any form should not be tolerated. Leaders must avoid incitement and reckless statements.” — COALITION OF KENYAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS, MARCH 2026

Perhaps the most institutionally significant warning has come from the implementation committee of the National Dialogue Committee — the body established in the aftermath of Kenya’s 2023 political tensions to foster reconciliation between previously warring political camps. Committee members have expressed alarm at what they describe as a resurgence of intolerance that risks undoing the fragile gains made through that dialogue process. The committee specifically cited incidents of political thuggery and confrontations at public rallies as evidence that competition between rival camps is becoming more aggressive and, in some instances, physically threatening.

It is in this context that President Ruto’s own intervention must be read. Speaking on multiple occasions in early 2026, the President warned politicians against fuelling division, accusing unnamed leaders of encouraging tribal and political hostility instead of promoting national cohesion. His remarks were notable for their directness — and, critics observed, for a certain irony. Ruto himself rose to the presidency through a political culture in which

ethnic mobilisation and aggressive rhetoric were standard instruments of electoral competition. His call for restraint, though sincere in the assessment of many observers, arrives freighted with the complications of his own political biography. “Divisive politics risk undermining national cohesion. Leaders must promote unity rather than encouraging tribal and political hostility.” — PRESIDENT WILLIAM RUTO, EARLY 2026

Valentine Loktar, a political analyst at Laikipia University who has studied the dynamics of Kenya’s pre-election periods, argues that the 2026 pattern fits a recognisable template — but with features that make it more concerning than previous cycles. “What we are seeing is not just the normal heating up of political competition,” Loktar wrote in a March 2026 analysis. “It is the systematic degradation of the norms that allow that competition to take place peacefully. When leaders treat their opponents not as rivals to be defeated but as enemies to be destroyed, the conditions for violence are created — even if no one explicitly calls for it.”

Kenya’s history lends Loktar’s assessment particular weight. The violence that followed the disputed 2007 election — in which more than 1,300 people died and hundreds of thousands were displaced — was not caused solely by political miscalculation at the top. It was enabled by years of accumulated intolerance, ethnic grievance and rhetorical normalisation of hatred at the community level. The 2022 election, by contrast, passed relatively peacefully — a product, in part, of the de-escalation architecture built around institutions like

the NADCO committee. The fear among civil society groups is that those gains are now being carelessly traded away.

The structural conditions that have historically amplified political intolerance in Kenya remain largely intact. High youth unemployment, regional economic disparities, a media ecosystem in which inflammatory content attracts engagement, and a political financing system that rewards mobilisation over policy — all continue to create incentives for the kind of divisive politics that leaders such as Amisi are warning against. Without deliberate institutional countermeasures, the drift toward toxicity is likely to accelerate as the 2027 election draws nearer.

Civil society groups have called for an urgent national dialogue on the standards of political conduct, including voluntary codes of practice for political parties, enhanced powers for the National Cohesion and Integration Commission to sanction hate speech, and media responsibility pledges. Whether Kenya’s political class will embrace such measures — or whether the competitive pressures of an election cycle will crowd out such civic-mindedness — remains to be seen.

What is beyond doubt is that the trajectory of the first quarter of 2026 is troubling. Kenya has navigated worse before. But it has also, on at least one unforgettable occasion, discovered the price of letting political intolerance go unchallenged. The warning lights are flashing. Whether anyone in authority is watching them is a question the next eighteen months will answer — one way or another.

YOUR OPINION IS INVALUABLE

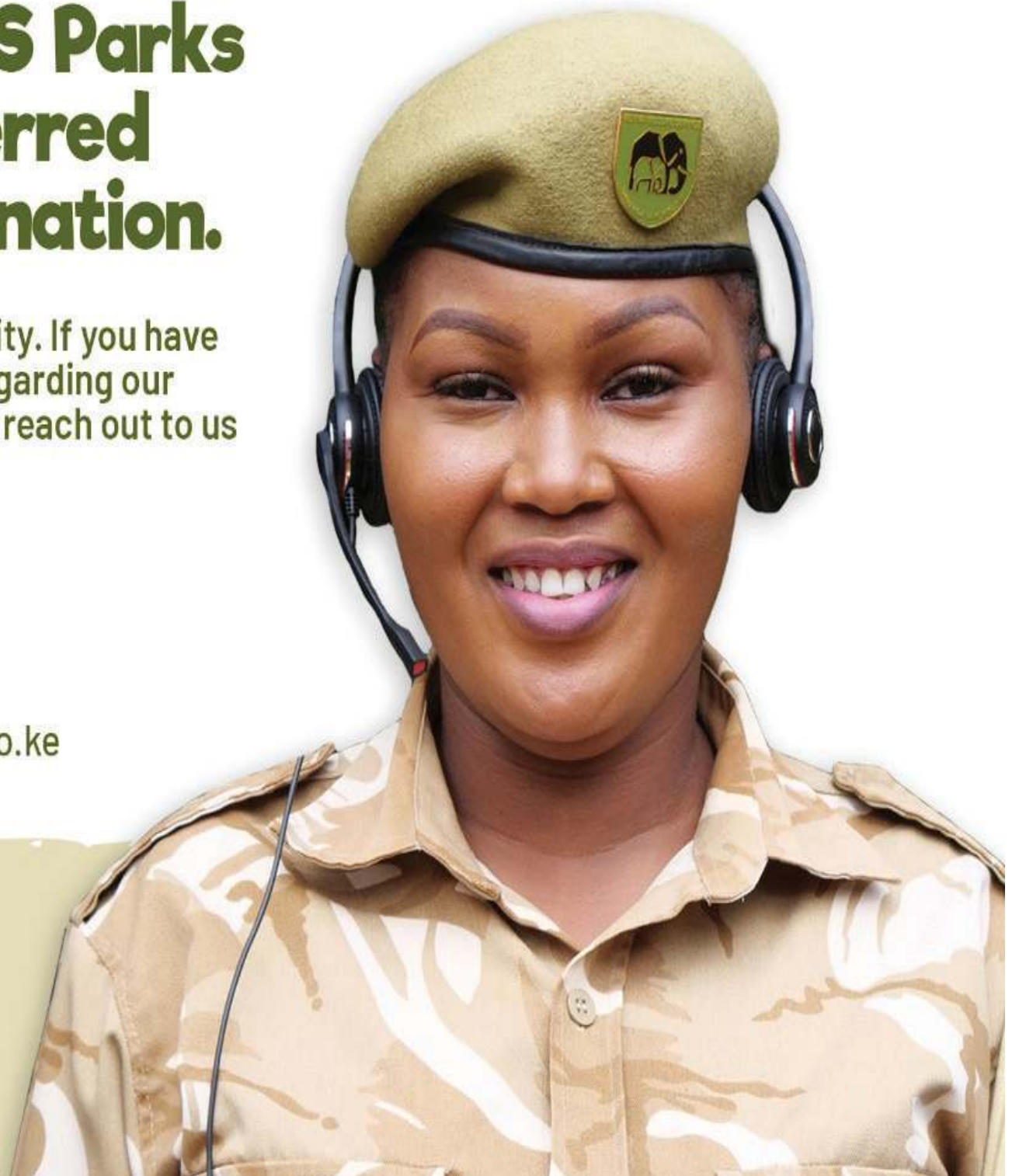
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FROM THE GHATS OF THE GANGES TO THE SPIRIT OF ISTANBUL: FRIENDSHIP FORGED THROUGH HUN BOXING

In a time when the world was divided by distance, martial arts created an unexpected bridge. From the sacred ghats of Kashi to the martial traditions of Turkey, Hun Boxing connects cultures through discipline, respect, and shared human values.

By: Pragati Gupta in India
xxxxxxxxxxxx

On the banks of the sacred Ganga in Kashi, life flows with ancient wisdom, spiritual rhythm, and centuries-old tradition.

Thousands of miles away, in Istanbul, a city that bridges continents, history echoes through domes, minarets, and the enduring spirit of warriors who once shaped civilisations.

At first glance, Kashi and Turkey may seem worlds apart. One is known as the spiritual heart of India; the other carries a powerful martial legacy rooted in discipline and resilience. Yet in 2020, amid the uncertainty of the global COVID-19 pandemic, these two cultures found an unexpected bridge - not through diplomacy or politics, but through martial arts.

That bridge was the World Hun Boxing Federation, led by its founder and General President, HB Prof. Grand Master Yilmaz Baygöl.

In the midst of global lockdowns, when physical borders were sealed and uncertainty dominated daily life, digital platforms quietly became new meeting grounds. It was during this time that I connected with Grand Master Yilmaz Baygöl through social media.

What began as a professional interaction soon evolved into a meaningful exchange of ideas about discipline, youth development, and cultural heritage.

Despite the challenging circumstances of the pandemic, he offered a week of online Hun Boxing training at no cost.

In a time when much of the world was focused on survival and limitation, this gesture reflected something deeper: commitment to sharing knowledge without barriers.

At the conclusion of the training, I was honoured with an appreciation certificate — a moment that remains significant in both my professional and personal journey. Beyond the certificate itself, it symbolised trust, encouragement, and international recognition during one of the most perilous periods in recent history.

Established to preserve, de-



A young Hun Boxing athlete holds a certificate of proud achievement after displaying her Hun Boxing belt.

velop, and promote Hun Boxing on an international scale, the World Hun Boxing Federation is guided by discipline, respect, courage, self-control, and ethical values.

According to Grand Master Baygöl, sport is not merely about physical competition. "It is about personal development, responsibility, and strong character."

Hun Boxing was created from his long years of experience in various martial arts disciplines, combined with a deep respect for cultural heritage.

His vision was clear: to build a system that merges traditional values with modern training principles - one that prepares young people not only for competition, but for life itself.

The Federation chose Amsterdam as its headquarters for its international accessibility and multicultural environment, enabling effective coordination across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Today, the organisation continues expanding its global presence through international representatives and structured programmes.

Building a new martial arts system was not without difficulty. In its early stages, Hun Boxing faced limited financial resources, a lack

of institutional recognition, and the challenge of gaining public trust.

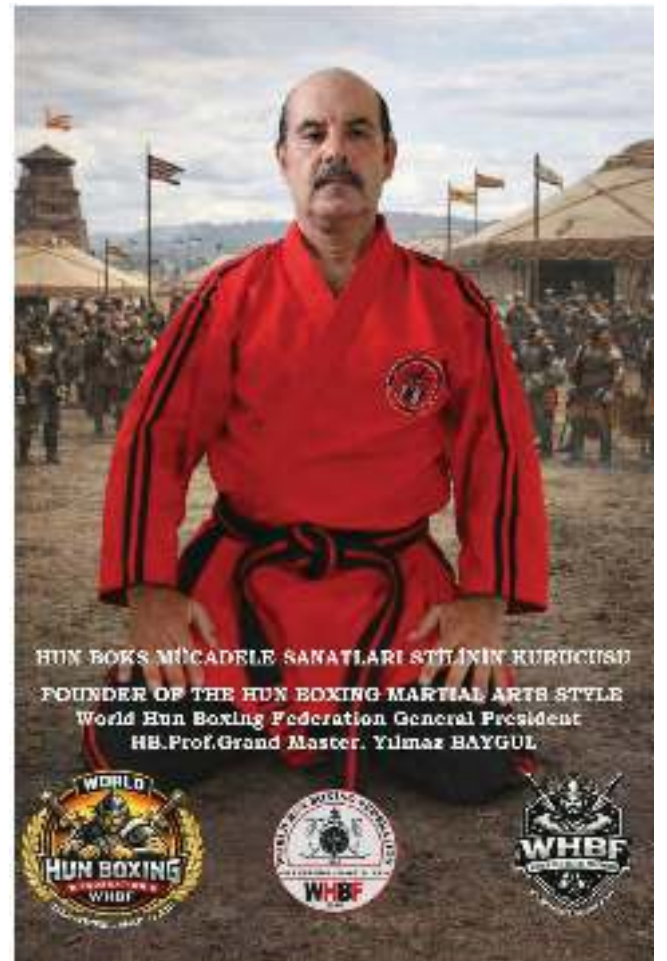
"Creating a new approach requires courage," Grand Master Baygöl shared. "You step outside established traditions."

Yet through consistency, discipline, and belief in his vision, he gradually established credibility. The success of his athletes spoke louder than doubt, and over time, Hun Boxing developed its own identity within the international martial arts community.

One of the most compelling aspects of our conversation was our focus on today's generation. In a world driven by instant gratification and digital distractions, developing patience and resilience has become increasingly challenging. Hun Boxing addresses this gap. Through structured training, young athletes learn that achievement demands effort. They develop endurance, responsibility, and moral awareness.

Martial arts, in this sense, function as a counterbalance to superficial digital engagement — offering discipline where distraction dominates.

Grand Master Baygöl emphasises that martial arts teach delayed success: the understanding that progress



Founder of the Hun Boxing Martial Art style, Prof. Grand Master Yilmaz Baygöl, who has attracted global interest in this martial art.



Hun Boxing Grand Master Yilmaz Baygöl demonstrates defensive technique during a practical training session.



Training session at the World Hun Boxing Federation, where athletes develop discipline and character through martial arts.

requires repetition, humility, and perseverance. These lessons extend far beyond the training hall.

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Established to preserve, develop, and promote Hun Boxing on an international scale, the World Hun Boxing Federation is guided by discipline, respect, courage, self-control, and ethical values.

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• Grand Master Baygül emphasises that martial arts teach delayed success: the understanding that progress requires repetition, humility, and perseverance. These lessons extend far beyond the training hall.

• Perhaps the most powerful dimension of Hun Boxing's philosophy is its strong commitment to gender equality. The Federation actively encourages equal participation of female and male athletes, ensuring that opportunity, respect, and fairness remain foundational principles. "Women are not only competitors," Grand Master Baygül notes, "they are leaders, coaches, and role models."

Perhaps the most powerful dimension of Hun Boxing's philosophy is its strong commitment to gender equality. The Federation actively encourages equal participation of female and male athletes, ensuring that opportunity, respect, and fairness remain foundational principles. "Women are not only competitors," Grand Master Baygül notes, "they are leaders, coaches, and role models."

In many parts of the world, martial arts have historically been male-dominated spaces. Yet Hun Boxing recognises that the future of global sport depends on inclusive representation. Female participation is viewed not as an addition, but as an essential pillar for international growth and social development.

As someone observing this from my base in Kashi — a city where tradition and modernity coexist — this perspective carries meaningful resonance.

Empowerment through discipline creates not just athletes, but confident individuals capable of shaping society.

Looking ahead, the Federation's goals for 2026 include organising international tournaments, expanding coach and referee training programmes, strengthening institutional structure, and deepening cooperation among member nations.

More importantly, the long-term legacy envisioned by Grand Master Baygül extends beyond competition. He hopes Hun Boxing will be remembered as a "school of life" — a system that keeps youth away from harmful habits, instils ethical responsibility, and prepares individuals to face life's challenges with resilience.

"The greatest achievement would be seeing future generations not only practice Hun Boxing but also further develop and spread it worldwide."

During the 2020 pandemic, online martial arts sessions connected participants from different countries simultaneously.

That experience demonstrated that martial arts function as a universal language.

Hun Boxing's core values, discipline, respect, and brotherhood naturally create bridges between cultures rich in heritage, such as Turkey and India.

From the ghats of Kashi to the training halls of Istanbul, the dialogue was never merely about technique. It was about shared human values.

Despite thousands of miles between us, the interaction carried the warmth of collaborative understanding rather than formality.

Sport, at its highest level, becomes diplomacy without negotiation tables. It builds friendships without political agendas. It teaches resilience without conflict.

For today's youth, especially young women entering arenas historically shaped by limitations, systems like Hun Boxing offer more than physical strength. They offer identity, confidence, and the courage to stand firm in a rapidly shifting world.

As Kashi continues to preserve its spiritual heritage and Turkey sustains its warrior legacy, initiatives like the World Hun Boxing Federation quietly weave new threads between nations.

What began in 2020 as an online training session during lockdown has evolved into a reminder that cultural exchange does not require proximity, only sincerity.

In an age often defined by division, the friendship between two cultures is symbolised through dialogue between a journalist from Kashi and a Grand Master from Turkey—reflects a simple yet profound truth:

When discipline meets respect, borders become bridges. And sometimes, the strongest bonds are formed not in grand arenas, but in shared commitment to values that transcend geography.

Pragati Gupta is a National Award-Winning Indian Journalist, Writer and Photographer

Edited by Shamlal Puri, Senior Editor in London



A female athlete practising advanced Hun Boxing striking techniques under the supervision of Grand Master Yilmaz Baygul.



Indefatigable Indian journalist Pragati Gupta received an honorary certificate from the Hun Boxing Federation in 2020 recognising her connection with the Global Hun Boxing Community.

Our tireless writer, Pragati Gupta, is an award-winning Indian journalist and photographer.



The Starting Gun Has Fired: How Kenya's Leaders and Citizens Are Racing to Shape the 2027 Election

With less than two years to polling day, Kenya's pre-election season is already in full swing — alliances are shifting, grassroots campaigns are launching, and a new generation of citizens is demanding more than promises. The 2027 vote will be a referendum on whether Kenya's democracy has truly grown up.

By: TRACY ACHIENG
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Worth Noting:

• From the corridors of Nairobi's political inner circles to the dusty market squares of rural counties, from WhatsApp groups in Kisumu to voter registration drives in Mombasa's coastal wards, a country of 55 million people is beginning the long, complex and often contentious process of deciding who will lead it next. What distinguishes this cycle from its predecessors, observers say, is the breadth and sophistication of the preparation — on both sides of the ballot.

• On the political front, the early manoeuvring has been swift and, in places, startling. The rigid party allegiances that defined the 2022 contest — which pitted President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza coalition against former Prime Minister Raila Odinga's Azimio la Umoja — are already showing signs of fracture and reconfiguration. Coalition architects on all sides have quietly begun sounding out potential allies, testing the limits of old loyalties and exploring new ones.

NAIROBI — Eighteen months before Kenyans queue at the ballot box, the machinery of the country's most consequential democratic exercise since 2022 is already turning. The 2027 general elections are no longer a distant fixture on the calendar — they are the organising principle of political life, civic conversation and institutional reform across the nation.

From the corridors of Nairobi's political inner circles to the dusty market squares of rural counties, from WhatsApp groups in Kisumu to voter registration drives in Mombasa's coastal wards, a country of 55 million people is beginning the long, complex and often contentious process of deciding who will lead it next. What distinguishes this cycle from its predecessors, observers say, is the breadth and sophistication of the preparation — on both sides of the ballot.

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tion. Coalition architects on all sides have quietly begun sounding out potential allies, testing the limits of old loyalties and exploring new ones.

For Azimio, the challenge is one of renewal and regrouping. Having suffered a narrow and bitterly disputed defeat in 2022, the coalition faces the dual task of maintaining internal unity while refreshing a narrative that resonates with an electorate increasingly impatient with political dynasties. Raila Odinga, now serving as African Union Commission Chairperson, remains the gravitational centre of the Azimio formation, but in his continental absence it has fallen to lieutenants to hold the coalition together and articulate its 2027 direction. Among the most prominent Azimio-aligned voices recalibrating for 2027 is Junet Mohamed, ODM's Director of Elections and close Odinga ally, who has been blunt about the need for the opposition to reconnect with ordinary Kenyans on economic terms rather than rely on the loyalty politics of previous cycles.

"We must go back to the people. Voters are tired of being treated as audiences. They want to be participants — in policy, in accountability, in

the decisions that shape their lives. Azimio will win 2027 from the ground up, not from hotel conference rooms." — JUNET MOHAMED, ODM DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS, MARCH 2026

Meanwhile, Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya — who serves in President Ruto's government as Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development — occupies one of the more complex political positions heading into 2027. A former Kakamega Governor and one-time Azimio stalwart who crossed the floor to join the Kenya Kwanza administration, Oparanya's trajectory illustrates the ideological fluidity that characterises Kenya's pre-election realignments. His ministry's outreach to small business owners and cooperative societies across western Kenya is being watched closely by strategists on both sides as a barometer of shifting grassroots sentiment.

On the government side, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has been particularly active, criss-crossing counties in what officials describe as development tours but which political observers read plainly as early campaign positioning.

"We are not campaigning — we are delivering. But Kenyans will judge the government on what it has built, what it has fixed, and what it has improved in their daily lives. That is the only manifesto that matters." — DEPUTY PRESIDENT KITHURE KINDIKI, ADDRESSING A PUBLIC FORUM IN EMBU COUNTY, FEBRUARY 2026

The most striking development in this pre-election period, however, is not what is happening among the political elite — it is what is happening among ordinary Kenyans. Across the country, a wave of civic engagement is building that analysts describe as qualitatively different from anything seen in previous electoral cycles. Driven largely by the penetration of smartphones and affordable mobile data, citizens — and young Kenyans in particular — are engaging with political issues in ways that bypass traditional gatekeepers entirely.

"Young Kenyans are not apathetic — they are strategic. They watched 2022 and they are determined that 2027 will be different." — Nerima Wako-Ojiwa, Siasa Place

Social media platforms have become the primary arena

for political debate, mobilisation and — critically — accountability. Government spending is tracked and scrutinised in real time. Political promises made on the campaign trail are archived and resurface, often with devastating effect, when they go unfulfilled. Leaders who once relied on the short memory of an electorate with limited access to information now find themselves facing constituents who have screenshots. Nerima Wako-Ojiwa, Executive Director of Siasa Place, a Nairobi-based civic engagement organisation working with young Kenyans, has been among the most articulate voices documenting this shift.

"Young Kenyans are not apathetic — they are strategic. They watched what happened in 2022 and they are determined that 2027 will be different. The question is whether the political system will respond to their energy or try to suppress it." — NERIMA WAKO-OJIWA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SIASA PLACE, MARCH 2026

Economic grievances are the

The Starting Gun Has Fired: How Kenya's Leaders and Citizens Are Racing to Shape the 2027 Election

With less than two years to polling day, Kenya's pre-election season is already in full swing — alliances are shifting, grassroots campaigns are launching, and a new generation of citizens is demanding more than promises. The 2027 vote will be a referendum on whether Kenya's democracy has truly grown up.

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Worth Noting:

- Social media platforms have become the primary arena for political debate, mobilisation and — critically — accountability. Government spending is tracked and scrutinised in real time. Political promises made on the campaign trail are archived and resurface, often with devastating effect, when they go unfulfilled. Leaders who once relied on the short memory of an electorate with limited access to information now find themselves facing constituents who have screenshots.

- Nerima Wako-Ojwa, Executive Director of Siasa Place, a Nairobi-based civic engagement organisation working with young Kenyans, has been among the most articulate voices documenting this shift.

- “Young Kenyans are not apathetic — they are strategic. They watched what happened in 2022 and they are determined that 2027 will be different. The question is whether the political system will respond to their energy or try to suppress it.”— NERIMA WAKO-OJWA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SIASA PLACE, MARCH 2026



fuel feeding this civic energy. The rising cost of living, persistently high youth unemployment and the sting of recent tax measures — some of which triggered street protests in mid-2024 — have made economic issues the dominant theme of early political discourse. ODM Secretary-General Edwin Sifuna has repeatedly stressed that the 2027 election will be decided not on tribal lines but on kitchen-table issues.

“Kenyans are not eating tribe. They are eating — or not eating — depending on the price of unga and the cost of school fees. Any party that comes to 2027 with ethnic arithmetic instead of economic solutions will be humiliated at the ballot.”— EDWIN SIFUNA, ODM SECRETARY-GENERAL, FEBRUARY 2026

Voter registration is emerging as a critical battleground, with civil society organisations and church groups launching early drives to ensure eligible voters — particularly first-time voters — are on the rolls in good time. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission is under intense scrutiny following controversies surrounding its conduct of the 2017 and 2022 elections. IEBC Chairperson Erastus Edung Etheke, who took the helm of the commission after a protracted and contested recruitment process, has made rebuilding public trust the centrepiece of his

tenure.

“The IEBC understands that public confidence is not inherited — it is earned. We are committed to earning it, step by step, before polling day. Kenyans deserve a commission they can trust, and we intend to be that commission.”— ERASTUS EDUNG ETHEKON, IEBC CHAIRPERSON, ADDRESSING A STAKEHOLDER FORUM, NAIROBI, MARCH 2026

Religious leaders are also increasingly active in the pre-election space. Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretary-Gen-

eral Reverend Fr. Collins Muheria has called on all political actors to commit to issue-based campaigns and warned that the church will not remain silent in the face of incitement. “We saw what hatred cost this country in 2007,” Muheria said at a peace forum in Nakuru in February. “We will not be complicit in allowing those conditions to return.”

There are, nonetheless, significant risks on the horizon. Political polarisation, amplified by the same digital platforms enabling civic engagement, remains a potent force. Misinformation campaigns — many

of them sophisticated and well-resourced — are already circulating on social media. Economic pressures, if they worsen, could sharpen grievances in ways that make peaceful electoral competition harder to sustain.

Yet the overall mood among analysts is one of cautious optimism. The preparations underway in 2026 reflect a political system that is, however slowly, learning from its own history. Citizens are more demanding. Leaders are, at least rhetorically, more accountable. Institutions are, at least nominally, reforming.

Kenya has always been a country that makes democracy look harder than it should be — and then, at the last moment, pulls back from the brink. The 2027 election will test once again whether that improbable resilience holds. The credit, if it does, will belong not to any single leader, but to the millions of ordinary Kenyans doing the quiet, unglamorous work of keeping a democracy alive. The starting gun has fired. The race, with all its hazards and all its promise, is on.



Artificial Intelligence in Medicine: Transforming Diagnostics and Treatment Planning

Artificial intelligence is particularly valuable in diagnosing diseases. Doctors use imaging technologies such as X-rays, MRIs, and CT scans to examine the human body, and these tests generate large amounts of data.



By: Hasanov Umidjon Ilhomovich
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Worth Noting:

- Artificial intelligence is particularly valuable in diagnosing diseases. Doctors use imaging technologies such as X-rays, MRIs, and CT scans to examine the human body, and these tests generate large amounts of data. Reviewing all this information can be time-consuming, but artificial intelligence can analyze it rapidly and assist doctors in identifying medical conditions at an early stage.
- Furthermore, artificial intelligence is transforming treatment planning. Traditional approaches often applied the same treatment methods to all patients, but this is not always effective because individuals differ in their genetic makeup, environment, and lifestyle. Artificial intelligence enables personalized treatment by integrating data from medical records, genomic sequencing, and clinical trials. This allows doctors to design treatment plans tailored to each patient. Research has shown that artificial intelligence systems can perform at a level comparable to doctors in detecting diseases such as cancer, heart conditions, and neurological disorders in their early stages.



The use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in medicine represents a major transformation in the healthcare sector. These technologies are helping doctors make more accurate diagnoses and develop effective treatment plans. In the past, doctors had to rely solely on their own knowledge and experience, but now they are supported by advanced systems that can process vast amounts of information quickly and accurately. As a result, patient care is improving, with more precise diagnoses and more personalized treatments. In addition, artificial intelligence is enhancing the efficiency of hospitals and clinics, making healthcare systems run more smoothly. Artificial intelligence is particularly valuable in diagnosing diseases. Doctors use imaging technologies such as X-rays, MRIs, and CT scans to examine the human body, and these tests generate large amounts of data. Reviewing all this information can be time-consuming, but artificial intelligence can analyze it rapidly and

assist doctors in identifying medical conditions at an early stage. Furthermore, artificial intelligence is transforming treatment planning. Traditional approaches often applied the same treatment methods to all patients, but this is not always effective because individuals differ in their genetic makeup, environment, and lifestyle. Artificial intelligence enables personalized treatment by integrating data from medical records, genomic sequencing, and clinical trials. This allows doctors to design treatment plans tailored to each patient. Research has shown that artificial intelligence systems can perform at a level comparable to doctors in detecting diseases such as cancer, heart conditions, and neurological disorders in their early stages. For instance, in cancer treatment, artificial intelligence helps determine how a patient's tumor will respond to specific medications, allowing doctors to choose the most effective therapy. This approach improves treatment outcomes and reduces

side effects, ultimately enhancing the patient's quality of life. Moreover, artificial intelligence contributes to the overall efficiency of healthcare systems. With challenges such as aging populations, staff shortages, and rising costs, healthcare systems worldwide are under pressure. Artificial intelligence tools help ensure that patients receive the right care at the right time and support doctors in making informed decisions, allowing them to spend more time with patients. In emergency departments, artificial intelligence can prioritize patients based on the severity of their condition, which can be life-saving. Despite its many advantages, the use of artificial intelligence in medicine also presents certain challenges. One of the main concerns is data bias. If artificial intelligence systems are trained on datasets that do not represent diverse populations, their performance may be less accurate for certain groups, potentially increasing healthcare disparities. Another important issue is data

privacy and security. Medical records contain sensitive personal information, so it is essential to protect them through strong cybersecurity measures and transparent data practices. Ensuring trust in how data is managed is crucial for the successful integration of artificial intelligence in healthcare. In conclusion, artificial intelligence is revolutionizing medicine by improving diagnostics, enabling personalized treatment, and increasing the efficiency of healthcare systems. However, it is equally important to address challenges such as data bias and data security to ensure fair and safe use of these technologies. Author: Hasanov Umidjon Ilhomovich was born on May 27, 2010, in Qorako'l district of Bukhara region. He studied at Secondary School No. 9 in Qorako'l district and has been continuing his education as a student of the Presidential School for Gifted Students since the 9th grade. Hasanov Umidjon has achieved numerous accomplishments. He is the holder

of more than 50 international certificates. He has also actively participated in national competitions, earning over 20 certificates, diplomas, and letters of appreciation. He is the founder of several projects and has demonstrated strong initiative in various fields. Notably, he won an honorable 2nd place in the national "Youth Innovators" competition. In February 2025, he obtained a CEFR B2 level certificate in English. In the same year, he was awarded the titles of "Volunteer of the Year" and "Initiator of the Year." He has also achieved honorable positions in national Real Hackathon and Ideathon competitions organized under the EEAO book platform. Currently, he is actively involved in organizing debate tournaments in his district and is working on transforming the prototype of the EEAO platform into a fully functional website together with team members.