



**Ruto opens KSh3.8 billion Ngong Road Flyover, unveils ambitious plan to ease Nairobi Traffic**  
 President William Ruto yesterday commissioned the KSh3.8 billion Ngong Road–Naivasha Road Flyover, describing the project as a major milestone

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**KNCHR raises alarm over enforced disappearances, police brutality following June 25 protests**  
 KNCHR has raised serious concerns over alleged enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and excessive use of force by security agencies

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**The Mt. Kenya Times**  
 Daily ePAPER

**Politics** Former deputy president's "cousins" strategy reaches deeper into the Coast, as Mijikenda joins the web

# Gachagua nets more cousins

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has added the Mijikenda community to his growing list of political "cousins," interrupting consultations at his Wamunoro residence to meet Coast leaders and accuse President William Ruto's administration of economically marginalising the region.

Gachagua said he travelled to the Coast after receiving an invitation from leaders of the Mijikenda community, led by their spokesperson, former Cabinet minister Chirau Ali Mwakwere. "My cousins from the Mijikenda community required my presence at a meeting of the leaders of the Mijikenda community under their spokesman, Chirau Ali Makwere," he said. The gathering brought together leaders from all nine Mijikenda communities, including the Digo, Giriama, Duruma, Rabai, Chonyi, Kauma, Kambe, Jibana and Ribe.

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua with leaders from Mijikenda community led by Chirau Ali Makwere at Wamunoro

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"ALL BUSINESSES ONE PLATFORM"

# Nairobi transport upgrade gains momentum as new viaduct is opened

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

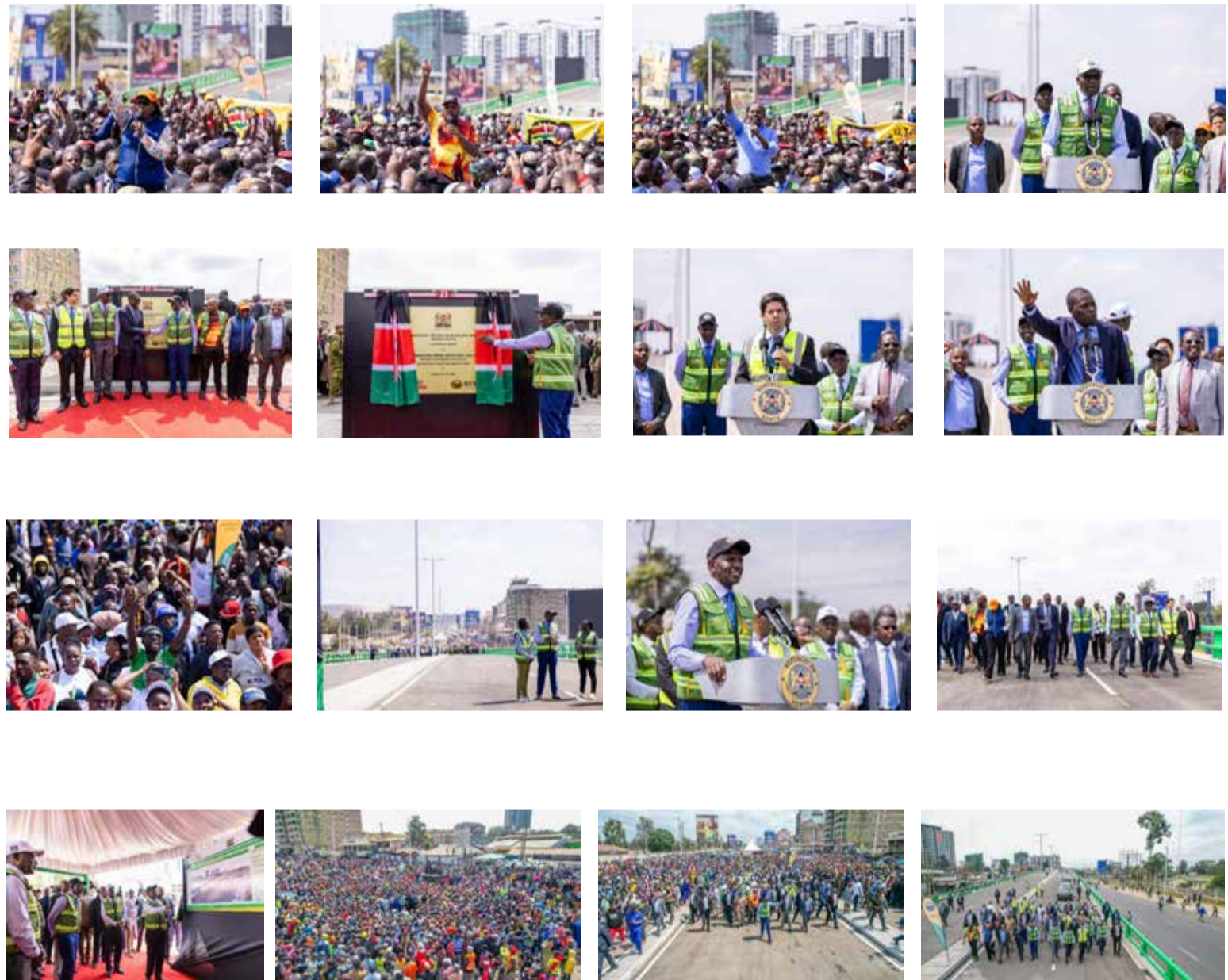
President William Ruto yesterday commissioned the 820-metre Ngong Road–Nai-vasha Road Flyover in Nairobi, a KSh3.8 billion project aimed at easing chronic traffic congestion and improving mobility in the capital.

The President said the flyover will eliminate one of the city’s major bottlenecks along the busy Ngong Road corridor, improving safety and restoring smooth movement of people and goods. He noted that the project is expected to reduce congestion by up to 60 per cent, significantly cutting travel time and lowering transport costs for commuters and businesses.

Ruto described the project as part of a broader urban transport transformation programme, which includes the KSh3 billion Upper Hill–Kenyatta Avenue Viaduct, currently 60 per cent complete, the KSh3.9 billion Talanta Sports City access roads, and the KSh1.6 billion State House Road upgrade. He also highlighted plans to dual the 23.5km Kiambu Road corridor under a KSh30 billion investment and roll out a KSh45 billion Intelligent Transport System covering more than 210 junctions across Nairobi.

The President said the initiatives are designed to create a modern, efficient and globally competitive capital city.

He was accompanied by Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja, Roads Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir, and other national and county leaders during the commissioning ceremony.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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## NEWS IN BRIEF



Aviation and Aerospace Development Principal Secretary Teresia Mbaika has urged Makueni residents to continue supporting the Kenya Kwanza administration, saying ongoing development projects are improving livelihoods across the county. Speaking at a women's empowerment forum at Malivani AIC Boarding Primary School in Makueni Sub-county, Mbaika cited affordable housing, market and road projects being implemented in all 10 sub-counties, noting they have created employment opportunities, particularly for young people. She highlighted key projects, including affordable housing developments in Wote, Makindu, Kikima and Kibwezi, as well as markets in Wote, Kilala, Kasikeu and Mutulani. Kibwezi West MP Mwengi Mutuse praised the government's development agenda, while President's aide Farouk Kibet called on Ukambani residents to reject tribal politics and support women leaders.



Uasin Gishu County Commissioner Dr. Eddyson Nyale has urged public officers to utilise the annual medical check-up package provided under the newly introduced Public Officers Medical Scheme Fund (POMSF) to promote early detection and treatment of health conditions. Speaking during a sensitisation forum in Eldoret on the comprehensive healthcare benefits available under the Social Health Authority (SHA) and POMSF, Nyale said routine medical screening would help officers remain healthy, productive and reduce the risk of severe illnesses through early diagnosis. The annual medical examination covers comprehensive physical assessments, blood pressure and blood sugar tests, cancer screening, and other preventive healthcare services for both members and their spouses.



Kirinyaga County Commissioner Shufaa Omar Mwijuma has urged residents, especially young people, to seek support from family members, religious leaders, chiefs and other trusted community figures whenever they face personal challenges instead of resorting to suicide or other harmful actions. Speaking during a public sensitisation forum, Mwijuma said every problem has a solution and encouraged those experiencing emotional distress to speak openly and seek help. She also called on unemployed youth to take advantage of government initiatives such as youth enterprise funds, affordable housing projects and other economic empowerment programmes to improve their livelihoods. The County Commissioner further condemned the rising cases of domestic violence, urging couples to resolve disputes amicably to protect children from psychological harm. She emphasised that strong family relationships, open communication and collective community support are essential in promoting mental well-being and addressing social challenges.



Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga has defended her development record, dismissing claims that she is taking credit for national government projects. She said her administration works closely with the national government to secure resources for roads, water, health, education and other essential services, arguing that the source of funding is less important than the benefits to residents. Wanga cited national projects such as affordable housing, road upgrades, the rehabilitation of Homa Bay Pier and the refurbishment of Raila Odinga Stadium as examples of successful collaboration. She also highlighted county achievements, including the construction of 604 ECDE classrooms under the "Ondoa Kaunda" initiative and the "Fins to Swim" scholarship programme supporting needy learners.

North Rift Valley Water Works Development Agency (NRVWDA) General Manager for Infrastructure Development, Eng. Jimmy Kemboi, has reaffirmed the agency's commitment to expanding access to clean and reliable water through strategic infrastructure investments. Speaking during the site handover ceremony at Kaptarkok Primary School in Kaptarakwa Ward, Keiyo South Sub-County, Kemboi said the project will benefit



residents of Kipchagan, Kamugo, Milimani, Kaptere, Rokocho and Kaptarakwa villages, as well as several public institutions that have faced persistent water shortages. He said the initiative supports the government's development agenda by improving access to safe water, enhancing livelihoods and driving socio-economic development through sustainable water solutions.

Kericho-based anti-drug activist and certified mental health counsellor William Rotich has urged the national and county governments to strengthen psychosocial support systems in schools to help prevent student unrest and property destruction. Speaking ahead of the reopening of secondary schools after the mid-term break, Rotich called for the deployment of full-time counsellors to provide mentorship, early intervention and emotional support to learners. He said many students struggle with personal, family and academic pressures but lack trusted adults to confide in, forcing them to seek advice from peers who may expose them to substance abuse and other risky behaviours. Rotich also advocated for regular forums bringing together teachers, parents and students to encourage open communication, identify emerging challenges early and promote discipline in schools.



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**Agriculture** Mazao Group presented a range of agricultural services that could support the county's farming sector

## Kajiado county eyes agricultural transformation through partnership with private sector

BY DMS

@themtkenyatimes

The County Government of Kajiado is seeking to deepen collaboration with the private sector as part of efforts to modernise agriculture, enhance food production and improve farmers' incomes.

This follows a meeting yesterday between county agriculture officials and a delegation from Mazao Group of Companies, which discussed possible areas of partnership aimed at promoting technology-driven and climate-smart agriculture across the county.

The delegation, led by Julius Mwai and Sammy Moya, paid a courtesy call on the Chief Officer for Agriculture, Grace Saitoti, where both parties explored strategies to accelerate agricultural transformation through innovation, farmer empowerment and the commercialisation of farming.

Among the key issues discussed was the role of public-private partnerships in improving agricultural productivity by making modern technologies and innovative farming solutions more accessible to farmers.

Mazao Group presented a range of agricultural services that could support the county's farming sector, including drone-based crop spraying and fumigation, irrigation technologies, seedling propagation, digital agribusiness platforms, agricultural financing, farmer training and value chain development.



The team that met yesterday | Photo: Courtesy

The discussions also covered interventions targeting both the crop and livestock sectors, with emphasis on technology transfer, improved access to quality farm inputs, expansion of irrigation infrastructure, sustainable production systems and strengthening market linkages for agricultural produce.

During the meeting, the company's representatives praised the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP) Agripreneur model, describing it as a practical framework for promoting youth participation in agribusiness and supporting enterprise development. They expressed interest in exploring co-investment opportunities under the programme and committed to identifying areas of collaboration that would create sustainable business

opportunities for farmers and agripreneurs in Kajiado County.

Speaking during the engagement, Chief Officer Grace Saitoti said partnerships with private sector players are essential in driving innovation and improving agricultural productivity.

She noted that integrating modern farming technologies with county agricultural programmes would help farmers increase production, strengthen resilience to climate change and improve household incomes.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to kick-start the proposed partnership through the organisation of a Farmer Field Day, which will serve as the first joint activity between the County Government and Mazao Group of Companies.

The event is expected to provide farmers with an op-

portunity to interact with and experience a range of modern agricultural technologies, including irrigation systems, drone-assisted crop spraying, improved seedling propagation techniques, digital agribusiness platforms and other climate-smart farming innovations.

County officials believe the initiative will encourage faster adoption of modern agricultural technologies, strengthen farmers' technical capacity and support the transition towards commercially oriented agriculture across Kajiado County.

The proposed collaboration forms part of broader efforts by the county government to leverage private sector expertise and investment in transforming agriculture into a more productive, resilient and profitable sector.

## WhatsApp opens username reservations in major privacy shift



WhatsApp

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

WhatsApp began accepting username reservations on Monday, allowing its more than three billion global users and businesses to claim handles ahead of a full rollout that will let people communicate without revealing their phone numbers.

Alice Newton-Rex, WhatsApp's vice president of product, told reporters: "We have designed this as a core privacy feature." The company explained the rationale in a blog post, noting that sharing a phone number with a new acquaintance "can feel like a big step" because numbers are tied to so many parts of a person's life.

Unlike conventional social platforms, WhatsApp said there will be no directory or suggested handles — contacts will need a user's exact

username to reach them. An optional "username key" adds a further layer, requiring a secondary credential before a stranger can send a first message. Handles must run between three and 35 characters, with reservations made on a first-come basis.

"I think a lot of people will go and get usernames, and that's why we decided to open reservations early," Newton-Rex said, citing the scale of overlap expected across a user base spanning 180 countries.

Reserved names become operational later this year, with businesses given until June 2026 to update systems built around phone-based identification.

The shift aligns WhatsApp with handle-based platforms such as Instagram and X, marking a quiet but consequential redrawing of how the world's most-used messaging app defines identity.

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**Health** Neema Opticians Ophthalmist Faith Gakii said that the majority of eye conditions like short and long sight can be corrected early.

# Eye problems; the silent thief of vision

*Records indicate that at least 1.5 million Kenyans are living with an eye problem called Myopia, Hypermetropia*

**BY JWM**

@themkenyatimes

How well do you take care of your eyes, how many times do you visit an eye clinic, how long do you spend on screens like Tv's computer or laptop,?

This is the concern of eye specialists who have stated that an estimated 1.5 million Kenyans are living with myopia (short-sightedness), a vision condition that can be corrected if diagnosed early.

Neema Opticians Ophthalmist Faith Gakii said that the majority of eye conditions like short and long sight can be corrected early.

Ms. Gakii also stated that the 1.5 million Kenyans diagnosed with the condition, visited an eye clinic when it is late, thus put on glasses to aid them.

She stated that if an individual can visit an eye clinic early, there is a possibility of correction and get proper instructions on how to take care of the eyes.

"An estimated number of 1.5 mil-

lion Kenyans have been diagnosed with myopia which is commonly known as short sight and Hypermetropia (long sight), the defect is detected when it is very late, if the patient visited an eye clinic earlier on, the defect could have been treated" said Ms. Gakii.

She also said that another cause of eye problems is the hours spent on devices that emit blue light like working on a laptop, long hours watching Television.

"Spending hours on devices that emit blue light can cause eye strain, eye discomfort, to protect the eyes is advisable to limit screen time, take regular breaks, use devices with blue light filters or anti-reflective lenses" she said.

Another cause of eye retinopathy is diseases like hypertension, diabetes; retinopathy is the damage to the retina, the light sensitive tissue located at the back of the eye.

The eye is the only organ that originates from the brain) that is why any condition affects sight.

Also there are hereditary eye prob-

lems that are passed to generations, urging Kenyans to get eye checkups, for early detection.

"We have hereditary eye problems that are passed to generations, when a patient goes for eye checkup, they should give the right information so as to get assisted, there are some like Age-Related Macular degeneration that comes with age, it affects the Retina.

Ms. Gakii also cautioned parents on giving their young children devices like phones, allowing long hours on televisions, and also the distance where the child is watching TV should be far; they should not be allowed to sit near the devices as most children have been diagnosed with eye defects that are preventable.

"we have diagnosed a kid of as young as five years with a problem of short-sightedness, when we got the history, the kid was exposed to devices like TV, phones and all emit blue light damaging the eyes, if the parent took precautions and avoided giving the child would not have had issues, parents stop destroying your



An eye specialist examining a patient. | Photo: Courtesy

children," she added.

"Visit eye hospitals, opticians, let's prevent eye problems that can be treated, not all eye problems are solved by glasses, some are solved by drugs" She added saying the theft

of vision cripples' lives.

Lately there has been alot of free medical camps organized by various stakeholders, the aim is to restore sight to the affected persons, with Cataract leading.

**NEWS PAPER**

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**Development** President Ruto said the new infrastructure would eliminate one of the city's longstanding traffic bottlenecks

# Ruto opens KSh3.8 billion Ngong Road Flyover, unveils ambitious plan to ease Nairobi Traffic

BY DMS

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday commissioned the KSh3.8 billion Ngong Road–Naivasha Road Flyover, describing the project as a major milestone in the government's long-term strategy to tackle chronic traffic congestion in Nairobi and modernise the capital's transport infrastructure.

The 820-metre flyover, constructed at one of Nairobi's busiest intersections, is expected to significantly improve traffic flow along the Ngong Road corridor by separating through traffic from vehicles accessing surrounding roads.

Speaking during the commissioning ceremony, President Ruto said the new infrastructure would eliminate one of the city's longstanding traffic bottlenecks, improve road safety and enhance the movement of people and goods within the capital.

"The opening of the Ngong Road–Naivasha Road Flyover demonstrates our commitment to decongesting roads and improving mobility in Nairobi. This project will restore smooth traffic flow along one of the city's busiest transport corridors while making travel safer and more efficient," the President said.

According to the government, the flyover is expected to reduce congestion along the corridor by up to 60 per cent, cutting travel times for thousands of motorists who use the route daily. The reduction in traffic delays is also expected to lower fuel consumption, reduce transport costs for businesses and commuters, and improve productivity within the city. The Ngong Road corridor serves several densely populated residential

estates, commercial centres and institutions, making it one of Nairobi's most heavily used road networks.

The President said the flyover forms part of a broader infrastructure programme aimed at transforming Nairobi into a modern and globally competitive capital city.

Among the major ongoing projects is the KSh3 billion Upper Hill–Kenya Avenue Viaduct, which is currently about 60 per cent complete. The viaduct is expected to improve connectivity between Nairobi's central business district and Upper Hill, one of the country's leading commercial and financial hubs.

The government is also constructing access roads to the proposed Talanta Sports City at a cost of KSh3.9 billion ahead of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), which Kenya will co-host with Uganda and Tanzania.

In addition, State House Road is undergoing a KSh1.6 billion upgrade, while preparations are underway for the dualling of the 23.5-kilometre Kiambu Road corridor through a KSh30 billion investment. The expansion is expected to ease congestion on one of Nairobi's busiest commuter routes linking the city centre with Kiambu County.

Beyond road expansion, the government has announced plans to implement an Intelligent Transport System (ITS) across Nairobi. The KSh45 billion project will be rolled out in three phases and will cover more than 210 signalised intersections.

The system will introduce coordinated, real-time traffic management using smart traffic signals and digital monitoring technology to improve traffic flow, reduce travel times and enhance road safety.

President Ruto said the initiative would complement ongoing road construction projects by ensuring that existing infrastructure operates more efficiently.

The government is also undertaking one of Nairobi's largest urban road maintenance programmes in recent years, with approximately 729 kilometres of roads currently under routine maintenance and several others undergoing rehabilitation.

Transport experts have long argued that while road expansion projects help ease congestion in the short term, sustainable urban mobility will also require investments in mass public transport, improved pedes-



President William Ruto while officially commissioning the viaduct.

trian infrastructure, non-motorised transport facilities and effective traffic management systems.

The completion of the Ngong Road–Naivasha Road Flyover marks another addition to Nairobi's growing network of grade-separated junctions designed to improve mobility as the city's population and vehicle numbers continue to rise.

President Ruto maintained that the

government's infrastructure agenda is intended to position Nairobi as a modern, efficient and globally competitive city capable of supporting economic growth while improving the quality of life for residents.

"Our goal is to build infrastructure that delivers a modern, efficient and globally competitive capital city—the gateway to Eastern Africa," he said.

The commissioning of the flyover comes as the government continues to invest heavily in road infrastructure, urban transport systems and strategic connectivity projects aimed at reducing congestion and supporting Kenya's long-term economic development.



The president and other leaders atop the viaduct.

**Politics** It is the latest in a sequence of choreographed appeals to kinship that has come to define Gachagua's political project since his fallout with the president

# Gachagua nets more cousins

*Former deputy president's "cousins" strategy reaches deeper into the Coast, as Mijikenda leaders become the latest Bantu bloc drawn into his expanding political family*

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has added the Mijikenda community to his growing list of political "cousins," interrupting consultations at his Wamunyoro residence to meet Coast leaders and accuse President William Ruto's administration of economically marginalising the region.

Gachagua said he travelled to the Coast after receiving an invitation from leaders of the Mijikenda community, led by their spokesperson, former Cabinet minister Chirau Ali Mwakwere. "My cousins from the Mijikenda community required my presence at a meeting of the leaders of the Mijikenda community under their spokesman, Chirau Ali Mwakwere," he said. The gathering brought together leaders from all nine Mijikenda communities, including the Digo, Giriama, Duruma, Rabai, Chonyi, Kauma, Kambe, Jibana and Ribe.

It is the latest in a sequence of choreographed appeals to kinship that has come to define Gachagua's political project since his fallout with the president. The "cousins" idea was born during a tour of Ukambani, where Gachagua told residents that Kambas and central Kenya people shared the same ancestral extraction, declaring, "Us Kikuyus, Kambas, Taitas and Mijikendas we are one family." During a campaign blitz along the Coast, he coined a playful variant of the term in Kasemeni, Kwale County, asking the crowd, "Makuzo mko hamko? Makuzo mko hamko?" and likening his alliance with Wiper's Kalonzo Musyoka and DAP-K's Eugene Wamalwa to a family reunion. Political analysts have read the strategy as a calculated expansion of the Mount Kenya bloc's electoral boundaries, with the Mijikenda meeting representing a further widening of that net beyond the original Central Kenya-Ukambani axis.

The substance of Monday's meeting echoed grievances Gachagua has voiced before, but with sharper specificity to Coast concerns. Coast leaders raised concerns over alleged economic exclusion, loss of local employment opportunities, manage-



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua with leaders from Mijikenda community led by Chirau Ali Mwakwere

ment of the Port of Mombasa, exploitation of mineral resources and land disputes, Gachagua said. He claimed the region's natural resources, including mineral deposits at Mrima Hills, had not benefited local communities, while alleging cases of land grabbing and forced grazing on community ranches.

On the port, his language was unsparing. "My cousins from Coast are a community in distress. Their economic lifeline, the Port of Mombasa, is in the process of being sold to foreigners, top Kenyan political leaders, notorious political brokers and the oligarchy," Gachagua narrated. He further alleged that employment opportunities at the Kenya Ports Authority had been unfairly distributed, leaving local residents sidelined — claims the government has previously denied. He also accused the government of allowing drug trafficking and failing to protect young people in the region, allegations for which he did not provide evidence.

His framing of the relationship reached for the language of liberation rather than ordinary political grievance. "My cousins have been sat on and suppressed by one brutal family. They are dominated and marginalised by that one family. They cannot breathe. They live like refu-

gees in their own land," Gachagua claimed. He said the Mijikenda leaders expressed their determination to unite in pursuit of what they termed the restoration of the region's dignity and economic empowerment. Gachagua pledged solidarity with the Coast leaders, saying they had the support of communities from the Mt Kenya region, Western Kenya, Lower Eastern, Kisii and Nyanza: "I have assured them of solidarity from their cousins in Western Kenya, Lower Eastern, Kisii, Nyanza, the Mountain and the whole country since we are one people." He said consultations would continue.

The pattern is now familiar enough that it has acquired its own internet vocabulary. "Cuzo," a playful twist on the word cousin, trended on social media after a Coast rally, with Kenyans adopting it in memes and captions far beyond the original political context. But the reception among rivals and critics has been considerably less affectionate. Government-allied aide Farouk Kibet dismissed the framing during Gachagua's Ukambani tour, telling a church gathering, "He has now started calling other communities cousins. Gachagua is someone who should not be paid attention to." Cabinet Secretary Alfred Mutua was

blunter still: "I don't want to tell you that we don't know who our cousins are. We know who our cousins are. And you are not our cousins."

The criticism has not been confined to government allies. Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma questioned the consistency of the narrative, asking how Kalonzo Musyoka and Fred Matiang'i could be branded cousins to the Kikuyu community while Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, from the closely related Meru community, was excluded, and pointed out that when Gachagua held the power to appoint Cabinet secretaries as deputy president, every slot went to his own community. Academic and columnist Makau Mutua went further, arguing that the cousins lexicon was a coded ethnic message designed to forge a Central Kenya-anchored coalition supplemented by the Akamba and, now, the Coastal Bantu, aimed at displacing the Nilotic-aligned Rift Valley and Nyanza coalition that has backed President Ruto.

Coast politicians themselves have offered a mixed verdict on Gachagua's overtures. Mombasa Governor Abdulsamad Nassir has previously accused Gachagua of opportunism, noting his silence while port functions were relocated to Nairobi during his time as deputy president:

"Now he comes to Mombasa preaching salvation as though he is a messiah. Let me be clear, Mombasa does not need a false messiah. We already did the work."

Whatever the merits of the critique, the political arithmetic behind Gachagua's outreach is not difficult to read. With the next general election drawing closer, a coalition stitched together from Mount Kenya, Ukambani, and now the Coast's nine Mijikenda sub-communities would represent a formidable electoral bloc — on paper, at least. Whether genuine grievance or convenient rhetoric, the Port of Mombasa, local jobs and land disputes are real and longstanding concerns for Coast residents, regardless of who chooses to amplify them.

For now, the former deputy president continues collecting cousins one community at a time. The open question is whether the relationships forged in rallies and living-room consultations will survive contact with the ballot box — or whether, as his critics insist, the cousins will discover the family reunion was never really about them at all.

**EACC** According to the Commission's court diary for this week, courts will hear 30 matters ranging from corruption and economic crimes

# Former governors, senior officials face EACC in KSh4.2 billion corruption and asset recovery cases

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) will this week prosecute and pursue the recovery of billions of shillings in alleged stolen public funds and illegally acquired public property in courts across the country.

The cases involve former governors, senior public officials, land registrars and private individuals.

According to the Commission's court diary for this week, courts will hear 30 matters ranging from corruption and economic crimes to recovery of public land, unexplained wealth and proceeds of crime.

Among the high-profile matters is the hearing of former Nairobi Governor Mike Mbuvi Sonko and another accused, who face conflict of interest charges linked to the award of a KSh10 million revenue collection contract for Nairobi City County Government.

The case will be heard at the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court from yesterday to Thursday.

In a separate matter, Sonko and 25 others will appear before the same court for mention tomorrow over allegations of conflict of interest, unlawful acquisition of public funds and embezzlement of KSh24.1 million from Nairobi City County Government.

Another former Nairobi governor, Evans Kidero, and 13 others will today appear before the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court for mention in a suit seeking recovery of KSh58 million allegedly embezzled from the former City Council of Nairobi.

The Milimani Anti-Corruption Court will also hear the

case against former Deputy Commissioner General of Prisons Benjamin Obuya Njoga and 12 others from today to Thursday. They face charges of abuse of office, fraudulent acquisition of public property and money laundering over alleged fraudulent payments amounting to KSh301.9 million for goods allegedly never supplied to the State Department for Correctional Services.

Also scheduled for hearing today is a suit against former National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Head of Procurement George Mwazighe Mwandembo and three others, who are charged with conflict of interest over the award of a KSh47.7 million tender for the supply and installation of bulk filers to Beldavo Enterprises.

The court will also hear a case seeking recovery of KSh800 million allegedly paid through an inflated tender for the supply of 100 portable medical clinics to the Ministry of Health involving Estama Investments Limited and others.

Other hearings today include a suit seeking recovery of KSh13.9 million allegedly embezzled from the County Government of Vihiga, and another seeking recovery of KSh12.6 million allegedly fraudulently paid as salaries to a non-employee of the Homa Bay County Assembly. The latter involves former Homa Bay County Assembly Clerk Bob Kephias Otieno and two others.

Yesterday, the Eldoret Law Courts was set to hear the case against former Chebororwa Agricultural Training Centre principal Nicholas Kiprop Kaino and four others over the alleged fraudulent withdrawal of KSh11.4 million belonging

to the institution.

The Nyahururu Anti-Corruption Court was yesterday and today set the case against Arnold Karani Njiru and four others over the alleged misappropriation of KSh14.8 million meant for a ghost project under the Laikipia East NG-CDF.

The Nyeri Anti-Corruption Court is expected to deliver a ruling tomorrow and Thursday in the case against former Nyeri Lands Registrar John Ndirangu and others, who are accused of soliciting and receiving a KSh200,000 bribe.

At the Makueni Law Courts, DCI officer George Omondi Mumbo will face a hearing today over allegations of receiving a bribe, while the Kakamega Law Courts will on Thursday hear the case against former Kaimosi Friends University security officer David Adrian Mwaka, who is charged with forging an academic certificate to secure employment.

In Homa Bay, former County Assembly Clerk Otieno Bob Kephias and six others will today appear for mention over charges of conspiracy to commit corruption, unlawful acquisition of public property and money laundering involving KSh85.2 million belonging to the County Assembly.

The Commission is also pursuing several major civil recovery suits.

On Thursday, the Milimani Environment and Land Court will rule on a suit seeking recovery of KSh282.4 million allegedly embezzled from the County Government of Turkana involving Irina Health and six others, and another seeking recovery of public land allegedly allocated to Rubis Energy Kenya PLC and eight others.

The Environment and Land



Former Nairobi Governor Mike Mbuvi Sonko

Court in Milimani was yesterday set to rule on a dispute over ownership of Government land in Kahawa West involving Gerald Chege Gitau and others, while another hearing on Thursday concerns land along Valley Road allegedly acquired illegally by Habib Omar Kongo alias Daniel Kongo and others.

The Kitale Law Courts are today expected to deliver judgment in a case involving Ken Kiptoo and others over Kitale Municipality Block 12/153, which the EACC says was reserved as a public open space before being illegally allocated.

The Environment and Land Court in Kabarnet will today rule on a suit seeking recovery of public land worth KSh15 million in Marigat, while the Nakuru Environment and Land Court will hear three land recovery cases during the week. On Wednesday, Paulina Nekesa Kode and three others will face a hearing over alleged illegal acquisition of public land, while on Thursday, separate hearings involv-

ing Dr Meshack Aluvaala and Dr Szumbah Mwanaongoro concern two parcels worth KSh40 million each that had been reserved for the Ministry of Education.

The Commission will also pursue recovery of public land in Nanyuki, where Antony Saidimu is scheduled for hearing today and a suit by Scorpion Properties over recovery of a fire station in Gigiri on behalf of the Nairobi City Council, which is listed for hearing later in July.

Several unexplained wealth and procurement-related cases are also lined up. Today, the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court will mention a suit seeking recovery of KSh342.8 million in alleged unexplained assets from Michael Auka, a former Nairobi City County employee. Tomorrow, another unexplained wealth case involving Alex Buigut and Kewah Construction valued at KSh72 million will be mentioned, while on Thursday Andrew Biketi and five others will appear in a forfeiture suit involving KSh283 million in

alleged unexplained wealth. Yesterday, the court was set to mention a suit against Kirimi Peter Kaberia and five others seeking cancellation of a KSh995 million tender and recovery of KSh220.4 million allegedly paid unlawfully as advance payment.

Another mention on the same day involves Filtronic International Limited and others over recovery of KSh63.7 million allegedly paid by the County Government of Kiambu through fraudulent contracts.

The EACC says the matters underscore its sustained campaign to recover public assets, combat corruption and hold accountable public officials and private individuals implicated in economic crimes.

**Mau Mau** The planned visit follows a series of engagements by the organisation aimed at advancing the interests of former freedom fighters and their families

# Freedom fighters' caucus revives JM Kariuki legacy, pushes for Mau Mau Trust Fund and national recognition

BY DMS

@themkenyatimes

The legacy of the late politician and former Nyandarua North Member of Parliament JM Kariuki has once again come into focus as members of MMV Associates CLG, a caucus bringing together former freedom fighters and their descendants, intensify efforts to preserve the memory of Kenya's liberation heroes while advocating for their welfare and recognition.

A delegation led by the caucus Director General James Njuguna Mahuria is today scheduled to visit JM Kariuki's widow, Dorcas Nyambura, to discuss several issues, including the revival of a proposed Mau Mau Trust Fund that the late legislator is said to have championed and served as custodian of during his lifetime.

The planned visit follows a series of engagements by the organisation aimed at advancing the interests of former freedom fighters and their families.

On Sunday, a section of the caucus members paid a courtesy call on Mrs Nyambura at her home in Nyandarua, where they honoured the memory of the former MP and acknowledged his enduring contribution to Kenya's democratic and social justice struggles.

During the visit, members described JM Kariuki as one of Kenya's most courageous and visionary leaders whose advocacy for social equity and the rights of ordinary citizens continues to inspire generations.

They noted that his political ideals remain relevant today, particularly in discussions surrounding inequality, governance and economic justice. JM Kariuki remains one of the most celebrated figures in Kenya's political history.

The former Nyandarua North MP was abducted and murdered in March 1975 under circumstances that remain among the country's most controversial political assassinations. His body was later discovered in Ngong Forest, sparking widespread public outrage and raising questions that continue to resonate decades later.

He is perhaps best remembered for his famous warning that Kenya risked becoming "a nation of ten millionaires and ten million beggars," a statement that has since become synonymous with the struggle against inequality, land injustice and the concentration of wealth and power.

Members of the caucus said their visit to the family was intended to honour JM Kariuki's contribution to the country's democratic development while reaffirming the importance of preserving the history and sacrifices of those who fought for justice and equality.

The planned meeting with Mrs Nyambura comes after the MMV Associates CLG members met at Blue Post Hotel in Thika. The meeting brought together dozens of representatives from all 47 counties to deliberate on matters affecting former freedom fighters and their descendants.

According to Mahuria, the delegates discussed various welfare issues, including an-

anticipated compensation for freedom fighters. The organisation also opened official accounts as part of preparations for future programmes and initiatives aimed at supporting members.

Speaking after the meeting, Mahuria expressed optimism that discussions with JM Kariuki's widow would help advance plans for the Mau Mau Trust Fund and other initiatives intended to benefit former freedom fighters and preserve Kenya's liberation heritage.

The caucus is also expected to submit a petition on gender-related issues during a public participation forum organised by the Nyandarua County Government in Ol Kalou. The event will provide an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to contribute their views on the proposed Nyandarua County Gender Policy.

In addition, MMV Associates CLG plans to present a separate petition to the National Heroes Council recommending several individuals for national recognition based on their contribution to the country's social, economic and political development.

Among those nominated is JM Kariuki, whose legacy members believe deserves formal national recognition. The organisation argues that his commitment to social justice, accountability and equality left an indelible mark on Kenya's political landscape.

MMV Associates CLG Chief Executive Officer Emmah Kassis said the list of proposed heroes and heroines was developed after carefully evaluating the nominees' con-



**MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria addressing journalists at Blue Post Hotel, Thika as members, led by the CEO Emmah Kassis looks on | Photo: Courtesy.**

tributions to the country's social and economic well-being. Meanwhile, the public participation forum on the draft Nyandarua County Gender Policy is expected to attract residents, civil society organisations, development partners and other stakeholders interested in shaping the county's approach to gender equality and social inclusion.

According to a notice issued

by the Department of Education, Technical Training, Culture, Gender and Social Protection, the policy seeks to strengthen gender equality and create a framework for mainstreaming gender considerations in county planning, budgeting and service delivery.

County officials say the proposed policy will address key issues including gender-based

violence, economic empowerment, equal access to opportunities, leadership, representation in decision-making processes and the inclusion of youth and vulnerable groups. The policy is also intended to align county programmes with the Constitution of Kenya, the National Gender Policy and international commitments on gender equality.



**Some of the MMV Associates CLG members who attended yesterday's meeting.**

**Brutality** KNCHR said it continues to receive, verify, and document emerging reports of abuses, calling for urgent investigations and accountability

# KNCHR raises alarm over enforced disappearances, police brutality following June 25 protests

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) has raised serious concerns over alleged enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and excessive use of force by security agencies in the aftermath of nationwide protests held on June 25, 2026.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Commission said it had documented multiple human rights violations linked to security operations conducted during and after the demonstrations, which marked the second anniversary of the 2024 Gen Z protests.

KNCHR said it continues to receive, verify, and document emerging reports of abuses, calling for urgent investigations and accountability.

The Commission reported seven cases of enforced disappearances, saying several individuals arrested during the protests were allegedly taken away by police and later found in traumatized conditions or remain unaccounted for. Among those cited were protesters allegedly bundled into police vehicles outside Parliament before being driven to unknown locations. Some were later reportedly dumped along Nairobi roads after what they described as torture and inhumane treatment.

KNCHR also raised concern over the continued disappearance of three individuals, urging security agencies to immediately disclose their whereabouts. It further noted other cases where individuals were allegedly picked up by security officers and remain missing.

According to the Commis-

sion, at least 361 people were arrested across several counties including Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajiado, Nakuru, Nyeri, Machakos, Meru, Bungoma, Laikipia and Nyamira. It warned that the scale of arrests raises questions about compliance with constitutional safeguards against arbitrary detention.

The rights body expressed particular concern over the arrest of 18 Human Rights Defenders and two freelance journalists, saying their detention undermines constitutional protections for civic space, media freedom, and freedom of expression. KNCHR called for the immediate and unconditional release of those detained solely for exercising their rights or performing professional duties.

The Commission also documented incidents of alleged police brutality, including the shooting of a protester in Nairobi and the assault of a person with disability in Nakuru. It said such cases raise serious concerns about the necessity and proportionality of force used by law enforcement officers and require urgent, independent investigations.

KNCHR further criticised restrictions on freedom of movement during the protests, noting that widespread police roadblocks in Nairobi and other counties prevented many citizens from accessing workplaces, disrupting livelihoods and essential services. It said these actions amounted to an infringement of constitutionally protected rights.

The Commission also highlighted concerns over the conduct of some security officers during the demonstrations, citing reports of hooded and plain-clothed officers operating in unmarked vehicles despite a court order requiring

police to remain identifiable. It said such practices undermine accountability and public trust in law enforcement.

KNCHR warned that Kenya continues to face recurring allegations of human rights violations during public protests, noting that taxpayers are often burdened with compensation costs for victims of police misconduct. It urged security agencies to adhere strictly to the Constitution, court orders, and international human rights standards.

Among its key recommendations, the Commission called on security agencies to urgently account for missing persons, ensure medical care for the injured, and conduct prompt investigations into all reported violations. It also urged the Director of Public Prosecutions to review protest-related charges to ensure no individual is unlawfully prosecuted or detained.

KNCHR further directed the Inspector-General of Police to enforce compliance with court orders requiring officers to be identifiable and to withdraw plain-clothed officers from protest operations. It also called for accountability for any officers found culpable of violations.

Despite the concerns raised, the Commission commended security officers who exercised restraint during the demonstrations, particularly in Mombasa, where it reported no incidents of excessive force. It also praised protesters who demonstrated peacefully, saying their conduct reflected respect for democratic principles and constitutional freedoms.

KNCHR reaffirmed its constitutional mandate to protect and promote human rights, urging members of the public to report any violations relat-



Police brutality following June 25 protests

ed to the protests through its official communication channels.

The Commission concluded

by reiterating its commitment to safeguarding human dignity and ensuring accountability, stating that respect for hu-

man rights remains central to Kenya's democracy and rule of law.




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**Agriculture** Governor Irungu Kang'ata yesterday held a sensitisation forum with heads of coffee factories drawn from across the county

# Murang'a rolls out free agricultural lime programme to boost coffee production

**BY MKT Correspondent**  
 @themtkenyatimes

Murang'a County has intensified efforts to revive its coffee sector through a new initiative aimed at improving soil health and increasing coffee productivity among farmers.

Governor Irungu Kang'ata yesterday held a sensitisation forum with heads of coffee factories drawn from across the county, where discussions centred on sustainable coffee farming practices, proper crop management and strategies to improve soil fertility.

Addressing the meeting, the governor underscored the importance of using agricultural lime to reduce soil acidity, enhance soil fertility and ultimately increase both the quantity and quality of coffee produced by farmers. He noted that healthier soils would translate into better yields and

improved earnings for coffee growers.

The forum also served as the official launch of the County Government's Free Agricultural Lime Programme, an initiative targeting registered coffee farmers in all sub-counties.

Under the programme, farmers who are active members of registered coffee cooperative societies will receive agricultural lime at no cost, subject to successful verification. Eligible farmers have been urged to collect, complete and submit application forms together with the required supporting documents.

County officials said the distribution of the agricultural lime will be conducted on a first verified, first served basis to ensure transparency and allow as many farmers as possible to benefit from the programme.

The county government says the initiative forms part of broader in-

terventions aimed at revitalising the coffee sector by promoting sustainable farming practices, improving coffee quality and increasing farmers' incomes.

The meeting brought together senior county officials, including County Executive Committee Member for Trade and Agriculture Kimani Mugo, Chief Officer for Agriculture Dr. Apollo Maina, Chief Officer for Trade and Devolution Isaac Karoga, Director of Crops Peter Muchiri, Ichagaki MCA Hilary Muchoki, as well as heads of coffee factories and other stakeholders in the coffee value chain.

The county administration expressed confidence that the programme will contribute to long-term improvements in coffee production while strengthening the livelihoods of thousands of coffee farmers across Murang'a County.



Murang'a governor Irungu Kang'ata addressing the forum yesterday.

The Mt. Kenya Times



## Following your own heart is a brave thing



The heart and the mind always monitor your actions  
They direct you to choose the correct path.  
The remaining part of your life, you should take care of you.  
You should always remember your heart.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N  
M.Sc.,M.A.,  
PGDG&C,B.Ed., CELT.  
BT Asst.  
GMHSCHOOL, TIRUR.  
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.  
Tamil Nadu  
India.  
Creative Writers.  
Educationist.

You are the master of your decisions  
You never allow others to influence you.  
Many times it controls you when you are not fair.  
It reminds you and your mind to take care.

When you move forward with your heart  
It takes you to reach out to the right.  
Never overcome the guidance of heart  
If you try to overcome it, you will be in trouble.

## If you seek peace talk less



If you seek peace talk less  
If you want wisdom listen more

If you seek peace, talk less  
If you want wisdom, listen more  
Peace comes only when we talk less and listen more;  
That's why God has given us two ears to listen

And only one tongue to speak  
Wisdom comes when we listen more and more,

If one wish to gain knowledge,  
we need to listen

To live in peace, one should listen  
The mind will be quiet if we speak less  
So hold your tongue  
Speak only when needed

Listen more, and more to gain knowledge  
Always Keep your ears open,  
Only the fool gossips and talk too much  
There peace can't exist

If you want peace and wisdom,  
Talk less, listen more

BRINDA. D  
Creative writers  
GHS Melpattampakkam  
Tamilnadu, India

## You don't need more time; you need fewer excuses



But think about it for a moment.  
Why do people make excuses? Often, it is because they postpone their work until tomorrow instead of doing it today.  
They may prefer comfort and enjoyment over hard work.  
However, success is not about rushing.  
It is not the work itself that matters most, but how you do it.  
Excuses can delay progress and prevent you from reaching your goals.  
So, take the time you need, but use it wisely.  
Give your best effort in everything you do. Work with dedication, live happily, and success will follow.

\_\_ G. YasminSirajudheen  
Secondary grade teacher  
Melmalayanur block  
Villupuram dt

## The day when sun slept



One fine morning I woke up with a smile,  
Thinking the sun would shine in a while.  
I opened my eyes to a sky so gray,  
The moon and stars were still on display.

I looked at the clock -it was seven O'Clock!  
I was surprised and frozen in shock.  
I asked my mother," what can this be?  
Why is the sunshine hiding from me?"

She smiled and said,"what a funny thought!  
Maybe the sun forget its job."  
I looked at the moon and asked with delight,  
"Why are you still here in the morning light?"

The moon replied, "The sun's asleep,  
He's resting well in slumber deep.  
Today I'll shine both day and night,  
Until the sun wakes fresh and bright."

Just then my mother calls my name,  
I open my eyes- it was just a dream!  
Golden sun was shining high,  
With fluffy white clouds in the blue sky.

I will never forget that funny day,  
When the sleepy sun stayed far away!

By : Anushree.  
Class : 9A, GGHSS, pattukkottai.

## The Grace of Space



Their choices bloom in a garden of their own,  
Not every seed is meant where ours is sown.  
To pull too hard on a tender thread,  
May leave a bond unravelled instead.

So when loved ones choose a slower pace,  
Offer understanding, offer space.  
For love grows deeper, calm and true,  
When freedom finds its place in you.

Hold not too tightly what you embrace,  
The strongest bonds are woven with space.

Nandini Anandkumar  
Educator, Writer, Motivator Freelancer  
(In Service of Education)

When people step back, let them free,  
Like birds that drift toward a distant tree.  
Not every silence is a door closed tight,  
Some souls need quiet to find their light.

We all seek moments untouched and free,  
A shore of stillness beside life's sea.  
For hearts may differ in dream and view,  
In what they cherish, pursue, or do.

## Teamwork makes the dream work



Others help them rise.  
Together we can cross the hills  
And reach the brightest skies.

No one shines by self alone,  
We need each other's light.  
With trust, support, and unity,  
We turn dreams into flight.

Sripriya R  
Creative Writer  
BT ENGLISH GHSS KOLAPAKKAM  
KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT  
Tamilnadu India

A dream may start in one small heart,  
But teamwork helps it grow.  
Many hands and caring minds  
Can make great ideas glow.

When one feels tired and slows down,

**NYC** Tharaka-Nithi remained peaceful throughout the demonstrations. There were no deaths, destruction of property or violent protests

# National Youth Council Presidential contender Mwenda applauds Governor Njuki's peace and youth empowerment record

**BY Jeniffer Kyunguti and Faith Mwanza**

@themkenyaintimes

Tharaka-Nithi County Youth President and the NYOTA Ambassador for Tharaka-Nithi County Eric Mwenda has praised Governor Muthomi Njuki's leadership, saying his administration has created a conducive environment for young people and residents while transforming the county into a model of peace and youth empowerment.

Speaking to Mt Kenya Times, Mwenda who is also the county's National Youth Council representative said Governor Njuki's record in empowering young people, promoting peace and investing in youth development makes him a strong candidate for the Tharaka-Nithi Senate seat in the 2027 General Election.

"Governor Njuki has demonstrated that when young peo-

ple are given opportunities and included in governance, they become partners in development. His administration has remained accessible to the youth and that has created a peaceful and progressive county," Mwenda said.

Mwenda, a university graduate who is currently contesting for the National Youth Council presidency, said the governor's second term has witnessed remarkable achievements that have elevated the profile of Tharaka-Nithi nationally and internationally.

He cited the county's participation in the 2023 Youth Connect Africa Summit in Nairobi, where he led the Tharaka-Nithi delegation that showcased youth innovations and inventions before delegates from across Africa.

"Our delegation was praised for presenting innovative solutions to emerging challenges facing young people and the recognition by then Youth Affairs Cabinet Secre-

tary Ababu Namwamba motivated many young innovators from our county," he said.

According to Mwenda, Tharaka-Nithi has also made significant strides in nurturing talent, noting that during last year's International Youth Day celebrations the county improved its national ranking from position 20 to position 13 in youth talent development.

He further described the county's handling of the June 2024 Gen Z protests as one of the clearest examples of Governor Njuki's collaborative leadership.

"Tharaka-Nithi remained peaceful throughout the demonstrations. There were no deaths, destruction of property or violent protests. We engaged as youth leaders and promoted dialogue, allowing businesses and normal activities to continue uninterrupted," Mwenda told Mt Kenya Times.

Mwenda also lauded the implementation of the NYOTA

Programme, saying Tharaka-Nithi emerged among the country's top ten counties in youth registration, enabling many young people to benefit from government empowerment funds.

He noted that Governor Njuki further supported beneficiaries by announcing free driving licence training within the county to improve their employability.

On environmental conservation, Mwenda said Tharaka-Nithi's participation in the Africa Youth Climate Assembly in Ethiopia reflected the county's commitment to tree planting and climate action initiatives championed by the county government.

## National youth policy

He also welcomed ongoing efforts to strengthen the National Youth Policy, saying it would expand opportunities for young people, promote equitable access to national resources and expose Kenyan



**Tharaka Nithi County Youth President Mr Eric Mwenda and the National Youth Council presidential contender. Photo/Alex Njeru.**

youth to continental opportunities.

Mwenda recalled attending the Amani Youth Summit in Eldoret, presided over by Principal Secretary Fikirini Jacobs, where he challenged leaders from the 47 counties to emulate Tharaka-Nithi's peaceful environment.

"Since Governor Njuki began his second term, our county has enjoyed peace and close collaboration between the government and young people. That environment has encouraged development and investment," he said.

Among the programmes he credited to the county administration are the employment of road marshals, empowerment of youth groups, community-based organisations and clubs, investment in sports through construction of stadiums and sponsorship of

teams. Others are; support for vocational training through county polytechnics, employment of young professionals including nurses and ECDE teachers and the formulation of the Tharaka-Nithi Youth Policy to institutionalise youth participation in governance.

Mwenda said he intends to champion similar youth-centred policies nationally if elected President of the National Youth Council, adding that his experience representing young people in Tharaka-Nithi has prepared him to advocate for youth empowerment across Kenya.

He maintained that Governor Njuki's leadership record and commitment to youth development make him well placed to serve the people of Tharaka-Nithi in the Senate after the 2027 General Election.

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**Airspace** Agentic Artificial Intelligence is reshaping aviation operations through autonomous decision-making, enabling real-time route optimization

# From the wrights' brothers to intelligent skies: The evolution and challenges of managing tomorrow's airspace



BY Fredrick Chelimo  
@themkenyatimes

The history of aviation is remarkable narrative of innovation, resilience and human ambition. What began as the pioneering achievement of Orville and Wilbur Wright in 1903, - a powered flight lasting only a few seconds, has evolved into a highly sophisticated global aviation system that safely transport billions of passengers and millions of tonnes of cargo annually. Every technological breakthrough has expanded the horizons of the flight, making air transport faster, safer, and more efficient and increasingly sustainable.

The earliest generation of aircraft relied on piston engines driving propellers, providing the foundation for military and commercial aviation during the first half of the twentieth century. As demand for speed, range and reliability grew, the aviation industry embraced turbine-powered propeller aircraft, which offered improved fuel efficiency, higher operating altitudes and enhanced performance on regional routes.

The subsequent introduction of the jet engine revolutionized global air transport, shrinking continents, accelerating international trade and tourism, and transforming aviation into one of the world's most strategic industries. Today, aviation is entering another era of unprecedented transformation. Advanced air mobility, led by electric Vertical Take off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft, promises to redefine regional and urban transportation by providing runway-independent, point-to-point mobility. At the same time, Agentic



Airspace

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping aviation operations through autonomous decision-making, enabling real-time route optimization, predictive maintenance, disruption management and intelligent air traffic coordination. Complementing these advances is rapid development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) and hybrid-electric propulsion systems, which are expected to significantly reduce aviation's environmental footprint while supporting the industry's global commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

The digitalization of aviation continues to gather momentum through biometric passenger processing, Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, satellite-based navigation, augmented reality applications and highly connected aircraft capable of continuously transmitting operational data. These innovations are enhancing safety, operational efficiency and the overall passenger experience while reducing operation costs.

However, the rapid expansion of aviation presents an equally significant challenge: managing increasingly congested airspace. Global air traffic continues to grow as commercial airlines, business jets, military aircraft, helicopters, cargo operations, unmanned

aerial systems (drones) and emerging air taxis compete for infinite airspace. Conventional air traffic management systems are approaching their operational limits, requiring controllers to process vast volumes of dynamic information while maintaining safe aircraft separation under demanding conditions.

Crowded airspace increases controller workload, heightens the complexity of conflict resolution, intensifies delays, raises fuel consumption and increases operational costs. Adverse weather, rapidly changing flight schedules, cybersecurity risks and the anticipated integration of autonomous aircraft further complicate the management of modern airspace. These challenges demand a transition towards intelligent, data-driven air traffic management systems capable of anticipating congestion, dynamically rerouting aircraft and supporting collaborative decision-making between pilots, controllers and airline operations centres.

Looking ahead, the future of aviation will be defined by intelligent automation, sustainable propulsion and integrated airspace management. Artificial intelligence will increasingly assist air traffic controllers by predicting conflicts before they develop, while digital communication,



satellite surveillance and autonomous flight technologies will improve the efficiency and safety of increasing

crowded skies. Electric and hydrogen powered aircraft, advanced autonomous systems and sustainable fuels

are expected to redefine aviation over the coming decades, creating a cleaner, quieter and more resilient global air transport network.

More than a century after the wright brothers first demonstrated the possibility of powered flight, aviation continues to embody humanity's relentless pursuit of innovation. The industry's next chapter will not be measured by faster aircrafts, but by smarter technologies, sustainable operations and intelligent airspace management capable of safely accommodating an ever-expanding global demand for flight. In this new era, the greatest challenge will not be reaching the skies, but will be managing them safely, efficiently and sustainably for generation to come.

*In flying, going up is an effort, but coming down is a must, the question is how to reach the ground.*

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**Uganda** With weeks left in the financial year, the economy shows momentum, but the measure will be household impact ahead of FY 2026/27

# Uganda yet to close FY 2025/26 at a crossroads: Growth, debt, and the test of delivery



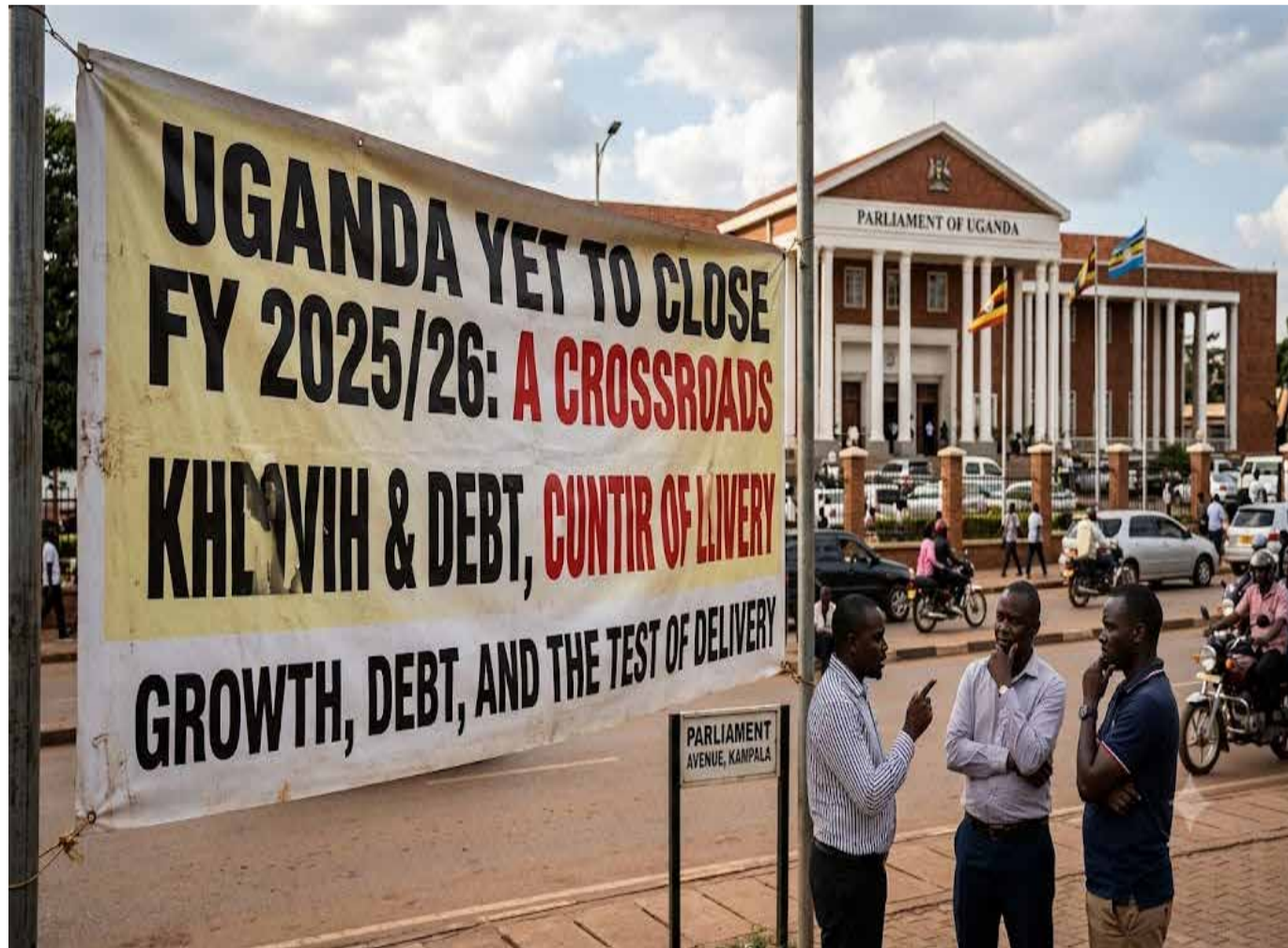
By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza  
mukphix@gmail.com

**KAMPALA** — As Financial Year 2025/26 nears its close, Uganda faces a familiar contrast: macroeconomic resilience alongside persistent household pressure. The year was positioned as a preparatory phase ahead of anticipated oil production, with growth expected to trend toward double digits and flagship programs such as the Parish Development Model intended to shift from design to delivery. The record shows progress on several fronts, and exposure on others.

Uganda entered the final quarter of FY 2025/26 on the back of estimated GDP growth of 6.3% in FY 2024/25, with projections for 6.4% this year. That places the country among sub-Saharan Africa's faster-growing economies. Export performance, particularly in coffee, supported foreign exchange reserves. The shilling remained relatively stable, inflation was contained, and foreign direct investment linked to the petroleum sector continued to flow.

Official projections maintain that, with timely oil production and prudent revenue management, growth could reach 10.2% to 10.4% in FY 2026/27. In policy terms, this is presented as an inflection point toward an \$80 billion economy and greater fiscal self-reliance for infrastructure, health, and education.

The outlook is tempered by debt and financing dynamics. Public debt has risen to \$34.86 billion, equivalent to 53% of GDP, with the fis-



Uganda yet to close FY 2025-26 at a crossroads

cal deficit near 5% of GDP, financed largely through domestic sources. The risk flagged by economists is that underperformance in oil revenues would increase debt service costs and constrain social expenditure.

Labor market outcomes remain a central challenge. Youth unemployment is estimated above 70% in parts of the country, while formal job creation has not matched the rate of graduate entry. A large share of the workforce remains in low-productivity, informal activity. As MUBS economist Dr. Fred Muhumuza observed, growth may be on target, but employment quality and returns are not yet commensurate with the required pace of job creation.

Poverty metrics reinforce the point. Approximately 60% of Ugandans live on less than \$3 per day. For this cohort, aggregate growth is meaningful only to the extent that it translates into jobs, lower food costs, and improved public services.

## Program Implementation and Service Delivery

The Parish Development Model was allocated Shs4.4 trillion to support household enterprises. Implementation experience in FY 2025/26 highlights recurring issues of accountability, repayment culture, and equitable targeting. In agriculture, post-harvest losses continue to erode farmer incomes, and rural

digital connectivity remains limited.

The 2026 State of the Nation address emphasized “no more sleep” on corruption and complacency. The resonance of that message reflects public concern that budget allocations are not consistently converting into functional services at the local level.

Uganda's fiscal and household position was shaped by global energy volatility. Brent crude was projected to average \$92–\$94 per barrel in 2026, increasing costs for transport, fertilizer, and food. Global growth was forecast to slow to 3.2% due to energy shocks, with downside scenarios lower if supply disruptions intensified. Domestically, the Bank of Uganda

maintained the Central Bank Rate at 9.75% to anchor inflation, even as households faced higher living costs.

The political calendar also weighed on sentiment. National elections are scheduled for January–February 2026, following 2025 primaries marked by reports of tension, poverty, regional divisions, and land disputes. In such a context, investor caution and household uncertainty are to be expected.

## Outlook for FY 2026/27: Three Trajectories

The transition into the new financial year presents distinct scenarios.

The first is an oil-dividend trajectory, in which petroleum

revenues are ring-fenced, debt is stabilized, and resources are channeled to agro-processing, vocational training, and SME finance. Coffee and cocoa continue to support forex, industrial parks are linked to employment, and growth at 10% begins to reduce youth unemployment.

The second is a stalled trajectory, in which oil is delayed or poorly managed, debt exceeds 55% of GDP, fiscal space narrows, and commodity volatility affects exports. Elections add uncertainty, growth remains near 6%, and employment gains lag.

The third is a people-centered trajectory that reduces dependence on oil by investing in skills, post-harvest infrastructure, rural digitization, and institutional accountability. Growth may be more moderate initially, but it is broader and more sustainable.

## Conclusion

FY 2025/26 will be recorded as a year of relative macroeconomic stability and continued preparation for oil. It will also be remembered for the gap between aggregate indicators and lived experience.

The closing weeks of the financial year are therefore not only an accounting exercise. They are a moment to close the distance between policy and impact. If oil revenues are managed with discipline, if debt is kept within sustainable bounds, and if public investment reaches the boda rider, the farmer, and the graduate, then FY 2025/26 will be understood as the year Uganda prepared to leap. If not, it risks being remembered as a period of missed alignment.

**Constitutions** The phrase “eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” often attributed to Thomas Jefferson (though its precise origins are debated), captures this reality

# Eternal vigilance: Why constitutions and human rights demand constant defense



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor  
Odhiambo

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Constitutions and human rights declarations, for all their lofty language, have never been self-executing instruments. In 1933, the Weimar Republic’s constitution on paper a model of liberal democracy with strong protections for speech, assembly, and due process failed to prevent Adolf Hitler’s legal ascent to power and the subsequent dismantling of those very rights. Similarly, the Soviet Union’s 1936 “Stalin Constitution” enshrined freedoms that existed only on paper while millions perished in the Gulag. Today, according to Freedom House’s 2025 report, only 45 percent of the world’s population lives in societies rated “Free,” with democratic backsliding evident even in established democracies where institutional erosion has occurred incrementally through legal means. These facts underscore a central truth: no constitutional order or charter of rights sustains itself. They require eternal vigilance the active, perpetual engagement of citizens, institutions, and leaders to remain meaningful.

The phrase “eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” often attributed to Thomas Jefferson (though its precise origins are debated), captures this reality. Constitutions are not magical talismans that automatically constrain power. They are frameworks of rules, principles, and procedures designed by fallible humans to govern other fallible humans. Human rights instruments, whether the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), national bills of rights, or regional conventions, similarly articulate aspirations rather than automatic enforcements. Their effectiveness depends on interpretation, implementation, enforcement, and, crucially, cultural and political commitment to their underlying values.

At their core, constitutions and human rights norms are not self-executing because they exist within political and social realities shaped by power dynamics. Legally, many



Illustration

constitutional provisions require enabling legislation, judicial interpretation, and administrative machinery to become operational. The U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights, for instance, did not immediately end slavery or grant universal suffrage; these required amendments, court rulings, and social movements. Internationally, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights binds states that ratify it, yet compliance varies enormously. Authoritarian regimes often sign such treaties for legitimacy while maintaining repressive apparatuses. Without vigilant domestic and international pressure, paper commitments remain inert.

This non-self-executing nature stems from human nature and the logic of power. James Madison warned in Federalist No. 51 that “men are not angels,” necessitating auxiliary precautions against the abuse of authority. Power tends to concentrate and expand unless actively checked. Leaders and bureaucracies face perpetual incentives to prioritize short-term control, security, or popular demands over abstract principles. Economic crises, security threats, pandemics, or cultural anxieties can create fertile ground for “temporary” suspensions of rights that become permanent. History is replete with examples: the Patriot Act in the United States after 9/11 expanded surveillance with limited initial pushback; Hungary and Poland in recent decades saw elected governments gradually weaken judicial independence and media pluralism under democratic guises. Even well-intentioned expansions of state

power for public health or equity can erode procedural safeguards if not scrutinized.

Even so a purely pessimistic view overlooks successes born of vigilance. Post-World War II West Germany’s Basic Law, informed by the failures of Weimar, incorporated robust constitutional courts and eternity clauses protecting core democratic principles. Strong civil society, independent media, and an educated citizenry helped sustain it. In South Africa, the post-apartheid Constitution of 1996, one of the most progressive in the world, has faced implementation challenges amid corruption and inequality, but an active Constitutional Court and civil society have repeatedly checked executive overreach. These cases illustrate that vigilance works when institutions are designed with redundancy separation of powers, federalism, judicial review and supported by a political culture that values constraints on power.

Objectively, threats to constitutionalism and rights emerge from multiple directions, demanding a balanced assessment. From the left, majoritarian impulses or social justice agendas sometimes pressure procedural rights, free speech, or property protections in favor of substantive outcomes. From the right, national security or traditional values can justify curtailing minority protections or due process. Populism across the spectrum often frames constitutional checks as obstacles to the “will of the people.” Technological developments add new complexities: surveillance capitalism, algorithmic

content moderation, and state digital controls challenge privacy and expression in ways framers could scarcely imagine. Meanwhile, global challenges like climate change or migration test the balance between collective action and individual liberties.

Eternal vigilance is thus not mere paranoia but a structural necessity. It manifests at several levels. First, institutional: independent judiciaries must interpret constitutions dynamically yet faithfully, resisting both executive pressure and judicial activism. Second, civic: citizens and civil society organizations serve as the ultimate check, through voting, protest, litigation, and public discourse. Third, cultural and educational: schools, media, and intellectuals must transmit an understanding of why rights matter not as abstract slogans but as hard-won limits on coercion that protect everyone, including future dissenters. Fourth, international: peer pressure, trade incentives, and monitoring by NGOs help deter backsliding in weaker states, though these too require vigilance against their own politicization.

Critics sometimes argue that excessive vigilance can itself become destabilizing, fostering cynicism or gridlock. This concern has merit. Hyper-partisanship can weaponize constitutional arguments, turning every dispute into an existential crisis and eroding trust in institutions. A balanced approach recognizes that vigilance should be principled rather than partisan focused on procedures and core rights rather than

outcomes. Constitutional patriotism, as articulated by thinkers like Jürgen Habermas, emphasizes loyalty to democratic processes over tribal identities. Education plays a vital role here, cultivating critical thinking and historical awareness rather than ideological indoctrination.

The costs of complacency are evident. Venezuela’s slide from democracy involved gradual judicial packing and media control under Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, all within a constitutional framework that proved insufficiently defended. In contrast, countries like Botswana have maintained relatively stable democratic governance in Africa through consistent respect for institutional norms. These contrasts highlight that success depends less on perfect constitutional design than on sustained societal commitment.

Ultimately, constitutions and human rights frameworks represent a collective bet on reasoned self-governance over unchecked power. They acknowledge humanity’s capacity for both greatness and cruelty. Their fragility is not a flaw but a feature: by requiring active defense, they force societies to continually reaffirm their values. In an era of rising authoritarianism, technological disruption, and polarization, this vigilance must be renewed across generations. It demands intellectual honesty recognizing that no side holds a monopoly on virtue or vice and practical engagement beyond social media outrage.

Citizens must engage with the messy work of politics, support independent institutions, and defend rights even for those with whom they disagree. Leaders must internalize restraint. Judges, journalists, and educators bear special responsibilities as guardians. The alternative is erosion by degrees: rights becoming privileges, constitutions becoming facades. As Justice Louis Brandeis observed, the greatest threat to liberty often comes subtly, clothed in good intentions.

The record of the past century demonstrates both the resilience and vulnerability of constitutional orders. Where vigilance has lapsed, rights have withered; where sustained, they have expanded opportunity and dignity for millions. There is no final victory only perpetual effort. Eternal vigilance is not a call to perpetual alarm but to informed, courageous citizenship. In defending the constitution and human rights, societies defend their own best aspirations against their worst impulses. This task remains as urgent today as at any point in history.

*The writer is a legal researcher and a social commentator*

**Zimbabwe** As Zimbabwe's National Assembly reconvenes in an extraordinary sitting today, Emmerson Mnangagwa faces the most consequential decision of his presidency — and the clock is ticking

# Will President Mnangagwa sign Bill 3? The pen, the pressure and the future

BY Norman Mwale

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"I have always opposed the constitutional amendment from the word go. What Mnangagwa is doing is going to be a catalyst for change. He is digging his own grave." — Nelson Chamisa

President Emmerson Mnangagwa now stands at the desk where Zimbabwe's constitutional future will either be written or deferred. The National Assembly has been recalled for an extraordinary sitting at 2:15 pm today, 30 June 2026, to consider the Senate's amendments to the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill No. 3, after both Houses passed it with the required two-thirds majority. If MPs accept the Senate's version without further change, the Bill moves directly to the President for assent. If they amend it again, it returns to the Senate. Either way, the signature is the next decisive act.

Bill 3 proposes to extend the presidential term from five years to seven, which would allow Mnangagwa to remain in office until 2030 rather than stepping down in 2028. It also removes the direct election of the president, replacing it with election by a joint sitting of the Senate and National Assembly, and transfers voter registration from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to the Registrar-General. The Senate would expand from 80 to 90 members, with ten additional appointees selected on the basis of professional skills.

## The case from within Zanu PF

Justice Minister Ziyambi Ziyambi, who tabled the Bill, frames it as governance reform. "This Bill introduces a set of constructive reforms that, taken together, reinforce constitutional governance, strengthen democratic structures, clarify institutional mandates, and harmonise Zimbabwe's constitutional or-



President Emmerson Mnangagwa

der with tested and successful practices in other progressive jurisdictions," he told Parliament. After the First Reading he said he was "confident it is progressive legislation which we must proceed to enact" and pointed to "overwhelming support from members of Parliament."

Government links the Bill to the Zanu PF "2030 agenda" adopted at the party's annual conference in Bulawayo in 2024, arguing that continuity will reduce "election-related toxicity" and advance Vision 2030. The party holds a supermajority and, by parliamentary arithmetic, has the numbers to pass the amendments without a referendum.

## The opposition and civic counterweight

Opposition leader Nelson Chamisa has rejected the Bill outright, characterising it as "the wrong move, a misguided initiative and a selfish national mistake." "As things stand, there is no done deal. In fact, there is no deal at all. Any arrangement that lacks

the consent and participation of the citizens remains incomplete and illegitimate," he said.

Critics also point to Section 328 of the Constitution, which requires a referendum for entrenched provisions affecting presidential term limits and election methods. Legal challenges have been mounted in the Constitutional Court, with judgment reserved. Diaspora groups have protested the move to parliamentary election, arguing it would render the diaspora vote irrelevant. A group of retired military generals and senior civil servants, led by retired Air Vice-Marshal Henry Muchena, petitioned Parliament against the Bill, arguing that the amendments undermine the principles of the liberation struggle and the people's electoral rights.

## Inside Parliament: the 216-to-42 divide and a persistent dissent

The National Assembly passed CAB3 on 18 June 2026 with 216 legislators vot-

ing in favour and 42 against, surpassing the two-thirds threshold of 187 out of 280 members. Before the final vote, the government agreed to withdraw two of the most contentious provisions — proposals to merge the Zimbabwe Gender Commission with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and to allow traditional leaders to participate in partisan politics. Despite those concessions, the core provisions remained intact. Speaker Jacob Mudenda declared the result in accordance with Section 328(5) of the Constitution. The Senate subsequently approved the Bill 75 votes to 4.

From the outset, Mbizo legislator Corban Madzivyanyika has been one of the Bill's most consistent critics. He has condemned CAB3 for proceeding without a referendum, arguing that "by not conducting a referendum, the government is disrespecting the people of Zimbabwe." During debate he also raised procedural concerns, telling NewsDay Weekender that he had failed for four consecutive days to

secure a place on the speaking list despite Parliament dedicating sessions exclusively to the Bill. "I don't know how the list is compiled because that is not normally how we do things. We normally submit our names, but for the past four consecutive days, I haven't been successful in contributing," he said. His objections ran from the Bill's introduction through to the final vote, framing the outcome as procedurally and democratically deficient.

## What could make Mnangagwa comfortable to sign

Several factors would ease the President's path. First, parliamentary arithmetic: Zanu PF commands the two-thirds threshold in both Houses, and the Senate has already approved the Bill. Second, party consolidation: the "2030 agenda" gives the amendment an internal narrative of stability and continuity. Third, institutional precedent: government argues that aligning terms to seven years creates space for long-term planning under Vision 2030. Fourth, controlled process: the extraordinary sitting, convened under Section 110(2)(c) of the Constitution, signals intent to conclude the matter quickly and within constitutional form.

## What could make him uncomfortable to sign

The discomforts are political, legal and reputational. Legally, the referendum question remains live. If the courts or public opinion frame the Bill as requiring a popular vote, assent would invite protracted legal contestation. Politically, the Bill has exposed fissures even within Zanu PF. Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga, a key figure in the 2017 military intervention that brought Mnangagwa to power, is reported to be leading a faction that openly opposes Mnangagwa's term extension. Silence from powerful factions often speaks louder than endorsement. In-

ternationally, the shift from direct election to parliamentary selection would be read as democratic backsliding, complicating relations with partners and investors. Domestically, Mnangagwa has repeatedly described himself as a "constitutionalist" and pledged to respect the two-term limit enshrined in the 2013 Constitution. Signing would be seen as breaking that pledge. The persistent opposition of legislators like Madzivyanyika — who were denied debate time and have rejected the process from day one — keeps that discomfort visible even after the 216-to-42 tally.

## The stakes for the country

Bill 3 is not only about one man's tenure. It reconfigures how power is acquired and held. Direct election gives citizens a periodic, national reckoning. Parliamentary election centralises leverage among MPs and party structures. The transfer of voter registration to the Registrar-General and the expansion of appointed senators also shift the balance of institutional oversight. For Zimbabweans trading at Beitbridge, farming in Masvingo or commuting from Chitungwiza, the question is whether these changes deliver stability or simply concentrate risk.

Mnangagwa's calculation will weigh party cohesion against constitutional credibility, immediate legislative momentum against judicial and public pushback, and the optics of continuity against the optics of continuity at any cost. He can sign and own the break with the 2013 term-limit promise. He can withhold assent and force a reset, or return the Bill with amendments. He can also allow the process to stall in legal challenge.

The pen is in Harare. The pressure comes from Parliament, from the courts, from party corridors and from the streets. The future will read very differently depending on which side of that line the signature falls.

**U.S.-Iran** On Saturday, the U.S. military announced additional strikes against multiple targets in Iran. In response to the U.S. attacks

# Will sporadic U.S.-Iran clashes derail fragile truce?

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themkenyatimes

Recent sporadic clashes between the United States and Iran have raised questions over whether a fragile truce reached earlier this month can hold, though analysts say both sides still appear unwilling to return to a full-scale war.

The latest exchange came after the United States carried out strikes on multiple targets along Iran's coast on Friday, saying the targeted sites had been involved in drone attacks on a commercial vessel in the Strait of Hormuz the previous day.

On Saturday, the U.S. military announced additional strikes against multiple targets in Iran. In response to the U.S. attacks, Iran said it launched missile and drone attacks on U.S. military sites in Kuwait and Bahrain, raising concerns that the developments could undermine hopes for regional calm and progress in further negotiations between the two countries.

## Mistrust, structural contradictions

Regional analysts said the latest exchange of fire underscored the deep-rooted divisions and mutual distrust between the United States and Iran, warning that their entrenched hardline positions suggest the path to future negotiations is likely to be fraught with challenges.

Mohamed Mohsen Abo El-Nour, an expert on Iranian affairs and head of the Arab Forum for Analyzing Iranian Policies, said the main outstanding issues between the United States and Iran are not linked only to the latest clashes, but stem from broader strategic disputes that were not fully resolved in the memorandum of understanding (MoU) that they signed earlier this month. He listed among these issues the security of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. military presence in the Gulf region, the future of Iranian influence in regional arenas, especially Lebanon and Iraq, and the continuation of U.S. economic sanctions against Iran. "What is currently happening is a reflection of the continuation of these structural contradictions," Abo



Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi meets with U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner ahead of the indirect U.S.-Iran in February. | Photo: Reuters

El-Nour told Xinhua.

Abu-Bakr Al-Desouky, an Egyptian expert on international relations, Gulf and Iranian affairs, said that



**On Saturday, the U.S. military announced additional strikes against multiple targets in Iran. In response to the U.S. attacks, Iran said it launched missile and drone attacks on U.S. military sites in Kuwait and Bahrain, raising concerns that the developments could undermine hopes for regional calm and progress in further negotiations between the two countries.**

although the exchanges of fire have so far remained limited in scope, the mutual attacks reflected "a continuing crisis of trust" between the two countries. "Both sides announced that the other had violated the agreement," Al-Desouky said, stressing that the clashes would cast a negative shadow over the atmosphere of ongoing negotiations. "There are no negotiations under bombardment and amid mutual attacks," he said, warning that the strikes could also provide hardliners on both sides with grounds to halt the negotiation process.

## Will truce hold?

Following the latest exchange of

attacks, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Monday that no technical working group meetings under the Iran-U.S. MoU were planned for this week. However, experts said the latest clashes were unlikely, at least for now, to fully derail the truce. It is unlikely that the sporadic clashes will cause the failure of the ceasefire agreement, though they could slow the implementation of some of its provisions and increase caution and mistrust between the two sides, said Abo El-Nour. The collapse of peace prospects is not a rational option for either side, he noted, explaining that Iran needs calm to stabilize its economy and restore trade flows through the Strait of Hormuz, while the Unit-

ed States seeks to avoid a new round of war that could disrupt global energy markets and add further military and political burdens on Washington. "Therefore, the clashes remain within the bounds of limited military signaling, without causing the collapse of the understanding aimed at ending the war between the two sides," Abo El-Nour added. Echoing Abo El-Nour, Al-Desouky also believes that neither side appears to have a desire to escalate the conflict. Both sides share an interest in avoiding a wider war with its losses in equipment, lives and money, Al-Desouky said, emphasizing "there is a strong interest for them in continuing the MoU and the negotiations."



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A nation on edge: fresh abduction claims renew fear across Kenya

By Tyra Nyaboke

Kenya is afraid again. Fresh reports of alleged abductions are sweeping the country, and for human rights defenders, journalists, civil society groups and Generation Z activists, the fear is not abstract — it is personal.

The case of activist Davis Lirhumwa has become the flashpoint. His reported abduction has drawn swift condemnation from rights organisations demanding his immediate and safe return, and transparent investigations into who is responsible.

The pattern they describe is chilling: that speaking openly, organising publicly or simply showing up to protest may now be enough to make someone disappear.

Civil society groups are un-



equivocal. Every Kenyan holds a constitutional right to free expression, peaceful assembly and civic participation without fear of reprisal. They warn that uninvestigated disappearances corrode public confidence in the justice system — and they are right to worry.

Government officials have repeatedly pledged to investigate reported cases and insist they do not sanction enforced disappearances. Yet pledges without proof satisfy no one. Human rights organisations are de-

manding transparent findings, not reassurances.

Political analysts frame the stakes plainly: this is no longer only a human rights crisis. It is a test of Kenya's democratic credibility.

Thousands of Kenyans are asking on social media what their government cannot yet answer — where are the missing, and who took them?

Until those questions are answered honestly, the fear will not lift.

## Autism: A journey without maps, money or mercy

By Sheila Juliet

One in every 25 Kenyan children lives with autism. That is 2.2 million people across the spectrum — a figure the Autism Society of Kenya places at 15.6 per 1,000 children, with boys diagnosed at four times the rate of girls. Kenya ranks 46th globally in autism prevalence. Yet the country remains catastrophically unprepared to respond.

The failures begin at home. Deep-rooted myths still lead families to attribute autism to supernatural causes, driving some toward harmful cultural rituals dressed as cure. Shame does the rest — countless children are hidden indoors, cut off from education, therapy and community, while their families fracture under pressure no support system exists to absorb.

The financial burden is crushing. Specialised therapy is expensive and almost entirely



out of reach. The Social Health Authority does not cover autism-specific interventions — a gap that is not a bureaucratic oversight but a policy failure with human consequences. Families who cannot afford private care are left with nothing.

Healthcare compounds the crisis. Kenya has too few paediatric specialists trained in autism diagnosis and management. Late or missed diagnoses mean children lose the early intervention window that

most determines long-term outcomes.

Schools complete the exclusion. Public classrooms lack the curriculum flexibility, physical environment and teacher training that autistic learners require. The result is not just poor grades — it is outright removal from the education system.

Kenya cannot build an inclusive future while locking two million of its citizens out of it.

## When phones spark conflict: Examining violence in the digital age

By Jaisy Mumo

Kenya has a mobile phone problem — and it has nothing to do with connectivity.

In January 2026, a 32-year-old mechanic in Ruaka, Kiambu County, was reportedly killed during an argument over a mobile phone. Weeks later, a similar dispute in Kibos, Kisumu County, turned fatal. Then came the case that stopped the country: a 17-year-old student from Karairo Village in Rachuonyo East Sub-county, son of a police officer, found dead after leaving home following what preliminary police investigations suggest was a disagreement about a phone.

Three deaths. Three ordinary arguments. Three families destroyed.

Rachuonyo North Sub-county Police Commander Peter Walah confirmed investigators are pursuing the circumstances of



the teenager's death. But the investigation that matters most is a social one.

The modern smartphone is no longer just a communication device. It carries private conversations, financial accounts, social media identities and intimate memories. It has become, for many, an extension of self — which is precisely why disputes over who touches it, who checks it and who controls it carry such explosive emotional charge.

Jealousy, mistrust and violated privacy are not new human problems. But when they converge on a device that holds the entirety of someone's private life, the consequences can be catastrophic — and increasingly, they are.

Kenya is embracing digital technology at pace. It has not yet learned to manage the human conflicts that technology quietly carries with it.

## Youth empowerment cannot wait

By Winfred Mumo

Kenya is sitting on a demographic dividend it is in danger of wasting.

Millions of young Kenyans enter adulthood each year equipped with skills, creativity and ambition. Too many of them walk straight into a wall — no jobs, no capital, no meaningful pathway from potential to livelihood. That is not a youth problem. It is a policy failure.

The barriers are well known and inexcusable. An education system that still trains young people for jobs that no longer exist in the numbers needed. A private sector that demands experience from people who have never been given the chance to gain it. A government that speaks eloquently about youth empowerment at podiums and then underfunds the programmes that would deliver it.



What is required is not another taskforce or another youth fund that disappears into procurement. It is genuine coordination — government, private sector and learning institutions aligning curricula, internships, mentorship and financing around what the modern economy actually needs.

The return on that investment is not abstract. Employed, empowered young people pay taxes, start businesses, raise stable families and reduce the social costs that governments

otherwise absorb. Youth empowerment is not charity. It is economic logic.

Kenya's youth are not asking to be saved. They are asking for a fair shot — access to training that works, markets that are open and institutions that take their participation seriously.

The longer that shot is delayed, the more expensive the consequences become.

# SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> \*A last-gasp strike in the 90th minute rescued the Seleção from a historic upset and kept their title dream alive

## Brazil survive Japan scare to advance at 2026 World Cup



By Martin Weche

Brazil edged Japan 2-1 in a tense 2026 FIFA World Cup clash on Monday, with the winning goal arriving in the final minute of normal time to spare the five-time champions an early and humiliating exit.

The result looked far from certain for much of the afternoon. Japan stunned the Seleção with an early goal in the 29th minute — a strike that silenced Brazil’s vast support base and exposed vulnerabilities in a side many had tipped to go deep into the tournament. That Japan, with 40 per cent possession and only five shots to Brazil’s 20, managed to take the lead and hold it deep into the second half spoke volumes about the tactical discipline of Hajime Moriyasu’s side.

Brazil, who dominated every statistical category — 60 per cent possession, 20 shots, seven on target — were made to work painfully hard before they found a way through. An equaliser arrived in the 56th minute, finally converting their sustained ter-

ritorial pressure into something concrete. Yet for more than half an hour after that, Japan’s compact defensive block refused to yield. Goalkeeper Zion Suzuki was in inspired form, making five saves across the 90 minutes to deny the Seleção what should, on the balance of play, have been a far more comfortable evening.

The tension was not confined to the pitch. Japan picked up three yellow cards, including one in first-half stoppage time that set an edgy tone for the second period. Brazil were not entirely composed either, collecting two of their own. The foul count told its own story — Japan conceded 13 to Brazil’s four, a sign of the physical methods Japan employed to disrupt the South Americans’ rhythm.

Coach substitutions shaped the endgame. Brazil made four changes in total, with a double switch at the hour mark injecting urgency, and Endrick coming on late as the side sought the breakthrough. Japan’s bench was equally busy, sending on five players as Moriyasu chased

a result that would have ranked among the greatest upsets in World Cup history.

It came down to the final minute. A Brazil goal in the 90th second sealed the outcome — clinical, dramatic and, from Japan’s perspective, devastating. After all the discipline, all the sacrifice, all the saves, they were undone at the death.

For Brazil, the relief was palpable. Vinicius Junior and Matheus Cunha led the attacking line throughout with persistence if not always precision, and Bruno Guimarães and Lucas Paquetá worked tirelessly in midfield to keep the ball moving. But this was not Brazil at their best, and they will know it. The defensive unit, anchored by Marquinhos and Gabriel Magalhães, needed Alisson to be solid in goal — and he was, even if his opposite number arguably had the better individual evening.

Japan’s Ritsu Doan, Daichi Kamada and the tireless Daizen Maeda gave everything in what turned out to be a heartbreaking near-miss. Tomiyasu Takehiro

marshalled the defensive line with authority, and only a single lapse at the very end cost them everything. They had come closer than the scoreline suggests to ending Brazil’s campaign before the knockout rounds.

The 2026 World Cup, co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, has already delivered a string of surprises, and this match added to the sense that traditional footballing hierarchies are shifting. Japan, who famously defeated Germany and Spain at the 2022 tournament in Qatar, nearly produced another seismic result.

Brazil advance. But their supporters, and their coaching staff, will be aware that performances like this one will not survive the knockout rounds intact.

Japan gave everything and were denied by a single moment when none were meant to be left.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*Die Mannschaft's 2026 campaign ends in agonising fashion at Gillette Stadium as Orlando Gill's heroics and ice-cold Paraguayan nerve eliminate the four-time champions

# Paraguay stun Germany in World Cup penalty shootout classic



By **Martin Weche**

Paraguay eliminated Germany from the 2026 FIFA World Cup in one of the tournament's most dramatic encounters, winning a penalty shootout after 120 minutes of football ended 1-1 at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts on Monday.

It was a contest of deeply contrasting styles from the first whistle. Germany dominated with roughly 75 per cent possession throughout, yet struggled repeatedly to penetrate a Paraguayan defensive block that was as disciplined as it was physically demanding. What should have been a comfortable passage into the last 16 for the four-time world champions became a gruelling, nerve-shredding examination of character — one they ultimately failed.

Paraguay stunned the tournament favourites in the 42nd minute when Julio Enciso rose to meet a precise cross from Matías Galarza and powered a header past Manuel Neuer — the first ever knockout-stage goal in Paraguayan World Cup history, scored against Germany. It was a moment of stunning audacity

from a side that had arrived at this round as heavy underdogs, and the roar it produced inside Gillette Stadium said everything about how unexpected it was.

Germany responded at half-time with intent and purpose. Florian Wirtz delivered a superb curling cross that Kai Havertz met with an expert header to equalise in the 54th minute — a goal of genuine class that appeared to signal the beginning of a German takeover. It did not materialise. Havertz had a big chance to win the match in the 78th minute but Gill produced a key save to deny the German striker. Germany also had a Jonathan Tah goal disallowed in extra time following a contentious VAR review that determined Waldemar Anton had fouled Gill at the corner — a brutal ruling that kept the tie alive.

Germany had controlled the match comprehensively on paper, outshooting Paraguay 21-7 and holding a six-to-three edge in shots on target. Yet Gill made six saves to keep his side alive while Neuer was called upon only twice. The statistics told the story of a match Germany dominated but could not win — and in knockout football, that distinc-

tion is everything.

The penalty shootout that followed was a classic of the genre. Gill struck first, saving Havertz's opening kick to give Paraguay an immediate and electric advantage. Joshua Kimmich responded with composure, holding off Gill's dive and rolling the ball crisply into the corner to level the shootout. Gustavo Gómez, Paraguay's defensive captain, stepped up and slotted coolly to put his side back ahead in a moment that epitomised the mental fortitude La Albirroja had displayed across 120 minutes. Matías Galarza then produced a moment of individual brilliance — feinting to send Neuer diving one way before rolling the ball into the opposite corner — to push Paraguay further ahead.

Germany found a lifeline when Antonio Sanabria, who had entered as a substitute, stepped up with the chance to win the shootout for Paraguay and dragged his effort wide of the post. But the reprieve was brief. Paraguay held their nerve and, with the shootout at 3-4 in their favour, completed one of the great World Cup upsets.

Paraguay had arrived at this

tournament after a rocky group stage that began with a 4-1 loss to the United States, before bouncing back with a win over Turkey and securing qualification with a draw. That resilience had been evident throughout Monday's match — in every block, every last-ditch clearance, every save from the extraordinary Gill. The winner was set to play France or Sweden in the last 16, and Paraguayans who had dared to dream now had concrete reason to believe.

For Julian Nagelsmann's Germany, there will be searching questions. A side that beat Curaçao 7-1 in their tournament opener and arrived in Boston among the tournament's most fancied nations leaves without troubling the final eight. They outshot, out-possessed and outplayed Paraguay for large portions of the match — and still they lost.

Sometimes football's cruelest truth is the simplest one: possession counts for nothing without the goal.

# SPORTS NEWS



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# SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



# When leadership becomes a blame game, who speaks for the Kenyan people?

*As accusations fly across the political divide, ordinary citizens are left asking a simpler, more urgent question: who is actually solving our problems?*

By: Hadassah Karangu

@themkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

In recent weeks, the country has watched its political leaders go at each other with familiar intensity. Accusations have flown in both directions. Government officials point fingers at the opposition. Opposition figures fire back, insisting the government has failed the very people it was elected to serve. Press conferences are held. Statements are issued. Social media churns with outrage. And somewhere in the middle of all that noise, millions of ordinary Kenyans are waiting — not for the next headline, but for relief.

That waiting is exhausting. It is the kind of exhaustion that comes not from laziness, but from watching leaders who have the power to change things spend their energy fighting each other instead.

Leadership was never designed to be a contest of blame. At its best, it is a commitment to something far more demanding than victory — it is a commitment to service.

Governance or politics — what should come first?

It is a question that echoes from villages and market stalls, from classrooms and boardrooms, from fishing communities along the lake to the high-rise offices of Nairobi. And right now, across Kenya, more and more people are asking it out loud.

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Today, families are stretched thin by a cost of living that keeps climbing. Young graduates are sending out applications and hearing nothing back. Small business owners are doing the maths every morning, wondering whether today is the day they can no longer stay afloat. Farmers are watching the skies and worrying about production costs and erratic weather. Students are dreaming of quality education, of futures that feel just out of reach.

None of those problems disappear because politicians find new ways to blame each other. They require something harder and less glamorous than a good soundbite. They require dialogue. They require solutions. They require action.

To be fair, disagreement has its



Illustration of blame game

place in a healthy democracy. The role of the opposition is to question, to challenge, to hold the government to account. The role of the government is to govern — to design and implement policies that improve lives. Both of those responsibilities matter enormously.

But when political competition hardens into a permanent blame game, something important gets lost. The real issues — the ones affecting the mother who cannot afford school fees, the young man who cannot find work, the elderly woman waiting months for medical care — those issues get crowded out by the noise. And the people who most need to be heard become, once again, the last to be listened to.

Kenya's most defining moments have rarely come from its politicians outdoing one another. They have come from citizens and leaders alike choosing, even in difficult times, to put the country ahead of their own ambitions. There is a resilience in

this nation that has repeatedly surprised the world. But resilience is not a substitute for leadership. It should not have to be.

The current political climate presents a genuine opportunity — not for more speeches, but for a different kind of reflection. Instead of asking who bears the blame, leaders on every side of the divide could ask a better question: who bears the responsibility? Responsibility for creating jobs. For improving healthcare. For strengthening education. For protecting lives. For rebuilding trust in public institutions that too many Kenyans have long since stopped believing in.

The future of this country will not be shaped by whoever shouts the loudest. It will be built — quietly, practically, steadily — by those who show up with real answers to real problems.

Kenya deserves leaders who listen before they speak. Who serve before they campaign. Who seek to unite

before they look to divide.

Leadership is not a campaign rally with no end date. It is a promise, made in public, to people who are counting on you to keep it.

Governance is not about winning arguments on television or landing the sharpest line on social media. It is about improving lives — tangibly, measurably, honestly.

And perhaps that is the question every leader, whether in government or in opposition, should sit with today: when history looks back at this moment in Kenya's story, will it remember the accusations — or will it remember the answers?

That question, more than any political rivalry, may determine not just the future of our politics, but the future of our nation.