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Ruto, Kindiki and Mudavadi leads launch of KSh3 Billion NYOTA Disbursement

BY DMS
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto on Friday in Nairobi led the launch of the second phase of the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) business support programme, with the Government disbursing more than KSh3 billion to over 122,000 young entrepreneurs across the country.

Ruto said each beneficiary received KSh25,000, bringing the total support under the programme to KSh50,000 per person to start or expand businesses. He directed the Ministry of Co-operatives and MSMEs Development to establish a national NYOTA identification mechanism to ease access to government services and instructed state financing agencies to develop a dedicated NYOTA Growth Product. He also urged county governments to consider a two-year business permit waiver for beneficiaries.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki and Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi led other senior government officials in launching the exercise in other parts of the country. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki said the KSh3 billion disbursement marked the second tranche under the programme's Business Development Support component, noting that one million youth are expected to benefit through NYOTA's four pillars. Speaking in Nakuru, where beneficiaries from Nakuru, Baringo and Nyandarua counties received grants, he said 8,958 youth from the three counties had benefited during the exercise.

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi said the programme demonstrates the government's commitment to investing in youth enterprise and job creation. Speaking during the Western Cluster disbursement at Masinde Muliro University, Mudavadi said NYOTA equips vulnerable and marginalised youth with entrepreneurship training, mentorship, skills development and start-up capital to enable them to build sustainable livelihoods and become job creators under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda.



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Jubilee party leadership in Nyeri county led by chairperson Regina Wanjiru on Friday convened an aspirants consultative meeting at the county headquarters. Scores of aspirants who are seeking various political seats during the forthcoming General Elections attended the forum. The meeting provided an opportunity to strengthen unity, build teamwork and discuss the party's vision and the way forward. The aspirants noted that they remain committed to a stronger, more united Jubilee Party.



A Milimani Anti-Corruption Court has convicted and sentenced Osborne Juma Olande for bribery and impersonation after he posed as a Nairobi City County enforcement officer to extort money from a motorist seeking the release of an impounded motorcycle. Investigations by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission established that Olande falsely claimed to be attached to the Nairobi City County Inspectorate Department and demanded money while pretending he had authority to facilitate the motorcycle's release. The court found him guilty on four counts of receiving bribes and one count of impersonation after determining that he misled the complainant through the false representation. Olande was fined a total of KSh237,000 on all counts and will serve up to one year in jail if he fails to pay the fines.



Bungoma County has received medical equipment worth more than KSh50 million to strengthen healthcare services, particularly vaccine storage, distribution and emergency care. Governor Kenneth Lusaka received the equipment at Webuye County Hospital, where the Rotary Club of Bungoma Magharibi donated a refrigeration van and a vaccine cold room, while the State Department for Health Services supplied emergency medical equipment. Lusaka said the new facilities will improve immunisation services, with the cold room capable of storing more than one million vaccine doses. Health officials said the equipment will enhance vaccine distribution and expand access to life-saving services for children and mothers across the county.



Wiper Patriotic Front leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka on Friday held talks with grassroots leaders from Kajiado and Narok during a meeting at Kithimani Farm, where they discussed issues affecting communities in the Maa region and the country's future. Kalonzo said the engagement reflected the shared aspirations of Kenyans and underscored the importance of national unity in addressing challenges facing the country. He also expressed gratitude to Maa elders for their blessings and guidance, saying their wisdom serves as a reminder that leadership is founded on service, integrity and responsibility to future generations. He said the meeting focused on the need for inclusive development that benefits all citizens and urged Kenyans to remain united, respect one another and work together towards building a stronger and more cohesive nation.



Nzoia Sugar Company has paid more than KSh700 million to farmers since resuming operations in January 2026, marking a significant turnaround following major rehabilitation works. CEO Sohan Sharma said the company has injected nearly KSh900 million into the Bungoma County economy, with farmers now receiving payments within two weeks of cane delivery. Since restarting operations, the mill has crushed over 292,980 tonnes of cane and introduced digital systems to improve efficiency and eliminate weighbridge manipulation. Despite the progress, Sharma said inadequate cane supply remains a major challenge, calling for collaboration to expand production. Bungoma Governor Kenneth Lusaka welcomed the revival, saying prompt payments have restored farmers' confidence and urged leaders to support the company's recovery.



The Coast Water Works Development Agency (CWWDA) is investing KSh185 million in water harvesting and supply projects across Tana River County to improve access to clean water and strengthen climate resilience. The projects include the Sheli Water Supply Project, Bangale 1 and 2 water pans, Chirifa, Biskder, Chariadende, Gafuru and Minjila water pans. The Sheli project will provide safe water to more than 300 households through a pipeline, distribution network and water kiosks. CWWDA says the projects will reduce water scarcity, improve sanitation and public health, support livestock and farming, keep children in school and enhance livelihoods through sustainable, solar-powered water infrastructure.

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Budget The Assembly approved an additional KSh110 million for the county bursary programme

Kirinyaga Assembly approves KSh7 Billion budget, health sector gets biggest share

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

The Kirinyaga County Assembly has approved the County Government's 2026/2027 budget estimates of more than KSh7 billion, with the health sector receiving the largest allocation at about 30 percent of the total budget.

The budget was passed after the Assembly adopted the report of the Budget and Appropriations Committee following scrutiny of the estimates to ensure resources are directed to priority programmes aimed at improving service delivery and accelerating development.

While moving the motion, Budget and Appropriations Committee Chairperson Geoffrey Gakuru said the Assembly had prioritized key sectors that directly impact residents' livelihoods. He noted that Members of the County Assembly increased the allocation for ward-based development projects to KSh600 million, translating to KSh30 million for each of the county's 20 wards, to ensure every ward implements projects that address local development needs.

The Assembly also approved an additional KSh110 million for the county bursary programme, raising the total allocation to KSh210 million.

Gakuru said the increased funding will enable more



Speaker Julius Muteti Murimi during the approval session.

needy and vulnerable students to access education and reduce financial barriers facing many families.

Health emerged as the biggest beneficiary of the budget, reflecting the county government's commitment to improving healthcare services, equipping medical facilities and expanding access to quality healthcare for residents across Kirinyaga.

Gakuru challenged the County Executive to ensure full and timely implementation of the approved budget, stressing that residents can only benefit if development projects are completed as planned.

"We have done our work as the Assembly by approv-

ing a budget that addresses the needs of our people. The Executive must now ensure every project is implemented as planned so that residents realise the intended benefits," he said.

During debate on the estimates, Tebere Ward MCA Peter Karinga criticized the County Executive for failing to implement some projects approved in previous budgets. He cited delays in procuring a firefighting engine despite funds having been approved by the Assembly, saying the county remains ill-equipped to respond to fire emergencies.

Karinga noted that the lack of firefighting equipment has forced the county to seek as-

sistance from neighbouring counties whenever major fires occur, exposing residents and businesses to avoidable losses. He referenced recent fire incidents in Kerugoya and Mwea, where property worth millions of shillings was destroyed.

The MCA urged the Executive to prioritize implementation of approved projects, ensure public funds are used for their intended purposes and uphold accountability, saying timely execution of development programmes is essential to delivering meaningful development and improved services to the people of Kirinyaga.

Mudavadi says NYOTA programme a game changer for the youths



PCS Musalia Mudavadi with one of the beneficiaries.

BY OPCS Press Services
@themtkenyatimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi on Friday joined thousands of youths and beneficiaries of NYOTA project, Western Cluster for Bungoma, Kakamega, Busia and Vihiga, where together leaders he listened to uplifting and successful stories of how the first tranche of the KSh22,000 payment to the youths had impacted on their lives.

Speaking during the 2nd Disbursement exercise at the Masinde Muliro University, Mudavadi said the payment seeks to further strengthen the economic impact of the youth empowerment to youths aged 18-29 years, and 35 years for PWDs, .

NYOTA programme PCS said intends to touch the lives of 820,000 vulnerable and marginalised youth who have not advanced beyond secondary school, drawn nationally across all the 1,450 wards in the country by affording them

seed money for invest in gainful employment.

Mudavadi said the global job market projected that in the next 10-15 years, more than KSh1.6 billion youth in developing nations, Kenya included, will need jobs, compared to only 400 million jobs likely to be created.

PCS said this poses a development, economic, and security challenge, but through BETA, the Government has placed youth empowerment at the centre of the development agenda, investing early in youth to enable entrepreneurship and job creation.

He said the project delivers job creation through two pathways like enhancing youth employability, skilling, recognition of prior learning (RPL), on-the-job experience (OJE), stronger employment systems, and a savings culture.

PCS noted that the NYOTA programme was Expanding youth employment opportunities through entrepreneurship like business training, start-up capital, mentorship, and market access via AGPO training.

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Politics A High Court order, an absent police commander, and a mob with stones — the Mukuru confrontation raises questions that go well beyond one school

Karua convoy attacked as police stand aside at Gatoto school

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua yesterday condemned an attack on her convoy at Gatoto Community Primary School in Mukuru kwa Reuben, accusing police of abandoning their duty to enforce a High Court order directing the peaceful handover of the school to its lawful Board of Directors.

Karua had accompanied the board to oversee the implementation of a ruling by Justice Gregory Mutai, issued on June 25, which directed that the school's ownership and management be restored to the petitioning board, with the

Officer Commanding Mukuru kwa Reuben Police Station required to provide security during the exercise. What followed, she said, was a sequence of institutional failures and physical violence.

When the group arrived at the police station, the OCS was absent and his deputy declined to deploy officers, stating that only the OCS could authorise the assignment. The board proceeded to the school regardless, only to find the gates locked. Minutes after the media arrived, the situation deteriorated sharply. Stones were hurled at board members' vehicles, forcing those present to flee. As Karua's vehicle departed, an individual armed with a club

smashed its rear windscreen.

Law Society of Kenya president Charles Kanjama, who was also present, was among those forced to leave hurriedly as the crowd surged.

"Today's events are not merely about Gatoto Primary School. They raise a broader national question about whether Kenyans can continue to rely on public institutions to enforce court decisions impartially and protect those exercising their constitutional rights," Karua said.

The dispute has its roots in a community that established Gatoto in the 1980s to serve children in one of Nairobi's most densely populated informal settlements. Residents and their lawyers have ques-



People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua

tioned how individuals could claim ownership in 2026 of a school with a root title dating to the 1980s. A section of parents has filed a notice of appeal, arguing that privatisation would price out the very

families the school was built to serve.

Karua called for immediate investigations into both the attack and the police failure, demanding accountability for anyone found responsible

through direct involvement, negligence, or abuse of office.

When a court order means nothing on the ground, the rule of law means nothing at all.

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THE



Politics The commission's stiff penalty against the Kipipiri MP signals a new era of electoral accountability — and puts every politician on notice ahead of 2027

Pay and apologise: IEBC orders Muhia to cough up KSh1.5m and face the public within 72 hours

BY Hadassah Karangu

@themkenyatimes

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission yesterday delivered one of its most significant enforcement actions in recent memory, fining Kipipiri Member of Parliament Wanjiku Muhia KSh1.5 million and ordering her to issue a public apology within 72 hours over violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct — a ruling that has sent shockwaves through Kenya's political establishment and reignited a fierce national debate about accountability, political speech, and the future of the country's democracy.

The penalty, among the stiffest the commission has handed down against a sitting legislator, landed with immediate force. Supporters, critics, political analysts, and ordinary Kenyans reacted with equal intensity — some welcoming the ruling as long overdue, others questioning whether the commission was applying its standards with consistency and without political motivation.

But beyond the legal arguments and political noise lies a much larger conversation — one that goes to the very foundation of what kind of democracy Kenya intends to be.

For years, Kenyans have watched political leaders make inflammatory statements with little or no consequence. During election seasons, rallies routinely become arenas of confrontation, opponents are attacked personally, and supporters are mobilised through emotion rather than ideas. In some cases, careless rhetoric has pushed communities toward tension and deep mistrust. Many Kenyans still carry the memory of periods when political speech brought the country dangerously close to the edge. Those memories remain raw.

That is precisely why the Electoral Code of Conduct exists.

The code was not designed to silence politicians. It was designed to protect democracy — to ensure that campaigns are conducted peacefully, respectfully, and within the law, and to remind leaders that elections should be contests of ideas, not vehicles for insults, threats, or incitement.

From the commission's perspective, enforcing these rules is not discre-

tionary. It is a constitutional duty. Where allegations are raised and evidence presented, the IEBC is obligated to act. Failure to do so would invite far more damaging questions about its credibility and commitment to impartiality.

The 72-hour apology deadline adds a sharp public dimension to the ruling that distinguishes it from a simple financial penalty. Muhia is not merely being asked to pay. She is being required to stand before the public and account for her words — a condition that many observers regard as the more politically consequential of the two sanctions.

Whether she complies, challenges the ruling, or attempts to negotiate its terms will be watched closely. Her response in the coming hours may prove as revealing as the ruling itself.

The timing of the IEBC's action carries its own significance. Though 2027 remains some distance away, Kenya's political engines are already running. Alliances are forming, camps are positioning, and leaders are traversing the country testing messages and measuring public appetite. By acting now — and acting firmly — the commission appears to be sending an unmistakable signal that the era of unchecked political rhetoric must end before campaigns reach full intensity.

If so, that message is not addressed solely to Muhia. It is addressed to every politician in Kenya. A warning that leadership carries responsibility. A warning that words have weight. A warning that public influence must be exercised with care.

Yet the controversy also exposes a deeper and more stubborn challenge facing Kenya's public institutions: trust. Years of political disputes have left many citizens genuinely sceptical about whether laws are applied equally. Whenever action is taken against one politician, a familiar question surfaces almost immediately — what about the others?

It is a fair question, and not one the commission can afford to dismiss. The credibility of any institution rests not only on what it does, but on whether the public believes it is acting without favour. If Muhia faces consequences while others escape scrutiny for comparable conduct, accusations of selective justice will be difficult to deflect.

Consistency will therefore be the



Kipipiri Member of Parliament Wanjiku Muhia

defining test of whether this ruling represents a genuine turning point or simply a high-profile exception. The law must apply regardless of political status, popularity, or party affiliation. It must recognise only conduct. Anything less risks corroding public confidence at precisely the moment the commission needs to be rebuilding it.

In this sense, the Muhia ruling places the IEBC itself under the microscope. As the MP's conduct is debated, the commission's own independence, impartiality, and resilience under political pressure are being examined just as closely.

Politicians across the board would do well to treat this moment as a serious invitation to reflect. Kenya faces real and pressing challenges. Young people are searching for work. Families are struggling with the rising cost of living. Farmers are contending with unpredictable

weather and volatile markets. Businesses are trying to stay afloat in difficult economic conditions. These are the concerns filling the minds of ordinary citizens — yet far too often, political discourse revolves around personalities, rivalries, and endless blame.

Kenyans deserve better. They deserve leaders who compete through ideas rather than insults, campaigns centred on solutions rather than sensational headlines, and public figures who understand that political power is a responsibility, not a reward.

The KSh1.5 million fine and the 72-hour apology order may ultimately matter less as individual sanctions than as a statement of intent. The IEBC appears to be drawing a line — and inviting Kenya's political class to decide which side of it they intend to stand on.

Every statement made today will shape tomorrow's political environ-

ment. Every institutional decision will either strengthen or erode public trust. And every leader will ultimately be judged not only by the promises made on a campaign stage, but by the conduct displayed long before polling day.

Whether one supports Muhia or not, whether one trusts the IEBC or not, this moment confronts Kenya with a question that is uncomfortable but inescapable: do we want politics driven by accountability and ideas, or politics driven by noise and impunity?

The answer may determine not only the credibility of the next election, but the future direction of the nation's democracy. And that is why this ruling matters — not because of one MP and one fine, but because of the standards Kenya chooses to uphold on the road to 2027.

NGAAF Speaking during the distribution exercise in Nyanduma Ward, Wamuratha said the programme aims to promote self-reliance

NGAAF empowerment programme boosts livelihoods in Lari constituency

BY Felix Njenga
@themtkenyatimes

Hundreds of residents in Lari Constituency are set to benefit from a National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) empowerment programme that provided financial grants to community groups and business equipment to entrepreneurs to boost grassroots economic growth.

The initiative, led by Kiambu Woman Representative Anne Wamuratha, saw five self-help

groups each receive a non-refundable grant of KSh100,000 to support income-generating projects, strengthen savings and improve members' livelihoods. The beneficiary groups are Kamuchege People with Disability Self Help Group, Gatamaiyu Blessed Welfare Group, Escarpment Mwhiko Self Help Group, Kamukombi-ini Pioneers Self Help Group and Team Rui Self Help Group.

Speaking during the distribution exercise in Nyanduma Ward, Wamuratha said the

programme aims to promote self-reliance by equipping organized groups and small entrepreneurs with resources to expand their businesses and create sustainable incomes.

Dozens of traders and artisans also received business equipment tailored to their enterprises. Market traders were issued with umbrellas, while food vendors received chips fryers, juice-making machines, chafing dishes, market trolleys, and eggs and smokies vending trolleys to improve efficiency and in-



Anne Wamuratha kiambu county women giving out blow-dryers to saloonists.

crease earnings.

Salon and barber shop operators benefited from salon sinks, barber chairs, hair dryers, blow dryers, nail technician chairs, ultraviolet nail curing machines and electric shaving machines. Boda boda riders received protective helmets and motorbike umbrellas, while car wash operators were equipped with modern car wash machines. Visually impaired residents also received white canes to enhance

mobility and independence.

Wamuratha said the programme targets women, youth, persons living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, enabling them to establish or expand businesses, create jobs and improve household incomes. She reaffirmed her commitment to ensuring NGAAF resources continue reaching deserving communities across Kiambu County.

Beneficiaries welcomed

the support, saying it would strengthen their businesses, improve productivity and help them cope with the rising cost of doing business.

The empowerment drive reflects NGAAF's broader goal of promoting inclusive economic growth through financial support and productive assets while encouraging entrepreneurship and employment creation at the grassroots.

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Politics “When we launched the NYOTA Enterprise Programme, some questioned whether Sh25,000 could truly make a difference,” he said.

Ruto dismisses Nyota critics as KSh3bn lands in youth accounts

BY DMS

@themkenyaintimes

President William Ruto has hit back at critics of the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) programme after the Government released more than KSh3 billion in grants to over 122,000 young entrepreneurs nationwide.

Speaking on Friday during the second tranche disbursement of the NYOTA Business Start-up Programme, the President reported that the initiative was delivering real results despite scepticism over the size of the grants.

“When we launched the NYOTA Enterprise Programme, some questioned whether Sh25,000 could truly make a difference,” he said. “Every great enterprise was once a small one. Every successful entrepreneur was once a beginner.”

The latest payout saw 88,934 beneficiaries receive a second KSh25,000 grant after successfully investing their first allocation, bringing their total support to KSh50,000.

Another 33,269 young Kenyans received their first grants, taking the total number of beneficiaries in the latest phase to more than 122,000 across all 47 counties.

Ruto maintained the programme was about creating opportunities rather than handing out cash, arguing that youth enterprise remains one of the Government’s biggest weapons against unemployment.

In a major boost for beneficiaries, the President an-

nounced a two-year waiver of business permits for all NYOTA businesses. He directed the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council to work with county governments to implement the measure.

He also instructed the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs Development to roll out a national NYOTA identification system to enable beneficiaries to access government services, incentives and future financing with ease.

“Young businesses deserve the opportunity to establish themselves before bearing the full cost of compliance,” the President said.

At a concurrent event in Nakuru, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki defended the programme, saying it specifically targets young people aged between 18 and 29 who missed out on university or college education and often struggle to secure formal employment.

DP Kindiki said the programme guarantees equal opportunities, with half the beneficiaries being women, half men, and five per cent reserved for persons with disabilities.

Prof Kindiki said 4,100 young people in Nakuru benefited from the latest disbursement, among them 3,000 receiving their second tranche and 1,100 first-time recipients.

In neighbouring Baringo, about 2,900 youths received grants, while another 1,900 beneficiaries were supported in Nyandarua.

Beyond start-up capital, he said NYOTA also offers industrial attachments for

90,000 youths, Recognition of Prior Learning certification for skilled workers without formal qualifications, and support for more than 6,000 young people seeking access to government procurement opportunities.

“We have ensured every county, every ward, men, women and persons with disabilities are represented. This is the fairest government pro-



President William Ruto with Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja during Friday’s event in Nairobi. |

Photo: Courtesy.

gramme ever,” Prof Kindiki said.

Explaining the need for the business boost to young Kenyans, Kindiki said it was going to trickle down to everyone.

“Our young people were never waiting for handouts. They were waiting for an op-

portunity. And when opportunity meets determination, ambition becomes enterprise; enterprise creates jobs; Jobs support families. Strong families build a strong nation,” he explained.

The Deputy President also criticised those dismissing the capital boost as inconsequen-

tial, urging them to offer better. “I have heard some people say that KSh22,000 is too little, but if you think this is little money, please come and help us provide more. For the time being, we are grateful, but in future we will expand this grant so that it can be larger than it is at the moment.”



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki with some of the beneficiaries.

Political On the one hand, the Commission has a constitutional duty to conduct elections that are free, fair, transparent and credible

If the IEBC postpones OI-Kalou, the law must speak louder than politics



By: Gitile Naituli
@themkenyatimes

The possibility that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) may postpone the OI Kalou parliamentary by-election has shifted national attention from campaign politics to constitutional law. Whatever decision the Commission ultimately makes, one principle must remain constant: the rule of law, not political convenience, must govern Kenya's elections.

The IEBC is not powerless in the face of electoral malpractice. Nor is it free to postpone elections simply because the political environment has become contentious. The Constitution and Kenya's electoral laws chart a careful path between these two extremes.

On the one hand, the Commission has a constitutional duty to conduct elections that are free, fair, transparent and credible. Article 81 requires elections to be free from violence, intimidation, improper influence and corruption, while Article 86 obliges the IEBC to administer elections in an accurate, accountable and transparent manner.

On the other hand, the law recognises that extraordinary circumstances may occasionally make it impossible to hold an election. For that reason, the electoral framework gives the Commission limited authority to postpone an election where exceptional conditions, such as widespread violence or circumstances genuinely beyond its control,

make a credible poll impossible.

That power, however, is an exception. It is not a substitute for enforcement.

If allegations of voter bribery, intimidation, abuse of state resources or violations of campaign regulations are true, the first constitutional response is not to postpone the election. The first response is to enforce the law.

The Election Offences Act already criminalises bribery and other electoral offences. The Electoral Code of Conduct regulates campaign behaviour. The National Police Service has investigative powers. The Director of Public Prosecutions has authority to prosecute offenders. Where public resources are allegedly misused, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission also has a role.

These institutions exist because the Constitution anticipated that elections would sometimes attract unlawful conduct. Their purpose is to protect elections, not to surrender them to those who break the law.

Indeed, there is a dangerous constitutional paradox here. If electoral offences become the reason for postponing elections instead of the reason for prosecuting offenders, those willing to violate the law acquire the ability to influence the electoral calendar itself. Democracy cannot permit those who undermine elections to determine when elections are held.

Should the IEBC conclude that postponement is nevertheless unavoidable, its decision must satisfy a much higher constitutional standard than a simple public announcement.

The Commission must explain precisely what legal provisions it is relying upon. It must identify the exceptional circumstances that make the

conduct of the election impossible. It must demonstrate why ordinary enforcement measures cannot adequately protect the integrity of the poll. Above all, it must show that postponement is necessary, proportionate and consistent with the Constitution. Transparency is not optional. It is the foundation of public confidence.

Equally important is what happens if the Commission decides not to postpone the election. Proceeding with the poll does not absolve the IEBC of responsibility. On the contrary, it imposes an even greater obligation to ensure strict compliance with electoral law. Allegations of bribery, intimidation, misuse of public resources or unlawful campaigning cannot simply be ignored because voting proceeds as scheduled.

The Commission must demonstrate that it is capable of enforcing the law impartially against all contestants, regardless of political affiliation or public office. Public confidence depends not only on the outcome of elections but on the fairness of the process that produces that outcome.

OI Kalou therefore presents the IEBC with two different tests.

If it postpones the election, Kenyans will judge whether the decision was supported by law, evidence and constitutional necessity.

If it proceeds with the election, Kenyans will judge whether the Commission had the courage and independence to enforce the law fairly and without fear or favour. In either case, the constitutional standard remains exactly the same.

The broader implications cannot be ignored. Every by-election is a rehearsal for the General Election. Every institutional decision contrib-



IEBC Chairperson Erastus Ethekon

utes either to confidence or to doubt. Every failure to explain, every appearance of selective enforcement and every perception of political influence weakens the credibility of the electoral system.

Article 1 of the Constitution reminds us that all sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya. Elections are the means through which citizens exercise that sovereign power. The IEBC is therefore not merely an election administrator; it is the constitutional

trustee of the people's democratic choice. That is why its decisions must never appear arbitrary or politically motivated. They must be rooted firmly in law, supported by evidence and capable of withstanding judicial scrutiny.

The debate over OI Kalou is therefore much larger than one parliamentary seat. It is a measure of whether Kenya's electoral institutions are prepared for the far greater constitutional responsibility that

awaits them in August 2027.

Whatever the Commission decides, one thing is certain: Kenyans will judge it not by the politics of the moment, but by its fidelity to the Constitution. And in a constitutional democracy, that is exactly as it should be.

The writer is a former commissioner with NCIC and a university lecturer who comments on various topical issues



A collage of gas cylinders, mattresses, electric posts and other goodies for residents of Olkalou constituency

Politics “Ol Kalou has been very peaceful. There has not been violence of any magnitude that could warrant the cancellation or postponement of the election,” Gachagua said

Touch Ol Kalou poll and your credibility dies with it, Gachagua tells IEBC

As violence, voter bribery and political brinkmanship engulf a single constituency, Kenya’s most explosive by-election has become a dress rehearsal — and a warning — for what 2027 could look like

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua yesterday warned the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission that any decision to postpone or cancel the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election scheduled for July 16 would strip the commission of the moral authority to conduct the 2027 general election.

The warning, delivered at a press briefing in Nairobi, escalated a crisis that has been building for weeks in a constituency that was supposed to be a routine mid-term vote but has instead become one of the most charged political contests in Kenya’s recent history. What began as a race to replace the late MP David Kiaraho — who died in March — has evolved into a proxy war between the ruling United Democratic Alliance and an emboldened opposition, with the IEBC now caught squarely in the crossfire.

“Ol Kalou has been very peaceful. There has not been violence of any magnitude that could warrant the cancellation or postponement of the election,” Gachagua said, directly contradicting the commission’s own assessment of conditions on the ground.

IEBC chairperson Erastus Ethekeon had on Thursday broken his silence on the matter, issuing a stern warning over violent campaigns that have left a trail of destruction and claimed at least one life. “We have witnessed voter bribery, campaigns at night and violence leading to the death of one person,” he stated. The commission, he said, had dispatched investigators to the constituency, and warned that if conditions were not favourable, it would “either postpone or cancel the election altogether.”

Ethekeon noted the significant financial implications of any postponement: “Elections are very expensive and in Ol Kalou alone the commission is spending almost Sh30 million,” he said. A final decision on



Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua

whether the poll proceeds is expected on Monday, July 13.

Gachagua’s response was unsparing. He accused the commission of selectively enforcing electoral law and cited a pattern of institutional inaction that he argued had emboldened those now allegedly disrupting the Ol Kalou campaign. “Mr Chairman, your silence and tolerance of those electoral practices prove that you cannot be trusted to deliver free, fair, transparent and verifiable elections,” he said, referencing past by-elections in Baringo North, Malava, Narok Township and Kasipul-Kabondo, where he alleged violence and irregularities went unchecked.

He went further, accusing the government of deploying Cabinet Secretaries and Principal Secretaries to campaign for the UDA candidate in violation of constitutional provisions barring public officers from partisan political activity. He named Cabinet Secretaries Alice Wahome, William Kabogo, Davis Chirchir and Rebecca Miano among those he alleged were involved, alongside former Cabinet

“Ol Kalou has been very peaceful. There has not been violence of any magnitude that could warrant the cancellation or postponement of the election,” Gachagua said, directly contradicting the commission’s own assessment of conditions on the ground. IEBC chairperson Erastus Ethekeon had on Thursday broken his silence on the matter, issuing a stern warning over violent campaigns that have left a trail of destruction and claimed at least one life. “We have witnessed voter bribery, campaigns at night and violence leading to the death of one person,” he stated. The commission, he said, had dispatched investigators to the constituency, and warned that if conditions were not favourable, it would “either postpone or cancel the election altogether.”



Secretary Moses Kuria, Mathira MP Eric Wamumbi, and several Principal Secretaries and senior state officials. None of the individuals named had publicly responded to the allegations at the time of publication.

On voter bribery, Gachagua made claims of extraordinary scale. “Mr William Ruto has spent over KSh1 billion on bribes in Ol Kalou constituency, and it is not working. He has spent KSh10 billion on projects, and it is not working,” he alleged. The allegations are unverified, and the IEBC has not publicly confirmed investigations into specific individuals named by Gachagua. No evidence was provided publicly to support the figures cited.

Gachagua challenged Ethekeon directly on the commission’s approach to the alleged bribery: “You have the law to stop them. Why punish the people of Ol Kalou instead of dealing with those violating the law?” he said. The question cut to what the opposition argues is the fundamental absurdity of the commission’s position — that rather than acting against those allegedly committing electoral

offences, it is threatening to remove the vote from the people the offences are being committed against.

The by-election has drawn opposition heavyweights including Gachagua, Fred Matiang’i, Martha Karua, Kalonzo Musyoka, Eugene Wamalwa, George Natembeya and Justin Muturi, all of whom are working to unite behind a single candidate for the 2027 presidential election. For the ruling party, the stakes are no less existential — a loss in Ol Kalou, a predominantly Kikuyu constituency in Nyandarua County that Kenya Kwanza had expected to hold, would constitute a significant political setback and hand the opposition a powerful narrative heading into the general election campaign.

Ethekeon himself appeared to acknowledge the broader implications. “These small incidents are a precursor to what 2027 will be like, and we cannot allow this trajectory,” he said. It was a rare moment of institutional candour — and an admission that what is happening in one constituency is not an isolated problem but a symptom of a deeper disease in Kenya’s electoral culture.

The three candidates in the race — UDA’s Muchina Nyaga, DCP’s Sammy Kamau Ngotho and Jubilee Party’s Wilson Kigwa — are contesting a seat whose significance has long since outgrown the constituency itself. Ol Kalou has become a national test: of institutional independence, of political restraint, and of whether Kenya’s electoral machinery can withstand the pressure that will be applied to it, at vastly greater scale, in just over a year.

“If the IEBC cannot manage security in one constituency, how will Kenyans trust it to conduct a nationwide general election?” Gachagua asked.

It is the question that will hang over whatever decision the commission announces on Monday — and over every election Kenya holds from this point forward.

Love without reason is the most beautiful one



When love has no reason, it feels magical. When goodbye has no reason, it feels unbearable.

Goodbye without reason is the most painful one.

Love without reason is the purest form of connection — it asks for no logic, no proof, no conditions. It simply exists, flowing naturally from one heart to another, like light that shines without asking why.

But goodbye without reason leaves behind unanswered questions. It echoes in silence, heavy with “what ifs” and “why nots.”

The beauty of love without reason is its innocence.
The pain of goodbye without reason is its mystery.

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Friendship



Life without friends is not life,
Friends are like family we choose for ourself,
The friendship is based on honest, respect,
In school friends are help with studies and play with us during break,
A friend is like a mirror who shows as our mistake and also cheers forever success,
A good friend you have your life us good,
Your friend is a roll model of you,
With friends even small things like playing studying and talking become big memories,
Friendship make our life joyful and meaningful

Friends are one of the beautiful gift in our life,
True friends like a second family,
friends laugh with us when we are happy,
A good friend will bring out the best in us ,
A true friend help as in difficult time,
A good friend will always true,
Friendship is not about beginning with someone everyday, it is about understanding, care and trust,
A good friend she's there happiness and their problem,

True friends make our life best.

P.HEMANYA
VIII D

JOHN DEWEY MAT HR SEC SCHOOL,
PANRUTI CUDDALORE DISTRICT TAMIL NADU.

El Niño – Awareness and Preparedness

You can't explain the ocean to a frog that lives in a well



Likewise, some people live within a small circle and believe that it is the whole world. They do not realize how vast the world truly is. Life is short, but the world is big. So, come out of your comfort zone, see the world with open eyes, and learn something new. Therefore, be wise and keep learning throughout your life.

_G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

The ocean is vast and powerful, while the well is small and calm.
The frog thinks that its well is the biggest and best place because it has never seen the ocean.
No matter what you say about the ocean, it cannot understand.



El Niño is one of the most important climate phenomena in the world. It is a naturally occurring event that affects weather patterns across many countries. The name “El Niño” means “The Little Boy” in Spanish because the phenomenon was first noticed by fishermen along the coast of South America around Christmas time. Although El Niño begins in the Pacific Ocean, its effects are felt worldwide, including in India.

Impact of El Niño in India

India depends heavily on the southwest monsoon for agriculture and water resources. During many El Niño years, the monsoon becomes weaker, leading to below-normal rainfall. This can reduce food production, lower groundwater levels, and affect electricity generation from hydroelectric projects. Farmers, especially those depending on rain-fed agriculture, face financial losses. However, the impact is not the same every year, and other climate factors can also influence the monsoon.

How to Be Aware and Prepared

Awareness is the best way to reduce the impact of El Niño.
Follow weather forecasts and official warnings from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
Farmers should adopt climate-smart farming practices, use drought-resistant crop varieties, and conserve water.
Store drinking water carefully and avoid wastage.
Governments should strengthen early warning systems, improve irrigation facilities, and support affected communities.
Schools and colleges should educate students about climate change and disaster preparedness.
Communities should plant trees, protect water bodies, and work together during emergencies.
Families should prepare emergency kits and have plans for floods, droughts, or heat waves.

What is El Niño?

El Niño occurs when the surface waters of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean become much warmer than normal. This warming changes the movement of air and ocean currents, disturbing the normal climate system. It usually occurs every two to seven years and can last for several months or even a year.
Causes of El Niño

The main cause of El Niño is the weakening of the trade winds that normally blow from east to west across the Pacific Ocean. As these winds weaken, warm water spreads toward the eastern Pacific instead of remaining in the western Pacific. This change affects atmospheric circulation and alters rainfall and temperature patterns around the globe.

Effects of El Niño

El Niño has both environmental and economic impacts.
It can cause droughts in some regions and heavy rainfall and floods in others.
Many countries experience unusually high temperatures.
Agriculture suffers because of poor rainfall or excessive rain, leading to reduced crop yields.
Water shortages may occur in drought-affected regions.
Fisheries are affected because warm ocean water reduces the availability of nutrients for marine life.
Forest fires become more common in dry conditions.
Human health may be affected through heat waves, poor air quality, and the spread of diseases after floods.

Role of Technology

Modern satellites, weather radars, ocean buoys, and computer models help scientists monitor ocean temperatures and predict El Niño months in advance. These forecasts allow governments, farmers, and disaster management agencies to prepare early and reduce losses.

Conclusion

El Niño is a natural climate phenomenon that cannot be prevented, but its harmful effects can be minimized through awareness, planning, and cooperation. Scientific forecasting, responsible use of natural resources, and public education are essential to face its challenges. By staying informed and taking timely action, individuals, communities, and governments can protect lives, strengthen food and water security, and build a more climate-resilient future.

Dr.Meera.T
Erode

Library



Each turning page begins a flight,
From little thoughts to shining light.

They wisely say, and it's truly right,
“When a library opens, a prison shuts tight.”
For books can change a heart and mind,
Leaving ignorance far behind.

My library is a treasure chest,
Where every reader finds their best.
With every visit, I proudly see—
A brighter future waiting for me.

By
S.Aishwarya
9A GGHSS Pattukkottai

A library whispers, calm and still,
A place where dreams begin to fill.
Not just silence, shelf by shelf,
It helps us truly find ourselves.

Every book unlocks a brand-new door,
Leading us to knowledge more and more.

Tourism The event forms part of DET's ongoing engagement with one of East Africa's fastest-growing outbound travel markets

Nairobi hosts Dubai tourism trade roadshow

BY Michael Omondi
@themtkenyatimes

The Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) hosted its annual tourism trade roadshow in Nairobi, bringing together more than 130 travel agents, tour operators, airlines and tourism stakeholders to strengthen partnerships with Kenya's travel industry and showcase new experiences available to visitors travelling to Dubai.

The event forms part of DET's ongoing engagement with one of East Africa's fastest-growing outbound travel markets.

It is worth noting that Dubai considers Kenya one of its most important tourism source markets in Africa, supported by growing demand for international travel, strong business ties and excellent air connectivity.

According to the Dubai Department of Economy and

Tourism, Africa contributed approximately 897,000 visitors to Dubai in 2025, representing around 5 percent of all international arrivals, with Kenya continuing to play an important role in that growth.

Travelers also benefit from 42 direct weekly flights between Kenya and Dubai, 35 from Nairobi and seven from Mombasa, making Dubai one of the most accessible long-haul destinations for Kenyan travellers.

Importantly, the recent Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Kenya and the United Arab Emirates, alongside expanded visa-on-arrival eligibility for qualifying Kenyan ordinary passport holders, is expected to further strengthen business, trade and tourism between the two countries.

On its part, DET reports that Kenyan travelers are increasingly looking for destinations that combine affordability, family experiences, shopping,

culture and entertainment in one destination.

"This year's roadshow is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the Kenyan market and strengthen our partnerships with the travel trade," said Khalaf Alaleeli – Assistant Manager, International Operations, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DCTCM), Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET).

"Dubai continues to welcome visitors with exceptional value, world-class experiences and something for every type of traveler. Whether you're traveling as a family, a solo traveler, with a group or for business, Dubai offers experiences across every budget," he added.

To meet evolving traveler expectations, Dubai continues to expand its tourism offering with affordable accommodation options, free and low-cost attractions, new

family entertainment experiences, and one of the world's most diverse culinary scenes featuring more than 13,000 restaurants.

In addition, the city has also become the first Certified Autism Destination in the Eastern Hemisphere, reinforcing its commitment to accessible and inclusive tourism.

Meanwhile, Dubai remains one of the world's leading destinations for safe and seamless travel, with tourism infrastructure, attractions, hotels and public services operating normally.

The city was ranked sixth globally in Numbeo's Mid-Year 2026 Safety Index with a very low recorded crime index of 16.2. Dubai also continues to invest in comprehensive safety systems and real-time traveler information platforms to support visitors and tourism partners with timely operational updates.



Khalaf Alaleeli

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Wedding The quiet heartbreak of a man who watches the woman he loves learn to love someone else first

When “us” became “her and the baby”



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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No wedding vow prepares you for this particular story. It does not appear in the photographs or the baby announcements. It lives in the silence between the 2 AM feedings, in the space where a marriage quietly learns what it is made of.

Before the child arrived, she was his. Not in a possessive way. In a sacred one. She woke up and his name was the first thing on her lips. She fell asleep with her head finding the exact spot on his chest, as though it had been measured and cut just for her. She knew how he took his tea. She remembered the throwaway story he told on a random Thursday about the scar on his knee, and six weeks later she asked him about it again. Her calendar bent around him. When he walked into a room, her eyes did not search. They landed.

Psychologists have a clinical name for it: the attachment phase. Husbands tend to call it something simpler — “back when it was just us.”

In that season, love felt infinite because it had only two places to go. She studied him like scripture. She chose him in the small things — the coffee, the text, the “drive safe” — and in the large ones: the dreams, the fears, the future. It was devotion without distraction. Love without division.

And then the baby came.

Nobody warns you about the sound of that shift. It is not the first cry. It is what comes after. It is the morning her arms, which once stretched across cold sheets reaching for him, now reach instead for a small, warm body. It is the notification that once meant “I’m on



The quiet heartbreak of a man who watches the woman he loves learn to love someone else first

my way home” now reminding her about a vaccination appointment. It is her mind, which once catalogued his moods and stress lines and the way his jaw tightened when work was difficult, now cataloguing feeding times, nap windows, and the weight of a responsibility she had not known could live inside a chest.

The love did not die. Do not mistake this for that story. The love exploded. And in exploding, it scattered.

He watches her become a mother in real time, and it is the most beautiful and brutal thing he has ever witnessed. She is awake at 2 AM, but not for him. She is exhausted, but not from the job — from the worry, from the love that now has no off switch. Her body, once a shared home, is now given over entirely to nursing, healing, carrying. And slowly, quietly, without a single cruel intention, she begins to subtract.

Not because she wants to. Because there are only twenty-four hours. Because there is only one heart, and it has been drafted into urgent new service. Because survival, for the baby, looks like her full attention.

He feels it before he understands it. The texts grow shorter. The eye contact drifts to the monitor. He tells himself the right things — she is tired, it is temporary, the baby needs her more. All of it is true. But truth does not stop

the ache.

He watches her give that child the exact tenderness she once gave to him: the soft voice at 3 AM, the forehead kisses, the way she memorises the curve of tiny fingers. And in the quiet of his own heart, he asks a question he is ashamed to say aloud: where did I go in her list of priorities?

This is not about blame. It is about biology older than both of them. The moment a child is born, a mother’s nervous system rewires. It is ancient, protective, and fierce. Her world becomes impossibly small — four walls, one crib — and impossibly large — one life that depends entirely on her. The baby becomes the sun, and everything else, including the marriage, begins to orbit.

For her, this feels holy. She is doing what women have done for centuries: keeping the fire lit, keeping the baby breathing. She does not see the distance growing until one day she looks up and finds it in his eyes.

For him, it feels like grief. Not grief of love — grief of placement. He is not jealous of the baby. He loves that baby. He is mourning the version of “us” that once felt like the whole world. He is learning, painfully, how to share the woman he once had entirely to himself. He is learning that love after a baby is not less. It is simply stretched thin, tired, often silent, often given in five-minute increments be-

tween other demands.

And this is where marriages fracture — not in the shift itself, but in the silence about it. When he swallows “I miss you” because he does not want to sound selfish. When she swallows “I still choose you” because she is too exhausted to find the words. When both assume the other knows, and both end up feeling unknown. So let these words say what couples rarely manage to say aloud.

A marriage does not die because a baby is born. It is tested by fire the day a baby is born. The woman is not wrong for putting the child first — that is instinct, and it is love. The man is not wrong for grieving that he is no longer first — that is human, and it is love too. Both can be true at once.

Healing begins in a single sentence. Her saying: I see

you. I know I have been absent. It is not because you matter less. Him saying: I am in awe of the mother you are. I just need ten minutes of you at the end of the day — just us.

Healing lives in the small rituals they refuse to let die. Coffee before the house wakes up. A twenty-second hug that is not about passing the baby. A note on the fridge that says: you are doing amazingly. Touch that is not logistical.

Love after a child is not about going back. That door closed the day she became a mother. It is about building forward — making room for three without pretending two is still enough.

To the woman reading this with milk on her shirt and no sleep in three days: your devotion is not betrayal. It is evidence of how large your heart is. But do not forget the man who was there before the

crib. He does not need grand gestures. He needs to be seen.

To the man reading this with a heavy chest and a sleeping baby on the monitor: her distance is not rejection. It is redirection. She is not taking love from you to hurt you. She is pouring it somewhere else to keep someone alive. Stay. Speak. Be gentle. Wait with her.

The first child changes everything. But it does not have to change everything that matters.

Because the truth — the hard and beautiful truth — is this: she can love both. Deeply. Fiercely. Without running out. It will simply look different than it did before. Less passion, more partnership. Less grand romance, more quiet solidarity.

And if they choose curiosity over resentment, if they keep learning each other through the change, the love that was once only “us” grows into something far larger.

Us — and the life we made together.




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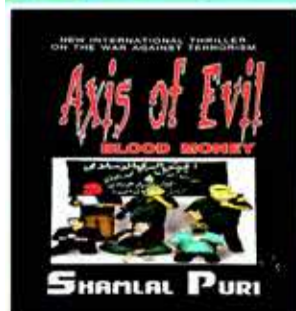
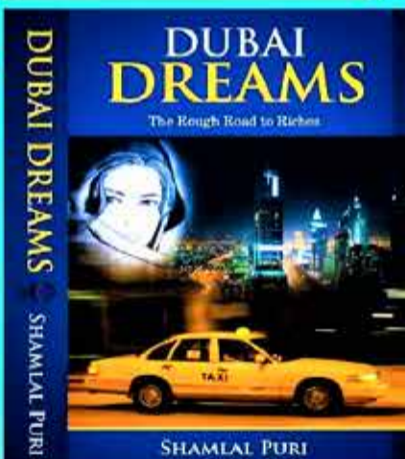
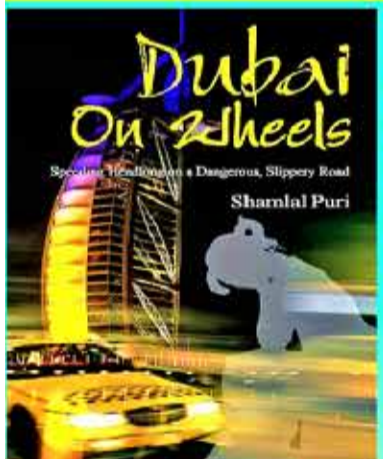
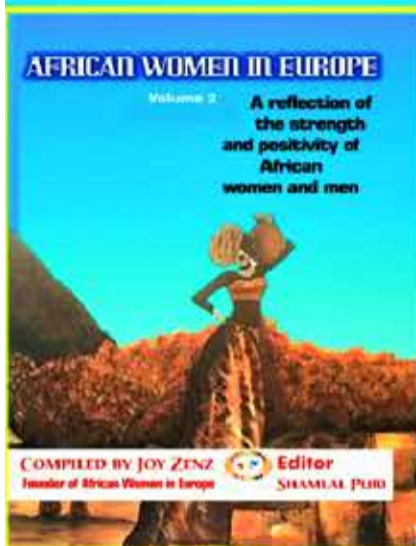
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Politics Walk through any by-election Ol Kalou is as instructive as any and you will not find voters debating fiscal policy on the mabati verandas

The three-pound organ Kenyans refuse to use during elections



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyatimes

Between 2003 and 2014, more than a quarter of Kenyans admitted to Afrobarometer researchers that they had sold their vote for money, food, or some other trinket of the moment. Afrobarometer data between 2003 and 2014 found that more than a quarter of the population said they engaged in vote buying, and researchers believe this is likely an understatement of the true scope of the problem. By 2021, a Transparency International Kenya survey of over a thousand respondents found that fifty-nine per cent would willingly accept a bribe from a political candidate, and more troublingly, seventy point five per cent believed that questions of integrity should not bar a person from vying for office at all. A separate ten-county study found that fifty-six per cent of respondents had at some point received a bribe from a political aspirant, and twenty-four per cent admitted to having offered one themselves. Kenya's National Crime Research Centre has gone further still, concluding that bribery is the single most prevalent election offence in the country. These are not the confessions of a fringe. They are the arithmetic of a republic.

Sit with that arithmetic for a moment, because it does something quieter and more corrosive than the headlines about rigged tallying centres and disputed IEBC servers. Rigging is theft committed against the voter. Vote-buying is a transaction the voter enters into willingly, a small mortgage taken out against the next five years, paid for in advance with a two-hundred-shilling note, a kilo of sugar, a branded kitenge, a promise of a job that will never materialize. The tragedy of Kenyan democracy is not only that it is stolen. It is that, with disturbing regularity, it is sold.

Walk through any by-election Ol Kalou is as instructive as any and



Kenyans elections

you will not find voters debating fiscal policy on the mabati verandas of the trading centre. You will find brokers moving between homesteads with envelopes, young men on boda bodas ferrying “appreciation” from one polling station to the next, and a peculiar, unspoken choreography in which everyone understands the rules without anyone stating them aloud. Nobody calls it a bribe. It is “something small,” “fuel money,” “understanding one another.” The euphemism does the work that shame used to do. Language has been recruited to launder the transaction, and once language launders a thing, conscience stops noticing it.

This is not a story about greedy voters and cunning politicians, told the way a foreign correspondent might tell it, as though Kenyans are uniquely corruptible. It is a story about incentives meeting deprivation, and deprivation, once organised into a market, becoming self-perpetuating. A mother queuing for four hours at a clinic that has no gloves, no painkillers, no doctor, does not experience the five-year electoral cycle as an abstraction about accountability. She experiences it as five years of the same absence. When a candidate finally arrives with something tangible in hand, the state has already taught her, through its own negligence, that the ballot is not where value comes

from. The stomach votes because the stomach has learned, through bitter repetition, that promises are cheap and cash is not.

And yet here is where the analysis must resist the comfort of a single villain this is precisely the arrangement that suits the political class best. A hungry electorate is a cheap electorate. It is far less expensive to buy a vote for the price of a soda than to build the school, tarmac the road, or staff the dispensary that would make buying votes unnecessary. Poverty is not merely tolerated by Kenya's political economy; in its electoral application, it is cultivated, because an electorate reduced to its stomach is an electorate that has already outsourced its judgment. Why invest in development that empowers scrutiny when you can invest in hunger that guarantees compliance?

None of this absolves the voter. There is a peculiar Kenyan fatalism that treats vote-selling as something done to the poor rather than something the poor also choose, and that fatalism is itself a form of condescension as if the poor cannot be expected to reason, only to react. The uncomfortable truth is that plenty of vote-buying happens well above the poverty line, among people who have eaten that day and will eat tomorrow, who take the envelope simply because it is there and because

everyone else is taking one too. Herd conscience is still conscience, deployed in the wrong direction.

What would it mean, then, to vote with the three pounds of grey matter God or evolution saw fit to place above the stomach? It would mean treating a manifesto the way one treats a contract reading the fine print, asking what has been costed and what has merely been promised. It would mean remembering, at the ballot box, the pothole that swallowed a matatu in March, the teacher who was never posted, the CDF account nobody has ever seen audited and asking whether five years of amnesia is worth two hundred shillings today. It would mean recognizing that the by-election broker and the corruption baron in Nairobi are not strangers to one another; they are financed by the same pipeline, and the shilling handed over at the trading centre is simply corruption's retail outlet, its last and most intimate point of sale.

Some will object, reasonably, that lecturing the hungry about civic virtue is a luxury of the fed, and that structural poverty cannot be moralized away by appeals to conscience alone. They are right that the solution cannot rest on exhortation. Campaign finance regulation, faster and more visible prosecution of election bribery under the Elections Of-

fences Act, and perhaps most powerfully the kind of civic education that reframes vote-selling not as harmless hustle but as a mortgage against one's own children's future, all matter more than sermons. But structural reform and individual reckoning are not rivals; a nation does not wait for perfect institutions before it starts thinking clearly, any more than a person waits for perfect health before deciding to stop smoking.

The dream, admittedly, is a modest fiction against a stubborn reality. It imagines a Kenyan electorate that wakes up one ordinary Tuesday, smells the coffee it has been sleeping through for a generation, and asks the simplest and most devastating of questions: what, precisely, did we sell, and to whom, and was it worth what we lost? That morning has not yet come. But every ballot cast in full knowledge of that question, rather than in exchange for a token that ends up being worth two hundred shillings and five years of silence, is a small down payment on the country that dream describes.

The writer is a social commentator

Politics Zimbabwe's troubled post-independence journey demands honest reflection — and leaders willing to answer for their choices

A nation's pain, a nation's reckoning

restores justice, rebuilds institutions, protects human dignity, and unites rather than divides. Accountability is not vengeance. It is the foundation

BY IPD ADM Party

@themkenyatimes

Karma has a way of catching up with nations and their leaders. History reminds us, with quiet persistence, that actions carry consequences — even when justice takes its time.

Zimbabwe's post-independence story has been marked by painful chapters that continue to shape the lives of millions. The Gukurahundi atrocities left wounds that remain deep and unresolved. The political violence that peaked in 2008 traumatised countless citizens. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme, though it addressed legitimate historical grievances over land ownership, was in many cases implemented in ways that caused severe economic disruption, mass displacement, and the destruction of productive agricultural capacity.

Many commercial farmers who had chosen to remain in Zimbabwe after independence — having been encouraged to keep contributing to the nation's food security and economy — were forced to leave with little no-

tice. Thousands of farm workers lost not only their jobs but their homes, schools, clinics, and livelihoods. As agricultural production collapsed, investor confidence evaporated, industries shut down, and the national economy entered a prolonged crisis from which it has never fully recovered.

The story of Kondozi remains one of the starkest examples of how political interference can destroy national prosperity. Once a world-class agricultural enterprise that generated export earnings, created employment, and supported numerous smallholder farmers, it became another casualty of poor governance. Across the country, similar stories have been repeated with tragic regularity.

Rather than building on the solid foundations inherited at independence, successive policy failures, entrenched corruption, and the persistent prioritisation of political survival over national development have left Zimbabwe struggling with economic decline, deteriorating infrastructure, failing public services, and widespread poverty.

Today, millions of Zimbabweans

have been forced to seek opportunities beyond their borders. Many now face uncertainty, deportation threats, and hardship in foreign countries. This painful reality should give every leader pause — and cause genuine reflection on how governance decisions at home have shaped the lives of ordinary citizens. The greatest responsibility for Zimbabwe's mass migration lies not with those who left in search of survival, but with the failures that made leaving a necessity in the first place.

Equally troubling are conditions inside Zimbabwe's prisons, which continue to raise serious human rights concerns. A nation that holds justice as a value must ensure that every individual is treated with dignity, regardless of their circumstances. Respect for human rights is not a privilege; it is a constitutional obligation and a moral imperative.

Scripture reminds us that all people are created by one God, share equal dignity, and deserve justice — a truth echoed across Acts 17:26, Job 31:15, and Malachi 2:10. Leadership is a sacred trust that demands humility, compassion, accountability, and



Zimbabwe's troubled post-independence journey

service. When governments fail to protect the vulnerable, deny justice, and place personal interest above the national good, history delivers its own verdict.

Zimbabwe deserves leadership that

upon which lasting peace, reconciliation, and national renewal are built.

Information and Publicity Department, Action Democratic Movement.

Botswana Botswana mourns the loss of a beloved guitarist whose warmth and talent left a lasting mark on all who knew him

Kabo Leburu wa Katara takes eternal rest

BY Paula O. M. Otukile

@themkenyatimes

Botswana lost a great guitarist in the early hours of Friday. Kabo Leburu wa Katara, best known for his beloved hit Mmapaseka and a rich catalogue of music that spanned decades, passed away leaving behind a community still coming to terms with the silence he leaves.

Kabo was, above all, a people's person. Humble, approachable, and always willing to collaborate, he carried his considerable talent lightly. Born in Molepolole, he grew into a figure who was widely regarded as a legend — not just in reputation, but in the daily warmth he extended to those around him, right to his final days.

Our second Mulher Forte African Literature awards, held in 2021 at the University of Botswana, offers

perhaps the most vivid memory of who Kabo truly was. The event came together against the odds — post-Covid gatherings were rare and fragile things — and we had invited a remarkable young woman named Gaone Ditirafalo to perform as our vocalist. By then, Gaone was battling lupus at an advanced stage, attending in a wheelchair. She arrived not alone, but with family, friends, and a full band in tow.

Among them was Kabo. He had not been formally invited, yet he came prepared, organised, and full of life — as though he had always known he was needed. He kept our awards evening alive in a way no amount of planning could have achieved. As he played, he called out in Setswana: "Kwala ore; Go sego baswi ba ba swelang mo moreneng!" — a declaration that carried the room.

Gaone lost her battle against lupus three years later. We still remember

her gentle and generous spirit. May her soul rest in peace.

When news of Kabo's passing broke, the memory of that evening came flooding back — and with it, a fuller understanding of how much both he and Gaone gave to us. They arrived that night not for recognition, but out of love for what we were building together. Their contribution to the growth of Mulher Forte African Literature was immeasurable.

Mulher Forte African Literature pays tribute and homage to Kabo Leburu wa Katara and Gaone Ditirafalo. May their talent shine on, forever alive in our hearts and memories.

Death, be not proud — for artists never truly leave us.

Paula O. M. Otukile is the founder of Mulher Forte African Literature, based in Gaborone, Botswana.



Late Kabo Wa Leburu Wa Katara, Molepolole Botswana.

Ukraine The findings reinforce internationally recognised principles protecting children from armed conflict, forced recruitment and the erosion of their identity

Landmark international report concludes systematic militarisation of Ukrainian children may amount to crimes against humanity



INITIATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

BY African Media Agency (AMA)
@themkenyatimes

A landmark independent international investigation has concluded that Russia is operating a systematic state programme that indoctrinates, militarises and prepares Ukrainian children in occupied territories for future service in the Russian armed forces, findings experts say may amount to crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law. The report concludes that these are not isolated incidents, but elements of an organised state policy targeting the identity and future of a generation of Ukrainian children.

The findings reinforce internationally recognised principles protecting children from armed conflict, forced recruitment and the erosion of their identity. These principles are reflected in international humanitarian law and align with longstanding commitments under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Union's consistent support for the protection of children

in situations of conflict, accountability for grave violations and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The report was prepared by three independent experts under the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Moscow Mechanism after 41 participating States invoked the body's emergency investigative procedure to examine Russia's treatment of Ukrainian children. It is the first international report to conclude that Russia's policy of militarising and indoctrinating Ukrainian children constitutes a systematic state programme rather than a series of individual abuses.

According to the report, the system affects two categories of children: more than 20,600 children officially recorded as deported or forcibly transferred, more than one million remaining under Russian control - in Russia or on temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The experts conclude that many children are subjected to sustained political indoctrination from around the age of six, compulsory military training from the age of 13, pre-conscription registration from 16 and eventual military

service at 18 in the armed forces occupying their homeland.

The investigation further finds that coercive measures underpin the system. Families refusing to enrol children in Russian schools face intimidation, teachers who resist the imposed curriculum risk dismissal or detention, while access to education, healthcare, banking and other essential public services increasingly depends on obtaining Russian citizenship. The report concludes that this process functions not only as forced assimilation but also as a mechanism feeding future military conscription.

Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrii Sybiha, said the report represents the first international finding that Russia's actions against Ukrainian children form part of a deliberate state policy.

"Militarisation, indoctrination, forced assimilation and deportation all serve a single goal - to destroy the identity of an entire generation of Ukrainians. This constitutes a crime against humanity. The fate of Ukrainian children must be an integral part of any peace negotiations,

and everyone responsible for these crimes must be held accountable."

Despite Russia's refusal to cooperate with the investigation, the independent experts conclude there are reasonable grounds to believe that the systematic persecution of Ukrainian children on national grounds constitutes crimes against humanity. The report also identifies probable war crimes, including unlawful deportation, forcible transfer, torture and inhuman treatment.

The report recommends that the protection and return of Ukrainian children become a distinct and non-negotiable element of any future peace process. It further calls for sustained international cooperation to facilitate the return of affected children and to ensure accountability for those responsible for violations of international law.

Mariana Betsa, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, said:

"We call on our international partners to strengthen cooperation, increase pressure on Russia and ensure that those responsible for these crimes are held accountable. The return of every Ukrainian child must

remain a global humanitarian priority."

The findings will inform discussions at the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children Ministerial Conference in Toronto on 28-29 September 2026, where participating governments will consider further diplomatic, humanitarian and legal measures to support the return of deported children and strengthen international accountability efforts.

Distributed by African Media Agency (AMA) on behalf ETHICORE Group on behalf of BKB

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Church leaders urge youth to choose peace as political temperature rises

By Mercy Kanini

Religious leaders in Mombasa yesterday called on young Kenyans to reject political violence and uphold peace as the country's temperature rises ahead of the 2027 general election.

Speaking at a community forum in Likoni, the clerics delivered a pointed message to both politicians and the public: inflammatory rhetoric has consequences, and Kenya's youth must not bear them. Unemployment, the rising cost of living, and shrinking opportunity already weigh heavily on young people. Using them as tools of political contestation, the leaders warned, would compound a burden they did not create.

The appeal was direct. Politicians were urged to focus on substance over spectacle. Civil society and government were



challenged to invest in civic education before campaigns reach full intensity. And young Kenyans themselves were called to become active architects of peace rather than passive victims of incitement.

The timing is not incidental. Security agencies are already monitoring political activity across the country following recent demonstrations and heightened tensions. The clergy's intervention reflects a

wider anxiety — that without deliberate and sustained effort, 2027 could follow the familiar and painful script of elections past.

Kenya has paid dearly before for letting political ambition outrun institutional restraint. The country cannot afford to pay that price again.

Peace, the leaders reminded their audience, is not the absence of politics. It is the presence of conscience.

Love across the distance: The couple who refused to let geography win



By Lydia Koech

Faith and Brian fell in love at university, graduated into a world that pulled them hundreds of kilometres apart, and chose to stay together anyway — a decision that would define not just their relationship, but their character.

Jobs in different towns meant that the life they had imagined together had to be deferred, not abandoned. What filled the

gap was discipline. Late-night phone calls replaced evening walks. Video calls marked the milestones — promotions celebrated on screens, birthdays toasted across unstable connections, plans mapped out in conversations that stretched past midnight. Visits were rare enough to feel like events.

It was not easy. Distance has a way of magnifying every silence and shrinking every reassurance. But Faith and

Brian treated the separation as a shared problem rather than a personal grievance. They were honest about the strain, loyal in the uncertainty, and patient with each other's moments of doubt. Their families watched and, quietly, took note.

When both eventually secured work in the same city, the reunion carried the particular sweetness of something genuinely earned. Looking back, neither described the years apart as wasted. They described them as foundational — the period in which they learned, without the comfort of proximity, whether what they had was real.

It was.

Distance does not destroy love. It simply insists on knowing whether love was ever truly there.

China's economy: growth ambitions meet hard realities

By David Mwaniki

China's economy yesterday remained under intense global scrutiny as Beijing pressed ahead with stimulus measures to sustain growth against the twin headwinds of weak domestic demand and escalating international trade pressure.

The world's second-largest economy is showing the kind of uneven performance that unnerves markets. Manufacturing activity has improved in some sectors, but export-oriented factories continue to struggle as global demand softens. The property market — long the engine of Chinese household wealth and local government revenue — remains fragile despite repeated government interventions to stabilise it.

Beijing has responded with a familiar playbook: infrastructure spending, consumer incentives, and targeted policy support. Whether these measures



are gaining genuine traction will become clearer when upcoming data on industrial production, retail sales, and employment is released — figures that analysts and investors are watching with unusual attention.

Looming over all of it is the unresolved stand-off with Washington. Both countries continue to maintain tariffs that distort trade flows and complicate investment decisions across global supply chains.

Negotiations are ongoing, but progress remains slow and trust thinner still.

The stakes extend well beyond China's borders. When Beijing catches a cold, commodity markets sneeze, emerging economies shiver, and global growth forecasts are quietly revised downward.

China's challenge is no longer simply about speed of growth. It is about whether the foundations beneath that growth are solid enough to hold.

Justice and restraint during protests

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

One person is dead and others are injured following protests in Mathare, and Kenya owes it to them — and to itself — to find out exactly how that happened and who must answer for it.

Public demonstrations are a constitutional right, not a privilege dispensed at the discretion of the state. Security agencies carry a legitimate mandate to maintain order, but that mandate has boundaries. Those boundaries are not bureaucratic technicalities. They are the difference between a democracy and something considerably less.

Every death during a protest must trigger an independent investigation — not an internal review conducted behind closed doors by the same institutions whose conduct is in question, but a credible, transparent process whose



findings are made public and whose consequences are real. Accountability cannot be selective. It cannot be promised and quietly forgotten once the news cycle moves on.

Protesters, equally, bear responsibility. The right to demonstrate does not extend to violence or the destruction of property. Those who exploit moments of public anger to cause harm undermine not only their own cause but the safety of every peaceful person standing beside them.

Kenya's democracy is not a finished project. It is a daily negotiation between citizens who demand to be heard and institutions that must learn to listen without reaching for a weapon.

That negotiation only works when both sides remember the rules.

SPORTS
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Sports >> *A late substitute's goal, a goalkeeper's costly error, and a performance of quietly ruthless efficiency send La Roja through to face France in Dallas

Merino breaks Belgian hearts as Spain march into World Cup semi-finals



Merino

By **Martin Weche**

Spain defeated Belgium 2-1 in a tense World Cup quarter-final at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, yesterday, with substitute Mikel Merino scoring the winner two minutes after coming off the bench to send La Roja into the semi-finals, where they will face France on Tuesday.

It was a victory built on Spanish character as much as Spanish quality. Fabián Ruiz had given Spain the lead in the 30th minute, capitalising on a rebound after Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois fumbled a shot he should have held. Charles De Ketelaere equalised for Belgium to level the contest and give the Red Devils hope they could force their way to an upset. That hope intensified when Courtois limped off with a muscular injury in the 73rd minute, replaced by backup Senne Lammens — a

change that would prove decisive in the cruellest possible way.

Spain pressed relentlessly in search of a winner. They finished with 16 shot attempts to Belgium's five, a statistic that told the story of a match Belgium had decided to defend deeply and threaten only on the counter. Luis de la Fuente, Spain's coach, responded to the stalemate by introducing Merino, and the midfielder needed less than two minutes to justify the decision. When Lammens stopped a shot by Pau Cubarsi in the 88th minute, Merino got to the rebound fast enough to steer the ball home and send the Spanish supporters inside SoFi Stadium into delirium.

Lammens, thrust into one of football's most unforgiving stages with no time to settle, could only sit dejected as the net rippled behind him.

The result continued a remarkable defensive run for Spain. Goalkeeper Unai Simón had not conceded in 519 consecutive minutes across the past two World Cups entering the match — a statistic that had begun to feel almost mythological. Belgium finally ended it, but the record had served its purpose: it had carried Spain to within one win of a World Cup final.

Belgium had arrived in California as genuine contenders. The Red Devils were the tournament's third-highest scorers, averaging 2.6 goals per game across five matches, and their round-of-16 demolition of the United States — 4-1 — had been one of the most commanding performances of the tournament. Captain Youri Tielemans had been absent from the start after suffering an injury during the warm-up, a blow that disrupted Belgium's rhythm before a ball

was kicked.

De la Fuente was measured in victory but left no doubt about his team's ambitions. "Let me be clear — we are not finished," he said through a translator after the final whistle. "We are here for more." Up next is France, arguably the tournament's most dominant side, in what promises to be a high-stakes all-European semi-final.

For Spain, the path to a second World Cup triumph — 16 years after their first — remains intact. For Belgium, the pain of another near-miss will linger long after the Californian lights have faded.

When it mattered most, Spain found a way. They almost always do.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Kenya's Olympic champion clocks 2:11.83 to bury Noah Ngeny's mark in a Diamond League performance that announced a generational talent at the peak of his powers

Wanyonyi smashes 27-year 1,000m world record in Monaco



Emmanuel Wanyonyi smashes 27-year 1,000m world record in Monaco

Emmanuel Wanyonyi yesterday shattered the men's 1,000m world record at the Herculis Monaco Diamond League, clocking 2:11.83 to erase a mark that had stood for 27 years — and in doing so, announced himself not merely as the finest middle-distance runner of his generation, but as one of the greatest athletes Kenya has ever produced.

The 21-year-old's time bettered the previous world record set by fellow Kenyan Noah Ngeny by 0.13 seconds — a margin that, in the merciless arithmetic of elite athletics, represents an eternity of improvement over a barrier that had defied the world's best runners since 1999. Ngeny had set that mark in Rieti, a year before claiming 1,500m gold at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. Wanyonyi was not yet born when his compatriot ran that race. Yesterday, he buried it.

through 400m in 50.95 and 800m in 1:45.11, right on world record schedule, before Wanyonyi struck for home over the closing stretch. Great Britain's Jake Wightman finished second in 2:12.96, with Algeria's Djamel Sedjati third in 2:13.96. Wanyonyi's run led seven other runners in the field to personal-best performances.

What made the performance all the more remarkable was its context. The 1,000m is not contested at the Olympic Games or World Athletics Championships, and is rarely run at elite level. It was Wanyonyi's first time competing over the non-standard distance. He arrived in Monaco not as a specialist chasing a career milestone, but as a champion quietly expanding the boundaries of what middle-distance running can look like.

Wanyonyi is already the reigning world and Olympic cham-

pion in the 800m, a title that established him as one of the most dominant middle-distance runners on the planet. He is the joint-second-fastest 800m runner in history — his personal best of 1:41.11 matches Denmark's Wilson Kipketer, with only David Rudisha's world record of 1:40.91 ahead of him. The 1,000m world record is now the second global mark he holds, and few in world athletics would bet against a third.

The Monaco meeting was the 10th stop of the 2026 Diamond League circuit, and the win was Wanyonyi's 13th Diamond League victory overall — a statistic that underscores a consistency of excellence that stretches well beyond a single electrifying night on the French Riviera.

Kenya's athletics community reacted with an outpouring of pride. The record arrives at a moment when the country's mid-

dle-distance tradition — built across generations by Kip Keino, Peter Rono, Ngeny himself, and Rudisha — finds itself in the care of a young man who appears almost temperamentally suited to its demands. Wanyonyi does not run with the frantic urgency that marks lesser champions. He runs with authority, as though he has already seen the finish line and is simply making his way towards it on his own terms.

The number 2:11.83 will take its place alongside the great Kenyan athletic landmarks. It is a time that represents not only the destruction of a 27-year-old record, but the arrival of a career still years from its peak. Wanyonyi has already achieved what many elite athletes spend entire careers chasing. The more unsettling question for his rivals — and the more thrilling one for Kenyan fans — is what he intends to do next.

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



I forgot my daughter's face: The hidden reality of postnatal depression



By: Sharon Tanganyika
@themkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- We often speak about childbirth as though it always begins with joy. We celebrate healthy babies, smiling mothers, and happy families. Those stories deserve to be told, but they are not every woman's story.
- Sometimes motherhood begins with overwhelming sadness. Sometimes it begins with crippling anxiety or an emotional numbness that makes a woman question everything she thought she knew about herself.
- Postnatal depression is a serious mental health condition that affects mothers after childbirth. It is not a lack of love. It is not a weakness. It is not a failure. Yet many women continue to suffer in silence because they fear being misunderstood. I understand that silence, because I lived it.

When I became a mother, I expected sleepless nights. I expected the exhaustion, the endless nappy changes, and the overwhelming responsibility of caring for a newborn.

What I never expected was to look at my baby daughter one day and, for a terrifying brief moment struggle to recognize her face. I knew she was my child. I knew I loved her. But a thick fog had settled over my mind, leaving me in a state of profound, haunting confusion. I looked at her, desperate to feel what I thought every mother was supposed to feel, and all I could feel was numbness.

For years, I kept that memory to myself. I was afraid that if I told anyone, they would think I was a terrible mother. Today, I know I was not a bad mother. I was a mother living with postnatal depression.

When Motherhood Doesn't Feel Like the Fairytale

We often speak about childbirth as though it always begins with joy. We celebrate healthy babies, smiling mothers, and happy families. Those stories deserve to be told, but they are not every woman's story.

Sometimes motherhood begins with overwhelming sadness. Sometimes it begins with crippling anxiety or an emotional numbness that makes a woman question everything she thought she knew about herself.

Postnatal depression is a serious mental health condition that affects mothers after childbirth. It is not a lack of love. It is not a weakness. It is not a failure. Yet many women continue to suffer in silence because they fear being misunderstood. I understand that silence, because I lived it.

A Mind That No Longer Felt Like My Own

Long before my daughter was born, my life had already been marked by trauma, rejection, and uncertainty. I thought becoming a mother would somehow heal those wounds. Instead, I found myself sinking into a darkness I could not explain. The sadness became constant; the ex-

haustion went beyond sleepless nights. Even simple decisions felt impossible.

Then came the moment that has remained with me for years: I looked at my daughter and, through the fog of depression, I struggled to recognize the little face I loved more than life itself. It is difficult to describe something that feels so irrational. My daughter had not changed, I had. Depression had quietly altered the way I experienced the world.

The Silence Around Maternal Mental Health

In many parts of Africa, we are making strides in discussing mental health, yet maternal wellbeing remains a hushed subject. We burden new mothers with the weight of expectation: they must be grateful, they must smile, they must "just cope." When a mother admits she is drowning, she is often told to pray harder or "be strong."

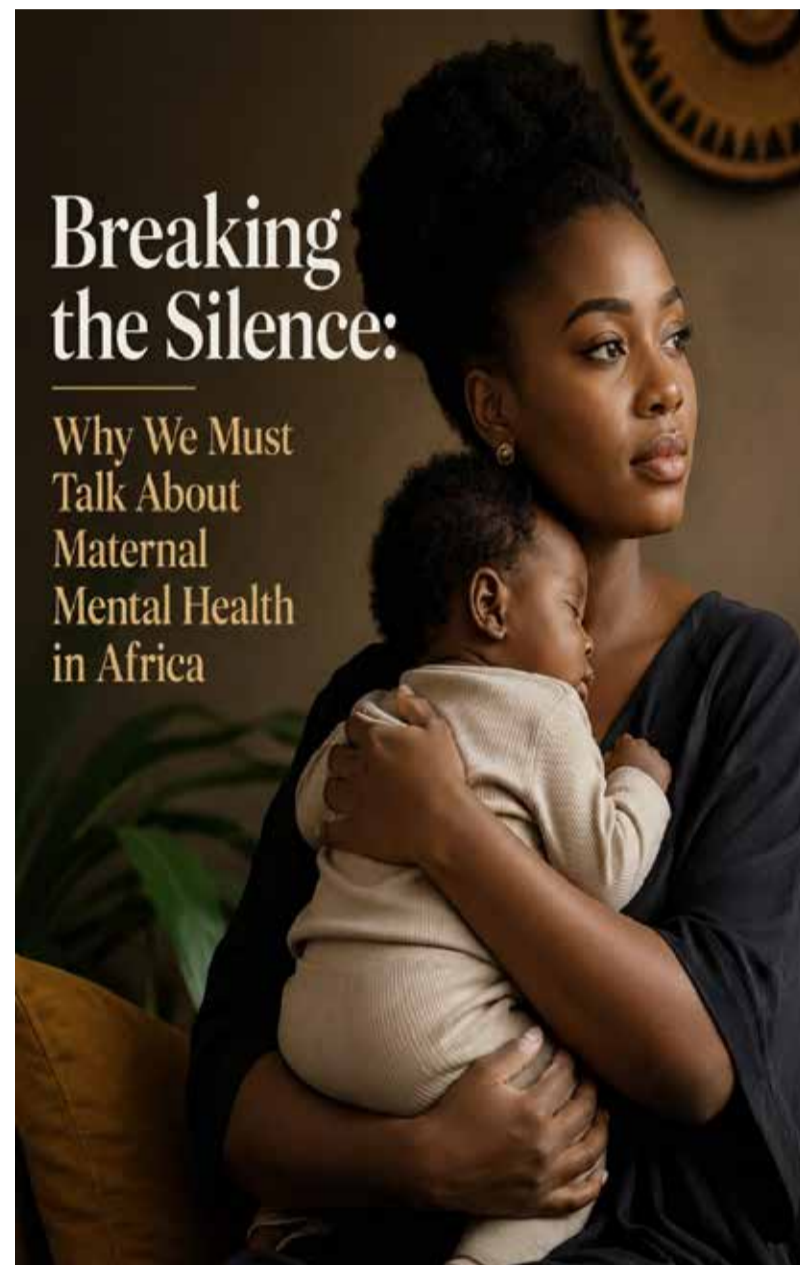
While faith was a vital part of my own recovery, I learned that it is not a substitute for seeking professional help. Faith did not ask me to pretend I was well; it met me in my brokenness and guided me toward healing. Maternal health clinics are our first line of defense; we must encourage mothers to seek medical support without shame.

Ultimately, I learned that compassion saves lives. Sometimes, what a struggling mother needs most is not advice. She needs someone to notice. She needs someone to listen. She needs someone to say, "You are not alone."

Breaking the Silence

Today, my daughter is grown, and when I look at her, I no longer see the fog that once clouded my mind. I see the grace that carried us both through a season neither of us chose.

For years, I carried the shame of that moment in silence. Now, I understand that silence is one of the greatest burdens women with postnatal depression carry. I share these stories to dismantle the shame that keeps so many women in the dark.



If sharing my story encourages one mother to seek help, one husband to notice the signs, one family to respond with compassion instead of judgment, or one healthcare worker to recognize a woman who is silently struggling, then every difficult word has been worth writing.

Motherhood does not make us immune to mental illness; it reminds us that we are human. Healing begins when we stop asking mothers to hide their pain and start giving them permission to speak it. No woman should have to walk through postnatal depression alone.

Sharon Tanganyika is a writer,

speaker, and author of the forthcoming memoir *Grace Beyond Scars*, a story of faith, resilience, healing, and hope. She writes regularly on trauma, belonging, motherhood, and restoration at *Grace Beyond Scars* on Substack <https://gracebeyondscars5.substack.com>