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Voice of the People

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# Kang'ata joins Gachagua's DCP ahead of 2027 polls

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyentimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata on Friday officially joined Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP), ending months of speculation over his political future ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Kang'ata was unveiled at Gachagua's Wamunyoro residence, where the former Deputy President welcomed him to the party, describing DCP as "the party of the moment and the future."

Gachagua said DCP has grown into a national political outfit with millions of supporters and thousands of prospective aspirants for the August 10, 2027, elections. He added that the party currently has one Member of the National Assembly and three Members of County Assemblies drawn from different parts of the country and is targeting majority status in both Houses of Parliament and county assemblies after the next polls.

The reception was attended by DCP Secretary-General designate Senator John Methu, National Organising Secretary Senator Mithika Linturi, Murang'a Senator Joe Nyutu, Kirinyaga Senator Kamau Murango, Laikipia Senator John Kinyua and Kiambu Senator Karungu wa Thangw'a.

Kang'ata's move comes after previously indicating he would not seek re-election on the UDA ticket and later aligning himself with the opposition-leaning Linda Mwananchi movement before formally joining DCP.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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## NEWS IN BRIEF



Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs Cabinet Secretary Hassan Ali Joho has chaired a high-level meeting to fast-track the reopening of the Hillo Gold Mines in Marsabit County following a directive by President William Ruto. The meeting, attended by Marsabit Governor Mohamed Ali, local MPs, Senator Mohamed Chute and County Commissioner Stanley Kamande, established a multi-agency team to assess the mines. The team has seven working days from July 23, 2026, to conduct a comprehensive field assessment and recommend a structured reopening of the mines in compliance with the Mining Act, 2016. Its mandate includes verifying artisanal mining zones, confirming registered mining cooperatives for permit issuance and advising on regulatory requirements. Joho also directed an intensified nationwide crackdown on illegal mining activities.



The National Assembly Departmental Committee on Health has backed the Kenya Medical Research Institute's (KEMRI) request for an additional Sh500 million to complete a modern biomedical research complex at Kenyatta National Hospital. The committee, chaired by Seme MP Dr. James Nyikal, expressed its support during an oversight visit to inspect the Exchequer-funded project. KEMRI says the facility is essential for strengthening Kenya's disease surveillance, biomedical research and emergency preparedness. After assessing the project's progress, the committee acknowledged the importance of completing the complex to enhance the country's capacity in health research, innovation and training. Dr. Nyikal said the committee was impressed by the progress made and pledged to support efforts to secure the additional funding needed to make the facility fully operational.



The Nakuru County Government has said it is fully prepared for the anticipated El Niño rains expected between October and December, with measures already in place to reduce flooding and protect lives and infrastructure. County Executive Committee Member for Infrastructure Michael Kamau said the county is working with government agencies and humanitarian partners following forecasts of above-normal rainfall. Priority interventions include unclogging drainage systems in urban areas, improving culverts and preventing floods, landslides and mudslides. A multi-agency disaster management committee in Bahati Sub-County will coordinate the response in collaboration with agencies including KeNHA, Kenya Railways, KWS, KeRRA, KURA and NEMA to ensure uninterrupted transport, safeguard public health and minimize the impact of the heavy rains.



The government has launched a Multi-Biometric Identification System (MBIS) that will reduce police clearance certificate processing time from up to 14 days to about 24 hours while improving criminal investigations. Launched at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations headquarters in Nairobi, the system integrates fingerprint, palm-print and facial recognition technologies on a secure platform. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen said it will expand the biometric database from two million to 10 million records and increase daily fingerprint searches from 4,500 to 20,000. The government also plans to integrate the system with the National Registration Bureau, Judiciary, Immigration and Interpol to enhance intelligence sharing. During the launch, the National Police Service Forensic Laboratory's Forensic Evidence Management Unit received ANAB accreditation, becoming Africa's first internationally accredited forensic evidence management unit.

Two-time gold medalist Vincent Keter says he is confident of winning a medal at the Elite International Road Mile Race in Rome, Italy, on July 27, citing his recent performances. Speaking during training at Kericho Teachers Training College, Keter said his preparations have been boosted by strong results despite limited training ahead of the Athletics Kenya National Track and Field Championships, where he finished sixth. He recently posted a personal best of 3:34 in the 1,500m and also boasts personal bests of 3:55.41 in the mile, set at the 2022 Eugene Prefontaine Classic Diamond League, and 1:46 in the 800m. He said he expects to improve further and challenge for a medal in Rome.



West Pokot Governor Simon Kachapin has inaugurated new Boards of Management for Kapenguria County Referral Hospital and the sub-county hospitals of Kacheliba, Chepareria and Sigor to strengthen governance in public health facilities. The appointments follow the enactment of the West Pokot County Facilities Improvement Fund (FIF) Act, 2025, which establishes hospital boards to oversee management, guide financial accountability and ensure facility-generated revenue is reinvested in healthcare services. Kachapin said the boards will provide strategic leadership, support professional health managers and promote accountability. He urged members to manage public resources with integrity and prioritize quality healthcare and the welfare of patients in all their decisions.

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**Business** Rutto said access to loans alone was not enough to guarantee long-term success, noting that transport Saccos must also embrace prudent financial management

# PSV Saccos urged to deepen savings and financial skills to drive sustainable growth

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatiimes

Public service vehicle (PSV) Saccos have been encouraged to cultivate a stronger savings culture and invest in financial literacy as a pathway to expanding their businesses, improving members' incomes and increasing access to affordable credit.

The appeal was made on Friday by Equity Bank Director and Head of Retail Banking Carol Rutto during the commissioning of seven new passenger service vehicles purchased by NAKKONS Sacco in Othaya, Nyeri County. The buses were acquired through financing from Equity Bank as part of the Sacco's ongoing fleet expansion strategy aimed at enhancing efficiency and strengthening members' investments.

Rutto said access to loans alone was not enough to guarantee long-term success, noting that transport Saccos must also embrace prudent financial management, consistent savings and investments that generate lasting returns.

She said NAKKONS Sacco had demonstrated how collective action and financial discipline could transform the livelihoods of its members by converting daily earnings into productive assets.

According to Rutto, the public transport industry plays a vital role in supporting Kenya's economy by linking people to jobs, markets and essential services. She noted



Equity bank and NAKKONS officials during the commissioning ceremony on Friday. | Photo: Courtesy.

that equipping PSV operators with financial knowledge and appropriate banking solutions would strengthen the entire

transport ecosystem.

She said organised transport operators who embrace sound financial practices, ad-

equate insurance, affordable financing and digital payment systems are better positioned to provide reliable services



Equity bank and NAKKONS officials cutting a cake to celebrate the commissioning ceremony on Friday. | Photo: Courtesy.

while creating employment opportunities and stimulating local economic growth.

Rutto added that Equity Bank's engagement with transport Saccos extends beyond vehicle financing to include working capital facilities, savings products, insurance services, digital payment solutions, investment opportunities and entrepreneurship training.

She further urged members to strengthen their savings habits and maintain a robust group guarantee system, saying the two are essential in improving members' access to financial services while enhancing the stability and resilience of their Saccos.

For NAKKONS Sacco, the newly acquired vehicles are expected to lower operational expenses and improve returns for members.

The Sacco's Secretary, Timothy Wachiuri, said members had previously depended on imported second-hand vehicles that were costly to maintain due to frequent mechanical breakdowns and high fuel consumption.

He said the newly acquired vehicles were brand new and had zero mileage, making them more reliable and economical to operate.

"The vehicles belong to our members, and this investment marks a significant step forward. We have been spending heavily on repairs and fuel because of the used vehicles we operated before. These new buses will lower maintenance costs, improve reliability and

ultimately increase members' earnings. We thank Equity Bank for making this investment possible," said Wachiuri.

Equity Bank General Manager for the Central Region Stephen Mwaniki said the financing package had been tailored to suit the cash flow patterns of PSV operators, enabling them to repay their loans comfortably while growing their businesses.

He said the repayment schedule had been structured with the operators' business cycles in mind, particularly ahead of the festive season when passenger numbers are expected to rise.

Mwaniki noted that supporting small and medium-sized enterprises remains one of the bank's key priorities because of the sector's significant contribution to the country's economy.

Besides providing financing, he said the bank had also trained Sacco members on financial management to equip them with the skills needed to build profitable and sustainable transport businesses.

The acquisition of the seven vehicles highlights the increasingly important role being played by Saccos in helping transport operators acquire productive assets, expand their enterprises and improve household incomes despite rising operating costs and growing competition within the public transport sector.

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**Data** For the fruit vendor at Muthurwa market in Nairobi, Kenya or the hardware shop owner in Gikomba market, these requirements were brick walls

# Data over collateral: Why digital transactions are the future of informal credit

*Traditional banks often fail small traders because they lack collateral. The expansion of data driven lending is changing this by using daily transaction history to prove creditworthiness.*



BY John Wambugu

@themkenyatimes

For decades, the banking system in Africa has spoken a language that the informal trader simply could not understand.

If you wanted a loan to grow your business, you needed a title deed, a logbook or a set of audited accounts.

For the fruit vendor at Muthurwa market in Nairobi, Kenya or the hardware shop owner in Gikomba market, these requirements were brick walls.

The system was designed to reward those who already had assets, while ignoring the millions who had something arguably more valuable: consistent, daily cash flow.

A shift is occurring. The expansion of digital merchant credit systems is rewriting the rules of engagement. We are moving away from rigid, asset-heavy banking toward a model where software identifies the health of a business through its digital footprints. Instead of a balance sheet, the system looks at the rhythm and frequency of daily trade across the busiest hubs on the continent.

## Rewriting the language of risk

In the traditional world, risk is calculated by what you might lose if things go wrong.

In the digital economy, risk is increasingly calculated by what you are actually doing right now. When a trader in the Alaba International Market in Lagos, Nigeria, uses a mobile money till for every transaction, they create a living record of their business health. This data shows that they have twenty customers every morning, pay their suppliers every Tuesday and grow their revenue steadily.

By layering algorithms over these



**A street vendor engages with his mobile phone, potentially managing digital transactions for his small business. This scene reflects the growing intersection of technology and informal economies.** | Photo: Courtesy

transaction flows, lenders can build a profile of a merchant that is much more accurate than a static bank statement.

The daily pulse and operational consistency of the business becomes the collateral. We are finally seeing technology that respects the hustle of the informal trader by translating their hard work into a digital score that banks can trust.

## From Cash silos to growth engines

This transition is about capturing the liquidity that used to vanish into thin air or under a mattress. When a small business owner in the Makola Market in Accra, Ghana, can access a loan based on their mobile money history, the speed of commerce moves from weeks to seconds.

They do not have to wait for a bank manager to approve a file. The system already knows they are good for the money because it saw them earn

it yesterday and the day before.

This immediate access to capital allows traders to respond to market demands in real time. Whether it is stocking up for a holiday rush or repairing a critical piece of equipment, digital credit provides the flexibility that paper-based banking never could. It turns simple payments into a ledger of creditworthiness for the vendor who has worked in the same stall for ten years but never owned a piece of land.

## Bridging the economic gap

For a long time, being informal meant being invisible to the financial system.

You could be making a significant profit in Nairobi or Lagos, but you were still treated as a high risk ghost.

By using transaction data to unlock credit, we are giving these businesses a formal identity without forcing them to adopt the overhead of traditional corporate structures.

Governments and policymakers should take note. Financial inclusion should not be about forcing every small shop to look like a multinational corporation.

Instead, we should be building digital infrastructure that meets them where they are. If we can use data to prove that a local vendor is a reliable borrower, we do more for economic growth than any traditional subsidy program ever could.

## The road ahead

As we expand these merchant credit systems, we must ensure the logic remains fair and transparent.

The systems that determine creditworthiness must be designed to include rather than exclude. Security and data privacy are the foundation of the trust that makes this entire system work.

The era of the title deed as the only gateway to capital is coming to an end.

In its place, we are building a world where your daily effort, captured in digital transactions, becomes your greatest asset. This is how we build a truly inclusive digital economy.

We do it by making sure technology works for the person who is working the hardest.

*John Wambugu is a technology, innovation, and digital economy leader dedicated to building Africa's Informal & Digital Economy through technology, entrepreneurship, ecosystem development, and community-driven innovation*

# Duale's sharp tongue lands him in NCIC's crosshairs

*Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale faces a formal National Cohesion and Integration Commission inquiry after remarks made in Garissa County were widely interpreted as targeting the Kikuyu community — triggering condemnation from Mount Kenya leaders and reigniting tensions ahead of the 2027 General Election.*

BY David Kimani

@themkenyatimes

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission has launched a formal investigation into Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale following allegations of ethnic incitement arising from remarks he made in Garissa County on July 20, days after the ruling United Democratic Alliance suffered a significant defeat in the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election.

The controversy centres on statements Duale made in Lafey Constituency in which he appeared to suggest that the Kikuyu community had adopted the attitude that “no one else should live well in Kenya.” He then quoted a Somali proverb — “Waraabe la-tagis bartay, ka-ridis waa ku dhib” — which critics translated as a reference to a hyena that, having tasted meat, cannot be stopped. The remarks, filmed and circulated extensively on social media, ignited immediate outrage across political and civic circles, drawing particular condemnation from Mount Kenya leaders who interpreted them as a deliberate ethnic slur.

Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru was among the first senior figures to respond, describing the remarks as deeply divisive and unbecoming of a Cabinet secretary. “Kenya is held together by the principle that every community belongs to this nation equally,” Waiguru said. “Remarks that single out any ethnic group — particularly in the charged atmosphere that follows an election — are irresponsible and dangerous. We expect better from those entrusted with national office.”

Githunguri MP Gathoni Wamuchomba was more direct, calling on the NCIC to move swiftly and decisively. “This is not a matter of political interpretation,” she said. “When a senior government official uses public platforms to profile a community, it crosses a clear legal and moral line. The commission must act, and it must act without fear or favour.” Wamuchomba added that

the timing of the remarks — coming in the immediate wake of UDA’s loss in Ol Kalou — suggested a political motive that made them all the more troubling.

Kabado wa Kabado, the veteran politician and Mount Kenya elder statesman, said the incident exposed a pattern of selective rhetoric that had no place in a constitutional democracy. “We have built this country on the understanding that no community is more Kenyan than another,” he said. “When leaders forget that, or choose to set it aside for political convenience, they undermine the very foundation of the republic. Duale must answer for what he said.”

The formal complaint was lodged with the NCIC by Abdi Noor, a civil society advocate who filed the case in his personal capacity. “Today, I lodged a formal complaint with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission against CS Aden Duale over alleged ethnic incitement, profiling of the Kikuyu community, and inflammatory public remarks that threaten national cohesion,” Noor wrote. “No public official should divide Kenyans along ethnic lines. I have urged the Commission to investigate the matter and take appropriate action.”

Duale responded with a comprehensive denial, insisting that his words had been stripped of their meaning and weaponised by political opponents. “I have been widely misquoted and my remarks delivered in Lafey Constituency have been taken out of context to advance false and misleading narratives,” he said. “The phrase I used is a well-known Somali proverb that has long been part of our oral tradition. It is a figurative expression about the difficulty of ending entrenched habits or long-enjoyed advantages. It was never directed at any community or intended to demean anyone.”

The Cabinet secretary maintained that his message had been about inclusivity, not division. “My message was about the importance of embracing inclusivity as the Government continues to ensure that all Kenyans,



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

regardless of their region or ethnicity, have an opportunity to serve the nation,” he said. “Attempts to portray my remarks as ethnic incitement are therefore dishonest and a deliberate distortion of what I said.”

Duale also turned the controversy back on his critics, accusing them of applying inconsistent standards. “I find it regrettable that some of those now expressing outrage remained silent when inflammatory remarks targeting the Somali community were made in the past,” he said. “Public leaders should reject selective outrage and apply the same standards consistently. Kenya’s strength lies in its diversity. My commitment remains to national unity, peaceful co-existence and equal opportunity for every Kenyan, without exception.”

The political backdrop to the affair

is impossible to ignore. UDA’s loss in the Ol Kalou by-election on July 16 was widely read as a significant setback for President William Ruto’s party in Mount Kenya, a region that delivered his 2022 election victory but has shown signs of restlessness as economic frustrations deepen. Any perception that senior government officials are responding to that loss with ethnic recrimination rather than political reflection will only sharpen the tensions the party can least afford.

The NCIC, for its part, has urged calm and called on all political actors to exercise restraint ahead of the 2027 General Election cycle. The commission has broad powers under the National Cohesion and Integration Act to investigate, prosecute and sanction individuals found to have

engaged in hate speech or ethnic incitement — powers it has not always deployed with the consistency its mandate demands.

Whether Duale’s proverb was a cultural reference or a coded provocation may ultimately be a matter of interpretation. What is not a matter of interpretation is the impact his words have had on communities already navigating a fractious political environment. In the court of public opinion in Mount Kenya, the damage is already done.

The NCIC’s investigation will determine what happens next in the courts of law. But in the court of political trust, the verdict may already be in.

**Business** Kaua reminded participants that every successful enterprise begins with a bold dream nurtured through determination and resilience

# MSEA-nurtured SevenTwenty Holdings triumphs at KEPSA SME awards, showcasing the power of local innovation

BY Waithaka Kariuki  
@themtkenyatimes

Local manufacturer wins KSh 225,000 top prize at annual national conference

By Waithaka Kariuki

The atmosphere at All Saints Cathedral was electric yesterday as the KEPSA 3rd Annual SME Conference, Awards and Exhibition concluded with a colourful awards ceremony celebrating Kenya's most innovative and resilient micro, small and medium enterprises, underscoring the transformative impact of entrepreneurship on the country's economic future.

Representing Micro and Small Enterprises Authority Director General Henry Rithaa, MSEA Director of Business Development, Marketing and Trade Caroline Kaua presided over the SME Enabler Awards, the open-

ing category of the evening. She presented appreciation awards to the judges, including officers from MSEA and key partner institutions, who undertook the rigorous evaluation process to identify the country's most outstanding enterprises.

In remarks delivered on behalf of Rithaa, Kaua reminded participants that every successful enterprise begins with a bold dream nurtured through determination and resilience.

"Resilient businesses are born from humble beginnings—in kitchens, garages and market stalls. The future belongs to entrepreneurs who are willing to learn, innovate and continuously adapt to changing market demands," Rithaa said.

Rithaa highlighted MSEA's commitment to supporting entrepreneurs throughout their

growth journey by connecting them to local and international markets, facilitating access to modern machinery through the Kenya Jobs and Economic Transformation Project, and working closely with partners such as Make it Kenya to improve product quality, branding and certification.

He further noted that flagship programmes such as the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement Project and the Kenya Jobs and Economic Transformation Project are empowering thousands of young entrepreneurs and small enterprises through mentorship, startup grants, digital transformation, enterprise clustering and business development services. These interventions are reducing production costs, improving competitiveness and unlocking new market opportunities.

Rithaa emphasised that Ken-



Among those receiving the prestigious Imara Business Innovation Award at the KEPSA 3rd Annual SME Conference, Awards & Exhibition is SevenTwenty Holdings CEO Mr. Kenneth Kariuki, whose visionary leadership has transformed a humble Jua Kali workshop into one of Kenya's fastest-growing manufacturing success stories.

ya's economic transformation will only be realised through strong public-private partnerships involving institutions such as MSEA, the Kenya Bureau of Standards, financial institutions, county governments and development partners working together to create an enabling environment where enterprises can innovate, grow sustainably and compete confidently in regional and global markets.

The defining moment of the evening came during the presentation of the coveted Imara Business Innovation Award, where SevenTwenty Holdings emerged as the overall winner, walking away with the grand prize of KSh 225,000. The victory was particularly significant for MSEA, as SevenTwenty Holdings is among the enterprises that have benefited from the authority's business development and enterprise support programmes.

The remarkable achievement serves as a shining example of what is possible when determination meets strategic institutional support. It reflects the success of MSEA's commitment to nurturing local enterprises from startup stage into nationally recognised manufacturers capable of transforming industries and creating employment opportunities.

The story of SevenTwenty Holdings is one of extraordinary resilience, innovation and unwavering belief in

Kenyan manufacturing.

The company began as a modest Jua Kali workshop driven by a simple but powerful vision—to replace imported construction products with durable, high-quality alternatives proudly manufactured in Kenya using locally available raw materials and skilled Kenyan labour.

Starting with the production of basic curtain rods and brackets, the company steadily expanded its operations through continuous innovation, investment in quality and a relentless commitment to meeting customer needs.

Today, SevenTwenty Holdings has evolved into one of Kenya's fastest-growing manufacturers, producing thousands of premium construction products every day and supplying a rapidly expanding market with locally made solutions that meet international standards.

Behind this remarkable success is Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Kariuki, a visionary and ambitious entrepreneur whose leadership has transformed a small workshop into a thriving manufacturing enterprise. His strategic outlook, passion for industrialisation and unwavering belief in local production have positioned SevenTwenty Holdings as an inspiring example of Kenyan entrepreneurship at its very best.

Under Kariuki's stewardship, the company has demonstrat-

ed that local manufacturers can successfully compete with imported products by prioritising quality, innovation and customer satisfaction. His journey embodies the entrepreneurial spirit that MSEA continues to champion across the country.

The recognition of SevenTwenty Holdings at the KEPSA SME Awards not only celebrates the company's impressive achievements but also reinforces the enormous potential that exists within Kenya's sector. It illustrates how targeted support, strategic partnerships and visionary leadership can transform small enterprises into nationally acclaimed businesses that contribute meaningfully to industrialisation, job creation and economic growth.

As Kenya continues to pursue inclusive economic transformation under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, the success of enterprises such as SevenTwenty Holdings demonstrates that the country's future will be built by innovative local businesses capable of creating value, generating employment and strengthening Kenya's manufacturing base.

For MSEA, the victory is more than an award—it is a powerful affirmation that investing in small enterprises yields lasting dividends for entrepreneurs, communities and the nation at large.

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**Politics** Murkomen painted the picture of an administration committed to reaching every corner of the country

# Murkomen's bold message: Is Ruto truly restoring hope where Kenya had been forgotten?

*Interior CS Kipchumba Murkomen has staked the Kenya Kwanza administration's reputation on a claim that President William Ruto is delivering development to communities long neglected — but not everyone is convinced.*

**BY Hadassah Karangu**

@themtkenyentimes

Politics in Kenya rarely lacks drama, but every so often a statement emerges that captures the attention of the nation. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has once again found himself at the centre of political debate after passionately defending President William Ruto's leadership, insisting that the head of state is taking development back to communities that had waited years to see meaningful government investment.

His remarks have ignited conversations across the country. Supporters see them as recognition of a government determined to fulfil its promises, while critics dismiss them as political rhetoric designed to shore up support ahead of the 2027 General Election. Yet beneath the heated exchanges lies a larger question that many Kenyans continue to ask: are citizens witnessing genuine transformation, or are they simply hearing another campaign narrative?

Murkomen painted the picture of an administration committed to reaching every corner of the country. According to him, Ruto's government is determined to ensure that no region is left behind on roads, electricity, education, healthcare and economic opportunity. He argued that development should not depend on political affiliation but should be the right of every Kenyan, regardless of where they live.

For many residents in rural Kenya, such promises carry enormous weight. Communities that have endured poor roads, unreliable water supplies, limited healthcare and chronic youth unemployment naturally welcome any sign of government attention. Every new road, classroom, health facility or electricity connection becomes more than just another project — it becomes a symbol of hope for families that have waited years to be noticed.

Yet politics in Kenya has taught citizens to be cautious. Grand promises have been made before. Every elec-

tion cycle has brought assurances that forgotten communities would finally receive their fair share of national resources. Some projects have indeed been completed; others have stalled or quietly disappeared once the excitement of political rallies faded.

That is why Murkomen's remarks have sparked intense debate. His supporters argue that Ruto deserves credit for pushing development projects despite the economic headwinds facing the country. They point to infrastructure, affordable housing, digital initiatives and agricultural programmes as evidence that the administration is working to deliver on its manifesto.

Critics, however, maintain that development should not be measured by announcements and launches alone. They argue that ordinary Kenyans continue to struggle with a high cost of living, unemployment and increased taxation. For them, true progress is reflected in improved household incomes, affordable food, accessible healthcare and quality jobs — not political speeches.

This divergence illustrates the central challenge facing the Kenya Kwanza administration. While government leaders highlight ongoing projects and investments, many citizens judge success by the realities they encounter every day. If life remains difficult despite visible projects, convincing the public becomes an uphill task.

Murkomen's defence of Ruto also reflects a sharpening political contest as the country gradually turns its attention towards the next election cycle. Every statement by a senior government official is now being read through the dual lens of governance and political strategy. Development has increasingly become one of the strongest tools in a politician's arsenal, with leaders racing to demonstrate tangible achievements to voters.

Ultimately, the debate should not revolve around personalities alone. The real issue is whether development reaches the people who need it most. Roads should connect farmers



Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen

to markets. Hospitals should save lives. Schools should equip children with better opportunities. Water projects should ease the daily burden on families. These are the achievements that endure long after political rallies have ended.

As Murkomen continues to defend Ruto's record, Kenyans will keep asking tough questions — comparing promises with reality, speeches with completed projects and political declarations with their own daily experiences. In a democracy, that scrutiny is not only expected; it is essential.

Whether history remembers this administration as one that genuinely transformed forgotten regions, or one that simply mastered the language of political persuasion, will depend not on speeches but on results that every Kenyan can see, touch and benefit from. In the end, development is the most powerful campaign message — but only when it changes lives.



President William Ruto

**Tribute** Hundreds of mourners gathered at Blue Post Hotel in Thika under the auspices of MMV Associates CLG to honour Karue

# Former Mau Mau fighters mourn Githui Karue, hail him as champion of freedom and culture

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

Former Mau Mau freedom fighters, community elders and descendants from across the country on Friday paid glowing tribute to veteran freedom fighter Githui Karue, describing him as a fearless patriot whose lifelong commitment to justice, culture and national liberation inspired generations of Kenyans.

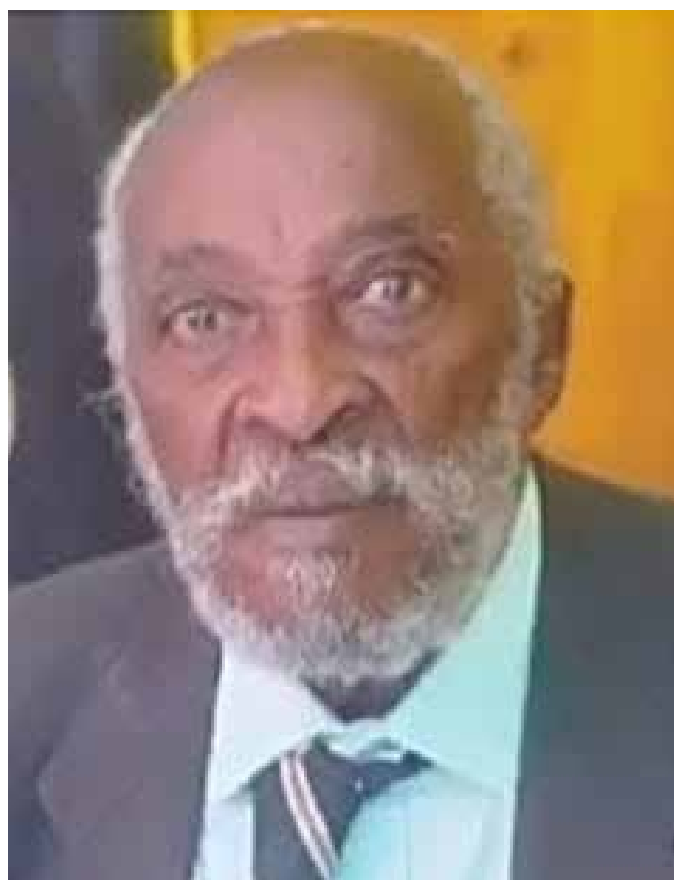
Hundreds of mourners gathered at Blue Post Hotel in Thika under the auspices of MMV Associates CLG to honour Karue, who died on Wednesday while undergoing treatment at Consolata Mission Hospital, Mathari, near Nyeri Town.

The gathering brought together former freedom fighters, Kikuyu elders, cultural leaders and family members, who remembered Karue not only as a Mau Mau veteran but also as a respected custodian of Kikuyu traditions and an outspoken advocate for the rights of former freedom fighters.

Speaking during the memorial meeting, MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria said Karue dedicated his life to preserving the country's liberation history while tirelessly pursuing justice for Mau Mau veterans who have waited decades for recognition and compensation.

"Mzee Githui Karue was not just a freedom fighter; he was a guardian of our history and culture. He carried invaluable information concerning the struggle for independence and remained committed to ensuring that those who sacrificed for this country receive justice," Mahuria said.

He said Karue played a key role in mobilising former freedom fighters across Kenya and remained actively involved in efforts to secure



The late Githui Karue

compensation for veterans and their families.

"Although we have lost one of our strongest pillars, our resolve has not changed. We shall continue pursuing justice for freedom fighters and ensure their sacrifices are never forgotten," he added.

Kikuyu Chief Seer Munyori Kinyenje Muhuri described the late Karue as a courageous elder whose love for justice remained unshaken even in his old age.

He said Karue believed that the struggle for freedom did not end with independence but continued through the fight against corruption, injustice and poor governance.

"Even in his 90s, Mzee Karue stood with young people demanding accountability. During last year's Gen-Z demonstrations against the Finance Bill, he joined the youth because he believed every generation has a duty to defend the country's freedom," said Muhuri.

He urged the government to accord Karue a dignified send-off befitting a national hero, saying his contribution to Kenya's liberation and preservation of cultural heritage deserved official recognition.

"The government should honour him just as it honours other national heroes. His life symbolised courage, patriotism and selfless service to the nation," he said.

Muhuri also appealed to Kenyans to support the bereaved family from Kiricho in Nyeri Town Constituency, saying Karue devoted nearly his entire life to serving the country and his community.

Myooot Council of Elders chairman for Tapsagoi Ward in Uasin Gishu County, Mzee Daniel Samoei, called on the government to expedite compensation for surviving Mau Mau veterans and ensure families of those who have died also benefit.

"Many freedom fighters



MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria addressing the gathering on Friday.

| Photo: Courtesy.

passed away before receiving justice. Their children and grandchildren should not continue suffering while their forefathers sacrificed everything for Kenya's independence," Samoei said.

He said recognising the contributions of liberation heroes would help preserve the country's history and inspire younger generations to value patriotism and national unity. Family members described Karue as a humble, disciplined and selfless man whose passion for community service remained evident throughout his life.

His son Maina and daughter Nyambura, accompanied by his younger brother Patrick Wachieni, thanked mourners for standing with the family during the difficult period.

They said Karue devoted much of his life to championing the welfare of freedom fighters, preserving Kikuyu cultural values and mentoring young people on the importance of integrity and service to the nation.

The family said burial arrangements would be announced after consultations over the weekend.

The memorial ceremony attracted former freedom fighters, cultural leaders and poli-

iticians from different parts of the country, all of whom described Karue's death as a great loss to Kenya's liberation movement.

Many speakers observed that his legacy would endure through the values he champi-

oned; justice, patriotism, unity and cultural preservation and urged the government to renew efforts to address the longstanding concerns of Mau Mau veterans and their descendants.



MMV associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria addressing the media as Chief Seer Munyori Kinyenje Muhuri (left) and Nyambura Githui as well as James Githui (right) looks on.

**Tourism and Wildlife** Miano said the successful relocation had restored peace of mind to the people of Rurii Ward, enabling farmers to return to their fields

# CS Miano applauds successful hippo translocation, reaffirms commitment to human-wildlife coexistence

**BY John Kariuki**  
@themkenyatimes

Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano has announced the successful completion of a hippo translocation exercise from Mukindu Dam in Rurii Ward, Ol Kalou, describing it as a major milestone in protecting both local communities and Kenya’s wildlife heritage.

The operation, undertaken by the Kenya Wildlife Service, safely relocated the animals to a protected sanctuary following weeks of meticulous planning and execution. The hippos had increasingly posed a threat to nearby residents, destroying crops, restricting access to water sources and exposing families and farmers to

frequent danger.

Miano said the successful relocation had restored peace of mind to the people of Rurii Ward, enabling farmers to return to their fields with confidence, families to access water safely and communities to resume their daily activities without fear.

She noted that the exercise reflects the government’s commitment to promoting sustainable human-wildlife coexistence, emphasising that effective conservation must go hand in hand with safeguarding the safety, dignity and livelihoods of Kenyan communities.

Miano commended the technical and conservation teams for their professionalism in executing the complex operation. She also expressed appreciation to local leaders and residents of Rurii Ward for their

patience, cooperation and vigilance throughout the exercise.

She reaffirmed that the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, the State Department for Wildlife and the Kenya Wildlife Service would continue implementing practical conservation interventions that protect Kenya’s rich biodiversity while ensuring that communities living near wildlife enjoy safety, security and sustainable livelihoods.

Kenya’s handling of the Mukindu Dam case offers a working model of how conservation and community development can serve as complementary goals — reinforcing the country’s standing as a responsible steward of its natural heritage.



Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano (L), flanked by local officials and community members, ceremonially flags off a heavy commercial truck during an official working visit.



## May my father’s life be protected



My heart is pounding, my heart is aching,  
Streams of tears keep silently falling.  
O my Allah, I humbly beg of You:  
Please keep my father's life safe.

His heart has long forgotten its own peace,  
For once, he too lost his beloved father.  
O Lord, do not leave him all alone,  
Please keep my father's life safe.

He faced life's trials with courage and grace,  
Beside him stood a praying mother.  
Hardened by labor in every place,  
Please keep my father's life safe.

May his path lead toward Paradise,  
May his forehead always rest in prostration.  
Even when the Final Day arrives,  
Please keep my father's life safe.

Sodiq Mahmud

## The grace of goodbye



Every ending is the womb of a beginning.

There are seasons  
When the soul grows silent,  
Not because it has forgotten its song,  
But because the world around it  
Has become too loud  
To hear the music of self-worth.

There are rooms  
Where smiles are borrowed,  
Where respect is rationed,  
Where love is measured  
By the weight of what you can endure.  
Stay long enough,  
And even your reflection  
Forgets your name.

Yet within every heart  
Burns an eternal ember  
A sacred spark  
No insult should extinguish,  
No fear should imprison.

The Bhagavad Gita (2.14) gently reminds us:

“O son of Kunti, the contact of the senses  
with their objects gives rise to cold and heat,  
pleasure and pain. They come and go; endure them  
patiently.”

Endure...  
But never confuse endurance  
With surrendering your dignity.  
Patience is strength,  
Humiliation is not destiny.

Sometimes  
The bravest prayer  
Is not spoken upon folded knees,  
But whispered  
With an unshaking voice:  
“Goodbye.”

Goodbye  
To doors that close upon your dreams.  
Goodbye  
To hands that wound while pretending to heal.  
Goodbye  
To places where your spirit  
Must shrink  
To make others comfortable.

Watch the trees.  
They never argue  
With autumn.  
Leaf after golden leaf,  
They release  
What they can no longer carry,  
Trusting the invisible promise

Of another spring.

Watch the river.

It never clings  
To the rocks that bruise its current.  
It sings its way forward,  
Knowing the ocean  
Belongs to those  
Who dare to leave the shore.

Even the eagle  
Finds the boundless heavens  
Only after leaping  
From the safety of the cliff.

So too,  
The soul discovers its vastness  
Only when it loosens  
The chains of fear.

The Lord’s final assurance  
Echoes through the ages:

Bhagavad Gita (18.66)

“Abandon all forms of fear and surrender unto Me  
alone. I shall liberate you from all sorrow; do not  
grieve.”

To let go  
Is not to lose.  
It is to place your future  
Into hands  
Greater than your fears.

For every farewell  
Carries the fragrance  
Of an unseen dawn.  
Every closed gate  
Guards the entrance  
To a better path.  
Every tear  
Polishes tomorrow’s smile.

When self-respect  
Becomes the price of staying,  
Leave.

Walk away  
Without bitterness,  
Without revenge,  
Without regret.

For Life  
The quiet sculptor of destinies  
Has an ancient promise:

If you are brave enough  
To say Goodbye  
To all that diminishes your light,

It will one day  
Open a new door,  
Wrap your scars in sunrise,  
And whisper  
With infinite tenderness  
“Hello...”  
Welcome home to the life  
You were always meant to live.”

## It always seems impossible until it’s done.



It feels like a huge mountain, When we first start  
to climb.  
Stay confident, take the route  
Soon the peak will be under our feet.

It feels like an endless ocean,  
When we first dip our toes.  
Be brave, keep swimming toward the goal  
Soon the waves will be our swimming pool

It feels like the endless sky, when we first learn  
to fly.  
Wear your courage, take the dive  
Soon the clouds will be our skyline.

Yes, it always seems impossible  
When we’re starting the work.  
But do your best, stay consistent  
Success will show what we’re worth.

DHANALAKSHMI DM  
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## If you are brave enough to say goodbye



Life will reward you with a new hello.  
Life is a journey filled with both successes and  
failures.  
Some moments bring happiness, while others  
bring sadness.  
When you face failure, do not lose heart.

Instead, say goodbye to the disappointments  
and begin a new chapter in your life.  
Have the courage to let go of unsuccessful  
moments,  
because every ending creates space for a new  
beginning.  
If you are brave enough to say goodbye,  
life will reward you with a new hello.  
\_\_\_\_G. YasminSirajudheen  
Secondary grade teacher  
Melmalayanur block  
Villupuram dt

**Exploitation** In the first operation in the Rimpa area of Ongata Rongai, detectives raided a house believed to have been operating as a hub for the production of obscene online material

# Police rescue 48 women in crackdown on alleged sexual exploitation ring in Kajiado

BY The DCI  
@themkenyatiimes

Police have rescued 48 young women and arrested several suspects following coordinated operations targeting alleged sexual exploitation and the production of obscene on-line content in Ongata Rongai and Kiserian, Kajiado County. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) said the raids were carried out after detectives received intelligence from members of the public about premises suspected to be used for the commercial production of explicit content and the exploitation of vulnerable women. In the first operation in the Rimpa area of Ongata Rongai, detectives raided a house believed to have been operat-



Some of the women who were rescued. | Photo: DCI

ing as a hub for the production of obscene online material. Inside, officers found 30 women aged between 19 and 27 years. Police recovered seven laptops fitted with cameras and other equipment believed to

have been used in producing explicit content. The women and suspects found at the premises were taken to Ongata Rongai Police Station as investigations continued ahead of planned court proceedings. In a separate operation in

neighbouring Kiserian, detectives acted on intelligence that young women had been lured with promises of domestic employment, only to be subjected to sexual exploitation and commercial prostitution. The joint operation by officers from Kiserian and Rongai police stations led to the rescue of 18 women, who were placed under police protection. Detectives also recovered mobile phones, laptops and other items believed to have been used in the commission of the offences. Police said the main suspect behind the alleged operation remains at large, with investigators pursuing leads to facilitate an arrest. The DCI said arrangements were underway to provide the rescued women with safe accommodation and com-



Some of the gadgets that were recovered.

prehensive support services, including psychosocial counselling and medical care, to aid their recovery and reintegration. The agency reaffirmed its commitment to dismantling criminal networks involved in sexual exploitation and the production of obscene material, saying investigations into both cases were continuing to establish the full extent of the

alleged operations, identify additional suspects and bring all those involved to justice. The DCI also appealed to members of the public to continue reporting suspected cases of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other organised crimes through its anonymous reporting channels.

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**Kenya - UK** The Government discounts claims suggesting that the defence partnership between Kenya and the United Kingdom has been terminated

# Kenya dismisses claims of BATUK exit, reaffirms commitment to UK Defence partnership

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

The Government has dismissed reports suggesting that the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) has ceased operations in the country, reaffirming its commitment to the long-standing defence partnership with the United Kingdom while clarifying that a new bilateral defence agreement is still undergoing parliamentary approval.

A statement issued on Friday, by Jacob Ng'etich, the Director of Press Service at the office of Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs said reports claiming the Kenya-United Kingdom defence partnership had been terminated were inaccurate and did not reflect the current status of engagements between the two countries.

It said the proposed Kenya-United Kingdom Defence Cooperation Agreement is currently before the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations for consideration in line with constitutional and legislative requirements.

"The Government discounts claims suggesting that the defence partnership between Kenya and the United Kingdom has been terminated or that the BATUK arrangement has come to an end. Such assertions are inaccurate and do not reflect the current status of the friendly engagement between the two Governments," the statement said.

The clarification follows reports that the British Ministry of Defence had cancelled a planned military training exercise in Kenya after the two countries failed to conclude negotiations on the renewed defence agreement,



PCS Musalia Mudavadi

with discussions reportedly centred on legal jurisdiction over British soldiers accused of committing offences while stationed in Kenya.

The Government, however, maintained that Kenya and the United Kingdom continue to enjoy a historic and mutually beneficial strategic relationship founded on mutual respect, shared interests and strong people-to-people ties.

According to the statement, defence cooperation remains one of the pillars of the bilateral relationship, contributing significantly to military capacity building, professional training, regional security cooperation and economic opportunities for communities hosting British military exercises.

It said Kenya remains com-

mitted to resolving all outstanding issues through established diplomatic and institutional channels while awaiting the completion of the parliamentary process.

"We look forward to an amicable conclusion of the parliamentary process and the continued implementation of the bilateral defence cooperation framework for the mutual benefit of both countries," the statement added.

The renewed agreement has attracted intense public and parliamentary scrutiny following concerns over accountability for alleged offences involving British soldiers stationed at BATUK.

The National Assembly Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations Committee has previously called for

stronger accountability measures, including greater jurisdiction for Kenyan courts over serious crimes allegedly committed by British military personnel, enhanced protection for local communities and implementation of recommendations arising from a parliamentary inquiry into BATUK's operations.

The debate has been influenced by unresolved cases, including the 2012 killing of Agnes Wanjiru, whose death has remained at the centre of calls for greater accountability under any future defence cooperation framework. A

parliamentary inquiry completed last year also documented allegations of misconduct involving British troops, including environmental concerns and claims of human rights abuses, prompting lawmakers to seek stronger safeguards before approving a new agreement.

Despite the ongoing negotiations, the statement stressed that the relationship between Nairobi and London remains strong and that both governments are committed to advancing shared strategic interests.

"As long-standing partners,

Kenya and the United Kingdom will continue working together to strengthen defence cooperation, promote regional peace and security, and advance the broader strategic objectives that have defined the relationship between our two nations over many decades," It further said.

BATUK has maintained a presence in Kenya for decades, with its training facilities centred in Laikipia County. The unit supports joint military exercises between the Kenya Defence Forces and the British Army and contributes to local economies through procurement, employment and community development initiatives, even as its operations continue to face increased public scrutiny over accountability and legal jurisdiction.




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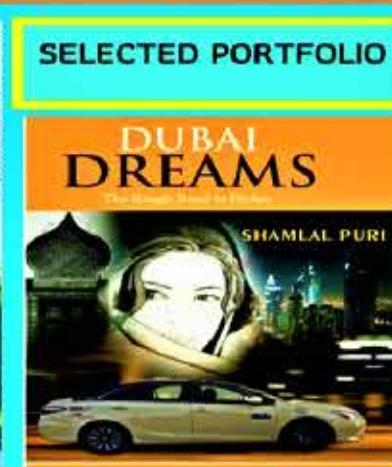
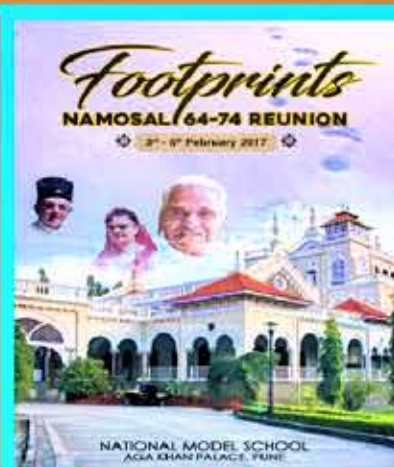
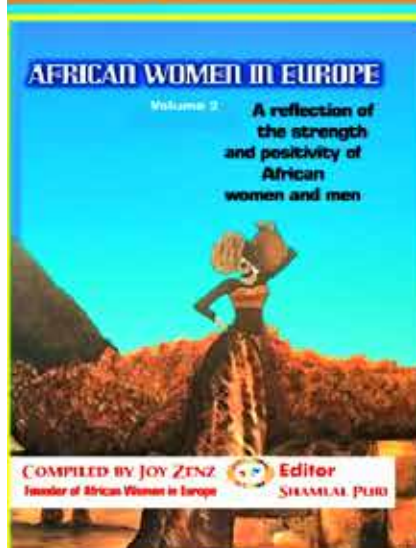
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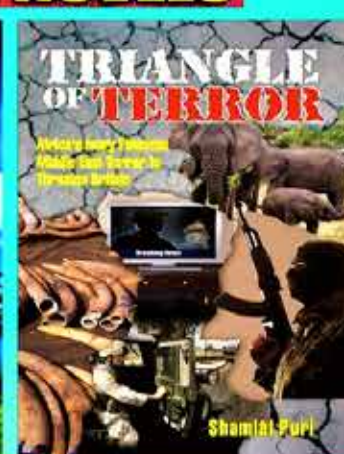
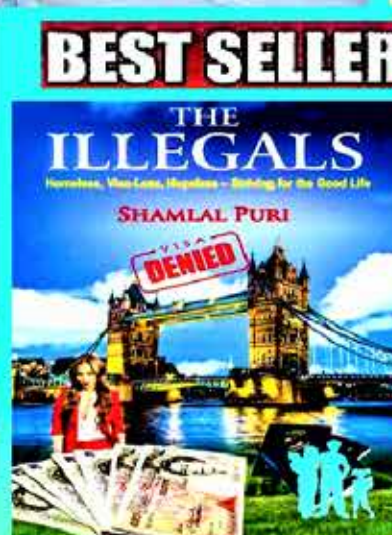
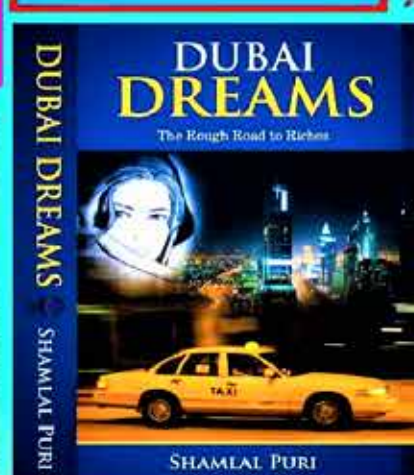
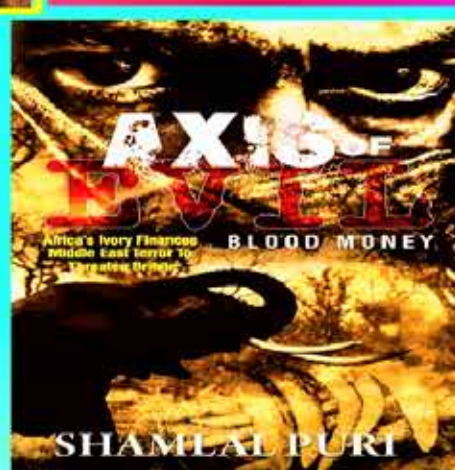
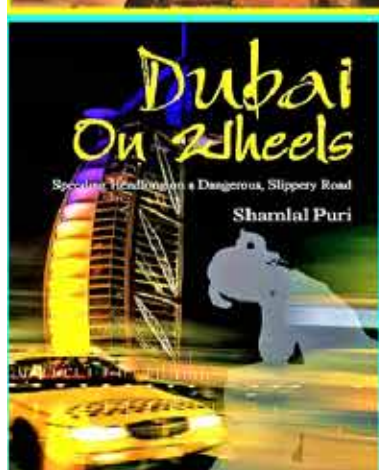
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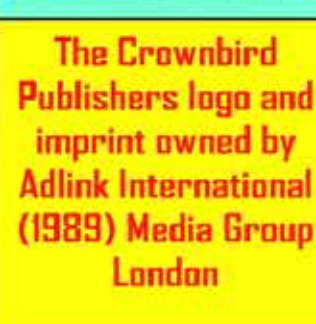
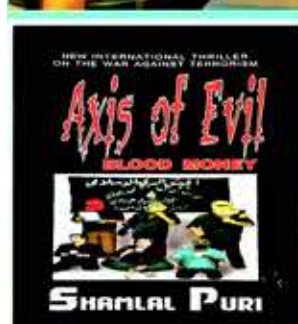
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**Law** The implications of that 2013 precedent ripple like venom through the body politic. It eroded the moral authority of leadership

# Why chapter six must become Kenya's living creed



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor  
Odhiambo

@themkenyatimes

In 2013, Kenya stood at a crossroads of hope and peril. Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, facing International Criminal Court (ICC) indictments for crimes against humanity related to the 2007-2008 post-election violence that claimed over 600 lives and displaced hundreds of thousands, were cleared by the courts to vie for the highest offices. The Court upheld their candidacy, and the duo, under the Jubilee Alliance, swept to victory. This “greenlight” was celebrated by supporters as a triumph of democracy over foreign interference. Nevertheless, it cast a long, ominous shadow over Chapter Six of the 2010 Constitution the very chapter Kenyans had overwhelmingly endorsed to enshrine leadership and integrity as non-negotiable pillars of the new republic.

Chapter Six, titled “Leadership and Integrity,” is not mere ornamentation. Articles 73 to 80 demand that state officers embody personal integrity, competence, selfless service, accountability, and transparency. Leaders must shun nepotism, favoritism, and corrupt practices; declare conflicts of interest; and conduct themselves in ways that maintain public confidence. It was the moral heartbeat of a Constitution born from the ashes of impunity, ethnic strife, and grand corruption. Kenyans envisioned a break from the past; a nation where power serves the people, not devours them. The 2013 greenlight, however, signaled that expediency could eclipse ethics. If accused masterminds of violence could ascend to leadership, what message did it send about the enforceability of integrity? It normalized a dangerous pragmatism: the ends justify the means, and Chapter Six is aspirational, not obligatory.

This foundational compromise has metastasized. Kenya's Corruption Perceptions Index score languishes at a dismal 30 out of 100 in 2025, ranking 130th out of 182 countries, a two-point decline signaling stag-

nation and regression. Transparency International and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) reports paint a portrait of systemic rot: billions lost annually to ghost projects, inflated tenders, and elite capture. The Kenya Bribery Index reveals ordinary citizens still grease palms for basic services, while the powerful feast unchecked. From Anglo-Leasing ghosts to recent controversies over public debt audits, fertilizer scandals, and procurement deals, the pattern is relentless.

The implications of that 2013 precedent ripple like venom through the body politic. It eroded the moral authority of leadership. When those at the pinnacle operate under a cloud whether of past indictments or fresh allegations it breeds cynicism. Public trust evaporates. Youth unemployment festers alongside mountains of debt (Sh13 trillion and counting), while scandals erode the social contract. The people who queued in the sun to ratify the 2010 Constitution did not dream of leaders who treat state coffers as personal ATMs or institutions as shields against accountability. They envisioned servants, not overlords.

Literary giants like Chinua Achebe warned in *Things Fall Apart* of the center that cannot hold when integrity crumbles. Kenya's centre its constitutional ethos is fraying. Chapter Six was meant to be the glue: a bulwark against the “big man” syndrome that plagued post-independence Africa. Instead, it has become a parchment tiger. Courts have occasionally flexed muscle, as in barring governors like Samburu's Moses Lenolkulal or Kiambu's Ferdinand Waititu on integrity grounds, invoking Chapter Six values. Even so, high-profile cases fizzle. Prosecutions target small fish while sharks swim free. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), EACC, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), and Judiciary often operate in silos or at cross-purposes blame-shifting, resource-starved, or politically pressured. Reports from *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* have chronicled this theater: raids that yield headlines but few convictions, asset recoveries that vanish into legal limbo, and a revolving door of “innocent until proven guilty” for the connected.

Consider the human cost. A mother in Kibera who cannot access quali-

ty healthcare because funds were siphoned into ghost hospitals. A farmer in the Rift Valley watching subsidized fertilizer disappear into political patronage networks. A graduate hawking vegetables on Nairobi streets while billions fund vanity projects. These are not abstract statistics; they are souls crushed under the weight of betrayed promise. Good governance is not a technocratic slogan, it is the difference between a child buried in an unmarked grave due to collapsed infrastructure and one thriving in a nation that invests in its future. Without integrity, democracy devolves into electoral authoritarianism: votes bought, institutions captured, futures mortgaged.

The 2010 Constitution was a covenant with posterity. Kenyans rejected the old order of impunity. They demanded leaders who are “selected on the basis of personal integrity” (Article 73). However, 15 years on, implementation remains cosmetic. Vetting processes for public office are often perfunctory rituals. Wealth declarations gather dust. Conflicts of interest flourish in plain sight. As one *Nation* analysis noted on the 15th anniversary, Chapter Six tests

the moral compass of leadership but the needle spins wildly.

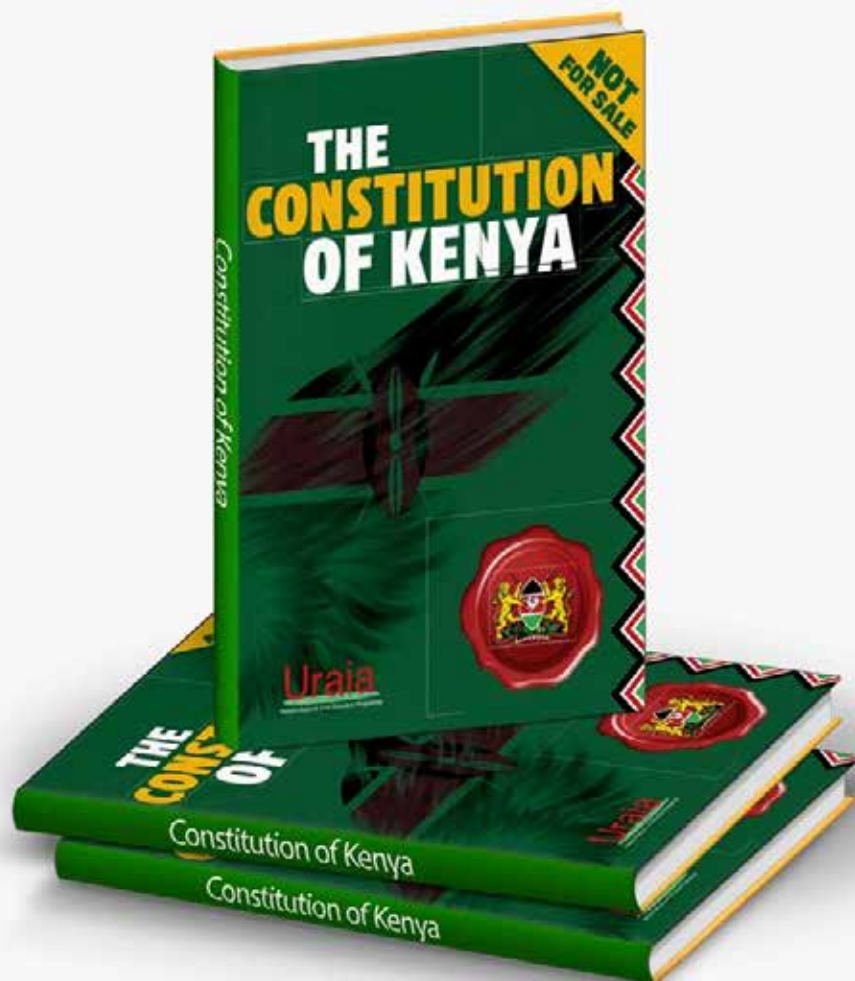
Original insight demands we confront this squarely: the crisis is not merely legal but cultural and spiritual. Kenya's soul hungers for authenticity. When leaders flout Chapter Six, they don't just violate statutes; they profane the collective dignity of a people who bled for reform. The “hustler vs. dynasty” narratives, debt burdens, and youth despair are symptoms of this deeper affliction. Concerted efforts are imperative. EACC, DCI, DPP, and the courts must forge ironclad collaboration not performative meetings, but binding protocols for swift investigations, asset tracing, and prosecutions insulated from executive whim. Specialized anti-corruption courts with adequate funding. Reversal of burden of proof for unexplained wealth. Lifetime bans for convicted leaders. Public dashboards tracking Chapter Six compliance. These are not radical; they are what Kenyans envisioned.

Imagine the alternative: a Kenya where integrity is lived reality. Where a president's legacy is measured not by rallies or ethnic arithmetic, but by transparent ledgers and empowered citizens. Where Chapter Six breathes life into every appointment, tender, and policy. Literary device meets lived truth the Constitution as phoenix, rising from repeated near-death. Persuasion here is moral urgency: leaders who evade it mock the blood of 2007-08 and the ballot of 2010. Citizens must demand it relentlessly through vigilant media like *The Standard* and *Daily Nation*, civil society, and the ballot.

The path forward requires original courage. Reject the false binary of “development at the cost of ethics.” True development flowers only in soil tilled by integrity. Kenya's youth, the digital generation armed with information, sense the hypocrisy. They reject it. Let 2027 and beyond mark not another cycle of selective amnesia, but the dawn where Chapter Six ceases to be aspirational prose and becomes the iron law of the land.

In the words of the Constitution's framers' intent, and echoed in the hearts of millions: power belongs to the people, exercised through leaders of unimpeachable character. The 2013 greenlight was a warning. Let it fuel a reckoning. Good governance is not optional; it is Kenya's redemption song. Sing it loudly, live it fiercely, or watch the republic unravel. The choice, as always, rests with us.

*The writer is a social commentator*



**Zimbabwe** Nothing illustrates Zimbabwe’s political hunger more starkly than Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3. On July 7, 2026

# The analogy of plight and plunder: the case of a haemorrhaging nation

*Nearly five decades after Dambudzo Marechera wrote The House of Hunger, Zimbabwe’s citizens find themselves living inside the very nightmare he described — and a controversial constitutional amendment is tightening the walls.*



President Emmerson Mnangagwa

**BY Alice Nyamande**  
@themtkenyaintimes

We are still living in Marechera’s House of Hunger. Dambudzo Marechera’s landmark work begins with a young man gathering his belongings and walking away from a home he can no longer endure. He leaves because the house is choking him. But what happens when the house is an entire country? Where does a nation gather its belongings and go? Published in 1978 and set against the suffocating conditions of colonial Rhodesia, The House of Hunger is not simply a story about people without food. Marechera’s hunger is physical, emotional, intellectual and political — the hunger of people deprived of dignity, security, opportu-

nity and hope. Its bodies are bruised because its society is bruised. Its homes are broken because the political order has entered the home and poisoned relationships between parents, children, lovers, neighbours and friends. Almost five decades later, Zimbabwe increasingly resembles the house from which Marechera’s narrator tried to escape. The flag has changed. The anthem has changed. The administrators have changed. But the architecture of hunger remains. In Marechera’s world, poverty is not an unfortunate accident. It is an atmosphere — one that enters the township, the school, the beerhall, the bedroom and the human mind. That atmosphere is suffocatingly familiar to contemporary Zimbabweans. Our people wake up every

morning to invent survival. Teachers sell goods from car boots. Nurses leave the country. Graduates become vendors. Pensioners watch the value of a lifetime’s work disappear. Parents measure out meals so that children may eat while adults pretend not to be hungry. Families live with unreliable electricity, deteriorating infrastructure and public services that no longer correspond with the taxes and levies extracted from citizens. The World Bank has estimated that electricity shortages alone cost Zimbabwe approximately 6.1 percent of gross domestic product annually. This is not only economic hunger. It is the humiliation of standing in a queue for what should be ordinary. It is the humiliation of holding qualifications that cannot purchase bread. It is the humiliation

of crossing borders in search of work, only to be insulted, hunted or treated as an unwanted burden in someone else’s country. Marechera understood that prolonged deprivation changes people. Hunger eventually moves from the stomach into the soul. The deepest poverty in The House of Hunger is the destruction of the human person. People drink to forget. They fight because they cannot confront the real source of their suffering. They turn their frustration against spouses, children, neigh-

bours and themselves. The oppressed begin to reproduce the violence of the system that oppresses them. This is one of Marechera’s most disturbing warnings — that a nation may remove its colonial rulers without removing colonial habits of command, surveillance, exclusion and punishment. Repression does not become freedom merely because it is administered by former liberators. Today, Zimbabweans increasingly measure their words. People lower their voices in restaurants. They

look around before discussing politics. They wonder who is recording the conversation. They hesitate before forwarding a message. A country in which citizens are afraid to speak honestly has already entered Marechera’s house. Nothing illustrates Zimbabwe’s political hunger more starkly than Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3. On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the amendment into law. Among its most consequential provisions are the extension of presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, the postponement of elections previously expected in 2028 to 2030, and the replacement of the direct popular election of the president with selection through Parliament. Supporters describe these changes as necessary for continuity, stability and institution-

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**Zimbabwe** Nothing illustrates Zimbabwe's political hunger more starkly than Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3. On July 7, 2026

# The analogy of plight and plunder: the case of a haemorrhaging nation

*Nearly five decades after Dambudzo Marechera wrote **The House of Hunger**, Zimbabwe's citizens find themselves living inside the very nightmare he described — and a controversial constitutional amendment is tightening the walls.*

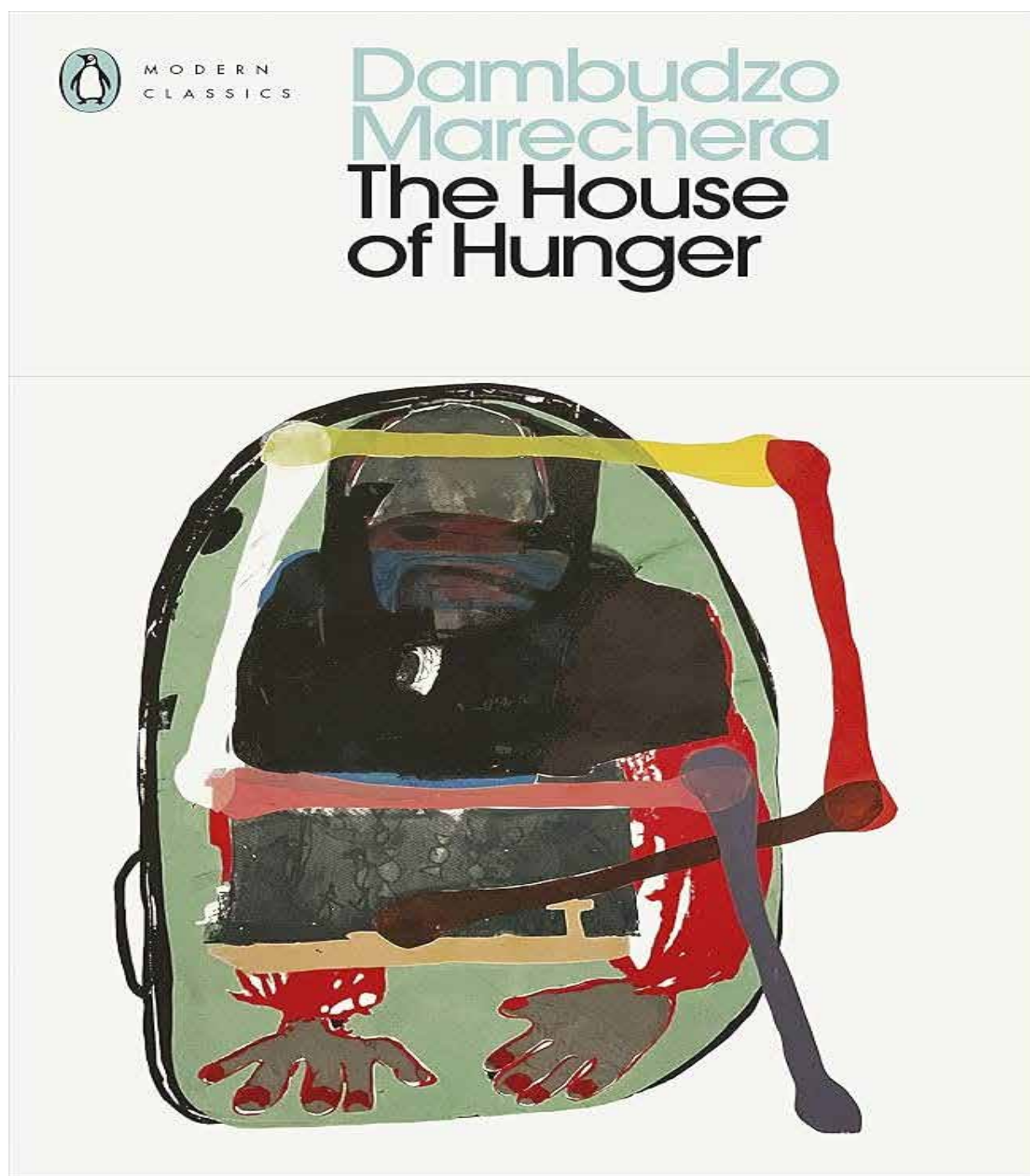
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al modernisation. But stability without democratic consent is stagnation. Continuity without accountability is captivity. A constitution is not the private property of a government, a political party or a temporary parliamentary majority. It is an agreement between generations — defining not only how power is acquired, but how it is limited. CAB3 takes something fundamental from the citizen: the direct power to choose the country's president. It moves the decisive vote from millions of Zimbabweans into a Parliament already dominated by one political formation. This is not a minor administrative adjustment. It is the redesigning of the national house while the occupants are still inside it.

Behind the respectable vocabulary of efficiency and development lies an old hunger — the hunger of rulers who cannot imagine a country continuing without them. Zimbabwe does not belong to any individual. Liberation credentials cannot become a permanent title deed to the republic.

Against this already tense background, an alleged political hit list has circulated on social media, purporting to name opposition politicians, activists, religious figures, former security officials and government critics in Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries. My name appears on that list. Its authorship and authenticity have not been independently established, and no responsible person should present an anonymous document as proven fact. But an unverified threat is not necessarily a harmless one. The purpose of anonymous political intimidation is often psychological — it tells those named that they are being watched, tells their families to be afraid, tells supporters to keep their distance and encourages citizens to silence themselves before anyone formally orders them to do so.

The alleged list must be subjected to an urgent, credible and independent investigation. The Zimbabwe Peace



Project recorded 228 human rights violations affecting 5,996 people during June 2026 alone, including intimidation, threats to personal security and restrictions on expression, assembly and association. The list has emerged precisely as authorities warn against demonstrations planned for July 31, with government officials confirming that security forces are on standby. The combination of public warnings, heightened security rhetoric and an anonymous list of perceived opponents creates exactly

the climate of fear that Marechera depicted.

A demonstration is not an insurrection. A placard is not a firearm. A slogan is not an act of war. Citizens must pursue change peacefully and lawfully, and protesters must reject violence and destruction absolutely. But the state carries an even heavier responsibility. It possesses the police, the military, intelligence institutions and the machinery of prosecution. It must therefore exercise greater restraint, not less. A demo-

cratic government protects peaceful citizens even when those citizens are condemning it. The answer to public anger over CAB3 is not intimidation — it is dialogue. The answer to political criticism is not a list — it is accountability. The answer to peaceful protest is not a gun — it is democracy.

Marechera did not portray oppression as something committed only by distant rulers. The house survives because people inside it cooperate with its cruelty — informers, oppor-

tunists, educated people who manufacture respectable explanations for injustice, victims offered small privileges and then recruited to police other victims. Some parliamentarians elected on promises of change have helped weaken the constitutional power of the people. Some religious leaders bless every action of the powerful while telling the poor to wait for justice in heaven. The House of Hunger is not sustained by one man alone. It is sustained by systems of patronage, fear, silence and collaboration.

Marechera's narrator could physically walk away from the house. Zimbabweans cannot all walk away from Zimbabwe — and millions who have tried are scattered across South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia and beyond. But exile is not a national development strategy. We must dismantle the House of Hunger without destroying the country. That requires peaceful constitutional resistance, independent institutions, courageous journalism, principled religious leadership and citizens who refuse to become instruments of fear.

CAB3 must remain subject to constitutional and judicial scrutiny. The alleged hit list must be independently investigated. The right of Zimbabweans to disagree with their government must be defended. Above all, Zimbabweans must reject the temptation to reproduce the cruelty they oppose.

The tragedy is not merely that Marechera foresaw our condition. The tragedy is that, nearly fifty years later, we continue to perform his nightmare. Zimbabwe remains hungry — hungry for justice, for accountable leadership, for institutions that protect rather than persecute, for a constitution that cannot be rewritten whenever power becomes afraid of the people.

The House of Hunger is still standing. But no house built on fear can stand forever.



The rising cost of living

*Kenyans are not struggling because they lack resilience — they are struggling because the basics have become a luxury.*

By Sheila Juliet

The price of unga, cooking oil and electricity has not risen in isolation. It has risen alongside school fees, transport costs and medical bills — squeezing Kenyan households from every direction at once.

For families living on daily wages, this is not an economic statistic. It is a daily negotiation between eating and paying rent, between sending a child to school and keeping the lights on. The burden falls hardest on those least equipped to carry it.

The government has not been entirely idle. Measures to stabilise the shilling, expand food production and cushion fuel costs have been announced with some regularity. But announcements are not relief. What low-income households need is not a policy speech —



they need prices that do not outpace their earnings month after month.

Practical interventions exist and are not beyond reach. Targeted subsidies on basic foodstuffs, stricter oversight of supply chain cartels that artificially inflate prices and a serious review of the tax burden on essential goods would each make a measurable difference. The private sector and civil so-

ciety have roles to play too — but leadership must come from the state.

Kenya's working families are not asking for charity. They are asking for a government that understands that an economy measured only in growth figures, while its people cannot afford supper, is an economy that has lost its moral compass. Stabilise the basics. Everything else follows.

The need to improve road safety

By Sheila Juliet

Every week, Kenyan families bury someone who left home and never returned — not because of illness or old age, but because of a speeding matatu, a defective lorry or a driver who had no business being behind a wheel.

The statistics are not abstract. Kenya loses thousands of lives to road accidents every year, placing it among the most dangerous road environments on the continent. Behind every number is a breadwinner, a student, a mother. The grief is real. The cause, in most cases, is entirely preventable.

The failures are layered. Drivers routinely ignore speed limits with little fear of consequence. Vehicles that should never pass inspection somehow remain on public roads. Traffic enforcement, where it exists at all, is too often selective, too easily negotiated and too rarely consistent. Meanwhile, road safety campaigns flare



up briefly after a high-profile crash, then quietly disappear until the next tragedy demands attention.

What Kenya needs is not another awareness campaign. It needs enforcement with teeth — speed cameras that actually operate, roadworthiness checks that cannot be bribed away and licences that mean something. The National Transport

and Safety Authority must be adequately resourced and genuinely empowered to act, not merely to announce.

Drivers bear direct responsibility for the choices they make on public roads. But the state bears equal responsibility for the system it has allowed to decay around them.

Fix the system. Save the lives.

The waiting season

*Kenya's opposition can count the government's failures — but it cannot yet count on a unifying vision to replace it.*



By Levis Wangamati

Politics is often mistaken for a contest of personalities. In reality, it is a contest of ideas, timing and trust — and Kenya is now deep in a season where all three are being tested simultaneously.

The opposition has found common ground in its criticism of President William Ruto's administration. From the streets to political rallies, the message has been consistent: the country deserves a different direction. Yet criticism alone has never formed a government. Every serious opposition must eventually answer a harder question — what comes after victory?

That question is becoming urgent.

Edwin Sifuna's recent admission that the opposition is not yet ready was striking not for its candour, but for its accuracy. Winning power is one challenge. Governing a nation with competing interests, economic pressures and high public expectations is another altogether.

Across the opposition, different leaders are projecting different visions. Rigathi Gachagua is focused on assembling a broad political coalition. George Nitembeya frames his politics around equity and regional empowerment. Martha Karua presents herself as a constitutional reformist. Eugene Wamalwa remains

measured, choosing strategy over headlines. Fred Matiang'i speaks sparingly, projecting the image of an experienced administrator content to let others carry the coalition's public messaging for now.

These contrasting approaches are neither inherently a weakness nor a strength. The real test is whether they can be woven into a single national vision capable of inspiring genuine public confidence — and on that front, the work remains unfinished.

History offers a sobering lesson. Raila Odinga shaped opposition politics for decades not simply because he challenged successive governments, but because he became the point around which opposition forces repeatedly converged. Today's opposition is still searching for that same centre of gravity.

Meanwhile, Ruto has intensified policy announcements touching on higher education, youth employment and economic relief. His supporters argue that these measures demonstrate a government willing to listen and respond. His critics ask a sharper question: why have so many of these interventions gained urgency only as political pressure has mounted?

The debate over university funding illustrates the tension. Expanding support for future entrants may offer genuine hope to thousands of fami-

lies, but continuing students — many still struggling with tuition fees and a punishing cost of living — are equally justified in asking where they fit. Sound public policy should not create two categories of citizen: those preparing to enter the system and those already drowning inside it.

The next election will therefore be about far more than changing the occupant of State House. It will test whether the opposition has moved beyond protest and into preparation — whether it has policies, not just grievances. It will equally test whether the government can convince Kenyans that its recent initiatives represent lasting reform rather than political calculation dressed up as compassion.

Kenya has changed. Its citizens are more informed, more demanding and far less willing to settle for slogans. They no longer seek leaders who merely identify problems. They want leaders who can present solutions, implement them with discipline and remain accountable for the results.

This is the waiting season. The government is waiting for another mandate. The opposition is waiting for a unifying vision. The people, however, are waiting for something greater than either — leadership that is not merely prepared to win power, but has done the hard work to deserve it.

# SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS  
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BREAKING NEWS



**Sports >>** \*The Court of Arbitration for Sport will convene in Lausanne to rule on whether Senegal or Morocco are the rightful holders of the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 title, in one of African football’s most explosive disputes in recent memory.

## CAS sets October 8 hearing date for Senegal’s appeal against AFCON title strip

By **Martin Weche**

The Court of Arbitration for Sport has scheduled an October 8 hearing for Senegal’s appeal against the Confederation of African Football’s decision to strip the Lions of Teranga of the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 title and award it to Morocco.

The announcement, made by CAS on Friday, confirmed that the hearing will take place behind closed doors at the court’s headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, with no immediate ruling expected on the day itself. “CAS cannot state when a final decision will be rendered but it will not be on the day of the hearing,” the court said in a formal statement.

The dispute has its roots in one of the most turbulent finals in the tournament’s history. On January 18, at the Stade de Marrakech in Rabat, Senegal appeared to have won the AFCON 2025 title when midfielder Pape Gueye scored in extra time to give his side a 1–0 victory over the host nation. The goal, and the scenes that followed, should have been the story. Instead, the final descended into chaos.

With the match still goalless in normal time, referee Maguette Ndiaye awarded Morocco a penalty — a decision that triggered an extraordinary response from the Senegalese camp. Several players walked off the pitch in protest, refusing to continue. Senegalese supporters attempted a pitch invasion. Play was suspended for nearly 20 minutes before Senegal’s players eventually returned, and the match concluded with Gueye’s decisive strike in extra time.

The chaos did not end at the final whistle. In March, CAF overturned the result entirely, awarding Morocco a 3–0 victory by forfeit and handing the Atlas Lions the title on the basis of Senegal’s conduct during the



*Sadio Mane lifts the AFCON trophy aloft after Senegal beat Morocco 1-0*

match. The Senegalese Football Federation, the FSF, immediately appealed to CAS, filing its case on March 25.

In its statement, CAS confirmed the scope of the appeal: “The FSF appeal seeks to set aside a CAF decision declaring that the Senegal national team forfeited the AFCON 2025 final and recording the Moroccan national team as the winners of the match by 3–0. The appeal requests that CAS declare the FSF winners of AFCON 2025.”

The case has divided opinion sharply across African football. Those sympathetic to Senegal argue that the penalty decision was deeply contentious and that the players’ reaction, however ill-judged, was a spontaneous response to what they perceived as a grave injustice on the biggest stage. Others contend that no grievance, however legitimate, can justify abandoning the field of play in the final of a continental championship, and that CAF had little choice but to act deci-

sively.

Morocco, for their part, have accepted the title awarded to them by CAF and will argue through the Royal Moroccan Football Federation, the FRMF — listed as a respondent in the CAS proceedings alongside CAF — that the governing body’s ruling was lawful and should stand.

The stakes could scarcely be higher. An AFCON title is the pinnacle of African international football, and the legitimacy of the 2025 edition remains in genuine dispute until CAS delivers its verdict. For Senegal, whose players celebrated on the pitch in Rabat believing they had won, the hearing represents the last realistic avenue to reclaiming what they insist is rightfully theirs. For Morocco, it is an opportunity to have their title confirmed by sport’s highest court of appeal.

October 8 now looms large on the African football calendar. Whatever CAS ultimately decides — and the timeline for a

final ruling remains open — the judgment will carry consequences that extend well beyond a trophy. It will shape how CAF’s disciplinary authority is understood, how match officials are protected and, perhaps most importantly, how players are expected to conduct themselves when they believe the game has wronged them.

In football, as in law, how you lose matters almost as much as whether you win.

# GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*Spain's head coach has condemned post-match conduct by Argentina players and staff following Sunday's World Cup final in New York, as FIFA opens a formal disciplinary investigation.

# De la Fuente blasts 'unacceptable' Argentina behaviour after World Cup final defeat

By Martin Weche

Spain head coach Luis de la Fuente has condemned what he described as "unacceptable" behaviour by several Argentina players and members of their coaching staff following Sunday's FIFA World Cup final in New York, which Spain won 1-0 after extra time.

The incidents occurred in the immediate aftermath of the final whistle at MetLife Stadium, where a number of Argentina players and staff confronted their Spanish counterparts in scenes that were filmed and widely circulated on social media. Among those identified in the footage were Atlético Madrid defender Nahuel Molina and former Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Leandro Paredes.

De la Fuente, speaking to Spanish television in the hours after the match, said he had been unaware of the confrontations as they unfolded. "At the time, I didn't realise it. I was celebrating, hugging teammates," he said. "But in any case, it is intolerable, unacceptable, it cannot be allowed."

His words carried a pointed edge, directed at players he had publicly praised in the build-up to the match. "Players of that stature, whom I praised in the days leading up to the match and continue to praise, who are great players with a tremendous coach — surely they must have felt just as bad as we did seeing those reactions," he said.

The Spain coach was equally emphatic in his praise for how his own squad handled the provocations, crediting them with maintaining their composure in the face of what he characterised as "acts of aggression" that, in his view, could easily have escalated into something far more serious. That none of the Spanish players responded in kind, he suggested,



Spain head coach Luis de la Fuente

spoke to the character of a group that had just been crowned world champions.

FIFA has since confirmed it has opened a formal investigation into the incidents to determine whether any violations of its disciplinary code occurred. The world governing body has not yet indicated a timeline for its findings, nor identified specific individuals under scrutiny, but the move signals that the matter will not simply be allowed to fade from the record.

No sanctions have been issued at the time of writing. Argentina's football association, the AFA, has also not publicly commented on the incidents or indicated whether it intends to take any internal disciplinary action against the players or staff involved.

The controversy has cast a long shadow over what was otherwise a historic occasion. Spain's victory, secured through a solitary

goal after 120 minutes of tightly contested football, marked a watershed moment for a generation of players who had rebuilt the national team's identity following years of transition after the golden era of the 2010 World Cup triumph in South Africa. For Argentina, the defeat ended the defending champions' bid to retain the title they claimed so dramatically in Qatar in 2022.

The scenes also reignited a broader conversation about the conduct of players in the high-pressure environment of elite international football. Post-match confrontations are not new to the sport, but when they occur on the grandest stage — with global audiences watching and cameras capturing every moment — the reputational damage extends well beyond the individuals involved.

For De la Fuente, the episode is a distraction he is understandably

reluctant to allow to overshadow his team's achievement. Spain's triumph in New York was built on tactical discipline, collective effort and a squad depth that few nations can match. The coach has every reason to want the conversation to be about football.

Whether FIFA's investigation results in bans, fines or simply a formal reprimand remains to be seen. But with footage already embedded in the public record and the governing body on notice, the Argentina players and staff involved will find it difficult to escape scrutiny. In world football, the final whistle ends the game — it does not always end the consequences.

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## Backpage



# Some women build businesses. Others build communities. Jo Worthy has built an entire women's movement.



By: Anila Bukhari  
@themkenyetimes

Jo Worthy is a women's empowerment leader, entrepreneur, motivational speaker, mentor, multi-published author and the visionary founder of the Women Rise Movement — a thriving community that inspires women to step into their potential and create lives of purpose, confidence and impact.

Driven by the belief that extraordinary lives begin with the decision to invest in yourself, Worthy has dedicated herself to helping women break through self-limiting beliefs, embrace personal growth and become the leaders they were born to be.

At the heart of her work is the Women Rise Movement, a powerful platform built on connection, collaboration and courage. Under Worthy's leadership, it has grown into a respected community where high-calibre entrepreneurial women come together to build authentic relationships, share knowledge, celebrate success and champion one another's journeys.

Recognising that meaningful transformation happens through genuine experience, Worthy has created a portfolio of premium events designed to inspire, educate and empower. From elegant networking evenings to immersive retreats, every event is intentionally curated to foster authentic conversations, lasting friendships and collaborative opportunities.

The annual Women Rise Conference has become the movement's flagship event, bringing together entrepreneurial women from diverse industries and providing an international stage for both emerging and established female voices. More than a conference, it is a celebration of courageous leadership, innovation and the collective power of women supporting women.

Complementing the conference are

the highly regarded Women Rise Retreats, where women step away from the demands of everyday life to reconnect with themselves, gain clarity and invest in their personal and professional growth. Through reflection, learning and meaningful connection, participants leave feeling renewed, inspired and equipped to move forward with confidence.

Worthy's commitment to empowering women extends beyond the stage through online summits that connect participants across Australia and around the world. These virtual experiences ensure that inspiration, education and community remain accessible regardless of location, allowing women everywhere to become part of the Women Rise Movement.

A passionate mentor, Worthy also leads group mentoring programmes built around her signature six-step framework: Mindset, Courage, Confidence, Creativity, Visibility and Self-Care. This proven approach equips women with practical strategies to overcome challenges, elevate their thinking and take intentional steps towards their goals.

As a sought-after motivational speaker, she is known for delivering authentic, heartfelt presentations that challenge women to think bigger, believe in themselves and embrace the courage required to create meaningful change. Her message is simple yet powerful: extraordinary results begin the moment we choose to invest in ourselves.

Her influence extends further through her work as a multi-published author, where she continues to inspire readers with insights that encourage personal transformation, resilience and purposeful living. Worthy also believes that creativity, expressed through writing and speaking, can activate women in profound ways — and she actively encourages others to share their stories, life experiences and wisdom with the world.

What truly sets Worthy apart is her unwavering belief in the power of collaboration over competition. She is passionate about creating spaces where women genuinely celebrate one another, build meaningful partnerships and rise together. This phi-



Jo Worthy

losophy underpins everything the Women Rise Movement does — every conference, retreat, mentoring programme and initiative she leads.

Today, Worthy continues to expand the Women Rise Movement through transformational events, mentoring,

speaking engagements and published works, creating opportunities for women to connect, grow and thrive. She warmly invites women to join the free Women Rise Facebook community and become part of a movement that believes when one

woman rises, she inspires countless others to rise with her.

Jo Worthy can be found at [worthy-womenmovement.com](http://worthy-womenmovement.com) and via the Women Rise Movement Facebook group at [facebook.com/groups/womenrisemovement](https://facebook.com/groups/womenrisemovement).