Supreme Court tax ruling tests Kenya's constitutional order

Kenya's Supreme Court delivered a significant tax ruling yesterday that reasserts the primacy of constitutional law over government revenue policy, in a judgment with far-reaching implications Page 8

Kikuyu elders condemn Duale remarks, warn against ethnic division

The Kikuyu Council of Elders has strongly condemned Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale over remarks in which he allegedly compared members of the Kikuyu community to hyenas Page 10

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Politics "Since Ruto is on UDA vying for president in 2027, ODM will produce the Deputy President," Arati

Ruto's gamble on DP

ODM yesterday escalated its demand for the deputy presidential slot in any future broad-based government arrangement with UDA, declaring the position non-negotiable and setting the stage for the most consequential political standoff ahead of the 2027 general election.

The party's position, articulated with unusual bluntness by senior figures at a series of public engagements, amounts to an ultimatum: the second-highest constitutional office in the Republic, or no deal. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, responding directly, was equally unambiguous. "Those who are salivating for that position should forget it because the Ruto-Kindiki ticket will be on the ballot," he told thousands of farmers in Meru County yesterday. The collision course is now set, and the consequences will reverberate far beyond the negotiating room.

Kisii Governor Simba Arati, ODM's deputy party leader, put the party's demand with characteristic directness: "Since Ruto is on UDA vying for president in 2027, ODM will produce the Deputy President." National Assembly Minority Leader Junet Mohamed reinforced the position: "For us to work together, ODM and UDA, it is now official that we must be given the running mate slot for us to move forward together."

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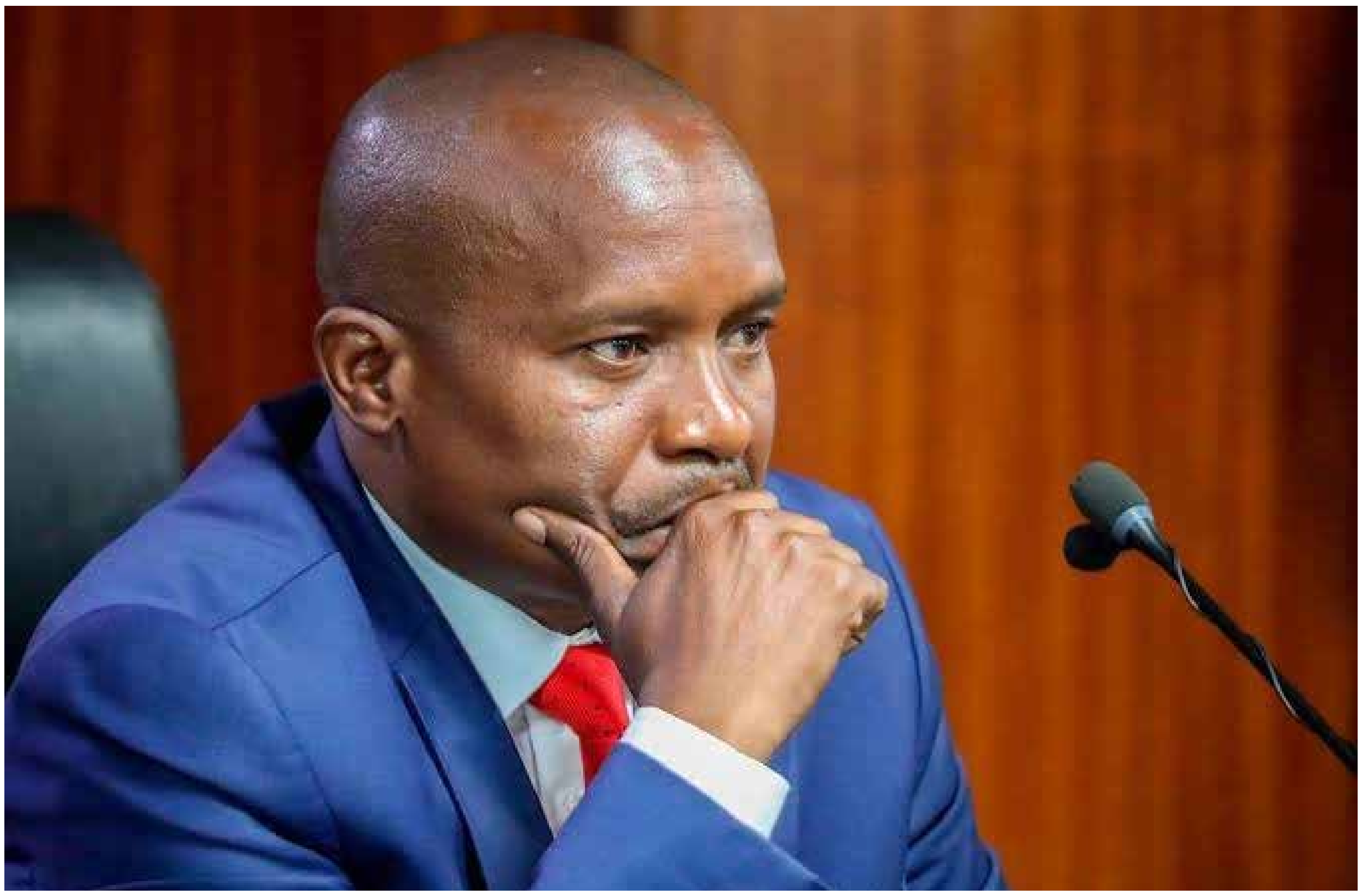

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

Gachagua steps up Meru campaign, targets Ruku and promises security, Miraa reforms

BY Wilfred Muchire
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua has intensified his criticism of Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku, accusing him of fuelling divisions in the Mount Kenya region while serving the interests of the Kenya Kwanza administration.

Speaking during the second day of his three-day political tour of Meru County, Gachagua claimed that Ruku was being used by President William Ruto's administration to create disunity in the region.

He maintained that the people of Mount Kenya remain united under one political direction and dismissed attempts to fragment the region politically.

"The people of Mount Kenya are united, and no amount of political manipulation will divide them," Gachagua told supporters during a series of rallies.

The former Deputy President also turned his attention to the growing insecurity in Igembe North Constituency, where residents have raised concerns

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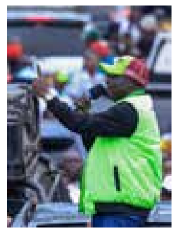










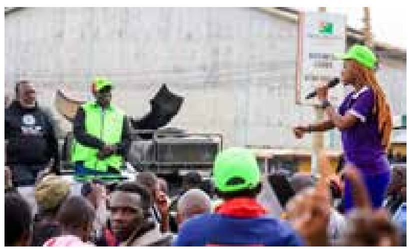


Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative.
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Group Executive Chairman
M. Danson
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/

Our Contacts
P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262
Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke,
News Desk: news@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Web**: www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke

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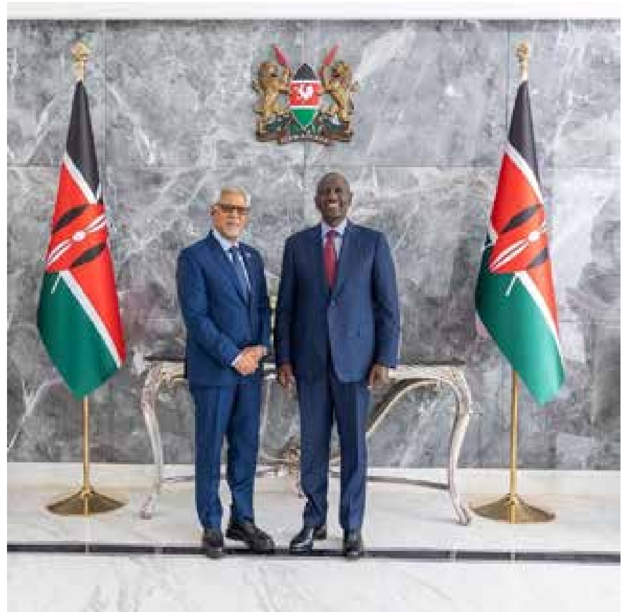
NEWS IN BRIEF

Kajiado Deputy Governor Mathew Moshisho addresses participants during the launch of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund, an initiative aimed at empowering young people to implement innovative climate action projects through grants and technical support. Moshisho said the county was privileged to be among the few beneficiaries of the global initiative, which is being implemented in 300 cities across the world. He noted that only four counties in Kenya were selected to participate in the programme and urged young people across Kajiado to seize the opportunity by submitting innovative proposals that address environmental challenges facing their communities.

The government has commenced the distribution of relief food to residents of Teso Central who were adversely affected by floods that displaced them during the April long rains. A total of 900 households are set to benefit from the exercise, receiving beans and rice. They will also receive soap and sanitary towels, as the elderly beneficiaries get blankets. Teso South Member of Parliament Mary Emase oversaw the distribution of more than 600 bags of rice and 512 bags of beans to affected residents, including learners in special schools that were also impacted by the floods. The floods affected the locations of Aremit and Akoret, forcing many residents to seek refuge at Odiria Primary School after their homes were inundated.

Tobacco farmers in Kuria, Migori County, have appealed to the national and county governments to help them recover millions of shillings allegedly owed by East Obac Kenya Limited for deliveries made since 2023. Led by Kevin Rioba, the farmers said more than 120 growers have not been paid despite repeatedly supplying tobacco to the company and receiving promises of payment. Rioba said the delayed payments have plunged many families into financial hardship. He added that farmers had reported the matter to the Migori County Department of Agriculture and the police but had not received meaningful assistance. The farmers accuse the company's director, Richard Chiromo, of failing to honour payment promises and are now seeking government intervention to ensure they receive their dues.



President William Ruto has reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to strengthening humanitarian response efforts through continued collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). During a meeting at State House, Nairobi, with IFRC Secretary-General Jagan Chapagain, the President thanked the organisation for its sustained humanitarian interventions in Kenya and the wider region. He assured Chapagain of Kenya's support in enhancing emergency preparedness and response across the region. President Ruto also briefed the IFRC chief on the government's transformation agenda, highlighting investments in water harvesting, water storage and irrigation under the National Infrastructure Fund, saying the initiatives will boost agricultural production and enhance the country's food security.

An Eldoret court has issued a warrant for the arrest of a Kenyan nurse living in the United States over alleged failure to comply with child maintenance orders. Senior Principal Magistrate Kesse Cheronoh directed the Officer Commanding Station at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to arrest Noah Kibet Mutai upon his return to Kenya and present him before the court. The warrant followed an application by his former wife, Nancy Jemutai Samoei, who accused him of ignoring a July 2024 court order requiring him to pay Sh20,000 monthly for the upkeep of their three-year-old daughter. Nancy told the court Mutai relocated to the US shortly after the child's birth, abandoned the family and stopped providing financial support, leaving her to meet all the child's needs despite being unemployed.

Karatina University has undergone a routine compliance inspection by the Clinical Officers Council (COC) to assess its Bachelor of Science in Clinical Medicine programme. The delegation was received by Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academics, Research and Student Affairs, Prof. Franklin Wabwoba, on behalf of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Linus Gitonga. Led by Geoffrey Korir, the inspection team evaluated the university's teaching facilities and practical training infrastructure to determine compliance with the council's standards. The university was commended for its continued investment in modern infrastructure, well-equipped clinical skills laboratories and expanded training capacity, which support quality clinical education. The inspection reaffirmed Karatina University's commitment to maintaining high academic and professional standards while producing competent clinical officers to meet Kenya's growing healthcare needs.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Politics DP said Kenya's future depends on visionary leadership, accountable governance and an informed electorate

Democratic Party launches nationwide drive, urges opposition to unite ahead of 2027 polls

BY Wilfred Muchire
@themtkenyatimes

From left; DP national officials, Jacob Haji, Peter Ndubai, James Macharia, Justin Muturi and Laikipia acting chairperson Winrose Mwangi during the opening of the party's Nanyuki office on Saturday. | Photo: Courtesy.

The Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) has launched a nationwide outreach programme aimed at strengthening its grassroots structures while calling on opposition parties to forge a united front ahead of the 2027 General Election.

In a statement issued by the party's National Chairperson, Peter Ndubai, the programme began in Laikipia County over the weekend and is set to be rolled out across all 47 counties.

According to the party, the initiative is designed to expand its grassroots presence, recruit new members, identify and nurture candidates for elective positions, promote voter registration, and educate Kenyans on the importance of active participation in the country's democratic processes.

The party said the outreach campaign forms part of its broader strategy to prepare for the 2027 General Election while reinforcing its presence at the county and constituency levels.

DP said Kenya's future depends on visionary leadership, accountable governance and an informed electorate, urging voters to elect leaders based on integrity, competence, accountability and a proven commitment to public service rather than personal or sectional interests.

The party also used the statement to appeal for greater unity among opposition leaders, saying Kenyans are looking to the opposition to provide a cohesive alternative government built on a common vision for the country.

It expressed support for dialogue and consensus-building among opposition parties, noting that they should consider agreeing on a single presidential candidate if such an arrangement is reached voluntarily.

According to the party, early agreement on a joint presidential flag bearer would allow sufficient time for coalition partners to prepare for the election, develop a shared policy agenda and engage voters across the country through peaceful, democratic and issue-based campaigns.

The statement comes amid growing political realignments as parties intensify grassroots mobilisation and coalition negotiations ahead of the 2027 elections.

The Democratic Party further appealed to Kenyans to reject politics based on tribalism, ethnicity, religious intolerance, discrimination and hatred, saying such divisions undermine national unity and development.

Instead, the party called for politics anchored on constitutionalism, inclusivity, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, arguing that Kenya's diversity remains one of its greatest strengths.

It maintained that a united country, guided by democratic values and accountable leadership, offers the best path toward sustainable development and prosperity for current and future generations.

The outreach programme marks one of the party's first major nationwide mobilisation efforts as it seeks to position itself ahead of the 2027 electoral contest, with recruitment, grassroots organisation and voter engagement expected to form the backbone of its campaign strategy.

Prof John Okumu appointed substantive Kenyatta University Vice-Chancellor

Prof. John Okumu

BY KNA
@themtkenyatimes

Kenyatta University has appointed Prof. John Okumu as its substantive Vice-Chancellor following a competitive recruitment process conducted by the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The appointment was announced yesterday by the Chairperson of the University Council, Prof. Clara S. Momanyi, through a notice issued in accordance with Section 35(1)(a)(v) of the Universities Act and with the concurrence of the Cabinet Secretary for Education.

According to the University Council, Prof. Okumu emerged as the top candidate during the PSC-led recruitment exercise and has now been confirmed to head the institution after serving as Acting Vice-Chancellor for the past six months.

The Council congratulated Prof. Okumu on his appointment and expressed confidence in his ability to steer the university as it pursues its academic, research and institutional development agenda.

"We celebrate this well-deserved milestone and wish him wisdom, strength and success as he leads our university towards greater excellence, innovation and global impact. Congratulations, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Okumu," the Council said in the notice.

Prof. Okumu previously served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs for 10 years and has held several other senior administrative positions at Kenyatta University.

The Council described him as an accomplished academic and administrator with extensive experience in academic leadership, research, institutional management, strategic planning and stakeholder engagement.

Prof. Momanyi said his wealth of experience in higher education management would strengthen the university's efforts to enhance quality teaching, research, innovation and institutional growth.


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Tax At its core, the ruling turns on a principle that is fundamental to constitutional governance: that the power to tax, however necessary, is not unlimited

Supreme Court tax ruling tests Kenya's constitutional order

A landmark judgment on taxation forces a reckoning between the government's revenue ambitions and the limits of the law

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's Supreme Court delivered a significant tax ruling yesterday that reasserts the primacy of constitutional law over government revenue policy, in a judgment with far-reaching implications for businesses, investors and the public finances.

The decision arrives at a moment of acute fiscal pressure. The government is struggling to meet ambitious revenue targets while households across the country contend with a cost of living that has shown little sign of relief. Against that backdrop, the court's intervention carries consequences well beyond the immediate parties to the case.

At its core, the ruling turns on a principle that is fundamental to constitutional governance: that the power to tax, however necessary, is not unlimited. Government must collect revenue within the boundaries set by law. Where it exceeds those boundaries, the courts will intervene. Yesterday, they did.

The practical significance of that principle for Kenya's business community is considerable. Investors committing large sums to the country need assurance that the tax regime they enter will be the one they operate under — that obligations will not shift through administrative reinterpretation or be resolved only after years of litigation. Legal certainty, in this respect, functions as a form of investment infrastructure. A stable, predictable framework is worth as much to a prospective investor as a competitive rate.

The ruling is therefore likely to be read carefully not only in Nairobi's commercial district but in the boardrooms of companies weighing Kenya against other markets in the region. A judiciary that enforces the law against the Executive, including on matters of taxation, is one of the clearest signals a legal system can send that contracts and statutes will be honoured. That signal has value that is difficult to quantify but easy to lose.

Domestically, the judgment reopens a debate that the government had perhaps hoped to defer. Critics of the ruling will argue that Kenya cannot afford judicial constraints on revenue collection at a time when the country carries a substantial debt burden and faces mounting demands on public services. The Treasury will note that shortfalls in revenue have direct consequences for hospitals, roads and schools. Those arguments deserve a hearing.

But the counterargument is equally compelling. Taxation that exceeds legal authority does not merely inconvenience individual taxpayers — it corrodes the relationship between the state and those it depends upon to finance itself. Businesses that feel exposed to arbitrary or legally questionable levies do not simply absorb the cost. They factor it into their decisions about where to invest, how to structure their operations, and whether to expand. The damage to the tax base from eroded confidence is less visible than a court order but no less real.

Chieg justice Martha Koome

What this ruling makes clear, perhaps most usefully, is that the government's fiscal challenge cannot be resolved through revenue collection alone. The approach of layering new taxes onto an already pressured economy has demonstrable limits — legal, economic and political. A more durable solution requires expanding the number of people and businesses contributing to the tax base, closing the gaps through which revenue is lost to corruption and inefficiency, and building the kind of public trust that makes compliance a civic norm rather than a reluctant obligation.

Citizens pay taxes more willingly when they believe the system is fair, when they can see their money being spent with discipline, and when the institutions managing public funds are held to account. Those conditions are not currently met in full in Kenya, and no court ruling can impose them. They are built, or not built, through consistent and accountable governance over time.

The separation of powers that this ruling exemplifies — Executive proposes, Parliament legislates, courts adjudicate — is not an obstacle to good government. It is the architecture that makes good government possible. When each institution operates within its lane, the whole system functions with greater legitimacy. When any of them overreaches, the system corrects. Yesterday, it corrected.

The broader debate now falls to Parliament, the Treasury, and the business community to advance constructively. The court has drawn a line. What government does on its side of that line — whether it pursues smarter, broader-based, legally sound revenue policy or returns to court with the next contested measure — will say more about Kenya's fiscal future than the ruling itself.

The judgment is settled. The harder work begins now.

Politics National Assembly Minority Leader Junet Mohamed reinforced the position: "For us to work together, ODM and UDA, it is now official that we must be given the running mate slot

The DP gamble that could cost Ruto everything

ODM's demand for the deputy presidential slot threatens to detonate a political minefield stretching from Mt Kenya to the Coast — and Ruto has no safe path through it

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

ODM yesterday escalated its demand for the deputy presidential slot in any future broad-based government arrangement with UDA, declaring the position non-negotiable and setting the stage for the most consequential political standoff ahead of the 2027 general election.

The party's position, articulated with unusual bluntness by senior figures at a series of public engagements, amounts to an ultimatum: the second-highest constitutional office in the Republic, or no deal. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, responding directly, was equally unambiguous. "Those who are salivating for that position should forget it because the Ruto-Kindiki ticket will be on the ballot," he told thousands of farmers in Meru County yesterday.

Kisii Governor Simba Arati, ODM's deputy party leader, put the party's demand plainly: "Since Ruto is on UDA vying for president in 2027, ODM will produce the Deputy President." National Assembly Minority Leader Junet Mohamed reinforced the position: "For us to work together, ODM and UDA, it is now official that we must be given the running mate slot for us to move forward together." ODM has floated Cooperatives Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya, Mining Cabinet Secretary Ali Hassan Joho, and Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga as candidates for the position, though party officials say securing the slot takes precedence over selecting the individual.

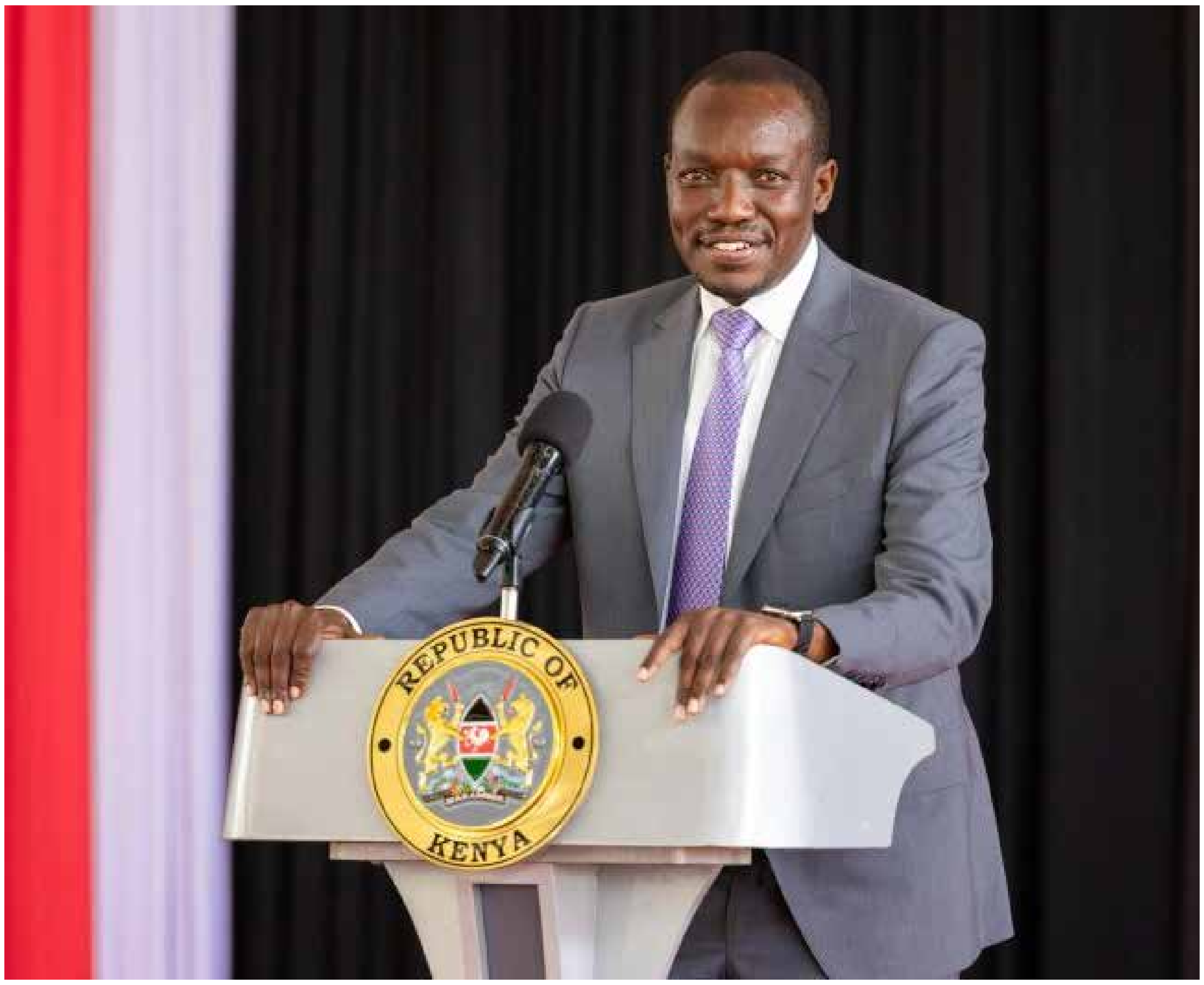
The demand does not exist in isolation. It lands in the middle of an already fractured political landscape in which every move President William Ruto makes in one direction risks dislodging something in another. The arithmetic is unforgiving, and there is no configuration of the running mate decision that does not carry significant electoral risk.

Mt Kenya, which delivered approximately 3.5 million votes to Ruto in 2022 — roughly 41 per cent of his entire national tally — is already volatile. Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party has been anchoring itself in the mountain, cannibalising support from UDA and Jubilee. Gachagua has vowed to ensure Ruto does not get more than five per cent of votes in Mt Kenya, compared to the 87 per cent secured in 2022. Should Ruto hand the deputy presidential slot to a Nyanza politician — Joho from the Coast or Wanga from Homa Bay — the narrative gift to Gachagua would be immense: proof, presented in the most visible constitutional terms possible, that Mt Kenya has been traded away for political convenience. Analysts already interpret Kindiki's more conciliatory public tone as recognition that his political relevance is tied directly to his ability to deliver the Mt Kenya vote. Remove him from the ticket, and that link is severed.

UDA insiders believe retaining Kindiki projects unity and avoids unsettling the party's core support base in Mt Kenya, while allies warn that dropping him could cost the President crucial support in the region. Yet retaining him risks weakening ODM's enthusiasm — the very arrangement Ruto needs to compensate for his losses in the mountain. A TIFA Research poll places Kindiki as the clear front-runner for the running mate position at 59 per cent, with Wanga in a distant second at 12 per cent. That gap reflects public sentiment, but presidential decisions are not always made by public sentiment.

Western Kenya adds a further complication that is rapidly moving from subplot to main story. Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna — who hails from Bungoma in Western Kenya — has climbed to 15 per cent nationally by June 2026 from virtually no measurable support in 2025, and commands 44 per cent support within ODM as the party's preferred presidential candidate. Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya, Sifuna, and DAP-Kenya leader Eugene Wamalwa have formed a working alliance explicitly designed to lock Ruto out of Western Kenya's 3.2 million projected votes in 2027. Ruto has been seeking to offset declining support in Mt Kenya by targeting Western, Nyanza, and the Coast — precisely the regions where ODM's demands and Sifuna's rise are now creating the most turbulence.

The irony is pointed. ODM's push for the deputy presidential slot was



Kisii Governor Simba Arati, ODM's deputy party leader

partly premised on delivering Nyanza. But the party's internal divisions — with Wanga's faction supporting a cooperation deal with Ruto and the Sifuna-led wing opposing it — mean that even a successful negotiation may not translate into consolidated Nyanza votes. If ODM fractures over the deal itself, Ruto could find he has sacrificed Kindiki and Mt Kenya without securing Nyanza in return. That is not a trade any rational election strategist would recommend.

At the Coast, the calculus is different but no less complicated. Joho's campaign for the running mate slot, backed by vocal support from Mombasa Governor Abdulswamad Nassir, is premised on the region's numerical weight. Nassir told a rally in Lamu County yesterday that numbers were the Coast's only real bargaining chip, and that the region had to register voters aggressively if it was to make its case. But the Coast, historically transactional in its political alignments, has shown a consistent pattern of demanding more than it receives — and of adjusting its loyalties accordingly when those demands go unmet.

What makes the current moment particularly dangerous for Ruto is the compounding nature of the risks. A running mate decision that offends Mt Kenya accelerates Gachagua's narrative. One that disappoints Western emboldens Sifuna. One that fails to satisfy ODM's 50-50 demands — which now extend to 11 of 22 cabinet slots, half of 72 diplomatic appointments, and key parliamentary leadership positions including the speakerships of both houses — risks losing the ODM alliance entirely, without the voter substitute to replace it.

Kindiki, campaigning in Meru yesterday, reached for a domestic metaphor to make his case: "You do not build a house, complete it, furnish it, and then abandon it to go and live in the forest. That is not possible. We are not going anywhere." The Deputy President is right that abandoning a finished structure makes little sense. The question Ruto must now answer is whether the house he built in 2022 is still structurally sound — or whether the foundations have shifted enough to require a different architect entirely.

The retreat between alliance leaders scheduled for next week will provide the first formal test of where these negotiations are genuinely headed. But the real decision will be made by one man, in one room, with incomplete information and incomplete options.

Every path forward carries a cost. The question is only which one Ruto is prepared to pay.

Ethinicity In a statement issued yesterday, the elders accused Duale of showing "a lack of common decency and moral responsibility"

Kikuyu elders condemn Duale remarks, warn against ethnic division

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The Kikuyu Council of Elders (KCE) has strongly condemned Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale over remarks in which he allegedly compared members of the Kikuyu community to hyenas, describing the comments as offensive, divisive and unbecoming of a national leader.

In a statement issued yesterday, the elders accused Duale of showing "a lack of common decency and moral responsibility" and said his remarks had caused deep pain across the Kikuyu community.

The council said the Cabinet Secretary's speech, delivered during a recent public address, conveyed "sweeping contempt and bitterness" towards an entire community and risked undermining national cohesion.

"Mr Duale, your condemnation has caused deep injury to this community. You did not spare children or their mothers, the young or the elderly, the sick in hospitals and homes, labourers or jobless, leaders or the led," the statement read.

The elders said no Kenyan leader occupying such a senior public office had inflicted similar harm on so many people through public utterances, warning that the effects of such comments could linger for years.

"It is comments and actions like yours that have kept Africa in ethnic and governance turmoil and steeped in poverty and bloodshed, and without stable governments," the council added.

The latest condemnation adds to mounting pressure on the Health Cabinet Secretary following widespread criticism from political leaders and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), which has opened investigations into the remarks after receiving formal complaints.

Kikuyu Council of Elders led by Wachira Kiago during the press conference yesterday.

The controversy stems from comments Duale made during a public function in Lafey, Mandera County, in which critics said he referred to members of the Kikuyu community as "hyenas" while discussing recent political developments. Duale has maintained that he was misquoted and that his remarks were taken out of context, insisting they were not intended to incite ethnic hatred. He has also declined calls to apologise.

In its statement, however, the Kikuyu Council of Elders rejected the remarks outright, saying they amounted to a blanket condemnation of an entire community regardless of age, gender or social status.

While expressing disappointment, the elders urged members of the Kikuyu community not to retaliate with similar ethnic insults directed at the Somali community.

"The Gikuyu Community respects the Somali Community, which you come from, as well as other Kenyan communities," the council said, adding that it continues to encourage cordial relations among all ethnic groups.

The elders appealed to leaders across the political divide to exercise restraint in their public pronouncements, warning that inflammatory rhetoric could reopen painful wounds from Kenya's history of election-related violence.

"To leaders in Kenya from the lowest to the highest, we pray and plead with you to avoid words and acts that would cause tribal disharmony in Kenya, and let the blood spilt from 2007 to 2024 be enough," the statement said.

The council also called on elders from all communities, religious leaders and faith organisations to play a greater role in promoting peaceful coexistence and national unity.

"To elders of Kenya communities, the clergy and clerics of all faiths, we urge you to stand and be counted as beacons of reason and peaceful co-existence, to the end that Kenya becomes a peaceful and democratic nation," the statement added.

The elders' statement comes amid growing condemnation from across the political spectrum. Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru has demanded an unconditional apology, saying the remarks amounted to dangerous ethnic profiling, while Lands Cabinet Secretary Alice Wahome has also urged Duale to withdraw the comments and apologise to the Kikuyu community.

Despite the growing backlash, Duale has maintained that he will not apologise, arguing that his speech has been deliberately misrepresented and insisting that he spoke about political inclusivity rather than targeting any community.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission has since confirmed that investigations into the matter are ongoing as it seeks to establish whether the remarks violated laws governing hate speech and ethnic incitement.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

Farming Dairy cattle in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa receive only between 50 and 80 per cent of their recommended mineral requirements

Africa's silent dairy crisis: How mineral deficiencies are costing billions in lost milk production

Mr Alex Gathii Gitonga addressing dairy farmers.

BY Alex Gathii Gitonga
@themtkenyatimes

Africa's dairy sector stands at a critical crossroads.

Despite boasting more than 400 million cattle and one of the fastest-growing dairy markets in the world, the continent continues to grapple with low milk productivity, limiting its ability to meet growing demand for dairy products and improve the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers.

While governments and development partners have invested heavily in improved breeds, artificial insemination, disease control and better feeds, livestock nutrition experts are increasingly pointing to an often-overlooked factor silently undermining production; mineral deficiencies.

A new strategic position paper by Tanolope Consultancy Limited argues that precision mineral nutrition could become one of Africa's most transformative agricultural interventions, describing mineral management as "strategic agricultural infrastructure" rather than simply another livestock feed supplement.

The report, titled Africa's Livestock Mineral Deficiency Crisis, presents a compelling case for governments, dairy processors, investors and development partners to rethink how they approach dairy productivity across the continent.

According to the report, dairy cattle in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa receive only between 50 and 80 per cent of their recommended mineral requirements.

The most common deficiencies include phosphorus, copper, zinc, selenium, cobalt and sodium; essential nutrients that influence milk production, fertility, immunity, calf survival and overall animal health.

Unlike infectious diseases that often present visible symptoms and attract immediate attention, mineral deficiencies are described as a "hidden productivity crisis." Farmers may not easily recognize the problem, yet their cows consistently produce less milk, experience poor reproductive performance, suffer from increased disease incidence and raise weaker calves.

The report notes that these deficiencies quietly erode profitability across the dairy value chain, affecting not only farmers but also milk processors, feed manufacturers and national economies.

Despite the magnitude of the challenge, the report says Africa lacks comprehensive livestock mineral surveillance systems capable of identifying regional deficiencies and guiding targeted interventions.

Most countries, it notes, do not have national mineral databases, comprehensive soil and forage mineral maps or routine programmes for testing livestock feed, water and animal blood samples.

As a result, many farmers continue using generic mineral supplements regardless of local soil conditions or the nutritional composition of available forage.

The consultancy argues that mineral nutrition has remained fragmented across ministries responsible for agriculture, livestock, research institutions, universities, regulatory agencies and private industry, resulting in weak coordination and inconsistent policy implementation.

To address this, the report recommends establishing national livestock mineral coordination platforms that would bring together governments, laboratories, universities, dairy processors and private sector players under a unified framework.

The report adopts internationally recognised strategic management frameworks, including the McKinsey 7S Model and Blue Ocean Strategy, to demonstrate how Africa can reposition mineral nutrition from a neglected technical issue into a major driver of agricultural transformation.

It argues that while existing investments continue to focus on genetics, veterinary medicines and feed brands; markets characterised by intense competition —precision mineral intelligence offers an opportunity to create an entirely new value proposition based on measurable improvements in productivity.

Among the innovations proposed are national livestock mineral atlases, regional diagnostic laboratories, digital mineral surveillance systems, artificial intelligence-powered advisory platforms, country-specific mineral formulations and executive training programmes for government officials and dairy industry leaders.

The report also proposes the development of a SmartAlex Mineral Intelligence Platform capable of analysing soil, forage, water and animal samples to generate precision mineral recommendations for farmers.

Another proposed innovation is a Dairy Mineral Return on Investment Calculator that would enable producers and policymakers to quantify the financial benefits of mineral interventions.

According to the report, inadequate mineral nutrition stems from multiple interconnected factors including poor soil fertility, declining pasture quality, seasonal feed shortages, crop residue feeding, inadequate supplementation and limited farmer awareness.

These are compounded by weak research funding, limited laboratory capacity, poor extension services and inadequate policy coordination.

The cumulative effect, the report says, is reduced milk yields, lower conception rates, extended calving intervals, increased mastitis, higher calf mortality, poor feed efficiency and reduced profitability across dairy enterprises.

While the report does not provide continent-wide monetary estimates, it argues that the resulting economic losses likely amount to billions of dollars annually.

To reverse the trend, the consultancy proposes a five-year continental roadmap beginning with baseline mineral surveys and the development of national mineral deficiency maps.

Subsequent phases would include expanding laboratory partnerships, introducing precision mineral advisory services, training extension officers, publishing an Africa Livestock Mineral Atlas and establishing regional benchmarking systems.

By the fifth year, the report envisions Africa positioning itself as a global leader in precision mineral nutrition for tropical dairy systems.

The report further recommends that boards overseeing dairy organisations receive quarterly reports covering mineral supply chains, laboratory testing coverage, farmer adoption rates, feed quality compliance, regional deficiency trends and productivity improvements.

Key performance indicators should include increased milk yields, improved conception rates, lower mastitis incidence, reduced calf mortality, higher farmer profitability and growth in national milk production.

Ultimately, the report concludes that Africa already possesses the scientific knowledge, livestock population and market potential needed to transform its dairy industry.

What has been lacking, it argues, is coordinated leadership and a strategic appreciation of mineral nutrition as a foundation for sustainable livestock productivity.

Rather than viewing minerals as routine feed additives, the report urges governments and industry leaders to recognise them as a critical investment capable of improving food security, strengthening rural incomes and accelerating agricultural growth.

As Africa seeks innovative solutions to feed its growing population and build resilient agricultural systems, the report suggests that the next dairy revolution may not come from larger farms or more expensive breeds, but from smarter nutrition guided by better science, better data and precision mineral management.

Alex Gathii Gitonga is a dairy cows expert.

Alex Gathii Gitonga at a dairy farm in Nyagatare in Rwanda.

Agriculture Stakeholders call for urgent implementation of national farming blueprint to bolster food security and climate resilience

Kenya urged to act on agroecology strategy

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Agriculture stakeholders yesterday called for the swift implementation of Kenya's National Agroecology Strategy for Food Systems Transformation, describing it as a critical blueprint for building resilient, sustainable and climate-smart food systems.

The resolutions emerged from the 3rd National Agroecology Symposium Kenya, held at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi and organised by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Kenya in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. Participants drawn from national and county governments, civil society, research institutions, farmers and agricultural innovators agreed that moving the strategy from policy to practice is now the defining challenge.

Agriculture stakeholders

Delegates described agroecology as a regenerative farming approach capable of restoring soil fertility, improving biodiversity and strengthening agricultural resilience against climate change. They urged government to expedite implementation across all levels, arguing that agroecological farming offers practical long-term solutions to degraded and acidic soils while reducing costly dependence on synthetic inputs.

A central message from the symposium was the need for money to match ambition. Stakeholders called for increased budgetary allocations, warning that adequate financing is necessary to translate the strategy into tangible benefits for smallholder farmers and rural communities. They also stressed the importance of farmer training, extension services and access to quality, locally adapted seeds as essential delivery mechanisms.

"Kenya needs to concentrate efforts towards practical implementation backed by adequate financing and research. The policy will enhance food security, improve livelihoods and strengthen resilience against climate change if fully implemented," said one of the leading voices at the gathering.

Encouragingly, at least five counties have already developed and adopted county-level agroecology policies, signalling growing institutional appetite for the approach. Stakeholders said the focus must now shift decisively from policy development to on-the-ground results.

Delegates also called for cross-sectoral collaboration, urging health, education, environmental and development partners to support the expansion of organic and regenerative farming beyond the agriculture ministry alone. Successful implementation, they agreed, will require coordinated effort across government agencies, research institutions, development partners and the private sector.

The symposium brought together a broad coalition of organisations including ActionAid, GIZ, SwissAid, Biovision Africa, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and the Seed Savers Network, among others — a signal of the depth of international and domestic commitment to transforming Kenya's food systems.

The strategy exists. The coalitions are assembled. What Kenya's farmers are waiting for is action.

Politics "The people of Mount Kenya are united, and no amount of political manipulation will divide them," Gachagua told supporters during a series of rallies.

Gachagua steps up Meru campaign, targets Ruku and promises security, Miraa reforms

Contd from page 2

over persistent bandit attacks. He accused the government of failing to protect local communities, saying the continued violence had exposed residents to unnecessary loss of life and property.

Gachagua said the government had neglected its constitutional responsibility to guarantee the safety of citizens and pledged that security would be among his top priorities if elected president.

He further addressed the economic challenges facing Meru, particularly the miraa sector, accusing influential individuals within the government of interfering with the trade for personal gain. According to Gachagua, the alleged interference has disrupted the region's economy and undermined the livelihoods of thousands of farmers and traders who depend on the crop.

He promised to dismantle what he described as miraa cartels and implement reforms aimed at restoring stability and ensuring farmers receive fair returns for their produce.

In his political message, Gachagua urged Meru residents to reject leaders who have aligned themselves with the Kenya Kwanza administration, accusing them of abandoning the interests of the people.

He announced plans to roll out what he termed "Operation Fagia," a political campaign aimed at replacing leaders he claimed had collaborated with the government at the expense of local residents.

According to Gachagua, the initiative seeks to usher in a new generation of leaders who will champion the interests of the people and provide accountable leadership.

Rigathi Gachagua

The DCP leader is using the Meru tour to consolidate support in the region ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Yesterday, he addressed public rallies in Muringene, Athiru, Laare, Muthara, Molo, Gitimbine and Makutano, where he urged residents to rally behind his party as it seeks to expand its influence across the Mount Kenya region.

He was accompanied by dozens of former, current and aspiring leaders led by Mithika Linturi and Senator Kamau Murango.

Health According to the governor, the initiative has continued to grow following the success of the inaugural camp held last year at D.E.B. Muslim Primary School

Over 1,000 turn up for Nyeri health camp as county steps up men's wellness drive

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

More than 1,000 men turned up for a male-only medical camp in Nyeri County on Saturday, underscoring growing interest in initiatives aimed at improving men's health and encouraging early medical check-ups.

The annual Male-Only Engagement and Medical Camp, held at Muthuaini Girls Secondary School, attracted participants from across the county who accessed a wide range of free health services.

Organised by the Nyeri County Department of Medical Services and Public Health, the day-long event offered cancer screening, diabetes and hypertension tests, urology consultations, tuberculosis screening, chest X-rays, mental health counselling, eye care, dental and ear, nose and throat (ENT) services, physical disability assessments, as well as health education. Participants also received financial literacy and legal awareness training.

Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga, who attended the event, said the strong turnout reflected increasing awareness among men about the importance of seeking timely medical care.

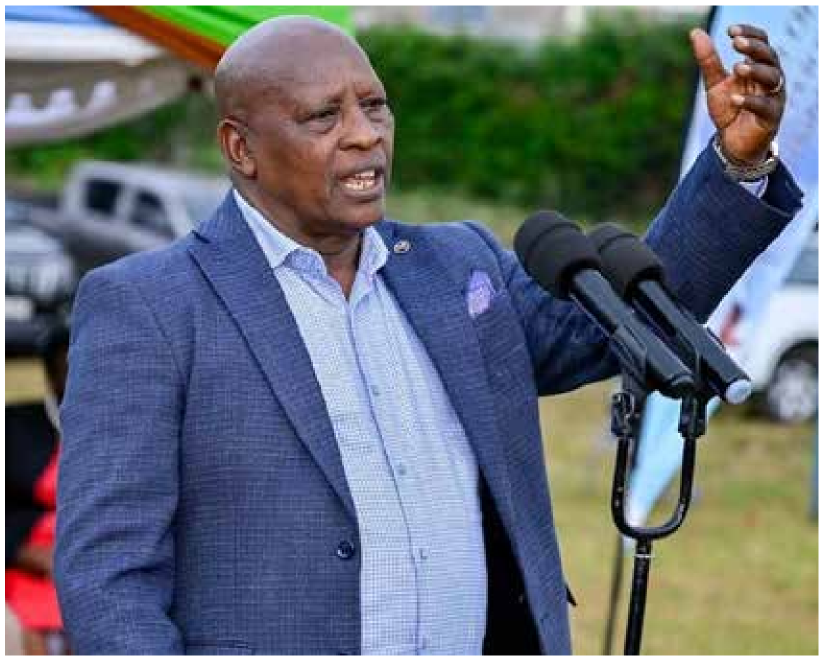
He noted that the programme was introduced to address concerns over the physical, mental, social and economic wellbeing of men and boys, a group that often delays seeking treatment until illnesses become severe.

According to the governor, the initiative has continued to grow following the success of the inaugural camp held last year at D.E.B. Muslim Primary School.

Kahiga said an estimated 1,100 men attended this year's event, with about 900 receiving various medical services and health consultations.

He reaffirmed the county government's commitment to making the camp an annual event, saying it provides a safe platform for men to access quality healthcare, receive health education and discuss issues affecting their overall wellbeing.

Health officials described the turnout as encouraging, expressing optimism that such targeted programmes will help improve men's health-seeking behaviour and contribute to the early detection and management of lifestyle and chronic diseases.



Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga addressing the forum. | *Photo:* Courtesy.

Sincere Gratitude for Publishing My Poem

Respected Editor,
Mount Kenya e-newspaper

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am Rajitha D, BT Assistant from GGHSS Padappai, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India.

I am deeply grateful to you for publishing my poem "Say A New Hello" in your esteemed e-newspaper. Your encouragement means a great deal to me as a writer and teacher.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Brinda Madam, Founder of Creative Writers, for motivating and guiding me to share my work with you.

Your platform has given my words wings, and has inspired me to continue writing with hope and purpose. Thank you for valuing voices from across the world.

With sincere appreciation,

Rajitha D
BT Assistant
GGHSS Padappai
Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu
India

I intend to forget old chapters,
The vicious, toxic captors,
Pillow tears, forever fears,
The words that prick like spears.

Pain when they shut you out,
Better to say good bye
Than to lose self respect,
Get away before they cut you out.

Leaves may fall, but spring comes,
Even the darkest nights end,
Life gives a glimmering hope
Like the first rays of the Sun.

Be brave and say good bye,
Be true, never hide in a lie,
Life will paint a golden yellow,
It will reward you with a new hello.

RAJITHA D
BT ASSISTANT
GGHSS PADAPPAI
KANCHIPURAM
TAMILNADU
INDIA

At ant's size

When I woke, I gave a shout,
I was as small as an ant about!
The grass looked like a giant tree,
The world was huge around tiny me.
I marched with ants in a busy line,
Every little step felt simply fine.
Then I smiled with great delight,
It was a wonderful dream that night.

S.P. SAAI SAMYUKKTHA
JOHN DEWEY MATRIC HR SEC SCHOOL
TAMIL NADU

Have patience

All things are hard before they become easy.
Every first step is hard.
If you work consistently, then it will become easy.
Everything is difficult before you learn it.
Then, when you have learned it, you will feel it is easy.
As you try, the wind can help you touch the sky.
Everything is possible, but it takes its own time.
So, be patient.
Every hard thing becomes easy.

__G.Yasminsirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

Believe in Yourself

If thousands of people say,
"You can't do it,"
Do not let their words stop you.
If you believe you can do it,
That is your true power.

Because you know yourself
Better than anyone else.

You know your dreams,
Your strengths,
And your determination.
So, believe in yourself
And make your journey wonderful.

Do not depend on others
To define your future.

Trust yourself,
Keep moving forward,
And never give up.
Only you can make
Your dreams come true.

V. S. NITHIYA SRI
VIII
JOHN DEWEY MAT. HR. SEC. SCHOOL,
TAMILNADU

Haunted Bungalow

Once, there was a village called Pudur. Five children used to play cricket every day in a field near a big, haunted bungalow. John, Ravi, Ram, and Aathi were close friends.
One day, they made a plan to play cricket.
"Friends, shall we play a team match?" Ravi asked.
"Okay, I'm in," John replied.
The game began. Ram's team won the toss and chose to bat. Ram was batting. He hit the ball very hard, and it flew into the haunted bungalow.
"You hit the ball, so you must go and get it yourself," Ravi said.
"Okay, no problem. I'll get it," Ram replied. "Hey, Aathi, come with me."
Ram and Aathi went into the bungalow. Aathi was very afraid.
"I can see the ball," Ram said.
The sun began to set, and the moon appeared.
However, they still couldn't find the ball.
Suddenly, they heard a loud thunderclap. The doors and windows slammed shut.
"Are there any ghosts here?" Aathi asked.
Ram replied, "Ghosts? Impossible! It's just the strong wind."
Suddenly, Ram let out a scream because two ghostly figures appeared in front of them like shadows.
"Who are you?
"Hey, Ram... this is... Ravi!" came a voice. "Don't be afraid. I came here to find you."
Ram said, "I was going home to get a torch to help find the ball."
"I found the ball!" John shouted.
By then, it was 12 o'clock at night, and all the boys were frightened.
"Everyone, run home!" Ram shouted.
The boys ran as fast as they could to their homes.

Muthu Kumar
7th Standard
Panchayat Union Middle School Eripatti. Pollachi North, Coimbatore Dt.

Have Patience

All things are hard
Before they become easy.

Be confident in all you do,
Whether you achieve today or not.
Like a river that flows with patience
Until it reaches the mighty ocean.

Likewise, do your work with care;
Your dreams will soon come true.
Tough times are everywhere,
But do not carry a bag of worries and tears.

Be patient, trust God, and believe in yourself.
Every difficult moment will one day become easier.
Encourage yourself like Muhammad Ali,
Who fought many battles to achieve his goals.

Remember this truth every day:
Patience, faith, and perseverance
Can turn every dream into reality.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

Aviation The breakthrough came after government-mediated talks addressed the labour grievances that had prompted KAWU to issue the strike notice

Aviation strike suspended after government deal

Last-minute talks avert airport disruptions that threatened flights, cargo and Kenya's role as a regional hub

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's aviation workers

Kenya's aviation workers yesterday suspended a nationwide strike scheduled for today after the government brokered a last-minute agreement with the Kenya Aviation Workers Union, averting disruptions at the country's airports.

The breakthrough came after government-mediated talks addressed the labour grievances that had prompted KAWU to issue the strike notice, covering unresolved concerns over pay and working conditions involving employers and relevant government agencies. The union called off the industrial action following commitments made during the negotiations, bringing an abrupt end to what had been shaping up as one of the most disruptive labour standoffs in the sector in recent years.

The planned strike had raised serious concerns across the aviation industry. Airlines, passengers, cargo operators, horticultural exporters and logistics companies had all been bracing for potential disruptions at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and other facilities across the country. Even a brief stoppage, industry players warned, risked cascading consequences for tourism, regional connectivity and Kenya's fresh produce export trade — particularly the flowers, fruits and vegetables that move daily to European and Asian markets on tight delivery schedules that tolerate no delay.

Kenya sits at the centre of East and Central Africa's air transport network, and any paralysis of airport operations carries economic consequences well beyond the sector itself. The country's position as a regional aviation hub means that disruptions at JKIA ripple outward to airlines, freight forwarders and businesses across multiple countries that rely on Nairobi as their primary gateway for both passenger travel and cargo movement.

The suspension means domestic and international flights will operate as scheduled today, sparing thousands of passengers from cancellations and delays. Cargo handlers and fresh produce exporters, for whom missed flights translate directly into spoiled produce and broken contracts, will also resume normal operations. Businesses involved in time-sensitive supply chains had been particularly anxious, as even a single day's disruption can result in lost consignments and damaged commercial relationships with international buyers.

The industrial action had been called over a range of unresolved issues, including demands for action from employers and government agencies on matters the union said had gone unaddressed for too long. The government's decision to intervene directly and bring the parties to the table is widely seen as a recognition of how much was at stake for the broader economy.

Labour experts cautioned, however, that the suspension is not a resolution. The parties are expected to continue negotiations to ensure the commitments made in yesterday's talks are fully implemented and that the underlying disputes are permanently settled. Sustained dialogue, analysts say, will be essential if the aviation sector is to avoid a return to the brinkmanship of recent days.

The strike is off — for now. The harder work of keeping it that way begins today.

Investment The refinery will be Dangote's second after his 650,000-barrel-per-day refinery in Lekki, Nigeria, which commenced operations in January 2024

Mega road and railway projects position Kenya's coast as investment hub

BY KNA
@themtkenyatimes

The government's sustained investment in mega road and railway infrastructure is transforming Kenya's Coast into a prime destination for capital-intensive investments, with a proposed 700,000-barrel-per-day oil refinery expected to anchor the region's industrial growth.

The Sh2.2 trillion refinery project by Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote, set for Lamu, is expected to guarantee a steady supply of refined petroleum products while reducing East Africa's dependence on imported fuel. Once launched, the refinery will become the country's largest private-sector investment and is projected to create about 60,000 jobs.

The refinery will be Dangote's second after his 650,000-barrel-per-day refinery in Lekki, Nigeria, which commenced operations in January 2024.

Expected to break ground before the end of 2026, the investment comes at a time when Kenya and the wider region are grappling with rising fuel prices driven by the conflict in the Middle East and disruptions caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The decision to locate the refinery in Lamu has drawn mixed reactions from residents and leaders. Once considered marginalised, the county is now emerging as a major beneficiary of government-led infrastructure projects and private-sector investments.

The Lamu archipelago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, hosts the Lamu Port, the first component of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor project. The port is planned to have 23 berths, with three already operational, featuring a draft of 17.5 metres and a turning basin of 500 metres.

The port

According to the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority, Phase Two of the port will include a liquid bulk terminal and an agri-bulk terminal to meet the projected regional demand of 70 million tonnes of agricultural bulk cargo by 2045 and Kenya's estimated refined petroleum demand of 16.3 million tonnes.

Once a sleepy coastal town, Lamu has become a hive of economic activity since the commissioning of the first berth in 2021. The port currently handles transhipment cargo destined for the United Arab Emirates, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Seychelles, Comoros and Madagascar, including containerised cargo, bulk goods and motor vehicles.

The government is also pursuing a landlord model for some port operations to enhance efficiency and competitiveness. The Lamu Port Container Terminal berths and the Lamu Special Economic Zone are earmarked for development and operation through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).

The broader LAPSSET Corridor project includes highways linking Lamu to Isiolo, Isiolo to Juba in South Sudan, Isiolo to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, and Lamu to Garsen, alongside the establishment of a Special Economic Zone.

Other flagship components include a crude oil pipeline from South Sudan through the Lokichar oil fields to Lamu; a refined products pipeline from Lamu to Ethiopia via Isiolo and Moyale; and a 3,000-kilometre single-track Standard Gauge Railway linking Lamu Port to Juba and Addis Ababa.

To further strengthen regional connectivity, the government is fast-tracking the Multinational Bagamoyo-Tanga-Horohoro/Lunga Lunga-Malindi Road Project.

The Sh15 billion project, jointly financed by the African Development Bank, the European Union and the Government of Kenya, is divided into two sections. Lot One, covering the Nyali Bridge-Mtwapa Bridge stretch, is 56 per cent complete after works began in November 2022 and is expected to be completed by August 2027.

Lot Two, covering the Mtwapa-Kwa Kadzengo-Kilifi section, has reached 76 per cent completion despite earlier delays caused by land acquisition challenges.

Once complete, the road is expected to improve regional connectivity, facilitate trade and significantly boost tourism along the Coast.

Meanwhile, construction of a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage facility by Taifa Gas at the 3,000-acre Dongo Kundu Special Economic Zone in Mombasa is nearing completion.

Last year, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the Kenya Ports Authority and the Special Economic Zones Authority signed a lease agreement for the development of the Dongo Kundu and Naivasha Special Economic Zones.

Afreximbank is financing the two integrated industrial parks with an investment of US$1 billion (approximately Sh128.5 billion) in support of the government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, particularly on value addition and export-oriented manufacturing.

On the railway front, the government in April launched the revival of the 130-kilometre Voi-Mwatate-Taveta Metre Gauge Railway line at a cost of Sh5.5 billion.

The project is expected to enhance cross-border trade with Tanzania, lower the cost of doing business and improve the livelihoods of communities along the railway corridor.

It also includes the construction of a dry port in Voi and new railway stations at Voi, Mwatate, Bura, Maktau and Taveta.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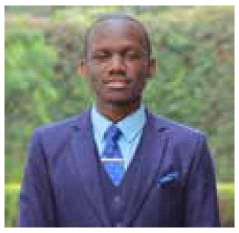
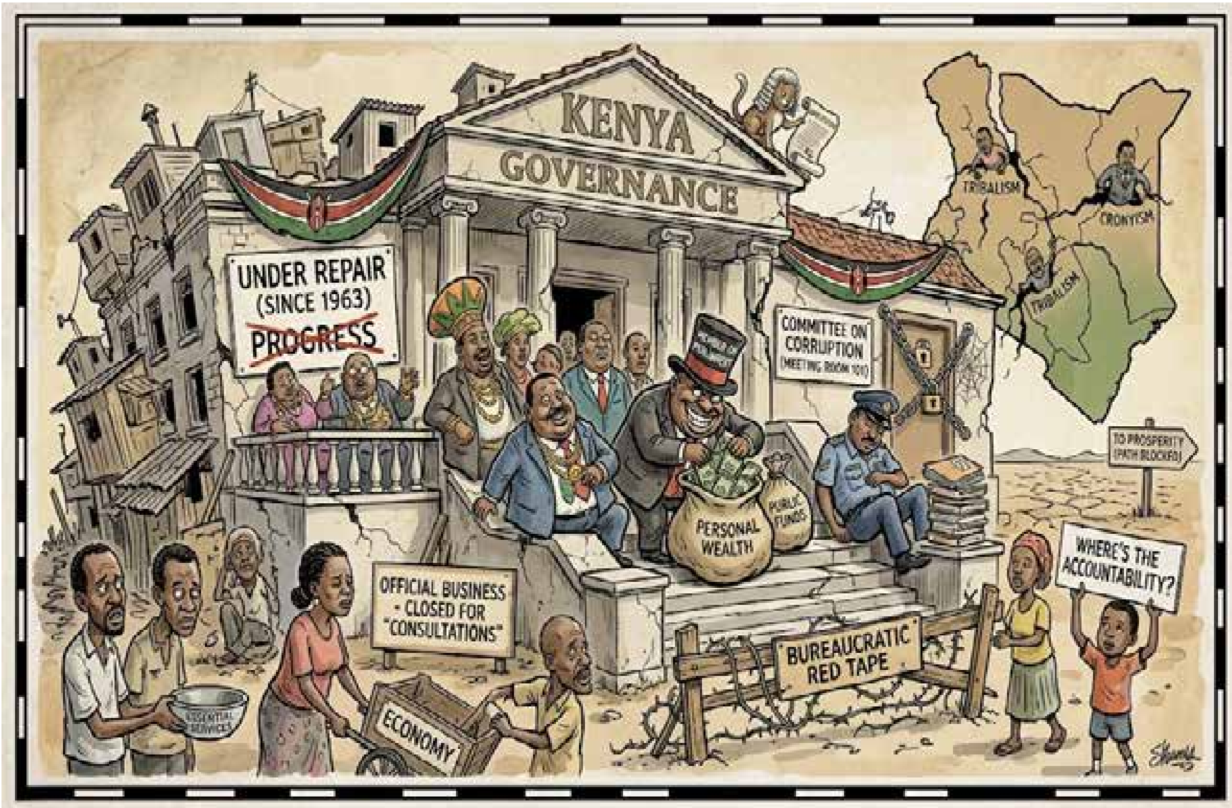
Politics This is the factual ground on which we stand. From this ground rises the architecture of what can only be called tumbocracy the rule of the belly.

The rotten diaper of tumbocracy in Kenya



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes



Illustration

Kenya loses an estimated three billion shillings every single day to corruption. Three billion. That is not a rumor whispered in Nairobi bars or a figure invented by opposition politicians. Former Chief Justice David Maraga stated it plainly in mid-2026, while public debt climbed past twelve trillion shillings and Transparency International scored the country a dismal thirty out of one hundred on the Corruption Perceptions Index ranking it 130th globally and among the worst performers in the region. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission's own surveys show police officers topping the bribery charts at 35.5 percent of service seekers, civil registration officials at 30 percent, and magistrates commanding average bribes of over 164,000 shillings. These are not abstract numbers. They are the daily tax ordinary Kenyans pay for the privilege of existing in a system designed to feed a few.

This is the factual ground on which we stand. From this ground rises the architecture of what can only be called tumbocracy the rule of the belly. Not democracy, not even kleptocracy in its classical sense, but a peculiarly Kenyan pathology in which political power exists primarily to expand the stomach. The belly is both symbol and engine: the protruding gut of the Big Man, once celebrated as proof of prosperity, now the living emblem of a nation being slowly digested from within.

Politicians and diapers must be changed often, and for the same reason. The old American saying has never found a more fertile soil than here. A soiled diaper left unchanged festers. It breeds infection. It turns the vulnerable body against itself. So too with politicians whose primary loyalty is to their own entrails. They begin by promising service and end by treating the public purse as a private latrine. The longer they remain in place, the deeper the rot seeps into the institutions that should have restrained them.

Consider the recent forensic audits reported in the dailies. In July 2026, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations opened a probe into a suspected 6.2 billion shilling government payroll fraud after a sample audit of only twelve state departments revealed ghost workers, unborn children listed as employees, minors on the payroll, shared bank accounts, and missing surnames. One single personal bank account in the National Police Service received 313.6 million shillings in irregular payments in a single year. This is not incompetence. This is systematic looting dressed in the language of human-resource management. The same newspapers have chronicled the unaccounted portions of public debt trillions borrowed with little to show beyond the expanding waistlines of those who authorised the loans.

The belly does not merely consume money. It consumes possibility. Every shilling diverted from a rural clinic or a classroom is a child denied a future. Every inflated contract is a road that will collapse in the rains and kill the very citizens who paid for it twice once in taxes and once in blood. The 2024 and 2025 protests, documented across the media were not merely about a finance bill. They were the cry of a generation that watched luxury cars and private helicopters parade across social media while their own parents queued for services that required a bribe simply to prove they existed. The average bribe may have fluctuated, but the principle remained constant: access is sold, dignity is rented, and the poor are expected to be grateful for the privilege of paying.

Tumbocracy thrives because it has perfected the art of selective hunger. The political class never goes hungry. Their children study abroad. Their wives shop in Dubai. Their bodyguards ride in convoys that clear the roads for the rest of us. Meanwhile, the ordinary Kenyan is taught to celebrate "our people" in power even as those same people systematically empty the granaries. Ethnicity becomes the perfect anaesthetic. As long as the belly belongs to one's own community, the stench of the soiled diaper is somehow more tolerable. This is the deepest intellectual failure of the Kenyan voter: the willingness to mistake shared blood for shared interest.

The literary image of the diaper is not crude for its own sake. It is precise. A diaper is meant to contain waste temporarily. It is designed to be discarded. When it is left in place, the waste becomes the environment. Kenya's political class has turned temporary containment into permanent residence. They have normalized the idea that public office is a feeding trough rather than a sacred trust. The result is a nation that measures success by the circumference of its leaders rather than the circumference of its possibilities.

There is a deeper insight here that goes beyond the usual moralizing. Greed at this scale is not merely personal vice. It is a structural addiction. Once a politician discovers that the state can be milked without immediate consequence, the hunger grows. The first ten million becomes the justification for the next hundred. The mansion becomes the reason for the next land grab. The system rewards the most voracious rather than the most competent. In such an ecosystem, integrity is not merely inconvenient it is evolutionary suicide. The clean politician is the one who loses the next election because he refused to buy the voters with money stolen from those same voters.

Call them out without apology. The Members of Parliament who demand "facilitation" to pass bills. The governors who treat county funds as personal ATM machines. The cabinet secretaries whose wealth multiplies mysteriously within months of appointment. The senior civil servants who invent ghost workers so that the living can be paid twice while the dead draw salaries. These are not aberrations. They are the logical products of a system that has made the belly the highest court of appeal.

Nevertheless, the most damning indictment is not of the politicians alone. It is of a citizenry that has, for too long, accepted the soiled diaper as the natural order of things. We laugh at the jokes about "our time to eat." We share the memes of pot-bellied leaders as if the absurdity itself were resistance. It is not. It is collaboration. Every time a community defends "our son" despite evidence of plunder, the infection spreads. Every time a voter sells a ballot for a few hundred shillings, the diaper is pressed more firmly against the national skin.

The remedy is as simple and as difficult as changing a diaper. It requires the will to remove what has become foul. It requires the courage to look at the waste without flinching and to declare that no amount of ethnic solidarity can sanitize it. Term limits are not enough if the same class simply rotates the soiled garments among themselves. Elections are meaningless if the currency of politics remains the size of the stomach rather than the strength of the mind. Accountability is empty if the institutions charged with enforcement are themselves feeding from the same trough.

Kenya does not lack laws. It lacks the collective refusal to keep living in the stench. The Constitution already contains the tools Chapter Six on leadership and integrity, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Auditor-General, the courts. What it lacks is a people willing to insist that those tools be used without fear or favour. Until that insistence becomes louder than the rumbling of political bellies, the diaper will remain unchanged, and the infection will continue its quiet work.

The facts are clear. The issue is not abstract. The belly has ruled long enough. It is time to change the diaper not because the politicians deserve a clean start, but because the nation can no longer afford to drown in its own waste. The alternative is a country that continues to measure its progress by the girth of its leaders while its children measure their futures in the shrinking space between hunger and hope. That is not democracy. That is tumbocracy. And it stinks.

The writer is a social commentator

Education UK-based charity constructs new classrooms to ease congestion and lift learning standards at a Trans-Nzoia school

Classrooms for Kenya boosts learning infrastructure at Bikeke Junior School in Trans-Nzoia County

BY Daniel Kipchumba
@themtkenyatimes

A United Kingdom-based charity has reaffirmed its commitment to improving education in Kenya, commissioning new classrooms at Bikeke Junior School in Trans-Nzoia County aimed at easing overcrowding and creating a better environment for pupils.

Speaking at the commissioning, Peter Woodman said Classrooms for Kenya, backed significantly by The Weald School in the United Kingdom, remains dedicated to supporting quality education by providing modern learning facilities.

Woodman, who attended alongside team leader Heidi Tucker and Country Chairlady Justina Sitti, said the warm reception from the school community was encouraging and pledged continued collaboration to raise education standards.

Kiminini Sub-County Director of Education Florence Nyongesa also addressed the gathering, commending the partnership for complementing government efforts to provide a conducive learning environment for pupils.

School head Ronald Francis Toili Wamalwa thanked Classrooms for Kenya and its partners for the support, noting that the new classrooms would significantly ease congestion and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Wamalwa said the school, established in 1976, currently enrols 1,386 pupils and employs 44 teachers, serving learners from Early Childhood Development and Education through to Grade 9.

He added that the support had not only benefited Bikeke but had contributed to improved learning conditions across many other schools in Kenya, and urged other development partners to invest in education infrastructure to meet the growing demand for quality facilities.

United Kingdom-based charity commissioning new classrooms at Bikeke Junior School in Trans-Nzoia County

Business Cabinet approves 40,000-tonne transit deal through Mombasa port, cementing Kenya's role as East Africa's energy corridor

Kenya opens pipeline to Rwanda fuel imports

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's Cabinet yesterday approved a deal allowing Rwanda to import up to 40,000 metric tonnes of fuel through the Port of Mombasa and the country's petroleum pipeline network, strengthening Kenya's position as East Africa's primary energy transit hub.

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi announced the decision after bilateral talks with Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Minister Olivier Jean Patrick Nduhungirehe in Nairobi, describing the agreement as a demonstration of Kenya's commitment to deeper regional economic integration.

Kenya bilateral talks with Rwanda

"The Kenyan Cabinet has approved the movement of about 40,000 metric tonnes of fuel to Rwanda through our pipeline from Mombasa. We are committed to ensuring deeper economic cooperation with our neighbours," Mudavadi said.

For Rwanda, a landlocked country that depends entirely on overland and pipeline routes for its petroleum supplies, the arrangement offers a reliable and cost-effective solution to a persistent logistical challenge. Nduhungirehe welcomed the deal warmly, putting the volume in practical terms that underscored its significance for his country's energy security.

"That will be about 52 million litres, which is roughly our country's monthly fuel consumption. It will serve us well," he said.

The agreement positions Kenya's infrastructure — its deepwater port at Mombasa and the pipeline network stretching inland — as the preferred conduit for one of the region's fastest-growing economies. Rwanda has recorded consistent GDP growth in recent years, driving rising demand for fuel across transport, industry and construction. Securing a stable, transparent import arrangement through Kenya addresses a vulnerability that landlocked status has long imposed on the country's energy planning.

For Kenya, the benefits are equally tangible. Transit volumes through the port and pipeline generate revenue, sustain employment in the logistics and energy sectors, and reinforce Mombasa's commercial primacy in the region at a time when competing corridors are being developed elsewhere in East Africa. Every tonne of fuel bound for Kigali via Mombasa is an argument for Kenya's infrastructure over alternatives.

The talks ranged beyond petroleum. Mudavadi said he used the bilateral meeting to seek Rwanda's support for Kenya's candidates seeking seats on the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, signalling that yesterday's engagement covered both economic and diplomatic ground.

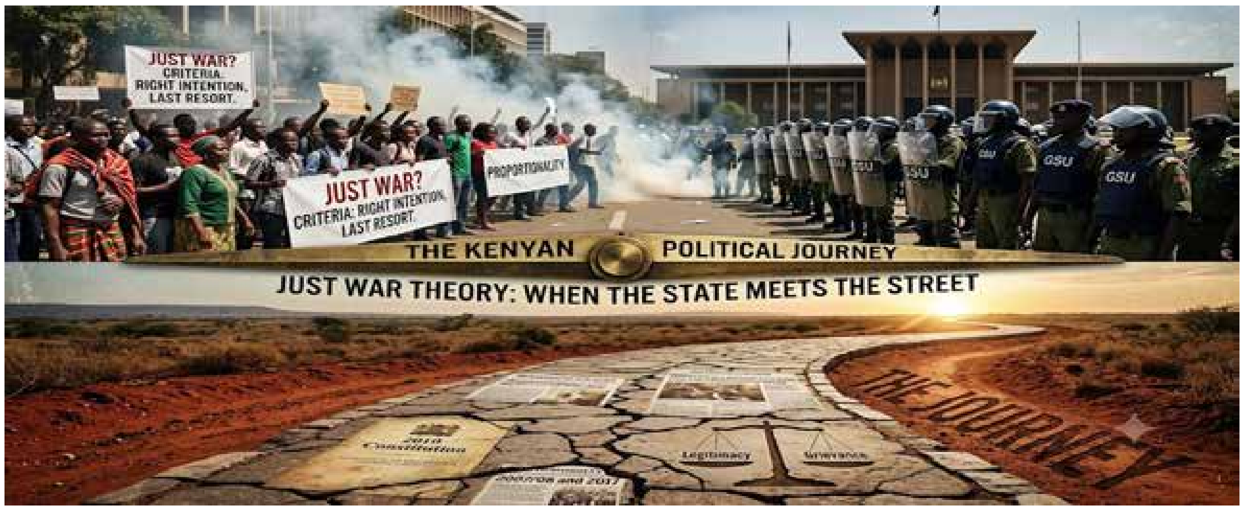
"Kenya remains committed to strengthening regional partnerships and advancing Africa's voice in international institutions," he said.

A pipeline deal and a diplomatic ask — Kenya is making the most of its neighbours.

Politics In classical theory, jus ad bellum begins by asking whether there is a morally justified reason for the use of force

Just war theory and Kenya's political journey: When the state meets the street

BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes



Illustration

Kenya's political history has always been shaped by a delicate relationship between authority and dissent. From the struggle for independence and the agitation for multiparty democracy to the constitutional reform movement and the more recent wave of youth-led protests, Kenyans have repeatedly taken to the streets when they feel that government institutions have failed to listen to their concerns. As the country navigates an increasingly charged political environment in 2026, the classical Just War Theory provides an unusual but powerful ethical lens through which to examine the relationship between the State and its citizens.

Just War Theory was originally developed to assess the morality of armed conflict. Its central principles—just cause, legitimate authority, last resort, proportionality and discrimination—can, however, offer important lessons when political disagreements escalate into confrontation between security agencies and civilian protesters. This does not mean that political demonstrations are a war. Rather, the theory enables us to ask a fundamental question: when a State uses force to maintain public order, what makes that force morally and ethically legitimate? Equally important, when citizens protest against their government, what responsibilities do they have to ensure that their actions remain peaceful and lawful?

These questions are particularly relevant to Kenya, where memories of the Gen Z protests, the enduring significance of the Saba Saba tradition of political mobilisation and periodic demonstrations over taxation, governance, accountability and the rising cost of living have exposed deep tensions between citizens and those entrusted with maintaining public order.

The first lesson from Just War Theory concerns the idea of a just cause. In classical theory, jus ad bellum begins by asking whether there is a morally justified reason for the use of force. Applied to Kenya's political environment, this requires us to examine the competing claims of both the State and its citizens. The government has a legitimate responsibility to protect life, property and public infrastructure. Parliament, businesses, transport networks and other public facilities cannot be left vulnerable to destruction. The State is therefore justified in taking reasonable measures to prevent violence, protect citizens and maintain public order.

At the same time, citizens have legitimate constitutional rights. Article 37 of the Constitution of Kenya protects the right to assemble, demonstrate, picket and present petitions peacefully and unarmed. That right is not a favour granted by government; it is a constitutional entitlement. The lesson is therefore that a government's responsibility to maintain order cannot automatically cancel the citizen's right to dissent. Equally, the right to protest cannot be interpreted as a licence to destroy property, attack individuals or endanger other members of society. A mature democracy must protect both public order and civic freedom.

The second lesson concerns legitimate authority. Just War Theory recognises the importance of lawful and legitimate authority. In a democratic State, security agencies have the responsibility to enforce the law and protect the public. However, legal authority is strengthened by public trust and weakened by perceptions of selective enforcement, political manipulation or impunity. Kenya's political experience demonstrates that citizens are more likely to respect State authority when institutions are seen to be impartial, transparent and accountable.

Allegations concerning unidentified security personnel, politically sponsored groups or criminal elements being used to disrupt demonstrations can seriously undermine public confidence. The legitimacy of authority cannot rest solely on the uniform, badge or weapon. It must also be anchored in the Constitution, the rule of law and accountability. Where citizens perceive that the law is being applied selectively, they may begin to question not only individual actions but the moral legitimacy of institutions themselves. This creates a dangerous cycle in which even legitimate security operations are viewed with suspicion.

The third lesson is that force should always be a last resort. Political disagreements are inevitable in a democracy, but they should be managed through dialogue, public debate, petitions, peaceful assembly and political engagement. The existence of disagreement should not automatically be treated as a threat to national security. Where demonstrations are peaceful, the first response should be engagement, facilitation and protection rather than confrontation.

Government has many options before force becomes necessary, including dialogue with organisers, negotiated routes, mediation, public communication and engagement through elected representatives. Protest organisers, on their part, have a responsibility to communicate clearly with participants, discourage violence, protect public property and cooperate with lawful security arrangements. Kenya's experience shows that the earlier leaders and security agencies engage with citizens, the less likely political tensions are to escalate into violence.

The fourth lesson is proportionality. Just War Theory requires that the harm caused by the use of force must not exceed the legitimate objective being pursued. This is perhaps one of the most important principles for Kenya today. A State has a duty to prevent violence, but the response to a peaceful demonstration must be fundamentally different from the response to an armed attack or violent riot. The level of force must correspond to the actual threat.

The use of lethal force against unarmed civilians, indiscriminate deployment of tear gas or excessive physical force against peaceful demonstrators raises serious ethical and constitutional concerns. Security action, where necessary, must remain restrained, targeted and accountable. The same principle applies to protesters. A peaceful demonstration that turns into violence, destroys property or attacks police officers loses the same moral character as a peaceful assembly. Constitutional rights carry responsibilities.

The fifth lesson is the protection of innocent people. The principle of discrimination requires a clear distinction between those directly involved in violence and those who are not. Security operations should distinguish between violent offenders and peaceful citizens. Journalists, children, elderly people, street vendors, motorists, medical workers and ordinary residents should not become casualties simply because they are caught in the vicinity of political unrest.

Likewise, protesters must distinguish between the government they oppose and innocent members of the public. Disagreement with political leadership cannot justify attacks on private businesses, public transport operators or individuals who hold different political views.

The deeper lesson for Kenya is that political conflict should never become a war against citizens. The State may possess superior resources and institutional authority, but it cannot govern sustainably through fear. Citizens may possess the power of numbers and public mobilisation, but they cannot build a better democracy through destruction and violence.

Kenya's political journey has shown that crises are rarely resolved through force alone. They are resolved when institutions become responsive, leaders listen, citizens participate responsibly and accountability is strengthened. The Constitution provides the framework for achieving this balance by recognising both the authority of the State and the sovereignty of the people.

The challenge before Kenya is therefore not to choose between government and citizens, but to build a political culture in which government understands that dissent is not treason, while citizens understand that freedom is not an exemption from responsibility. The Gen Z movement and the continuing relevance of Saba Saba should be understood within this broader democratic journey. They reflect a society increasingly willing to demand accountability, transparency and better governance. The appropriate response is neither to dismiss all dissent as a threat nor to romanticise every protest as inherently legitimate. The democratic task is to distinguish legitimate dissent from unlawful violence and legitimate State authority from excessive or abusive force.

Ultimately, Just War Theory offers Kenya a mirror rather than a weapon. It asks the State: Is your cause just? Is your authority legitimate? Have peaceful alternatives been exhausted? Is your response proportionate? Are you protecting the innocent? It asks citizens the same difficult questions.

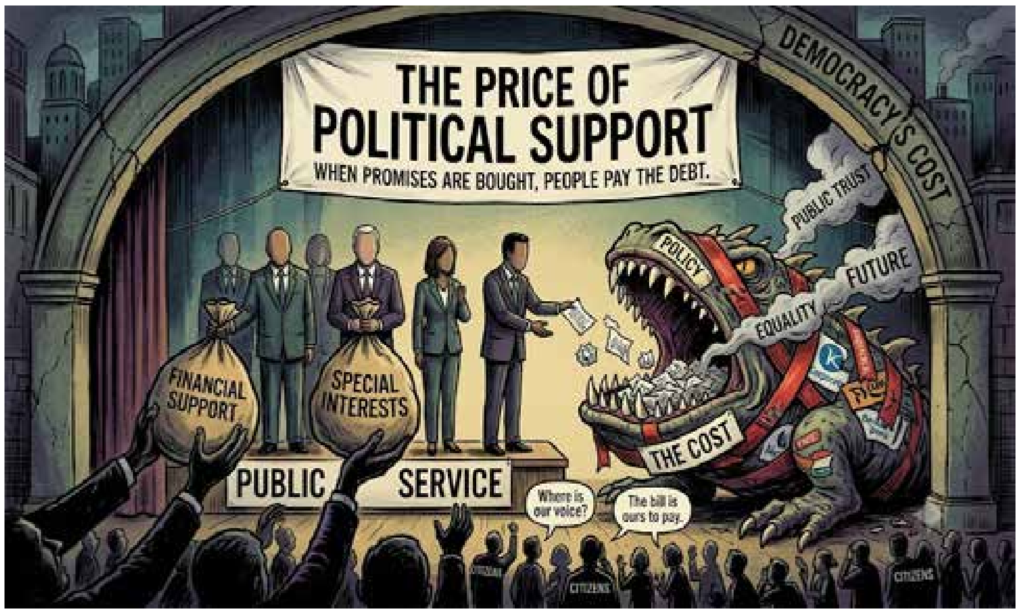
Kenya's political future will depend greatly on how honestly these questions are answered. The country does not need a politics in which the State fears its citizens or citizens fear their State. It needs a constitutional democracy in which authority is exercised with restraint, dissent is protected with responsibility and political disagreements are resolved through dialogue rather than confrontation.

The greatest lesson of Just War Theory for Kenya is therefore not how to justify force, but how to prevent the need for force in the first place.

"The true measure of a democracy is not how it treats those who agree with it, but how it responds to those who peacefully challenge its power."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The price of political support



By **Levis Wangamati**

Politics has never been a marketplace of charity, and Kenya's latest round of coalition manoeuvring is no exception.

Reports that leaders within the Orange Democratic Movement are pushing for the office of Deputy President as the price of any future broad-based government arrangement have exposed a truth that most Kenyans have long understood: political alliances are built as much on interests as they are on ideals. Every handshake, every coalition, and every public declaration of unity carries expectations. Behind the language of inclusivity, there is almost always a quieter conversation about influence, authority, and the distribution of power.

ODM's reported insistence that the Deputy President's office is non-negotiable signals a desire not merely to participate in government, but to occupy one of the highest constitutional positions in the Republic. From a purely political standpoint, that ambition is neither unusual nor illegitimate. Parties exist to seek power. The real question is whether that pursuit ultimately serves the national interest or simply the interests of those doing the pursuing.

Supporters of broad-based government arrangements argue, with some justification, that expanding political cooperation reduces tension, strengthens national cohesion, and promotes stability. Kenya's history offers genuine examples where political accommodation has prevented deeper and more dangerous divisions. That argument deserves to be taken seriously.

But stability cannot become an end in itself. It must translate into better governance. Ordinary Kenyans did not embrace the promise of political cooperation simply to witness another round of negotiations over offices and portfolios. They expected practical responses to rising living costs, unemployment, mounting public debt, struggling businesses, and declining confidence in public institutions. When national discourse becomes dominated by who should occupy which office at the top of government rather than how government intends to improve lives at the bottom of society, politics begins to serve itself instead of the people it was created to serve.

President William Ruto faces a defining political moment. Every alliance expands opportunity but also creates new expectations. Every concession strengthens one relationship while potentially unsettling another. The challenge before him is not simply how to manage political partners, but how to ensure that political compromise does not overshadow the government's primary obligation to the Kenyan people. Cabinet positions may satisfy political elites, but they do not put food on the table, create employment, or restore hope to families who have been waiting for both.

Kenya has witnessed many political agreements over the years. Some have restored calm during moments of genuine national crisis. Others have simply redistributed power among political insiders while leaving the underlying concerns of citizens entirely unresolved. The record is mixed, and history is unambiguous on one point: the success of any political arrangement is measured not by the number of leaders accommodated, but by the number of lives improved.

The office of Deputy President is not a political trophy to be awarded at a negotiating table. It is a constitutional institution carrying significant responsibilities in the governance of the Republic. Any discussion surrounding it ought to be guided first by public interest, constitutional principle, and long-term national stability — not by the immediate convenience of political bargaining or the arithmetic of party loyalty.

As Kenyans watch these developments unfold, one truth remains difficult to argue against. Political support can be negotiated. Cabinet positions can be allocated. Coalitions can be formed, rebranded, and dissolved. But public trust cannot be traded across a conference table. It must be earned through integrity, accountability, and measurable service to the people who grant politicians their authority in the first place.

In the end, Kenyans will remember neither the negotiations nor the titles that came out of them. They will remember whether their leaders used power to transform lives — or merely rearranged themselves around it.

Power can be shared. Responsibility cannot.

My parents are the crown on my head

By **Hilola Xudoyberdiyeva**

Parents are not simply the people who raise us. They are, if we are fortunate enough to recognise it in time, the most irreplaceable people we will ever have in our lives.

They go without so that we can have. They give us food when they themselves have less. They sacrifice time, youth, health, and years of their own living so that ours might be better. And they do most of it without announcement, without complaint, and without expecting to be thanked.

As children, we do not always see this clearly. We misunderstand our parents. We say things in moments of frustration that we cannot take back. We make demands without pausing to consider what those demands cost the people on the other side of them. It is one of the gentler cruelties of growing up — that we often only understand what our parents gave us after we no longer need it in the same way.

A father occupies a particular kind of space in a family. He is the structure that holds things together when the weight of life becomes heavy. He is the steadiness his children lean on without always realising they are leaning. A person who truly loves and respects their father understands something important not just about family, but about what it means to be a decent human being.

A mother is harder still to put into words, and I say that having tried. Six letters in English. A world of meaning inside them. It is through our mothers that we first encounter life, warmth, and the sense that the world, for all its difficulty, contains something worth trusting. The Uzbek people compare a mother to the warm rays of the sun, the beauty of the moon, and the preciousness of water. I have always thought that was exactly right.

I want to share something personal, because I think it illustrates what I mean more honestly than any general statement could.

Several years ago, I was attending an extracurricular class when our teacher required us to purchase a book. The cost was not large by most measures, but at that time, my father was unable to work because of persistent pain in his leg, and my mother was managing the household on very little. I did not fully grasp any of this. I cried. I pressed them for the money repeatedly, making things more difficult for two people who were already carrying more than I could see.

My father found the money. To this day, I do not know how. What I do know is that he handed it to me without a single word of reproach, just as he always had whenever I needed something. He had never once told me to wait. He had always found a way.

When I think about that now, I feel ashamed — not bitterly, but in the way that teaches you something lasting. That moment showed me, more clearly than anything, what parents are actually doing behind the surface of ordinary life. They are solving problems we do not know exist, so that we never have to know they existed.

I chose to write about this because I see many young people around me who do not yet appreciate their parents in the way I believe they one day will — and I would rather they arrive at that understanding sooner than I did. This is as much a reminder to myself as it is to anyone else.

There is nothing more precious to a parent than their child. That is a truth so widely acknowledged that it risks sounding like a cliché. But the reverse is also true, and far less often said: there is nothing more precious we will ever have than the parents who loved us before we had done anything to deserve it.

Appreciate them while they are here. Love them openly. Protect them as they once protected you. The time we have with them is shorter than it feels — until suddenly it is not long enough at all.

Sports >> *Kenya secures two spots in the Commonwealth Games women's 800m semi-finals despite Chebet's untimely tumble in Glasgow

Odira and Jepkemoi advance to 800m semis as Chebet falls at crucial moment

Odira competing in 800m at Kipkeino Classic

By **Martin Weche**

Lilian Odira and Janet Jepkemoi both qualified for the semi-finals of the women's 800m at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow yesterday, while compatriot Vivian Chebet was denied a place after falling with less than 100 metres to the finish line.

Odira, the world champion, won Heat 2 in 2:01.05, crossing ahead of Wales' Isabelle Boffey, who had led the field through much of the race before fading on the final bend to finish second in 2:01.53. Jamaica's Kelly-Ann Beckford took third in 2:01.63.

Jepkemoi had advanced minutes earlier, finishing third in Heat 1 in 2:02.30. Australia's Sarah Billings won that heat in 2:01.51, with Botswana's Oratile Nowe second in 2:02.11. Jepkemoi's third-place finish was enough to see her through to tonight's semi-finals.

The mood around the Kenyan camp, however, was tempered by events in the same heat. Chebet, an Olympian who had been well positioned to qualify, hit the track in a fall that ended her hopes at the worst possible moment. She crossed the line sixth and last in 2:13.00, a time that reflected the disruption rather than her ability, and she will take no further part in the competition.

The contrast between the two results captured something of the unforgiving nature of middle-distance track racing at major championships. Odira and Jepkemoi produced controlled, measured runs — the hallmark of athletes who understand that heats are about survival, not spectacle. Both read their races well, positioned themselves efficiently, and did what was required without unnecessary exertion. Chebet, by all accounts running within herself and heading for qualification, had that calculation wrenched from her by misfortune rather than error.

Odira's performance was particularly assured. Leading a heat at a major Games carries its own pressures, and the world champion handled them without visible strain. Boffey pushed hard through the back straight and briefly threatened to make the Kenyan work harder than anticipated, but Odira responded with a composure that confirmed why she carries the weight of Kenya's expectations in the event.

Jepkemoi's route through was quieter but no less effective. A third-place finish in a stacked heat — one that included Billings, who ran the fastest qualifying time across both heats — required her to stay calm and competitive in a race she did not lead. She did precisely that.

Kenya has historically been a formidable force in middle-distance events at the Commonwealth Games, and tonight's semi-finals will be viewed as a significant step in determining whether that tradition continues in Glasgow. Both Odira and Jepkemoi will be among the favourites for a final berth, and either could realistically contend for a medal should they reproduce yesterday's qualifying form.

The women's 800m final is scheduled for later this week. Tonight's semi-finals will establish whether Kenya's representation in the decider is one or two strong, and which of the other nations — Australia, Botswana, Wales and Jamaica among them — will also be standing on the start line when it matters most.

For Chebet, there is no path back into this competition. A runner of her calibre and experience will know that yesterday's fall was not the sum of her preparations, but in championship athletics, that distinction offers cold comfort. She leaves Glasgow without a result commensurate with her standing in the event.

Odira and Jepkemoi march on — tonight.

Sports >> *Stoppage-time header from substitute Gusto Mulongo hands Uganda's Vipers SC a 1-0 victory over Gor Mahia in Kigali

Vipers snatch late winner to dump Gor Mahia out of top spot at Cecafa

Gor Mahia's Ben Stanley Omondi (in white) in action against Uganda's Vipers SC. PHOTO/CECAFA ONLINE.

By **Martin Weche**

Vipers SC defeated Gor Mahia 1-0 through a stoppage-time header from substitute Gusto Mulongo yesterday evening to claim top spot in Group A of the Cecafa Club Championships at the Kigali Pele Stadium.

The game had appeared destined for a goalless draw before Mulongo rose to meet a cross and send the ball past Gor goalkeeper Humphrey Katasi in the dying minutes, handing the Ugandan side maximum points and a place in the quarter-finals.

Gor coach Charles Akonnor had made sweeping changes to the side that thrashed Rwanda's APR 5-0 on Saturday, ringing in Katasi for Byrne Omondi between the posts and reshaping his attacking line. New signing Hansel Ochieng' started in place of Paul Okoth, while Ebenezer Adukwaw and Ben Stanley Omondi were handed wing berths. The rotation was a calculated gamble by Akonnor — understandable given the energy expended in Saturday's commanding win — but it ultimately cost K'Ogalo, as the freshened Vipers side found the quality to punish them late.

To Gor's credit, the restructured XI did enough to stay competitive for the vast majority of the contest. Vipers, who themselves arrived in Kigali on the back of a 3-0 demolition of Burundi's Garde Républicaine on Saturday, pressed for the breakthrough but found the Kenyan champions well-organised and disciplined in defence for long stretches. It was only when Mulongo arrived from the bench that the Ugandans found the decisive touch.

The result leaves Gor second in Group A on three points, knowing that their campaign continues but that they must now do so without the safety net of top position. Vipers, with six points from two games, advance directly to the last eight.

For Akonnor, the defeat will sting more for its timing than for any tactical failure. A side that kept Vipers scoreless for the majority of the match came within seconds of sharing the spoils. That Mulongo's intervention arrived in stoppage time will do little to ease the frustration in the Gor dressing room, but the Ghanaian coach will also know that wholesale rotation at a competitive tournament always carries risk, and yesterday that risk materialised.

The Cecafa Club Championships have historically served as an early-season indicator of form and squad depth for East and Central African clubs, and yesterday's encounter underscored both the quality Vipers carry across their roster and the challenge facing Gor as they look to navigate the knockout rounds without the benefit of a settled starting eleven. Akonnor's decision to use the group stage as an opportunity to assess his squad options is not without merit — K'Ogalo have a long domestic season ahead — but it remains a fine line between rotation and disruption.

Gor will need to recalibrate quickly. The quarter-finals await, and the teams that progress from the group stage will arrive fresher and sharper than sides that have been experimenting. Akonnor is expected to return closer to his strongest available eleven as the stakes rise, and the nucleus of Saturday's destructive performance against APR — with Okoth and the established forwards back in contention — gives him options that many coaches in the tournament would welcome.

Vipers, meanwhile, have made a statement. Six points from two matches, both clean sheets, and a winner snatched from the jaws of a draw — it is the profile of a side that knows how to win ugly when the occasion demands. Their quarter-final opponents will have been watching.

Gor Mahia's supporters, accustomed to seeing their club compete deep into knockout rounds, will hope that yesterday's loss proves to be the jolt that sharpens rather than unsettles.

In Kigali, the knockout rounds begin. K'Ogalo cannot afford another late lesson.

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Sifuna declared 'tosha' as Linda Mwananchi storms Western Kenya

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- **Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya, who has positioned himself as one of the movement's most vocal regional anchors, delivered the sharpest declaration of the day, invoking the phrase that has historically marked a definitive political endorsement in Kenyan politics.**
- **"If they dish out money, you take it. I want to challenge the united opposition to stand up and say Sifuna tosha," Natembeya told the crowd to sustained applause.**
- **The invocation of "tosha" — the Kiswahili declaration meaning "enough" or "sufficient", last used memorably in 2002 when Raila Odinga endorsed Mwai Kibaki — is not a casual political gesture in Kenyan political culture. It signals that a candidate has been deemed ready, capable and worthy of the highest office. Its deployment in Bungoma yesterday will be noted far beyond Western Kenya.**

The Linda Mwananchi movement yesterday drew large crowds across Bungoma County as Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna held homecoming rallies through Western Kenya, with opposition leaders formally backing his 2027 presidential bid and hinting at the formation of a breakaway political party.

Thousands lined the roads as the movement traversed Kiminini, Kamukuywa, Kimilili and Chwele before converging for the main rally, in scenes that underscored the growing momentum behind a political formation that has moved rapidly from fringe agitation to a credible electoral force in the space of months. The reception in Bungoma — Sifuna's home county — was particularly fervent, with supporters turning out in numbers that will give both the opposition and the ruling Kenya Kwanza alliance cause to reassess their calculations for the country's most fiercely contested vote-rich region outside Nairobi.

Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya, who has positioned himself as one of the movement's most vocal regional anchors, delivered the sharpest declaration of the day, invoking the phrase that has historically marked a definitive political endorsement in Kenyan politics.

"If they dish out money, you take it. I want to challenge the united opposition to stand up and say Sifuna tosha," Natembeya told the crowd to sustained applause.

The invocation of "tosha" — the Kiswahili declaration meaning "enough" or "sufficient", last used memorably in 2002 when Raila Odinga endorsed Mwai Kibaki — is not a casual political gesture in Kenyan political culture. It signals that a candidate has been deemed ready, capable and worthy of the highest office. Its deployment in Bungoma yesterday will be noted far beyond Western Kenya.

Siaya Governor James Orengo, a seasoned political strategist and one of the opposition's most respected constitutional voices, added his weight to the case against the incumbent, arguing that President William Ruto had forfeited public confidence.

"President Ruto has lost favour with the Kenyan electorate," Orengo said, a blunt assessment from a man not known for rhetorical excess.

But the most consequential signal from yesterday's rallies may not have been the endorsement of Sifuna's presidential bid — it was the suggestion that the opposition is preparing to abandon the ODM structure entirely and build something new. Sifuna himself, who currently serves as ODM Secretary-General, was unambiguous about what he believes has happened to the party he helped build.

"It is evident that they have sold off our party to William Ruto. Now allow us to look for a different alternative," Sifuna said.

Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi followed immediately with a declaration that made the direction of travel explicit. "And that party will include everyone — including you," he told supporters, gesturing to the crowds.

The suggestion of a new party carries significant implications. ODM under the Oburu Oginga-led faction has been negotiating a broad-based arrangement with UDA that would see the party share power with Ruto's administration — a direction that Sifuna's wing has consistently opposed. If the Linda Mwananchi faction formally splits and registers a new vehicle, it would fracture what remains of one of Kenya's most historically powerful opposition structures, potentially reshaping the entire landscape of the 2027 race. It would also force a reckoning among ODM's grassroots supporters about which faction represents the party's authentic identity.

Western Kenya, with its projected 3.2 million votes across Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, Busia and Trans Nzoia counties, has become the most fought-over political terrain outside Mt Kenya. Ruto's allies have been working to consolidate the region through development pledges and the influence of Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and National Assembly Speaker Moses

The Linda Mwananchi brigade during a political tour in Bungoma on July 26, 20206. Photo:edwinsifuna/X.

Wetang'ula. The Linda Mwananchi movement, with Natembeya providing grassroots reach, Sifuna providing the presidential narrative, and Orengo lending constitutional credibility, is mounting a direct challenge to that consolidation effort.

The movement also turned its attention yesterday to the electoral process itself. Embakasi East MP Babu Owino issued a pointed warning to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, demanding transparent and credible management of next year's polls.

"Our votes will not be stolen. We will get vehicles and travel to Nairobi after casting our votes to protect them," Owino said — a statement that reflected both the opposition's deep distrust of the electoral machinery and its determination to mobilise supporters beyond polling day itself.

The challenge before Sifuna and his allies now is to convert yesterday's energy into durable organisation. Crowd sizes in Western Kenya have historically been an imperfect predictor of electoral outcomes — the region has a long record of delivering large rallies for candidates who subsequently underperform at the ballot. Building the structures that translate enthusiasm into votes, particularly in an environment where resources are unevenly distributed, will test the movement's operational capacity in the months ahead.

A TIFA Research poll published last month placed Sifuna at 15 per cent nationally — a remarkable rise from near zero in 2025 — and at 44 per cent as ODM's preferred presidential candidate. Those numbers are significant, but they also reflect the distance still to travel. Ruto retains incumbent advantages, state resources, and a coalition that, fractured as it may be, still controls the machinery of government.

Yesterday in Bungoma, however, the opposition did something it has struggled to do for much of this electoral cycle. It offered a name, a narrative, and a crowd.

Whether that is enough by August 2027 is the only question that matters.

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