



Gachagua accuses Kindiki of weakening Mt Kenya unity for Ruto
DCP party leader Rigathi Gachagua yesterday carried his campaign into Gatundu South, Kiambu County, accusing Deputy President Kithure Kindiki of allowing himself to be used to fracture the unity of the Ki-kuyu, Meru and Embu **Page 8**



Kenya at the crossroads: Blood, ballots and the battle for 2027
Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday accused the Ruto administration of engineering political violence to destabilise the 2027 General Election **Page 12**

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Countdown 2027 **Groups of youths allegedly confronted the convoy and pelted vehicles with stones**

Violence in Homa Bay

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This was not election day. It was not even the formal campaign season. It was a political rally — one of many that will take place before Kenyans cast their ballots in 2027. Yet the politics surrounding it became tense enough to disrupt movement, endanger journalists and raise uncomfortable questions about the direction Kenya's political environment is taking.

That should worry every Kenyan, not just the ODM factions currently fighting for political space.

The Linda Mwananchi Movement, led by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and other political leaders, entered Homa Bay County yesterday amid scenes that cast a long shadow over what was meant to be a grassroots mobilisation exercise.

Sections of roads leading into Homa Bay had been blocked with large stones from as early as 4am, well before the convoy was anywhere near the county. Tyres were set ablaze at Oyugis Junction, and in Ndhiwa, groups of youths allegedly confronted the convoy and pelted vehicles with stones, prompting police to deploy teargas to disperse the crowds.



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Linda Mwananchi Movement leader Edwin Sifuna | Photo: Edwin Sifuna

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Linda Mwananchi campaign tour triumphs in Homa Bay

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyetimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

The Linda Mwananchi campaign tour in Homa Bay was marked by remarkable success, drawing enthusiastic crowds and reinforcing the movement's growing influence across the region. Supporters turned out in large numbers, filling venues with energy and optimism as leaders emphasized unity, reform, and the importance of safeguarding democratic values.

The tour showcased the faction's ability to mobilize diverse groups, from youth to community elders, all eager to engage in constructive dialogue about Kenya's political future. Organizers highlighted the campaign's commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that voices from every corner of Homa Bay were heard and respected.

Key speeches focused on strengthening grass-roots participation, promoting transparency, and building bridges between citizens and leadership. The warm reception underscored the resonance of Linda Mwananchi's message, with many attendees expressing confidence that the movement represents a fresh, people centered approach to politics.

Beyond speeches, the tour featured cultural performances and community engagement activities, reinforcing the campaign's connection to local traditions and values. The atmosphere was celebratory, with participants leaving inspired and motivated to continue supporting the cause.

The Homa Bay tour stands as a testament to Linda Mwananchi's growing momentum, proving that its vision for reform and unity is striking a powerful chord across Kenya.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Kenya Ports Authority yesterday stepped up enforcement of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code at the Port of Mombasa, certifying more than 40 security officers who completed a structured awareness training programme. The exercise included practical drills to test operational readiness and identify security gaps. Security Services Manager Tony Kibwana said compliance with the code was central to protecting port operations and keeping personnel prepared for evolving threats. “Security is not separate from port operations — it is one of the conditions that makes those operations possible,” Kibwana said. KPA described adherence to the framework, which has governed global maritime security since 2004, as fundamental to maintaining the confidence of shipping lines, cargo owners and international trading partners.



Detectives yesterday raided a stall at Platinum Plaza along Tom Mboya Street in Nairobi, arresting a suspect linked to receiving and altering stolen mobile phones. Officers recovered 38 mobile phones, three laptops and a desktop computer from the premises. In a separate operation at the Imenti House car park, two further suspects were intercepted inside a vehicle carrying Lenovo monitors, central processing units, keyboards, cables and accessories — several bearing labels identifying them as government property. Police impounded the vehicle as investigations continued. Detectives are working to determine whether the recovered electronics are connected to reported theft cases and whether those arrested form part of a broader criminal network trading in stolen goods. The suspects remain in custody pending arraignment.



The National Police Service yesterday warned politicians and rally organisers against incitement after arresting 15 suspects found carrying crude weapons along the Kisumu–Kericho Road on Saturday. Preliminary investigations indicate the suspects were hired criminals allegedly recruited to disrupt political activities in the area. NPS said anyone facilitating violence or disorder would face prosecution without exception. Officers deployed to political gatherings were directed to maintain professionalism, impartiality and restraint while upholding citizens’ right to peaceful assembly. The service reaffirmed its non-partisan mandate, stating it is guided solely by the Constitution and the National Police Service Act. Members of the public were urged to report suspicious activity via toll-free lines 999 and 911 or through the DCI WhatsApp line.



Two AFP journalists, Fred Ooko and Brian Ongoro, were beaten, dragged along a road and robbed of cameras, press cards and personal belongings by armed youths during a Linda Mwananchi rally in Homa Bay Town yesterday. The Kenya Editors Guild condemned the attack, calling it an assault on media freedom and the public’s right to information. A boda boda rider intervened, preventing further harm. The Guild called on Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja to order independent investigations and on the Independent Policing Oversight Authority to oversee the process. It also demanded recovery of the stolen equipment and urged political organisers to guarantee journalist safety at rallies. The incident comes as Kenya approaches the 2027 General Election.



Gloria Sekeiyan Khalwale, third wife of Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale, died on Saturday morning after collapsing from a suspected heart attack. Khalwale confirmed the death in a statement, describing her passing as sudden. Sekeiyan was the mother of eight of the senator’s children, including Engine Kukaste Khalwale, who recently graduated as a certified full-stack software engineer from Moringa School. Messages of condolence poured in from across the political spectrum, with Linda Mwananchi Principal Edwin Sifuna and National Assembly Budget and Appropriations Committee Chair Samuel Atandi among those who conveyed their sympathies. Khalwale, who has four wives and 17 children, lost his first wife, Adelaide, in 2019. No prior illness was disclosed.



The Garissa regional immigration office has processed more than 16,000 passport applications since reopening eighteen months ago, with 15,800 passports already collected by residents across six counties including Wajir, Mandera and Tana River. Deputy Officer-in-Charge Abdi Sheikh Ali said strong demand from the region validated the decision to reestablish the office, which had been closed since 2014. Most applicants receive their passports within five days. The office has also established a dedicated desk for Hajj-bound travellers to expedite processing. North Eastern Regional Commissioner John Otieno said the facility had significantly reduced travel costs previously incurred by residents making long-distance trips to Nairobi or Mombasa. Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims Garissa branch chairperson Sheikh Hassan Abdi credited the office with transforming access to travel documents for the Muslim community.

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Politics I want to tell the NCIC, the DCI and the ODPP that while other people make statements, you are very quick to act and arrest them within 24 hours

Arrest Kaluma now, Njeri tells DCI as political speech war turns ugly

With violence already drawing blood in Homa Bay, a Kirinyaga legislator invokes the Constitution to demand equal justice — and the silence of Kenya's watchdogs speaks loudest of all

BY James Mwangi

@themtkenyentimes

Kirinyaga Woman Representative Njeri Maina yesterday called on the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to arrest and prosecute Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma over remarks she described as inflammatory threats against government critics.

Maina made the demand during a church service at PCEA Rev. Samuel Marima Memorial Church in Gatundu South, Kiambu County, where she joined Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua and other opposition figures in condemning a pattern of political violence that has increasingly marked Kenya's road to the August 2027 General Election. Her remarks were direct, her target unambiguous and her frustration with the country's law enforcement agencies unmistakable.

The remarks that triggered Maina's call were made by Kaluma during a political gathering in Homa Bay, where he warned that anyone saying "one term" would face consequences, told supporters that Linda Mwananchi allies could not walk freely, and threatened that hotels which hosted

the opposition team during their rallies would be seized and closed down. "From today, we are giving the command that anyone who says one term passes with them. If you are among us and you worked for the other side, and you don't think you can walk with us, disappear," Kaluma said.

Social media users accused the legislator of promoting political intolerance and called on the NCIC to investigate the comments, with others questioning whether the DCI and NCIC would act against a senior politician allied to the ruling coalition, arguing that the statement amounted to intimidating citizens based on their political leanings. Maina gave voice to those concerns from a church pulpit, investing them with the moral authority of a constitutional argument.

"I want to tell the NCIC, the DCI and the ODPP that while other people make statements, you are very quick to act and arrest them within 24 hours. Kaluma said those things. He is walking around spreading hatred," she said. She invoked Article 27 of the Constitution — which guarantees equality before the law — to argue that political affiliation must not determine how oversight agencies enforce the statute. "Even if we are living in an animal kingdom, our Constitution of Kenya 2010 says in

Article 27 that every person is equal before the law," Maina said. "Therefore, even Peter Kaluma should be arrested and taken to court to answer the charges."

She reserved particular sharpness for the NCIC chairman, whom she reminded holds a bishop's moral office alongside his statutory mandate. "Chairperson of the NCIC, you are a bishop; do the work that you are supposed to do. Even that Peter Kaluma should, by now, have been sought out by the DCI, arrested and taken to court to answer the charges against him," she said. The challenge is as much institutional as it is political — a legislator publicly testing whether Kenya's cohesion and prosecutorial machinery operates by the same rules for allies of power as it does for their opponents.

The context in which Maina spoke gives her argument its weight. The Linda Mwananchi movement entered Homa Bay the same day drawing large crowds amid heightened political tensions, with the rally having become a major political contest weeks before the event. Two AFP journalists were assaulted and robbed. Supporters were beaten. The National Police Service arrested 15 suspects carrying crude weapons along the Kisumu-Kericho Road, describing them as hired criminals recruited to disrupt



Kirinyaga Woman Representative Njeri Maina

political activity. Against that backdrop, Kaluma's earlier warnings about hunting down opposition supporters in hotels and homes were not merely rhetorical excess — they were, in the reading of Maina and many legal observers, a potential contribution to a volatile environment already producing real casualties.

The debate over selective enforcement of hate speech and incitement laws is not new in Kenya, but it has sharpened

considerably as the 2027 election approaches and political rallies increasingly end in violence. The NCIC was established precisely to prevent the kind of ethnically and politically charged language that preceded the 2007 post-election violence, yet critics across the political spectrum have long accused it of inconsistency — moving swiftly against some speakers while treating others with conspicuous patience.

Kaluma had not publicly responded to Maina's remarks at the time of going to press. The DCI, NCIC and ODPP also had not issued statements on the matter. Their silence, in a country where selective justice has become a political grievance in its own right, may prove as telling as any response they eventually offer.

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Politics Gachagua used the Gatundu address to broaden his attack beyond the economy, urging Kenyans to seek new leadership ahead of 2027. “Let us get in line,” he told the congregation

Gachagua accuses Kindiki of weakening Mt Kenya unity for Ruto

With the entire Mt Kenya region drifting from Ruto, the DCP leader's Gatundu rally marks the opposition's most confident push into the president's former stronghold

BY David Kimani

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua yesterday carried his campaign into Gatundu South, Kiambu County, accusing Deputy President Kithure Kindiki of allowing himself to be used by President William Ruto to fracture the unity of the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu communities ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The choice of venue was not coincidental. Gatundu South sits in the heart of the Kenyatta backyard — the ancestral political soil of the former first family — but its deeper significance yesterday was as a symbol of a broader and accelerating estrangement between Mt Kenya and the man the region helped elect president in 2022. That Gachagua chose to plant his flag there, precisely a year before polling day, was a statement as deliberate as anything he said from the podium.

Speaking at PCEA Rev. Samuel Marima Memorial Church, Gachagua accused Kindiki of allowing himself to be used by Ruto to weaken unity among communities in Mt Kenya, insisting that the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu communities needed to remain united rather than allow political leaders to divide them. The crowd, gathered in the shadow of the Aberdare foothills, received him with the enthusiasm of a constituency that has spent months watching its elected representatives quietly reassess their political futures.

Gachagua used the Gatundu address to broaden his attack beyond the economy, urging Kenyans to seek new leadership ahead of 2027. “Let us get in line,” he told the congregation. He also turned his fire on Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi, ridiculing the minister's claim that increased soft drink sales were evidence of economic recovery. “I know these people are treating us like fools, saying that because people drink more soda, the economy is okay,” Gachagua said. The line drew laughter — but it also drew blood. In a country where ordinary Kenyans have spent the better part

of four years absorbing tax increases, rising food costs and a battered shilling, the soda remark landed as a metaphor for a government that had, in the opposition's telling, lost the plot entirely.

The Gatundu rally was the culmination of a two-week, nationwide grassroots blitz that has taken DCP from Kiambu to Kajiado, Narok, Laikipia, Nakuru and back to the Mt Kenya heartland. The tour began on 7 August in Kiambu Town, moved through Kajiado, Narok East and Kipeto, then swept into Nakuru for two full days before returning to Thika and Gatundu, with a thanksgiving rally still to come in Emurua Dikirr on 21 August. The scale of the mobilisation, executed with the discipline of a campaign machine rather than the improvisation of a movement still finding its footing, has unnerved the ruling United Democratic Alliance.

At Nairakia Enkare in Narok East the previous week, Gachagua addressed a packed ground and told supporters: “Today is August 10, 2026. Next year, a day like this, August 10, 2027, we will wake up early and send President William Ruto home.” The words carried the swagger of a man who believes, with some justification given the emerging polling arithmetic, that the political tide is turning.

The most dramatic subplot of the Gatundu rally was provided not by Gachagua but by the MP whose defection handed it symbolic weight. Gatundu South MP Gabriel Kagombe, who recently left UDA for DCP, was heckled by residents the moment he rose to speak, exposing the political difficulties facing his move. Seeking to win over a hostile crowd, Kagombe likened his political transformation to the biblical conversion of Saul to Paul, removing his old cap and replacing it with a DCP-branded one as residents jeered. “I came here as Saul, but now I have become Paul,” he said. It was a moment that illustrated in miniature the broader challenge facing every politician attempting to navigate the rapidly shifting terrain of Kenyan pre-election politics: the



Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua in Gatundu South

electorate, it turns out, has a longer memory than the party whip.

Gachagua, taking the microphone after Kagombe's address, said he had forgiven the politicians who supported his impeachment and removal from office. “Mimi sina shida. Mimi ni Mkristo. Ata wale walini-fukuza kwa office, I have forgiven them,” he said — translated as: “I have no problem. I am a Christian. Even those who drove me from office, I have forgiven them.” Yet in the same breath, he told Kagombe to seek forgiveness not from him but from Gatundu residents — a distinction that sharpened into a warning for every defector calculating the cost of a previous allegiance.

The political realignment sweeping Mt Kenya is the defining structural story of Kenya's road to August 2027. Leaders who have quit UDA include Kagombe, Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi, Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata, Nyanjira Governor Kiarie Badilisha and Lamu Woman Representative Muthoni Marube, while Gachagua has said efforts to unite Mt Kenya against Ruto are going according to plan, adding that some senior officials are merely marking time in government before jumping ship.

The claim is impossible to verify — but it is not implausible, and the government knows it.

DCP is positioning itself as the vehicle for Mt Kenya's political grievances, a region that delivered decisive votes for Ruto in 2022 and now feels, in the assessment of many community leaders, that the bargain was not honoured. Gachagua's ability to frame Ruto's record in terms of personal betrayal rather than mere policy failure gives the critique a populist edge that resonates with voters who expected tangible returns on the political capital they invested four years ago.

The opposition's wider unity project, meanwhile, remains both the single greatest threat to Ruto's re-election and the single greatest risk to the opposition itself. The latest Infotrak survey placed Ruto at 32 per cent, with Kalonzo at 13 per cent, Sifuna and Matiang'i at 12 per cent each, and Gachagua at four per cent, while a TIFA poll put Ruto at 24 per cent, Sifuna at 15 per cent, Matiang'i at 14 per cent and Kalonzo at 13 per cent. The numbers confirm that the opposition collectively commands a majority of public sentiment — and that it would squander that majority if it enters 2027 divided, handing

Ruto precisely the fractured field he requires.

The opposition's greatest challenge may not be persuading Kenyans that change is desirable but persuading its own leaders that unity is strategically necessary. Gachagua understands this, which is why yesterday's Gatundu rally was less a local mobilisation exercise and more a national audition — a demonstration to Kalonzo, Matiang'i, Sifuna and the millions of undecided Kenyans watching from a wary distance that DCP has the organisation, the energy and the geographic reach to anchor whatever coalition ultimately faces Ruto on the ballot.

Whether that coalition holds, whether the egos bend and the regional arithmetic balances, will determine not merely who wins in August 2027 but what kind of Kenya emerges from the contest. The mountain has moved. The only question left is whether it moves as one.

Violence This was not election day. It was not even the formal campaign season. It was a political rally — one of many that will take place before Kenyans cast their ballots in 2027

Political violence mars Linda Mwananchi campaign tour in Homa Bay

Road blockades, stone-throwing and teargas cloud the movement's Homa Bay debut as questions mount over Kenya's political climate ahead of 2027

BY Levis Wangamati and Angela Mwanga
@themkenyaintimes

By the time the Linda Mwananchi convoy reached Homa Bay Town yesterday, the road behind it told its own story: barricaded routes, burning tyres, a disrupted political journey and two journalists injured and stripped of their equipment.

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That should worry every Kenyan, not just the ODM factions currently fighting for political space.

The Linda Mwananchi Movement, led by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and other political leaders, entered Homa Bay County yesterday amid scenes that cast a long shadow over what was meant to be a grassroots mobilisation exercise.

Sections of roads leading into Homa Bay had been blocked with large stones from as early as 4am, well before the convoy was anywhere near the county. Tyres were set ablaze at Oyugis Junction, and in Ndhiwa, groups of youths allegedly confronted the convoy and pelted vehicles with stones, prompting police to deploy teargas to disperse the crowds.

Despite the disruptions, the movement pressed on. The team received a warm reception from residents in Nyandiwa, where large crowds turned out to welcome the convoy. Sifuna addressed supporters, thanking them for their numbers and reaffirming that Linda Mwananchi would continue its grassroots mobilisation across the region.

Yet the warm moments in Nyandiwa could not erase what had happened on the roads leading there.

Several political leaders accompanying the movement were caught up in the disorder. Former Bungoma Governor Wycliffe Wangamati

claimed he was attacked by a group of individuals at Asumbi Junction while travelling to join the rally, condemning the incident as a clear demonstration of political intolerance. Siaya Governor James Orengo also condemned attacks on groups attempting to interfere with the convoy, while reports from across the county described heightened tensions throughout the day.

Then came the journalists.

Two AFP journalists covering the tensions were reportedly assaulted and had their cameras, press cards, driving licences and other belongings taken. Amnesty International Kenya condemned the reported attacks, along with the road blockades, destruction of property, disruption of media broadcasts and restrictions on freedom of movement, and called for independent investigations into the incidents.

Neutral on paper, tested in practice

To be fair to the state, there were signs that authorities understood the gravity of the situation. Police officers intervened to protect the Linda Mwananchi motorcade as it travelled through Homa Bay County, using teargas to disperse groups that attempted to block or attack the convoy.

Those are the right instincts.

But the real test of state neutrality is not what officials say at a briefing. It is whether citizens can exercise their constitutional rights without intimidation, regardless of which political banner they carry.

That is where yesterday's events became uncomfortable.

Authorities knew the rally was coming. The movement had publicly announced its Homa Bay tour, and reports indicate that organisers had notified police in advance. Yet by Sunday morning, key roads had already been blocked and political tensions had escalated well before the convoy arrived.

None of this, on its own, proves deliberate partisan conduct by the state. Police intervention in protecting the convoy is evidence that security officers were working to restore order. It does, however, expose a gap



Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and other leaders in Homa Bay

between the promise of protection and what some citizens and journalists experienced on the ground. That gap deserves answers.

A party colliding with itself

The deeper problem is that yesterday's events are unfolding against the backdrop of a fundamentally changed opposition landscape.

ODM is no longer operating under the political gravity that Raila Odinga provided for decades. His death in October 2025 left behind a party and a movement navigating a new era of competing ambitions, shifting alliances and competing interpretations of its own future direction.

The emergence of Linda Mwananchi and the disagreements surrounding it have made those internal tensions increasingly visible. Yesterday, Sifuna publicly described his break with ODM as having been triggered by the circumstances surrounding the death of blogger Albert Ojwang, underscoring how deeply personal and political the fractures within the movement have become.

But political disagreement is not the problem. Democracy is built on disagreement.

The problem begins when disagreement moves from speeches and

party meetings to road blockades, stone-throwing, intimidation and attacks on journalists. That is the line Kenya cannot afford to cross, and it is a line that was crossed in Homa Bay yesterday.

It is also important to resist the temptation to assign blame before investigations establish who organised particular acts of violence. Political accusations are already flying in several directions, but allegations are not convictions. The proper response to every reported attack is evidence, investigation and accountability — not political speculation.

Why Homa Bay matters beyond Nyanza

It would be a mistake to file yesterday's events away as a regional or intra-party quarrel.

What happened in Homa Bay offers a disturbing preview of what unmanaged political competition can become: rival camps contesting public space, security concerns testing state neutrality, and a press corps caught in the crossfire.

The journalists deserve particular attention. A democracy cannot claim political health when reporters covering public events become targets. Once journalists begin worrying

about whether their cameras, press cards or personal safety will survive a rally, the public loses more than the press does — it loses independent eyes and ears on the ground at precisely the moment those eyes and ears matter most.

The same applies to ordinary citizens. A political rally should not determine whether a trader opens a shop, whether a driver can use a road, whether a church conducts its services normally or whether a citizen feels safe travelling through a town. Politics is supposed to compete for citizens' support, not make citizens pay the price of that competition.

With the 2027 elections drawing closer, political leaders and security agencies face a clear and pressing responsibility: ensuring that Kenyans can attend political gatherings freely and safely, regardless of their affiliations. Political competition is an essential feature of democracy. Violence, intimidation and destruction of property, however, threaten the very freedoms that elections are designed to protect and uphold.

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Political violence mars Linda Mwananchi campaign tour in Homa Bay

Road blockades, stone-throwing and teargas cloud the movement's Homa Bay debut as questions mount over Kenya's political climate ahead of 2027

Contd from page 9

The 2027 question

The most dangerous response to yesterday's events in Homa Bay would be to treat them as an isolated incident, a one-off flare-up in a politically charged county that will settle down on its own.

The most responsible re-

sponse is to ask what they reveal about the political environment Kenya is entering with less than a year to go before the 2027 general election.

Kenya has painful experience with political violence. The lesson from previous election crises is that violence does not necessarily begin on polling day. Intolerance, mobilisation and intimidation build long before a single vote is cast.

The country has been through enough post-election commissions, enough reconciliation processes and enough painful reckonings to know that warning signs ignored in the early stages rarely disappear — they intensify.

That window of time before the formal campaign season is not a problem. It is an opportunity. It gives institutions time to act decisively. It gives political parties time to dis-

cipline their supporters and demonstrate that they understand the difference between robust campaigning and incitement. It gives the police time to strengthen preparedness and build public confidence in their impartiality. And it gives journalists and civil society the space to keep documenting, reporting and holding all sides to account.

Most importantly, it gives Kenya a chance to prevent today's political confrontations

from becoming tomorrow's electoral crisis.

The state does not have to wait for election day to demonstrate its neutrality. Political leaders do not have to wait for campaigns to be formally sanctioned before showing restraint and setting the tone for their supporters. And Kenyans do not need another post-election commission to tell them that the warning signs were visible all along.

The events in Homa Bay

serve as a sharp reminder that political differences must be settled through ideas, debate and the ballot — not through confrontation, stone-throwing or the theft of a journalist's camera.

Homa Bay has already offered the warning.

The question now is whether Kenya will listen while the stakes are still a rally — rather than wait until they become an election.



Linda Mwananchi Movement in Homa Bay

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Politics “I came to visit you many nights when I was the Interior Cabinet Secretary and told you to be loyal to the President so that in the future you could also be in his position,” Kindiki said

Secrets, brothers and a mountain divided: Kindiki’s dossier threat tears Mt Kenya apart

The feud between Kenya’s sitting and former deputy presidents has exploded into the open, laying bare a bitter battle for the soul of Mt Kenya with one year to the 2027 election

BY James Mwangi

[@themkenyatimes](#)

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki on Saturday threatened to publicly disclose details of private late-night meetings he held with his predecessor Rigathi Gachagua before the latter’s impeachment, warning the Democracy for the Citizens Party leader to stop attacking him or face political and personal exposure.

The threat, delivered before a gathering of Mt Kenya East elders at the Solemn Assembly in Nembure, Manyatta Constituency, Embu County, marks the most explosive escalation yet in a feud that has cleaved Kenya’s most electorally significant region into two hostile camps precisely one year before the country goes to the polls.

Kindiki claimed he had kept a dossier of the discussions and warned Gachagua against pushing him further, suggesting he could make public what transpired during the meetings if the former deputy president continued attacking him. He stopped short of revealing the contents, leaving the threat suspended in the air like a loaded weapon — its power derived entirely from what it might contain.

“I came to visit you many nights when I was the Interior Cabinet Secretary and told you to be loyal to the President so that in the future you could also be in his position,” Kindiki said, addressing Gachagua directly from the platform. It was an extraordinary moment — a sitting deputy president publicly narrating secret nocturnal visits to his predecessor, framing them as



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

acts of political mercy that were contemptuously rejected.

The personal dimension of the attack was striking in its directness. “When you hear me addressing you as my brother, it is not because I fear you nor because I love you so much, because you have a lot of disrespect. I am trying to love you, but you have a lot of disrespect,” Kindiki told the assembly. Gachagua had

publicly demanded the previous week that Kindiki stop referring to him as a brother — a demand Kindiki rejected with barely concealed contempt. “You have said openly that I should not call you my brother. I want to tell you, Mr. Rigathi, it is not upon you to tell me how I should call you. It is not your business; it is my business,” he said.

Kindiki defended the fraternal language by grounding it

not in personal affection but in community identity, arguing that elders from the Kikuyu, Meru, Embu and Mbeere communities had defined them as one people. “You are my brother by blood, not by choice,” he said. The distinction was pointed — brotherhood as political obligation, not sentiment.

Kindiki also reminded Gachagua of the difference in their political histories, recalling

his own involvement in efforts surrounding the International Criminal Court cases against President William Ruto and former President Uhuru Kenyatta. “Rigathi, you are a very small-time politician compared to me,” he said. It was the kind of remark that lands differently in Kenyan political culture — where seniority, sacrifice and proximity to power are measured and remembered — and it was designed to sting.

The deputy president went further, laying Gachagua’s impeachment squarely at the door of what he called arrogance and an inability to manage political relationships. “I don’t know what kind of a human being you are. You disrespect your seniors, juniors and your brother. Now, how can you be the only right man in the whole world? You have to live well with your brothers,” Kindiki said. He also issued a direct challenge over the 2027 contest, dismissing Gachagua’s campaign for the opposition and his allies’ “one-term” messaging with undisguised aggression. “Those leaders you are campaigning for to be President — I have heard you saying Kalonzo will be the President. I tell you to continue with that business. You should wait for next year; we will deal with you together with President William Ruto,” he said.

Gachagua, who had addressed a church service in Gatundu South the following day, was in no mood to retreat. “The thing I have a problem with this Kindiki is accepting to be used by William Ruto to divide Mt Kenya,” he said, warning that the communities would suffer if they allowed themselves to be separated. “We are one. If we are divided, we will finish ourselves,” he said. He also alleged, without producing evidence, that Kindiki had distributed money to Embu elders to deepen divisions within the region — a claim the deputy president’s office did not immediately address.

Gachagua accused Ruto of seeking to weaken the political influence of the region by driving a wedge between its communities, arguing that unity among the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru communities was essential ahead of 2027. “As Kenyans, our strength is

our unity. If we are divided, Ruto will finish us,” he said. He also urged Kindiki to confront Ruto directly over the region’s concerns rather than serve as a vehicle for policies that, in his telling, were designed to neutralise Mt Kenya’s collective bargaining power.

The bitterness of the exchange reflects something deeper than personal rivalry. Mt Kenya delivered Ruto his 2022 victory margin, and both men understand that whoever commands the region’s loyalty in 2027 holds the key to State House. With rival camps seeking to shape the region’s political direction, the Gachagua-Kindiki exchange is deepening the contest over whether Mt Kenya remains united or enters the next election divided along eastern and western lines.

Kindiki, for his part, attempted to use the Embu platform to appeal for regional cohesion — on his terms. He called on Mt Kenya elders to stop blaming the western bloc for political divisions, urged politicians to allow elders to engage their counterparts and rebuild unity, and condemned the rising tide of political violence spreading across Central Kenya. “This culture of violence must come to a stop. We cannot allow our young people to turn to violence for whatever reason,” he said. He also reframed the deputy presidency itself as a communal asset rather than personal achievement, arguing that the position belonged to Mt Kenya as a whole. “This position of Deputy President is not my personal position, and it was not also for Rigathi personally. It was and it is for the community,” he said.

Elders from Njuri Ncheke, Kiama Kia Muembu and the Mwea Council of Elders attended the Solemn Assembly — their presence lending the gathering the weight of cultural authority that both sides are now competing to claim. That competition, over who speaks for the mountain, who betrayed it and who can reunite it, is the central political drama of Kenya’s pre-election year. The dossier remains sealed. For now.

Politics “Ruto bears the responsibility for security,” Kalonzo said. “We do not want Kenya to be a state where citizens are not allowed to elect their leaders democratically.”

Kenya at the crossroads: Blood, ballots and the battle for 2027

With twelve months to the general election, political violence, a fractured opposition and a government under siege are converging into the most consequential electoral contest since independence

BY Grace Wanja

[@themkenyatimes](#)

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday accused the Ruto administration of engineering political violence to destabilise the 2027 General Election, as Kenya’s pre-election season descended into its most turbulent period in recent memory. Speaking during a church service in Machakos County, Kalonzo made his most direct and pointed accusation yet against President William Ruto, alleging that the government was not merely failing to contain political violence but was actively sponsoring it. His remarks came hours after armed youths attacked the Linda Mwananchi convoy in Homa Bay Town, assaulting supporters, roughing up journalists and destroying camera equipment. “Ruto bears the responsibility for security,” Kalonzo said. “We do not want Kenya to be a state where citizens are not allowed to elect their leaders democratically.”

His call was unambiguous: Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo should resign. The clock, Kalonzo reminded the nation, was ticking — 358 days to polling day. “Ruto’s regime is looking for ways to escape elections,” he said, “but Kenyans will not allow it.”

The language was incendiary, but the backdrop gave it force. The Linda Mwananchi movement entered Homa Bay yes-

terday drawing large crowds as its convoy moved through the county amid heightened political tensions, in what had become a major political contest weeks before the event. The movement, led by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and Siaya Governor James Orenge, had been pushing deeper into Nyanza — territory long regarded as an ODM stronghold — as part of a sustained nationwide mobilisation campaign. Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga, who also serves as ODM national chairperson, came under scrutiny over alleged plans to disrupt the function, as did Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma, whom the Sifuna-led team accused of mobilising youths against the rally. Both leaders denied the allegations.

Orenge had earlier claimed he was the main target of violence being organised and funded by the state through elected leaders and politicians from Homa Bay County, alleging that meetings had been held in hotels and public places to coordinate attacks, and that crude weapons including runkus, pangas and knives had been distributed to youths. The rally went ahead regardless, but the violence that accompanied it shocked the nation. Two AFP journalists, Fred Ooko and Brian Ogoro, were beaten and robbed by armed youths — a development that prompted the Kenya Editors Guild to call for independent police investigations and drew condemnation from across the political

spectrum.

Former Attorney General Justin Muturi condemned the attacks, warning that political violence and intimidation could undermine Kenya’s democratic process and set a dangerous precedent as the country approaches 2027. “Our politics must be a contest of ideas, not a battle of goons,” he said.

The Homa Bay confrontation was not an isolated incident. Two people sustained serious gunshot wounds after armed men attacked a Linda Mwananchi rally in Nyahururu town, and a Linda Mwananchi convoy in Keumbu, Kisii County, was violently attacked in July, with one person killed and more than 20 others injured. The pattern of disruption has hardened into a disturbing trend — opposition convoys ambushed, journalists assaulted, supporters intimidated — occurring with a regularity that political analysts say is unprecedented outside of a formal election campaign period.

Ruto’s administration has pushed back firmly against accusations of state-sponsored violence. The National Police Service, which last week arrested 15 suspects found carrying crude weapons along the Kisumu–Kericho Road, described its operations as intelligence-led and warned that anyone facilitating violence would face prosecution. Yet for Kalonzo and his allies, police statements have done little to alleviate what they describe as a systemic assault



Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka

on free political activity.

The political landscape into which this violence is erupting is itself extraordinarily fragmented. The latest Info-trak national survey, released on 13 July, placed Ruto at 32 per cent, followed by Kalonzo at 13 per cent, Sifuna and Fred Matiang’i at 12 per cent each, and Gachagua at four per cent, while a TIFA survey placed Ruto at 24 per cent, Sifuna at 15 per cent, Matiang’i at 14 per cent and Kalonzo at 13 per cent. The numbers tell a clear story: Ruto leads a deeply fragmented field, and his most durable political advantage may not be his own popularity but the inability of his opponents to unite behind a single challenger.

Kalonzo, Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua and Democratic Action Party–Kenya leader Eugene Wamalwa held high-level consultations in Nairobi on 4 August, reaffirming their commitment to building a united opposition capable of offering Kenyans a credible alternative government. Yet the unity project remains fraught. Although the coalition has consistently maintained that its immediate focus is unseating Ruto, behind the scenes there is growing competition over who will eventually fly the alliance’s presidential flag, with differences emerging over Gachagua’s growing influence raising questions about the coalition’s cohesion.

If today’s political alignments remain largely unchanged, Ruto’s greatest advantage

may not be overwhelming public enthusiasm for his administration but the absence of a unified challenger capable of converting dissatisfaction into a coherent electoral coalition. Conversely, the opposition’s greatest challenge may not be persuading Kenyans that change is desirable but persuading its own leaders that unity is strategically necessary.

Gachagua is understood to favour Kalonzo as the opposition’s presidential candidate, with discussions within the coalition simultaneously focused on finding a senior role for Gachagua should the opposition win power — including a position akin to Prime Cabinet Secretary, subject to constitutional developments. Matiang’i, carrying the Jubilee banner and backed by former President Uhuru Kenyatta, has consolidated significant traction, particularly in Kisii and Migori. Linda Mwananchi, meanwhile, is pushing aggressively into the Luo Nyanza heartland, seeking to inherit the political capital left by the late Raila Odinga, who died in October 2025.

Kalonzo has hinted that the Linda Mwananchi faction and the United Opposition are in talks to work together ahead of 2027, revealing that a serious conversation is under way between the two formations aimed at liberating Kenya from what he termed poor leadership and economic mismanagement. Whether those talks survive the egos, the regional arithmetic and the mutual suspicions that have

historically derailed Kenyan opposition coalitions remains the defining political question of this pre-election season.

Kalonzo also raised concerns about electoral integrity, urging the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission to ensure the polls are fraud-proof and demanding that Smartmatic not be retained as a service provider. “Kenya needs to be settled as a democratic country,” he said. “Kenyans should be allowed to elect their leaders without state capture.” The IEBC has confirmed 10 August 2027 as polling day, though a Malindi High Court ruling that elections were constitutionally due in 2026 — later suspended — has added legal complexity to an already volatile environment.

What is unfolding in Kenya is not merely a political contest between personalities. It is a reckoning over what kind of democracy the country intends to be — one where dissent is accommodated, where journalists can report without fear, where opposition convoys are not met with runkus and where the ballot, and not the boot, determines who governs. Twelve months remain. The violence has already started, the coalitions are not yet formed, and the nation, watching anxiously, is still waiting for a leader with the authority to say: enough.

Illegal pesticides The urgency behind the crackdown is sharpened by the Amboseli tragedy. Post-mortems on the 15 dead elephants pointed to cyanide poisoning

Poison in the supply chain: PCPB cracks down on illegal pesticides after elephant deaths

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The Pest Control Products Board has warned agrovets across Kenya that trading in unregistered, counterfeit or banned pesticides risks immediate arrest, prosecution and business closure as the regulator intensifies a nationwide enforcement campaign linked to the deaths of 15 elephants in Amboseli.

PCPB General Manager for Compliance and Enforcement Lawrence Kalawa told dealers to verify every pesticide they stock against the Board’s official register before offering it for sale. “These illegal pesticides are not authorised, and this is a message to those who think otherwise,” Kalawa said, directing traders to the PCPB website for confirmation. “Dealers whose products are not listed on the official register

should stop the business.” The warning was unambiguous: enforcement measures are already active, and ignorance of the register will not serve as a defence.

The urgency behind the crackdown is sharpened by the Amboseli tragedy. Post-mortems on the 15 dead elephants pointed to cyanide poisoning, with investigators examining possible links to contaminated crops in the surrounding area. Conservation groups have warned that chemicals potent enough to kill wildlife at that scale could equally threaten human health if contaminated produce enters the food chain — a concern that transforms what might otherwise appear to be a narrow regulatory matter into a public health emergency.

The PCPB is currently prosecuting 51 cases involving illegal pesticides. Four cases concluded in convictions during the last financial year, attracting fines ranging from KSh100,000

to KSh750,000. Offences range from selling unregistered or counterfeit products and stocking expired pesticides to dealing in banned active ingredients. Beyond fines, authorities can seize stock, close premises and revoke licences.

Officials say some illegal products enter Kenya through porous borders, though tighter controls have reportedly reduced illegal inflows by up to 90 per cent. The greater concern now is stock already circulating through domestic markets. For farmers and consumers, the risk extends beyond product authenticity — illegal or misused chemicals can leave residues on vegetables and other crops that breach approved Maximum Residue Levels, creating food-safety hazards invisible to the eye but measurable in the blood.

PCPB has urged all agrovets to obtain valid authorisation, ensure their products carry official safety



A man spraying pesticides on his farm

stickers and confirm registration before any sale. Members of the public have been asked to report suspicious agrovets and unlabelled pesticides to the authorities. When elephants are dying in a national

park and prosecutors are pursuing 51 active cases, the agrovet shelf is no longer just a commercial space — it is a frontline.



Take memories, leave only footprints



Take memories,
and leave only footprints.

God created this beautiful world
with flowers, trees, rivers, and skies.
How wisely we use it
is what truly matters.

We explore the beauty of flowers,
but we should never pluck them
or try to spoil their beauty.

Wherever you go,
remember one important thing
protect nature
and keep the Earth beautiful.

Yet, we are still unaware
of how harmful plastic can be.
It pollutes our surroundings
and destroys our precious
natural resources.

Let us understand
the importance of being eco-friendly.
Let us reduce plastic,
reuse what we can,
and protect what nature has given us.

Do you know
how to protect nature
and make our world more beautiful?

Start with yourself.

Take memories,
leave only footprints,
and let nature breathe.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative writer
Chengalpattu district

Sometimes, you need a mute button for your feelings



Sometimes, you need a mute button for your
feelings.

Feelings are a way of communicating with
everyone.

Some people express their happiness openly,
while others keep their deep feelings at the
bottom of their hearts. Some situations do not
give us the chance to reveal our feelings.

Before you speak,
think about whether it is the right time to speak

and whether your words will bring happiness or
hurt someone.

If your words might hurt someone,
it is better not to say them.

At that moment, you need a mute button.

Using this mute button can lead you and others
to happiness and peace. So, always try your best
to speak beautiful and kind words.
Your words can spread happiness throughout the
world.

When you need a mute button, use it.
It may help you live a peaceful and happy life.

G. YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

The bell rings



Ding, ding, the school bell rings,
A new lesson slowly begins.

We enter class with happy faces,
And settle down in our own places.

Teachers guide us as we learn,
Page by page, our minds can turn.
The bell keeps moving through the day,
Leaving memories in our hearts.

V.Joshika
Grade 8
John dewey matric higher secondary school, Link
road, panruti.



Shall I be sentenced?
I am urged to demolish her house
No peaceful weapon I found
How can I shatter her dreams
Yet I have to demolish
Her children are sleeping
who knows may be weeping
I am confused
Yet I am urged to demolish
I thought my speech on equal rights
She is the symbol of hardwork
I raised my hand

and wondered, is it right?
Prayed to God before sinning
Yet I have to demolish
I am a sinner
Yes, I've demolished her house and killed everyone
there
To be neat and tidy
My house is clean now but hers is shattered
I am crying inside
Shall I be sentenced
for having cleared the cobweb?

Raj Ganesh

Dr. K.R.GANESAN
BLOCK RESOURCE TEACHER EDUCATOR
BLOCK RESOURCE CENTRE,
GOBICHETTIPALAYAM
ERODE Dt.
TAMILNADU, INDIA

The gift of time



Time moves quietly,
without stopping for anyone.
It passes through every moment,
leaving memories behind.

We cannot see time,
but we can feel its journey.
A child becomes an adult,
and yesterday becomes a memory.

Time gives us chances
to learn from our mistakes,
to follow our dreams,

and to become better.

We often waste it
thinking we have plenty.
But every second that passes
can never return.

So let us value each moment,
use our time wisely,
love the people around us,
and make every day meaningful.

Time is a precious gift,
given equally to everyone.
We cannot hold it in our hands,
but we can choose how to use it.

M.R.Hanshiga
Grade 8-C
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary school
Panruti Cuddalore Tamil Nadu India.

School bell



The school bell rings and my heart jumps too,
Like a starter gun for all we do.
It calls us in from laughter and play,
To books, to dreams, to a brand new day.

In class the bell is our quite guide,
Telling us went to turn the tide.
From math to art, from test to cheer,

It marks the movements we hold dear.

When the last bell rings, The Gates swing wide,
Joints get stiff from sitting ,we stretch with
pride.
We run ,we talk ,we carry the light,
Of all we learnt from morning to night.

"A bell isn't just sound-
It's the beat of the peace where we grow and are
found."

Penned By: JEGADEESWARI V
STANDARD:11-A
SCHOOL: St. Joseph's Matriculation HIGHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL ACHARAPAKKAM.

Life Modern technology has introduced another layer of difficulty: the battle for our attention. Smartphones and social media deliver a continuous supply of messages

Your brain on modern life: Rewire, recharge and refocus

In a world of endless notifications and digital noise, understanding how your brain adapts may be the most important thing you do today

BY Angela Mwanga
@themtkenyatimes

The human brain is constantly adapting to the world around it. Every new skill we learn, every conversation we have and even the way we choose to spend our free time influences how our brain works. In today’s fast-paced digital world, however, that remarkable organ faces a new and relentless challenge: an endless stream of information, notifications and distractions competing for its attention around the clock.

One of the brain’s most fascinating qualities is neuroplasticity — its capacity to change and reorganise itself throughout life. Learning a new language, reading a demanding book, playing an instrument or picking up a new skill can create and strengthen connec-



tions between brain cells. This means the brain is not permanently fixed in its ways. With consistent practice and mental stimulation, people can continue developing their cognitive abilities at virtually any stage of life.

But learning is only one part

of keeping the brain in good shape. Sleep matters just as much. While we sleep — particularly during deep sleep — the brain carries out essential maintenance. The glymphatic system helps clear metabolic waste from brain tissue by allowing cerebrospinal fluid to

circulate through it. Adequate sleep, in other words, gives the brain the recovery time it needs after a demanding day.

Modern technology has introduced another layer of difficulty: the battle for our attention. Smartphones and social media deliver a contin-



uous supply of messages, videos, notifications and stimulating content, all designed to keep us engaged. Constantly checking a phone or jumping between tasks makes it harder to concentrate for extended periods. What begins as a quick glance at a notification can easily consume an hour of scrolling without a moment’s thought.

The answer is not necessarily to abandon technology altogether, but to take deliberate control of how we use it. Turning off unnecessary notifications, keeping phones out of reach during work or study, taking regular breaks from screens and setting aside time for uninterrupted activity can go a long way towards restoring focus and reclaiming mental clarity.

Physical activity matters too. Exercise improves blood

flow to the brain and supports healthy cognitive function. Combined with a balanced diet, meaningful social connections, adequate sleep and a commitment to continuous learning, movement contributes significantly to overall mental well-being.

Ultimately, modern life is shaping our brains whether we are paying attention or not. The encouraging news is that we have more influence over that process than we might think. By learning new things, resting properly and protecting our attention from unnecessary noise, we can give our brains the environment they need to thrive.

The brain is always changing. The question worth asking is whether our daily habits are changing it in the direction we actually want.

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Business Catherine Kathure, has quietly become one of Kenya's most compelling business stories — not through fanfare, but through results

The woman building more than rooftops

BY John Kariuki

@themtkenyatimes

There are leaders who manage businesses, and there are those whose vision becomes something larger than the enterprise they run. Catherine Kathure, chief executive of Homelink Mabati, belongs in the second group.

She is not the loudest voice in the room. She does not need to be. Her record speaks with a clarity that renders self-promotion unnecessary. Under her stewardship, Homelink Mabati has grown into more than a supplier of roofing materials. It has become, for many Kenyans, the first tan-



Catherine Kathure, CEO of Homelink Mabati

gible step towards owning a home.

That is no small thing.

The construction and building materials sector in Kenya is competitive, capital-intensive and historically dominated by men. To lead within it requires not only commercial acumen but a particular kind of resilience — the willingness to be underestimated and to keep going regardless. Kathure has demonstrated both qualities in abundance.

What distinguishes her leadership is its texture. She combines commercial discipline with a genuine interest in the people her business serves. Clients are not transactions. Suppliers are not just vendors. Staff are not simply head-

count. This orientation — rare in any industry, rarer still in construction — has shaped the culture of Homelink Mabati in ways that are visible to anyone who has dealt with the company.

She understands, too, that a roof is never just a roof. It is security. It is dignity. It is the physical expression of a family's ambition. A business that grasps that truth about its own product is a business with a clear sense of purpose, and purpose, in Kathure's case, translates directly into how the company is run.

Her story carries weight beyond Homelink Mabati. For women navigating Kenya's business landscape — particularly in industries where

their presence at senior level remains the exception — she is a straightforward example that the space exists, and that it can be occupied with authority and grace in equal measure.

She has not arrived at this point by accident. The journey reflects sustained effort, sound judgement and the kind of consistency that compounds over time. There is no shortcut embedded in her biography. There is simply the work, done well, over a long period.

Kenya's private sector needs more such figures: executives who build institutions rather than profiles, who measure success by what their organisations deliver rather than by the attention they attract, and who understand that enduring reputation is earned quietly.

Catherine Kathure is one of them.

Politics The initiative follows Passaris' participation in the Mother and Baby Exhibition

Passaris launches baby cot giveaway for August mums in Nairobi

BY John Kariuki

@themtkenyatimes

Nairobi Woman Representative Esther Passaris has launched a baby cot giveaway targeting expectant mothers in the capital whose estimated delivery dates fall in August.

Passaris announced she will give away three baby cots and three rocking chairs to selected mothers-to-be as part of a personal initiative to celebrate and support women in the final stretch of pregnancy.

"Are you an expectant mum in Nairobi with an ETD in August? This one is for you!" she said.

To enter, expectant mothers are invited to send Passaris a direct message along with a photo of their baby bump. Eligibility requirements include being a registered voter in Nairobi, residing in the county, and having an estimated delivery date this month.

The initiative follows Passaris' participation in the Mother and Baby Exhibition, where she purchased the cots earmarked for the giveaway. The exhibition, which brings together families, businesses and organisations in the maternal and child welfare space, is running at August 7th Memorial Park in Nairobi until August 16.

Passaris encouraged residents — particularly mothers and young families — to visit the exhibition and explore the products and services on offer. "Send in your DM and good luck, Mama," she added, wishing the hopeful recipients well as they prepare to welcome their newborns.

The giveaway underscores the importance of community support during pregnancy and early motherhood, and keeps maternal and child wellbeing firmly at the centre of Passaris' public outreach in Nairobi.



Nairobi Woman Representative Esther Passaris




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Conservation The philosophy of “one seedling, one farmer, one cow at a time” is powerful precisely because it speaks in the language of ordinary life

Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme: A legacy of restoration, community empowerment and shared responsibility



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyaintimes

“Every time I plant a tree seedling, it reminds me that it is not about me. It is about us. It is about humanity.”
— Dr. Chris K. Kiptoo

There are forests we inherit, and there are forests we fight to restore. Kaptagat belongs to the second category. Its story is not simply about trees, hectares, boundaries or government programmes. It is a deeply human story about a landscape that has given people water, livelihoods, pasture and identity, and about communities that have themselves faced the difficult choices that come with poverty, changing climate and diminishing natural resources.

The story of the Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme (KICP) is therefore ultimately a story about people. It is about what becomes possible when conservation ceases to be something imposed upon communities and becomes something they can see, touch and benefit from in their own lives.

For decades, conservation in many parts of Kenya was approached largely through enforcement. Forests were protected by rules, restrictions and the ever-present possibility of punishment. Those measures have their place, because forests are national assets and cannot be left to destruction. But enforcement alone cannot create a lasting relationship between people and nature. A community that sees a forest only as a forbidden space may obey the law when watched, but a community that understands the forest as part of its own future will protect it even when nobody is watching. That is the deeper philosophy behind KICP.

Under the leadership and commitment associated with Dr. Chris Kiptoo, the programme helped advance a different conversation around Kaptagat: What if restoring the forest could also restore the dignity of the people living around it? That question changed the meaning of conser-



Dr. Chris K. Kiptoo

vation.

The philosophy of “one seedling, one farmer, one cow at a time” is powerful precisely because it speaks in the language of ordinary life. The seedling represents nature’s recovery. The farmer represents the human being whose daily decisions determine whether conservation succeeds. The cow represents livelihood, income, food security and economic dignity.

Put simply, KICP recognised a truth that conservation debates sometimes overlook: a family struggling to survive cannot be expected to carry the entire burden of protecting an ecosystem without seeing a pathway to a better life. That is not an excuse for environmental destruction. It is a recognition of human reality.

If a farmer can earn more from a productive dairy cow, access better markets, obtain clean energy, secure water and improve household income while simultaneously protecting the forest, conservation ceases to be a sacrifice and becomes an investment. The interests of the forest and the interests of the family begin to converge.

This is where the proposed cow hotel concept becomes particularly significant. Properly organised through cooperative and SACCO structures, such an initiative can give farmers access to improved feeding, veterinary services, breeding, professional management and organised milk marketing. The farmer retains own-

ership of the animal while benefiting from collective systems that would be difficult to achieve individually. That is not merely a livestock project. It is a development philosophy.

A cow that produces reliably can pay school fees, support household nutrition, meet medical expenses, provide savings and create a measure of financial security. And when that income reduces the economic pressure on a household, the temptation to depend excessively on forest resources can also decline. In that sense, the cow becomes an unlikely partner in forest conservation. This is why the achievements of KICP should not be reduced to the number of seedlings planted. Trees matter, certainly. But the deeper measure of restoration is whether people begin to believe again that the future is worth investing in.

Through its four broad pillars—Pesa Mfukoni, Kawi Safi Nyumbani, Maji Nyumbani and Mazingira Safi—KICP has sought to address the reality that environmental degradation rarely exists in isolation. Poverty, energy insecurity, inadequate water access, agricultural vulnerability and environmental destruction are interconnected problems. Treating one while ignoring the others simply moves the problem from one place to another. The most enduring achievement, therefore, may be the restoration of hope.

A farmer who sees a seedling grow, a cow increase household income, a

water source protected and a cleaner energy alternative become available begins to see conservation differently. The forest stops being merely government property somewhere beyond the farm boundary. It becomes part of the family’s own inheritance. That change in attitude is priceless.

It is also why the next chapter of Kaptagat must be approached with considerable wisdom. Kenya Forest Service has an important statutory responsibility to protect and manage public forests. Professional forest management, scientific oversight, enforcement of the law and protection of forest boundaries are indispensable. No conservation programme can succeed without clear institutional responsibility. But institutional responsibility should never be confused with institutional ownership of the conservation conversation.

The people living around Kaptagat are not outsiders to its future. They are part of it. That distinction matters particularly when questions of fencing, access, boundaries and forest management arise. A fence may define a physical boundary, but it cannot by itself create a culture of conservation. A fence can protect a boundary; only trust can protect a forest for generations.

The answer, therefore, should not be to turn Kaptagat into a battlefield of institutions, communities and competing interpretations. The answer is dialogue, clarity of mandate and partnership. KFS, KICP, community organisations, local leadership, farmers and residents must each understand both their responsibilities and the value of the others’ contribution. There is no victory in winning an argument if the forest ultimately loses.

Dr. Chris Kiptoo’s contribution to the Kaptagat story should consequently be viewed in its wider context. His significance lies not simply in seedlings planted or programmes initiated, but in helping popularise an idea that Kenya urgently needs: conservation must have a human face. People must be able to see themselves in the environmental future we ask them to protect.

That is perhaps the most important legacy of KICP. It reminds us that a tree is not merely a tree. It can be shade for a child, protection for a water source, habitat for wildlife, a

defence against climate change and a promise to someone not yet born. A cow is not merely livestock. It can be school fees, food, dignity and economic resilience. A stream is not simply water flowing through a landscape. It is a lifeline for households, farms and communities downstream. And a forest is not simply acreage enclosed on a map. It is a living system upon which human life depends.

Kaptagat therefore deserves something better than institutional confrontation or political interpretation. It deserves a mature conversation about what has been achieved, what remains unfinished and how the gains can be protected without destroying the community relationships that made them possible.

The next chapter should build on the legacy rather than erase it. It should strengthen the role of KFS while preserving community ownership of conservation. It should improve accountability without undermining legitimate initiatives. It should secure forest boundaries where necessary while ensuring that communities do not feel punished for having participated in restoration. Above all, it should recognise that conservation is strongest when people see themselves not as subjects of environmental policy, but as custodians of their own future.

Kaptagat has already taught Kenya a valuable lesson: nature and humanity do not have to be enemies. When institutions cooperate, when communities are empowered, when livelihoods are strengthened and when environmental responsibility is shared, restoration becomes more than a government programme. It becomes a social movement.

The real legacy of Kaptagat will therefore not be measured only by how many trees survive. It will be measured by whether the next generation inherits a healthier forest, stronger communities, protected water sources, more resilient livelihoods and, above all, the conviction that conservation belongs to everyone.

As Dr. Chris Kiptoo’s words remind us, planting a seedling was never really about one person. It was about us. It was about humanity.

And perhaps that is the principle upon which Kaptagat’s future should now be built: “conservation should never become a battle between institutions and communities. It should become a partnership in which every tree represents shared responsibility, every stream represents shared hope, and every restored forest represents a future that belongs to all of us”.

Elections The demand, made in a statement issued yesterday, lands at a moment of acute sensitivity. With exactly one year until the August 2027 General Election

No black boxes: Muturi demands open election technology with one year to the polls

As the IEBC floats a KSh7B tender for election hardware, the opposition is drawing a hard line on vendor secrecy — and invoking the Supreme Court to make it stick

BY Grace Wanja
@themkenyentimes

Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi yesterday demanded that all technology vendors bidding for Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission contracts ahead of the 2027 General Election accept mandatory disclosure of their systems, servers, logs and audit trails as a condition of award, warning that no private company could hide behind intellectual property rights when the integrity of a national election was at stake.

The demand, made in a statement issued yesterday, lands at a moment of acute sensitivity. With exactly one year until the August 2027 General Election, the IEBC has officially triggered the procurement phase for critical election infrastructure, floating a massive international tender for biometric kits and ballot papers under reference IEBC/01T/02/2026-2027, inviting eligible international and local bidders to supply, deliver, install, test and commission the Kenya Integrated Elections Management System hardware. The scale of the exercise — and the controversies that have trailed previous technology procurements — make Muturi’s intervention timely and politically pointed.

“Intellectual property cannot be unconditional where public elections are concerned,” Muturi said. “A vendor cannot be allowed to hide behind proprietary rights when Kenyans, authorised institutions or the courts need to establish whether an electoral system functioned properly.” The argument is legally grounded. The Supreme Court’s handling of the 2022 presiden-



Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi

tial petition included orders permitting scrutiny of IEBC servers and election technology — a precedent Muturi is now insisting must be baked into the procurement contracts themselves, not litigated after the fact when votes are already counted and the damage is done.

He has previously called for full disclosure of election technology systems, independent audits and strict oversight of vendors contracted by the electoral commission, warning: “There can be no secret servers, no hidden systems, no untouchable vendors and no black boxes in a democratic election.” Yesterday’s statement sharpened that position into a concrete contractual requirement — every vendor must accept, before being awarded a contract, that relevant technical records will be available for lawful scrutiny by the IEBC, authorised auditors, independent experts, investigative institutions and the Judiciary.

Muturi warned that Kenya risks repeating the challenges witnessed during the 2022 presidential election petition if technology providers are

allowed to invoke intellectual property rights to restrict access to critical electoral data and systems. The 2022 petition, in which the Supreme Court ultimately upheld Ruto’s election, saw prolonged disputes over access to servers — disputes that eroded public confidence in the result even among those who accepted its legal validity. Muturi’s point is that the answer to that problem cannot be left to courtroom improvisation in the middle of an election dispute. It must be settled now, in the tender documents, before a single contract is signed.

“Technology must serve democracy; democracy must never become captive to technology,” Muturi said — a formulation that distils the opposition’s broader anxiety about the 2027 electoral process into a single, quotable principle. That anxiety is widely shared. Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka has also called on Chief Justice Martha Koome to expedite all pending general election cases before the High Court, particularly those touching on alleged unlawful procurement of electoral materials, while

Muturi himself has insisted the opposition cannot go into 2027 with what he called a discredited technology platform.

The proposal forms part of a broader electoral integrity campaign that Muturi has been prosecuting with increasing urgency as the election cycle opens. He has called for independent security audits, end-to-end encryption, immutable audit trails and disclosure of system logs whenever disputes arise, and has demanded greater transparency in the procurement and deployment of election technology. He has also called for a forensic audit of the population and identi-

ty-management systems and a freeze on changes to the voter register pending the outcome of such an audit — measures that, taken together, amount to a comprehensive pre-election integrity framework that the IEBC has yet to formally endorse.

Muturi argued that every voter should be able to trace their vote from the polling station to the final tally, and that the electoral system must provide sufficient evidence to resolve disputes whenever they arise. “We want an election that is credible, free, fair and verifiable,” he said, adding that Kenyans who cast their ballots should have confidence

that the vote counted at the polling station is the same vote reflected in the final results.

IEBC Commissioner Francis Aduol, speaking during the launch of the commission’s Election Operations Plan in June, acknowledged that key planning documents had been delayed, noting that the strategic plan covering 2024 to 2029 was only being unveiled in 2026. The admission gave opposition leaders further ammunition to press for greater urgency and transparency in the commission’s preparations.

The stakes of getting election technology right in Kenya have never been higher. With polls placing Ruto at between 24 and 32 per cent and the combined opposition commanding a majority of public sentiment, a disputed result in August 2027 would detonate in a political environment already primed by violence, fractured coalitions and deep institutional mistrust. Muturi’s message to the IEBC is as simple as it is fundamental: open the black box now, or risk a nation that will refuse to accept whatever comes out of it on election night.

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UN In its 80 years of existence, regional distribution of Secretary Generals has been 4 from Europe, 2 from Asia and Africa, 1 from Latin America

Is the world ready for a female UN Secretary-General?

BY Christine Muchira

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As the second and last term of Antonio Guterres comes to a close in December 2026, the race for the next United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has gained momentum on who will steer the world's premier multilateral body in 2027.

Since the United Nations was founded in 1945, all the nine Secretaries-General that have served the organisation have been men.

While the office has been held by leaders from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, no woman has ever served as the UN's top diplomat.

The contest now intensifies with one question taking center stage, 'Is the world ready for a female UN Secretary-General?'

There is also growing international support for electing the first female UN Secretary-General.

When the race for the next SG officially opened on 25 November 2025, the President of the UN General Assembly, Annalena Baerbock, and the President of the Security Council for November 2025, Michael Imran Kanu, sent a letter to Member States. In their letter, they called for a process guided by transparency, inclusivity and integrity while also urging member states to consider women candidates.

Similarly, the "1 for 8 Billion" campaign has intensified calls for a transparent, inclusive and merit-based selection process while urging Member States to nominate qualified women.

Candidates for UN Secretary General position

There are several high profile candidates that have entered the race so far with female candidates dominating the line up.

Out of the seven candidates nominated for the position, four are female.

They include: Former President of Chile and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Rebeca Grynspan of Costa Rica, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former President of the UN General Assembly, María Fernanda Espinosa of Ecuador, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the UN and former Foreign Minister,



Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett of Guyana.

The three male candidates are Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi of Argentina, former President of Senegal, nominated by Burundi, Macky Sall of Senegal as well as former UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, nominated in July 2026, Olara Otunnu of Uganda.

The strong presence of women has given fresh momentum to calls for the UN to break with its eight-decade-old-tradition of male leadership.

Proponents of a female Secretary-General argue that the UN's commitment to gender equality should be reflected in its highest office. However, critics point out that the final decision will ultimately depend not on public opinion but on the complex geopolitical negotiations within the Security Council.

Regional rotation

The position of UN Secretary-General has traditionally reflected an informal principle of regional rotation, although there is no formal rule requiring it. The office is rotated among the regional groups of the UN with each region getting two or three consecutive terms.

In its 80 years of existence, regional distribution of Secretary-Generals has been four from Europe, two from Asia two from Africa and one from Latin America and the Caribbean while North America and Oceania have had no representation.

However, according to Dr. Graham Amakanji Oluteyo, an academic, lecturer and Senior Research Analyst specialising in Peace, Security and International Relations, regional representation should not be considered in isolation.

Speaking in an interview with KBC Digital, Dr. Oluteyo says the effectiveness of the Secretary-General cannot be separated from the international political system in which the UN operates, noting that regional rotation should serve the core mandate of the UN, rather than simply satisfying the geographic consideration.

"International relations is largely about power, and basically the functioning of the UN is determined to a great deal by the major powers," Dr. Oluteyo noted adding that, "Regional rotation should not simply be about ensuring that every region feels represented; it should be about advancing peace and security."

Women leaders

The growing number of women occupying the highest leadership positions across the United Nations system has further strengthened the case for the appointment of the organization's first female Secretary-General.

Today, several key UN agencies are headed by women; Sima Sami Bahous heading UN Women, Catherine Russell for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) while Cindy McCain leads World Food Programme (WFP).

Others include, Audrey Azoulay who heads the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as well as Rebeca Grynspan of who is also a candidate for Secretary-General, serves as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Meanwhile, Winnie Byanyima of (Uganda) is the Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). and also serves as a United Nations Under-Secretary-General.

To add to the list, recently, Monica Juma of Kenya was appointed by

Antonio Guterres to head United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as Executive Director as well as Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV).

In addition, the President of the UN General Assembly, Annalena Baerbock of Germany, is also a woman, underscoring the increasing presence of female leadership at the highest levels of the United Nations and Amina Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

According to proponents, this then weakens the argument of whether there is a lack of qualified female leadership within the UN system. They note that from the statistics this goes to show that women are indeed qualified to hold the office of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

However Dr. Oluteyo argues that the debate should go beyond gender and examine where power actually lies within the UN system.

"Whether the UN is spearheaded by a male or a female Secretary-General, the bigger question is the balance of power and the cooperation of the major powers, particularly within the Security Council," Dr. Oluteyo noted.

Adding that: "A female Secretary-General would undoubtedly represent a historic breakthrough for gender equality and could strengthen the UN's credibility on its own commitments to women's leadership. However, the office-holder would still operate within an institution where the five permanent members of the Security Council; China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States retain veto power," he added.

Voting and Appointment

To become the UN Secretary-Gen-

eral, a candidate must be officially nominated by a UN member state, self-nomination is not permitted, additionally, a candidate must secure at least 9 votes out of 15 in the UN Security Council without receiving a veto from any of the five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the USA).

Finally, the Security Council's chosen nominee is then sent to the 193 member UN General Assembly for a final formal appointment vote.

The effectiveness of the Secretary-General will ultimately depend on the cooperation of members of the Security Council, particularly the five permanent members.

The 15-member Security Council began consideration of the candidates in May, and the first straw poll was held on July 29, 2026 in a series of closed-door meetings to narrow down the candidates. The Council will then recommend one nominee to the UN General Assembly, which will formally appoint the next Secretary-General.

The process places the Security Council at the heart of the contest.

According to Dr. Oluteyo, the next Secretary-General will inherit an increasingly complex international system that is characterised by competing centers of power saying he/she must be able to navigate them.

"The world is increasingly shifting towards multipolarity, with several centres of power, and the next Secretary-General must be able to navigate these competing interests," Dr. Oluteyo argued.

Oluteyo describes an ideal candidate for the position of UN SG as one who will maintain relationships across geopolitical divides.

"The UN Secretary-General must be friendly to the East, the West, the North and the South, while responding to Africa's call for greater representation," he added.

The tenth Secretary-General will follow in the steps of: António Guterres (Portugal), who took office in January 2017, Ban Ki-moon (Republic of Korea), 2007 to 2016, Kofi Annan (Ghana), 1997 to 2006, Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt), 1992 to 1996, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru), 1982 to 1991, Kurt Waldheim (Austria), 1972 to 1981, U Thant (Burma, now Myanmar), 1961 to 1971, Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden), 1953 to 1961 and Trygve Lie (Norway), 1946 to 1952.

Future When we read stories like these, we naturally come to a conclusion: if a person truly works hard, does it really matter where they were born?

Does where you are born define your future?



BY Laylo Saparboyeva
@themtkenyatimes

There are countless stories about success in the world. Many of them begin in almost the same way: they had limited opportunities, but they refused to give up; their circumstances were difficult, but they kept working; eventually, they became known.

When we read stories like these, we naturally come to a conclusion: if a person truly works hard, does it really matter where they were born?

I do not completely agree with that idea, but I do not want to reject it entirely either.

Because the most interesting part of this question lies somewhere between these two perspectives.

Albert Einstein was born in Germany. His name later became associated with science across the world. Marie Curie was born in Poland and, despite the barriers women faced in education and science during her time, went on to receive two Nobel Prizes. Their lives show us something important: where you begin does not necessarily determine where you end.

A person can grow beyond the place they were born.

But there is one subtle thing we often forget.

We see the people who made it.

We rarely see the people who did not.

Imagine one hundred children with similar abilities, born in different parts of the world. Some attend good schools, have access to libraries and the internet, learn foreign languages, hear about international opportunities in time, and have someone who can help them prepare an application when necessary.

Others do not have some of these things.

And then we tell both groups the same thing:

“Work harder.”

The words sound the same to everyone. But their starting points are not



the same.

That is why I want to look at stories of success from a different angle.

We usually ask, “How did they make it?”

Perhaps sometimes we should also ask, “If they had not made it, what might have stopped them?”

That is a much more uncomfortable question.

Because it forces us to recognize something we may not want to see: hard work does not always guarantee a result.

This does not mean that hard work is unimportant.

On the contrary, talent without effort often remains only potential. Einstein did not become a historical figure simply because of where he was born. Marie Curie did not receive Nobel Prizes through luck alone. Behind every major achievement are years of research, mistakes, patience, discipline, and persistence. But hard work is not the only ingredient in success.

Sometimes we need an opportunity.

Sometimes time.

Sometimes a good teacher.

Sometimes the support of a family.

And sometimes, simply, the chance to meet the right person at the right moment.

None of these things appear on a diploma or a medal.

That is why explaining success only by saying, “They worked extremely hard,” can also be dangerous. Because the opposite conclusion can be painfully simple: if someone did not succeed, perhaps they simply did not work hard enough.

But that is not always true.

There are countless talented people in the world whose names we will never know.

Not because they lacked talent.

Perhaps simply because history has a habit of recording the names of those who won.

When we read about a scientist’s discovery, we may never hear about the other people who worked beside them in the laboratory, spending equally long nights trying to understand the same problem. A writer’s book may sell millions of copies, while hundreds of other young writers who began writing but never managed to reach a publisher remain unknown.

This creates a strange paradox.

We try to create a formula for success from the stories of people who succeeded, while ignoring the stories of those who did not.

Perhaps that is why the phrase “you can achieve anything” can sometimes be beautiful, yet also dangerous.

There is a significant difference between inspiring a person and hiding the problems within the system.

If a child is born in a village, that does not mean their future must be small.

If they are born in a major city, that does not mean their future will automatically be extraordinary either.

A city does not guarantee a dream.

And a village does not destroy one.

A wealthy family does not simply buy success.

And being born into a poorer family does not automatically mean inheriting failure.

However, our starting conditions

can affect how difficult the road ahead will be.

To me, real fairness does not mean placing everyone at exactly the same starting line. Life has never worked that way.

Real fairness means that regardless of where a person starts, they should have a genuine opportunity to open doors along the way.

Because somewhere in the world, there may be a scientist whose discovery has not yet been made.

There may be a writer whose story no one has read.

There may be a future leader who will one day make a decision that changes their country.

Some of these people may be living very ordinary lives today. Perhaps they have not discovered their own potential yet.

And the saddest possibility is that some of them may never get the chance to.

That is why I do not think we should see the place where someone is born as either a curse, a judgment, or a destiny.

It is simply a starting point.

But when the distance between starting points is enormous, it is not fair to say, “Everyone can reach the finish line if they just try.”

Success requires hard work.

But hard work alone may not be enough.

Opportunity matters.

Opportunity alone may not be enough either.

Sometimes luck matters.

And perhaps most importantly, a person needs to be able to imagine a future beyond what they can cur-

rently see.

So, does where a person is born define their future?

I would not say that it does. But I also do not think it is honest to say that it does not matter at all.

Some people rise from limited circumstances and become known around the world. Their lives prove that a person can grow far beyond their starting point. At the same time, there are equally talented and hard-working people whose stories never reach us simply because they never received the opportunities they needed.

That is why I do not want to see success as merely the reward for hard work, or failure as simply the result of not working hard enough.

Where you are born is not destiny. Hard work is not a guarantee. And opportunity is not merely an advantage.

A person’s future is shaped somewhere at the intersection of all three.

Perhaps our greatest loss is not the absence of talent. Perhaps it is the number of talents we will never discover because they never received the opportunity to develop.

So perhaps we should change the question.

Not, “Where were they born?”

But, “How far were they given the opportunity to go?”

Because the future is not written only by those who dream the loudest or work the hardest. It is also written by those who are given at least one real chance to discover what they are capable of.

And perhaps the problem with the greatest person the world has never heard of is not that they lacked ability.

Perhaps their door simply has not opened yet.

Laylo Saparboyeva was born on March 22, 2010, in Khorezm, Uzbekistan. She is currently a tenth-grade student at the Ogahi Creative School and a young writer interested in literature and contemporary issues. She has written short stories, articles, and other creative works, some of which have been published in The Seoul Times and Synchronized Chaos. She also holds a National Certificate in Uzbek Language and Literature and communicates in Uzbek, English, and German. Through her writing, she explores human experiences, social questions, and the perspectives of young people.

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *The Portuguese superstar says the 2026/27 season could be his last as a professional footballer

Ronaldo hints at farewell: Football legend nears his final chapter

By Pascal Okoth

Cristiano Ronaldo has given football fans one of the most emotional statements of his extraordinary career, admitting that the 2026/27 season could be his last as a professional footballer.

At 41, the Portuguese superstar has spent more than two decades at the highest level of the game, building a legacy that has few equals. In a recent interview with Vogue, Ronaldo said the current campaign was “probably” his final year in football and spoke of his desire to leave behind what he called a “spectacular legacy.”

It is a significant moment in the story of a player who has dominated world football for a generation. From his early days at Sporting CP through spells at Manchester United, Real Madrid, Juventus and Al-Nassr, Ronaldo has consistently reinvented himself and maintained a remarkable scoring record despite advancing age.

His possible retirement follows a career packed with individual and collective honours. He has won five Ballon d’Or awards and five UEFA Champions League titles, along with major domestic trophies in England, Spain and Italy. With Portugal, he was part of the squad that won the 2016 European Championship and subsequent UEFA Nations League titles.

His international career also reached a historic milestone at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, where Ronaldo became the first player to score in six different World Cup tournaments. Portugal’s campaign, however, ended in the round of 16 against Spain, and he later confirmed the tournament had been his last.

Despite the emotional conclusion to his World Cup journey, Ronaldo stopped short of announcing an immediate retirement from international football at the time, stressing that he wanted to make important decisions calmly rather than in the heat of disappointment.

His latest comments, though, suggest that the end of his club career may now also be drawing near.

Ronaldo remains contracted to Al-Nassr until 2027, meaning the coming season could represent his final campaign before he steps away from competitive football altogether.

The timing carries added significance because Ronaldo is closing in on yet another extraordinary milestone: 1,000 career goals. Recent reports put him at 976 goals for club



and country, leaving him just 24 short of the historic mark. Reaching four figures before retirement would provide a fitting final chapter to an already remarkable story.

Beyond the statistics, Ronaldo’s influence has extended well beyond the pitch. His professionalism, physical conditioning and relentless desire to improve have allowed him to remain competitive deep into his forties, inspiring millions of young footballers around the world in the process.

Yet every great sporting career eventually reaches its final whistle. Ronaldo appears increasingly aware that his playing days are nearing their conclusion. Rather than focusing solely on what he leaves behind on the field, he has already begun thinking about

life after football — more time with his family, travel, and pursuits such as padel.

For supporters who have followed him throughout his career, the prospect of his retirement is difficult to imagine. For more than 20 years, his goals, celebrations and fierce rivalries have been woven into the fabric of the global game.

Whether 2026/27 ultimately proves to be his final season remains to be seen. But one thing is already certain: Cristiano Ronaldo’s impact on football will not fade when he finally hangs up his boots.

When that day comes, the sport will bid farewell not simply to a prolific goalscorer, but to one of the defining figures of an entire footballing era.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Gunners thrash City 3–0 in Cardiff to claim first silverware of the 2026/27 season

Arsenal lift Community Shield in convincing victory over Manchester City

By Pascal Okoth

Arsenal made a powerful statement ahead of the new Premier League season, defeating Manchester City 3–0 to lift the 2026 Community Shield at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff yesterday.

The victory handed Mikel Arteta’s side the first silverware of the 2026/27 campaign and sent an early warning to the rest of the division that the Gunners are ready to defend their Premier League crown. Entering the match as league champions, Arsenal produced an energetic and disciplined performance against the FA Cup holders.

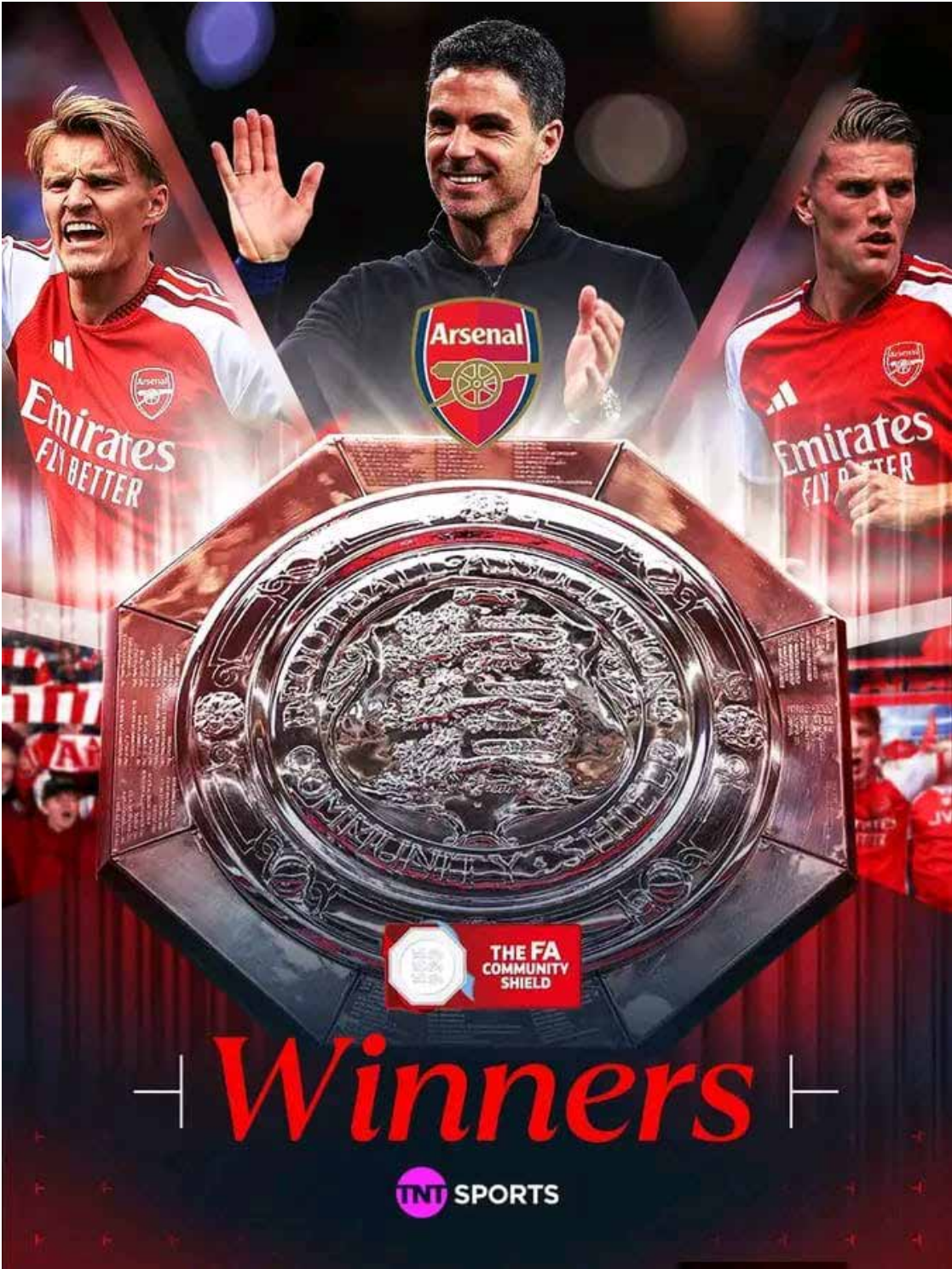
They needed less than a minute to take the lead. Riccardo Calafiori found the net after just 24 seconds, finishing a clever move created by Myles Lewis-Skelly — reportedly the fastest Community Shield goal since 1968. The early strike immediately put Manchester City under pressure and set the tone for the afternoon.

City struggled to settle as Arsenal controlled possession and moved the ball with purpose. The Gunners’ midfield worked hard to deny City’s attackers any meaningful space, while the defence remained organised whenever the champions attempted to respond.

The pressure told in the 28th minute when Kai Havertz rose to head home a dangerous delivery from new signing Christos Tzolis, giving Arsenal a 2–0 advantage at the break and leaving City with a mountain to climb.

Arteta’s side continued in the same vein after the interval. Captain Martin Ødegaard added a third shortly after the restart, putting the result beyond any doubt with a composed finish that completed a dominant afternoon’s work.

The result carried added weight given that City are beginning a new era under Enzo Maresca



following Pep Guardiola’s departure. The visitors struggled to match Arsenal’s intensity and cohesion, with several new faces finding the occasion difficult to navigate.

Tzolis caught the eye throughout, contributing creativity and two assists on his competitive debut, while Bruno Guimarães also made his first appearance in Arsenal colours before being withdrawn at half-time.

For City, the 3–0 defeat raises pointed questions ahead of the new season. Maresca will need to address the defensive frailties and midfield imbalance that Arsenal so ruthlessly exposed.

Arsenal, meanwhile, begin the campaign with a trophy in the cabinet and a performance to match. If yesterday’s display is any measure of what is to come, Arteta’s side will take some stopping.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



The end of the V8 era: Why Toyota replaced the legendary LC200

By: John Irungu Maina
@themkenyetimes



Worth Noting:

- The LC300 moved away from the V8 and adopted a new-generation twin-turbocharged V6. The 3.3-litre diesel variant produces 700 Nm of torque, while the petrol version uses a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6. Despite fewer cylinders and less displacement than the outgoing diesel V8, both engines deliver strong performance while being lighter and more fuel-efficient.
- This is where Toyota's philosophy becomes clear.
- The company was not simply making the engine smaller. It was attempting to make the entire vehicle more efficient without compromising the capability that Land Cruiser buyers have always expected.



Toyota Land Cruiser 200

For years, the Toyota Land Cruiser 200 represented everything enthusiasts associated with Toyota: size, strength, luxury and, above all, the unmistakable character of a V8.

Then Toyota made a decision that divided the faithful. In 2021, the LC200 went out of production and was replaced by the Land Cruiser 300, drawing the curtain on the V8 era for Toyota's flagship SUV across the markets where that engine had been offered.

The LC200 had earned its place among the world's most respected SUVs. Its 4.5-litre twin-turbo diesel V8 was particularly admired across Africa, where its combination of enormous torque, durability and long-distance capability made it a favourite among private owners, businesses and off-road enthusiasts alike. But the automotive world was changing.

Stricter emissions regulations, pressure for better fuel economy and the demand for stronger performance forced manufacturers to rethink the traditional formula of simply using bigger engines to produce bigger power.

Toyota's answer was the LC300.

At first glance, the new Land Cruiser still carries the unmistakable

identity of its predecessor. Toyota retained the upright proportions and rugged character that made the 200 Series so recognisable. Underneath, however, almost everything of substance was redesigned.

The most talked-about change was under the bonnet.

The LC300 moved away from the V8 and adopted a new-generation twin-turbocharged V6. The 3.3-litre diesel variant produces 700 Nm of torque, while the petrol version uses a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6. Despite fewer cylinders and less displacement than the outgoing diesel V8, both engines deliver strong performance while being lighter and more fuel-efficient.

This is where Toyota's philosophy becomes clear.

The company was not simply making the engine smaller. It was attempting to make the entire vehicle more efficient without compromising the capability that Land Cruiser buyers have always expected.

For enthusiasts, however, something emotional was lost in the process.

The V8 was more than an engine configuration — it was part of the LC200's identity. Its sound, its effortless power delivery and its repu-

tation for near-indestructible durability helped make the vehicle desirable long after it left the showroom.

The LC300 demonstrates convincingly that a smaller engine does not mean a weaker vehicle. Modern turbocharging allows a smaller powertrain to generate enormous torque, while improved transmissions and sophisticated electronics extract more performance from every drop of fuel.

But technology cannot completely replace character.

The move away from the V8 also reflected a broader shift within Toyota. The Mark X — another firm favourite among driving enthusiasts — ended production in 2019. A rear-wheel-drive sedan powered by V6 engines, its disappearance marked another step away from Toyota's traditionally performance-oriented petrol lineup. The two models were entirely different vehicles, yet their endings told the same story about a changing automotive landscape.

Toyota was moving decisively towards newer platforms, greater efficiency and modern powertrains.

For Africa, the LC300 faces a particular challenge: living up to the formidable reputation of the LC200.

The 200 Series spent years earning

its stripes in some of the continent's most demanding environments. It became a familiar sight on African highways, rural roads, farms and safari tracks — a reputation built not through advertising, but through years of hard, real-world use.

The LC300 now has to build that reputation for itself.

It has the technology, the power and the heritage. What it does not yet have is the decades of accumulated trust that turned the LC200 into a legend.

That is why the debate between the two generations is unlikely to go away anytime soon.

The LC200 represents the closing chapter of Toyota's V8-powered flagship era. The LC300 represents Toyota's bid to carry the Land Cruiser into a new automotive age.

For some enthusiasts, the V8 will always be the true heart of the Land Cruiser. For Toyota, however, the future could not remain anchored to the past.

The LC200 gave Toyota's flagship its V8 legacy. The LC300 is now charged with proving that the Land Cruiser can remain a legend without one.