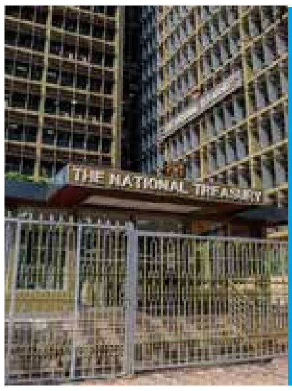


**Treasury scandal deepens: Nine arrested over KSh1.57B PROFIT programme fraud**

A major corruption scandal has hit Kenya's National Treasury after the EACC yesterday arrested nine suspects over the alleged embezzlement and fraudulent disbursement of KSh1.57B

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**NCIC summons Gachagua to answer for his words — or face arrest**

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission yesterday summoned Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua to appear before it on 27 August

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**Countdown 2027** The report in question was the product of a taskforce Ruto himself commissioned.

# Maraga to Ruto: release the report

Former Chief Justice David Maraga yesterday gave President William Ruto seven days to release the complete and unedited report of the National Taskforce on Police Reforms, warning that he will publish the document himself if the deadline passes without action.

The ultimatum, delivered in a letter dated 18 August 2026 and addressed directly to the President, sets a deadline of 25 August — and it lands at a moment of acute political sensitivity. Maraga is no longer simply a retired jurist and reluctant reformer. He is the presidential flagbearer of the United Green Movement (UGM) party, openly contesting the 2027 General Election, and the gap between those two identities is narrowing by the day. Yesterday's letter makes clear that the police report is no longer merely a governance question. It has become a campaign weapon — and a potentially decisive one.

The report in question was the product of a taskforce Ruto himself commissioned. Established on 22 December 2022, with Maraga as chairperson, the body was tasked with identifying the legal, policy, administrative and operational constraints affecting the National Police Service, Kenya Prisons Service and National Youth Service, as well as reviewing the welfare and terms of service of their members.

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*Former Chief Justice David Maraga with President William Ruto. File photo*

# Ruto opens Kenya Health Summit as SHA reaches 32 million registrations

**BY MKT REPORTER**
*@themtkenyatimes*

**President William Ruto yesterday opened the inaugural Kenya Health Summit 2026 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi, declaring that Kenya had crossed a historic threshold in its journey toward Universal Health Coverage. Addressing more than 5,000 delegates under the theme "Reforms Delivered, Health as a Right," Ruto said 32.3 million Kenyans were now registered under the Social Health Authority, compared with eight million under the defunct National Hospital Insurance Fund, and that SHA had received more than KSh209B since October 2024, paying out KSh178B to contracted health facilities across all 47 counties. He added that over 500,000 surgeries had been performed and more than 50,000 cancer patients treated under SHA since its introduction. Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale reported that a KSh9.6B National Equipment Service Programme had deployed 862 specialised medical equipment units to 251 facilities in 44 counties, while a KSh10B recapitalisation of the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority had lifted the order fill rate from 35 to 95 per cent. National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula pledged Parliament's full legislative and budgetary support for the reforms. The government also announced plans to recruit 5,000 additional nurses and midwives to strengthen maternal and newborn care. "Numbers tell the story of the remarkable transformation we have undertaken in Kenya's health sector over the past three years," Ruto said — but for millions still navigating a strained system, the summit's real test lies not in the figures presented, but in the care delivered.**

## *Some of the moments as captured in pictures*
















Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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# NEWS IN BRIEF

Nairobi Woman Representative Esther Passaris yesterday called for intensified public education on the Social Health Authority (SHA), saying more Kenyans need clearer information on how to register, access services and seek help when they face challenges. Speaking at the Kenya National Health Summit at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi, graced by President William Ruto, Passaris said SHA is working but that effective implementation must go hand in hand with public awareness. She pledged to support SHA sensitisation through National Government Affirmative Action Fund activities and community engagements. Passaris also called on the Ministry of Health to intensify public education on SHA registration and premium reviews, and urged Kenyans experiencing difficulties to contact the SHA customer support line on 147, available around the clock in English and Kiswahili.


The Kenya Bureau of Standards and the National Industrial Training Authority have strengthened their cooperation following a courtesy visit by NITA Director General Rukia Atikiya to KEBS Managing Director Esther Ngari. Discussions centred on joint initiatives in training, capacity building and management systems, with both institutions exploring ways to develop competencies that can help organisations across Kenya's public and private sectors improve performance and remain competitive. The partnership reflects a shared recognition that quality standards and skills development are most effective when pursued together. KEBS continues to expand strategic partnerships under Ngari's leadership, while NITA sees the collaboration as an opportunity to ensure industrial training responds effectively to the evolving needs of industry and employers across the country.

A 25-year-old man has been charged before a Mombasa court with cruelty to a child after allegedly assaulting a three-year-old girl left in his care. Caleb Omondi appeared before Senior Principal Magistrate Erick Wambo yesterday, facing one count of cruelty to a child contrary to Section 152(1)(a) of the Children Act, 2022. The charge sheet alleges that Omondi, acting as guardian of the minor, wilfully assaulted and ill-treated the child on diverse dates between 19 July and 15 August 2026 in the Shonda area of Likoni Sub-County, Mombasa. Neighbours who responded to cries from the house found the child with visible injuries on her legs, hands and body and escorted Omondi to a nearby police station. The minor received hospital treatment before being placed in a rescue centre. Omondi pleaded not guilty. Prosecution counsel Yassir Mohammed opposed immediate release on bond, urging the court to order a pre-bail report given the gravity of the offence.

President William Ruto has congratulated Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema on his re-election after the Electoral Commission of Zambia declared him winner of the 13 August presidential poll. Hichilema secured approximately 61% of the vote against opposition challenger Brian Mundubile's 38.5%, giving him a second five-year mandate. In a congratulatory message, Ruto described the outcome as a reflection of Zambians' confidence in Hichilema's leadership and reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Zambia, describing it as a brotherly nation and valued regional partner. The election was declared despite opposition fraud allegations and a temporary suspension of vote counting, with international observers noting competitive but incumbent-skewed conditions.

Kenya Institute of Special Education Director General Norman Kiogora has reaffirmed the importance of regional cooperation in advancing inclusive education, following a productive engagement with members of Uganda's Parliamentary Committee on Education and Sports. The Ugandan delegation visited Kenya for a week-long benchmarking visit on the Competency-Based Curriculum, recently introduced in Uganda. During discussions at KISE, both sides exchanged insights on special needs education, teacher training and inclusive learning approaches. Kiogora thanked the delegation for seeking to learn from Kenya's experience and proposed a joint learner assessment initiative that would allow both countries to collaboratively identify and respond to diverse educational needs. He said sustained knowledge exchange and regional partnerships would be essential in advancing inclusive education across East Africa.

Deputy Inspector General Eliud Lagat yesterday commissioned a newly constructed and fully equipped Strategic Communication Office at the Kenya Police Service headquarters, Vigilance House, marking a significant step in the Service's modernisation agenda. The facility is designed to strengthen police communication systems and meet the demands of a rapidly changing digital environment. The commissioning ceremony, attended by senior police officers, also featured the launch of a Kenya Police Service magazine profiling officers deployed to the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, alongside a redesigned public website offering easier access to timely and accurate information. The three platforms are intended to improve coordination and delivery of official information, deepen public engagement and enable the Service to communicate its work more clearly and directly to Kenyans.

**Health** The capital city has recorded zero maternal deaths across 16,500 deliveries at Pumwani

# Sakaja says Nairobi's health reforms are saving lives, one delivery at a time

**BY Grace Wanja**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Nairobi Governor John Sakaja

Nairobi Governor John Sakaja yesterday told the Kenya Health Summit 2026 that the capital city has recorded zero maternal deaths across 16,500 deliveries at Pumwani Maternity Hospital, a facility that was once among the country's most troubled public health institutions.

Speaking at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre before President William Ruto and senior government officials, Sakaja delivered one of the summit's most striking testimonials on devolved healthcare, drawing a sharp contrast between Nairobi's recent past and what he described as a genuine transformation on the ground.

"Hospitals like Pumwani, which would be on the news every day for the wrong reason, have now zero percent maternal mortality out of 16,500 deliveries," he said.

Pumwani Maternity Hospital, founded in 1926 and the largest referral maternity facility in East Africa, handles an estimated 80 to 90 deliveries daily and accounts for approximately 10 per cent of all births in Kenya. For years, it was synonymous with overcrowding, underfunding and preventable deaths. A new neonatal unit equipped with central heating technology was commissioned at the facility in June 2026, part of a broader upgrade supported by the Safaricom Foundation and the Nairobi County Government. Sakaja's claim — if sustained — would mark a watershed moment in the hospital's century-long history.

The governor said Nairobi now has 7,820 Community Health Promoters covering 780,000 households across the city. Other maternity gains cited include Riruta Hospital conducting approximately 100 deliveries a month, with new maternity services introduced at Kayole 2 and Mathare North. "Before, we used to tell the people to go to hospital. These days the CHPs — the hospital is going to the people," he said.

Sakaja also highlighted dramatic changes in facility funding. Some health centres that received KSh100,000 over two years under previous arrangements are now receiving the equivalent of KSh4 million a month, giving them the means to invest meaningfully in staff, equipment and services. "We have facilities that would get 100,000 shillings in two years, in a year getting 4 million shillings a month, allowing them to invest in healthcare and to invest in serving our people," he said.

On the Social Health Authority, Sakaja said more than three million Nairobi residents had registered under the scheme, with over one million actively making monthly contributions. He put the figure in perspective with a characteristically pointed comparison. "The people registered in Nairobi under SHA are two times the population of the whole of Estonia," he said, referring to the Baltic state widely regarded as the world's most digitally advanced nation.

The governor was direct about the philosophy underpinning the reforms, pushing back against those who invoke constitutional rights without demanding their implementation. "The right to health will not fulfil itself. It has to be designed. It has to be planned. It has to be thought out. There has to be legislation," he said. "Constitutionalism is not just about mandamano or making noise. Constitutionalism is about fulfilling the constitution."

For a city where family medical emergencies have historically forced households to liquidate assets, Sakaja framed universal coverage not as a political aspiration but as a practical necessity. "Health is no longer a privilege for the few," he said. "It is not a privilege for those who have money."

Numbers on a podium are one thing; a mother walking out of Pumwani with her child is quite another — and Nairobi, Sakaja insisted, is finally delivering on both.

# Wheelbarrows all round: Mt Kenya's opposition war within a war

*Democracy for the Citizens Party Secretary General designate John Methu*

**BY Jane Njeri**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Democracy for the Citizens Party Secretary General designate John Methu yesterday dismissed Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro's newly unveiled People's Party of Kenya as a "wheelbarrow" designed to dilute DCP's grip on Mt Kenya, as the battle for the region's 2027 vote escalates into an opposition civil war.

Speaking at former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's Wamunyoro residence during a visit by a Wiper party delegation, Methu delivered a pointed warning to politicians he accused of manufacturing parties to serve personal ambitions. "These wheelbarrows that are coming up, we know all of them. We knew they were coming. We saw one that was launched yesterday — it does not come to us as a surprise," he said. "A wheelbarrow is a wheelbarrow, and we will deal with small wheelbarrows in the same way we have dealt with the big one."

The irony was unmistakable. Nyoro himself, announcing his exit from UDA at Safari Park Hotel on Monday, applied the same label to the ruling party. "We left the government a long time ago and dissociated ourselves from the wheelbarrow party, UDA," Nyoro told journalists. Having spent nearly a year in consultations with Gachagua, Kalonzo Musyoka, Martha Karua, Fred Matiang'i, James Orengo and Edwin Sifuna, Nyoro presented the People's Party as an open house for opposition presidential aspirants, promising tours of Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Bomet and Kericho — all counties where he once campaigned vigorously for Ruto.

DCP is not amused. The party's "One Mountain, One Agenda, One Party" strategy depends on consolidating Mt Kenya behind a single opposition vehicle, and Nyoro's arrival threatens that arithmetic directly. Methu made the stakes explicit. "The people know who their leader is and the party they belong to," he said.

With twelve months to polling day, Kenya's opposition is discovering what every coalition learns eventually: the fight against the incumbent is never quite as fierce as the fight over who gets to lead it.

**EACC** **Approximately KSh784.7 million was wired to 23 companies, while another KSh768.2 million was withdrawn directly in cash**

# Treasury scandal deepens: Nine arrested over KSh1.57B PROFIT programme fraud

*Senior National Treasury officials and six business owners face charges after the EACC unravels an elaborate scheme to plunder funds meant for Kenya's small-scale farmers.*

BY Angela Mwanga
@themtkenyatimes


Kenya's National Treasury

A major corruption scandal has hit Kenya's National Treasury after the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) yesterday arrested nine suspects over the alleged embezzlement and fraudulent disbursement of KSh1.57B under the Programme for Rural Outreach of Financial Innovations and Technologies (PROFIT), an IFAD-funded initiative designed to expand access to affordable financing for small-scale farmers.

The EACC has described this as one of the largest financial recovery cases it is currently pursuing. The arrests follow a lengthy investigation into one of the most brazen alleged frauds to emerge from Kenya's public financial management system in recent years — a scheme that investigators say ran for years, involved forged documents, an unauthorised bank account and the siphoning of billions of shillings into private hands.

The nine suspects arrested yesterday are John Ngure Kabutha, the PROFIT Programme Coordinator; Namwel Moturi Motanya, Head of the Accounting Unit at the National Treasury; John Maina Muriithi, a Senior Accountant at the National Treasury; Gladys Juliet Oroni, proprietor of Mawindo Enterprises, Brigs Agencies and Green Basil Agencies; Brian Kiprop Chepkarat, proprietor of El Konyinta Technologies; Ian Kwemoi Chepkarat, director of O20 Investments Limited and Vidi Vici Ltd; Josephat Kamau Kamoshe, director of Blue Dart Agencies Limited; James Omwodo Ndai, proprietor of Ednas Agencies, Prozepp Technologies and Steeren Enterprises; and Jimmy Carter Odoyo Osodo, proprietor of Cadnic Investments.

The PROFIT Programme was implemented by the National Treasury between the 2013/14 and 2023/24 financial years with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), with the stated goal of facilitating small-scale farmers' access to affordable financing. Investigators allege that KSh1,569,582,338.20 was fraudulently disbursed from the National Treasury Development Account into the programme — and then systematically looted.

The mechanics of the alleged fraud, as established by EACC investigators, are deeply troubling. Fraudsters allegedly opened a new bank account in the programme's name using forged National Treasury documents, even though the PROFIT programme had already ended and its official bank account been closed. Suspects then allegedly used fake payment vouchers and forged single-step authorisations to push through disbursements disguised as PROFIT funding requests.

Approximately KSh784.7 million was wired to 23 companies, while another KSh768.2 million was withdrawn directly in cash — a scale of cash movement that raises serious questions about internal controls at both the Treasury and the banking institutions involved. EACC also established financial links between programme officials and some of the private entities that received the funds, in apparent contravention of public financial management and accountability requirements.

The response from IFAD has been swift. After learning of the court proceedings filed by the anti-graft agency, the international fund referred the matter to its Office of Audit and Oversight, saying it takes "all allegations of fraud seriously" and emphasising its zero-tolerance approach to corruption.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has approved prosecution of all nine suspects. The charges to be preferred include abuse of office, unlawful acquisition of public property, uttering a false document, financial misconduct, acquisition of proceeds of crime and money laundering.

The EACC has also moved beyond the criminal courts. The commission has approached the High Court seeking recovery of luxury properties allegedly bought with the stolen funds in Nairobi, Machakos and Uasin Gishu counties.

The nine suspects are expected to be arraigned at the Milimani Law Courts today. It bears emphasis that the arrests and allegations do not amount to convictions, and all suspects remain entitled to due process and the presumption of innocence until the courts determine otherwise.

What is not in dispute is the gravity of what is alleged. The PROFIT programme was not an abstract budget line — it was money earmarked to help Kenya's most economically vulnerable farmers access credit, purchase farm inputs and improve their livelihoods. Every shilling allegedly stolen was a shilling that never reached a small-scale farmer depending on it.

The case also raises uncomfortable questions about the systems meant to prevent exactly this kind of fraud. The alleged scheme — involving a closed programme's account being reopened using forged documents, fake payment vouchers and cash withdrawals on an industrial scale — suggests multiple layers of oversight failed either to detect or to act on red flags that, in retrospect, should have been impossible to miss.

As Kenya continues to grapple with persistent concerns over the misuse of public and development funds, the PROFIT Programme scandal is a sobering reminder that accountability is not a bureaucratic formality. For the farmers this programme was supposed to serve, it is the difference between a helping hand and an empty promise.

**Politics** **Maraga's letter goes considerably further than a procedural demand for transparency. He levels direct accusations at the President**

# Maraga's ultimatum to Ruto: release the police report — or I will

**BY David Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Former Chief Justice David Maraga yesterday gave President William Ruto seven days to release the complete and unedited report of the National Taskforce on Police Reforms, warning that he will publish the document himself if the deadline passes without action.

The ultimatum, delivered in a letter dated 18 August 2026 and addressed directly to the President, sets a deadline of 25 August — and it lands at a moment of acute political sensitivity. Maraga is no longer simply a retired jurist and reluctant reformer. He is the presidential flagbearer of the United Green Movement (UGM) party, openly contesting the 2027 General Election, and the gap between those two identities is narrowing by the day. Yesterday's letter makes clear that the police report is no longer merely a governance question. It has become a campaign weapon — and a potentially decisive one.

The report in question was the product of a taskforce Ruto himself commissioned. Established on 22 December 2022, with Maraga as chairperson, the body was tasked with identifying the legal, policy, administrative and operational constraints affecting the National Police Service, Kenya Prisons Service and National Youth Service, as well as reviewing the welfare and terms of service of their members. Its mandate was subsequently extended by Ruto in March 2023 to include the National Youth Service. After months of public consultations and stakeholder engagement, the taskforce produced a final report containing over 500 recommendations, which was formally presented to Ruto at State House on 16 November 2023. Nearly three years later, Maraga says the most consequential recommendations — those intended to restore the independence of the police service and end systematic brutality — remain unimplemented, and the full report remains unpublished.

"In the circumstances, and in view of the fact that the report was secured at public expense, and in line with Article 35 of the Constitution, I demand that you immediately release and publish the complete and unedited Taskforce Report within seven days, failing which I will myself release it," Maraga wrote.

His legal basis is Article 35, which enshrines the constitutional right of every Kenyan to access information held by the State. But the political context gives the demand its real urgency. On 5 August, Erick Otieno, a boda boda rider, died following injuries sustained while in custody at Muthaiga Police Station, where he had been detained over an alleged traffic offence. His family collected him from the station in what they described as a battered condition; he died at Mama Margaret Uhuru Hospital shortly afterwards. A post-mortem examination found he died from internal injuries consistent with blunt-force trauma. The case has reignited national outrage over police brutality, and UGM publicly invoked it to demand the immediate implementation of the Maraga report. Yesterday's ultimatum is, in part, a response to that outrage — and a calculated effort to channel it.

Maraga's letter goes considerably further than a procedural demand for transparency. He levels direct accusations at the President over what he describes as the deliberate politicisation of the National Police Service, cataloguing a series of incidents he says demonstrate partisan policing: organised political violence and goonism in Homa Bay, Keumbu and Ol Kalou, and attacks on churches in Kisumu, Nairobi and Witima. The language is unsparing. "We have witnessed organised political violence, goonism and partisan policing in Homa Bay, Keumbu, Ol Kalou as well as acts of violence in churches in Kisumu, Nairobi and Witima, among others, under your watch, direction and for your political benefit," Maraga wrote.

He frames the entire phenomenon as something more systematic than individual failures of discipline or command. "This is a road the country has travelled before at terrible cost. It must not travel it again. This, in my view, is all as a result of the State Capture of the National Police Service," he wrote. The phrase "State Capture" is a deliberate and loaded choice — one that positions the current situation not as poor governance but as the premeditated subjugation of an independent constitutional institution to presidential political will.

Former Chief Justice David Maraga with President William Ruto. File photo

The legal history of the taskforce itself adds a layer of complexity that Maraga's letter does not address but which any serious reading of the situation must account for. In April 2025, the High Court declared the entire taskforce unconstitutional, ruling that Ruto had overstepped his authority by establishing a body that encroached on the mandate of the National Police Service Commission. Justice Lawrence Mugambi held that the President had no constitutional authority to assign specific responsibilities to a commission in a manner that undermined rather than complemented an independent body's functions. The government said it would appeal. Of the taskforce's 271 substantive recommendations examined by the court, only 16 were found to be directly problematic — but the ruling clouded the legal standing of the entire enterprise, potentially complicating any government claim that implementation was proceeding normally.

That the government has made some progress on certain recommendations is not in dispute. Salary reviews, promotions, decentralisation of human-resource functions within the police service and proposed amendments to the National Police Service Commission Act were all reported as being taken forward in phases, with authorities citing financial constraints. Ruto previously estimated that full implementation of the reforms would cost KSh106B, with KSh22B directed toward improved officer compensation, KSh37B toward hardware and welfare reforms, and KSh45B toward other priority areas. Implementation, the government has consistently said, is proceeding in stages.

For Maraga, that answer is insufficient — and deliberately so. The recommendations he is specifically demanding action on are not the salary scales or transfer policies or entry-level cadet pathways that were publicly accepted at the interim stage in October 2023. They are the structural reforms: the independence of the police service from political command, the accountability mechanisms to address brutality, and the return of the police airwing — currently under military control since former President Uhuru Kenyatta's 2019 directive — to the National Police Service. These are the recommendations that carry no price tag visible to the public, because they have not been published.

That is precisely the point. As long as the full report remains unpublished, Kenyans cannot know which recommendations have been implemented, which have been quietly shelved, and which have never been tabled at all. Maraga's demand for publication is simultaneously a transparency claim under Article 35 and a political masterstroke: it forces the government either to release a document that will invite detailed public scrutiny of its implementation record, or to refuse — and hand Maraga a narrative about a president suppressing accountability ahead of an election.

The timing is also instructive when read against the broader pre-election landscape. Kenya is now less than a year from the August 2027 General Election. The political environment has already grown febrile: NCIC is investigating ten political figures for alleged hate speech and ethnic incitement, including Maraga's direct political adversary Gachagua. The nurses' strike has entered its fourth week. The PROFIT programme scandal has exposed billion-shilling fraud at the National Treasury. Every week brings a fresh confrontation between the state and an institution — or a citizen — demanding accountability.

Into this environment, Maraga has introduced a document that goes to the heart of the question Kenyans will be asking themselves over the next twelve months: can the institutions of the state be trusted to operate independently of whoever holds political power? It is the question that will define 2027 — and Maraga, by turning a suppressed report into a public ultimatum, has ensured it cannot be avoided.

The deadline is 25 August. The President's response — or silence — will say more than the report itself ever could.

**Health** The strike, which commenced on 29 July 2026, was called after KNUNM accused the government of failing to conclude negotiations for the 2025–2029 CBA

# Meru nurses hold firm as nationwide strike enters 22nd day


Nurses and Midwives in Meru county stand in Solidarity with colleagues from 47 counties. | Photo: Brian Gitonga

**BY Brian Gitonga**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Nurses and midwives in Meru County yesterday reaffirmed their participation in the ongoing nationwide strike, intensifying pressure on the Council of Governors and government agencies to resolve a long-running dispute over a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the absorption of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) workers into permanent county employment.

Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives (KNUN) Meru branch chairperson Mugambi Bakari

Speaking at a press briefing at Meru Level Five Hospital, Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives (KNUNM) Meru branch chairperson Mugambi Bakari said the industrial action, now in its 22nd day, was national in character and would continue until the outstanding grievances were addressed.

“Being the 22nd day of our strike, which is national in nature because it is about the Council of Governors, Salaries and Remuneration Commission, Public Service and any other group mandated to look into the activities and affairs of workers,” said Bakari.

The strike, which commenced on 29 July 2026, was called after KNUNM accused the government of failing to conclude negotiations for the 2025–2029 CBA and implement commitments made under the 2017 Return-to-Work Agreement, despite years of engagement. Bakari said the dispute was grounded in constitutional rights, specifically Article 41, which guarantees workers the right to fair labour practices and collective bargaining. He noted that workers and employers are expected to negotiate and renew a CBA every four years, but nurses had been without one since 2017.

“We had a return-to-work formula which was agreed upon, and the parties involved — including the Council of Governors, the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, the Public Service Commission and the union — agreed, but nothing was implemented,” said Bakari.

The chairperson also highlighted what he described as a glaring inequality between nurses and other professionals in the public sector. Doctors, clinical officers and teachers had all secured CBAs, he said, leaving nurses questioning why their own negotiations had dragged on unresolved for nearly a decade.

Bakari further raised the plight of UHC nurses — a situation he described as deeply unjust. More than 7,400 UHC workers have been demanding permanent and pensionable employment, with the National Treasury allocating KSh8.6B to facilitate their absorption. Despite this, county governments have refused to receive the payroll or issue appointment letters, leaving the workers in prolonged uncertainty.

“We have our colleagues, the UHC nurses, who served for the first three years expecting to be absorbed, but the Council of Governors has continued to refuse to absorb them,” said Bakari.

He stressed that nurses are central to the functioning of any health facility and that the public healthcare system simply cannot operate without them.

“Let it be known to Kenyans that without nurses, there is no hospital. That is the secret with the US, UK and Cuba — all of whom have valued their nurses — and that is why we are saying: let us be valued the way we deserve,” said Bakari.

Bakari was careful to draw a distinction between the national dispute and local county management. He credited Meru Governor Mutuma M’Ethingia with making meaningful progress in the county health sector, noting that the governor had promoted more than 500 health workers and employed 79 nurses during the year. The solidarity action, he emphasised, was directed at national institutions — not the county administration.

He also warned against intimidation of Meru nurses over their participation in the strike, saying the union expected its members to be free to exercise their constitutional rights without interference.

KNUNM Meru branch secretary Nesbit Mugendi said the union had been pursuing a CBA for more than eight years, repeatedly being referred between different government institutions without resolution. The prolonged process, he said, had left health workers exhausted and demoralised.

“Since we began this process, we have always been taken in circles. When we speak with the SRC, they send us to the Council of Governors; the Council of Governors sends us to court. We have become tired of following up this matter,” said Mugendi.

Mugendi also questioned the adequacy of allowances paid to nurses relative to the risks they face daily while providing healthcare — risks he said were insufficiently recognised in their current terms of service.

The strike has continued despite a court order directing nurses to return to work, which the union defied, insisting it would only stand down once the government honoured its agreements. The nurses said their solidarity with colleagues across the country would continue until the 2025–2029 CBA is concluded, the 2017 return-to-work commitments are fully implemented, and the fate of UHC workers is definitively resolved.

**Education** The timing makes that question even more pressing because the government is proposing a significant change to how higher education is financed

# The university door has opened — what awaits inside?

*As thousands of Kenyan students prepare to enter university this September, an admission letter should open a door, not hand a family another bill.*

Kenyan students in universities

**BY Levis Wangamati**
*@themtkenyatimes*

For thousands of Kenyan students, the university admission letter is more than a piece of paper. It is the reward for years of crowded classrooms, punishing examinations and long, anxious waiting. It is the moment when a distant ambition suddenly acquires a campus, a course and a reporting date. But behind the excitement lies a question that many families must confront almost immediately: how much will it cost to turn that admission into an actual university education?

This year's admissions season carries unusual weight. KUCCPS received results for 980,444 eligible candidates from the 2025 KCSE examination, of whom 268,700 attained a mean grade of C+ and above, qualifying for degree placement in 43 public and 31 private universities. Those students are expected to join universities in September, making this one of the most significant higher education transitions Kenya has seen in years.

That is where the celebration of admission meets the reality of affordability.

University costs do not begin and end with tuition. There is accommodation, food, transport, learning materials, internet access and the everyday expenses that come with student life. For families already stretched between one financial obligation and the next, an admission letter can carry two messages at once: opportunity for the student and anxiety for the household.

The timing makes that question even more pressing because the government is proposing a significant change to how higher education is financed. President William Ruto has announced plans to provide full government funding for students admitted to universities and colleges, with the stated aim of ensuring that financial circumstances do not bar qualified young people from pursuing higher education. The proposal is expected to take effect from September 2026, subject to the necessary legislative changes.

It is an ambitious promise, but it remains a proposal rather than a completed reform. Parliament is currently considering the Tertiary Education, Placement and Funding Bill, 2026, which seeks to establish a new framework for student placement and financing. That distinction matters because the debate should not simply be about whether the government will announce more funding. It should be about whether the eventual system will genuinely make higher education accessible to the students it is designed to serve.

The first question is deceptively simple: what does "fully funded" actually mean in practice?

The proposed framework would reorganise tertiary education financing, bringing functions currently handled by bodies such as the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), the Universities Fund and TVET funding structures under a single new arrangement. The legislation provides for loans and scholarships while seeking to widen access to government support. But for the student, the distinction between what is funded on paper and what is accessible in reality matters enormously. If the government covers formal tuition costs but a student still cannot afford accommodation, food, learning materials or reliable internet, then education may be funded in policy documents while remaining out of reach in practice. A student cannot study tuition fees. They study in classrooms, libraries and laboratories — but they also need somewhere to sleep, something to eat and the basic tools to participate in modern education.

This is why Kenya's higher education conversation must move beyond the admission letter and beyond the tuition bill. The real test is whether students can survive the full journey from admission to graduation. A student who arrives on campus but drops out because of financial pressure has not truly benefited from expanded access. Neither has a family that takes on unsustainable obligations simply to keep a child enrolled.

The success of any funding model should therefore be measured not only by how many students enter university, but by how many are able to remain there until they graduate. Recent difficulties with university financing, delayed student support and cases of hardship on campuses are a reminder that implementation will matter just as much as policy announcements.

There is also the question of institutional capacity. More students require more lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, accommodation and teaching staff. Kenya can expand access, but access without adequate capacity risks creating a different kind of problem: overcrowded institutions where the number of students grows faster than the ability of universities to maintain quality education. The country should not have to choose between access and quality. A serious higher education system must pursue both.

The same principle applies to what students are actually being taught. University should not simply be a place where young people spend several years collecting academic credits before receiving a certificate. It should prepare them for an economy that is changing faster than many traditional curricula can accommodate. A degree should give a graduate more than a qualification to list on a curriculum vitae. It should develop practical skills, critical thinking, communication, technological competence and the ability to solve real problems. Kenya needs graduates who can compete for opportunities, create enterprises, adapt to changing industries and contribute meaningfully to the economy. Without that, the country risks solving one problem only to create another — producing more graduates without sufficiently preparing them for the labour market.

That responsibility cannot rest on universities alone. Government, universities and industry need a clearer and more honest conversation about what students are being taught and what the economy actually needs. The distance between the lecture room and the workplace should not become a chasm that graduates are expected to cross alone.

There is also a human side to this transition that statistics easily obscure. For many first-year students, university is the first major step away from the structure of secondary school. They are suddenly expected to make decisions about money, academic work, careers and their personal lives, often while adapting to an entirely unfamiliar environment. Some will arrive with strong financial backing. Others will arrive carrying the expectations of entire families. The difference between those two experiences can be enormous.

A university system that genuinely wants to expand opportunity must therefore recognise that students do not arrive on campus as admission numbers. They arrive as young people with different financial circumstances, different levels of preparation and different challenges. Giving them a place is important, but giving them a realistic chance of succeeding is even more so.

The proposed funding reforms could represent a meaningful opportunity to address some of those inequalities. But implementation will matter far more than the announcement. If the government wants the promise of full funding to mean something to ordinary families, the final system must be clear about what is covered, who qualifies, how support reaches students and institutions, and what obligations beneficiaries may carry afterwards.

Universities themselves must also be held to account. Public investment in students should come with expectations about teaching quality, infrastructure, student welfare and graduate outcomes. The state cannot simply increase the number of students entering higher education and leave universities to absorb the consequences.

Kenya has opened the university door to a new generation. Now it must make sure that poverty does not become the reason they cannot walk through it, remain inside it or build a future beyond it.

An admission letter should be the beginning of opportunity — not the beginning of another family's financial crisis.

**NCIC** The commission says it is investigating Gachagua's utterances under Sections 27, 29 and 63C as read with Section 63E of the National Cohesion and Integration Act

# NCIC summons Gachagua to answer for his words — or face arrest

*Kenya's hate speech watchdog delivers its most explicit warning yet to the DCP leader, setting a 27 August deadline and threatening arrest warrants if he fails to appear.*

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua

**BY James Mwangi**
*@themtkenyatimes*

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission yesterday summoned Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua to appear before it on 27 August to answer for a series of public utterances under investigation for possible hate speech and ethnic incitement, warning that failure to comply could result in arrest warrants and criminal proceedings.

The summons, signed by NCIC Chief Executive Officer Daniel Mutegi Giti and dated 18 August 2026, directs Gachagua to present himself in person at the commission's offices at Britam Towers, Upper Hill, Nairobi, at 2pm on Thursday next week. The language is unambiguous. "Take notice that failure to appear in person at the aforementioned place, date, and time, will lead to warrants of arrest being issued for your arrest and production before the Commission and/or the institution of criminal and/or contempt proceedings against you," the notice states.

The commission says it is investigating Gachagua's utterances under Sections 27, 29 and 63C as read with Section 63E of the National Cohesion and Integration Act. Among the specific incidents cited is an alleged statement made on 23 February 2026 at Gusii Stadium in Kisii County. The commission also cites statements allegedly made during Gachagua's tour of Meru between 25 and 28 July 2026, when he is alleged to have used the phrases "tuta ua nyoka pamoja na mayai" and "kufukuza William Ruto kwa kura" while addressing a public gathering. NCIC further alleges that Gachagua accused President William Ruto of seeking to eliminate the political leadership of the Mt Kenya region, criticised leaders who had supported the administration and urged residents to send a "very strong signal" to those he accused of betraying the community.

Gachagua has not been shy about the remarks in question. Speaking in Buuri, Meru County, last month, he offered his own translation with characteristic directness. "When we say we will kill the snake, we mean removing Ruto from office through the ballot. When we talk about destroying its eggs, we mean ensuring those who support him are also voted out," he said, insisting his words were figurative language used in the literary tradition. "We are not engaging in hate speech. We are using figurative language because we are students of literature," Gachagua told his audience, challenging the NCIC to write to him if it needed clarification.

The commission, however, is not persuaded by the literary defence, and the timeline tells a story of its own. On 28 July, the NCIC and the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya issued a joint statement in which NCIC Chairperson Bishop Dr Kepha Nyamweya Omae confirmed that the commission's Investigations and Compliance Department had opened independent probes into ten prominent political figures, including Gachagua, Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale, Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku, Busia Governor Paul Otuoma and six others. The two institutions described themselves as witnessing a troubling rise in political intolerance across counties, airwaves and social media platforms, warning that language was increasingly being used to dehumanise opponents and cast entire communities as adversaries. "Hate speech is not free speech. It is an assault on human dignity and on the constitutional order that binds this nation together," their joint statement read.

The decision to issue formal summons specifically against Gachagua — three weeks after that announcement — represents an escalation, and it arrives against a backdrop of competing political pressures that have complicated the commission's position. Nandi Senator Samson Cherargei formally petitioned the NCIC on 27 July to investigate Gachagua over remarks he argued linked members of the Kalenjin community to criminality, insecurity and organised violence — grounding his request in Article 27 of the Constitution, which bars ethnic discrimination, and Article 33, which strips hate speech of free-speech protection. From the other side of the political fence, Duale publicly declared he would not honour the NCIC's own summons against him unless Gachagua was simultaneously compelled to appear. "The day I will go to NCIC, I must go with Gachagua. If there is anyone with the number one Kenyan hate speech, it is Gachagua, and I am not sorry about it," Duale said in Garissa. The commission's decision to issue an arrest warning exclusively against Gachagua while the broader investigation into all ten individuals remains ongoing will do nothing to defuse accusations of selective enforcement — a charge Gachagua has consistently levelled and will now undoubtedly amplify.

Gachagua has dismissed the NCIC as "an appendage of the government and not the independent commission that it ought to be" and has previously suggested its interventions are designed to shield Duale rather than address incitement impartially. He has also positioned the investigations as politically motivated, designed to suppress opposition voices ahead of 2027 rather than to genuinely enforce national cohesion law.

That context matters enormously. Gachagua, who served as Deputy President from 2022 until his impeachment and removal from office in October 2024, has since emerged as one of the most energetic and disruptive opposition figures in the country. His DCP is being positioned as the nucleus of a wider anti-Ruto political coalition ahead of the 2027 General Election, and his public rallies — particularly across Mt Kenya — have drawn large and enthusiastic crowds. The more confrontational his rhetoric becomes, the larger his audience grows. The NCIC summons, whatever its legal merit, hands him another grievance to prosecute on the campaign trail.

For the commission itself, the coming week is as much a test of its own credibility as it is of Gachagua's compliance. NCIC has in the past struggled to enforce its summons against prominent political figures. Records presented to the National Assembly's Committee on Administration and Internal Security earlier this year showed that Gachagua was among several individuals who had previously ignored commission summons without consequence. The explicit arrest warning in yesterday's notice suggests the commission has decided it can no longer afford to be ignored.

What happens on 27 August will determine whether the warning was real — or whether Kenya's pre-election season produces yet another confrontation between a political figure and a state institution that finds itself without the authority to match its ambition.

Kenya has walked this road before, and it knows the cost.

**Elections** Nderitu tells women and youth convention that election preparedness is a collective task, not the commission's alone

# IEBC commissioner urges shared responsibility for credible 2027 poll

**BY John Kariuki**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Commissioner Ann Nderitu has called on political actors, security agencies, the Judiciary, civil society, the media and ordinary citizens to take shared ownership of the 2027 General Election, warning that credible polls cannot be delivered by the commission alone.

Nderitu was speaking at the Women and Youth Convention 2026, convened by the Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KEWOPA) at Iconic Plaza Hotel in Nairobi. The convention, held under the theme "Enhancing Inclusive Electoral Governance through Women- and Youth-Led Advocacy and Policy Engagements," brought together women leaders, youth groups, civil society organisations and local administrators to deliberate on electoral preparedness ahead of the next general election.

Representing the commission on a panel that also included the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, Nderitu told delegates the IEBC was on course with its 2027 preparations, with activities tracking against the timelines and milestones set out in the Election Operations Plan (EOP) 2025–2027.

"Election preparedness is a continuous process," she said, adding that the commission's progress should be assessed against its own established milestones rather than external speculation.

Nderitu highlighted the launch of the IEBC Strategic Plan 2024–2029 and the EOP, alongside advances in legal reforms, electoral campaign financing, procurement of critical materials and services, and the recruitment of key personnel. She also stressed the importance of enforcing the Electoral Code of Conduct and tackling electoral violence and hate speech.

On inclusion, the commissioner outlined steps underway to enhance participation by persons with disabilities, including voter assistance, Braille ballot materials, improved physical accessibility at polling stations and access to sign-language interpretation.

"Election is for all of us," Nderitu said, urging stakeholders to ensure women, youth, persons with disabilities and all eligible voters can participate meaningfully in 2027.

The panel discussion was themed "Is Kenya Ready for the 2027 Election?"

Dr. Ann Nderitu

# Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens

Wisdom listens before knowledge speaks.
Knowledge is a valuable wealth.
It comes through listening.
Talk less and listen more;
it is a proverb.
These are true words.

Listening is the first step of the four skills.
When you listen more, you will learn more things.
When you talk more,
it is of no use because it does not bring
knowledge.
Knowledge gives us beautiful thoughts for
speaking before people. So, knowledge speaks
with the help of wisdom.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

# A walk after the rain

My best friend and I went for a walk,
Just after the rain had stopped.
Green leaves sparkled with tiny drops,
Red flowers smiled beside the path.

The blue sky appeared through the clouds,
While birds flew over the trees.
Puddles reflected the open sky,
And the cool wind touched our faces.

We walked slowly, enjoying the view,
Laughing at our little footprints.
The world looked peaceful and new,
And we smiled at nature's beauty.

D.DHANYASRI
GRADE 8
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary school,
Panruti, Tamil Nadu, India

# The Ray of hope

When the sky is painted dark and gray ,
And my heart feels lost along the way,
A little light peeks through the pain,
Like Sunshine dancing after rain.

Hope is candle in my hand,
It flickers, but refuse to stand.

It's the bridge when I'm scared to cross,
The quite voice that says ,"No loss".

Like the seed that sleeps beneath the ground,
Trust me, miracle will be found.
For every night ,there's morning due,
And every wound will heal anew.

"Even in the darkers night ,
Don't lost your light."

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

# The talking book

I found a book upon my shelf,
It seemed to whisper by itself.
"Open me and come inside,
There are many worlds where you can hide."

It took me to a land of dreams,
With shining stars and flowing streams.
I met a king, a fairy too,
And learned of places strange and new.

Books can teach us, books can guide,
They keep a thousand worlds inside.
So every day I love to read,
For books can give us what we need.

M.R.Hanshiga
Grade 8-C
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary school
Panruti.

# Realise yourself

Name: Dr. Debabrata Maji
Country: India

Shadows deep in the spirit lies,
Whisper dream in closed eyes.
The world is mist self unknown,
Beds of ease the seed unsown.

A hard voice is a clarion sound,
May arise in slumber profound.
Awaken let the inner fire ignite,
Pierce a long and heavy night.

Self know a boundless Whole,
Grasp the meaning of the soul.
Realize the power held within,
The endless journey may begin.

No rest and no pause in steep,
Always promise to have keep.
Every step has a truth unfurled,
Till light illuminates the world.

Title: A Golden Touch
Author: Dr. Debabrata Maji
Country: India

Sunlight spills on crystalline shores,
Like a painter gives golden touch;
The palm sway with pine-clad peaks,
A Silence means it has too much.

Volcanic heart has a rugged grace,
Like a beneath of an African sun;
The dusty trails has lead soul astray,
Till the new journeys have begun.

A whispered has a tourist brights,
Where the stars have to be ignite;
Canaria breathes with different tale,
Surround with its shadows and light.

A place has found its truest self,
Feel like a world with a noisy place,
The island sketches its own song,
Within its time and endless space.

Title: The Open Road
Name: Dr. Debabrata Maji
Country: India

The heavy door is closed behind,
Quieter only clearer space to find.
No more weight of yesterday,
Breathe it out and let it sway.
The past is just a story told,
Has a broken and faded mold.
Dawn brings fresh and new,
With an endless sky of blue.

Pack no bags of regret or fear,
Just faith can start from here.
A new road has a steady pace,
Have found an authentic place.
Light is bright in heart is free,
Starting over it is just to be.

Biography

Dr. Debabrata Maji's journey is one woven with the artistry of words, the precision of engineering, and the resounding echoes of literary passion. Born on September 6, 1961, in the serene Deulpur Village of Howrah District, West Bengal, India, his life's path meandered through the structured world of engineering before blossoming into an awe-inspiring legacy in the poetic realm. Despite pursuing a career in engineering, the written word never loosened its grip on his soul. It was as if poetry was inscribed into his very being, waiting patiently for the right moment to erupt into brilliance. And erupt, it did. What followed was an unstoppable rise through the ranks of the World Poetic Fraternity, marking Dr. Maji as a luminary in contemporary literature. His literary prowess, distinguished by a profound sensitivity and refined craftsmanship, has been recognized far and wide. The world acknowledged his contributions by bestowing upon him fourteen Honorary Doctorates, a testament to the depth and impact of his work. Recognition followed in waves, with eleven prestigious Annual Literary Awards adorning his illustrious career - one of the most remarkable being the Silver Saraswati Statue, a symbol of divine wisdom and artistic excellence. The weight of his influence is evident in the vast array of publications that carry his name. His unique poetic creations have graced numerous magazines, newspapers, and contemporary anthologies, reaching readers across India and beyond. His artistry, rooted in heartfelt emotions and intricate expressions, carved a distinct space within global literary landscapes. Dr. Maji's written legacy is solidified through eight remarkable poetry collections, each bearing the coveted ISBN. His books - Kavita Bichitra, Kavita Darpan, Probad Angina, Premer Boikunth, Sonnet Bhaskar, Harano Bamsari, Smarane Manane, Dreamscape, The Peace , Vande Mataram, Barnera Rahasya, The Divine Glow and Maxims 500 are more than literary works; they are extensions of his soul. They have found their way into the hands of eager readers, offering solace, beauty, and wisdom through poetic verses that transcend time. The accolades are endless, honouring his artistic contributions with the most distinguished awards: Bharat Gaurav Ishan Award, International Solidarity Award, Kabi Ratna Award, Sarat Sahitya Ratna Award, Bengal Shiksha Gaurav, International Kabi Ratna Award, and many more, including the Royal of Art and Literature Award, Bishwa Bongo Sahitya Award, Golden Pen Award, Golden Star Award, William Shakespeare Award, Poet of Nature Award, and the revered Gold Poetry Prize Winner. These titles bear witness to his unwavering commitment to poetry and the sheer brilliance of his literary craft. His story is not merely about accolades or achievements - it is about a man who dared to transform life's melodies into poetry, leaving behind an enduring legacy that will inspire generations to come.

KEMSA ............................

# KEMSA chief tells Ruto medicine order fill rate has more than doubled in four years

Ejersa says authority is targeting 100 per cent order fulfilment as digital overhaul transforms supply chain

**BY John Kariuki**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Dr. Waqo Dulacha Ejersa, Chief Executive Officer, KEMSA

Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA) Chief Executive Waqo Dulacha Ejersa has told President William Ruto that the authority has raised its medicine order fill rate from roughly 40 per cent to more than 90 per cent over the past three to four years, in what he described as a decisive move to end the persistent “Hakuna Dawa” syndrome in public health facilities.

Ejersa made the disclosure during the Kenya Health Summit in Nairobi, where he outlined a sweeping transformation of KEMSA’s procurement, warehousing, distribution and digitisation operations.

“Our business is to ensure commodity security,” he said, adding that the authority’s agreed target with the President is a 100 per cent order fill rate. In public health supply chains, he noted, a rate above 95 per cent is considered very good.

The turnaround began with a fundamental rethink of what KEMSA actually needed to stock. The authority had previously been pursuing around 3,800 molecules for procurement. After working with technical teams and county pharmacists, it narrowed its focus to approximately 500 priority stock-keeping units — concentrating resources on the commodities most needed by health facilities rather than spreading thinly across thousands of products.

KEMSA also moved away from holding six months’ worth of stock. Ejersa described the new approach as “shrink and grow” — reducing stockholding to roughly three months and replenishing as needed, which helped push fill rates significantly higher.

Digitisation has been central to the transformation. Ejersa demonstrated a real-time dashboard showing order fill rates, orders being processed, their monetary value and the facilities and counties being served. At the time of the presentation, the system showed 984 active orders valued at more than KSh500 million, serving approximately 855 health facilities across 35 counties.

KEMSA is now fully paperless. Officials can track individual transactions and monitor commodity movement down to facility level — what was ordered, processed and delivered. The next step is connecting KEMSA’s systems to the national Digital Health Architecture to create a unified Logistics Management Information System covering the entire country.

The authority has also changed how it delivers. Rather than depositing medicines at county or sub-county stores, KEMSA now takes commodities directly to the facility that placed the order. Ejersa said KEMSA is the only agency operating this doorstep delivery model, which shortens the distribution chain and reduces unnecessary intermediate handling.

Warehouse operations have shifted from conventional office hours to a split-shift system running from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The impact on turnaround times has been significant. For rural health facilities, order processing time has fallen from approximately 24 days to under two weeks. For hospitals, it has dropped from about 20 days to fewer than 10.

For Ejersa, the ultimate measure of success remains straightforward: whether Kenyans can walk into a public health facility and find the medicines they need.

**Justice** Mbaabu was attacked on the evening of 7 August while preparing supper in her kitchen alongside her grandson, Maxwell Mwenda

# Dawood calls on DCI to accelerate probe into killing of NG-CDF board member

**BY Brian Gitonga**
*@themtkenyatimes*

North Imenti Member of Parliament Abdul Rahim Dawood yesterday called on the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) to urgently establish who killed North Imenti NG-CDF Committee member Evalyn Mukiiri Mbaabu, who was attacked at her home in a brutal assault that also left her 13-year-old grandson injured.

Speaking at Mbaabu's burial, Dawood said he had engaged the DCI in Meru, led by County Criminal Investigations Officer Abednego Kavoo. He added that Deputy President Kithure Kindiki had also raised the matter directly with DCI Director Mohamed Amin as pressure mounts on investigators to solve the case.

"We have spoken with the DCI from Meru, led by Mr Kavoo, and the Deputy President has also spoken with Director Amin so that we can establish what happened," said Dawood.

Mbaabu was attacked on the evening of 7 August while preparing supper in her kitchen alongside her grandson, Maxwell Mwenda. According to investigators, the attacker arrived at the homestead at around 7pm and asked for water. Mbaabu sent Maxwell to serve the man in the sitting room while she remained in the kitchen. Moments later the boy heard his grandmother scream. When he rushed back to the kitchen, he found her lying in a pool of blood, with deep cut wounds to her forehead and the back of her head. The attacker then struck the boy on the arm with a machete before fleeing the scene. Mbaabu was rushed to a local hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival.

Dawood said investigators are currently pursuing several leads. Among the theories being examined are a land-related dispute and the possibility that Mbaabu may have had information concerning the alleged theft of funds — though the MP said he could not disclose further details at this stage.

**Meru County Executive Committee Member for Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Development, Elias Murega Adreses the Press** | *Photo:* Brian Gitonga

"There are two or three theories we are exploring, with one being about land and the other about whistleblowing. I won't go into the details, but it involves some stolen funds that are being investigated," said Dawood.

The MP also appealed to residents of Kithoka and Msenangu to assist investigators with any information that could help identify the attacker. Local leaders had been informed that the person believed to have carried out the attack was wearing a purple dust coat on the evening Mbaabu was killed.

Dawood urged anyone who saw a person dressed in similar clothing around the time of the incident to come forward. He assured residents that those uncomfortable approaching the DCI directly could share information through his office, where their identities would be protected.

"We have been told that the person who killed her was wearing a purple dust coat. We appeal to the people of Kithoka and Msenangu to share information if they saw somebody that evening dressed in the same manner," he said.

Dawood added that Mbaabu's family had told them the suspect was not known to her, and confirmed that she was attacked from behind while entering the kitchen after offering the man water — details he described as particularly disturbing.

He assured the family and the wider community that efforts to bring the perpetrator to justice would continue regardless of how long the investigation takes.

**Meru County Deputy Governor Linda Kiome (in black) alongside Imenti North MP Rahim Dawood, throw dust on Evelyn's casket.** | *Photo:* Courtesy

Elias Murega, the Meru County Executive Committee Member for Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Development, described the killing as a devastating loss for the Imenti North community. Murega said Mbaabu had served diligently on the NG-CDF Committee under Dawood, participated in various school boards and championed environmental conservation, including efforts to protect residents from human-wildlife conflict through the construction of an elephant barrier. She had also helped vulnerable children access bursaries, making her death a blow to many families that had relied on her support.

Murega urged security agencies to treat the investigation with the urgency it demanded, warning that failure to resolve the case could frustrate the family and erode public confidence in the authorities ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"If this matter is left unresolved yet we are in government, it will be a huge setback that will frustrate this community and the family. That is why we appeal to the security apparatus to help maintain peace, especially as we head towards the general elections," said Murega.

**Evelyn Mukiri Mbaabu's Casket at Chabuane Methodist Church.** | *Photo:* Courtesy

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**Politics** It is the latest, most brazen expression of a rising political intolerance that treats dissent especially opposition linked dissent as a licence for violence

# The goon's paycheque: When political intolerance turns Kenya's streets into killing fields

**By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo**
*@themtkenyatimes*

**Goons**

On 16 August 2026, in Homa Bay County, hired youths paid between two and four thousand shillings each blocked roads with boulders and burning tyres, stormed the Homa Bay Tourist Hotel to hunt for perceived political opponents, torched at least six vehicles, attacked and robbed journalists of cameras and personal belongings, vandalized shops, and left a trail that included a dead police officer, a second civilian fatality, and dozens of injured civilians and officers. Some reports place the injury toll near forty-six. The targets were supporters and leaders of the Linda Mwananchi movement, a breakaway faction within the opposition orbit. The attackers were not spontaneous rioters; they were organised, instructed, and remunerated.

This is not an isolated brawl. It is the latest, most brazen expression of a rising political intolerance that treats dissent especially opposition linked dissent as a licence for violence. Kenya has seen this movie before. In the weeks after the 2007 elections, organised ethnic and political violence killed more than 1,100 people and displaced between 300,000 and 500,000. Homes burned. Churches became slaughterhouses. Neighbours turned on neighbours because someone whispered that the other side had "stolen" the vote. We swore never again. We established the National Cohesion and Integration Commission. We wrote a new constitution. We told ourselves we had learned. Nevertheless, here we stand, watching the same script played out with cheaper actors and higher stakes as 2027 approaches.

The Homa Bay operation was not chaotic improvisation. Sources describe meetings days in advance, recruitment drives that sought more than a thousand youths, some ferried from neighbouring Migori, and clear instructions: block the entry of Siaya Governor James Orengo, Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, Embakasi East MP Babu Owino and their team. The goons who received the higher rates were the ones brought in from outside. At four thousand shillings a head, a thousand men cost four million pocket change for those who traffic in power, yet enough to purchase the temporary surrender of a young man's conscience. That price tag is the purest expression of contempt: human life and public order reduced to a day's wage for someone who will never sit at the table where the real decisions are made.

What makes the episode unforgivable is not only the blood and the broken glass. It is the atmosphere of impunity that hangs over it like smoke after a fire. The financiers and directors are widely whispered about in the political corridors of Nyanza and beyond. Even so, the machinery of the state moves with studied lethargy when the trail leads upward. Thirty-seven suspects have been arrested, crude weapons recovered machetes, metal rods, knives. One named individual remains at large. But the men who wrote the cheques, who issued the orders, who calculated that a few dead bodies and a few burned cars would send the necessary message those men remain, for now, untouchable. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission, already limping under the weight of its own limitations, has been conspicuously quiet. The security apparatus, which claims intelligence capabilities, somehow failed to reinforce the area despite clear warning signs: the hotel raid the night before, the open calls to flush out "intruders," the roadblocks forming in broad daylight. When the state cannot or will not protect citizens and its own officers from politically directed thuggery, it is not merely negligent. It is complicit in the slow erosion of its own monopoly on legitimate force.

That monopoly is the thin line between a constitutional republic and a vigilante marketplace. Once private armies whether dressed in party colours or simply paid in cash begin to contest the streets, the country slides toward the logic of Haiti: competing centres of violence, each claiming to represent the people while preying upon them. Kenya is not there yet. But the distance is shrinking every time a politician calculates that a few thousand shillings and a few dozens hired hands can redraw the political map of a county. The weaponisation of protest is no longer the desperate cry of the disenfranchised; it is the calculated instrument of those who already hold power and fear its dilution.

History is not a museum. It is a warning system. The 2007–2008 catastrophe did not erupt from nowhere. It was preceded by years of inflammatory rhetoric, the quiet recruitment of youth gangs, the normalization of ethnic scoring, and the failure of institutions to punish the architects rather than the foot soldiers. Today the same pattern is visible in miniature: the labelling of political opponents as invaders, the mobilisation of local identity against "outsiders," the cash payments that turn idle young men into temporary mercenaries. The difference is that the stakes are higher and the tools more efficient. Social media amplifies the signals. Smartphones record the orders. Yet the accountability remains as porous as ever.

Journalists were not collateral damage; they were deliberate targets. Cameras were stolen because cameras are witnesses. Press cards were taken because the press is the only institution still capable of naming the powerful. When the media is beaten and robbed while covering a political event, the message is clear: the public's right to know ends where the goon's club begins. A democracy that allows its watchdogs to be muzzled by hired muscle has already begun to die from the inside.

The police, too, must answer. If intelligence indicated that chaos was probable, why were reinforcements not positioned in strength? Why did officers find themselves outnumbered and outmaneuvered on familiar roads? The death of a colleague under a hail of stones is not an occupational hazard of democracy; it is the direct result of institutional failure. Heads must roll not as theatrical sacrifice, but as the minimum requirement of seriousness. Commanders who sleep while their men die and civilians bleed have no business wearing the uniform of the republic.

Campaigning is not a blood sport. The right to assemble, to persuade, to challenge incumbents is not a privilege granted by the dominant faction in any county. It is a constitutional guarantee. When that guarantee is enforced only for the strong and suspended for the inconvenient, the constitution itself becomes a decorative document. Those who recruit, finance, mobilise, arm or otherwise facilitate these criminal elements must be treated as the organisers of organised crime that they are. The judiciary must recognise the pattern and refuse to treat each incident as an isolated disturbance. The National Assembly must demand answers under oath. Civil society must refuse the polite language of "both sides" when one side is paying cash for violence.

Kenyans are not destined to live under the permanent shadow of the next paid mob. But destiny is not automatic. It is the sum of choices made by those who still possess agency: the voters who can still withhold their silence, the officers who can still insist on doing their job without political instruction, the prosecutors who can still follow the money, the judges who can still apply the law without fear or favour, and the ordinary citizens who can still refuse to cheer when the goons of their preferred side "defend" the county. The alternative is a slow descent into a place where every political disagreement is settled by the highest bidder for muscle, and where the only remaining question is how many thousands of shillings a human life is worth this week.

We have already paid that price once, in blood and displacement and national shame. To pay it again, knowingly, with the memory of 2007 still living in the bones of this generation, would be not tragedy but choice. And choice, unlike tragedy, can still be refused. The time for that refusal is now before the next convoy is ambushed, before the next journalist is dragged along a dusty road, before the next police officer dies for the crime of standing between hired rage and the rest of us.

*The writer is a social commentator*

**Nissan** Then Nissan made a decision that appeared almost unthinkable. It began removing the Datsun name from its cars

# From Datsun to Nissan: The rebrand that changed a global carmaker forever

## *How one of the most daring name changes in automotive history turned a trusted badge into a worldwide identity.*

**BY John Irungu Maina**
*@themtkenyatimes*

For decades, the name Datsun was synonymous with Japanese motoring. From the streets of Tokyo to highways across North America, Europe and Africa, Datsun built a reputation for producing affordable, reliable and increasingly sophisticated cars. Models such as the 510, the Sunny, the Bluebird and the legendary 240Z gave the brand a devoted following, particularly in export markets far from its Japanese homeland.

Then Nissan made a decision that appeared almost unthinkable. It began removing the Datsun name from its cars.

This was not simply a badge replacement. It was a carefully planned move to bring a rapidly growing global company under one unified identity — a decision that would prove controversial at the time and defining in retrospect.

The story begins with an unusual arrangement that had grown up organically over the years. Nissan Motor Co. was the corporate name, while Datsun had become the name most customers encountered on its vehicles in many export markets. Inside Japan, however, Nissan was already the established automotive identity. For years, the two names coexisted without serious friction. As the company expanded internationally, though, that arrangement became increasingly difficult to sustain. Nissan wanted its corporate identity and its products to speak the same language across every market it operated in.

In 1981, the company announced its decision to phase out Datsun and establish Nissan as the unified global vehicle brand.

It was a bold call, because Datsun was neither an unknown nor a struggling name. Quite the opposite — Datsun had considerable recognition, especially in the United States, where its cars had earned a strong reputation for reliability, value and performance. The company was therefore making a deliberate choice to retire a name that was genuinely working for it.

Nissan Datsun

The transition was gradual rather than abrupt. Vehicles continued to carry Datsun branding for several years, with Nissan increasingly appearing alongside it before eventually taking over entirely. For loyal customers, it meant watching a familiar badge disappear from cars they already trusted. But Nissan was thinking well beyond individual models.

The company was expanding its manufacturing operations overseas and building a much larger international presence. A single name would allow it to present itself consistently to customers, dealers and business partners anywhere in the world. The objective was straightforward: one company, one name, one global automotive identity.

Critically, the disappearance of the Datsun badge did not mean the disappearance of what had made Datsun successful. The cars continued. The technology continued. The engineering philosophy continued. The Z-car remained a cornerstone of the company's performance heritage, while models such as the Sunny and Bluebird kept evolving, now bearing the Nissan nameplate. The name had changed, but the company's automotive character had not. That continuity helped Nissan carry the trust built by Datsun into its new identity without the rupture that a more abrupt transition might have caused.

By the mid-1980s, the switch was largely complete in major markets. Datsun had effectively become history, and Nissan was becoming the name associated with the company's expanding international portfolio.

The timing was significant. Japanese carmakers were moving rapidly from being primarily exporters to becoming genuinely global manufacturers, establishing production facilities outside Japan and bringing their operations closer to customers on every continent. The Nissan name therefore came to represent more than a corporate label. It became the face of a global automotive brand built on decades of accumulated engineering credibility.

There was, however, an unexpected second chapter. In 2013, Nissan revived the Datsun name for selected emerging markets, attempting to use the historic badge to attract customers seeking affordable new vehicles in countries such as India, Indonesia and Russia. The revival sparked genuine nostalgia among those who remembered the original era.

But it did not last. Nissan eventually discontinued the Datsun brand for the second time, bringing the experiment to a quiet close.

That second disappearance made the original decision look even more considered than it had at the time. What had begun as a controversial attempt to unify Nissan's global identity had ultimately become the company's settled, long-term direction. The brief Datsun revival suggested the old name still carried emotional weight — but it also confirmed that the future belonged firmly to Nissan.

Datsun had helped Nissan establish itself internationally, providing the foundation on which a global reputation was built. When Nissan chose to move on, it was not erasing that history. It was carrying it forward under a single, stronger identity capable of representing everything the company had grown into.

The Datsun badge disappeared, but its legacy remained embedded in the cars that followed. Today, the Nissan name is recognised across continents. Behind that identity lies a brand that once introduced itself to much of the world as Datsun.

The transformation holds an enduring lesson for any industry: sometimes a company must be willing to let go of a successful identity in order to build an even stronger one. Datsun built the foundation. Nissan took that foundation and turned it into something the world would come to know on its own terms.

It was not simply the end of Datsun. It was the beginning of Nissan as the world would come to know it.

**Lesotho** The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development uses the Kigali water symposium to showcase how coordinated financing transforms ambition into lasting development impact

# ADFD highlights power of partnerships in advancing water security across Africa

BY Lana Kuzbari
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Metolong Dam

Water is life — and across Africa, securing that life remains one of the continent's most urgent challenges. As leaders, financiers and water-sector stakeholders gather in Kigali this week for one of the most significant continental conversations of the year, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) is making a powerful case that the key to solving Africa's water crisis lies not only in money, but in the quality of partnerships behind it.

The Africa Water & Sanitation Systems Leadership Symposium 2026, running from 17 to 21 August at the Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda, is a pivotal continental gathering co-convened by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and the Government of Rwanda, and facilitated by IRC. It brings together more than 1,000 African and global leaders to accelerate reform and investment in water and sanitation across the continent, and is designed as a high-level political and institutional platform to move Africa decisively from commitments to delivery.

In line with the symposium's priorities, ADFD has highlighted the Metolong Dam project in the Kingdom of Lesotho as a compelling example of what coordinated, multi-partner financing can achieve on the ground. The project stands as one of the Fund's flagship water investments in sub-Saharan Africa, and its story offers a blueprint worth examining closely.

### A dam built on partnership

Lesotho is a landlocked, high-altitude kingdom entirely surrounded by South Africa. Despite sitting amid some of Africa's most abundant mountain water resources, communities in the country's lowlands faced an acute and worsening water crisis in the early 2000s. Rapid urban growth, industrial expansion — particularly in the textile sector — and climate variability placed mounting pressure on limited potable water infrastructure. For months at a time during dry seasons, households in and around the capital, Maseru, had no reliable water supply at all.

The Metolong Dam and Water Supply Programme was conceived to address this crisis comprehensively. Constructed across the Phuthiatsana River, the project involved the development of a 53 million cubic metre reservoir designed to secure a sustainable and reliable potable water supply for Maseru and surrounding towns and villages. It was a massive undertaking — and one that no single funder could have delivered alone.

ADFD contributed AED 77.1 million (US$21 million) towards the core dam and engineering works as part of the wider US$450 million multi-partner programme, which brought together the Government of Lesotho, multilateral development banks and bilateral partners around a shared national priority. The ADFD financing covered the concrete dam structure, pumping and storage infrastructure, water treatment facilities and associated engineering works — the technical backbone of the entire system.

The results have been transformative. The programme supplies raw water for Lesotho's capital and surrounding towns, improves water delivery to domestic users and textile operations, and has preserved 48,000 jobs while creating approximately 6,000 new ones. Today, the dam supplies approximately 71,000 cubic metres of treated drinking water per day, serving more than 30,000 households and benefiting over half a million people. It also supports electricity supply to over 5,000 homes and 20 schools across the region. The ripple effects reach across public health, agriculture, food security and industrial productivity — creating lasting benefits that extend far beyond the dam wall itself.

### Why partnerships matter

For Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of ADFD, the Metolong project illustrates a principle that guides the Fund's entire approach to development finance.

"Water security is fundamental to sustainable development, supporting the health and wellbeing of communities, the resilience of economies and food security," Al Suwaidi said. "Addressing these challenges requires more than infrastructure; it requires partnerships that bring together financing, expertise and strong institutions around nationally led priorities. The Metolong Dam Project demonstrates how strategic development finance can help provide the foundation for wider investment, enabling partners to address critical water needs while building systems that deliver lasting development impact."

This philosophy — that finance must be coordinated and complementary, not fragmented and isolated — is central to ADFD's model. The Fund does not simply write cheques; it works to align institutions, leverage resources and build the frameworks that attract further investment. The Metolong experience demonstrates precisely how this approach works when all partners are pulling in the same direction.

### A new platform for a global challenge

The ambitions being showcased in Kigali are not limited to a single dam in a single country. Earlier this year, ADFD launched the Abu Dhabi Global Water Platform — a strategic initiative designed to accelerate development in the water sector on an entirely new scale. The platform aims to mobilise US$2B from local and international financing institutions, with ADFD committing an initial phase of US$1B over five years from 2026 to 2030, targeting approximately 10 million beneficiaries worldwide.

The platform aims to enhance water security worldwide by financing innovative projects that provide safe and sustainable water sources for communities, and by supporting advanced technological solutions to address water scarcity challenges. It aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation, reflecting the UAE's commitment to supporting sustainable development and quality of life globally.

Al Suwaidi described the platform as a natural evolution of the Fund's longstanding commitment to the sector. "Beyond financing key water projects in partner countries, the Fund has launched the Abu Dhabi Global Water Platform to advance a partnership-driven approach to water security, bringing together governments, development institutions and other partners to develop practical solutions, strengthen investment opportunities and mobilise resources for sustainable water development," he said.

### Africa's moment

The urgency behind this week's discussions in Kigali cannot be overstated. Water insecurity across Africa is not an abstract policy problem — it is a daily reality for hundreds of millions of people, affecting health, livelihoods, food production and economic growth. Held during the African Union Year on Water and Sanitation, the symposium will focus on strengthening leadership, governance, regulation, professional capacity and strategic public finance — the foundations of resilient, investment-ready systems.

For ADFD, the message from Kigali is clear. As Al Suwaidi put it: "As discussions focus on accelerating water and sanitation transformation across Africa, ADFD remains committed to working with governments and strategic development partners to support investments that strengthen water security, improve livelihoods and contribute to resilient and inclusive economic development in Africa."

The Metolong Dam took a nation's crisis and turned it into a story of resilience and possibility. If the partnerships forged in Kigali this week hold firm, there are many more such stories waiting to be written across the continent.

**Education** At its core, the 2026 Masomo Bora Programme requires parents to pay just KSh 500 per term — a further reduction from the KSh 1,000 cap of previous phases

# Nyoro's Masomo Bora programme: The model that is making Kibaki smile

***Kiharu's boldly expanded education initiative is doing what national policy has long promised but rarely delivered — and other constituencies are taking notice.***

**BY Ashford Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro

Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro has expanded his flagship Masomo Bora Programme to cover all 65 public day secondary schools in the constituency, directly benefiting more than 12,000 learners and setting a standard that has left education administrators and fellow legislators across Kenya scrambling to take notes.

The late President Mwai Kibaki is remembered for many things, but perhaps none more warmly than January 2003, when his incoming NARC administration implemented free primary education and changed the trajectory of an entire generation. More than two decades later, the government continues to wrestle with the practicalities of making that promise real at the secondary level. Nyoro, it appears, has decided not to wait.

Launched in its significantly expanded 2026 edition on 13 January at Maragi Primary School grounds in Kiharu, the programme is a direct, practical response to the persistent crisis in public secondary education. National capitation funds remain inadequate, frequently delayed and routinely insufficient to cover rising operational costs, leaving schools mired in debt and parents trapped in financial despair. Kiharu offers a different story — and an increasingly difficult one for the rest of Kenya to ignore.

At its core, the 2026 Masomo Bora Programme requires parents to pay just KSh 500 per term — a further reduction from the KSh 1,000 cap of previous phases — with no hidden registration fees, no arbitrary levies and remedial tuition strictly capped at KSh 1,000 per term. The programme applies universally across all 65 schools, covering every learner from Grade 10 through Form Four regardless of their county of origin. Children living with relatives or guardians in Kiharu access the full benefits without discrimination. The message is unambiguous: if you are in Kiharu, you are covered.

One of the programme's most transformative elements is its school feeding component. Every learner receives lunch on all school days, including Saturdays — a direct response to the silent crisis of hunger that undermines concentration, attendance and performance across Kenyan public schools. The menu is thoughtfully balanced: githeri three days a week, rice three days, uji during tea breaks and chapati on the last Friday of every month. This is not charity. It is a precise understanding that no child learns well on an empty stomach, and that retention and academic outcomes improve meaningfully when basic nutritional needs are consistently met.

Beyond fees and meals, the programme channels substantial resources into infrastructure and academic support. Over KSh 50 million has been set aside for additional facilities, with strong emphasis on laboratories and computer labs to prepare students for a science-driven modern economy. This builds on prior investments that have already drawn benchmarking visits from more than 14 MPs representing other constituencies — a telling measure of the programme's national resonance. In the current financial year, KSh 10 million goes towards revision materials, supplementing KSh 20 million invested in earlier phases. Each school receives an additional KSh 50,000 to support co-curricular activities — sports, music and drama — grounded in the sound understanding that holistic development extends well beyond the classroom. Free uniforms are provided for Grade 10 students in 20 low-enrolment or newly established schools, removing yet another financial barrier at the critical point of entry into senior secondary education.

The programme also embeds accountability and incentives that distinguish it from typical constituency initiatives. Prize-giving ceremonies in Murang'a East and Kahuro sub-counties are fully funded at KSh 900,000. Top-performing and most-improved school principals earn fully paid trips to Dubai — or Malaysia for repeat travellers — while the best-improved subject teachers travel to Mombasa. These are not trivial gestures. They create a culture of continuous improvement and signal clearly that performance is recognised and rewarded. Insurance premiums and maintenance for school buses are also covered, treating them as shared public utilities rather than an optional luxury.

Nyoro has not shied away from critiquing the broader system that makes interventions like his necessary in the first place. He has publicly highlighted how inadequate national funding — sometimes as low as KSh 109 per learner for an entire term — forces schools into debt and parents into desperation. His calls for a consolidated national education fund drawing KSh 10B each from the NG-CDF, county governments and the national budget — creating a KSh 30B pool for genuinely free basic education and a nationwide feeding programme — reflect a conviction that Kenya has the resources to do this properly if priorities are honestly rearranged. Kiharu, he argues, is simply the proof of concept.

The results have been difficult to ignore. More than 14 MPs from other constituencies have visited on benchmarking trips, and similar initiatives are beginning to emerge in other parts of the country. Critics have raised legitimate questions about long-term sustainability and funding sources. But the outcomes — measurably lower dropout risks, improved nutrition, enhanced learning facilities and visibly motivated educators — continue to speak louder than the scepticism.

What makes Masomo Bora so persistent in the national consciousness is its elegant simplicity. If a constituency with Kiharu's mix of rural and semi-urban challenges can deliver this level of support for thousands of learners, the question that follows is unavoidable: why not everywhere else?

Nyoro himself has framed the initiative not as a political project but as a governing philosophy — a demonstration that focused, transparent allocation of constituency resources can produce tangible, measurable change without waiting for top-down national reforms that may never arrive on time. Every term that passes without a child dropping out of school in Kiharu for lack of fees is, in his view, a policy argument made in the most persuasive language available: results.

The programme is more than a local success story. It is a direct challenge to the nation — proof that when resources are directed purposefully at learners' needs, education becomes a genuine equaliser rather than a privilege rationed by geography or the depth of a parent's pocket. Kibaki gave Kenya free primary education and changed the country. Nyoro, working from a constituency in Murang'a, may be showing Kenya what the next chapter of that promise looks like — and daring the rest of the country to follow.


Sports >> *For the first time in a decade, Anfield turns the page — and a legendary chapter closes.

# End of an era: Liverpool begin again without Salah, Mané and Firmino

By **Pascal Okoth**

Liverpool yesterday began a new season without a single member of the famous attacking trio of Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mané and Roberto Firmino — the first time the club has faced that reality since the 2015/16 campaign.

It marks the definitive end of an era that reshaped the club and returned Liverpool to the summit of European football.

Salah, Mané and Firmino became synonymous with everything Liverpool stood for in their prime. Their pace, creativity and almost telepathic understanding produced moments that supporters will carry with them long after the final whistle of this or any other season. Together, they were not merely a forward line — they were an identity.

Under former manager Jürgen Klopp, the trio became the engine of a system built on relentless pressing, rapid transitions and devastating finishing. Their greatest collective triumph came with the UEFA Champions League in 2019, followed by Liverpool's long-awaited Premier League title in 2019/20 — ending a 30-year wait for the club. They also contributed to victories in the FA Cup, League Cup, UEFA Super Cup and FIFA Club World Cup.

Firmino departed first, his clever movement and trademark smile leaving a gap that no one could quite fill in the same way. Mané followed, his explosive pace and directness moving on to new challenges. Salah stayed the longest — and left the biggest mark. By the time his nine-year chapter ended, he had scored 255 goals in 435 appearances, placing him third on the club's all-time scoring list. He has since joined Trabzonspor in Turkey as a free agent.


*Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mané and Roberto Firmino*

Liverpool enter the 2026/27 season under new manager Andoni Iraola, who arrives from Bournemouth with a strong reputation and the considerable task of rebuilding without their most important attacker of the modern era. The club's recruitment and tactical evolution will be scrutinised closely as a new generation of forwards attempts to create its own story at Anfield.

For supporters who lived through the Salah–Mané–Firmino years, the difference will be felt immediately. Those were not ordinary footballers passing through — they were the architects of one of the most celebrated periods in the club's history.

That period is now history.

An era has ended at Anfield. A new one begins.

Sports >> *The Indomitable Lionesses finally conquer Africa, crowning a tournament that turned history on its head.

# From the wilderness to the summit: Cameroon end the wait with historic WAFCON crown


By **Alfred Lobawoi**

For nearly three decades, the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) belonged to one nation above all others. Nigeria carved their dominance into the continental record books from the inaugural championship in 1998, and for years only three countries had ever lifted the trophy: the Super Falcons, Equatorial Guinea, who won in 2008 and 2012, and South Africa, who claimed the title in 2022.

Yesterday, a fourth name was added to that list — and the wait to get there had been particularly painful.

The 2026 edition in Morocco marked a new chapter as CAF expanded the tournament from 12 to 16 teams. The four additional places were filled by selecting the highest-ranked teams eliminated during qualification: Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali and Egypt. That expansion would prove consequential in ways no one could have predicted. It also brought debutants Cape Verde and Malawi to the continental showpiece for the very first time.

East Africa's representation produced mixed fortunes. Kenya returned to the tournament after a decade away, but lost all three group matches — 4–0 to hosts Morocco, 1–0 to Senegal and 2–0 to Algeria — and exited without scoring. Tanzania, meanwhile, made their presence felt. The Twiga Stars produced a stunning upset on the opening day, defeating 2022 champions South Africa, and scored in all three group matches before eventually being eliminated. Their campaign ended with a 2–1 defeat to Ivory Coast in the final group fixture, with the Elephants going on to reach the quarter-finals.

The tournament's true sensation, however, was Malawi. Making their debut at the continental showpiece, the Scorchers shocked the continent immediately, defeating ten-time champions Nigeria 3–2 in their opening match — one of the biggest upsets in WAFCON history. Spearheaded by the Chawinga sisters, Temwa and Tabitha combined for nine of Malawi's 13 tournament goals as the Scorchers advanced through the group stage, quarter-finals and semi-finals to reach the final — a feat no debutant had ever achieved in the competition's history.

Nigeria, meanwhile, suffered a catastrophic collapse. For the first time in the history of the tournament, the Super Falcons failed to reach the semi-finals, losing 1–0 to Cameroon in the quarter-finals. That defeat sent them into a World Cup play-in against South Africa, where Banyana Banyana secured a 2–1 victory through second-half goals from Thembi Kgatlana and Refiloe Jane, ending Nigeria's consecutive Women's World Cup appearances — a run stretching back to the tournament's 1991 debut.

Cameroon, by contrast, grew stronger with every match. They ousted Nigeria and Morocco — last year's finalists — on their way to the final, edging past hosts Morocco in a tense semi-final that was settled 3–1 on penalties after a goalless draw. In the final, there was nothing tense about it at all.

Cameroon dominated from the outset, leading 3–0 at half-time through Marie Ngah's brace and a Naomi Ndjoah Eto strike. Goalkeeper Michaely Bihina, who had been outstanding throughout the tournament, was rarely called upon in the second half as Malawi pushed forward in search of a way back. The clean sheet held. The trophy was won.

Having finished as runners-up in 2004, 2014 and 2016, Cameroon finally erased years of heartbreak to claim their first continental crown — becoming only the fourth nation in history to win the WAFCON title.

Both finalists had already secured their places at the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil. To date, 18 nations have confirmed their spots at the tournament in Brazil, including Algeria, Morocco, Cameroon, Malawi, Australia, Japan, Argentina and hosts Brazil. The global showpiece will be contested by 32 nations, with several confederation qualification windows still to close.

For now, the continent belongs to Cameroon. The Indomitable Lionesses finally have the trophy their history always promised.


SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

The MT. KENYA TIMES

# International Unitarian Funding Program Gave A Grant To Mulher Forte GBV Project In Botswana

By: Paula Otukile
*Gaborone, Botswana Correspondence*

**Worth Noting:**

- **Led by Dr. Otukile, Mulher Forte works directly with school leadership and regional education offices to secure permission and schedule presentations. Sessions are structured around three core areas: understanding what GBV is and how it manifests in homes, schools and communities; personal safety and how to respond in a dangerous or compromising situation; and the importance of speaking up — reporting abuse to a trusted adult or safe space.**
- **Since the project launched in 2023, nearly 60 schools in Botswana have benefited from the programme. The reach has also extended beyond national borders, with two schools in Tembisa, South Africa, participating — a sign of the project's growing regional footprint.**

The fight against gender-based violence (GBV) is being carried forward in classrooms across Botswana, backed by a fresh injection of international funding.

In August 2026, the International Unitarian Funding Program* in the United States awarded renewed funding to the Mulher Forte GBV Project in Botswana. The grant will allow the project to continue its school campaigns across the country, equipping learners with the knowledge and tools to recognise, prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

**Taking GBV education into schools**

Led by Dr. Otukile, Mulher Forte works directly with school leadership and regional education offices to secure permission and schedule presentations. Sessions are structured around three core areas: understanding what GBV is and how it manifests in homes, schools and communities; personal safety and how to respond in a dangerous or compromising situation; and the importance of speaking up — reporting abuse to a trusted adult or safe space.

Since the project launched in 2023, nearly 60 schools in Botswana have benefited from the programme. The reach has also extended beyond national borders, with two schools in Tembisa, South Africa, participating — a sign of the project's growing regional footprint.

**Leadership rooted in advocacy and literacy**

At the heart of Mulher Forte is Dr. Otukile, an internationally recognised author and GBV activist. Her work has earned recognition on the continent, including the Best Woman of the Year award from the Save Girl Child NGO in Nigeria in 2021, and the Best Gender-Based Violence Advocate of the Year award in Monrovia, Liberia, the same year.

Beyond her advocacy, Dr. Otukile mentors African authors and writes on issues affecting communities, including HIV, menstruation and other social challenges. She also provides therapeutic support and youth motivation through Ntshegetse Ke Go Tshegetse NGO in Mahalapye — a centre that supports children and the elderly.

**Support beyond the grant**

The International Unitarian Funding Program has supported the Mulher Forte project since 2023. A key element of that support is access to the Rowe Institute, which trains grant recipients in fundraising, project management and sustainability. Grantees also receive structured guidance on reporting and accountability.

"The good part is the clear assistance one gets after receiving the grant — to file reports, account for how funds were spent, and plan for the continuation of the project," the project team notes.

**Why this work matters**

Gender-based violence remains a serious and urgent concern in Botswana, with recent reports of killings and abuse affecting children and young people. Through Mulher Forte's school campaigns, learners are given language, tools and safe spaces to protect themselves, support their peers and break the silence around abuse.

By investing in education and prevention today, the project is working to build a generation that stands up against violence and chooses dignity, respect and safety — for everyone.

*About Mulher Forte GBV Project: Mulher Forte is a community-driven initiative focused on ending gender-based violence through education, advocacy and direct support for children and youth in Botswana and across the region.*

*Dinokwane Primary in Serowe Mulher Forte African literature Outreach( First pioneering school 2026 book Donation) standing next to kids: Dr. Paula O.M.Otukile-founder Mulher Forte GBV- Powered by Unitarian International Funding Program.*

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