The lion's cub: Ida hands Raila Junior to Kibra as the Odinga dynasty enters a new era

Ida Odinga yesterday handed her son Raila Odinga Junior to the people of Kibra, publicly endorsing his bid for the constituency's parliamentary seat and urging local leaders to guide him

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Opposition principals sign unity covenant in Kiambu as 2027 race intensifies

Eight opposition political parties united under the United Alternative Government yesterday signed a formal coalition unity agreement and individual personal pledges at Windsor Hotel in Kiambu County, committing to remain together

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Countdown 2027 Gachagua said he had spent the past 55 days listening to Kenyans' views on the state of the country

The Gachagua factor

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua concluded a 55-day political conclave at his Wamunyoro residence in Nyeri County yesterday, addressing the nation on what he described as the political direction of Kenya ahead of the August 2027 General Election — a country already deep in succession politics, sharply divided over who should lead it next, and increasingly anxious about whether its electoral institutions can be trusted to say so honestly.

The conclave, which brought political leaders, grassroots representatives and opinion shapers to Gachagua's home in Nyeri County, was initially announced as a 45-day consultation exercise but was subsequently extended. By the time it concluded yesterday, it had become something larger — a running political seminar on Kenya's discontents, drawing voices from across the country to a village in the central highlands that, for two months, functioned as an unofficial opposition headquarters.

Gachagua said he had spent the past 55 days listening to Kenyans' views on the state of the country, their expectations for the future, and the 2027 General Election. The final session, before yesterday's press conference, was reserved for young Kenyans — Gen Z, the cohort whose street protests in June 2024 reshaped national politics and whose allegiance no political formation can now afford to ignore.

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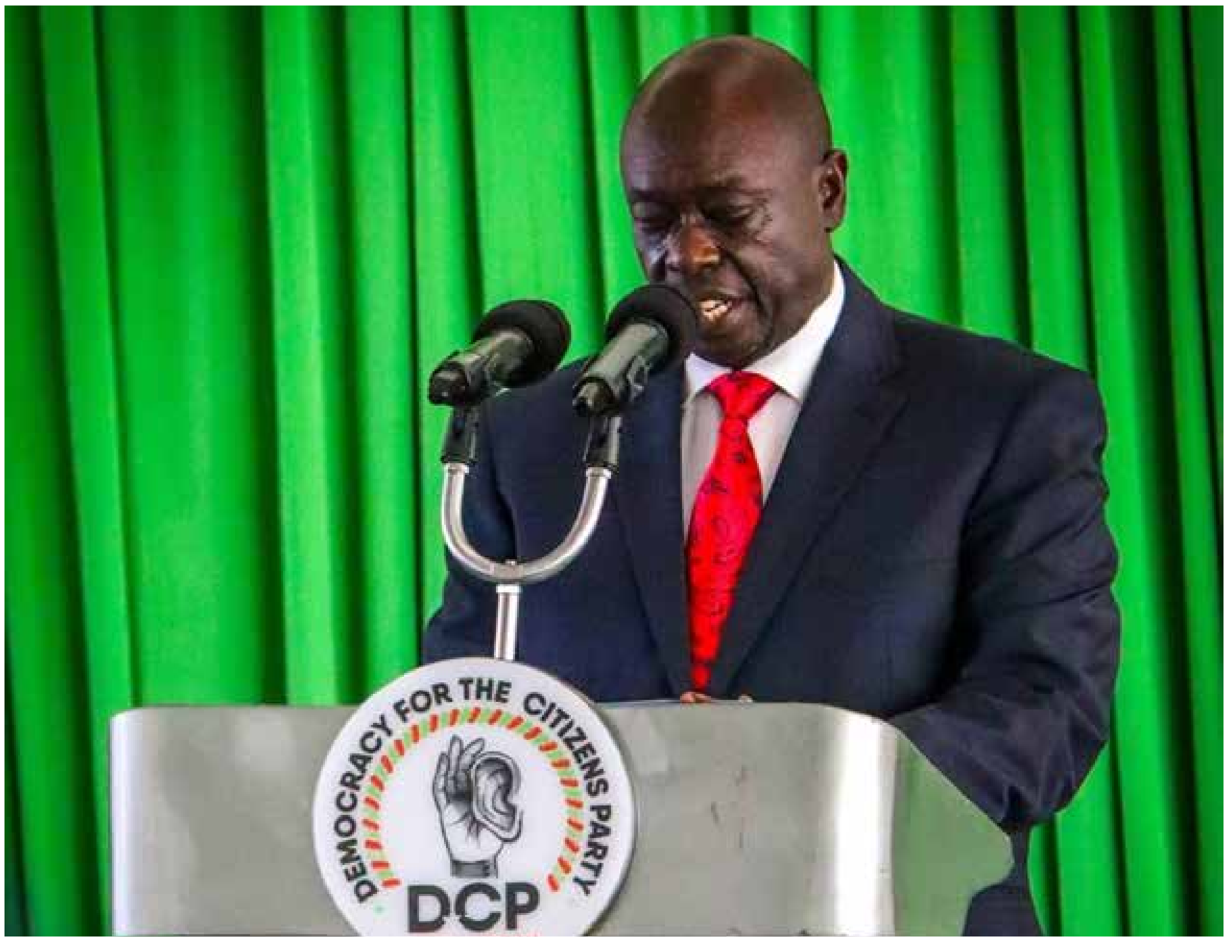


Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua

Gachagua closes 55-day conclave with pledge to stand with Gen Z

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Rigathi Gachagua yesterday closed his 55-day political conclave at Wamunyoro with a direct address to young Kenyans, accusing the government of having shot, abducted and killed Gen Z protesters during the 2024 anti-government demonstrations and pledging to make their welfare central to his political mission.

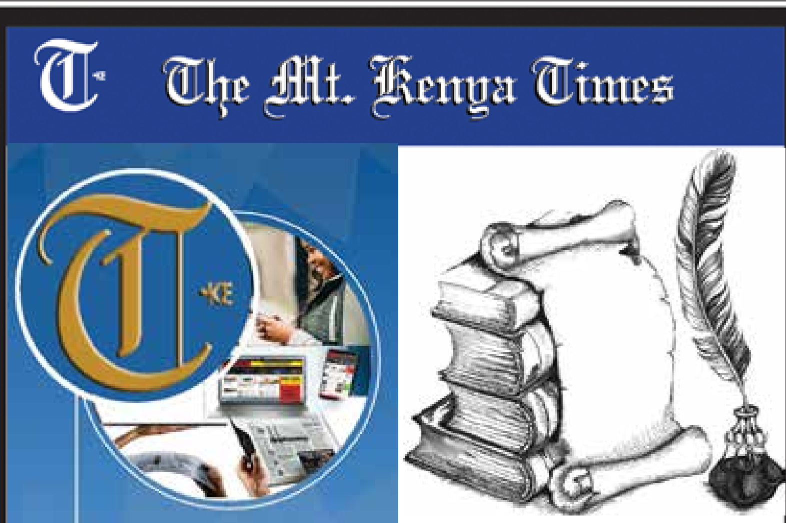
Speaking at his Nyeri County residence on the final day of consultations that drew delegations from across the country, Gachagua said young people had been met with state violence when they dared to speak. "The young people were called criminals, several were butchered and others disappeared. Instructions were later issued to shoot them on the legs," he said.

The government has not formally acknowledged issuing such orders. Gachagua did not present evidence but has raised the allegations repeatedly in recent weeks, including before Gen Z representatives at earlier engagements.

His closing message was unambiguous. "We must stand with our young people — their destiny must be secured," he said.

The 2024 protests, which forced President William Ruto to withdraw the Finance Bill, remain a defining moment in Kenya's recent political history — and a wound that no serious presidential contender can afford to ignore.

Editor's Desk



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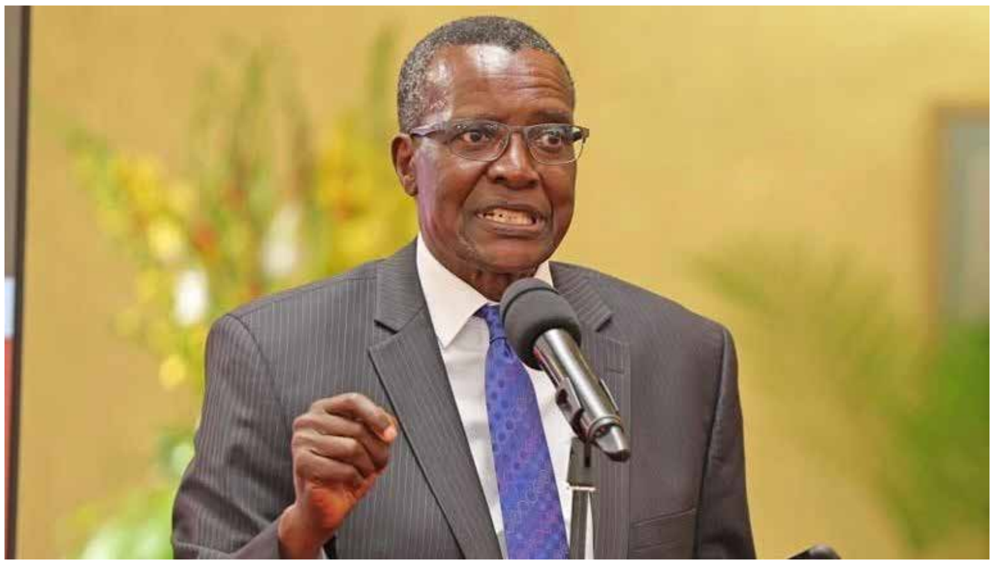
NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Chief Justice David Maraga yesterday held an online consultative meeting with Kenyan diaspora members spread across Minnesota, Georgia, Washington D.C., Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Texas and several other American states, ahead of a planned visit to the United States beginning September 17, 2026. Maraga, who is co-party leader and presidential flagbearer of the United Green Movement, used the session to engage supporters as he steps up his 2027 campaign. Participants praised his judicial record, particularly his landmark 2017 ruling annulling the presidential election and reforms — including court digitisation — that enabled Kenyans abroad to access judicial services remotely. Diaspora members described him as principled, courageous and visionary.

Government digital strategist Dennis Itumbi yesterday triggered a data privacy storm after publicly posting specific medical billing details — including hospital names, admission periods and SHA payment amounts — belonging to family members of lawyer Ndegwa Njiru, in a social media dispute over the Social Health Authority's effectiveness. Itumbi shared the information in response to Njiru's public criticism of the SHA scheme, citing the lawyer's cousin and deceased aunt as evidence the system was working. The post drew immediate condemnation from legal experts and citizens who questioned how a government official accessed confidential patient records and deployed them in a political argument. Under Kenya's Data Protection Act and the Health Act of 2017, medical records are classified as sensitive personal data, and unauthorised disclosure carries civil and criminal liability. The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner has been called upon to investigate.

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday arrested a Busia Law Courts clerk after he allegedly received a KSh180,000 bribe to secure a lenient outcome in a criminal case involving an impounded commercial vehicle. Wesley Kipkoech Langat is accused of demanding the money on behalf of a magistrate at the station, with the funds intended to benefit an accused person and six co-accused individuals facing charges linked to alleged traffic offences. The EACC mounted an operation on Monday after receiving a complaint that the magistrate had, through Langat, solicited the bribe to influence the case's outcome. Langat was arrested after allegedly receiving the payment and is being held at the commission's Western Regional Office in Bungoma, with transfer to Bungoma Police Station expected as investigations continue.

The Political Parties Disputes Tribunal yesterday certified as urgent a case filed by promoters of the Linda Mwananchi Movement, challenging the Registrar of Political Parties' refusal to reserve their proposed party name ahead of the 2027 General Election. The movement, associated with Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, says it applied to reserve the name Linda Mwananchi Movement on June 4, was initially rejected on public interest grounds, secured a verbal reversal after an August 4 meeting with Registrar John Cox Lorionokou, then saw that position reversed again following the emergence of a rival entity — the Liberty National Democratic Alliance — which uses the acronym LINDA and says its registration predates the dispute. The applicants, who claim 55,592 digital members and 13,232 volunteers, want the Tribunal to bar the Registrar from processing any similar name. The matter is set for hearing today at 2:30pm.

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja yesterday moved to calm fears among content creators and social media influencers, clarifying that new filming charges introduced under the Nairobi City County Finance Act, 2026, target large commercial productions — not ordinary digital creators shooting everyday content. Sakaja said the fees, which include KSh8,000 for local commercial shoots, KSh50,000 for external productions and KSh10,000 for music videos, apply to professional operations arriving with crews, specialised equipment and vehicles requiring temporary use or closure of public spaces. "There is a clear difference between a content creator shooting a video for social media and a large film production requiring the controlled use of a road — that is who we are targeting," he said. Individual creators posting to social media platforms remain unaffected, the governor said, adding that his administration remained committed to supporting Nairobi's creative economy.

Mukurwe-ini MP John Kaguchia yesterday appeared before the National Cohesion and Integration Commission accompanied by his legal team, led by lawyer Ndegwa Njiru, to assist investigations into hate speech allegations arising from remarks he made at a public rally in Kieni, Nyeri County on August 1. Kaguchia was arrested on August 3 at Citizen TV studios after warning Mount Kenya residents that those who vote for President William Ruto in 2027 would be tracked to their homes and "smoked out." While cooperating with the commission, Kaguchia argued that government-allied leaders who had made inflammatory statements had faced no similar scrutiny. "The law must be applied objectively and fairly to all Kenyans," he said. NCIC Chairperson Bishop Kepha Nyamweya Omae urged all political leaders to remain peace ambassadors ahead of 2027. A Nairobi court is expected to give directions on whether Kaguchia will be required to take plea in the matter.

Politics Omollo framed the 2027 General Election as a contest of records rather than rhetoric

Ruto’s PS takes the fight to Kalonzo and Orengo on their own turf

BY Brenda Atieno
@themtkenyatimes

Interior and National Administration Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo yesterday challenged opposition leaders — including Wiper party leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka and Siaya Governor James Orengo — to account for their records in public service before asking Kenyans to trust them with power again in 2027.

Speaking in Homa Bay during a consultative meeting with grassroots mobilisers supporting civic education, Omollo framed the 2027 General Election as a contest of records rather than rhetoric, urging voters to apply the same scrutiny to every candidate on the ballot — from ward level to the presidency.

“Even if you want to be an MCA, MP, women representative, senator, governor or even President of this country, you must tell Kenyans what you have done before and what you intend to do,” Omollo said.

The remarks landed in territory that is traditionally hostile to President William Ruto’s administration. Homa Bay County sits in the heart of Nyanza — a region that has historically delivered overwhelming support to the opposition and forms part of the western alliance networks that opposition figures are

Interior and National Administration Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo

now working to consolidate ahead of next year’s election. That Omollo chose this ground to make the government’s case was itself a statement of intent.

He was direct about his targets. Kalonzo Musyoka, Kenya’s former Vice President and the current leader of the Wiper Democratic Movement, has served in senior government roles across multiple administrations spanning more than three decades. “Take the case of Kalonzo Musyoka — what has he done for Kenyans all this time he has led this country in different capacities?” Omollo asked.

The challenge to Orengo was equally pointed. The Siaya governor, a veteran lawyer and legislator who first entered elective politics before Omollo was born, was asked to account for his county’s development record before seeking to shape political opinion in neighbouring areas. “If you look at James Orengo, the Governor of Siaya — he was first elected into public office even before I was born. Can he first tell us what he has done in Siaya?” Omollo said.

The PS also turned his attention to Suba South MP Caroli Omondi, who has been vocal in his opposition to Ruto’s re-election bid, saying the legislator was entitled to his political position but not to his own facts. “That is his democratic right, but he must say the truth. He is claiming that President Ruto has done mundane things in his constituency. That is a lie that must be confronted with facts,” Omollo said, citing road construction and other government projects in Suba South as evidence of the administration’s delivery record in the region.

The Homa Bay meeting forms part of a broader government strategy to challenge opposition narratives on their own ground ahead of 2027. The latest TIFA Research polling places Ruto at 24 per cent national presidential preference — ahead of the fragmented opposition field — but his support in Nyanza and Western Kenya remains limited, making engagements such as yesterday’s meeting in Homa Bay both politically necessary and genuinely difficult terrain.

Omollo urged grassroots mobilisers to equip residents with accurate information on government programmes and services, arguing that informed voters would be better placed to assess the administration’s performance against the promises of those seeking to replace it. He closed with a direct instruction to residents: “Do not listen to critics of President Ruto — arm yourselves with identity cards and voters’ cards and make your voices known at the ballot in 2027.”

The message was unambiguous. With twelve months to polling day, the government is no longer content to defend its record from State House. It is taking the argument into the opposition’s backyard — and daring its rivals to answer.

Kindiki calls Gachagua a liar over Gen Z crackdown claims

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday dismissed as lies allegations by former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua that he failed to oppose orders to abduct, torture and kill young people during the 2024 Gen Z protests, saying he was at the time focused on combating terrorism and banditry across the country.

Kindiki responded sharply on his Facebook account after Gachagua claimed to have personally called him following a National Security Council meeting to challenge what he described as instructions from the security establishment to deal harshly with protesters. Gachagua alleged that Kindiki, then serving as Interior Cabinet Secretary, acknowledged the actions would be wrong but declined to confront President William Ruto. “I called Professor Kindiki — that is why I have very little regard for that man, very little regard,” Gachagua said during a meeting with Gen Z representatives.

Kindiki’s rebuttal was contemptuous. “Nobody will buy your petty lies. I told you I have been directed to kill people?” he said. “I was too busy and focused during that time, handling the important national assignment of the fight against terrorists and bandits who had run amok with their brazen attacks on the people of Kenya. I had no time to engage you in your treasonous project. Nonsense upon stilts. Fake.”

The exchange sharpens the personal antagonism between two men who served in the same administration and now occupy opposite sides of Kenya’s increasingly volatile pre-election divide.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Politics “To all of you here, I leave my child in your hands,” Ida said, addressing the Kibra leaders present. “All of you who have come here at the front, I have given you my son

The lion’s cub: Ida hands Raila Junior to Kibra as the Odinga dynasty enters a new era

On her 76th birthday, Ida Odinga publicly endorsed her son’s bid for the Kibra parliamentary seat — committing the family’s most consequential political legacy to a constituency that shaped modern Kenyan opposition politics

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Ida Odinga yesterday handed her son Raila Odinga Junior to the people of Kibra

Ida Odinga yesterday handed her son Raila Odinga Junior to the people of Kibra, publicly endorsing his bid for the constituency’s parliamentary seat and urging local leaders to guide him as the Odinga family navigates its first major political transition since the death of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in October 2025.

Speaking during celebrations to mark her 76th birthday at the family’s Karen residence in Nairobi — attended by hundreds of Kibra residents, community leaders and political figures — Ida said she had been approached by residents invoking the Swahili proverb “Mtoto wa simba ni simba,” meaning a lion’s cub is a lion, in reference to her son’s political ambitions. Her response, delivered with the measured authority of a woman who spent decades at the centre of Kenyan political life, was as close to a formal blessing as the moment could carry.

“Now you, Kibra residents, have come to me with other things. You are telling me that ‘Mtoto wa simba ni simba.’ If you have decided, then I don’t have much to say, but I put him in your hands,” she said. The words were spare. Their meaning was not.

“To all of you here, I leave my child in your hands,” Ida said, addressing the Kibra leaders present. “All of you who have come here at the front, I have given you my son. Take care of him, teach him and remind him. Many of you started with the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in 1992. Show him the way so that he walks in the right way and does the right thing.”

The reference to 1992 was freighted with history. That was the year Raila Odinga entered elective politics for the first time, winning the Langata parliamentary seat in a multi-party election that marked a turning point in Kenya’s democratic development. The leaders she was addressing — veterans of three decades of opposition politics in one of Nairobi’s most politically charged constituencies — were being asked to do for the son what they had done for the father. It was an appeal to loyalty, to continuity and to a political tradition that the family is now determined to preserve across a generational boundary.

Ida’s endorsement came with a clear condition. She urged her son to run clean politics — free from insults, chaos and violence — and to build his support through ideas, service delivery and his ability to convince voters of what he could do for them. “Run clean politics, not of insults, chaos or violence. It should be clean. Convince people with your words and what you can do for them,” she said. The instruction carried the weight of someone who has watched Kenyan political campaigns at their most vicious and who understands that the Odinga name, while still powerful, is no longer protection enough on its own.

For Raila Odinga Junior, the birthday endorsement caps weeks of intensifying grassroots activity in Kibra that have made his intentions increasingly clear even before a formal declaration. On August 3, he met elders representing all five wards of the constituency — Laini Saba, Lindi, Makina, Woodley/Kenyatta Golf Course and Sarang’ombe — and told them he was already focused on planning for the constituency’s future rather than the mechanics of his election campaign.

“I am already thinking about how to organise Kibra after the 2027 elections while you are thinking about voting. I am ahead of you. My concern now is planning for Kibra. Your concern should be ensuring I get there. I have already moved forward and started preparing,” he told the gathering. The confidence was deliberate and the framing strategic — a young politician presenting himself not as a candidate anxious for votes but as a leader already thinking beyond the election, already inhabiting the role he intends to win.

The constituency he is targeting carries enormous symbolic weight. Raila Odinga represented the former Langata constituency — from which Kibra was subsequently carved — for decades, and the area became synonymous with the most enduring chapter of his political career. Its densely populated informal settlements, its history of political mobilisation and its fierce communal loyalties made it both one of the most challenging and most rewarding constituencies in Nairobi for any politician who could earn its trust. Raila Junior’s entry has raised immediate questions about the future of the Odinga family’s political influence in the wake of the former Prime Minister’s death. Those questions do not have easy answers. Political dynasties in Kenya have a mixed record of transmission — some thrive across generations, others exhaust their inheritance within a single electoral cycle.

What distinguishes Junior’s approach, at least so far, is his attempt to combine the family’s inherited political capital with a substantive policy focus that gives voters a reason to support him beyond sentiment. He has engaged Nairobi City Water officials and local leaders over Kibra’s persistent water supply challenges, raised concerns about infrastructure including the state of Toi Market, and framed his campaign meetings around practical development questions rather than family legacy alone. Whether that approach holds under the pressure of an actual campaign — with rival candidates, contested resources and the unpredictable passions of a constituency that has never delivered its votes without a fight — remains to be seen.

His sister, East Africa Legislative Assembly MP Winnie Odinga, has also indicated plans to seek elective office in the 2027 elections, pointing to the emergence of a new generation of Odingas in active politics. Together, the two siblings represent the Odinga family’s attempt to remain a force in Kenyan public life even as the patriarch who defined it for more than three decades is no longer there to lead.

The political landscape in which Junior is making his move is not straightforward. Kibra, a constituency that has known bitter succession contests and shifting alliances, will attract serious competitors who will not defer to lineage. The ODM party itself — the political vehicle his father built and led — is currently split between factions, and the outcome of that internal contest will shape the organisational resources and party infrastructure available to any Odinga-aligned candidate in 2027.

None of that diminishes what happened yesterday at Karen. A mother, on her birthday, placing her son in the hands of the community that shaped his father’s legacy — and asking that community to do for the next generation what it did for the last — was a moment of genuine political weight. It did not settle the question of whether Junior will win Kibra. It settled the question of whether the family is fully behind his attempt.

The lion has passed. The cub is running.

Politics Gachagua said he had spent the past 55 days listening to Kenyans' views on the state of the country, their expectations for the future, and the 2027 General Election

The Gachagua factor: Kenya's battle for 2027 has begun

After 55 days of consultations at his Wamunyoro home, Rigathi Gachagua stepped before cameras yesterday to deliver what may prove the most consequential political address of Kenya's pre-election season — and the race to August 2027 is now fully, irreversibly, on

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua concluded a 55-day political conclave at his Wamunyoro residence in Nyeri County yesterday, addressing the nation on what he described as the political direction of Kenya ahead of the August 2027 General Election — a country already deep in succession politics, sharply divided over who should lead it next, and increasingly anxious about whether its electoral institutions can be trusted to say so honestly.

The conclave, which brought political leaders, grassroots representatives and opinion shapers to Gachagua's home in Nyeri County, was initially announced as a 45-day consultation exercise but was subsequently extended. By the time it concluded yesterday, it had become something larger — a running political seminar on Kenya's discontents, drawing voices from across the country to a village in the central highlands that, for two months, functioned as an unofficial opposition headquarters.

Gachagua said he had spent the past 55 days listening to Kenyans' views on the state of the country, their expectations for the future, and the 2027 General Election. The final session, before yesterday's press conference, was reserved for young Kenyans — Gen Z, the cohort whose street protests in June 2024 reshaped national politics and whose allegiance no political formation can now afford to ignore. "When it is done, I will listen to the young people, the Gen Zs," Gachagua told reporters ahead of the address. "By around 3pm, I shall have a press conference to announce to Kenyans all the opinions I have received and the way forward as directed by the people of Kenya."

The language was careful. The politics, less so. During a morning engagement with a delegation from Isiolo and Marsabit counties at Wamunyoro, Gachagua claimed to be in possession of information pointing to a plan involving President William Ruto, Mining and Blue Economy Cabinet Secretary Hassan Joho and an Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission vice chairperson to manipulate the 2027 vote. He said he was still verifying the information before a full disclosure. No evidence was presented. The IEBC did not immediately respond. But the allegation — serious, specific, unverified — landed in a political atmosphere already crackling with mistrust, and it will not be easily set aside.

Gachagua also criticised what he described as attempts to divide communities through political mobilisation and alleged that elders had been offered money to support such efforts. These are the themes he has returned to repeatedly since his impeachment in October 2024 — betrayal, manipulation, the systematic dismantling of Central Kenya's political standing — and they resonate, particularly among voters who delivered President Ruto an overwhelming mandate in 2022 and feel they have little to show for it.

In 2022, the Mount Kenya region, comprising ten counties and approximately 5.7 million registered voters — roughly 27 per cent of Kenya's national electorate — gave Ruto 76.96 per cent of its vote. It was a landslide within a landslide. That bloc is now openly in play. "In 2022, Mt Kenya handed over her votes to Dr Ruto — 87 per cent — and to Raila Odinga — 12 per cent," Gachagua said in a statement issued from the DCP offices in Nairobi last month. The arithmetic of 2027, he argues, must be different.

The conclave was also an attempt to answer a structural question: how does the region enter a coalition without repeating what Gachagua has called the mistake of 2022, when Central Kenya campaigned in another party's vehicle and was subsequently asked, in his metaphor, to step out of the car before the journey was complete. Among the matters Gachagua sought to resolve during the consultations were the question of a community command centre, the choice of DCP as the region's political party, and the minimum requirements for coalition-building — with a firm instruction that the mistakes of 2022 would not be repeated.

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua

Yet the broader opposition picture remains complicated. A TIFA Research poll conducted in May 2026 placed Ruto at 24 per cent presidential preference nationally, with Wiper leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka at 19 per cent, and Gachagua and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna tied at 18 per cent each — a fragmented field with no single opposition figure breaking away. A subsequent TIFA survey, conducted between June 13 and June 22, found that 62 per cent of Kenyans believed Gachagua's most viable path to defeating Ruto lay in backing a single opposition candidate rather than leading the ticket himself — with only 14 per cent favouring his direct candidacy.

That is the central tension Wamunyoro has not resolved. The opposition has yet to agree on a single presidential candidate to face Ruto, even as individual leaders — including Kalonzo, who launched a formal campaign platform in June — have stepped up their respective mobilisation efforts. Possible ticket combinations under discussion include Kalonzo-Matiang'i, Matiang'i-Kalonzo, Kalonzo-Sifuna and Sifuna-Kalonzo, with Jubilee strategists warning that momentum could be building around a Kalonzo-Sifuna pairing that might leave former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i isolated.

Political analysts have noted that the opposition's only realistic path to victory in 2027 lies in presenting a single presidential candidate with broad, cross-regional appeal — a conclusion that is easier to state than to achieve among leaders each commanding strong but geographically bounded loyalties. Gachagua dominates Mt Kenya. Sifuna leads in Western, Matiang'i in Nyanza, Kalonzo in Lower Eastern, and Ruto retains majority support in Northern Kenya. A coalition that stitches these together would be formidable. The question is whether the ambitions of the individuals involved allow it.

For his part, Ruto is not waiting. His re-election operation is already taking shape regionally, with Cabinet secretaries deployed to crack opposition strongholds, including Labour CS Alfred Mutua tasked with penetrating Eastern Kenya, the base of Kalonzo's Wiper party. The DCP leader has warned that Ruto's strategists are actively plotting to divide the Mount Kenya vote as a route to securing a second term. "If we go to a runoff, they will bribe those who lose and bring them to their side. That is why, if we want to win in the first round, the Mountain must be united, and Mount Kenya must cast all its votes together," Gachagua said.

After yesterday's press conference, Gachagua announced plans to travel to the United States — saying he intended to use the time away to make important political decisions without what he described as undue influence from those around him, and to rally the Kenyan diaspora behind his bid. It was a signal, not a retreat. The man who left the deputy presidency stripped of office and dignity has spent 55 days rebuilding, listening, and positioning. Whether Kenya's fractious opposition can match that discipline — and whether Wamunyoro becomes the cradle of a government or merely a footnote to one — will be answered at the ballot, twelve months from now.

The mountain has stirred. The rest of Kenya is watching.

Politics In a joint statement issued at Windsor Hotel, the principals did not shy away from the weight of what they were asking Kenyans to believe

Opposition principals sign unity covenant in Kiambu as 2027 race intensifies

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Eight opposition political parties united under the United Alternative Government yesterday signed a formal coalition unity agreement and individual personal pledges at Windsor Hotel in Kiambu County, committing to remain together, participate in a credible presidential candidate selection process and campaign collectively for whoever emerges as their flagbearer in the 2027 General Election.

The signing, which brought together the principals of the coalition in what they described as a decisive step towards consolidating the opposition's credibility, comes at a moment of acute political tension — with the race to next year's general election accelerating and questions about the opposition's internal cohesion growing louder by the week.

The parties that executed the agreement were Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya, the Party for Peace and Love, the Democracy for Citizens Party, the Democratic Party of Kenya, Azimio La Umoja, Jubilee Party, the BUS Party and the Party of National Unity. Together, the coalition spans a broad ideological and regional spectrum — former rivals, former government insiders and longstanding opposition figures united, at least on paper, by a shared determination to deny President William Ruto a second term.

In a joint statement issued at Windsor Hotel, the principals did not shy away from the weight of what they were asking Kenyans to believe.

United Alternative Government

"We recognise that millions of Kenyans are looking beyond individual leaders and political parties," the statement read. "They are asking whether those seeking to provide alternative leadership have the courage to put aside personal ambitions, historical differences and partisan considerations in defence of the greater national interest. Our answer today is unequivocal: Kenya comes first."

The language was deliberate and the timing carefully chosen. The ceremony at Windsor Hotel came on the same day that Democracy for Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua concluded his 56-day political conclave at his Wamunyoro residence in Nyeri County and addressed the nation on his political direction ahead of 2027 — a convergence that placed the opposition's internal dynamics squarely in the national spotlight.

The Personal Unity Pledge, which each principal signed individually as well as collectively, goes beyond the standard commitments of coalition agreements. It binds each leader personally to the process — an attempt to close the gap between the political declarations that have accompanied previous opposition alliances and the fractures that ultimately undermined them. Coalition agreements in Kenyan politics have a complicated history. Principals who sign with fanfare have, in the past, found reasons to step back when the candidate selection process did not favour their interests. Yesterday's ceremony appeared designed, above all, to make that kind of exit harder to justify.

The selection of a joint presidential candidate remains the most consequential unresolved question facing the United Alternative Government. A technical committee chaired by former Cabinet minister Kipruto arap Kirwa has been working on the framework for that process, but as recently as July, UAG co-convenor Martha Karua acknowledged publicly that the coalition had yet to agree on the criteria, process or timeline for choosing its flagbearer. Yesterday's unity covenant does not appear to have resolved that question definitively — but it does raise the political cost of defection before the answer is found.

The coalition faces a field in which no single opposition figure has broken decisively from the pack. The most recent TIFA Research polling placed President Ruto at 24 per cent national presidential preference, with Wiper leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka at 19 per cent, Gachagua and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna tied at 18 per cent, and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i at 14 per cent. That fragmentation is precisely the problem the Windsor Hotel agreement is intended to address. A divided opposition field — multiple candidates drawing from an electorate broadly opposed to Ruto — gifts the incumbent the electoral arithmetic he needs for a first-round victory.

The involvement of Azimio La Umoja and Jubilee Party alongside DCP and Wiper gives the coalition a cross-regional profile that individual parties cannot replicate alone. Former President Uhuru Kenyatta, who chairs Azimio, has in recent months been increasingly active in opposition reorganisation efforts, and Jubilee's participation signals that the party structures that once delivered Ruto the presidency are now formally aligned against him. Whether that alignment holds through the candidate selection process — widely regarded as the point at which coalition unity is most severely tested — will determine whether yesterday's covenant is remembered as a turning point or as one more declaration that ultimately could not survive contact with competing ambitions.

The principals, for their part, appeared to understand that history was watching. "This decision marks an important transition in our journey," the joint statement declared, framing the Windsor Hotel gathering not as an endpoint but as the beginning of a more disciplined and binding phase of coalition politics.

For millions of Kenyans who have watched successive opposition coalitions sign agreements and then splinter, the question is not whether the principals meant what they said yesterday. The question is whether the structures they have now committed to — the personal pledges, the unity covenant, the binding framework — are strong enough to hold when the pressure of candidate selection, regional politics and individual ambition bears down on them in the months ahead.

Kenya has seen political covenants before. What it has rarely seen is one that survived the moment it became inconvenient.

Nuclear power **Meaningful inclusion acknowledges that diverse voices contribute distinct insights about local needs, social dynamics and livelihood patterns**

Nuclear power and the people: Siaya shows Kenya how it should be done

The engagement of women and persons with disabilities in Bondo Constituency over Kenya's proposed nuclear project is not a procedural tick-box — it is a test of whether the country can build transformative infrastructure without leaving its most vulnerable citizens behind

Stakeholders meeting

BY James Kilonzo Bwire
@themtkenyatimes

The arrival of women and persons with disabilities from Lenya and Liunda in Bondo Constituency for stakeholder engagement on Kenya's proposed nuclear power project marks a moment worth pausing over. Public engagement of this nature is more than procedural formality. It is the foundation upon which any credible, sustainable and socially responsible infrastructure programme must be built.

When communities receive clear, accessible information about the goals, risks, benefits and timelines of a project that will touch many aspects of their daily lives, they gain the ability to form informed opinions, raise legitimate concerns and propose practical adaptations that make implementation smoother and outcomes fairer. In Siaya, the deliberate decision to create space for women and persons with disabilities reflects an understanding that those who have historically been marginalised must have equal footing in shaping decisions that affect their futures.

Meaningful inclusion acknowledges that diverse voices contribute distinct insights about local needs, social dynamics and livelihood patterns that technical assessments alone cannot capture. By listening to these community members, project partners demonstrate respect for human dignity and strengthen the social acceptance that any long-term project of this scale requires to survive.

Equally important is transparency — in the way information is shared and in how decisions are made. The technical complexity of nuclear energy can create a barrier between project proponents and communities, generating misunderstanding, mistrust and resistance. Transparency reduces that risk by explaining processes clearly and by showing how regulatory safeguards, environmental assessments, safety protocols and emergency preparedness measures will be implemented and overseen. When the Nuclear Power and Energy Agency (NuPEA) and KenGen commit to open dialogue and to sharing plain-language explanations of what compliance with statutory requirements actually means, they lay a foundation for trust that public institutions and international partners can independently verify.

Transparency also makes accountability possible. When commitments are recorded and communicated, civil society, local leaders and citizens can monitor progress and demand corrective action when standards are not met. That accountability protects community welfare and preserves the integrity of the project itself.

The collaborative model proposed — linking NuPEA and KenGen with relevant national and international institutions — offers a pathway to integrate technical expertise, regulatory rigour and best practices from jurisdictions with mature nuclear programmes. Such collaboration is vital to ensure that every stage of the project lifecycle conforms to established safety and environmental norms, and that the workforce and institutions tasked with oversight are prepared and capable. But technical competence alone is not enough. Institutions must also be attentive to local contexts, cultural norms and socioeconomic realities.

Bringing in international partners must therefore be paired with genuine capacity building for local regulators, transparent knowledge transfer and mechanisms that embed local oversight rather than outsource responsibility. This approach secures not only compliance with external standards but also community confidence that local systems can manage, inspect and enforce the obligations that accompany a nuclear facility — long after international partners have moved on.

Prioritising inclusive stakeholder engagement is also, at its core, a matter of social justice. Projects of this magnitude can reshape land use, employment patterns and resource allocation, with disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged groups unless conscious policy choices are made to prevent it. Ensuring that women and persons with disabilities participate fully in consultations combats exclusionary tendencies and empowers these groups to influence mitigation measures, compensation frameworks and benefit-sharing arrangements. Their involvement must be substantive, not symbolic — with accommodations made for accessibility, timing, language and facilitation styles that enable effective participation. When inclusion is treated as a central design principle rather than an afterthought, project outcomes are far more likely to distribute benefits equitably and minimise harm to those least able to absorb it.

Sustained engagement matters just as much as initial consultation. One-off meetings cannot substitute for ongoing dialogue that tracks how commitments evolve and how local conditions change over time. Continuous engagement allows for adaptive management: as technical plans are refined and as social and environmental impacts become clearer, community input can shape adjustments and corrective measures. This iterative process fosters mutual learning between implementers and residents, reduces the likelihood of conflict and enhances project resilience. It also builds the institutional memory and social trust that improve governance well beyond the life of the nuclear project itself.

At the heart of the Siaya engagement lies a principle that should govern all infrastructure development in Kenya: that economic growth, energy security and technological advancement are legitimate national goals, but their legitimacy depends entirely on whether they respect the voices, rights and aspirations of those most affected. When a community is genuinely part of the decision-making process — when its concerns are acknowledged and addressed, and when transparent systems verify that safeguards are in place — development becomes a partnership rather than an imposition.

The presence of NuPEA and KenGen alongside national and international bodies signals a willingness to pursue such a partnership. But goodwill must translate into concrete practice: documented commitments, clear compliance indicators, accessible communication channels and credible mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.

Finally, the Siaya engagement sends a broader message about the standard of governance Kenyan citizens should expect for major projects. It illustrates an opportunity to craft a model of development that balances technological ambition with ethical stewardship. Governments and implementing agencies carry a responsibility to ensure that regulatory processes are robust, that environmental and safety standards are non-negotiable, and that the rights of citizens — including those who have been historically marginalised — are protected through every phase of planning, construction, operation and eventual decommissioning. Achieving that balance will not happen automatically. It will require vigilance, persistent outreach and the political will to treat social safeguards as seriously as project timelines.

The conversation in Lenya and Liunda is an encouraging sign that Kenya can pursue advanced energy solutions while honouring democratic values and human rights. If NuPEA, KenGen and their partners sustain this level of openness, listen carefully to the concerns of women and persons with disabilities, and embed inclusion and transparency into every contractual and regulatory step, the country will not only advance its energy agenda but also strengthen the social foundations for future development.

This is the moment to prove that progress can be both technical and humane — that the pursuit of secure, reliable energy can proceed without sidelining the very people whose lives it is meant to improve. The project's proponents, regulators and communities must now make that promise real through measurable action and genuine long-term commitment.

Politics The Rigathi Gachagua-Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka camp has the greater incentive to favour negotiations among principals

Kenya's opposition writes its rulebook while Sifuna builds his own game

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

The United Alternative Government is still debating how to choose its presidential candidate — but one of the fastest-rising figures in the race may not wait for the answer

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's opposition is approaching the 2027 General Election with an unresolved question that may prove more consequential than any of the names already dominating the conversation: who gets to decide the rules for choosing the person who will face President William Ruto?

For months, leaders within the United Alternative Government, commonly referred to as the United Opposition, have spoken about building a united political vehicle to take on Ruto. Yet the mechanism for selecting its presidential flagbearer remains unsettled — and the longer it stays that way, the more politically significant the delay becomes.

A technical committee chaired by former Cabinet minister Kipruto arap Kirwa has been working on the coalition's structural framework, tasked with recommending how the alliance should be governed and with proposing criteria for choosing its presidential candidate. Each constituent party contributed two members to the committee. In July, UAG co-convenor Martha Karua acknowledged publicly that the coalition had still not agreed on the process, criteria or timeline for selecting its flagbearer, and that the principals would consider the committee's recommendations before making any decision.

That admission matters. The selection formula is not a technical footnote buried in coalition paperwork. It could determine whether political bargaining, regional mobilisation, party strength or national opinion polls carry the greatest weight in choosing the opposition ticket. And the disagreement over process is already revealing the interests of those advocating loudest for each approach.

The Rigathi Gachagua-Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka camp has the greater incentive to favour negotiations among principals. Both men bring established political networks and deep regional influence that translate into real bargaining power even when their individual polling numbers do not place them at the top of the field. Fred Matiang'i and Karua, by contrast, have pushed for a transparent, poll-driven process. Matiang'i has proposed an internal scientific survey, with the highest-polling candidate becoming the coalition's flagbearer. Karua and Eugene Wamalwa have backed that approach, while Kalonzo has consistently favoured consensus and negotiation instead.

The emerging irony is that Matiang'i helped put polling at the centre of the nomination debate, only for the latest numbers to point towards a beneficiary who was not part of the original fight — Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna.

A TIFA Research survey conducted between June 13 and 22 placed Sifuna at 15 per cent in presidential preference, ahead of Matiang'i at 14 per cent and Kalonzo at 13 per cent. Ruto led the field at 24 per cent, with Gachagua at 7 per cent. Those numbers alone would be a snapshot. But Sifuna's strength is not confined to national polling, and that is what makes his position genuinely difficult to dismiss.

A separate TIFA survey released on May 14 found 73 per cent of ODM supporters backing the Sifuna-led Linda Mwananchi faction, against 24 per cent for the rival Linda Ground camp associated with acting ODM party leader Oburu Odinga. A follow-up survey from the same pollster later showed Linda Mwananchi at 74 per cent, with Linda Ground at 20 per cent.

That gives Sifuna something more durable than a fleeting rise in presidential preference ratings — substantial and apparently growing support within one of Kenya's most consequential opposition parties, at a moment when that party is visibly split over its direction and identity. It makes his rise considerably harder to dismiss as a polling mirage. It also complicates the assumption that a poll-based selection process would automatically favour Matiang'i. If national popularity becomes the decisive measure, Sifuna could turn out to be the strongest beneficiary of the very method his rival championed.

He is not waiting for the UAG to settle that question, either.

On July 18, during a Linda Mwananchi tour of Taita Taveta County, the movement signalled a push towards establishing an independent political identity, including plans to formally separate from ODM and pursue its own political vehicle — a development that came as Linda Mwananchi intensified its mobilisation well outside its traditional base in Nairobi and the western alliance networks that Sifuna has built across Luo Nyanza and Western Kenya.

Later in July, Sifuna said the movement was seriously considering whether to field its own presidential candidate, while stressing that any such decision would be made collectively after wider consultations rather than unilaterally. Then, on August 2, the Luhya Council of Elders endorsed Sifuna for the presidency and urged opposition leaders to unite behind a candidate capable of mounting a serious challenge to Ruto, pointing to his growing reach across nearly 17 counties. The endorsement does not make Sifuna the opposition candidate. But it adds another substantial layer to a political rise that the wider coalition can no longer comfortably ignore.

The implications reach beyond any individual polling figure.

The United Alternative Government can spend months — and it has — negotiating a formula for choosing a single candidate. But what happens if one of the fastest-rising opposition movements simply declines to be bound by the outcome? The coalition would then face the very problem it was constructed to solve: multiple candidates splitting an electorate that is broadly opposed to Ruto but divided over who should lead it into battle.

That is why Sifuna's position matters far beyond his polling numbers.

If Linda Mwananchi enters the 2027 race independently, a formula negotiated among the existing UAG principals would carry limited practical weight. A bloc that never fully signed on has no compelling reason to honour its outcome. The opposition may therefore be attempting to build unity at precisely the moment a new political centre is forming outside its established architecture — and that timing could prove deeply damaging.

This reality gives the Kirwa committee's eventual recommendations outsized importance. If the formula rewards national polling heavily, Sifuna's rise reshapes the contest. If it rewards established regional support and entrenched political structures, Gachagua and Kalonzo retain real leverage. If the principals keep the final word, the process risks returning to the very political bargaining that Matiang'i and Karua set out to replace. And if the formula ultimately produces a candidate that Linda Mwananchi will not support, the entire exercise risks becoming irrelevant before the ink dries.

Gachagua's latest public pledge to support another candidate should he not be selected is no longer the central story. His willingness to compromise matters, but it sits alongside his own active efforts to build alliances and strengthen his negotiating position ahead of whatever process the coalition eventually agrees on.

The bigger question — the one the opposition has not yet answered — is whether it can agree on a process before the political landscape shifts again beneath its feet.

For now, the coalition is still writing its rulebook. Sifuna, meanwhile, is building a political movement that may not be willing to wait for it.

That leaves the opposition facing a peculiar race against time: settling the rules for choosing its candidate while one of the candidates best positioned to benefit from those rules is simultaneously constructing the option of running entirely without them.

The opposition is not merely deciding who should challenge Ruto. It is deciding whether its own process is strong enough to keep everyone inside the same race.

That may be the most important political calculation of the 2027 contest so far.

Prison officers The announcement was delivered by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki at the 27th Pass-Out Parade for Kenya Prisons Service cadets

Ruto promises prison officers better pay, homes and hospitals as reforms take hold

BY John Njagi
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday announced a package of salary, housing and healthcare reforms for Kenya's prison officers, saying his administration was committed to ending years of neglect within the correctional service and building a system capable of meeting modern security demands.

The announcement was delivered by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki at the 27th Pass-Out Parade for Kenya Prisons Service cadets at the Prisons Staff Training College in Ruiru, Kiambu County. Kindiki also officially opened the 150-bed Wanini Kireri Magereza Level IV Referral Hospital at the college — a facility that will serve prison officers and their families, inmates and residents of the surrounding community.

On pay, Ruto said the first two phases of an ongoing salary review had already delivered meaningful gains. "Following Phase I and II of the salary review, entry-level remuneration for a prison constable rose by more than 36 per cent, while the maximum point on the salary scale increased by approximately 24 per cent," he said. Phase III of the review took effect on July 1, 2026.

Prison officers have also been enrolled under the Usalama Cover provided through the Social Health Authority, improving their access to healthcare. On housing, the Kenya Prisons Service is expected to receive 28,000 units under the Affordable Housing Programme, with 9,000 procured through public-private partnerships. A further 41 vehicles have been acquired for the service under Phase VII of the Government Motor Vehicle Leasing Programme, with electric vehicles also planned.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki at the 27th Pass-Out Parade for Kenya Prisons Service cadets

Ruto was direct about the link between officer welfare and institutional performance. "We cannot demand a modern correctional service from officers working with outdated tools, inadequate infrastructure and difficult living conditions," he said. He challenged the service to accelerate technology adoption and equip officers with capabilities to counter radicalisation, organised crime, cybercrime and trafficking.

To the newly passed-out officers, his message was equally plain: "A prison sentence takes away liberty. It does not take away human dignity. You must therefore be firm without being cruel; vigilant without becoming abusive; disciplined without becoming indifferent; and authoritative without becoming arbitrary."

Reform without professionalism, the President made clear, is incomplete.

As if the meaning of life has faded away

The years will no longer bring you back to me.
Did all our dreams turn into a mere illusion?
Now even our paths have parted for good.

Regret will never bring you back to me,
Oh Lord, has my beloved become a distant memory?
My lips still long for the warmth of yours,
Tell me, Separation, are you finally satisfied?

Why are there so many obstacles on the road to happiness?
Why has taking a deep breath become so hard?
Every time I close my eyes, I see your face,
I miss you... I miss you so deeply.

You didn't fight for our love either,
We both failed to cherish this sacred feeling.
If time passes and we happen to meet again,
Do not hold my hand—it is far too late now.

You never knew that your existence was my whole life,
I loved you like someone madly possessed.
Now I realize it was all unnecessary,
Loving the Almighty Truth is truly all that matters.

Author: Amirova Nodira

Never judge a person by the opinion of others

Opinion is personal
The thought conceived from one's emotional
The opinion is irrational
As it is often seasonal.

Fact is professional,
It is always rational,

The judgment taken on the fact is exceptional.
To judge others on the fact is traditional.

Opinion is a belief
It makes one live in grief
Fact is a hopeful new leaf
It is the best relief for the grief.

Opinion of a person may differ
It makes us suffer
Never judge a person from others '
Opinion as it makes relationship tougher
....
Penned by
RANGANATHAN E
B.T Asst (Eng)
Marwar Govt.Boys Hss,Acharapakkam

As if the meaning of life has faded away

The Real Freedom

India gained Independence from British rule
after many struggles and countless sacrifices.
Today, we enjoy this freedom without fear,
yet sometimes we forget the values we should follow.

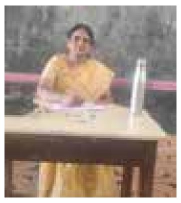
Real freedom is not only the freedom to live,
but the freedom to enjoy the beauty of nature,
to never judge anyone,
and never hurt anyone—knowingly or unknowingly.

Let us take a vow today:
Real freedom is to wear a smile,
to share love,
to give others the freedom to laugh,
to give respect and receive respect,
and to live happily and peacefully forever.

Let us celebrate freedom not only in our nation,
but also in our hearts.

Happy Independence Day!
V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

Never judge a person by the opinion of others



Everyone has a different opinion about each person.
Every person has different habits and characteristics.
Some people like certain persons, while others may dislike them.
Some people are also used to gossiping about other people's character.

People with similar characters and interests may become friends, while those with opposite personalities may become rivals.

However, we should not judge anyone based on what others say about them.
Just as the five fingers of our hand are different from one another, human beings are also different.

Therefore, we should form our own opinion about a person instead of blindly believing what others say.
Never judge a person by the opinion of others.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

The Sea of Stars

A sea of stars shines bright,
Like diamonds in the quiet night.
They sparkle, glow, and gently gleam,
Turning the sky into a dream.

The moon sails softly through the blue,
While little stars shine down on you.
A thousand lights, so far away,
Make the dark sky bright as day.

I look above and start to see,
A magical world that calls to me.
The stars whisper dreams from afar,
Like tiny boats upon a sea of stars.

By – Aishwarya
Student of sheeba mam
9th A
GGHSS, Pattukottai

Proud to be an Indian

India is my beautiful land,
A country I proudly call my home.
We may speak different languages,
But together, we are one.
In India, every festival has a colour,
And every tradition has a story.

India taught me
That being different does not divide us,
It makes us stronger.
From the farmer who feeds the nation
To the soldier who protects it,
From the teacher who shapes young minds
To the scientist who reaches for the stars,
Every Indian has a role to play.

I may be just one person,
But my dreams can be part of India's future.
I can learn, I can help,
I can choose kindness and courage,
And make my country proud.
I don't want to simply say,
"I am proud to be an Indian."
I want my actions to make
India proud of me.

I am proud of our brave soldiers,
Our hardworking farmers,
Our caring teachers,
And our brilliant scientists.

Let us respect one another,
Help those who are in need,
And keep our nation strong and developed.
I am proud to be an Indian,
Today, tomorrow, and always.
My country is my identity,
My unity is my strength,
And my dreams are my contribution.

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

School The third term is scheduled to run for nine weeks, from today until October 23, 2026 — a tight window that places immediate pressure on teachers and learners alike

Kenyan schools reopen for final term as examination season looms

The Ministry of Education has moved to quash social media rumours of a delayed start as candidates and teachers face a tight nine-week run to national examinations


Kenyan schools reopen

BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes

Schools across Kenya reopened today for the third and final term of the 2026 academic year, with the Ministry of Education moving swiftly to dismiss circulating social media claims that the start date had been pushed to September.

The ministry urged parents, learners and teachers to rely exclusively on official communication channels and to disregard unverified information that it said was causing unnecessary confusion ahead of one of the most consequential terms in the academic calendar.

The third term is scheduled to run for nine weeks, from today until October 23, 2026 — a tight window that places immediate pressure on teachers and learners alike to make every day count. Schools are expected to focus on completing outstanding curriculum content, conducting internal assessments and intensifying preparation for national examinations. The compressed timeline leaves little room for disruption, and education officials have made clear that effective time management will be essential from the outset.

The reopening carries particular weight for Form Four candidates, who face their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations at the close of the term. Teachers are expected to accelerate revision programmes while ensuring that all remaining curriculum sections are covered to the required standard. For these students, the next nine weeks represent the final stretch of years of preparation — and the pressure is real.

Parents have been called upon to play their part. The ministry has encouraged families to provide their children with the necessary learning materials, to ensure a suitable study environment at home and to support teachers in maintaining the focus and discipline that the season demands. The message from education authorities is consistent: this term requires a collective effort from every stakeholder in a child's education.

The mood at many schools, however, is tempered by persistent financial pressures that have shadowed Kenya's education sector for much of the year. Concerns over delays and shortages in government capitation funding remain unresolved, and school administrators warn that these constraints could affect the availability of learning materials, the delivery of academic programmes and the provision of other essential services that learners depend on. With the term already short, any disruption caused by underfunding carries an outsized cost.

School heads are expected to manage available resources carefully and creatively, prioritising the needs of examination candidates while maintaining programme delivery for all other learners. It is a balancing act that many administrators have been navigating for several terms now, and one that the broader funding challenges have made no easier.

The Ministry of Education has reiterated that the official academic calendar remains unchanged and has warned against the spread of false information through social media platforms. The rapid circulation of unverified claims about the term's start date — which prompted the ministry's public rebuttal in the days before reopening — reflects a broader pattern of misinformation that officials say is becoming an increasing concern for parents and schools attempting to plan around official schedules.

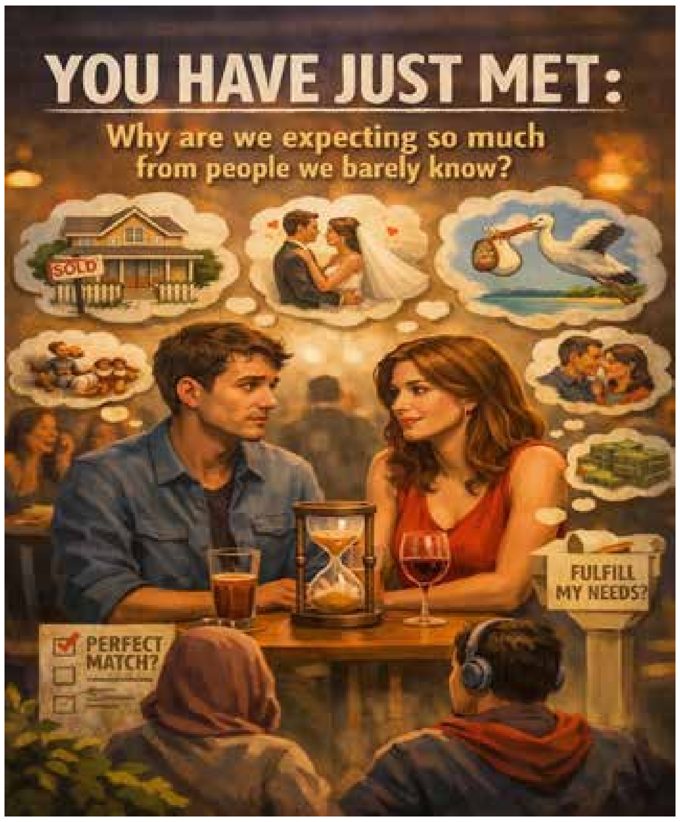
As the final term begins, the emphasis from authorities, teachers and parents alike is on discipline, commitment and purposeful preparation. For examination candidates in particular, the weeks ahead will demand focus and resilience. The 2026 academic year is entering its closing chapter, and for thousands of Kenyan learners, what happens in the next nine weeks will shape outcomes they will carry long beyond the classroom.

Expectation Modern dating has increasingly become a strange negotiation between attraction, expectation, money and intimacy

You have just met: Why are we expecting so much from people we barely know?

When a man asks for sex and a woman asks for money within hours of meeting, something has gone wrong — not with attraction or need, but with patience and respect

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes



A woman meets a man today and, before they have had any real opportunity to know each other, he is already suggesting sex. A man meets a woman today and, almost immediately, she is asking him to send her money. The speed of each request may differ, but the underlying question is the same: why are we expecting so much from people we have only just met?

Modern dating has increasingly become a strange negotiation between attraction, expectation, money and intimacy. People meet for the first time — at a social gathering, at work, online, through friends or simply by chance — and within hours one party may already be making demands that would traditionally have required time, trust and genuine familiarity to earn.

The man who quickly wants sex may argue that he is simply attracted to the woman. Attraction itself is perfectly natural. The problem begins when attraction is treated as entitlement. Seeing someone, liking them, finding them physically appealing — none of that automatically creates an obligation to become sexually intimate. A person can be genuinely interested in another while still respecting the time required to establish trust, compatibility and mutual consent. Consent is not a reward for buying dinner, paying transport or showing affection. Neither does it become available simply because two adults have flirted. It must remain voluntary, mutual and freely given — every single time.

On the other side is the woman who meets a man and almost immediately asks him for money. There may be genuine circumstances behind the request. Perhaps she has an urgent need. Perhaps financial assistance between people who have just met is normal in her social environment. But when financial expectations appear before any meaningful acquaintance has developed, a relationship can quickly become transactional. The man may begin to wonder whether he is being valued for who he is or purely for what he can provide. When every new romantic connection is immediately associated with a financial request, generosity can easily be confused with obligation — and that confusion poisons things before they have had a chance to begin.

This creates an uncomfortable symmetry. One person is effectively saying: "I have just met you, but I want access to your body." The other is saying: "I have just met you, but I want access to your money." Both situations raise the same fundamental issue — boundaries.

A healthy relationship does not begin with an invoice or a sense of entitlement. It begins with curiosity. Who is this person? What are their values? How do they treat people? Are they honest? Are they emotionally mature? Can they communicate? Do they respect limits? These questions take time to answer, and that time is not wasted — it is the work.

Dating should not be confused with an immediate exchange of commodities. Human beings are not products on a shelf where someone selects what they want and expects instant delivery. Intimacy, emotional connection and financial trust develop differently for different people, and at different paces — and that is entirely normal.

There is also a generational and technological dimension to this problem. Social media and dating applications have made it easier to meet people but, paradoxically, sometimes harder to truly know them. A profile photograph can create instant physical attraction. A few hours of messaging can manufacture a false sense of familiarity. Someone may genuinely feel that because they have chatted at length, they already know the other person. They do not. Meeting someone is the beginning of knowledge, not the completion of it.

The pressure for immediate gratification also produces unnecessary disappointment. A man who expects sex straight away may interpret a refusal as rejection, even when the woman is simply exercising her right to move at her own pace. A woman who expects money immediately may interpret a refusal as stinginess, even when the man is reasonably uncomfortable giving money to someone he barely knows. Both interpretations can be deeply unfair.

There is nothing inherently wrong with sexual attraction. There is nothing inherently wrong with helping someone financially. The problem is prematurity and expectation — particularly when one person's desire is treated as the other person's responsibility.

People should therefore learn to distinguish between asking and expecting. You can ask. But the other person must be free to say no — without punishment, without insults and without manipulation. That applies equally to men and women. A man should be able to say he would rather get to know someone first. A woman should be able to say she is not ready for sex. Equally, a woman should be able to decline a financial request without being labelled difficult, and a man should be able to decline sending money to someone he has just met without being called mean.

Perhaps the real lesson is a simple one: slow down.

Not every attraction needs to become sexual immediately. Not every connection needs to become financial immediately. Sometimes the most mature thing two people can do after meeting is simply talk, laugh and take the time to genuinely observe each other.

Trust cannot be downloaded. Character cannot be established in a single conversation. Genuine affection cannot be measured by the speed at which someone gives money or offers sex.

When two people meet for the first time, they owe each other basic respect — not immediate access.

Take your time. Get to know the person. Let attraction grow into understanding, and let generosity grow out of trust. Some things become far more valuable precisely because they were not demanded too soon.

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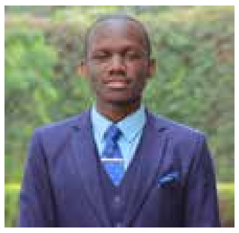
Constitution Jomo Kenyatta inherited a Lancaster House Constitution designed to disperse power and protect minorities; he systematically centralized it

The constitution as a disposable convenience: How Kenya's ruling elite weaponize situational ethics against the republic



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On 27 August 2010, Kenyans stood in Uhuru Park and watched the late President Mwai Kibaki promulgate a new Constitution the product of decades of blood, tears, and hard-won negotiation after the failed 2005 referendum and the near-catastrophe of 2007–08. That document was not a suggestion. It was a deliberate, popular repudiation of imperial presidency, ethnic patronage, and the culture of impunity that had defined the Kenyatta and Moi eras. Fifteen years later, the same class of politicians who swore oaths on that Constitution treat it as an optional accessory which is useful when it legitimizes their power, disposable when it constrains their appetites. This is not mere hypocrisy. It is the systematic practice of situational ethics: the doctrine that morality and law bend to the convenience of the moment and the interests of those who hold the keys to State House, Parliament, and the security apparatus.

The pattern is ancient in Kenyan political DNA. Jomo Kenyatta inherited a Lancaster House Constitution designed to disperse power and protect minorities; he systematically centralized it. Daniel arap Moi perfected the art of constitutional amendment-as-weapon, turning the supreme law into a rubber stamp for personal rule. The 2010 Constitution was meant to break that cycle. Instead, successive governments first under Uhuru Kenyatta, then under William Ruto have revived the old habit under new rhetoric. They invoke Article 1's sovereignty of the people when they need electoral legitimacy, then ignore Chapter Six on leadership and integrity when appointing the compromised. They cite

the Bill of Rights when foreign partners demand democratic credentials, then unleash security forces whose conduct mocks every provision on life, dignity, and assembly.

Consider the data that refuses to be spun. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index continues to place Kenya in the lower ranks hovering around 32 out of 100 in recent years, ranking near 121 globally evidence of a public sector still widely perceived as captured. Independent estimates put annual losses to corruption, illicit flows, and wasteful spending in the range of $1.5 billion or higher; the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission has previously cited figures approaching 7–8 percent of GDP. These are not abstract numbers. They are classrooms without textbooks, hospitals without drugs, roads that collapse after one rainy season, and a debt burden that mortgages the future of the unborn. Public debt has hovered in the mid-to-high 60s as a percentage of GDP even after periods of fiscal consolidation, sustained in part by the very practices the Constitution's public finance provisions were written to prevent.

The disregard is categorical. Parliament has repeatedly failed to enact the two-thirds gender principle despite successive court orders, treating judicial directives as advisory opinions rather than binding law. Executive officers have ignored court orders on media freedom, deportation, appointments, and environmental safeguards with a frequency that former Chief Justices have publicly condemned as corrosive of constitutionalism. During the 2024 Finance Bill protests, security forces responded with live ammunition, abductions, and enforced disappearances documented by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Missing Voices, and international observers despite clear constitutional guarantees of peaceful assembly and the right to life. Deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces raised further questions of constitutional process. The message was unmistakable: the Constitution protects the powerful; the rest of us are governed by the ethics of the situation.

This is situational ethics in its purest political form. Situational ethics, in its original theological framing, argued that love might justify bending rigid rules in extreme circumstances. Kenya's political class has perverted the concept into a permanent operating system: the rule is binding only when it serves the regime's immediate interest. When a court order threatens an ally, it becomes "judicial overreach." When Chapter Six threatens a preferred cabinet nominee, integrity is redefined as "electability." When citizens exercise Article 37 rights, the same leaders who once marched under the Constitution's banner suddenly discover the virtues of "order" and "stability." The correlation is stark and damning. The more tightly power is concentrated around a narrow elite, the more elastic the Constitution becomes in their hands. The further the distance between the political class and ordinary Kenyans, the more readily the supreme law is treated as inconvenient scaffolding rather than load-bearing foundation.

Literary devices illuminate the moral bankruptcy. The Constitution has become a political chameleon changing colour to match the needs of whoever currently occupies the high table. It is a buffet from which the powerful select only the dishes that satisfy their hunger, leaving the nutritious but bitter vegetables of accountability uneaten. It is a sacred text recited on oath-taking day and then locked in a drawer until the next crisis of legitimacy. Irony saturates the spectacle: leaders who rose to power promising to "protect the Constitution" now treat its most transformative chapters as optional. The deep insight is this: a constitution that is applied selectively ceases to be a constitution at all. It becomes a set of rhetorical weapons in an elite contest. Once that happens, the social contract frays. Citizens stop believing that the rules bind the rulers. When belief collapses, the only remaining languages are force and patronage languages Kenya has already spoken too fluently and at too high a cost.

History offers no comfort to those who imagine this is temporary. The same selective constitutionalism that produced the 1969 and 1982 amendments, the same culture that produced the 2007–08 post-election violence, is alive in the present. The 2010 document was meant to interrupt that continuum. Instead, it has been domesticated by the very forces it sought to restrain. Original thought demands we name the mechanism: the Kenyan political elite has perfected the art of constitutional capture without formal amendment. They do not always need to rewrite the text; they simply refuse to live by it, knowing that institutional weakness, ethnic mobilization, and public fatigue will eventually normalize the breach. Each unpunished violation teaches the next generation of leaders that the Constitution is theatre, not constraint.

This cannot stand. The actors who must act are many and their duties are clear. The Judiciary must continue to speak with institutional courage, issuing orders that are not only principled but enforceable, and documenting every act of contempt with relentless precision. Civil society and the legal profession must refuse the temptation of selective outrage defending the Constitution whether the government of the day is favoured or despised. Citizens, particularly the young who stormed the streets in 2024, must convert episodic anger into sustained institutional pressure: demanding lifestyle audits, rejecting compromised candidates at every level, and treating Chapter Six as a living standard rather than a campaign slogan. International partners who fund Kenya's development and security architecture must stop treating constitutional compliance as a soft variable; conditionality that ignores governance merely subsidizes the erosion. And the politicians themselves those currently "in government" and those who hope to replace them must be told, without diplomatic softening, that the oath they took is not poetry. It is a binding covenant with a people who have already paid too high a price for their predecessors' situational morality.

A constitution is not a convenience. It is the architecture of a people's collective self-respect. When those entrusted with its custody treat it as disposable, they do not merely break the law; they declare that the people themselves are disposable. Kenya has walked that road before. It ends in blood, broken institutions, and a generation that inherits only the ruins of promises once made in their name. The time for polite analysis has expired. The Constitution is either supreme or it is nothing. Those who govern must choose and the rest of us must make the cost of the wrong choice higher than the temporary comfort of power.

The writer is a social commentator.

Society One of the most troubling developments is the manner in which some churches have opened their altars and pulpits to politicians.

Voice: Who will speak for society?

The church has long been Kenya's moral compass — but silence, political capture and abandoned civic duty are slowly eroding its authority

BY Paul Kinyanjui
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The church has historically been regarded as the conscience of society — a moral institution expected to speak truth to power, defend the vulnerable, promote justice and guide communities towards peace and responsible citizenship. In Kenya, the church has at various times played a courageous role in defending democracy, civic rights and constitutional reform. Historical record documents its contribution to civic education, election monitoring and the broader struggle for democratic governance.

Yet in recent years, a growing concern has taken root: parts of the church have compromised this prophetic responsibility, particularly through an unhealthy relationship with political power.

One of the most troubling developments is the manner in which some churches have opened their altars and pulpits to politicians. The altar should be a place of worship, truth and spiritual reflection — not a campaign platform. When politicians are routinely invited to speak from the pulpit, publicly endorsed, celebrated or given privileged access to congregations, the church risks turning sacred spaces into political arenas. The problem is not that politicians, as citizens, should be excluded from worship. The danger lies in allowing partisan interests to occupy ground that belongs to the church's moral and spiritual mission.

This has contributed to an increasingly blurred boundary between church and state. Kenya's Constitution is clear: there shall be no state religion, while citizens enjoy freedom of conscience, religion and expression. The church therefore has a legitimate voice in matters affecting society, but that voice must remain independent of political patronage. It should be able to challenge a government when it is wrong and commend it when it is right. Once the church becomes dependent on political leaders for money, influence, protection or recognition, its moral authority begins to hollow out.

Even more troubling is the selective silence of some church leaders. There are moments when society desperately needs the church to condemn injustice, corruption, violence, abuse of public resources and violations of citizens' rights. Yet some leaders stay quiet because speaking plainly might offend political friends or financial benefactors. Silence in the face of wrongdoing is not neutrality — it can become complicity. Scholarship on Kenya's earlier church activism observed that keeping silent about political abuses could itself constitute a political act.

The church must therefore rediscover what genuine neutrality actually means. It does not mean refusing to engage with public affairs. It means refusing to become an extension of any political party, politician or government. The church should have no partisan interest. Its interest should be justice, peace, accountability, constitutionalism, human dignity and the common good. It should hold both government and opposition to the same moral standard — without fear or favour.

The church has also, in many instances, stepped back from civic education and public participation — which is particularly unfortunate given its enormous grassroots network and the trust it enjoys among millions of citizens. Kenyan churches once played an active role in voter education and election monitoring. That tradition should not be abandoned. Congregations should be spaces where citizens learn about their constitutional rights and responsibilities, public participation, peaceful engagement, accountability and the importance of informed voting. That is not a political act. It is a civic one.

The church should also reclaim its role as mediator. When communities are divided, when political temperatures rise and when citizens lose faith in institutions, the church should be among the first to bring people together. Its strength lies in its ability to stand above political factions and provide an honest platform for dialogue. Research on Kenya has, however, documented periods when the church's prophetic voice was weakened by ethnic divisions and the co-option of clergy by political interests. Those periods should serve as a warning, not a template.

Looking ahead, society may eventually be forced to ask whether some church activities require greater regulation. That should not be read as an attack on religious freedom. Rather, it should provoke a serious national conversation about accountability, the political exploitation of religious spaces, financial transparency and the responsibilities that come with enormous social influence. Whether we choose to confront it or not, that conversation is already arriving.

The church remains the conscience of society. But a conscience that refuses to speak loses its moral authority. A church that blesses every political leader loses its independence. A church that stays silent before injustice loses its prophetic voice.

The future presents a simple choice: get ready or get left behind. The church must reclaim its independence, restore its integrity, reject political capture, educate citizens, mediate conflicts and speak truth without fear or favour. If it does so, it can once again become a powerful guardian of justice, order and national conscience. If it continues to trade prophetic courage for political proximity, society will eventually look elsewhere for the moral leadership it once expected from the church.

Fintech According to figures provided by the company, a single deployment of its VERICASH platform currently powers digital banking operations for a pan-African banking group

African fintech platform wins global award as digital banking scales across continent

BY Adele Amobi
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CIT VERICASH, a fintech enablement platform serving banks and financial institutions across Africa, has been named Best Digital Financial Services Platform 2026 by Global Business Outlook, a UK-based international business publication that issues annual awards recognising performance across global financial markets. The award lands at a significant moment — not just for the company, but for the broader story of how digital finance is quietly reshaping economic life across sub-Saharan Africa, one transaction at a time.

The recognition follows three industry awards the company says it received in 2025 — Best Digital Transformation Platform, Fintech Strategic Partner of the Year and Best Financial Services Platform Africa — and comes as digital financial services adoption across the continent expands rapidly at institutional scale. For a company that has spent years building infrastructure in markets that many global technology firms have historically found too complex, too fragmented or too risky to enter seriously, the accumulation of external recognition is beginning to tell a coherent story.

According to figures provided by the company, a single deployment of its VERICASH platform currently powers digital banking operations for a pan-African banking group across 22 countries, processing more than 500 transactions per second and handling upwards of 30 million digital services daily across more than seven million active subscribers. The company says that in the client's first five years of full digital platform operations, the deployment produced fivefold growth in digital subscribers, tenfold growth in monthly transactions and thirtyfold growth in monthly financial transaction value — translating, it says, directly into higher fee income and lower servicing costs for the client. These figures have not been independently verified.

CIT VERICASH is a division of CIT Global, which traces its origins to Toronto, where the parent company was founded in 1993 with a focus on systems integration and software development. Over more than three decades, the group has expanded its footprint to clients across more than 50 countries. Its core African offering — the VERICASH Fintech Enablement Platform — is described by the company as a centralised, integrated ecosystem designed to allow financial institutions to launch, operate, optimise and continuously scale digital financial services through a single platform, rather than managing a patchwork of disconnected systems.

Powered by what the company describes as an agile, low-code and no-code service builder, the platform is designed to allow commercial banks, digital banks, microfinance institutions, mobile money operators and fintechs to deploy and evolve digital banking, agency banking, mobile wallets, payment ecosystems and lending services without the delays and costs typically associated with bespoke technology development. The company says it is currently active in approximately 25 markets across Africa, working with institutions ranging from large Tier 1 banks to neobanks and specialist fintech operators.

Global Business Outlook, in selecting CIT VERICASH for the 2026 award, pointed specifically to the platform's demonstrated ability to operate at institutional scale across fragmented regulatory environments — a challenge that continues to frustrate expansion-minded financial institutions working simultaneously across multiple African jurisdictions. Regulatory fragmentation remains one of the most persistent structural barriers to pan-African financial services growth, and platforms that can navigate it credibly are increasingly rare.

Beyond software delivery, the company says it operates what it describes as a strategic partnership model, positioning itself as a long-term operational partner to its clients rather than a conventional technology vendor. The model includes dedicated centres of excellence, around-the-clock operational monitoring, continuous platform optimisation, business intelligence and performance analytics, application quality support and proactive fraud monitoring. Crucially, it also extends into territory that technology companies rarely occupy — supporting clients in evaluating business models, navigating licensing requirements, building operational teams, developing financial forecasts and accelerating go-to-market execution for new digital service offerings.

A revenue-sharing arrangement underpins the model, aligning CIT VERICASH's financial incentives directly with those of its clients. The company argues that this structure reduces technology risk for financial institutions, accelerates the path to profitability and creates a foundation for continuous evolution of digital capabilities rather than one-off deployments that quickly become outdated.

Regional partnerships extend that reach further. In East Africa, CIT VERICASH says it has formed a strategic alliance with Bluechip Technologies, combining the VERICASH platform with Bluechip's localised market knowledge to deliver agency banking, digital payments and mobile wallets to banks, telecoms operators and fintechs operating in the region. In West Africa, the company cites a decade-long partnership with CWG PLC as the foundation for large-scale financial ecosystem deployments across markets that collectively represent some of the continent's highest-growth digital finance opportunities.

On artificial intelligence, the company has staked out a position that goes further than most of its competitors are publicly willing to. Rather than treating machine learning as an optional feature or a future roadmap item, CIT VERICASH says it embeds AI-powered capabilities across retail, small business and corporate banking functions as a matter of core design. These capabilities include personalised customer experiences, automated credit scoring, real-time transaction risk assessment and proactive fraud prevention. The company's stated philosophy is that AI is not a feature added to its platform — it is the mechanism through which the digital channel thinks, decides and acts. Whether that vision is fully realised in practice across all deployments is a question the market will ultimately answer, but the strategic clarity of the position is notable in an industry where AI claims frequently outpace delivery.

The broader context gives the award additional weight. Digital financial services adoption across sub-Saharan Africa accelerated sharply in the years following the Covid-19 pandemic, driven by a combination of smartphone penetration, expanding mobile money infrastructure, regulatory innovation and the urgent need for financial services that could reach populations far beyond the branch network. The institutions that emerged best positioned from that period were largely those that had invested early in scalable, interoperable platforms rather than attempting to build and maintain proprietary technology stacks that struggled to keep pace with changing market conditions.

Analysts tracking the sector have consistently identified infrastructure depth, regulatory adaptability, operational support capacity and the ability to serve diverse institution types on a single platform as the factors separating sustainable digital finance deployments from those that achieve early traction but stall at limited scale. On each of those dimensions, CIT VERICASH has built its public case — through client performance data, regional partnerships and now a growing body of external recognition.

What the Global Business Outlook award confirms, more than anything else, is that the company's profile beyond Africa is growing and that international observers are paying closer attention to the infrastructure layer quietly powering digital finance across one of the world's most consequential economic frontiers. Whether that recognition translates into continued client growth across an increasingly competitive landscape — one that now attracts serious capital and serious competitors from Europe, Asia and North America — remains the test that no award can answer in advance.

The continent's digital finance revolution is well underway. The companies that will define its next decade are already being chosen, one deployment at a time.

Politics The Constitution does not confer rights upon Kenyans as favours from whichever administration happens to occupy State House

The hole you are digging for Uhuru may become your own political grave: A word of thought to the political class

BY Fredrick Chelimo
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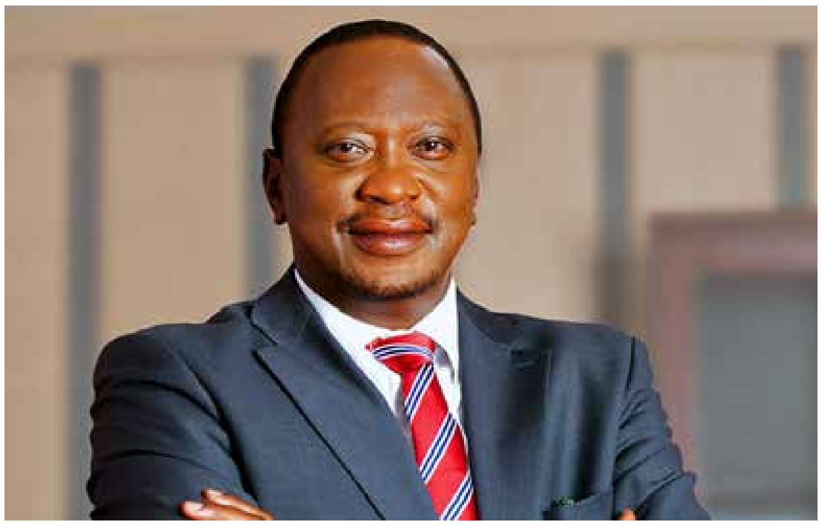

President Uhuru Kenyatta

"Political power is temporary, but political precedents is permanent: the hole you dig for your predecessor may become the political grave you inherit when your own term ends"

Kenya's political class has a peculiar habit of behaving as though power comes with a permanent address. Once inside State House, Parliament or the Cabinet, some politicians begin to speak and act as if political authority is hereditary property rather than a temporary trust bestowed by citizens. Yet Kenya's political history tells a different story. Governments change. Coalitions collapse. Friends become opponents and opponents become allies. The powerful become vulnerable, and yesterday's untouchable politician can suddenly find himself pleading for the very freedoms they once regarded as inconvenient privileges of others.

That is why the increasingly aggressive political campaign surrounding retired H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta deserves something more serious than partisan applause or partisan outrage. It deserves constitutional reflection. There may be legitimate questions about the conduct of a former Head of State. There may be legitimate questions about the legal restrictions governing retired presidents and their political activities. But there is a profound difference between enforcing the law and weaponizing the law for political convenience.

Uhuru Kenyatta is no longer President. That fact should be beyond argument. He no longer commands the Executive, appoints Cabinet Secretaries, directs State machinery or exercises the constitutional powers of the presidency. His presidency ended when another Kenyan was sworn into office. But leaving State House did not strip him of his citizenship. It did not erase his dignity. It did not extinguish his freedom of expression. And it certainly did not make him constitutionally invisible. That distinction matters.

The Constitution does not confer rights upon Kenyans as favours from whichever administration happens to occupy State House. Article 19 recognises rights and fundamental freedoms as inherent to individuals, while Article 20 binds State organs and all persons to the Bill of Rights. Article 27 guarantees equality before the law; Article 28 protects human dignity; Article 33 protects freedom of expression; and Article 38 safeguards political rights. These are not Uhuru Kenyatta's private constitutional possessions. They belong to every Kenyan.

The Presidential Retirement Benefits Act does impose restrictions on the political-party activities of retired presidents. If there is credible evidence that Uhuru Kenyatta has violated a statutory restriction, the matter should be handled according to law. Evidence should be presented. The relevant institutions should investigate. Due process should be followed. If a violation is established, the law should take its course. That is precisely what constitutionalism demands.

What Kenya should resist is the dangerous habit of reaching a political verdict before reaching a legal conclusion. Accusation is not conviction. Political hostility is not evidence. Article 24 is particularly instructive because it makes clear that limitations on fundamental rights must have a legal foundation and must satisfy the demanding requirements of reasonableness and justification in an open and democratic society. The question, therefore, should never simply be whether political leaders dislike what a former president is saying or doing. The question should be whether the conduct in question actually violates a specific and applicable law, and whether the response being contemplated is lawful, proportionate and procedurally fair. This is where Kenya's political class needs to exercise maturity.

A democracy is not tested when everyone agrees with government. It is tested when powerful citizens disagree with it. It is easy to defend freedom of expression when the speaker is praising those in power. The real constitutional test comes when the speaker is irritating, embarrassing, criticising or politically inconvenient. The temptation to silence a former President may be politically attractive to those currently holding power. But political convenience is a dangerous foundation upon which to build constitutional precedent. Today's politicians should remember something that political ambition routinely makes people forget: they are temporary.

The President is temporary. Cabinet Secretaries are temporary. Members of Parliament are temporary. Political parties are temporary. Parliamentary majorities are temporary. Political alliances are temporary. Even political enemies are temporary. The Constitution is supposed to be the enduring framework within which all of them operate.

That is why today's political actors should be extraordinarily careful about the standards they establish. If every political association by a former President becomes suspicious, what happens when today's Cabinet Secretary becomes tomorrow's retired leader? If criticism of government becomes evidence of political sabotage, what happens when today's government becomes tomorrow's opposition? If retirement benefits can become a political weapon, what happens when the political fortunes of the people wielding that weapon change? Political history has an unforgiving way of returning yesterday's precedents to today's authors.

There is also a danger in turning Parliament into an arena for political punishment. Parliament has an important constitutional role in oversight, legislation and representation. It should not become a theatre where temporary majorities settle political scores with individuals they consider inconvenient. The authority of Parliament is strengthened when it acts institutionally, not when it appears to be driven by partisan vengeance. The same principle applies to the Executive.

Government has enormous power. That is precisely why constitutional restraints exist. A government does not become stronger by intimidating its critics. It becomes stronger when it demonstrates that its authority does not depend upon silencing them.

Equally, supporters of Uhuru Kenyatta should not confuse constitutional protection with political immunity. A former president must be accountable like every other citizen. Retirement from office cannot become a shield against legitimate scrutiny. If he breaks the law, he should answer for it. If he engages in political activity prohibited by statute, the relevant institutions should act. If he makes political miscalculations, voters and history are entitled to judge them. But accountability must be anchored in law, not political appetite. This is the balance Kenya desperately needs.

We should neither protect Uhuru because he is Uhuru nor pursue him because he is Uhuru. We should protect the constitutional principle because it will eventually protect someone else—and that someone else may be one of today's most enthusiastic political prosecutors. The most dangerous political weapon is not the one used against an opponent. It is the one designed without considering who will inherit it.

Kenya has changed governments before, and it will change them again. Political fortunes can evaporate with astonishing speed. The politician who today commands crowds may tomorrow struggle to attract a handful. The leader who today enjoys unrestricted access to power may tomorrow discover the doors have closed. The legislator who today cheers the restriction of another person's rights may one day need those very rights to defend himself.

That is why Articles 47 and 50, concerning fair administrative action and fair hearing, matter. Article 22 matters because constitutional rights are enforceable. These provisions are not designed for one political generation. They are safeguards against the temporary passions of every political generation.

The question Kenya should therefore ask is not whether H.E Uhuru Kenyatta deserves special protection. He does not. The question is whether Kenya deserves a political culture in which the law is applied consistently, institutions are respected and constitutional rights do not change according to who occupies State House. That is the larger issue.

If, H.E the retired President Uhuru has broken the law, let the evidence speak. If he has violated the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act, let the statutory process determine the matter. If his political influence is exaggerated, let voters demonstrate that at the ballot box. If his political interventions are unpopular, let democratic debate answer them. But let us not confuse political discomfort with illegality, or temporary possession of State power with ownership of Kenya. The Constitution belongs to the citizenry.

And before today's political class enthusiastically digs a constitutional hole for H.E retired President Uhuru Kenyatta, it should pause long enough to consider who might eventually be standing at the bottom of it. Never build a political weapon without asking who will hold power when it is turned around. In Kenya, the answer is almost certainly: someone else.

"Never build a political weapon to destroy your predecessor without asking who will inherit when you leave office. In Kenya presidents come and go, but precedent has a strong memory anything you try to bend today in your favour might haunt you tomorrow".

Sports >> *The Spanish midfielder has given his personal backing to the move as the two clubs finalise terms on a deal that underlines Newcastle's growing ambition

Newcastle close in on £50m González signing from Manchester City

By **Pascal Okoth**

Newcastle United yesterday reached a verbal agreement with Manchester City to sign Spanish midfielder Nico González in a deal worth up to £50 million, with the player himself said to have approved the transfer as negotiations moved rapidly towards a conclusion.

The two clubs agreed on an initial fee of £47 million, with a further £3 million available in performance-related add-ons. González, 24, is reported to be ready to commit to Newcastle's project, and the club regard him not as a squad addition but as a player they expect to become a central figure in their midfield for years to come.

The deal, if confirmed, would represent one of the most significant pieces of business Newcastle have conducted since their Saudi-backed ownership group began reshaping the club. It also signals the continued intent of a club that has spent recent seasons closing the gap on the Premier League's established powers — and is now targeting the players to prove it.

González developed through Barcelona's celebrated academy before making his senior breakthrough at the Catalan club and earning a move to Manchester City, where he has worked under Pep Guardiola's demanding tactical system. That experience — immersion in one of Europe's most sophisticated football environments — has exposed him to the kind of elite-level training, tactical discipline and intensity of competition that few clubs outside the very top can provide.

His time at the Etihad Stadium has, by his own standards, been frustrating. Competition for midfield places at City is as fierce as anywhere in world football, and consistent first-team minutes have proved elusive. But Newcastle's calculation is that the experience has sharpened rather than diminished him — and that regular football, responsibility and a clear role within their system could unlock a level of performance that City's depth never allowed him to sustain.

His qualities are not in doubt. González has built a reputation for technical precision, composure in tight spaces and the versatility to operate effectively across different midfield roles. That adaptability could prove particularly valuable at St James' Park, where manager Eddie Howe has consistently favoured midfielders capable of performing multiple functions within the same system.

For Manchester City, the proposed fee represents a healthy financial return on a player whose first-team opportunities have been limited. The deal allows González to pursue the prominence and continuity that his development at this stage of his career arguably requires, while freeing City to redirect resources within their own squad.

The timing suits all parties. Newcastle are building with purpose and with money, their recruitment increasingly targeted at players in their mid-twenties with proven pedigree at the highest level and years of development still ahead of them. González fits that profile precisely.

Should the transfer be completed before the window closes, González would join a Newcastle squad that has already undergone substantial transformation since the takeover. The club have invested consistently in quality across the pitch and continue to target players capable of competing not just domestically but in European competition, where their ambitions are real and their performances have increasingly justified the expectation.

Nico González

For González, the move could mark the moment his career shifts from promising to decisive. He arrives at a club that believes in him, in a league that rewards the qualities he possesses, with a fan base at St James' Park that has waited a long time to watch this level of ambition expressed in the transfer market.

The formalities remain to be completed. But with a verbal agreement in place and the player's own approval secured, the transfer is understood to be moving steadily towards confirmation. Newcastle supporters, long accustomed to watching top talent leave rather than arrive, will be watching closely.

If González pulls on a black and white shirt, it will mean more than one signing. It will mean that Newcastle's transformation is no longer a project — it is a reality.

Sports >> *The Brazilian winger faces a defining career decision after the Saudi club submitted a contract offer and Arsenal confirmed they are willing to let him leave

Al Hilal close in on Martinelli as Arsenal prepare to sanction £55m exit

Gabriel Martinelli

By **Pascal Okoth**

Al Hilal are closing in on a deal to sign Arsenal winger Gabriel Martinelli, with negotiations between the Saudi Pro League club and the Gunners understood to be at an advanced stage and a fee in the region of £50 million to £55 million under active discussion.

The 25-year-old Brazilian forward could be on his way out of the Emirates Stadium before the transfer window closes, with manager Mikel Arteta said to have made clear internally that Martinelli is free to leave if an appropriate offer arrives. Al Hilal have emerged as the leading destination, and the Saudi club are understood to be pushing hard to complete the signing.

A contract offer has already been submitted to the player, and Martinelli is now understood to be weighing the proposal carefully. His personal decision is expected to be the determining factor in whether the transfer reaches a conclusion — with the clubs themselves moving steadily towards agreement on the financial terms.

Martinelli arrived at Arsenal from Brazilian club Ituano in 2019 as a relatively unknown teenager and quickly established himself as one of the Premier League's most exciting attacking talents. Pace, directness, a relentless pressing game and the ability to operate effectively from either flank made him a firm favourite at the Emirates and a regular starter under Arteta during the club's resurgence as genuine Premier League title contenders.

His standing at the club has, however, shifted. Competition for places in Arsenal's attacking department has intensified considerably as the squad has evolved, and Arteta's tactical plans appear to have opened the door for Martinelli to consider a move rather than fight for a starting berth he once held without serious challenge. At 25, he is at an age where regular football and a central role matter enormously for his continued development — and for his prospects with the Brazilian national team.

For Al Hilal, securing Martinelli would represent another statement of intent in a Saudi Pro League recruitment campaign that has already brought some of the world's most recognisable players to the kingdom. The club are prepared to invest heavily in his wages as well as the transfer fee, offering the Brazilian a financial package that would be difficult to match at any European club outside the very elite.

The decision facing Martinelli is not straightforward. Moving to Saudi Arabia at this stage of his career would provide security, prominence and the opportunity to be a central figure in a league that is growing in profile and resource. But it would also mean leaving a club competing at the sharp end of the Champions League and Premier League — the stages on which top players are ultimately judged — at what should be the peak years of his career.

Arsenal, should the transfer proceed, face their own challenge. Martinelli's departure would reduce Arteta's options in wide attacking positions and could prompt the club to move in the final days of the window for a replacement. The Gunners have shown in recent transfer windows that they are capable of acting quickly when circumstances demand, but finding a winger capable of matching Martinelli's energy and directness at short notice is never a straightforward task.

The structure of the final deal — including the balance between an upfront fee and any performance-related additions — is still being discussed, though both clubs are said to be optimistic that an agreement can be reached. The reported £50 million to £55 million valuation reflects Arsenal's position that they will not accept a significantly discounted fee for a player who has served the club with distinction and still carries considerable market value.

All the significant pieces are now in place. Arsenal have given their blessing. Al Hilal have submitted their offer. The fee is close to being settled. What remains is the player's answer — and that, those close to the negotiations suggest, could come soon.

If Martinelli says yes, he will leave north London having played his part in one of English football's most compelling recent revival stories. Whether he chooses the next chapter in Saudi Arabia or holds out for another opportunity in Europe's top competitions, the decision will define the trajectory of a career that, at 25, still has its most important years ahead of it.

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

ART, Culture & Backs

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The MT. KENYA TIMES

The importance of geoinformatics in the implementation of the digital Uzbekistan–2030 strategy

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The rapid development of digital technologies has become one of the defining characteristics of the twenty-first century. Today, digital transformation affects almost every sector, including public administration, agriculture, transportation, environmental management, education, and urban planning. As countries seek to strengthen their economies and improve the quality of public services, the integration of modern information technologies has become an essential component of sustainable development.

Recognizing the importance of digital transformation, Uzbekistan adopted the Digital Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy, which aims to modernize the country's economic sectors, expand digital infrastructure, improve public services, and increase the efficiency of state institutions. Achieving these goals requires the effective use of advanced technologies, among which geoinformatics occupies a particularly important position.

Geoinformatics combines geographical information systems (GIS), remote sensing, cartography, satellite technologies, spatial analysis, and geographic data management. These technologies make it possible to collect, process, analyze, and visualize spatial information, thereby supporting evidence-based decision-making. As a result, geoinformatics has become one of the key technological tools for implementing the Digital Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy.

The Role of Geoinformatics in the Modern World

Geoinformatics is an interdisciplinary field that integrates geography, computer science, mathematics, and information technology. It provides efficient methods for collecting and analyzing spatial data and transforming that data into useful information.

In recent years, the application of geoinformatics has expanded significantly. Governments, research institutions, and private organizations increasingly rely on geographic information systems to monitor natural resources, develop infrastructure, manage urban growth, and improve environmental protection.

Modern technologies such as the Global Positioning System (GPS), satellite imagery, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and cloud computing have dramatically improved the accuracy and accessibility of geographic information. These innovations allow specialists to create detailed digital maps, identify environmental changes, and develop predictive models for future planning.

The growing demand for spatial data has transformed geoinformatics into one of the most important scientific and technological disciplines of the digital era.

Geoinformatics and the Digital Transformation of Uzbekistan

The Digital Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy emphasizes the importance of information technologies in accelerating economic growth and improving the efficiency of public administration. Geoinformatics supports these objectives by providing accurate geographic information for decision-making at both national and regional levels.

One of the most significant areas of digital transformation in Uzbekistan is the modernization of the cadastral system. Traditional land registration methods often require extensive paperwork and lengthy administrative procedures. The introduction of digital cadastral systems based on GIS technologies simplifies data management and improves transparency.

Agriculture is another sector that greatly benefits from geoinformatics. Uzbekistan's economy has historically depended on agricultural production, making efficient land management a national priority. GIS technologies help monitor crop conditions, analyze soil quality, estimate irrigation requirements, and optimize agricultural productivity.

Urban development also depends heavily on geospatial technologies. Population growth and rapid urbanization require effective planning tools that can support infrastructure development. Digital maps and geographic databases enable urban planners to evaluate transportation networks, residential areas, and public facilities more accurately.

Environmental Monitoring and Sustainable Development

Environmental sustainability is one of the major challenges facing countries worldwide. Climate change, land degradation, water shortages, and air pollution require effective monitoring systems that can provide reliable information for environmental management.

Geoinformatics plays a crucial role in environmental monitoring by allowing specialists to observe changes in ecosystems through satellite imagery and remote sensing technologies. These tools provide valuable information about deforestation, desertification, water resource distribution, and biodiversity conservation.

In Uzbekistan, geospatial technologies are increasingly being used to monitor environmental conditions in vulnerable regions. Accurate environmental data can support government agencies in developing strategies to reduce ecological risks and improve resource management.

Furthermore, geoinformatics contributes to disaster management by identifying areas vulnerable to floods, landslides, earthquakes, and other natural hazards. Early detection and risk assessment can significantly reduce the social and economic consequences of natural disasters.

Future Prospects and Challenges

Although significant progress has been made in the implementation of digital technologies in Uzbekistan, several challenges remain. These include limited technical infrastructure, insufficient access to high-quality spatial data, and the need for highly qualified specialists in geodesy and geoinformatics.

Future developments are likely to focus on integrating artificial intelligence, big data, machine learning, and drone technologies with geospatial systems. These innovations will improve the accuracy of spatial analysis and create new opportunities for scientific research and economic development.

Educational institutions also have an important responsibility to prepare specialists capable of working with modern geospatial technologies. Strengthening academic programs in geodesy and geoinformatics will contribute to the successful implementation of the country's digital transformation strategy.

Conclusion

Geoinformatics is one of the fundamental technologies supporting the implementation of the Digital Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy. Its applications in agriculture, urban planning, environmental management, land administration, and public services demonstrate its significant contribution to sustainable development.

The continued expansion of geospatial technologies will strengthen Uzbekistan's digital infrastructure and improve the quality of decision-making across different sectors. Therefore, increasing investments in geoinformatics, promoting scientific research, and developing professional expertise should remain national priorities in the coming years.

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