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Tharaka University has launched an ambitious campaign to raise KSh 500 million for a revolving scholarship fund, kicking it off with a 530-kilometre charity walk

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**Political hate speech: Are we learning from our past, or walking into another dangerous chapter?**  
Kenya has travelled a long and painful road in its democratic journey. Every election cycle brings renewed hope for change, but it also revives a familiar and deeply troubling concern

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# The Mt. Kenya Times

## Daily ePAPER

**Politics** The Council resolved to reorganise party structures and move forward with rebranding the Azimio Coalition

## The great opposition gamble

Azimio la Umoja yesterday held a pivotal joint council and national executive committee meeting that admitted three senior opposition figures to its governing council, extended formal invitations to four political parties, and mandated its leader Kalonzo Musyoka to pursue coalition talks with Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party, Martha Karua's People's Liberation Party and Edwin Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi movement — the most significant steps yet in the opposition's bid to build a single, credible vehicle capable of removing President William Ruto from power in the 2027 General Election.

The meeting, chaired by Kalonzo at the SKM Command Centre in Nairobi, appointed Jubilee deputy party leader Fred Matiang'i, former Meru Governor Peter Munya and former Embu Senator Lenny Kivuti to the coalition's top decision-making body. Former President Uhuru Kenyatta, who holds the title of Azimio Coalition Council chairman, did not attend. Secretary General Caroli Omondi, reading from the resolutions adopted during the meeting, confirmed that the council had resolved to reorganise and rebrand the coalition. "The Council resolved to reorganise the party structures, the various organs of the party, as well as to move forward with the rebranding of the Azimio Coalition," he said.

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Secretary General Caroli Omondi addresses the media at the SKM Command Centre in Nairobi, flanked by Azimio Coalition leaders

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# Azimio rebrands, expands coalition as opposition steps up 2027 preparations

BY Diplomatic Media Services

@themkenyentimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

The Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition has unveiled a major reorganisation and expansion plan as opposition leaders intensify preparations for the 2027 General Election. Speaking after chairing a Joint Council and National Executive Committee meeting at the SKM Command Centre in Nairobi yesterday, coalition leader Kalonzo Musyoka said the meeting adopted far-reaching resolutions aimed at strengthening the coalition ahead of the election year.

The coalition resolved to rebrand and reorganise Azimio while welcoming former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, former Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya and former Senator Lenny Kivuti into the Azimio Council.

Azimio also invited the Democratic Action Party-Kenya led by Eugene Wamalwa, Umoja na Maendeleo Party led by Kawira Mwagaza, the People's Democratic Party led by Omingo Maara and the Democratic Party of Kenya led by National Assembly Speaker Justin Bedan Muturi to formally join the coalition.

Kalonzo said the Council further mandated him to continue engaging other political formations, including the Democracy for the Citizens Party, the People's Liberation Party, the United Green Movement and Linda Mwananchi once it is registered, as part of efforts to build a broad-based national opposition alliance. He said leaders from several parties attended the meeting, underscoring what he described as growing unity within the coalition.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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## NEWS IN BRIEF



Government agencies have launched a papyrus rehabilitation programme at Lake Naivasha to restore nearly 30 acres of degraded wetlands, with support from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The project also aims to expand papyrus cover by an additional 100 acres over the next two years. According to KMFRI Naivasha's Edna Waithaka, the destruction of papyrus has exposed the lake to pollution by allowing waste and silt from nearby farms, estates and hotels to flow into the water. She said fish stocks have declined sharply, with annual landings dropping from about 3,400 metric tonnes in 2019 to around 1,050 metric tonnes last year due to overfishing, illegal fishing and habitat degradation. About 70 per cent of the lake's papyrus has been lost over the past two decades.



Health officials and members of the public marked World Hepatitis Day 2026 by calling for increased awareness, expanded testing, and improved access to hepatitis B treatment. An estimated 1.5 million Kenyans are living with chronic hepatitis B, yet many remain unaware they are infected. According to the World Health Organization's Global Hepatitis Report 2026, only 13% of people living with chronic hepatitis B worldwide know their status, underscoring the urgent need for early testing, diagnosis, and treatment to prevent serious liver disease and liver cancer.



The government is developing a policy framework to regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies amid concerns that AI-generated misinformation could undermine the credibility of the 2027 General Election. A National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) Governance Study 2025/2026 warns that deepfakes, manipulated images, cloned voices and fabricated online content pose growing risks to democracy. The study found that 77 per cent of Kenyans rely on social media for political information, with WhatsApp identified as a major channel for misinformation. The ICT Ministry has invited public comments on the Draft Kenya Artificial Intelligence and Other Emerging Technologies Policy, which seeks to guide the responsible development, governance and use of AI.



More than 1,000 unemployed youth in Laikipia will benefit from the Nyota on-the-job experience programme, which was launched on Monday to equip them with practical vocational skills through a six-month apprenticeship. The trainees will acquire skills in areas such as barbering, welding, beauty and therapy, ICT, and other trades under experienced artisans. The programme also targets teenage mothers, providing them with opportunities to gain employable skills. Upon completing the training, participants will receive certificates from the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). Nationally, the Nyota programme aims to train over 800,000 youth to promote self-employment and reduce drug and substance abuse.



Caregivers in Turkana South are playing a greater role in tackling child malnutrition through the R-SWITCH project, a partnership between the county government and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Over the past 18 months, parents have been trained to monitor their children's nutrition at home using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes and mobile phones, enabling early detection and referral for treatment. Health officials say the initiative has empowered caregivers and improved early identification of malnutrition cases. However, challenges remain, including caregivers' competing livelihood demands, especially mining and livestock herding, which limit regular monitoring. Stock-outs of essential supplies and reporting tools have also affected the programme's effectiveness.



The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) has begun forming a technical team to work with the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) on a joint manifesto for President William Ruto's 2027 re-election campaign. Speaking in Homa Bay County, ODM leader Oburu Oginga said the team will develop policies addressing key issues affecting Kenyans while strengthening cooperation between the two parties. He said ODM is committed to working with Kenya Kwanza to help retain power and secure its place in government. Oburu also backed President Ruto's proposed 2060 development blueprint, saying it originated from the late Raila Odinga. He cited the appointment of ODM leaders to Cabinet positions as evidence of the parties' cooperation and dismissed claims that ODM had weakened following Raila's death.

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**Politics** The registration drive is being led by senators Godfrey Osotsi of Vihiga and Richard Onyonka of Kisii.

# Sifuna's moment: The senator who wants to rewrite Kenya's political script

*From ODM rebel to presidential hopeful, Edwin Sifuna is racing to turn a grassroots movement into a registered party — but legal obstacles, coalition arithmetic and veteran rivals stand between him and State House*

BY David Kimani  
@themtkenyatimes

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna is in the process of registering Linda Mwananchi as a political party for a 2027 presidential bid, his allies have confirmed, in a move that is rapidly transforming what began as a protest movement within ODM into one of the most consequential new forces in Kenyan electoral politics.

The registration drive is being led by senators Godfrey Osotsi of Vihiga and Richard Onyonka of Kisii, who confirmed that the faction has scheduled a meeting with the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties and has already reserved at least one version of the Linda Mwananchi name. Osotsi has been emphatic about the seriousness of the endeavour. A team of experts, he says, is currently drafting the new party's blueprint and manifesto, ahead of a planned 47-county popularisation tour that will lay the groundwork for a national presidential campaign.

Sifuna's declaration on July 18 that he is ready to seek the presidency transformed Linda Mwananchi from a pressure group into a potential electoral force, thrusting a figure known for sharp political commentary and fierce loyalty to his base into a conversation that had, until recently,



Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

been dominated by seasoned heavyweights. The move has been building for months. Sifuna launched an online membership registration drive earlier this year, saying the directory would help his team gauge the level of support and strategise effectively for the 2027 mission.

The political terrain from which Sifuna emerges is instructive. ODM has been riven by internal division, with Oburu Oginga's faction warming to President Ruto while Sifuna's camp firmly rejects any partnership with the ruling establishment. That rupture has been public and bitter. Sifuna, who remains officially ODM secretary-general despite attempts to remove him, has used the Linda Mwananchi banner to consolidate rebel ODM leg-

islators — among them Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, Siaya Governor James Orenko and a cluster of Western Kenya lawmakers — into a disciplined opposition bloc that has already demonstrated real electoral reach. At the Finance Bill 2026 vote in June, the Linda Mwananchi bloc joined forces with Kalonzo Musyoka's Azimio grouping and Rigathi Gachagua's Mount Kenya legislators to mount the most coordinated parliamentary opposition Ruto has faced since taking office.

The registration itself, however, faces significant legal and political obstacles. The Registrar of Political Parties rejected a prior attempt by another applicant to reserve the name "Linda Mwananchi Party of Kenya," citing Section

8 of the Political Parties Act on the grounds that it closely resembles an already reserved slogan. Sifuna's team has reserved backup names and is pursuing the registration through modified alternatives, but the outcome remains uncertain. According to the ORPP, the new outfit has met some requirements and is awaiting full registration, suggesting the process is active but incomplete.

Beyond the bureaucratic hurdle lies a more complex political one. The Linda Mwananchi camp has made clear it intends to field Sifuna as the presidential candidate in his own right — not as a deputy to Kalonzo, not as a coalition satellite, but as a principal contender. The Luhya Elders Forum threw its weight behind Sifuna on Sunday, nam-

ing him the opposition's preferred presidential candidate and urging other formations to consolidate around him. Forum deputy chairperson Noah Wekesa put the community's position plainly: "Our son Edwin Sifuna has been accepted by a lot of Kenyans." Kitutu Chache South MP Anthony Kibagendi has also insisted Linda Mwananchi is part of the planned grand coalition, saying: "The idea is to bring together all the opposition parties because that is the only way we can beat Ruto."

At yesterday's Azimio joint council meeting, Kalonzo confirmed that engagement with Linda Mwananchi is ongoing, saying: "We are talking to Linda Mwananchi. We wish them well as they push for the registration of Linda Mwananchi as a political party." Kalonzo's own ambitions for the flagbearer position are well established — he has told his inner circle that at 72, this is his last and best chance at the presidency. The two movements' visions of what a coalition looks like are, for now, in creative tension: Kalonzo wants to lead it; Sifuna's allies want him on the ballot too.

That tension is not necessarily fatal. Kenya's coalition history is littered with arrangements that seemed impossible until the night before they were signed. What Linda Mwananchi brings to the negotiating table is something

that veteran opposition figures cannot manufacture: genuine grassroots energy, a cross-regional following spanning his Western alliance networks across Luo Nyanza and Western Kenya, and the support of a generation of Kenyans who are tired of recycled presidential faces. Siaya Governor James Orenko has argued that Linda Mwananchi is currently the biggest movement in the country and must produce a presidential candidate. "Linda Mwananchi will form the next government, and the sixth president will come from this movement," Osotsi declared at a Vihiga rally in April — language that leaves no doubt the movement has no intention of playing a supporting role.

What Sifuna has built in less than a year is remarkable by any political standard. What he has not yet built is a registered party, a presidential campaign structure, or a coalition agreement that reconciles his ambitions with those of Kalonzo, Gachagua and Matiang'i — all of whom regard themselves as equally central to whatever emerges. The registration of Linda Mwananchi as a party will be the first real test of whether this movement can make the transition from phenomenon to institution.

Kenya's 2027 election is still a year away. In Kenyan politics, that is both a long time and no time at all.

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# NEWS PAPER

IN BUSINESS



## The Mount Kenya Times

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**Business** Mbithi, who took the helm at Ecobank Kenya in February this year after a five-year tenure as chief executive of Family Bank, was unambiguous about where the bank stands.

# Ecobank bets big on Kenya's small businesses

*With a US\$19 billion financing gap and 7.4 million enterprises in need of support, the pan-African lender is putting SMEs at the centre of its growth strategy*

**BY Grace Wanja**

@themtkenyatimes

Ecobank Kenya yesterday reaffirmed its commitment to Kenya's small and medium enterprises, pledging faster lending decisions, tailored financial products and expanded non-financial support as the bank positions the sector as central both to the country's economic future and to its own strategic ambitions on the continent.

Managing Director Rebecca Mbithi made the declaration at a breakfast gathering of entrepreneurs, industry leaders and ecosystem partners held under the theme "Empowering Your Business for Sustainable Growth" — an event that was part conversation, part call to arms for a sector that drives the country's economy yet continues to struggle for the support it deserves.

The numbers alone explain the urgency. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kenya is home to approximately 7.4 million micro, small and medium enterprises, which together contribute roughly 34 per cent of gross domestic product and sustain nearly 16 million jobs. Yet the International Finance Corporation estimates the country's SME financing gap at more than US\$19 billion — approximately KSh 2.5 trillion — a chasm that represents both a national challenge and, for banks willing to move seriously into the space, a significant opportunity.

Mbithi, who took the helm at Ecobank Kenya in February this year after a five-year tenure as chief executive of Family Bank, was unambiguous about where the bank stands. "SMEs are not simply another customer segment to us," she said. "They are innovators, manufacturers, traders, service providers and job creators who drive Kenya's economy every day. They are the heartbeat of Kenya's economy and are central to Ecobank's purpose."

That purpose, she argued, is rooted in the institution's origins. Founded in 1985 with an explicit mandate to finance African enterprise, Ecobank has grown into one of the continent's leading financial institutions, with operations across 34 African mar-

kets and an international presence spanning France, the United Kingdom, Dubai and China. "Ecobank was founded to finance African enterprise," Mbithi said. "Supporting entrepreneurs is part of our DNA. As African businesses increasingly look beyond their domestic markets, they need a banking partner with the regional footprint, expertise and networks to support that ambition."

To help bridge the financing gap, the bank is broadening its suite of SME products — including working capital facilities, asset and stock financing, unsecured lending for qualifying businesses, trade finance, foreign exchange services and digital banking platforms. Mbithi also highlighted the bank's Single Market Trade Hub, a proprietary platform that gives Kenyan businesses access to verified buyers and sellers across the continent, alongside real-time intelligence on trade requirements and product flows in different African markets.

Recognising that capital alone is rarely enough, Ecobank is deepening partnerships with the African Guarantee Fund and Melanin Kapital to reduce lending risk and provide business advisory services — giving entrepreneurs access not just to money, but to the skills and networks needed to deploy it effectively.

One of the morning's most resonant moments came from Flora Muthahi, founder and chief executive of Melvin Marsh International and a non-executive director on Ecobank Kenya's board, who drew on her own entrepreneurial journey to encourage SMEs to invest in continuous learning and strategic partnerships. Her account was a reminder that the distance between a struggling business and a thriving one is often less about capital than it is about knowledge, networks and resolve.

The scale of Ecobank's continental SME operation gives its Kenyan commitments credibility. Across Africa in 2025, Ecobank Group served more than 4.5 million MSMEs, trained over 90,000 entrepreneurs digitally across 25 countries, reached more than 929,000 micro and retail women-owned enterprises and disbursed over US\$783 million to female-owned businesses. Those



Ecobank Kenya Managing Director Rebecca Mbithi

figures earned the group recognition from Euromoney as Africa's Best Bank for SMEs — an accolade that reflects both its reach and its intention.

For Kenya's entrepreneurs — nav-

igating high operating costs, patchy infrastructure and a financing environment that has long favoured larger corporates — Ecobank's renewed commitment is welcome. Whether the bank can translate yesterday's

breakfast conversation into measurable change on the ground is the question that will matter most to the millions of small business owners who keep this economy moving.



MSME customers follow the proceedings during the Ecobank Kenya SME event held at Sarova Stanley, Nairobi

**Politics** To understand the significance of what is now being assembled, it helps to trace how Kenya’s opposition arrived at this moment

# The great opposition gamble: Can Kenya’s fractured anti-Ruto forces finally unite?

*Azimio has tasked Kalonzo Musyoka to broker a grand coalition with Gachagua’s DCP and Sifuna’s Linda Mwananchi — but the arithmetic of ambition, ego and electoral calculation makes this the most complex political negotiation Kenya has seen in a generation*

**BY Dan Mwangi**  
@themkenyentimes

Azimio la Umoja yesterday held a pivotal joint council and national executive committee meeting that admitted three senior opposition figures to its governing council, extended formal invitations to four political parties, and mandated its leader Kalonzo Musyoka to pursue coalition talks with Rigathi Gachagua’s Democracy for the Citizens Party, Martha Karua’s People’s Liberation Party and Edwin Sifuna’s Linda Mwananchi movement — the most significant steps yet in the opposition’s bid to build a single, credible vehicle capable of removing President William Ruto from power in the 2027 General Election.

The meeting, chaired by Kalonzo at the SKM Command Centre in Nairobi, appointed Jubilee deputy party leader Fred Matiang’i, former Meru Governor Peter Munya and former Embu Senator Lenny Kivuti to the coalition’s top decision-making body. Former President Uhuru Kenyatta, who holds the title of Azimio Coalition Council chairman, did not attend. Secretary General Caroli Omondi, reading from the resolutions adopted during the meeting, confirmed that the council had resolved to reorganise and rebrand the coalition. “The Council resolved to reorganise the party structures, the various organs of the party, as well as to move forward with the rebranding of the Azimio Coalition,” he said.

The meeting also extended formal invitations to four parties to join the growing coalition: the Democratic Action Party-Kenya led by Eugene Wamalwa, Umoja na Maendeleo Party led by Kakamega Governor Kawira Mwangaza, the People’s Democratic Party led by Omingo Maara, and the Democratic Party led by former National Assembly Speaker Justin Muturi. Representatives from Wiper Patriotic Front, Jubilee, ODM, NARC, KANU, PNU and several other formations attended, united, Kalonzo said, by a shared



Leaders of the Azimio Coalition pose for a group photo after a meeting chaired by Kalonzo Musyoka at the SKM Command Centre in Nairobi to reorganise and rebrand the coalition.

commitment to deliver a better future for all Kenyans.

In a statement after the meeting, Kalonzo made clear the breadth of the mandate he had been given. “The Council also mandated me to continue engaging like-minded political formations, including the Democracy for the Citizens Party, the People’s Liberation Party, the United Green Movement, and Linda Mwananchi upon its registration, as we continue building a broad national movement,” he said. He was direct about the conversations already under way. “We are talking to the Democracy for the Citizens Party. We are also re-engaging with PLP. Democracy for the Citizens Party leader is, of course, our brother Rigathi Gachagua and also our sister Martha Karua of PLP,” Kalonzo said. He also confirmed engagement with Sifuna’s movement: “We are talking to Linda Mwananchi. We wish them well as they push for the registration of Linda Mwananchi as a political party.”

To understand the significance of what is now being assembled, it helps to trace how Kenya’s opposition arrived at this moment. The implosion began when ODM signed a cooperation agreement with Ruto’s ruling UDA party to form a broad-based government, effectively ending Azimio as a functioning electoral coalition. In February this year, Azimio’s party council appointed Kalonzo as its new leader and installed Caroli Omondi as secretary-general — structural moves designed to transform Azimio from a post-election shell into a disciplined opposition machine. Meanwhile, Gachagua, impeached as deputy president, built his Democracy for the Citizens Party into a Mount Kenya political force while conducting 45 days of quiet consultations across the region on who should lead the opposition’s 2027 charge.

Those consultations produced their most explosive moment in early July when reports emerged that Gachagua had privately settled on Kalonzo

as the coalition’s preferred presidential candidate, triggering immediate internal divisions. Jubilee deputy party leader Jeremiah Kioni led the pushback. “Any person that the opposition picks must be identified by the people,” Kioni said. “We don’t want a boardroom decision that may pick a person who does not fit the bill.” Gachagua subsequently denied any formal arrangement had been reached while acknowledging his ongoing partnership with Kalonzo. “We are yet to decide on who will replace William Ruto,” he said — a formulation that denied the specific claim while leaving the door open.

Martha Karua’s response set the tone for the wider coalition unease: “I know for sure that even the framework for arriving at such a decision is yet to be agreed upon,” she said, declining to confirm or dismiss the endorsement outright. It was a polished deflection that nonetheless confirmed something important: the coalition has not yet agreed on how it will choose its candidate, let alone

who that candidate will be.

That internal tension is the thread running through everything. The proposed grand alliance would bring together Kalonzo’s Ukambani base, Gachagua’s Mount Kenya constituency, Sifuna’s Western alliance networks spanning Luo Nyanza and Western Kenya, and the rebel ODM figures who broke with Raila Odinga’s family axis. Linda Mwananchi’s camp has positioned Sifuna as a presidential candidate in his own right, complicating demands that the movement subordinate itself to a Kalonzo-led ticket. Kitutu Chache South MP Anthony Kibagendi has nonetheless insisted that Linda Mwananchi is part of the planned grand coalition. “The idea is to bring together all the opposition parties because that is the only way we can beat Ruto,” he said.

On paper, the coalition mathematics are compelling. In practice, they require each leader to subordinate presidential ambitions to a shared ticket — a demand that has defeated Kenyan opposition politicians more times than anyone cares to count. Former attorney general Justin Muturi has backed Kalonzo for the flag-bearer role while opposing Gachagua’s proposal to delay naming the candidate until May 2027, arguing that procrastination benefits Ruto. Political analyst Martin Oloo frames the dilemma starkly: “For Ruto and his broad-based government to lose in 2027, there needs to be one big coalition like Narc. If the opposition does not unite, Ruto’s team will sponsor minority presidential candidates who chip away some votes.”

Kalonzo himself has left no ambiguity about his intentions. Speaking at the SKM Command Centre last Thursday after meeting Sifuna and Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, he delivered his sharpest language in years. “I want to tell Mr William Ruto — please stop imagining that I can ever join you. We will meet at

**Education** Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Kinyua Muriungi said the walk is the opening act of a broader fundraising campaign that will culminate in a gala dinner

# Tharaka University launches KSh 500 million scholarship fund drive with 530km charity walk

*The 16-day expedition, led by 83-year-old marathoner Mzee Isaac Gacugo, will traverse seven counties in a bid to build a sustainable revolving fund for needy students*

**BY Dennis Mutua**

@themtkenyaintimes

Tharaka University has launched an ambitious campaign to raise KSh 500 million for a revolving scholarship fund, kicking it off with a 530-kilometre charity walk around Mt Kenya to rally support for financially disadvantaged students.

taged students.

The 16-day walk was flagged off yesterday by Tenri Group of Hospitals and Mwendani Media Group chief executive Jim Njamiu, and is being led by 83-year-old marathoner Mzee Isaac Gacugo. The expedition will traverse seven counties before concluding on August 19.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, Tharaka University Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Kinyua Muriungi said the walk is the opening act of a broader fundraising campaign that will culminate in a gala dinner on December 11.

“We are planning to have a fundraising dinner on December 11 this year, so today’s



Tenri Group of Hospitals CEO Dr. Jim Njamiu, PhD, HSC, flags off Tharaka University’s 530-kilometre charity walk. He is flanked by Tharaka University Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Kinyua Muriungi during the flag-off ceremony.

walk is a build-up event to create awareness that Tharaka University cares for the vulnerable,” Muriungi said. “We want to raise around KSh 500 million to establish a revolving fund where we will be using the interest and not the principal amount, so that the fund remains sustainable for generations.”

He said the fund will finance scholarships for financially disadvantaged students while also strengthening mentorship, student support services and talent development programmes at the university.

Njamiu used the occasion to encourage students and young people not to be discouraged by unemployment, saying opportunities remain within

reach for those who stay disciplined and hardworking.

“Opportunities are always there, and if you don’t seize them, they have wings and will fly away,” he said. “Position yourself by being disciplined and hardworking, because nothing can replace hard work.”

He also paid tribute to Mzee Isaac, praising the veteran marathoner’s continued commitment to community causes.

“We have been with him in many initiatives to help the needy. He is teaching us that age is not a barrier to purpose — at 83 years and still running strong, he is truly an inspiration,” Njamiu said.

For his part, Mzee Isaac

urged students to shun drug abuse, warning that it continues to wreck the futures of young people. He challenged scholarship beneficiaries to embrace discipline and listen to their elders, noting that the current generation faces real and growing challenges in that regard.

He also appealed to the public to contribute whatever they can afford to help make the campaign a success.

The walk will take the team from Tharaka University through Meru, Nanyuki, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Embu and Chuka, before looping back — a total distance of 530 kilometres.



Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Kinyua Muriungi

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**Labour** Employees allege that management withholds signed copies of their employment contracts after signing or renewal, leaving workers unable to verify their agreed terms

# Workers cry foul at Laikipia flower farm

*Employees at HBM Flowers allege verbal abuse, unpaid overtime, missing safety gear and withheld contracts — and are calling on the Ministry of Labour to act*



**BY John Lorogoi**  
@themkenyatomes

Workers at HBM Flowers Company Limited in Laikipia North have raised serious allegations of labour rights violations, hostile management, hazardous working conditions and discriminatory hiring practices, calling on government regulators to intervene before the situation deteriorates further.

At the heart of the complaints is what employees describe as a toxic workplace culture driven from the top. Staff allege they are routinely subjected to verbal abuse, intimidation and unfair treatment, creating an atmosphere of fear in which raising a grievance is more likely to invite victimisation than resolution. Workers have directed their sharpest criticism at the current site manager, calling for an immediate review of the manager's conduct and demanding their removal as a precondition for restoring any meaningful trust between staff and management.

The day-to-day realities at the farm compound the problem. Employees say they are regularly required to work well beyond standard hours without receiving overtime pay — a practice they argue constitutes a direct violation of Kenya's labour statutes. Heavy workloads and inadequate rest periods have left staff physically exhausted and increasingly stressed, raising legitimate concerns about their long-term health and wellbeing.

Safety standards on the ground appear to be equally strained. Workers report that the company routinely fails to provide basic Personal Protective Equipment and essential tools required for their daily duties, leaving them exposed to workplace hazards, chemical substances and the risk of occupational injury. In a flower farming environment where

workers handle pesticides and other agrochemicals on a daily basis, the absence of protective gear is not a minor oversight — it is a serious occupational health risk.

Employees also allege that management withholds signed copies of their employment contracts after signing or renewal, leaving workers unable to verify their agreed terms of service or assert their statutory rights. Without physical documentation, challenging unlawful treatment becomes significantly harder — a vulnerability that, workers say, management appears content to exploit.

The discontent at HBM Flowers has spilled beyond the farm gates into the wider Laikipia North community. Local residents and community leaders have raised separate concerns about the company's recruitment practices, alleging that qualified local job seekers are consistently bypassed in favour of outsiders. They are demanding a transparent and equitable hiring process that gives the host community a fair chance at employment on land that sits in their backyard.

HBM Flowers had not responded to a request for comment at the time of going to press.

The cumulative picture painted by workers and community members is of an operation under significant strain — one where management accountability, worker welfare and community relations have all, they say, been allowed to erode simultaneously. Employees and local leaders are now urging the Ministry of Labour and workplace safety regulators to conduct an urgent inspection, enforce statutory compliance and guarantee a fair and legal working environment for all staff.

For the workers of Laikipia North, the flowers may be blooming — but conditions inside the farm, they say, are far from rosy.



Protests at HBM Flowers Company Limited farm in Laikipia North



**Politics** The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission has also expressed concern over the rising tide of divisive politics

# Political hate speech: Are we learning from our past, or walking into another dangerous chapter?

BY Hadassah Karangu

@themtkenytimes

Kenya has travelled a long and painful road in its democratic journey. Every election cycle brings renewed hope for change, but it also revives a familiar and deeply troubling concern: political hate speech. Once again, inflammatory rhetoric, ethnic profiling and divisive political statements are dominating rallies, television debates and social media platforms. As the country edges closer to the next General Election, one uncomfortable question refuses to go away. Have we truly learned from our past?

The Constitution of Kenya rests on one powerful principle: every citizen is equal before the law. It makes no distinction between the powerful and the ordinary. It grants no exemption to a politician on account of status, popularity or party affiliation. If the law is to command genuine public confidence, it must be applied fairly, consistently and without fear or favour.

Yet many Kenyans continue to ask difficult questions. Why do some political leaders find themselves under investigation almost immediately after making controversial remarks, while others appear to face little scrutiny after statements that are equally provocative? Whether or not that perception is entirely accurate, it should concern every institution charged with enforcing the law. Justice must not only be done — it must be seen to be done.

The danger of inconsistent enforcement is that it corrodes public trust. When citizens begin to believe that justice depends on political influence rather than evidence, confidence in national institutions erodes quietly but steadily. Laws lose their moral authority the moment people perceive that they apply dif-



ferently depending on who is speaking.

This is precisely why institutions such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the courts carry such enormous responsibility. Every complaint of hate speech must be investigated on its own merits, regardless of the speaker's political party, ethnicity or position. Under Kenyan law, hate speech — words or actions that incite hatred, violence or discrimination against communities based on ethnicity, race, religion or nationality — carries significant penalties upon conviction.

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission has also expressed concern over the rising tide of divisive politics. Rather than threatening to suspend elections, the

commission has maintained that it is working closely with relevant institutions to prevent hate speech, political intolerance and violence during the electoral period. The objective is to protect free, fair and peaceful elections — not to undermine democracy.

History reminds us why these warnings matter.

Kenya has lived through painful moments when political competition curdled into ethnic suspicion and violence. Words spoken carelessly from political platforms have sometimes travelled faster than reason, leaving neighbours to mistrust neighbours and communities to fear one another. The scars of politically motivated violence have taken years to heal, and many families still carry those memories close.

That is why hate speech should never be dismissed as “just politics.” Words carry

enormous power. They shape perceptions, inflame emotions and can either unite or fracture a nation. A single speech delivered before thousands of supporters can ignite tensions that spread far beyond the rally ground.

The greatest victims are rarely the politicians themselves. They are ordinary Kenyans trying to earn an honest living — traders forced to shut their businesses when violence erupts, students whose education is derailed by unrest, farmers cut off from their markets, families who belong to the wrong community, and children who grow up witnessing fear instead of peace. Meanwhile, political leaders move on to the next campaign rally, while citizens stay behind to rebuild broken communities and shattered lives.

The rise of social media has

made this challenge significantly harder to contain. A speech delivered in one county no longer stays there. Within minutes, video clips circulate across Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, X and YouTube. Edited footage, misleading captions and emotionally charged posts reach millions before the facts can catch up. Technology has amplified both political participation and political division in equal measure.

The responsibility does not rest with politicians alone. Citizens, bloggers, influencers, journalists and social media users all have a duty to verify information before sharing it. Every forwarded message has the potential either to build peace or to fuel unnecessary tension.

Kenya deserves politics built on ideas, not identity. Elections should turn on health-care, education, agriculture,

employment, economic growth, security and the cost of living. Too much political energy is still spent dividing citizens along ethnic and regional lines — a strategy that may deliver short-term victories but leaves long-term damage to national cohesion.

The real question confronting Kenya today is not whether hate speech exists. It clearly does. The question is whether every leader, regardless of affiliation, is prepared to reject it consistently — even when it comes from their own supporters.

The law cannot be selective. Condemnation cannot be partisan. Justice cannot bend to political convenience. If one politician is investigated for inflammatory remarks, every other politician accused of similar conduct must face the same legal process. Equality before the law is not merely a constitutional provision. It is the foundation upon which public confidence in justice is built.

As another election approaches, Kenyans face a defining choice. Will political competition continue to divide communities that have lived together peacefully for generations? Will elections remain seasons of fear rather than celebrations of democracy? Or will this finally be the moment Kenya chooses issue-based politics over tribal mobilisation?

The answer lies not only with political leaders, but with every citizen who refuses to be moved by dangerous rhetoric. A mature democracy is measured not by how loudly its leaders speak, but by how responsibly they wield the power of their words.

Kenya has overcome its darkest moments before. There is every reason to believe it can do so again — but only if truth replaces propaganda, accountability replaces impunity, and unity outlasts division.

The question that remains is simple, yet profound: when will Kenyan politics finally accept that elections are temporary, but the nation must endure long after the campaign slogans have faded?

**Politics** To understand the significance of what is now being assembled, it helps to trace how Kenya’s opposition arrived at this moment

# The great opposition gamble: Can Kenya’s fractured anti-Ruto forces finally unite?

*Azimio has tasked Kalonzo Musyoka to broker a grand coalition with Gachagua’s DCP and Sifuna’s Linda Mwananchi — but the arithmetic of ambition, ego and electoral calculation makes this the most complex political negotiation Kenya has seen in a generation*

Contd from page 9

the ballot. If I will be the last man to drive Ruto out, I will,” he declared. His allies frame his candidacy as a debt long overdue. Kitui Senator Enoch Wambua has argued that Kalonzo stepped down to support Raila Odinga in 2013, 2017, and again in 2022 when he was not even the running mate. At 72, Kalonzo has made clear to his inner circle that time is no longer a resource he can spend carelessly.

The rebranding from Azimio to Komboa Kenya — approved in principle at yesterday’s meeting — is designed to present a unified public identity and streamline the legal coalition process. But a name change does not resolve the deeper question of whether leaders with competing presidential ambitions can agree on a single ticket. Ruto’s allies are watching closely. Kibwezi West MP Mwengi Mutuse has accused Uhuru Kenyatta of quietly orchestrating a political alliance aimed at unseating UDA — a sign that the ruling party regards the opposition’s consolida-

tion efforts as a genuine threat. Yesterday’s meeting was one significant step. The harder work — resolving the flagbearer question, holding fractious principals together, and converting political movement into electoral machinery capable of winning — still lies ahead. Whether this collection of ambitious, experienced and historically divided leaders can finally do what they have never quite managed before remains the defining question of Kenya’s long road to 2027.



Leaders of the Azimio Coalition pose for a group photo after a meeting chaired by Kalonzo Musyoka at the SKM Command Centre in Nairobi to reorganise and rebrand the coalition.



# Die with memories not dreams



There are two frogs living in a well  
One of the frogs thinks well is like a cell  
As the well makes him live only in the shell.  
He wants to see a wider world to dwell.

The other frog tells him the well is well  
As it protects from all the danger.  
So the frog gently avoids the changer  
He starts treating him like a stranger.

The mighty frog thinks of mighty kings  
Who fought bravely depicted in History

He gets inspired by their victory  
Like a bird,His courageous mind makes him fly  
with wings.

The coward frog thinks of lost kings  
Who lost their nation and rings .  
Instead of losing they should have been hiding  
He thinks abiding is better than ruling.

The coward reigns the world in his dream  
He builds his own sand castle and lives away from  
his team.  
But the mighty frog's leap makes him out of the  
well  
To leave a strong impression Dying with memories  
is better than living a coward king in dreams.

...  
Penned by  
RANGANATHAN E  
B.T Asst(Eng)  
Marwar Govt Boys Hss,Acharapakkam

# A smile is a spiritual perfume you spray on others



A kind mother takes her son to a garden  
The garden has many colourful flowers  
The son wonders the beauty of the garden  
Then he appreciates the service of a warden.

He sees a colourful butterfly  
That flies around a scented flower and sits a  
while  
The flower shares its sweet honey  
To the fly .The fly gives a gentle smile.  
Here The son thinks happiness can't only be  
decided by paper money.

Then the butterfly moves to a tall tree  
To take a rest after a heavy dinner

The tree gives his shadow  
To rest free.  
The tree fans the fly with his gentle leaves.  
The son understands sharing with a smile makes  
a winner.

The butterfly moves to a river  
The river gives water to the fly forever  
The fly makes a riverside more beautiful  
by spreading seeds of beautiful flowers .  
The son delivers the message of the river  
A Giver is happier than a receiver.

Finally The butterfly sits beside the son  
The fly tells him if give more  
The god gives more pleasant moments to have fun  
Like the butterfly, Let's spread hope through our  
gentle smile.

.....  
Penned by  
RANGANATHAN E .,B.T Asst(Eng)  
Marwar Govt Boys Hss,Acharapakkam

# Respect your journey



Everything is building something beautiful  
Breaks, cracks as the stepping stone,  
Surrounded with rocks, hard and brittle,  
Tiring, weary the path looks,  
Until flowers of various colours slowly bloom.

Success, the journey turned inside out,  
Not always green, yet happiness gives,  
Brown and pale at times, life looks,  
Yet, belief and focus makes dream work.

Since beginning, not smooth, nor clear,  
Assuring is sure, when the challenge  
Is accepted, worthy the reward,  
Beyond words and dreams, a life unfolds

Angelin Gracita.C  
Creative Writers

# Trees



Trees are very, very important.  
Trees give us fruits and vegetables.  
Trees give us cool shade.  
Trees give us oxygen.  
Trees give us fresh air.  
Trees are homes for flying birds.  
Trees give us many useful things.

Trees give us wooden toys.

Trees give us paper.  
Trees help us build houses.  
Trees give us wooden kitchen things.

Trees are a wonderful gift of nature.  
They help people, animals, and birds every day.  
Let us love trees,  
Plant more trees,  
And protect them forever.

MYTHILI R  
CLASS -8 B  
VKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR

MOTIVATED BY  
KUMARESWARI S  
VKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR

# You spray on others



A smile is a precious gift from God.  
It reveals happiness and gives a peaceful mind.

A smile is one of the medicines that helps reduce  
diseases.  
If you stand among people, you should spread  
your beautiful smile to others.  
It brings pleasant moments into your life and to  
the people around you.  
A house is like a temple, and a smile is its  
beautiful rhythm.  
Once a house becomes happy, the world becomes  
a home filled with happiness.  
So, spread the spiritual perfume of your smile  
throughout the pleasant world.  
People live in a wonderful world because of the  
perfume of a smile.

\_\_G.YasminSirajudheen  
Secondary grade teacher  
Melmalayanur block  
Villupuram dt.

# Child Labour



Let not your child get wage  
during his/her very little age,  
Dangerous it is filling the purse  
without knowing the forthcoming curse.

Treat your child as your heart  
and forget not to teach a fine art,  
Every child should be taught

on work and worship a lot.

Let us not allow the little honey  
in their young stage to earn money,  
To acknowledge their strong ability  
must be our sincere responsibility.

Do no harm to the tiny creature  
and leave them grow with the nature,  
It's the right time to show your child love and care  
Child labour is not always fair.

Dr. K.R.GANESAN  
BLOCK RESOURCE TEACHER EDUCATOR  
BLOCK RESOURCE CENTRE,  
GOBICHETTIPALAYAM  
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**Tourism** The agency is now integrating drones, remote sensing, geographic information systems, thermal imaging, and data analytics platforms

# Kanga puts technology at the heart of Kenya’s wildlife future

Under its director general’s watch, KWS is trading old methods for drones, data, and a digital funding portal — and the results are beginning to show

BY John Kariuki  
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya Wildlife Service Director General Dr. Erustus Kanga is steering one of Africa’s most celebrated conservation agencies into a new technological era, deploying digital tools and strategic partnerships to sharpen the protection of Kenya’s wildlife while making the institution more transparent and accountable.

The shift is neither cosmetic nor slow. On World Wildlife Day earlier this year, Kanga officially opened the Global Conservation Tech and Drone Forum in Nairobi, where he made clear that science and technology must guide both policy and field operations, ensuring that wildlife protection keeps pace with evolving



Kenya Wildlife Service Director General Dr. Erustus Kanga (L)

threats. It was a statement of intent — and KWS has been backing it up with action.

The agency is now integrating drones, remote sensing, geographic information sys-

tems, thermal imaging, and data analytics platforms to transform how wildlife and

protected areas are monitored across Kenya. At the KWS Law Enforcement Academy in Manyani, Kanga led senior management in witnessing live drone demonstrations, with KWS Airwing pilots showcasing how the technology is being woven into wildlife monitoring and anti-poaching operations inside national parks and conservation zones. The drones, KWS says, are already improving surveillance coverage and are expected to play a central role in curbing poaching and the illegal bushmeat trade.

The digital push does not stop at the park boundary. KWS has launched an online funding portal that enables individuals and organisations worldwide to contribute directly to wildlife conservation in Kenya — a move designed to modernise conservation funding and reduce dependence on traditional revenue streams. Kanga framed the significance of the initiative plainly. “The resilience of our wildlife ecosystems directly shapes the resilience of our tourism industry and, ultimately, the well-being of millions worldwide who depend on it,” he said.

Kanga brings more than two decades of experience in bio-

diversity conservation to the role, including five years as Wildlife Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage, and sixteen years at KWS overseeing biodiversity research and monitoring across Kenya’s protected areas. That depth of institutional knowledge gives weight to his conviction that modern conservation demands more than dedicated rangers — it demands intelligent systems.

The stakes, he has repeatedly noted, could not be higher. Kenya’s wildlife faces an intensifying cocktail of threats — climate change, habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and fluctuating tourism revenues that have long underwritten conservation work. Against that backdrop, Kanga’s determination to build a leaner, smarter, more globally connected KWS looks less like ambition and more like necessity.

What is emerging, those who work closely with the agency say, is an institution beginning to match the scale of its mandate — one that is learning, as Kanga himself has put it, that protecting Kenya’s wildlife heritage is not just a conservation duty. It is an economic, cultural, and moral one.

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**Lifestyle** Very few people are destroyed overnight. Most are consumed gradually. A little pride today. A little fear tomorrow

# The things that consume us

*Why people are rarely destroyed overnight but slowly undone from within*

**BY Levis Wangamati**

@themkenyaintimes

A building rarely collapses the day the first crack appears. For weeks, months, sometimes years, the damage spreads unnoticed beneath the surface. By the time the walls give way, the collapse feels sudden — but the destruction began long before anyone paid attention.

Human lives follow the same pattern.

Very few people are destroyed overnight. Most are consumed gradually. A little pride today. A little fear tomorrow. Another postponed dream. Another excuse. Another compromise. None of these choices seems fatal on its own. Yet together, they become the invisible forces that quietly reshape a person's future.

We are conditioned to look outward whenever life disappoints us. We blame politics, the economy, corruption, betrayal, unfair competition, or bad luck. Sometimes those explanations are justified — society can place enormous obstacles before us. But there is another truth, far less comfortable to admit: the greatest threat to our future is often not what stands against us, but what quietly grows within us.

Pride is one of those silent destroyers. It rarely introduces itself as arrogance. Instead, it disguises itself as confidence, convincing us that we already know enough — that correction is an insult and humility is unnecessary. Yet history offers a different lesson. Every remarkable leader, scientist, artist, and innovator remained a lifelong student. The day we believe we have nothing left to learn is the day we begin to decline.

Fear is no less dangerous. Unlike failure, it rarely announces itself dramatically. It whispers. It tells us to wait for a better opportunity, a better economy, a better version of ourselves. We postpone



## Things that consume us

applications because we fear rejection. We abandon ideas because we fear criticism. We stay silent because we fear judgement. While we negotiate with fear, time quietly moves on. Dreams do not disappear because they are impossible. They disappear because they are endlessly postponed.

Then comes procrastination — perhaps the most polite thief life has ever produced. It never demands anything. It merely asks us to wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow becomes next week, next month, and before long, another year has slipped away. Time is unique because, unlike money, influence, or reputation, it cannot be recovered once spent. Every unnecessary delay is a silent investment in regret.

Comparison has become one of the defining afflictions of our generation. Every scroll through social media exposes us to carefully edited versions of other people's success. We compare our unfinished chapters to someone else's celebrated conclusion, our private struggles to public achievements. In doing so, we forget that every meaningful journey follows its own rhythm. The oak tree does not envy the bamboo, nor does the river compete with the mountain. Nature succeeds because everything grows according to its purpose — not according to comparison.

Bitterness, too, consumes from within. Unlike anger, which often burns brightly before fading, bitterness settles quietly into the heart and convinces us that holding onto pain is a form of justice. In reality, resentment punishes the person carrying it far more than the one who caused it. Forgiveness does not erase the past. It simply refuses to let the past imprison the future.

Even comfort deserves suspicion. We spend much of our lives chasing it, yet too much comfort can quietly suffocate ambition. Great ideas are rarely born inside comfortable routines. Progress demands discomfort. Every inventor challenged convention. Every reformer confronted resistance. Every person who built something lasting reached a point where staying comfortable had become more dangerous than taking a risk.

Perhaps the most destructive force of all is indifference. Societies rarely collapse because people suddenly become dishonest. They decline because honesty slowly becomes optional. Citizens grow accustomed to injustice. Corruption becomes ordinary. Integrity becomes admirable but inconvenient. We lower our expectations until mediocrity feels normal, and what once shocked us becomes another headline we scroll past without feeling.

This truth extends beyond individuals. We demand visionary leaders while neglecting the values that produce them. We criticise corruption yet celebrate shortcuts. We condemn dishonesty while excusing it whenever it benefits us. Nations are not transformed by speeches alone. They are transformed when ordinary citizens choose integrity over

convenience, responsibility over excuses, and principle over personal gain.

History remembers great empires, influential leaders, and extraordinary innovators — but behind every visible achievement was an invisible victory over pride, fear, doubt, complacency, or despair. Character has always been the foundation upon which lasting success is built. Talent may open doors, but character determines whether we remain inside the room.

Every day, we cast silent votes for the people we are becoming. Every habit either strengthens or weakens our character. Every decision either expands our future or quietly consumes it. Life is not shaped only by dramatic moments. More often, it is shaped by ordinary choices, repeated consistently over time.

Before asking what is destroying our communities, our institutions, or our nation,

perhaps we should first ask a more uncomfortable question. What is quietly consuming me?

Is it pride that refuses correction? Fear that postpones action? Comfort that discourages growth? Comparison that steals gratitude? Bitterness that poisons peace? Or indifference that allows wrong to flourish simply because confronting it feels inconvenient?

The answers will rarely flatter us. But they may save us.

The world will always present obstacles beyond our control. Economies will rise and fall. Governments will change. Opportunities will come and go. Yet the greatest victories have never belonged to those who faced the fewest obstacles. They belong to those who refused to let invisible enemies conquer them from within.

People are rarely defeated by the storms around them. More often, they are defeated by the quiet surrender that begins inside. And the strongest nations, the greatest leaders, and the most fulfilled lives are built by men and women who win that silent battle — every single day.




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**Democracy** To pretend otherwise is not idealism. It is a form of national self-deception that borders on intellectual fraud

# The tyranny of the tribal cocoon: Kenya's Democracy Was never meant to be anything else



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyatimes

In the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, the five largest ethnic groups Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo and Kamba together accounted for roughly 65 per cent of the population. Kikuyu alone stood at 8.15 million (about 17 per cent), Luhya at 6.82 million, Kalenjin at 6.36 million, Luo at 5.07 million and Kamba at 4.66 million. These numbers are not dry demography. They are the iron arithmetic of power. From the moment the Union Jack came down in 1963, Kenyan politics has revolved around the consolidation of these big tribal blocs and the temporary marriages of convenience they strike with one another. Everything else ideology, policy manifestos, "issue-based politics" has been decorative scaffolding erected around the real architecture: the tribal cocoon.

To pretend otherwise is not idealism. It is a form of national self-deception that borders on intellectual fraud. Politics in Kenya has always been a contest of ethnic arithmetic dressed in the language of the nation. The 1960s birthed KANU as the vehicle of the larger, more urbanized groups and KADU as the defensive alliance of the smaller pastoralist and coastal communities. That foundational cleavage never died; it merely changed costumes. Jomo Kenyatta's Kikuyu-dominated state, Daniel arap Moi's Kalenjin-centred Nyayo order, the short-lived multi-ethnic NARC experiment of 2002, the Kikuyu-Kalenjin "tyranny of numbers" that delivered Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto in 2013 and 2017, and the subsequent rupture that saw Mount Kenya abandon its own political royalty for a Kalenjin hustler in 2022 all followed the same underlying logic. Secure your base. Deliver it almost intact. Then bargain with other bases. The presidency has never been won by a candidate who



The tyranny of the tribal cocoon

failed to dominate at least two of the major ethnic reservoirs.

This is not an accusation levelled at one community while others are granted moral immunity. That is the cheap hypocrisy that poisons public discourse. When Mount Kenya is called tribal for voting as a bloc, the same tongue falls silent when Nyanza delivers near-unanimous



**This is not an accusation levelled at one community while others are granted moral immunity. That is the cheap hypocrisy that poisons public discourse. When Mount Kenya is called tribal for voting as a bloc, the same tongue falls silent when Nyanza delivers near-unanimous support to its preferred candidate, or when the Rift Valley closes ranks, or when Western Kenya swings as a unit.**

support to its preferred candidate, or when the Rift Valley closes ranks, or when Western Kenya swings as a unit. Selective outrage is not analysis; it is theatre. Every major ethnic formation in this country has, at one time or another, treated the ballot as an ethnic census first and a policy referendum second. The data from successive elections confirm it. High-turnout strongholds consistently deliver 70, 80, even 90 per cent of their votes to the candidate perceived as "theirs" or as the one least threatening to their collective interests. The 2007 election, the post-election violence that followed, and the painful power-sharing arrangement that ensued were not aberrations. They were the system revealing itself under pressure.

Why does this pattern endure with such stubborn vitality? Because the Kenyan state remains, in the eyes of most citizens, a patronage machine rather than a neutral referee. Land, jobs, contracts, security appointments, infrastructure placement these are still widely experienced as ethnic goods. In a low-trust society where institutions are weak and historical grievances run deep,

the safest strategy for the individual voter is minimax regret: support the candidate from your group or its reliable ally so that your people are not locked out of the state's spoils. Rational choice theory meets primordial fear. The result is a democracy that is tribe-centric by design and by practice. To insist that it is something else is to chase a fantasy.

Accepting this reality is not surrender. It is the beginning of adult politics. For six decades we have performed the ritual of pretending that every election is a national conversation about ideas, only to wake up the morning after and discover that the map of results looks like an ethnographic sketch of the country. The cost of this pretence has been high: periodic bloodshed, frozen development in "opposition zones," the elevation of ethnic brokers over competent administrators, and a political class that invests more energy in managing tribal alliances than in solving unemployment, debt or climate vulnerability. The 2022 election offered a brief, intoxicating glimpse of something different Mount Kenya's decisive rejection of its own elite's preferred candidate

but even that rupture was still negotiated within the ethnic frame. Ruto's victory rested on the near-total delivery of Kalenjin and a large portion of Kikuyu votes. The arithmetic remained.

Is there an exit? Only if the new voters force one. Kenya's median age is roughly twenty. The 2022 register already contained millions of young people; by 2027 another five million Gen Z citizens will be eligible, many of them urban, digitally fluent, and less tethered to the rural ethnic hierarchies that shaped their parents. Their low turnout in 2022 was a warning, not a permanent sentence. If these young Kenyans continue to treat elections as another arena of elite theatre rather than a lever of material change, the modus operandi that began in 1960 will simply update its software and continue. The same big tribes will consolidate, the same temporary alliances will form, the same zero-sum logic will prevail. History does not abolish itself out of politeness.

Nevertheless, there is a narrow window. A generation that has watched the old ethnic bargains deliver little beyond elite enrichment, a generation that can organise outside traditional party structures and can punish any formation that takes its support for granted, possesses the numerical weight to complicate the old arithmetic. They will not erase ethnicity no society does that overnight but they can dilute its monopoly. They can demand that alliances be justified by more than the crude addition of ethnic percentages. They can punish politicians who speak only the language of "our people" when the real crises are shared: the cost of living, the collapse of public services, the debt trap, the climate shocks that do not respect county borders.

Until that shift becomes decisive, the honest posture is clear-eyed acceptance rather than moralistic denial. Kenyan democracy is tribe-centric. The big tribes consolidate their votes and then enter into alliances. Accusing only one region of this behaviour is stupid hypocrisy. The system that took shape at independence remains the operating system. Fantasy will not rewrite the code. Only a critical mass of citizens who refuse to be reduced to ethnic integers, and who force the political class to compete on different terms, can begin to change it. The alternative is another half-century of the same dance, performed with increasing sophistication and diminishing returns, while the country remains trapped inside its own tribal cocoons.

*The writer is a social commentator*

**Politics** The politician will return to a comfortable home after addressing a rally. The struggling farmer will return to a farm whose input costs have risen

# When the dust settles, Kenya will still be here: Let the voter, not the political noise, decide



**BY Fredrick Chelimo**  
@themtkenyatimes



When the dust settles, Kenya will still be here

Kenya is slowly walking into another political storm. The clouds are gathering, the political winds are changing direction, and across the country, the early tremors of the next electoral contest are beginning to be felt. From the smallest village meeting to the grandest national political declaration, the stage is being prepared. Political boundaries are being redrawn, alliances are being tested, ambitions are being declared and opponents are being measured. The political daggers are out, although some are still hidden beneath the robes of friendship.

Soon, the skies will be crowded with helicopters. Roads will be filled with convoys. Political rallies will compete for attention. Loudspeakers will scream from market centres, football fields and open grounds. Social media will become a battlefield of insults, propaganda and carefully manufactured political excitement. Every politician will have a story to tell, every party will have a promise to make and every political commentator will have an opinion. And the ordinary Kenyan will be invited to watch.

But this time, Kenyans must watch differently. We must watch as citizens, not as blind political fans. We must listen as voters, not as members of cheering squads. We must examine the political boxing ring without forgetting that, after the final bell, it is the citizen who must live with the consequences. The political

spectacle will be magnificent. The reality behind it will be painfully ordinary.

The politician will return to a comfortable home after addressing a rally. The struggling farmer will return to a farm whose input costs have risen. The political strategist will return to a hotel room to analyse the day's performance. The unemployed young person will return home to another day without work. The Cabinet Secretary will fly to another meeting. The ordinary citizen will board a crowded matatu and calculate how to survive until the end of the month. This is the Kenya that must not be forgotten in the political theatre.

Our suffering has been largely silent. The ballot box, too, is silent. Our votes do not shout as they enter the ballot box. They do not carry the noise of helicopters. They do not arrive in motorcades. They do not wear expensive suits. They do not command television studios. Yet those silent votes have the power to determine who governs Kenya.

The vote of the loud political activist will count. The vote of the quiet farmer will count. The vote of the young person who has lost faith in politics will count. The vote of the

woman struggling to feed her family will count. The vote of the person with disability who has been systematically ignored by political systems will count. The vote of the elderly citizen who rarely appears on television will count. The ballot box does not know who shouted the loudest. It does not care who owned the largest political convoy. It does not recognise the number of helicopters that filled the skies. It does not distinguish between the politically connected and the politically forgotten. One person. One vote. That is the great equaliser.

This is why Kenyans must resist the confusion that will inevitably accompany the approaching political season. The political class will attempt to make us believe that every disagreement is a national crisis and every alliance is a historic breakthrough. One day, two politicians will be enemies; the next day, they will be strategic partners. A leader who was condemned yesterday may become a political saviour tomorrow. A political friend may suddenly become the greatest enemy. We must not lose our minds in this drama.

Political alliances are often temporary. Political promises are frequently forgot-

ten. Political friendships are sometimes transactional. But the consequences of political choices are permanent enough to shape the lives of ordinary people. Therefore, Kenyans must return to the most powerful political instrument they possess: their conscience. Before cheering for a politician, ask what they have done. Before believing a promise, ask whether it is realistic. Before defending a political party, ask whether the party has defended your interests. Before voting along ethnic or regional lines, ask whether ethnicity has improved your life. Before celebrating a political victory, ask whether the victory will improve the lives of the people who put the politician in office.

The voter must become the investigator. The voter must become the auditor. The voter must become the final judge. Kenya cannot continue choosing leaders based solely on the volume of their rallies. A crowd is not necessarily a measure of competence. A convoy is not necessarily a symbol of good governance. A helicopter is not necessarily a sign of economic success. A political speech is not a development plan.

Indeed, there is something deeply uncomfortable about watching the skies fill with

helicopters during political campaigns while citizens are simultaneously being told that the economy is under pressure and that everyone must tighten their belts. The question must therefore be asked: Who is tightening the belt, and who is flying above the belt? This is not an argument against political leaders travelling. It is a question about priorities, accountability and the symbolism of political extravagance in a country where millions of citizens are struggling with the basic cost of living.

The coming election must therefore become a referendum on leadership culture. Do we want leaders who become increasingly arrogant once they occupy public office? Leaders who become so distant from ordinary citizens that their offices appear higher than the people who elected them? Leaders whose Cabinet Secretaries and senior officials behave as though they are taller than nature itself? Or do we want leadership that listens? Leadership that walks into the villages. Leadership that listens to farmers. Leadership that respects young people. Leadership that includes women. Leadership that recognises persons with disabilities not as objects of charity but as equal citizens with rights, talents and economic potential. Leadership that understands that development must begin with the most vulnerable.

The true test of government is not how well it serves those who already have power. The true test is how it treats those who have none. The person with disability who cannot access a government building is part of Kenya. The farmer who cannot secure a profitable market is part of Kenya. The unemployed graduate is part of Kenya. The child studying in an overcrowded classroom is part of Kenya. The elderly person waiting for medical attention is part of Kenya. The

small trader struggling under the weight of taxes and regulations is part of Kenya. These are not statistics. They are citizens. And when the political dust settles, they will still be here.

That is why the 2027 political contest must not simply be about who defeats whom. It must be about what kind of country Kenyans want to build. The political class will focus on winning the election. The citizens must focus on winning the future. Let us therefore spectate, but let us spectate intelligently. Let us listen to the noise without becoming part of the noise. Let us watch the political boxing ring without allowing ourselves to be punched by propaganda. Let us watch the football match without forgetting that we are the referees.

The political season will come with its drama. Some leaders will surrender. Some will emerge. Some will merge. Some will disappear. New alliances will be born, old friendships will collapse and political fortunes will rise and fall. But after all the speeches, rallies, helicopters and political theatre, the Kenyan voter will remain with one solemn responsibility. To choose.

And when the dust settles, Kenya will still be here. The politicians will return to their offices. The campaign flags will come down. The helicopters will disappear from our skies. The music will stop. The crowds will go home. But the consequences of our choices will remain with us for another five years. So, before we cheer, let us think. Before we shout, let us listen. Before we promise our vote, let us examine the record.

And when the time comes, let us walk into that polling station guided not by fear, tribe, political excitement or empty promises, but by our conscience. Because the ballot box is silent. But it speaks with consequences. And this time, let our silent votes speak louder than all the political noise.

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**Justice** In orders issued at the Kiambu High Court yesterday, Lady Justice Njoki Mwangi directed that the legislator be released forthwith upon depositing the cash bail

# Court orders release of MP Kaguchia on KSh100,000 cash bail amid hate speech probe

*Judge grants urgent orders as Mukurwe-ini legislator accuses government allies of orchestrating his arrest, while Kamukunji police delay compliance*

BY James Mwangi

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The High Court has ordered the release of Mukurwe-ini MP John Kaguchia from police custody on a cash bail of KSh100,000, hours after he was arrested over remarks he made at a weekend political rally in Nyeri.

In orders issued at the Kiambu High Court yesterday, Lady Justice Njoki Mwangi directed that the legislator be released forthwith upon depositing the cash bail, after certifying his application urgent and granting interim relief pending the hearing of the case.

The judge, who heard the matter for directions on a notice of motion filed under a certificate of urgency, directed Kaguchia to serve the application on the respondents, who include the Inspector General of Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The respondents were given 14 days to file and serve their responses, with the MP granted a further 14 days to file a supplementary affidavit if necessary. The substantive application has been set down for a virtual hearing on September 16.

Kaguchia was arrested by detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations yesterday morning, after spending the night at the Royal Media Services offices in Nairobi, where he had taken refuge from Sunday evening. He said a contingent of police officers had surrounded the studios and mounted roadblocks in what he described as an attempt to intimidate him before his eventual arrest.

Speaking to Citizen TV shortly before he was taken into custody, Kaguchia said he was being investigated over comments he made at a political rally in Kieni, Nyeri County, on Saturday, which he maintained had been distorted to fit a particular narrative. "I have not received any summons, only social media posts," he told the broadcaster, adding that he had no objection to appearing before the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, which he said



Mukurwe-ini MP John Kaguchia

held the proper mandate over such matters. He accused government digital strategist Dennis Itumbi and a number of Mt Kenya legislators of amplifying claims against him.

At the Kieni rally, Kaguchia is reported to have warned Mt Kenya residents of consequences should they back President William Ruto in the 2027 General Election, telling the crowd in Kikuyu that those who supported the President would be "tracked to their homes." It is these remarks that authorities are now investigating as potential hate speech.

Regional DCI commander Daniel Kandie was among the officers who carried out the arrest. The MP was initially believed to be headed to the regional DCI offices at Milimani, Nairobi, but was later moved to DCI headquarters along Kiambu Road for processing, before being held at Kamukunji Police Station pending the court's determination.

It is at Kamukunji that the case took an unexpected turn. Despite the High Court order for Kaguchia's immediate release upon payment of the KSh100,000 bail, the station's

Officer Commanding Station did not act on the order for several hours, prompting sharp criticism from the MP's allies. Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, in a statement issued after the ruling, said the OCS was "being misled by his seniors" into disregarding a court order that had, by his account, already been served on the station.

"My advice to the OCS is to obey the court order, as he will be held personally liable for contempt of court," Gachagua said, warning that senior officers would not shield the

station commander should he later face contempt proceedings. He drew a comparison to the Central Police Station OCS, who remains in remand on murder charges over the death in custody of the late Albert Ojwang, arguing that junior officers who follow unlawful instructions ultimately bear the legal consequences alone.

Gachagua went further, framing the arrest within a broader pattern he attributed to the current administration. "The use of the criminal justice system to manage politics is synonymous with outgoing, cowardly regimes," he said, adding that selective application of the law was counterproductive. He recalled that President Ruto, while serving as Deputy President under the previous administration, had once criticised similar tactics used against him and his allies. "As President, he is doing exactly what he said at the time was foolish," Gachagua said, questioning what changes in leaders' thinking once they assume the presidency.

He said the party's legal team was working to secure Kaguchia's release on bond ahead of his arraignment, which he indicated would take place today.

Neither the National Police Service nor the Kamukunji OCS had issued a public response by the time of publication regarding the delay in effecting the court order. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations has also not commented on the specifics of the probe into Kaguchia's rally remarks, nor on whether formal charges will be preferred against him.

The case adds to a string of recent confrontations between opposition-aligned Mt Kenya legislators and law enforcement, amid heightened political tension ahead of the 2027 General Election. Kaguchia's arrest, and the manner of his brief detention beyond the terms of a court order, is likely to feature prominently when the matter returns to the High Court in September, with his legal team expected to raise the delay as part of a broader argument over the conduct of his arrest and custody.

For now, Kaguchia remains out on cash bail, with the substantive hearing on the legality of his arrest and the hate speech allegations against him set for September 16.

**Uzbekistan** Today, numerous opportunities have been created in Uzbekistan, both by the government and non-governmental organizations

# Seven effective ways for women’s development in Uzbekistan



**BY Xalimova Qurbonoy**  
@themtkenyatimes

A wise truth is repeatedly emphasized in both our national wisdom and global experience: “Educating one woman means educating an entire nation.” In today’s Uzbekistan, increasing the social and economic activity of women and enabling them to realize their full potential is based on this very idea.

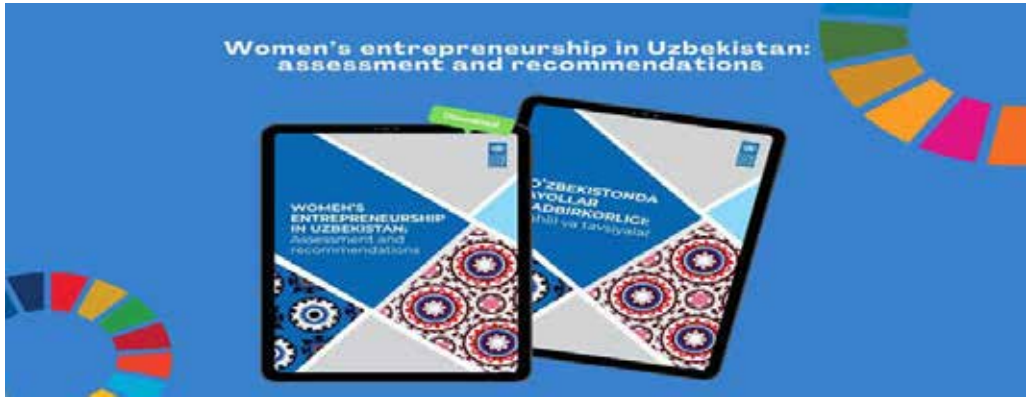
Below are seven of the most effective ways to promote women’s development in New Uzbekistan.

### 1. Acquiring Modern Professions and IT Skills

In the age of technology, it is possible to earn a good income without even leaving home. Through free courses and online platforms, women can learn programming, social media marketing (SMM), graphic design, copywriting, and 3D modeling, gaining valuable skills for the modern labor market.

### 2. Learning Foreign Languages

Today, numerous opportunities have been created in Uzbekistan, both by the government and non-governmental organizations, to help women learn foreign languages and obtain international certificates. In particular, the examination fees for international language certification tests in English, German, French, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese are fully reimbursed by the Youth Affairs Agency for successful candidates.



Through government-supported free educational platforms, many young women are achieving excellent results in learning Russian, English, and Turkish. Learning foreign languages broadens one’s worldview, enables communication with people from different nations, and creates opportunities for cultural exchange. Language proficiency also plays a significant role in obtaining higher-paying jobs and working with international partners.

### 3. Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle and Well-Being

Caring for women’s health is one of our primary responsibilities. Fortunately, there are numerous opportunities available today. Modern fitness centers, swimming pools, and sports complexes offer special training sessions exclusively for women, often led by female instructors. Activities such as yoga, aerobics, Zumba, and cardiovascular exercises have become increasingly popular, helping women maintain physical health and emotional well-being. Furthermore, access to professional consultations on balanced nutrition, natural dietary supplements, and vitamin intake has expanded significantly.

### 4. Learning a Craft Online and Turning It into a Business

Many women have successfully started their own businesses through this path. Some have even created their

own brands and introduced them to international markets. Personally, during my maternity leave, I learned various handicrafts while staying connected to my family responsibilities. I began making bouquets from soap, decorative money arrangements, artificial flowers, and fruits, and successfully marketed them.

This experience not only made me proud of myself but also encouraged me to explore other talents and abilities. Additional income allows women to invest more in their personal and professional development.

### 5. Psychological Support and Self-Awareness

It is no secret that many psychologists and mentors now offer online courses based on their knowledge and experience. Online communication allows women to openly discuss their emotions, fears, and personal challenges. Professional mentors provide objective and evidence-based guidance, helping individuals cope with emotional stress, depression, and burnout.

With the support of mentors, women can better understand their strengths and weaknesses, identify their personal values, and discover their true aspirations. For women who are busy with family or professional responsibilities, online mentoring makes personal development more accessible. It also helps improve communication skills within the family, workplace, and society.

### 6. Improving Financial Literacy

Financial literacy enables women to manage both family and personal budgets effectively. It includes proper financial planning, saving money, maintaining a balance between income and expenses, and making informed financial decisions that contribute to long-term stability.

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### 7. Active Participation in Social and Volunteer Projects

Women can establish support networks and communities where they exchange ideas, experiences, and knowledge. Participation in social and volunteer initiatives strengthens leadership skills, increases social engagement, and creates opportunities for personal growth. Being surrounded by educated and motivated women inspires continuous self-improvement, learning, and professional development.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, an educated

mother serves as the first and most influential school in a child’s life. A mother shapes not only her child’s knowledge but also their understanding of the world and moral values. As the great Uzbek educator and reformer Abdulla Avloniy emphasized the importance of education in building an enlightened society. In Uzbekistan, women’s employment rights and social protection are guaranteed through state policies and legal frameworks. The future of New Uzbekistan depends on educated, capable, and talented young people, and women play a vital role in shaping that future.

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# SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS  
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BREAKING NEWS



**Sports >>** \*The Football Association of Wales becomes the first national body to formally withdraw support for the FIFA president's re-election — and it will not be the last

## Infantino's grip on FIFA loosens as Wales leads rebellion

By **Martin Weche**

The Football Association of Wales yesterday became the first national association to formally withdraw support for FIFA president Gianni Infantino's bid for re-election, triggering what observers expect to be a coordinated cascade of defections ahead of next March's presidential election in Rabat, Morocco.

The FAW's decision follows the spectacular collapse of Infantino's plan to sell private stakes in FIFA's major tournaments, including the men's and women's World Cups — a proposal that would have netted each of FIFA's 211 member associations \$40 million but provoked a swift and furious backlash from three continental confederations. Infantino was forced to shelve the project, known as the FIFA Forward Enterprise, on Saturday, acknowledging in a statement that it had "created divisions" that were "no longer in the interest of the objective set out in the first place."

The Welsh FA wasted no time. In a blunt statement issued on Monday, the FAW declared: "The Football Association of Wales hereby confirms its withdrawal of support for the candidature of Mr Gianni Infantino, for re-election as FIFA president for the 2027–2031 term. The recent failures in good governance, processes, leadership, values, stakeholder management, communications and sound judgement have led us to a position where Mr Infantino has lost the confidence of the FAW to remain at the helm of world football. Failing to put the best interests of football first is a failure we cannot accept."

The English FA is understood to be writing to Infantino in a similar vein, withdrawing a previous letter of support in what Sky Sports described as part of a coordinated European strate-



*FIFA president Gianni Infantino*

gy to remove him from office as quickly as possible. On Saturday, the FA had already publicly backed UEFA's position — the European governing body having stated, in equally unambiguous terms, that Infantino had lost its confidence. European countries are now planning a mass withdrawal of letters supporting his re-election, with more announcements expected in the coming days.

The sense of institutional isolation closing in around Infantino is striking. Since taking over from Sepp Blatter in 2016, the Swiss-Italian administrator had been re-elected unopposed twice and appeared firmly in control of the body. His bid for a fourth term, covering 2027 to 2031, had until recently looked like a formality. Now, analysts say, it is anything but. Experts have told Reuters that the backlash against the failed proposal has exposed

deeper dissatisfaction among FIFA members and could significantly complicate his path to re-election.

The geography of the revolt is also significant. It is not only European bodies raising their voices. CONCACAF, the governing body for North and Central American football, called for a comprehensive reckoning with Infantino's leadership, while the Asian Football Confederation pleaded for greater transparency in FIFA's decision-making. Under FIFA's rules, an emergency congress can be convened if called for by at least 20 per cent of its 211 member associations — a threshold that could enable either a vote of no confidence or the installation of a rival candidate before the November 18 nomination deadline.

The timing of all this carries a particular irony: just two weeks ago, Infantino was standing on

the podium in New Jersey, handing the World Cup trophy to Spain. That image of authority and prestige now sits uncomfortably alongside the accelerating withdrawal of the very institutions that underpin his mandate. The FAW's statement, in particular, reads less like a diplomatic communiqué than a verdict — measured in tone but devastating in intent.

What remains unclear is whether Infantino will attempt to ride out the storm or step aside ahead of the Rabat congress. FIFA has not yet responded publicly to the Welsh FA's withdrawal. Whatever his calculation, the rebellion now has momentum, a leading nation, and the unmistakable backing of UEFA — and in football politics, that is rarely where the story ends.

# GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> \*Czech goalkeeper’s £25.7m arrival signals intent — but questions remain over direction at a club without a manager

# Newcastle sign Hornicek to steady a ship in storm

By Martin Weche

Newcastle United yesterday completed the signing of Czech Republic goalkeeper Lukas Hornicek from Portuguese club Braga on a five-year contract, activating his £25.7 million release clause to make the 24-year-old the club’s fifth summer addition.

The capture of Hornicek, who kept seven clean sheets during Braga’s run to the Europa League semi-finals last season — the highest tally of any goalkeeper in the competition — addresses what had been the most pressing gap in Newcastle’s rebuild: a commanding, experienced presence between the posts. He is expected to immediately displace Nick Pope as first-choice goalkeeper ahead of the new Premier League season, which gets under way for the Magpies at home to Liverpool on August 23.

For Hornicek, the move represents a significant leap — from a mid-table Portuguese club chasing European glory to one of English football’s most storied grounds. He made no attempt to disguise his excitement. “The last few days have been an emotional rollercoaster from when I first heard about the move and now I’m so happy to be here,” he said. “I know Newcastle is a huge football city, with 52,000 fans at St James’ Park creating an incredible atmosphere and pushing the team every game. I can’t wait to play in front of them.”

That warmth of feeling appears mutual. Sporting director Ross Wilson said Hornicek’s progress in recent years had been remarkable, noting that it quickly became evident how keen the goalkeeper was to be part of what the club is building. Wilson went further, describing Hornicek as having “firmly established himself as one of Europe’s top young goalkeepers.”

The numbers support the billing. According to Opta data,



Czech Republic goalkeeper Lukas Hornicek.

Hornicek ranked second among Primeira Liga goalkeepers for successful passes — 846 in total — and fourth for passing accuracy at 75 per cent, attributes that suit a Newcastle side which, under whichever manager eventually takes charge, is expected to continue playing out from the back. At 198 centimetres, he also commands his area with authority — a quality that had begun to look conspicuously absent from St James’ Park.

The signing is the clearest statement yet that despite the turbulence engulfing the club, Newcastle’s hierarchy remains committed to forward momentum. Yet the backdrop is difficult to ignore. The club confirmed last Friday the departure of Eddie Howe, who stepped down with immediate effect after five years in charge, leaving the squad to prepare for a new season with-

out a head coach in place. Swiss tactician Matthias Jaissle has emerged as a leading candidate to fill the vacancy, though no appointment had been confirmed at the time of writing.

The summer has been one of considerable upheaval beyond the dugout. Italy midfielder Sandro Tonali has moved to Tottenham Hotspur, England forward Anthony Gordon has departed for Barcelona, and captain Bruno Guimarães — arguably the most influential player at the club — remains heavily linked with a move to Premier League champions Arsenal. The Magpies finished 12th in the top flight last season, a placing that satisfied nobody and accelerated the rethink now visibly underway.

Into all of this uncertainty steps Hornicek, a young goalkeeper of considerable promise who, tellingly, had earlier this summer

rejected an approach from Hull City to hold out for a more ambitious destination. That decision, with the benefit of hindsight, looks a sound one. Newcastle, for all their present disarray, remain a club with Saudi-backed resources, a passionate and enormous fanbase, and real ambitions of returning to European competition. Hornicek becomes the fifth player signed this summer, following Ewen Jaouen, Bazoumana Touré, Sean Steur and Aladji Bamba, with total summer expenditure now surpassing £150 million.

Whether a club without a manager can translate that investment into a coherent, competitive season remains the central question on Tyneside — and one that neither a five-year contract nor a £25.7 million release clause can answer on its own.

## SPORTS NEWS



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# The Convergence of Code, Silicon, and Intelligence: How AI is Rewiring Computer Engineering

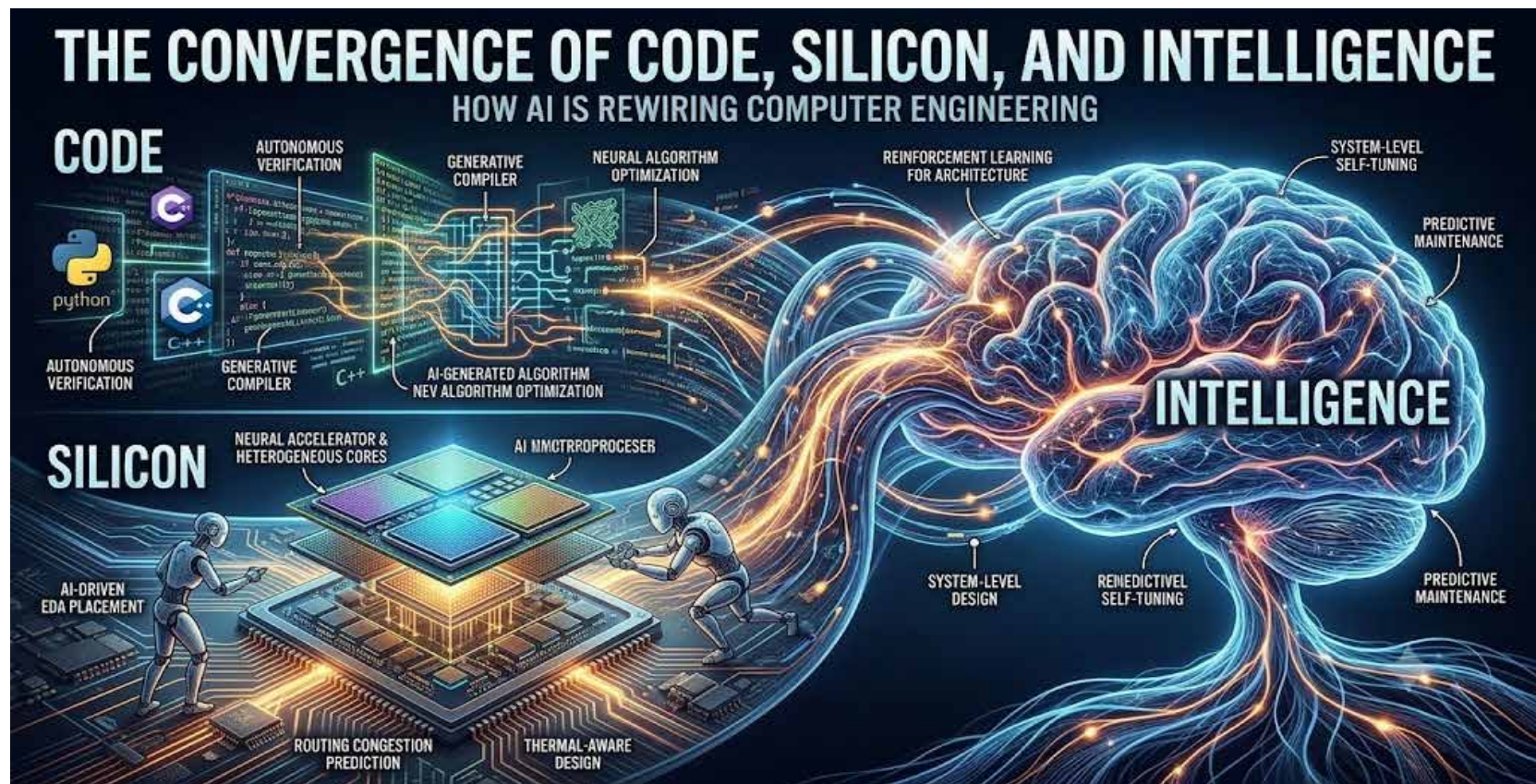


By: Mavlonov Najmiddin  
@themkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

- At the intersection of Edge AI and traditional engineering, researchers are unlocking new potentials. By leveraging the capabilities of microcontrollers, such as Arduino boards, developers are creating smart, real-time sensors, automated mechanisms, and localized visual analysis systems. Furthermore, to guarantee robust data security, engineers are increasingly turning to closed, local environments—like AI models deployed on Linux Ubuntu operating systems—to process sensitive information without exposing it to the open web.
- This intelligence extends into the backend as well. Within database architectures, particularly relational systems like PostgreSQL, AI models have proven highly effective at optimizing complex queries. These AI-assisted optimized queries, especially during multi-table searches, can result in up to a 30% reduction in system resource consumption. Fast APIs, often developed using Python frameworks like FastAPI, bridge these localized analytics to the broader software ecosystem.



## Abstract

This article explores the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in computer engineering, specifically analyzing its functional capabilities across both software and hardware ecosystems. By integrating AI tools into traditional system architectures, engineers can dramatically increase local data processing speeds and successfully implement “Edge AI” conceptual models into practical applications.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Computer Engineering, Edge AI, Local Models, Computer Vision, Microcontrollers, Database.

## The Dawn of a New Architecture

The rapid evolution of modern information technology is fundamentally altering the core paradigms of computer engineering. Previously, hardware and software were strictly bound by deterministic algorithms, but today, machine learning and AI models introduce unprecedented flexibility to these systems. The integration of AI into software architecture, embedded systems, and da-

tabase management has challenged engineers to design a new generation of autonomous hardware. A critical frontier in this evolution is the deployment of AI not just within massive cloud infrastructures, but directly on “Edge” devices.

## Pushing Intelligence to the Edge

At the intersection of Edge AI and traditional engineering, researchers are unlocking new potentials. By leveraging the capabilities of microcontrollers, such as Arduino boards, developers are creating smart, real-time sensors, automated mechanisms, and localized visual analysis systems. Furthermore, to guarantee robust data security, engineers are increasingly turning to closed, local environments—like AI models deployed on Linux Ubuntu operating systems—to process sensitive information without exposing it to the open web.

This intelligence extends into the backend as well. Within database architectures, particularly relational systems like PostgreSQL, AI models have proven highly effective at optimizing complex queries. These

AI-assisted optimized queries, especially during multi-table searches, can result in up to a 30% reduction in system resource consumption. Fast APIs, often developed using Python frameworks like FastAPI, bridge these localized analytics to the broader software ecosystem.

## The Need for Speed: Cloud vs. Local AI

When deploying computer vision technologies, such as OpenCV and SIFT algorithms, the location of the processing power dictates performance. Experimental data reveals that relying on traditional Cloud AI APIs results in an average latency of 240 milliseconds, coupled with high network dependency and moderate security risks.

In contrast, integrating AI locally transforms the landscape. Processing visual data directly on the device using OpenCV slashes latency down to just 45 milliseconds, cutting delays by roughly four times. Taking it a step further, deploying Edge AI directly on microcontrollers drops latency to a remarkable 15 milliseconds, entirely eliminating network

dependency and ensuring high-level security. By bypassing the cloud entirely, edge models guarantee hardware autonomy.

## Conclusion

In modern computer engineering, artificial intelligence is far more than just an automated code generator. It serves as the primary driving force that digitizes and optimizes the critical chain between hardware and software layers, paving the way for autonomous, secure, and highly efficient systems. Deepening our focus on Edge AI will empower the next generation of engineers to build decentralized, rapid, and reliable solutions to real-world challenges.

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