Kenya's opposition meets again — but the harder questions remain unanswered

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday convened a second consultative meeting of the United Alternative Government principals, projecting unity Page 8

Ruto in Lusaka: 'Political competition may divide choices — it must never divide our destiny'

President William Ruto yesterday invoked Kenya's 2027 general election on an international stage, using the inauguration of Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema in Lusaka to call on African leaders to ensure that political competition never becomes a source of national rupture Page 12

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Countdown 2027 Deputy President Kithure Kindiki sits uncomfortably in the middle of all this

Is Mount Kenya heading for another 1992?

Kenyan politics has a curious way of dragging history back to the table, often when politicians least expect it. As the country moves toward the August 2027 general election, Mount Kenya is once again becoming the centre of a fascinating and consequential political contest — one that is raising uncomfortable echoes of 1992.

The historical parallel is instructive. When Kenya returned to multiparty politics in 1991, the first competitive presidential election produced two major opposition contenders from the same region: Kenneth Matiba and Mwai Kibaki. Both commanded substantial Central Kenya support. Both contested separately. The result was a divided vote that handed then-President Daniel arap Moi a victory he might not have secured against a united opponent. The lesson was simple and devastating: even the most politically powerful constituency can lose its national bargaining power when its leadership is fragmented.

More than three decades later, that lesson is becoming relevant again.

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro

Ruto hails Hichilema's second term as Kenya and Zambia pledge deeper ties

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday attended the inauguration of Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema for a second term at the National Heroes Stadium in Lusaka, using the occasion to pledge deeper bilateral ties and reaffirm Kenya's commitment to African economic integration.

Hichilema, who was sworn in alongside Vice-President Mutale Nalumango, secured re-election in a result that his continental peers described as a powerful expression of public confidence in his transformative agenda. Ruto offered warm congratulations, framing the renewed mandate as an opportunity to accelerate shared regional ambitions.

"Your re-election is a strong expression of the confidence the people of Zambia have placed in your leadership," Ruto said, adding that Kenya looked forward to expanding trade, investment and bilateral cooperation between the two nations.

Both leaders expressed commitment to advancing the African Continental Free Trade Area as a vehicle for intra-African commerce and job creation. The ceremony drew Presidents Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of Namibia, Duma Boko of Botswana, Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe and Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania, alongside Lesotho's Prime Minister Sam Matekane and Eswatini's Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla.

The gathering underscored southern and eastern Africa's growing diplomatic cohesion at a moment when continental integration demands exactly that.









Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times


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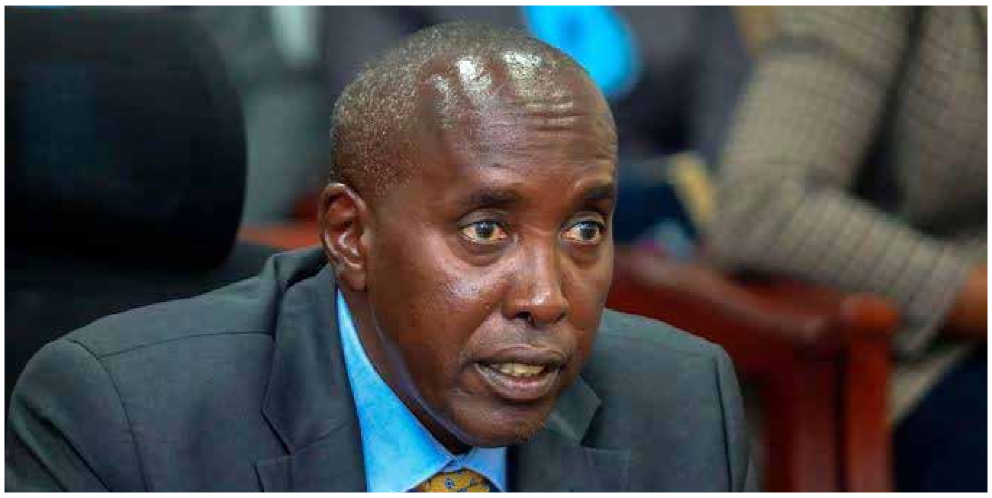

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission has summoned Kajiado Governor Joseph Ole Lenku to appear before it on September 17, 2026, over remarks allegedly made at Ewuaso Oonkidong'a in Kajiado West on August 22, in which he appeared to warn political parties against fielding non-Maasai candidates for positions he described as belonging to the community. "Any political party that fields a non-Maasai candidate for a position meant for the Maasai in Kajiado, Narok or elsewhere, we will have no relationship with you," Lenku reportedly said, according to the commission's summons. The NCIC is investigating the remarks under provisions of the National Cohesion and Integration Act relating to hate speech and negative ethnicity, warning that failure to appear could result in an arrest warrant and possible criminal proceedings.

A senior police officer told an inquest yesterday that Nairobi's Central Business District CCTV surveillance network was not operational on the evening Rex Kanyike Masai was shot during the June 2024 anti-Finance Bill protests, a revelation that could significantly complicate efforts to establish who fired the fatal bullet. Andrew Limo, testifying in the ongoing inquiry into the 24-year-old's death, said the National Police Service cameras were non-functional at the time. The police surveillance system at Jogoo House was reportedly offline due to a faulty fibre connection. Despite the gaps, investigators recovered private CCTV footage from Absa Bank along Mama Ngina Street, which an Independent Policing Oversight Authority forensic investigator confirmed as authentic — capturing a man opening fire at protesters at approximately 7:11pm on June 20, 2024. The inquest continues.

The Social Health Authority yesterday granted healthcare providers an additional month to comply with Health Management Information System requirements, extending a deadline that facilities across the country had struggled to meet. The SHA said the extension was intended to give providers adequate time to complete the technical and administrative steps required for full system integration, including registration, data migration and staff training on the digital platform. Officials said the authority remained committed to ensuring the transition to the unified health information system was thorough rather than rushed, warning that the extension would not be repeated and that facilities failing to comply by the new deadline risked exclusion from the SHA reimbursement framework. The move affects public and private facilities participating in Kenya's Social Health Insurance Fund programme.

African women's rights advocates yesterday warned that appeals to family values, culture, religion and national sovereignty are being systematically weaponised to dismantle hard-won protections for women and girls, calling for urgent public engagement to prevent a coordinated rollback of gender equality gains. The warning emerged ahead of the 81st United Nations General Assembly, where rights experts and civil society groups examined growing anti-rights mobilisation at the latest SHE & Rights session, jointly hosted by the Global Center for Health Diplomacy and Inclusion, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and allied organisations. Dr Robert Eno, Registrar of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, sought to temper concerns over a proposed African Charter on family sovereignty and values, clarifying that the draft was not an African Union proposal and would face a lengthy institutional process before reaching the Assembly for consideration.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission has summoned Nominated MP Joseph Wainaina Iraya to appear before it on September 17, 2026, over remarks allegedly made during a public address in Ngeria, Uasin Gishu County on August 29, in which he appeared to tell Kikuyu residents who do not support President William Ruto's re-election to leave the county. "Whoever does not want to give us votes here, whoever does not want William Ruto here, should leave first," Wainaina allegedly said, according to remarks reproduced in the summons. He further appeared to urge fellow Kikuyu community members to identify and pressure those opposing Ruto within their own community. The NCIC is investigating the utterances under the National Cohesion and Integration Act, warning that failure to appear could result in arrest and criminal proceedings.

The Kenya Red Cross yesterday warned that 46 of Kenya's 47 counties face above-average rainfall in the coming months, cautioning that crumbling drainage infrastructure and blocked waterways risk transforming the seasonal rains into a humanitarian catastrophe. Officials said the threat was compounded by years of inadequate maintenance of flood management systems, with drainage channels in urban and peri-urban areas heavily obstructed by solid waste, construction debris and encroachment. Low-lying communities and informal settlements were identified as particularly vulnerable, given their limited capacity to absorb sudden surges in water volume. The Red Cross urged county governments to urgently clear blocked drainage systems, identify at-risk communities and pre-position emergency response resources before the rains intensify. Residents in flood-prone areas were advised to remain alert and heed early warning communications from meteorological authorities.


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Election The IEBC, for its part, carries a constitutional responsibility that goes well beyond simply organising a vote

Gachagua vs IEBC: The battle for electoral trust has already begun

BY Collin Kibet
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The contest over Kenya's 2027 general election has already started — not at the ballot box, but in the increasingly bitter dispute between former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission over technology, procurement and institutional independence.

Gachagua has intensified his criticism of the IEBC in recent weeks, raising pointed concerns about the procurement of an Integrated Election Management System. He has alleged that the process could favour a South Korean technology company and questioned the treatment of officials who reportedly raised internal concerns about the procurement. These remain allegations. They require evidence, independent verification and proper institutional scrutiny — not trial by political statement.

The IEBC, for its part, carries a constitutional responsibility that goes well beyond simply organising a vote. It must ensure that every stage of the electoral process — from procurement decisions made in 2025 to the announcement of results in August 2027 — can withstand legitimate scrutiny from political parties, civil society, the courts and the Kenyan public. That responsibility cannot be discharged through silence or defensiveness.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

The dispute, viewed through that lens, is considerably larger than a confrontation between one opposition figure and an electoral commission. It touches the foundation of democratic legitimacy itself. Kenya's electoral history offers a sobering reminder of what happens when sections of the public believe the process has been compromised before the first ballot is cast. The 2007 post-election crisis, the controversies of 2017 and the litigation that followed the 2022 presidential result all demonstrated that electoral credibility cannot be retrofitted after the fact. It must be built, painstakingly, through transparent decisions and accountable institutions long before election day arrives.

Gachagua's accusations should neither be accepted uncritically nor dismissed as mere political noise. He is a political leader with a direct interest in the 2027 contest, and that interest shapes how his claims must be read. But political motivation does not automatically make an allegation false. If he possesses credible evidence of procurement irregularities or institutional bias, that evidence should be placed before the relevant oversight bodies and legal institutions for proper investigation — not deployed solely as a mobilisation tool on the campaign trail.

The IEBC, meanwhile, would serve Kenya better by responding with transparency rather than political confrontation. Major technological decisions — particularly those involving systems that will determine how votes are transmitted and results announced — deserve clear, detailed public explanation. Procurement processes should be open to scrutiny. Political parties, civil society organisations and independent technical experts should be given meaningful access to assess election preparations. Where legitimate concerns are raised, they should be addressed promptly and substantively, not left to ferment into the kind of suspicion that can delegitimise an election before a single vote has been counted.

The responsibility extends well beyond these two parties. Kenya's media must investigate electoral preparations rigorously and report findings accurately, without becoming amplifiers for unverified political claims. Civil society organisations with expertise in electoral monitoring must engage early and consistently. Parliament must exercise its oversight role over the commission actively, and the courts must remain both accessible and independent. Political leaders across all affiliations — including those within the governing coalition — must resist the temptation to weaponise institutional disputes for short-term political gain.

Kenya's recent electoral history also raises a structural question that this dispute brings back into focus: how much of the country's democratic stability depends on technology that the public does not understand, procured through processes the public cannot easily observe, operated by institutions whose internal decision-making remains opaque? The IEBC's technology choices in 2027 will matter enormously. So will the credibility of the process through which those choices are made.

With the August 10, 2027 election now less than twelve months away, the window for building genuine public confidence in electoral institutions is narrowing. Every unexplained procurement decision, every allegation left unaddressed and every confrontation that generates heat rather than clarity brings Kenya closer to the kind of pre-election environment in which results — whatever they may be — are contested not on their merits but on accumulated institutional suspicion.

Kenya does not need another election defined by technological controversy, accusations of bias and a legitimacy deficit that takes years to resolve. It needs transparent procedures, secure and independently verified technology, accountable institutions and results capable of withstanding serious legal and public scrutiny.

Gachagua may be challenging the IEBC. But protecting Kenya's electoral democracy is a responsibility that belongs to every institution, political leader and citizen.

In 2027, the greatest victory should not belong merely to the candidate who wins. It should belong to the Kenyan voter — whose ballot is cast freely, counted accurately and respected absolutely.

Politics The United Alternative Government is holding together on paper, but the battle over who leads it into 2027 is becoming the alliance's most dangerous internal front.

Kenya's opposition meets again — but the harder questions remain unanswered

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday convened a second consultative meeting of the United Alternative Government principals, projecting unity and determination ahead of the August 10, 2027 general election — even as deep unresolved tensions over the coalition's presidential candidate, selection method and campaign timeline continue to simmer beneath the surface.

"We held a consultative meeting with the UAG principals today to deepen our unity and chart the way forward for our alliance. Our mission remains clear: unite Kenyans, restore hope, and Komboa Kenya," Kalonzo said after the meeting, offering little detail on what was actually deliberated.

The brevity of that statement was telling. The UAG is a coalition that has committed, in writing, to unity — but has not yet agreed on the most fundamental question of any presidential alliance: who will be its candidate?

The coalition brings together some of the most consequential figures in Kenyan opposition politics. Kalonzo, the Wiper Patriotic Front leader and UAG co-convener alongside Martha Karua of the People's Liberation Party, is the most prominent. Alongside them sit Jubilee Deputy Leader Fred Matiang'i, Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi, DAP-Kenya's Eugene Wamalwa, Party of National Unity's Peter Munya and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for Citizens Party, represented in absentia at the August 24 Kiambu retreat by Cleophas Malala, who signed the unity covenant on Gachagua's behalf.

That retreat, held at Windsor Hotel in Kiambu on August 24 and originally scheduled for two days, ended after only one day's deliberations — without resolving the structural and political questions that will ultimately determine whether the UAG becomes a genuine electoral force or another opposition formation that fractures before polling day. The principals signed a Personal Unity Pledge and a Coalition Unity Agreement committing to support whoever emerges as the presidential candidate. But the mechanism for selecting that candidate, and the timeline for doing so, remain firmly contested.

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday convened a second consultative meeting of the United Alternative Government principals

Kalonzo has been proposing boardroom negotiations as the method for selecting the flag bearer, while a faction led by Gachagua and Matiang'i has been pushing for scientific polling. Gachagua has also rejected calls to unveil the candidate soon, insisting the announcement should come closer to the election — pointing to 2002 as the model — and arguing that principals should focus on consolidating their respective bases before engaging in serious coalition talks after Christmas.

The disagreement is not merely procedural. It reflects fundamentally different assessments of political reality. Those pushing for an early announcement, including allies within Kalonzo's camp, argue that the opposition needs a clear identity and a named presidential candidate to give voters something concrete to rally around. Those urging caution, led by Gachagua, argue that premature announcement would expose the chosen candidate to sustained government targeting before the campaign has properly begun.

Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi has already declared publicly that if he does not secure the coalition ticket himself, the only principal he would support is Kalonzo. "If I'm not selected as the presidential candidate, the only other principal in the united opposition I can support is Kalonzo. Let's stop beating around the bush," Muturi said. The declaration has accelerated speculation that Kalonzo is emerging as the coalition's frontrunner — speculation that has generated both encouragement from some quarters and resistance from those who insist the selection must follow a transparent, agreed process.

Karua has been careful to manage those expectations. "As Principals and Co-Convenors of the United Alternative Government, we are committed to building a coalition founded on consultation, mutual respect, inclusivity and fidelity to agreed processes," she said. "These values distinguish our coalition and inspire confidence among Kenyans who seek a credible, democratic and principled alternative." A technical committee chaired by former Cabinet minister Kipruto arap Kirwa has been developing proposals on how the coalition should be formally structured and governed, with its recommendations expected to be presented to principals soon.

The structural challenge is significant. Without a fully established secretariat, the coalition remains heavily dependent on the goodwill and availability of individual principals — a fragile foundation for an alliance that will need to coordinate campaign operations, manage regional outreach, negotiate running mate arrangements and mount a credible electoral infrastructure across 47 counties in less than twelve months.

The political environment in which the UAG is operating has also shifted considerably in recent weeks. The abduction of Standard Group Associate Editor Alex Kiprotich on Monday night — the second targeting of a journalist critical of the government in two months — has sharpened the opposition's narrative about democratic backsliding under President William Ruto. Kalonzo has been among those calling on the international community to take note of Kenya's deteriorating democratic environment, and events like the Kiprotich abduction provide precisely the kind of evidence that the UAG needs to sustain a credible reform argument.

Ruto, for his part, is not standing still. His administration has been moving aggressively to consolidate support outside traditional Kenya Kwanza territory, offering development projects, appointments and political attention to regions the opposition is counting on. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki's mobilisation across Mt Kenya East has been intensive, and the ruling coalition's financial and institutional advantages remain formidable.

The UAG's greatest asset — and its most persistent vulnerability — is its diversity. It brings together leaders from across Kenya's ethnic, regional and ideological spectrum, which gives it a theoretical national reach that no single-community coalition can match. But that same diversity makes consensus enormously difficult to achieve. Every decision involves multiple competing interests, every announcement carries the risk of alienating one principal or another, and every delay in resolving the candidate question allows Ruto's camp to further consolidate its position.

Yesterday's meeting was described by Kalonzo as a deepening of unity. The harder truth is that unity in a coalition at this stage of the election cycle is not measured in consultative meetings or signed pledges — it is measured in the willingness of powerful, ambitious individuals to subordinate their personal interests to a collective decision, even when that decision does not go in their favour.

That test has not yet arrived for the UAG. When it does, Kenya will learn whether yesterday's gathering was the beginning of a genuine alternative government — or simply another chapter in the long, complicated story of Kenya's opposition learning to lose together.

Politics That changing Kenyan voter is perhaps the most underappreciated factor in all of this. Today's young electorate is more connected, more politically informed

Is Mount Kenya heading for another 1992?

The Nyoro-Gachagua rivalry is raising a question that goes far beyond two politicians: could the Mountain's fragmented leadership cost it the national bargaining power it has spent decades building?

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro

Kenyan politics has a curious way of dragging history back to the table, often when politicians least expect it. As the country moves toward the August 2027 general election, Mount Kenya is once again becoming the centre of a fascinating and consequential political contest — one that is raising uncomfortable echoes of 1992.

The historical parallel is instructive. When Kenya returned to multiparty politics in 1991, the first competitive presidential election produced two major opposition contenders from the same region: Kenneth Matiba and Mwai Kibaki. Both commanded substantial Central Kenya support. Both contested separately. The result was a divided vote that handed then-President Daniel arap Moi a victory he might not have secured against a united opponent. The lesson was simple and devastating: even the most politically powerful constituency can lose its national bargaining power when its leadership is fragmented.

More than three decades later, that lesson is becoming relevant again.

Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro's departure from the United Democratic Alliance and his alignment with the People's Party of Kenya has added a significant new dimension to an already complicated landscape. Nyoro is no longer simply a young politician within someone else's machine. He is visibly attempting to build an identity of his own — and that ambition inevitably places him in the same political space as former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, who has spent considerable energy presenting himself as both a defender of the region's interests and a credible national opposition figure.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

Gachagua's challenge is structural. If he concentrates too heavily on Mount Kenya, he risks being typecast as a regional politician reaching for national power. If he ranges too far from the region, he risks undermining the very political base that gives him his relevance. Nyoro faces an equally difficult test from the opposite direction. Having separated himself from UDA, he must now demonstrate that his influence was never merely borrowed from his proximity to President William Ruto. Building a genuine political movement requires more than a party card and a press statement. It demands structures, ideas, a coherent national message and, above all, public trust earned over time.

Ruto, for his part, has every reason to remain deeply invested in Mount Kenya. The region was central to his 2022 victory, and its political choices will remain significant in 2027. He cannot afford to lose it — but his relationship with some of its most prominent voices has changed dramatically since his election. Gachagua's impeachment in 2024 did not simply remove a deputy president. It created a political rupture whose aftershocks are still being felt across the Mountain.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki sits uncomfortably in the middle of all this. His appointment was intended to consolidate Ruto's Mt Kenya East support base, but the region is not one political mind. A voter in Kiambu may see the political moment very differently from a voter in Nyeri. A young graduate in Murang'a may have entirely different priorities from an older farmer in Kirinyaga. The Mountain is millions of individual voters with distinct aspirations — and any politician who assumes otherwise does so at considerable peril.

That changing Kenyan voter is perhaps the most underappreciated factor in all of this. Today's young electorate is more connected, more politically informed and significantly less willing to inherit loyalties simply because their parents supported a particular leader. Social media has accelerated the volatility of political narratives. A story that dominates the morning can collapse by evening. Politicians who believe that an entire region belongs to them by historical right are operating on dangerously outdated assumptions.

Some of Gachagua's allies have accused the Ruto administration of encouraging or deliberately exploiting divisions within the region. Such claims deserve careful scrutiny. There is a meaningful difference between observing that a politician benefits from a political development and proving they engineered it. No conclusive evidence exists that Ruto's strategy is the deliberate fragmentation of Mount Kenya. But a divided mountain would undeniably produce consequences that could favour an incumbent building a broad national coalition.

The deeper issue, however, is not about any individual politician's strategy. It is about what the people of Mount Kenya actually want from their political leadership.

A farmer watching the price of agricultural produce stagnate is unlikely to be moved by which politician controls the regional political machinery. A young graduate struggling to find employment does not benefit from another coalition negotiated in Nairobi's political corridors. A small-business owner drowning in operating costs will not be rescued by slogans. When elections become contests between political personalities rather than competing ideas and records, voters risk becoming spectators in a game being played for someone else's benefit.

The 1992 election demonstrated that political fragmentation can change the outcome of a presidential race. But fragmentation is not inherently fatal — it depends entirely on what replaces unity. If Mount Kenya's political diversity produces genuine competition of ideas, accountability to voters and leaders who can articulate a clear economic and social vision, then division need not be weakness. It could, in fact, become a form of democratic maturity.

If, however, that diversity collapses into nothing more than a personal battle between ambitious politicians, the region could once again discover the same truth Matiba and Kibaki's voters learned the hard way — that having many powerful leaders does not automatically make the people more powerful.

The political chessboard is being arranged. Gachagua is building his opposition camp. Nyoro is carving out his own space. Ruto is defending his national coalition. Kindiki is fighting to hold his position. Others are watching and calculating.

The Mountain is watching too.

And in August 2027, the most consequential decision will not be made by any of the politicians who have spent years positioning themselves for this moment. It will be made by the ordinary voter — the one who has watched alliances rise and collapse, who has heard the promises before, and who remembers, even if they never lived through it, what 1992 cost.

A political mountain may have many voices. Its people must decide which ones deserve to be heard.

Abduction The Standard Group said it did not know his whereabouts at the time of issuing the statement, signed by Group Chief Executive Officer Chaacha Mwita.

Standard Group editor abducted on Gilgil-Nakuru road in suspected state-linked attack

The second targeting of Alex Kiprotich in two months has drawn direct accusations from Kenya's oldest media group against elements within the government — and an unequivocal demand for his safe return.

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The Standard Group yesterday night confirmed the abduction of its Associate Editor Alex Kiprotich along the Gilgil-Nakuru road, issuing a sweeping statement that holds the Kenyan state directly responsible for his safety and accuses elements within the government of orchestrating a targeted campaign against one of the country's most prominent journalists.

Kiprotich was seized shortly before 9:20pm on Monday as he travelled toward Nakuru. The Standard Group said it did not know his whereabouts at the time of issuing the statement, signed by Group Chief Executive Officer Chaacha Mwita.

The abduction is the second time in two months that Kiprotich has been targeted. On June 27, 2026, armed men travelling in a Toyota Probox — a vehicle model that human rights organisations and press freedom groups have repeatedly linked to enforced disappearances of government critics in Kenya — attempted to seize him from his car as he drove to work in Nakuru. He escaped by locking his doors and driving away.

That attempt came days after President William Ruto publicly criticised The Standard Group over its coverage of his administration. The Group said its own investigations traced the vehicle involved in that June attempt to the National Police Service's Crime Research and Intelligence Bureau. No one has been held accountable.

"Tonight, that threat has been carried out," the Standard Group said in its statement. "We do not believe this is a coincidence."

The language from Kenya's oldest media group was as direct as any press statement issued by a Kenyan media organisation in recent memory. The Group said the abduction bore all the hallmarks of a targeted attack on a journalist for doing his job and stated its belief that it may be linked to elements within the state seeking to silence the newsroom. Kiprotich has led significant editorial output at the Group, including reporting that has scrutinised government conduct at the highest levels.

Abduction

"If that is confirmed, this is not simply a crime against one man," the Group said. "It is an assault on the Constitution of Kenya, on the freedoms of expression and of the media guaranteed under Articles 33 and 34, and on the right of every Kenyan to independent information."

The statement made three explicit demands: the immediate, safe and unconditional release of Kiprotich; a prompt, transparent and independent investigation into the abduction and into why no one was ever held accountable for the June 27 attempt; and concrete, visible guarantees that journalists in Kenya will be protected — consistent with public commitments the President has already made and, the Group argued, has so far failed to honour.

The Standard Group called on the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the Law Society of Kenya, the Media Council of Kenya, the Committee to Protect Journalists and all who value press freedom to demand answers publicly until Kiprotich is found safe.

The abduction lands at a fraught moment for press freedom in Kenya. The country has seen a sustained pattern of intimidation against journalists critical of the government, with arrests, harassment and equipment seizures documented by both local and international press freedom organisations in recent years. The Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters Without Borders have repeatedly flagged Kenya's deteriorating media environment, even as the government has maintained publicly that it supports a free press.

President Ruto's administration has made several high-profile statements affirming commitment to media freedom. The Standard Group's accusation that those commitments have not been honoured — and its willingness to name the state directly in the context of a journalist's disappearance — represents an extraordinary escalation of the tension between Kenya's oldest daily newspaper and the current government.

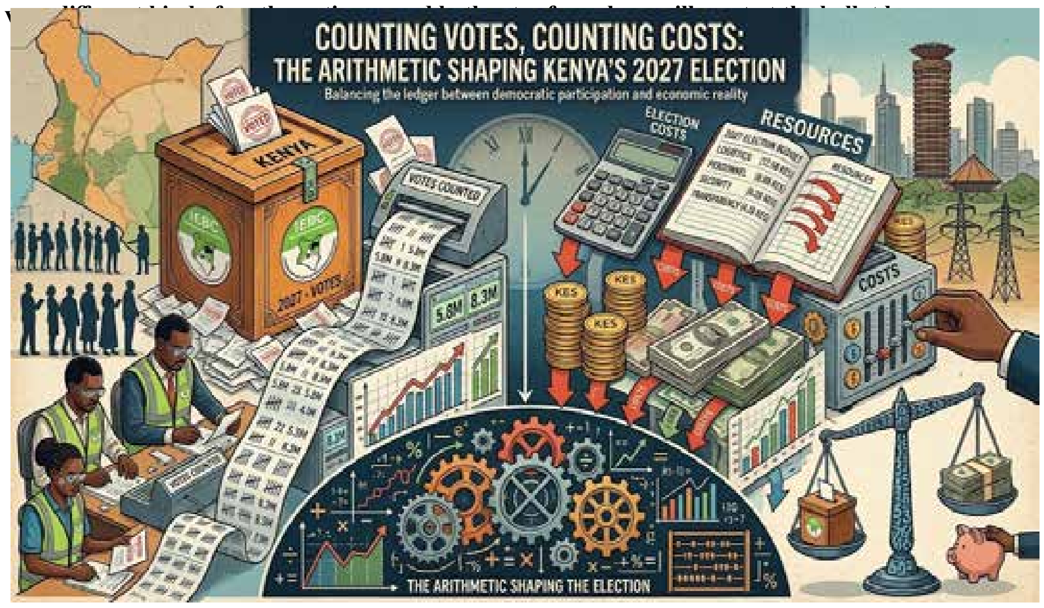
Kiprotich's case also raises urgent questions about the June incident that have never been satisfactorily answered. If the vehicle used in that first attempt was indeed traceable to a law enforcement intelligence unit, as the Group has alleged, the failure to investigate and prosecute those responsible amounts to institutional impunity — one that, on the evidence of last night, may have emboldened whoever ordered the second attempt.

"The Standard Group holds the State responsible for Alex Kiprotich's safety and his life, and for anything that happens to him while he remains missing," the Group said. "Protecting the life and liberty of every citizen is the State's first duty, not an afterthought."

As of the time of publication, Kiprotich's whereabouts remain unknown.

Elections While politicians tally constituencies and calculate coalitions, ordinary Kenyans are doing a

Counting votes, counting costs: The arithmetic shaping Kenya's 2027 election



Illustrations

BY Levis Wangamati
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Kenya has already begun counting. Politicians are tallying constituencies, weighing alliances, debating running mates and mapping regional voting blocs. Parties are measuring their reach, leaders are testing their popularity, and political formations are quietly calculating the mathematics required to win in August 2027.

Away from the strategy rooms and rally podiums, however, ordinary Kenyans are engaged in a vastly different kind of arithmetic. They are calculating what remains after paying rent, buying food, covering transport, settling school fees and clearing electricity bills. For them, the numbers are not about electoral margins. They are about whether an income can survive the demands of another month.

This contrast forms the uncomfortable core of Kenya's emerging political landscape. The political class is consumed by the arithmetic of winning; millions of citizens are consumed by the arithmetic of survival. For politicians, the imperative is assembling votes. For families, it is stretching a paycheck to the next payday.

That divergence matters more than political commentators typically acknowledge. Elections are not spreadsheet exercises — they are fundamentally about people. Yet as the 2027 political calendar accelerates, citizens risk being reduced to data points in calculations detached from their daily realities. A constituency becomes a target. A region becomes a bloc. A community becomes an electoral asset. A rally crowd becomes evidence of popularity.

Behind every percentage point, however, sits a household. Behind every vote is a person navigating economic pressure, frustration and expectation.

For most Kenyans, governance is not experienced through parliamentary debates or political declarations. It is felt at the supermarket, the petrol station, the matatu stage, the hospital and the school fees office. It is experienced when salaries disappear faster each month and when a basic basket of goods becomes an agonising financial calculation. Can young graduates transition from education to meaningful work? Can households afford basic food without accumulating debt? Can small businesses survive rising costs and taxation? Can healthcare and education deliver value without placing an unbearable burden on families?

These questions rarely dominate political speeches because they do not fit neatly into the mechanics of coalition building. They are less dramatic than announcing a new political alliance and less thrilling than presidential speculation. Yet they determine whether campaign promises mean anything once the dust settles.

What makes this moment particularly significant is that Kenya has entered campaign mode unusually early. Long before political parties formally unveil their manifestos, the country is already immersed in speculation about coalitions, succession plans, regional kingpins and electoral calculations. The danger is not simply that politicians begin campaigning prematurely. The danger is that public attention becomes consumed by the next election before the challenges of the present have been adequately confronted.

For ordinary citizens, life does not pause for political strategy. Bills arrive regardless of political seasons. School fees must be paid whether alliances hold or collapse. Businesses must navigate difficult economic conditions regardless of which leaders dominate the headlines. The concerns occupying households are immediate and practical; the concerns dominating political discourse are increasingly long-term and electoral.

This creates a growing disconnect between the language of politics and the language of everyday life. Politicians speak of numbers in terms of votes, percentages and constituencies. Citizens speak of numbers in terms of prices, salaries, debts and household budgets. Both conversations involve arithmetic, but they are calculations with very different consequences.

There is a real hazard in allowing public life to become permanently electoral. When leaders spend years campaigning, governing risks becoming secondary. Policies are framed around political advantage, regions are treated as strategic calculations and public appearances become exercises in power consolidation. Meanwhile, the citizen remains on hold, waiting for better roads, reliable healthcare, accessible employment and an economy where honest work offers a decent chance at a decent life.

The consequences of this disconnect are not merely political. There is a psychological cost to living under persistent economic uncertainty. Many Kenyans find themselves planning less for the future and focusing more on getting through the present. When economic pressure becomes constant, households adjust their expectations downward. Ambitions are postponed, spending is reduced and long-term plans are replaced by short-term survival strategies.

These experiences rarely appear in political speeches or government statistics. Yet they shape profoundly how people understand leadership. A young graduate who spends years searching for employment does not experience the economy as a percentage in a quarterly report. A small trader struggling to keep a business open does not experience taxation as a policy debate. A parent struggling to meet school expenses experiences it as a personal calculation with immediate and painful consequences.

For most Kenyans, governance is not experienced through parliamentary debates or political declarations. It is felt at the supermarket, the petrol station, the matatu stage, the hospital and the school fees office. It is experienced when salaries disappear faster each month and when a basic basket of goods becomes an agonising financial calculation. Can young graduates transition from education to meaningful work? Can households afford basic food without accumulating debt? Can small businesses survive rising costs and taxation? Can healthcare and education deliver value without placing an unbearable burden on families?

Kenyans are not indifferent to politics. They understand that political power controls public resources, legislation and national priorities. But there is a widening gap between being politically engaged and being politically satisfied. A voter can follow every shifting coalition and still wonder what any of it changes at home.

The political class should be careful not to mistake crowd size or campaign enthusiasm for genuine endorsement. Citizens may attend rallies, cheer leaders and debate alliances while carrying deep economic frustrations that no amount of political theatre has resolved. Political excitement and economic satisfaction are entirely different metrics — and conflating them is a mistake Kenya's leaders have made before.

The 2027 election presents a clear challenge: convince voters that politics can meaningfully improve their lives rather than simply determine who occupies office. The most compelling argument in 2027 may not belong to the largest coalition. It may belong to whoever can persuade a discerning and increasingly impatient electorate that government can deliver tangible, measurable results.

That will require more than slogans. It will require explaining not only what a government intends to build, but how those plans will translate into jobs, affordable services, productive businesses and greater economic security. Voters are growing more interested in the distance between a promise and its measurable outcome — and they are growing less forgiving when that distance proves to be vast.

Citizens keep ledgers of their own. They remember unfulfilled promises, rising taxes, climbing living costs, scarce employment, struggling businesses and relentless bills. They remember what was pledged before the vote and what followed after. By the time 2027 arrives, voters may be carrying a more detailed record of their experiences than politicians expect.

While politicians calculate the votes required to secure power, ordinary Kenyans calculate whether their incomes can carry them through another week. While parties count constituencies, families count expenses. While leaders calculate alliances, citizens calculate sacrifices.

Those two calculations will eventually meet at the ballot box.

And when they do, politicians may discover that voters are not simply choosing between parties or personalities. They are passing judgment on their own lived experience.

Politicians may be counting votes for 2027. The people are counting the cost of surviving until then. And when the ballots are finally cast, the most important arithmetic may not be found in coalition agreements or electoral spreadsheets.

It may be found in the accumulated answer to one simple question: did our lives get better?

Politics The setting lent the remarks a charged quality that Ruto's carefully calibrated language sought to navigate. Hichilema's second-term inauguration followed a deeply contested August 13 election

Ruto in Lusaka: 'Political competition may divide choices — it must never divide our destiny'

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto speaking at the National Heroes Stadium, Zambia

President William Ruto yesterday invoked Kenya's 2027 general election on an international stage, using the inauguration of Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema in Lusaka to call on African leaders to ensure that political competition never becomes a source of national rupture — a message that carried as much weight in Nairobi as it did in Lusaka.

Speaking at the National Heroes Stadium before a gathering of regional heads of state, Ruto was deliberate in positioning Kenya not as a model but as a fellow traveller on democracy's uncertain road. "Kenya too will hold a general election next year," he said. "We therefore speak not as spectators, and certainly not as lecturers, but as fellow Africans travelling the same democratic path."

The setting lent the remarks a charged quality that Ruto's carefully calibrated language sought to navigate. Hichilema's second-term inauguration followed a deeply contested August 13 election in which the incumbent secured approximately 60 per cent of the vote against opposition candidate Brian Mundubile's 38 per cent, according to official results. Mundubile rejected the outcome and was unable to mount a legal challenge after Zambia's seven-day presidential petition window closed without a petition being received by the judiciary. He was subsequently arrested alongside his running mate, Makebi Zulu, and charged with treason — a development that drew immediate and sharp international attention to the political environment surrounding the ceremony Ruto was attending.

Election observers had already raised concerns about aspects of the tallying process, including weak verification between digital entries and paper records and delays at certain tallying centres. Hichilema, in his inauguration address, called for political disagreements to be handled peacefully and pledged that his government would engage with opposition ideas where they had merit.

Ruto did not reference the disputed election, Mundubile's arrest or the observer concerns directly. His remarks operated at a higher level of abstraction — but the context ensured that every word was heard through the lens of what had just unfolded in Zambia. When a Kenyan president speaks of preserving national unity through elections while standing at an inauguration shadowed by a jailed opposition leader and international scrutiny of the vote count, the subtext is unavoidable.

His substantive argument was clear and, in isolation, unimpeachable. Democracy on the African continent must deliver more than the ritual of elections, he argued. It must produce political stability, economic opportunity and the institutional credibility that attracts investment and enables long-term planning. "Africa cannot industrialise if every election becomes a moment of national uncertainty," Ruto said. "Businesses cannot plan in environments where political uncertainty persists. Investors require trusted institutions and the rule of law."

The economic framing was characteristic of Ruto's international posture — an attempt to connect democratic governance to the development agenda that African leaders invoke at virtually every multilateral gathering. The argument has genuine merit. The correlation between political instability and economic stagnation is well established across the continent's recent history. Elections that produce disputed outcomes, violent contestation or institutional delegitimisation consistently set back the very development goals that governments campaign on.

But the speech also carried an unmistakable domestic dimension. With Kenya's own election cycle accelerating sharply — opposition coalitions forming, grassroots mobilisation intensifying, political alliances shifting and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission facing serious scrutiny over its procurement decisions — Ruto's words in Lusaka were as much a message to Kenya's political class as they were a contribution to any pan-African democratic discourse.

"We must compete vigorously without becoming enemies. We must disagree without destroying anything. And we must seek victory without excluding," he said. The elegance of the formulation could not entirely obscure the irony that it was delivered by a president whose own political period has been marked by sharp polarisation, the dramatic impeachment of his deputy, allegations of state intimidation of journalists and a deepening confrontation with a growing opposition coalition that has explicitly framed its mission as his removal from power.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, whose impeachment in October 2024 restructured Kenya's political landscape, now leads the Democracy for Citizens Party and sits at the table of the United Alternative Government — the opposition coalition that has signed a unity pact and is actively positioning Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka as its likely presidential candidate. The political terrain Ruto will contest in 2027 is more contested, more fragmented and more ideologically charged than the one he navigated in 2022.

The Zambian experience, read carefully, offers cautionary material for all sides of Kenya's political divide. Hichilema's first term was marked by arrests of opposition figures and press freedom concerns — episodes that his government justified and his critics condemned. Yet he won re-election with a substantial majority, suggesting that a population facing genuine economic challenges will often prioritise delivery over political pluralism, at least in the short term. Whether Kenya's electorate will apply the same calculus to Ruto in 2027 depends enormously on whether the economic conditions that have defined his first term — high cost of living, youth unemployment, controversial taxation and fiscal pressure — improve meaningfully before polling day.

The leaders sharing the Lusaka stage with Ruto yesterday — Presidents Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of Namibia, Duma Boko of Botswana, Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe and Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania — each carry their own democratic records, ranging from genuinely competitive multiparty systems to heavily managed political environments. That Ruto chose to deliver a democratic unity message in this company, at this particular inauguration, will be noted by observers across the region.

"Political competition may divide choices," he said. "It must never divide our destiny."

It was a line worth remembering. Kenya will find out in August 2027 whether its own political class — the president included — was prepared to live by it.

NCIC His stance reflects a broader fragmentation of the Mt Kenya political bloc — one that President William Ruto's coalition can ill afford to ignore as the election draws closer.

Ruku defiant after NCIC grilling over Mt Kenya East split call

BY Charles Muturi
@themtkenyatimes

Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku appeared before the National Cohesion and Integration Commission yesterday over allegations of hate speech and ethnic incitement, emerging unrepentant and doubling down on his call for Mt Kenya East to chart an independent political course ahead of the 2027 general election.

Ruku, who represents the Embu, Tharaka Nithi and Meru bloc within the broader Mt Kenya region, has been arguing that Mt Kenya East has spent more than six decades delivering political support to leaders from Mt Kenya West — a sub-region that has produced three of Kenya's presidents in Jomo Kenyatta, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta — without receiving commensurate development returns.

Far from retreating after the NCIC summons, Ruku sharpened his position immediately after the meeting. "Mt Kenya East will no longer unconditionally stand with other regions. We will do so in our own terms and conditions, irrespective of whether we are working with our West counterparts or the rest of Kenya," he posted on his X account.

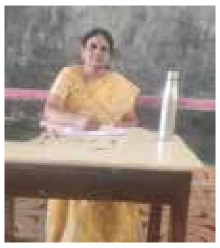
He was equally uncompromising in rejecting the suggestion that his utterances threatened national cohesion. "We have not breached peace or cohesion in the country by demanding respect and what we are owed as development for the past decades. Those offended by our agitation as Mt Kenya East can equally agitate independently and peaceably. We will not relent in our goal," he said.

The NCIC has been systematically reviewing divisive political utterances ahead of the 2027 polls. Ruku joins Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma, Busia Governor Paul Otuoma and Mukurweini MP John Kaguchia among those who have recently answered the commission's summons.

His stance reflects a broader fragmentation of the Mt Kenya political bloc — one that President William Ruto's coalition can ill afford to ignore as the election draws closer.

Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku

The strongest roots grow in the toughest soil



Every hardship creates a stronger achievement.
Roaring waves teach us how to survive difficult moments.
Good parents teach their children respect.
Sincere and dedicated teachers produce brilliant students for the world.
Hard situations develop our problem-solving skills.
Even the toughest tasks can become easier through continuous practice.
Every difficult experience teaches us something new and
makes us stronger.
So, let us face every situation boldly.
It will build a strong mind,
just as the strongest roots grow in the toughest soil.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

Tougher soil

Soft soil, shallow roots,
Storm winds come, tree uproots.
Dry and rocky, roots dig deep,
Cyclone hits, but strong they keep.

Struggles carve you deep,
Through the pain, your character seeps.
Only pressure makes diamonds,
Discipline takes time, no shortcuts.

Household chores done,
Census rounds, not fun.
Teaching classes on the run,
Scorching surveys under the Sun.

The tougher the road,
The stronger you grow.
Life isn't an easy cake,
We live for others' sake.

For the strongest roots
grow in the toughest soil.

RAJITHA D
BT Assistant
GGHSS PADAPPAI
KANCHEEPURAM
TAMIL NADU

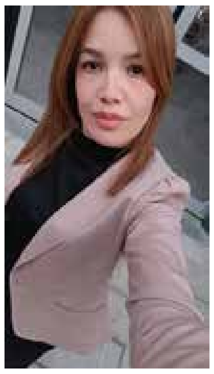
The street performer

When I was a child,
I watched a thousand wonders
a race upon a single wheel,
a walk upon a slender wire,
a dance along a trembling rope,
little monkeys performing their tricks,
tiny drums beating their ancient rhythm,
bicycles turning into flying dreams.
All of it
for the hunger of a belly
no wider than a palm.
We forget the hunger
of the little monkeys
dancing beside him.
In the plate he holds out,
only a few coins fall
while the man before us
performs feats
that could have won Olympic gold.
Yet we never learn
the grandeur of his art.
And those who mock
the poverty of the performer
how could they ever understand
the height of an Olympic gold
when they cannot even see
the gold hidden
inside his hands?

Raj Ganesh

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

I wish...



If only you would hold my hand with tenderness,
Whisper softly,
And tell me of your love...
Fills my arms
With beautiful flowers,
And take me away,
Far, far away...

I wish...
If only you were by my side for a moment,
Dispersing the mist
Of longing thoughts,
Lifting the bag of troubles
From my shoulders,
Leaving no room for doubt
In my heart's feelings...

I wish...
On a night when dusk falls,
You could greet me
With a bouquet of flowers,
Wrap your arms around my waist,
Lift me up for a moment,
And let me taste the sweetness of love...

I wish...
As the evening moon sets over the street,
You could become a peaceful
Night just for me,
Stopping the noise of the world
For a brief moment,
Illuminating
My sleepless night...

I wish...
Holding me tight to your chest for a moment,
You could say,
"You are all I need."
Holding my hands,
Holding them tighter,
If only you could be my "crazy one"
For a lifetime...

I wish...
When gentle breezes blow
And touch my face,
You would gently shield me.
When spring rain washes over my face,
You could stand over me
As an umbrella...

I wish...
If ever I grow weary of the world's worries,
You could be a pillar of support,
Standing shoulder to shoulder beside me.
Like a heroic protector
Offering his shoulder
To rest my head upon,
You could be my sanctuary...

In truth, if you only knew,
Love is not in words,
Nor in eyes that sparkle and smile.
It is not being together
Only in happy moments,
While walking separate paths
Living just for oneself.

Love is standing shoulder to shoulder
By one's side,
Being a companion on the journey
And a trusted confidant.
Overlooking mistakes, big or small,
Holding on tightly,
And never letting go.

Love is—
Simply holding someone close to your heart
And being able to say,
"You are all I need."
Whatever happens in life,
By the decree of fate,
Fighting together
And dying together!

By Amirova Nodira

Feelings in the mouth of a whale

A beautiful voyage through sea
Thrilled ever could be
But adapted to be comfort
And pleasantly with dream swam about
As my eye lashes hugged each other
Slept deeply as a nature lover.
Alas! how am I in this dark cabin?
With sharp edged pillars I've never seen
It's suffocating here!
And vibrated groaning I could hear
Oh my God! am I trapped to assail
"In the mouth of whale"
Faithfully just chanted prayer
Believing God would sway off my fear
With a wild sound it splitted me out
Poor! by a cruise ship it was hurt.
We got to go out miseries in life
As that of whale's mouth is rife
This is a lesson learnt through dream
For faith transforms our dark days to gleam.

G.Sarala.

Compensation The payments draw from two separate compensation mechanisms established under Boeing's agreements with the US Department of Justice

Boeing to pay Kenyan families KSh11.3B over Ethiopian Airlines crash

Nearly seven years after Flight 302 fell from the sky six minutes into its journey, 32 Kenyan families are finally approaching the end of a long and painful legal road.

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

Ethiopian Airlines

Families of 32 Kenyans killed in the March 2019 Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crash are set to receive a combined $87.3M — approximately KSh11.3B — from Boeing-linked victim compensation funds, Chicago-based law firm Ribbeck Law Chartered confirmed yesterday.

The allocation, totalling $87,343,352.60 and averaging roughly $2.73M per victim, follows the conclusion of legal proceedings in the United States. "We have now concluded the legal work on behalf of our clients in the United States, Africa, the Middle East and Asia," said Manuel von Ribbeck of the representing firm.

The payments draw from two separate compensation mechanisms established under Boeing's agreements with the US Department of Justice over the two fatal Boeing 737 MAX disasters. A 2021 deferred prosecution agreement created an initial $500M victim fund. A subsequent 2025 non-prosecution agreement — reached after Boeing faced renewed legal jeopardy — required the manufacturer to provide an additional $444.5M, to be divided equally among estates of the 346 people killed across both crashes. Boeing additionally committed to spending $455M on compliance, safety and quality improvement programmes, alongside appointing an independent consultant to assess progress.

Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crashed near Bishoftu, Ethiopia, on March 10, 2019, approximately six minutes after departing Addis Ababa bound for Nairobi. All 157 passengers and crew members aboard, representing more than 30 nationalities, perished — among them 32 Kenyans, 18 Canadians, nine Ethiopians, eight Italians, eight Chinese nationals and eight Americans. Five months earlier, Lion Air Flight 610 had crashed into the Java Sea on October 29, 2018, shortly after departing Jakarta, killing all 189 people aboard.

Investigations into both disasters concluded that Boeing's Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System — MCAS — played a decisive causal role in both accidents. The MCAS software, designed to prevent the aircraft from stalling, repeatedly pushed the nose of both planes downward against pilot inputs, overpowering the crews before either flight crew could regain control. The findings triggered the worldwide grounding of the entire 737 MAX fleet and exposed fundamental failures in aircraft design, pilot training, regulatory oversight and the certification systems governing new commercial aircraft.

For the Kenyan families, the settlement represents not just financial restitution but the formal conclusion of a legal battle that has stretched across nearly seven years of grief, litigation and institutional accountability. Many lost breadwinners, parents and children in a disaster that unfolded in six minutes and was later shown to have been preventable had Boeing acted on known safety concerns before either aircraft entered commercial service.

Boeing's liability extends well beyond the compensation funds. The company's reputational and commercial damage from the 737 MAX crisis has been extensive and ongoing, with production delays, regulatory scrutiny and leadership changes reshaping the manufacturer's trajectory throughout the years since the crashes.

For 32 Kenyan families, however, the calculation has always been simpler and far more personal — and it ends not with a corporate press release, but with a payment that no amount of money can truly make whole.

Love **He is not investing in you. He is investing in the moment you feel too indebted, too guilty, too entangled to say no. His money is not a gift**

When love learned to wait: The difference between being bought and being built

One man will shower you with millions on the first day because he wants your body. Another will take his time to know your soul because he wants your future. Learn to tell the difference.

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

There is a moment many young women know too well. A man you have just met makes your phone light up — a message, then a notification. The transfer is anything but small. A new phone, rent covered, a trip you never imagined — all before he even knows your favourite food or your childhood fear.

It feels like a fairytale. It feels like love has finally arrived in a grand, generous rush.

But sometimes what feels like love at first sight is not love at all. It is a shortcut. And shortcuts have never led anyone home.

Real love is not in a hurry. When a man truly sees a future with you, he does not rush to impress your eyes — he moves carefully to understand your heart. He wants to know how you love when no one is watching, how you speak when you are upset, how you treat people who can offer you nothing in return, what makes you laugh properly and what you dream of becoming. That kind of knowing takes time. It takes long conversations, quiet observations, shared moments and little tests of character. It is slow. But it is safe.

The other kind of man knows he cannot win that slower, more honest race. So he changes the game entirely. He replaces knowing you with paying for you. He calculates that if he gives you in two days what a sincere man would work toward building with you over two years, you will become confused. You will mistake his speed for seriousness.

It is not seriousness. It is strategy.

He is not investing in you. He is investing in the moment you feel too indebted, too guilty, too entangled to say no. His money is not a gift. It is a key — one he hopes will lock you in before you have had time to think clearly.

Now consider the quieter man. He did not arrive with fireworks. He arrived with questions. He asked about your family, your faith, your future. He talked about growing together, building slowly. He said: let me know you first. And because his love did not come with a receipt, you thought it was not enough. You called him unserious. You mistook his patience for poverty and his restraint for indifference.

That man was not poor. He was prudent. He was not withholding love — he was protecting it from becoming a transaction. He understood something important: a woman who can be won with money today can be won by another man with more money tomorrow. So he was not looking for someone to impress. He was looking for a partner to keep. He wanted to pay your bride price, not just your salon bill. He wanted to build you a home, not just book you a hotel room. His love was quiet — but it was real. And the noise of fast money drowned it out.

Nobody shows the next part on social media.

Months later, the man who gave you the world in a week now reminds you daily that he is your world. The gifts have become rules — who you can see, where you can go, what you can say. The money that once felt like freedom has become a beautifully decorated cage. You try to reach the patient man. He has long since healed and moved forward, with someone who recognised what you could not see in time — that his slowness was not weakness but strength.

You thought you were avoiding struggle. Instead, you traded growing together for suffering alone.

This is written with love, not judgment.

If it is moving too fast, slow down and reflect. Real love is not desperate to possess you or purchase you — it is desperate to know you. The right person will not rush to access your body; he will invest time in understanding your soul.

Character is the real currency. Anyone can send money. But can he keep his word? Can he remain faithful when you are not present? Can he admit when he is wrong and lead with wisdom? Money fades. Character remains.

Do not penalise a good man for being careful. A man who chooses to understand your character before committing his resources to your future is a builder. Builders take time to lay foundations. Those in a hurry simply paint the walls.

You are priceless — not for sale. The moment you put a price on your heart, you will always find yourself going to the highest bidder. And the highest bidder is rarely the best partner, the most devoted father or the truest friend.

To every sincere man who has been overlooked because you chose to love patiently — hold firm. Your love is the kind that heals families and builds generations.

And to you, if you feel trapped in a fast-money relationship right now — it is not too late to choose differently. You can choose peace over pressure. You can choose a love that waits over a love that simply pays.

The man who truly loves you will never need to buy you on the first day. He will wait, he will learn you, he will earn you — and then he will spend the rest of his life showing you that waiting was the best decision he ever made.

You are worth more than money at first sight. You are worth a love that lasts.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A reflection of the strength and positivity of African women and men
Compiled by Joy Zenz
Editor Shamlal Puri
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Yoke **The violence began long before 1967. The East Africa Order-in-Council of 1897 and its successors already subordinated "native law and custom"**

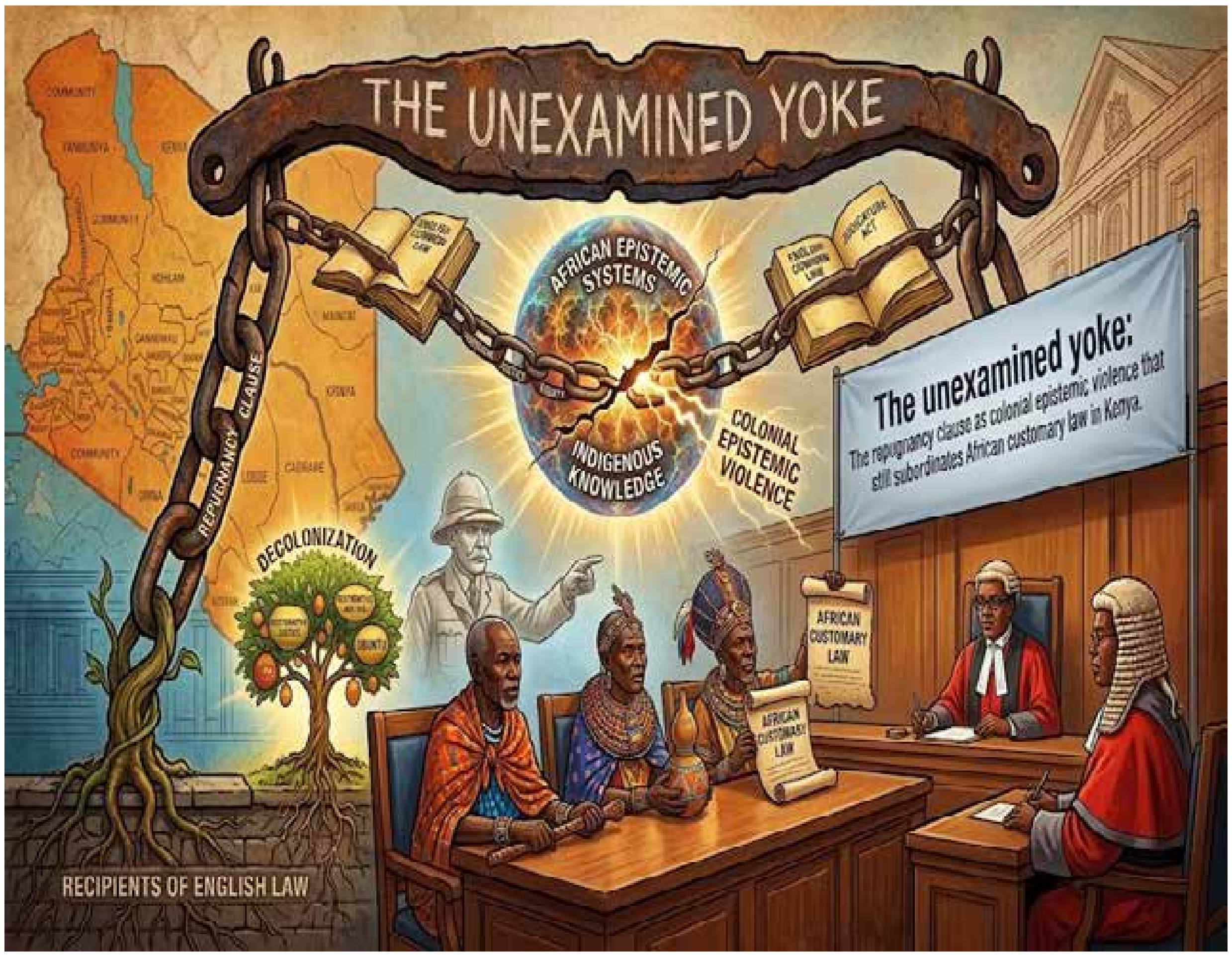
The unexamined yoke: The repugnancy clause as colonial epistemic violence that still subordinates African customary law in Kenya

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes

In 1967, four years after independence, Kenya's Parliament enacted the Judicature Act. Section 3(2) still declares that the courts "shall be guided by African customary law in civil cases in which one or more of the parties is subject to it or affected by it, so far as it is applicable and is not repugnant to justice and morality or inconsistent with any written law." That single, bland sentence is not a neutral filter. It is the legal residue of an empire that decided African ways of knowing, living, marrying, inheriting, and repairing harm must first pass through the unexamined sieve of British conscience before they could count as law. The clause remains on the statute books today. It is not a historical curiosity. It is an active instrument of epistemic violence.

The violence began long before 1967. The East Africa Order-in-Council of 1897 and its successors already subordinated "native law and custom" to the requirement that it not be repugnant to justice and morality. Colonial judges were candid about whose morality mattered. In 1938 one of them stated without apology: "I have no doubt whatsoever that the only standard of justice and morality which a British court in Africa can apply is its own British standard." The standard was never examined; it was simply imposed. African polygyny became "wife purchase." Bridewealth, a complex system of alliance and obligation, was reduced to commercial transaction. Compensation for homicide under Maasai custom was struck down. Practices that had ordered social life for generations were declared, by fiat, outside the pale of civilisation.

This was never merely the rejection of particular customs. It was the systematic demotion of an entire epistemology. African communities possessed sophisticated bodies of knowledge about kinship, land,



The unexamined yoke

conflict, and responsibility. These knowledge systems were oral, contextual, relational, and evolving. Colonial law treated them as primitive raw material that required purification by the superior solvent of English equity and Christian-influenced morality. The result was a hierarchy of knowing: the colonizer's categories sat at the apex; African categories survived only by permission. That hierarchy is the classic signature of epistemic violence the refusal to recognise another people's capacity to generate valid knowledge about justice.

The phrase "justice and morality" is itself a masterpiece of colonial sleight of hand. It pretends to universality while remaining stubbornly particular. Whose justice? Whose morality? The clause never defined the terms. It left the definition to the discretion of judges trained in the Inns of Court, men who had absorbed the civilizing mission as common sense. The same discretion was later inherited by post-independence Kenyan judges. The result is a continuing pattern in which African customary law enters the courtroom already on probation. It must prove it is not "repugnant." English common law and statutes of general application need prove nothing of the sort. The asymmetry is structural and deliberate.

Consider the emotional and material cost. For generations, families have watched courts dismiss the very norms that ordered their marriages, their succession, their dispute resolution. A widow who relies on customary mechanisms of support may find those mechanisms declared invalid. A community that seeks restorative justice according to its own logic is told that only the adversarial, individualist model of the common law qualifies as true justice. The message is clear and wounding: your ancestors' wisdom is provisional; the colonizer's is presumptively permanent. That message does not vanish because the flag has changed colour. It settles in the consciousness of the society as a quiet, corrosive doubt about the legitimacy of its own past.

The 2010 Constitution offered a chance to break the yoke. Article 2(4) subjects all law, including customary law, to the Constitution itself. Article 11 recognises culture. Article 159 encourages the use of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Yet the Judicature Act's repugnancy clause continues to sit in the hierarchy of norms, a colonial ghost that still demands African law justify itself against an undefined external standard. The Constitution's supremacy is real, but the residual language of repugnancy keeps the old hierarchy psychologically and procedurally alive. Courts continue to reach for it. Scholars continue to debate it. Communities continue to live under its shadow.

This is not a call for the uncritical romanticization of every custom. Some practices have caused and continue to cause harm, particularly to women and children. The answer to that harm is not the colonial filter. The answer is internal critique, democratic deliberation, and the Constitution's own bill of rights applied on equal terms. To keep the repugnancy clause is to insist that African societies remain perpetual pupils, forever requiring an external examiner. It is to deny the possibility that African moral and legal thought can generate its own standards of justice and refine them over time.

The deeper insight is this: the clause is not merely a technical rule of conflict of laws. It is a technology of epistemic subordination that has outlived the formal empire. It trains the legal mind to treat African customary law as suspect until proven otherwise. It trains the citizen to regard indigenous knowledge as second-class. It preserves, in the most intimate sphere of law family, land, succession, conflict the colonial ranking of civilizations. That ranking was always a lie. It remains a lie. Nevertheless, the statute still speaks it.

Parliament must act. The Judicature Act should be amended to remove the repugnancy language entirely. Customary law, like every other source of law, should stand or fall by consistency with the Constitution and with written statutes enacted by a sovereign people. The judiciary must stop treating "justice and morality" as a free-floating, unexamined British inheritance and begin to articulate Kenyan standards grounded in the lived experience and evolving values of Kenyan communities. Legal educators must teach the history of the clause not as neutral legal technique but as an instrument of epistemic conquest. Civil society, elders' councils, and community organisations must reclaim the authority to debate and reform their own customs without first seeking the approval of a colonial ghost.

The words themselves matter. "Repugnant" is a visceral term. It suggests something that causes physical disgust, something that offends the senses of the civilized observer. Applied to the legal traditions of an entire continent's peoples, it is an insult that has been allowed to harden into doctrine. Enough. The time for polite coexistence with this language has passed. Kenya cannot claim intellectual and moral sovereignty while its courts still measure African justice against an unexamined foreign yardstick. The yoke is visible. The hand that can lift it is Kenyan. The only remaining question is whether the will exists to do so.

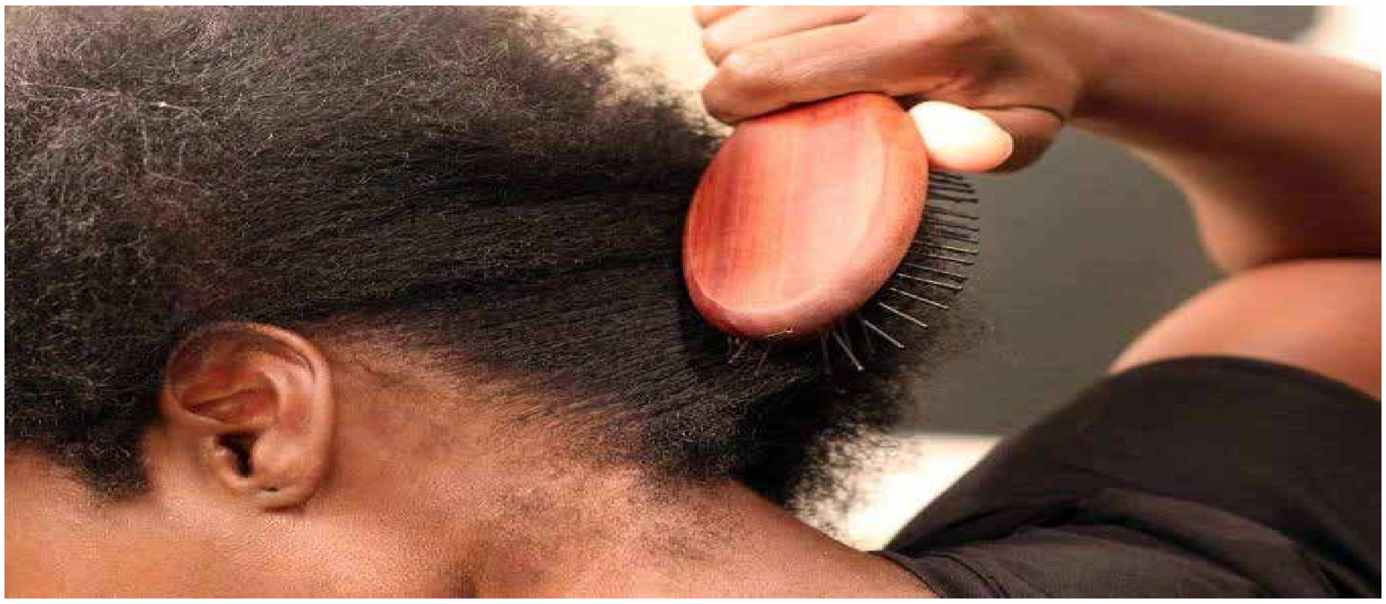
The writer is a social commentator.

Hair management Kenya's environment plays a significant role. Many people live and work in dusty towns and cities, spending hours commuting on busy roads or travelling in open vehicles

How often should you wash your hair? It depends on your scalp, not a trend

The answer Kenyan women have been searching for has nothing to do with beauty rules — and everything to do with listening to their own heads.

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes



Hair management

There is no universal answer to how often Kenyan women should wash their hair — the right routine depends on scalp condition, hair texture, lifestyle and the products being used, not on salon advice or social media trends.

For many Kenyans, washing hair is far more than a hygiene routine. It is tied to identity, confidence, beauty and personal presentation. A fresh haircut, neatly styled braids, clean natural hair or a well-maintained weave can transform how a person feels and how they are perceived. Yet the question of how often to wash continues to divide households, salons and online conversations across the country.

Some believe hair must be washed daily to remain clean. Others insist that frequent washing strips the scalp of its natural oils, causing dryness, breakage and unnecessary hair loss. Many women wearing braids or other protective hairstyles go several weeks without washing, while some young professionals shampoo almost daily because of exercise, dust, heat or an oily scalp. Both extremes carry risks that are worth understanding.

Kenya's environment plays a significant role. Many people live and work in dusty towns and cities, spending hours commuting on busy roads or travelling in open vehicles. Those in dry regions contend with dust settling on the hair and scalp, while people in hot and humid areas sweat more frequently. Regular outdoor activity and heat exposure can make the scalp feel oily and uncomfortable — and for those people, more frequent washing makes sense.

The scalp naturally produces sebum, an oily substance that protects the skin and prevents excessive dryness. When this oil combines with sweat, dust, styling creams, hair food, gels and other products, it can create a heavy layer of buildup that leaves hair looking dull, greasy or lifeless. The scalp may become itchy and flakes may appear. This is particularly relevant in Kenya, where it is common to layer several products simultaneously — hair food, oils, moisturisers, gels and edge-control cream — in pursuit of growth or neatness. More product does not always mean healthier hair.

People with fine or straight hair tend to notice oil more quickly, since sebum travels easily from scalp to ends. They may need to wash two or three times a week. Those with tightly coiled or natural African hair face a different reality: the bends and twists in the hair prevent oil from travelling far from the roots, leaving scalp sufficiently moisturised while the lengths remain dry. For these women, washing once a week or every seven to ten days may be entirely appropriate. Washing too frequently with a strong shampoo can worsen dryness and increase breakage.

Protective hairstyles deserve particular attention. Braids, twists, cornrows and locs reduce daily manipulation, but they do not eliminate the need for scalp care. Sweat, oil, dust and product residue still collect beneath the style. Persistent itching, an unpleasant odour, visible flakes or heavy buildup around the roots are all signals that the scalp needs gentle cleansing — even when the hairstyle is still intact.

One popular idea — that you can "train" your hair to produce less oil by extending the time between wash days — has little scientific basis. Sebum production is governed by biology, not habit. Waiting longer between washes may simply allow dirt and residue to accumulate, making an uncomfortable scalp worse. If the scalp is itchy, heavy or producing visible flakes, it needs to be cleansed — not endured.

The choice of shampoo matters equally. If the scalp feels unusually tight or dry after washing, the product may be too harsh. Persistent dandruff, redness, painful bumps or unexplained hair loss should prompt professional medical advice rather than another product purchase.

The right question is not how many days everyone should wait between washes. It is simpler and more personal than that: what does my scalp need today? A healthy scalp feels comfortable, not tight. Hair should feel manageable, not brittle. The routine may shift with the seasons, activity levels, hairstyle and products. The scalp communicates through oiliness, dryness, itching and discomfort. Those signals — not beauty trends, salon myths or social media challenges — should always guide the answer.

Ashford Kimani is a teacher of English and Literature who writes on education and social affairs.

Health **The question is not whether Pfizer is a respected multinational pharmaceutical company. It is. Nor is there any serious argument against making cancer treatment cheaper**

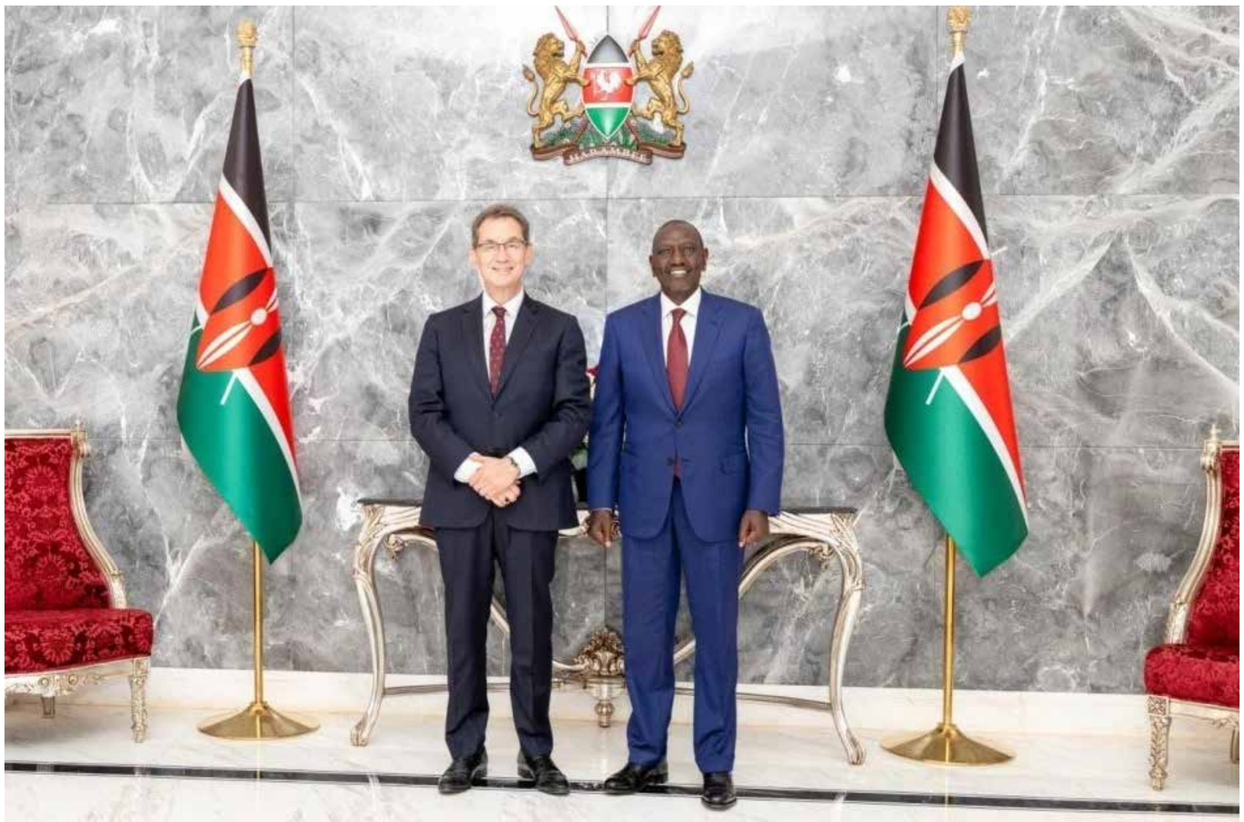
The Pfizer question: Why Kenya must welcome cheaper cancer drugs without surrendering its vigilance

BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

Cancer does not knock gently on the door of a Kenyan family. It arrives with fear, uncertainty and, all too often, a financial burden capable of destroying everything a family has spent a lifetime building. A diagnosis can turn a home into a fundraising centre, force the sale of ancestral land, drain retirement savings and leave families borrowing from relatives and strangers in the desperate hope of purchasing another cycle of treatment. For far too many Kenyans, the battle against cancer is therefore fought on two fronts: against the disease itself and against the unbearable cost of staying alive.

That is why any credible effort to dramatically reduce the price of cancer medicines deserves serious attention and genuine optimism. If the new arrangement involving Pfizer can genuinely reduce the cost of certain cancer medicines from hundreds of thousands of shillings—and, in some reported cases, close to KSh1 million—to below KSh50,000 per treatment cycle, its significance for Kenyan families cannot be overstated. It could represent one of the most consequential breakthroughs in access to cancer treatment in the country's recent history.

But when a promise is this significant, scrutiny must be equally serious. Kenyans should welcome cheaper, life-saving medicines. At the same time, they are entitled to ask exactly how those medicines will be delivered, who will benefit, how long the prices will remain affordable and what protections exist against secrecy, abuse or excessive dependence on a foreign pharmaceutical company. Hope is indispensable to a cancer patient. But in the management of public healthcare, hope must never be permitted to replace accountability.



President William Ruto with Pfizer Chairman and Chief Executive Albert Bourla at State House

The question is not whether Pfizer is a respected multinational pharmaceutical company. It is. Nor is there any serious argument against making cancer treatment cheaper. Kenya desperately needs affordable medicines. The deeper question is whether Kenya possesses sufficiently strong institutions to protect the public interest throughout the life of this agreement.

What exactly has the country signed? Which medicines are covered? What quantities will be supplied? What is the actual pricing formula? How long are the reduced prices guaranteed? What happens when the agreement expires? Are there exclusivity provisions that could affect competition or future procurement? And, perhaps more importantly, will this partnership strengthen Kenya's long-term pharmaceutical capacity or merely make the country more dependent on the companies that manufacture the medicines it needs? These are not hostile questions. They are responsible questions.

They become even more important when multinational pharmaceutical companies operate within countries where public procurement and healthcare governance have repeatedly faced questions about transparency and accountability. Kenya's recent experience offers ample reason for caution. The country has endured major controversies surrounding medical procurement, public supply chains and healthcare financing. KEMSA has previously faced serious audit and procurement concerns, while the transition to the Social Health Authority has generated substantial public debate over major technology contracts, medical equipment arrangements and the management of public resources.

Whether every allegation surrounding these institutions is ultimately proven is not the only issue. The deeper problem is the erosion of public trust. Kenyans have repeatedly witnessed impressive announcements followed by difficult questions about implementation, contracts, payments and accountability. It is therefore unreasonable to expect citizens to abandon their right to scrutiny simply because a healthcare initiative is presented as a miracle.

The historical record should also make Kenya wiser, particularly when considering Pfizer's controversial 1996 clinical trial during a meningitis epidemic in Kano, Nigeria. The company tested the experimental antibiotic trovafloxacin, known as Trovan, on children affected by the epidemic. Pfizer has consistently maintained that the trial was conducted with appropriate approvals and consent and has denied wrongdoing. However, subsequent investigations, litigation and academic examinations raised serious ethical questions concerning informed consent and the circumstances surrounding the study.

The controversy generated years of legal disputes and ultimately led to a settlement with Kano State, leaving behind a legacy that extended far beyond the courtroom. It created a deep and lasting problem of public mistrust. The lesson from Kano should not be turned into a permanent indictment of Pfizer, nor should history be distorted into an unfair assertion that the company deliberately sought to harm African children. Corporations, governments and institutions can learn from past controversies and improve their practices. But the episode should not be forgotten either. Its most important lesson is about the importance of accountability when powerful institutions and vulnerable populations meet.

Trust cannot simply be announced. It must be earned. Kenya should therefore welcome Pfizer's initiative while demanding an exceptionally high standard of transparency. Parliament, in particular, must refuse to become a ceremonial spectator to a major healthcare transaction. Its constitutional responsibility is not to applaud a cheaper medicine deal. Its responsibility is to interrogate it thoroughly on behalf of the millions of citizens whose taxes, health and lives are implicated.

Every medicine covered by the agreement should have a publicly verifiable international reference price, a transparent Kenyan acquisition price and a clearly established final cost to the patient. Kenyans should be able to determine whether the promised savings genuinely reach hospitals and patients or disappear somewhere between the manufacturer, government agencies, distributors, insurers and healthcare providers.

There must also be clarity about the sustainability of the arrangement. Cheap quality medicines today are welcome, but Kenya must ask what happens tomorrow. If lower prices depend entirely upon a particular international company's continued goodwill, then the country may be solving today's crisis while postponing tomorrow's vulnerability.

This is where the conversation must move beyond access and towards pharmaceutical sovereignty. There is a fundamental difference between importing affordable medicines and developing the national capacity to manufacture medicines. Kenya can celebrate lower prices while remaining permanently dependent on foreign producers for the drugs that determine the survival of its citizens. That may provide immediate relief, but it does not automatically create long-term health security.

The real opportunity is therefore to use partnerships such as this one to build Kenya's domestic pharmaceutical capacity. Any meaningful commitment to technology transfer must be clearly defined. Will Kenyan manufacturers receive access to relevant production technologies? Will scientists and pharmaceutical professionals receive specialised training? Will research institutions benefit from meaningful partnerships? Will local manufacturers eventually develop the capacity to produce more sophisticated medicines, or will Kenya remain a market that merely imports, distributes and packages products

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Men's mental health: A crisis that belongs to all of us

When Kenyan men suffer in silence, the damage rarely stays with them — it travels straight into families, workplaces and communities

Behind the image of the provider, the protector, the man who has it all together, many Kenyan men are quietly breaking down. And because men make up half of every family, workplace and community, what happens to them never stays private.

Globally, men are four times more likely to die by suicide than women. In Kenya, hospitals and helplines report a rising number of men aged 25 to 45 seeking help for depression, anxiety and substance abuse — typically after a crisis has already consumed them. Job loss, financial pressure, relationship breakdown and the cultural instruction that real men do not cry remain the familiar drivers.

"Many men come in only when things have collapsed — marriage, job, health," says Nairobi psychiatrist James Mwangi. "By then the damage has spread to children, colleagues and the community."

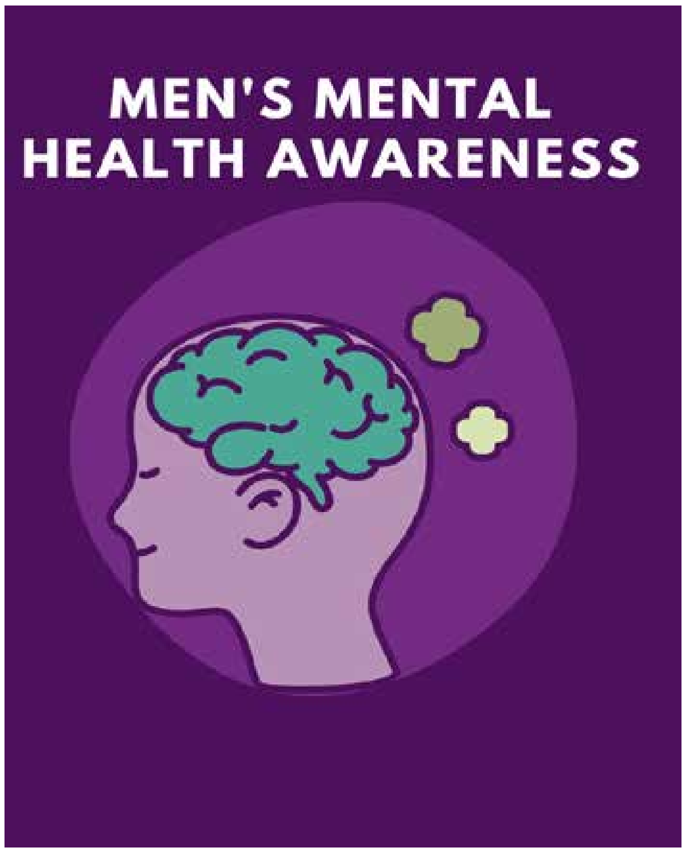
The consequences are measurable. When fathers struggle with untreated depression, it surfaces as irritability, withdrawal or domestic violence. Children in those homes are more likely to underperform in school and develop their own mental health challenges. In workplaces, where men comprise roughly 70 per cent of Kenya's formal workforce, burnout and absenteeism quietly drain productivity. The Stanbic Purchasing Managers Index flagged stress-related productivity loss as a growing concern in 2026. Globally, depression and anxiety cost economies over $1 trillion annually in lost output. In Kenyan households, a man unable to work due to mental illness can push an entire family into poverty.

Men avoid seeking help for reasons that are structural as much as cultural. Stigma remains fierce — asking for help is still widely read as weakness. Most support groups and therapy campaigns are designed for women. Cost, time and limited awareness of available services close the remaining gaps.

Progress is being made. Safaricom and KCB have introduced Employee Assistance Programmes with counselling access. Barazas, boda boda groups and church men's fellowships are hosting conversations on stress and fatherhood. Befrienders Kenya and LVCT Health report more male callers. The Mental Health Amendment Act 2022 pushes for workplace mental health policies, including for men in high-risk occupations.

But institutions alone are insufficient. Every person can contribute. Ask the men in your life how they are — and wait for a real answer. Frame therapy as coaching for the mind, the same way gym work is coaching for the body. Teach boys emotional literacy early. Employers should offer mental health days, peer support and train managers to recognise burnout before it becomes collapse.

A society cannot be well while half its population suffers in silence. When men are supported, families stabilise, workplaces become safer and communities grow stronger. Mental health is not a women's issue or a men's issue. It is a human one — and the cost of ignoring it is one Kenya can no longer afford.



The Pfizer question: Why Kenya must welcome cheaper cancer drugs without surrendering its vigilance

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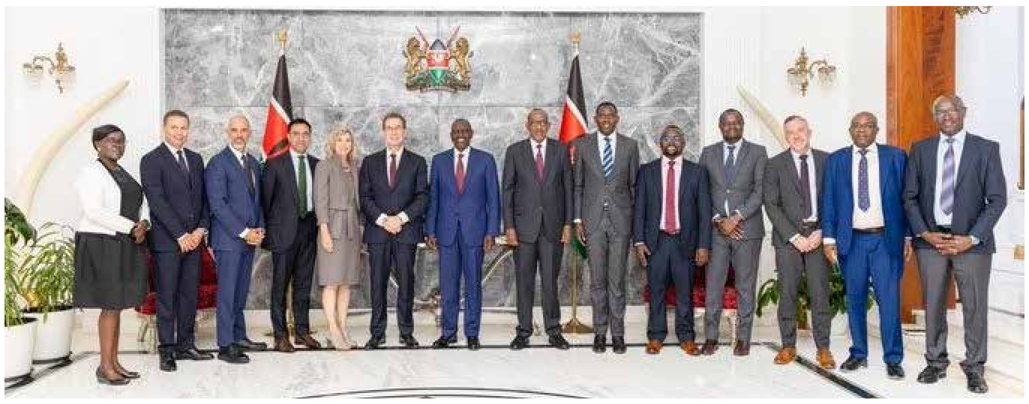
developed elsewhere? A genuine development partnership should leave Kenya stronger than it found it.

An independent public-interest monitoring framework is therefore essential. Treatment outcomes should be monitored. Stock-outs should be publicly reported. Distribution margins should be transparent. Technology-transfer commitments should contain measurable milestones rather than vague promises. Parliament should receive regular reports, while the Auditor-General should have full access to all financial records involving public resources. Commercial confidentiality must never become a convenient curtain behind which public money and public health are hidden.

Most importantly, the true measure of this partnership will not be found in the grandeur of its launch, the sophistication of its press statements or the applause that follows a presidential announcement. It will be found in the oncology ward. It will be found in the hands of a doctor prescribing treatment and in the life of a frightened patient wondering whether they can afford another month of care.

A cancer patient does not care about the elegance of an international agreement. They care whether the medicine is available when the oncologist prescribes it. They care whether the healthcare system will pay for it, whether the hospital will demand additional money and whether treatment will continue without interruption. For that patient, affordable healthcare is not an economic statistic. It is the difference between despair and another chance at life.

The Pfizer agreement therefore deserves neither blind celebration nor automatic condemnation. It deserves something far more valuable: rigorous, independent and forensic public scrutiny combined with an unwavering commitment to making life-saving medicines accessible to every Kenyan who needs them.


President William Ruto with Pfizer Chairman and Chief Executive Albert Bourla at State House

If the promised transformation in cancer medicine prices is real, sustainable and protected by a transparent contractual framework, Kenya should not hide the evidence. Let the prices be published. Let Parliament interrogate the agreement. Let independent institutions audit its implementation. Let doctors, hospitals and patients confirm that the medicines are actually reaching those whose lives depend on them.

As the late physician and humanitarian Paul Farmer famously observed, "The idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world." For Kenya, that observation carries a profound moral challenge. Cancer treatment must cease to be a privilege determined by the size of one's bank account. But the promise of affordable treatment must equally be protected by transparency, accountability and institutions strong enough to ensure that no Kenyan's hope becomes another casualty of secrecy, corruption or poor governance.

Kenya should embrace the opportunity. But it must do so with its eyes fully open. Cheaper cancer medicines can save lives. Strong institutions can protect the integrity of the system that delivers them.

In the fight against cancer, hope is essential. But when public money, powerful corporations and vulnerable lives meet, hope alone is never enough. The first duty of government is not simply to promise hope. It is to make that hope real, affordable, sustainable and verifiable.

Sports >> ***After two decades, two Copa Américas and a World Cup, the greatest player of his generation has finally laid down the blue and white shirt.**

Messi bids farewell to Argentina: 'I don't have anything more to give'

By **Pascal Okoth**

Lionel Messi yesterday announced his retirement from the Argentina national team, ending an international career spanning more than 20 years and confirming what many had long suspected — that the curtain was falling on the most decorated chapter in Argentine football history.

The 39-year-old made the announcement in a deeply personal message that blended pride, gratitude and undisguised pain. He revealed he had written it shortly after the final on July 21 but had held back, needing time and reflection before making it public. Events surrounding his father in the weeks since, he said, had strengthened his conviction that the moment had come.

"After all this time since the final, after thinking about it a lot, I want to tell everyone that I'm retiring from the national team," Messi wrote.

The decision closes a chapter that was never straightforward. For much of his international career, Messi carried the weight of a nation's expectations while absorbing its frustrations. The 2014 World Cup final defeat to Germany, the Copa América final losses that seemed to pile up in the mid-2010s — each one added to a narrative that questioned whether he would ever deliver for Argentina the way he did for club football.

The redemption, when it came, was total. Messi captained Argentina to Copa América glory in 2021, ending the country's 28-year wait for a senior international trophy. Twelve months later, he produced what many regard as the greatest individual World Cup performance in modern history, leading Argentina to the title in Qatar in 2022 in a final against France that will be replayed and debated for generations. Further international success followed, cementing a legacy that once seemed in danger of being defined by its near-misses.

"I swear I always gave everything, not only in these last few years when we won everything, but before that too," he wrote — a quiet but pointed response to those who once questioned his commitment to the national cause.

Now, he said, it was time for others to carry the responsibility. "There are great young players coming through who deserve to be here," he wrote, acknowledging that the transition was as much his gift to the next generation as it was his farewell.

The emotional pull of the message was impossible to miss. Messi did not simply announce a retirement — he described a love affair drawing to a close. "I love, I loved, and I will always love being part of the national team," he wrote. "There isn't much time left, and different chapters are coming to an end. This is one that hurts me a lot."

He thanked his family, his coaches, his teammates and the directors who supported him through two decades of triumphs and heartbreak. But his most tender words were reserved for the Argentine supporters — the millions who stood by him in the difficult years and erupted alongside him when the wait finally ended.

"Thank you for all the love during these 20 years. I'm going to miss hearing you from the inside. Now I'll be one of you, always supporting from the outside, in the good times and even more in the bad ones."

He concluded with the words that have defined his relationship with the country throughout his life.

"Thank you, God, for making me Argentine. Vamos Argentina."

The boy from Rosario who arrived in international football as a teenager carrying impossible expectations leaves as his country's greatest footballing icon — burdened, tested, redeemed and ultimately triumphant. He endured the criticism, absorbed the defeats and stood at the summit of world football long enough to silence every doubt.

"I gave everything I had," he wrote. "I don't have anything more to give."

For an entire generation of Argentine supporters, those words will resonate long after the blue and white shirt is finally folded away. A legend. A captain. A world champion. And now, watching from the stands.

Lionel Messi

Sports >> *Manchester City's pursuit of the Argentine World Cup winner signals Guardiola's most ambitious midfield rebuild in years — and leaves Chelsea counting the cost of another spectacular sale.

City smash British record with £125m Fernández swoop from Chelsea

Manchester City yesterday agreed a £125 million deal to sign Argentine midfielder Enzo Fernández from Chelsea, shattering the British transfer record and delivering Pep Guardiola one of the most coveted midfielders in world football ahead of the new season.

The agreement, reportedly approved by Chelsea on Tuesday afternoon, clears the way for Fernández to complete his move to the Etihad Stadium and puts his signature on what would become the most expensive transfer in British football history. Contracts are understood to be at the final stage, with the formalities expected to be concluded imminently.

The fee is staggering by any measure. When Chelsea signed Fernández from Benfica in January 2023 for what was then a British record of £106.8 million, the football world collectively raised an eyebrow. That figure has now been surpassed by the very club selling him — a remarkable footnote in a transfer story that has moved quickly and at enormous financial scale. For Chelsea, it represents a significant profit on a player purchased less than three years ago. For Manchester City, it represents something altogether different: a declaration of intent.

Fernández arrived at Stamford Bridge off the back of one of the most celebrated individual World Cup performances of 2022, when his contributions helped Argentina end their 36-year wait for the tournament and confirmed Lionel Messi's place in the pantheon. He arrived in London as one of the most exciting midfielders of his generation. He leaves having delivered on much of that promise, establishing himself as a consistent and technically imposing presence in Chelsea's engine room.

His qualities are well understood at the highest level. Fernández is not a midfielder who catches the eye through individual brilliance alone. He controls matches through intelligence — reading space, recycling possession cleanly, pressing with conviction and contributing in both defensive and offensive phases without sacrificing his positional discipline. His technical quality and passing range are exceptional. His work rate, particularly without the ball, is the kind that Guardiola demands as an absolute minimum from every player in his system.

That profile makes him a near-perfect fit for City. Guardiola's side have been navigating a midfield transition for the better part of two seasons, and while they have managed it more competently than most clubs manage their strongest periods, there has been an identifiable gap at the elite level. Kevin De Bruyne, now 34, can no longer be expected to carry the creative burden across an entire campaign. Rodri's injury absences have highlighted the squad's reliance on a single player to anchor the midfield structure. Fernández addresses both concerns simultaneously — he offers the technical sophistication to operate as a creative hub while providing the defensive foundation that has sometimes been missing.

His arrival would also reshape City's midfield hierarchy. Mateo Kovačić, Matheus Nunes and Kalvin Phillips have all occupied the space that Fernández would now make his own, and the competition for places that Guardiola values so highly would intensify considerably. For a squad targeting a return to Premier League dominance and a renewed challenge in the Champions League, the addition of a player of Fernández's calibre sends an unmistakable message to their rivals.

Enzo Fernández.

For Chelsea, the calculus is more complicated. Selling a 24-year-old midfielder of Fernández's quality to a direct competitor — regardless of the profit margin — represents a significant sporting loss. The argument that the money can be reinvested will carry weight in the boardroom. Whether it carries equal weight in the dressing room, and among supporters who have watched the club spend lavishly on a squad that has yet to consistently challenge for the title, is a different matter.

The broader context of the deal is equally striking. Premier League clubs continue to set and reset financial benchmarks at a pace that separates English football further from its European competitors. A £125 million transfer for a midfielder — not a striker, not a marquee forward — underlines the scale of the commercial advantage that English clubs currently enjoy. Whether that advantage is being converted into sustained on-pitch success remains the central question for City's rivals heading into the new campaign.

For now, Fernández is heading to the Etihad. And English football has a new transfer record.

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Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X: The last of a dying breed

By: John Irungu Maina
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Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X

By the time Mitsubishi unveiled the Lancer Evolution X in 2007, the name carried a weight that few performance cars could match. Nine generations had already established the Evo as a rally-bred weapon, and the tenth arrived with one deeply consequential assignment: carry that legacy into a new era without losing what made the car legendary. It succeeded. And then it became the last one.

At the mechanical heart of the Evo X was Mitsubishi's 4B11T engine — a 2.0-litre turbocharged and intercooled four-cylinder that replaced the legendary 4G63T powering previous generations. It was the biggest mechanical change in Evolution history, and it was not universally welcomed at first. The new unit was lighter, built around an aluminium cylinder block, and delivered the punch that enthusiasts expected from the badge. But the numbers were never really the point. The character came from how the engine delivered its power — with urgency, precision and an immediacy that rewarded a committed driver.

What truly defined the Evo X, however, was Mitsubishi's Super All-Wheel Control system. S-AWC was not simply a means of preventing wheelspin. It used electronics and active torque management to influence how the car behaved through corners — keeping it composed under aggressive inputs, maximising traction on difficult surfaces and giving the driver a level of confidence that felt almost conspiratorial. Give it a fast corner, a challenging road and an enthusiastic driver, and the Evo X turned its sophisticated drivetrain into a serious advantage. This was the rally car's DNA speaking directly through a road vehicle.

The Evolution name had been forged through competition, and the Evo X honoured that inheritance faithfully, even as it grew more refined than its predecessors. It was wider, more modern and considerably more sophisticated. The cabin was better equipped, the ride more civilised and the car more manageable as everyday transport. Yet Mitsubishi made sure the visual identity remained unambiguous. The large front grille, sharp headlights, muscular bodywork, prominent rear wing and wide stance gave the Evo X a presence that needed no introduction. It looked fast standing still.

Inside, the focus remained entirely on the driver. Supportive seats, performance-oriented instrumentation and controls designed around the car's capabilities made clear that this was never intended to be a luxury grand tourer. The purpose was involvement — that rare quality in a car that makes the driver feel like a participant rather than a passenger.

That involvement took on a new dimension with the availability of Mitsubishi's Twin-Clutch Sportronic Shift Transmission, known as TC-SST. The dual-clutch gearbox delivered exceptionally rapid gear changes and offered a genuinely different driving experience from the traditional manual. For some enthusiasts, it pointed toward the technological future of performance cars. For others, the manual remained the purer, more honest choice. That debate reflected the broader transformation sweeping through the performance-car industry — more electronics, faster shifts, greater capability, but perhaps something intangible being quietly traded away in the process.

The Evo X occupied an interesting middle ground in that transition. It was more advanced than anything the Evolution name had produced before, yet it retained the fundamental ingredients that had built the legend: turbocharged four-cylinder power, four-wheel drive, aggressive chassis tuning, strong brakes and a body shaped by function rather than decoration. Crucially, it could also be driven to work, used for ordinary errands and then unleashed on a winding mountain road — that practicality separating it from more extreme, track-focused machines while never softening its essential character.

Owners did not simply appreciate the car's speed. They appreciated its personality. There was a persistent sense that the Evo X had been engineered for people who genuinely enjoyed driving — not as a marketing claim, but as a foundational design principle.

And then came the difficult reality that ended it all.

The automotive industry was shifting rapidly. SUVs and crossovers were displacing performance sedans in manufacturers' product strategies. Emissions regulations were tightening. The business case for continuing to develop a specialised, rally-inspired performance car became increasingly hard to justify within Mitsubishi's commercial priorities. In 2016, production of the Lancer Evolution X ended. There was no replacement. No Evolution XI. No farewell edition beyond the Final Edition trim. Just silence.

That finality changed how the car was viewed almost immediately. What had once been simply the latest Evolution became, overnight, the final representative of an entire philosophy — one that had begun on rally stages in the 1990s and found its way, generation by generation, onto the roads driven by ordinary enthusiasts around the world.

The Evo X's legacy is therefore larger than its performance figures suggest. It represents a particular and increasingly rare approach to performance: not enormous engines and straight-line power, but a compact, focused car made extraordinarily effective through corners and difficult conditions by the quality of its engineering. The four-cylinder was sufficient. The all-wheel-drive system provided the traction. The chassis delivered the control. The driver completed the equation.

When Mitsubishi closed the book on the Evolution name in 2016, it didn't just discontinue a model. It ended the road-going expression of a motorsport philosophy that had produced some of the most respected performance cars of the modern era.

The Evo X wasn't simply the last Lancer Evolution. It was the final, definitive proof of what that name had always meant — and that is precisely what makes it unforgettable.

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