



Kindiki defends Kenya Kwanza record: Can projects alone define a government?
Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has stepped up his defence of the Kenya Kwanza administration's development record, arguing that the government is implementing its manifesto project by project **Page 8**



KSh8.4 million up for grabs as MKU searches for its most impactful alumni
Mount Kenya University (MKU) Alumni Directorate has officially opened nominations for the MKU Alumni Award 2026, calling on the University's alumni community in Kenya and across the Diaspora **Page 12**

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The Mt. Kenya Times Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **Uhuru is quietly becoming the most powerful force behind Kenya's 2027 election**

Uhuru's 2027 gambit

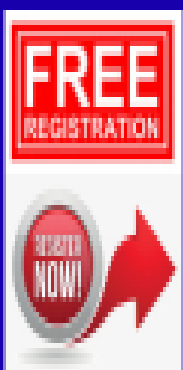
Former President Uhuru Kenyatta is quietly repositioning himself as the most consequential behind-the-scenes force in Kenya's 2027 General Election, wielding his influence as Jubilee Party patron, his vast economic networks, and his deepening opposition alliances to construct what allies describe as a unified alternative capable of ending President William Ruto's tenure after a single term. The architecture of that effort — and the extraordinary personal animosity driving it — is now reshaping Kenyan politics in ways that will define the country's direction for a generation.

To understand where Kenya is heading, it is necessary to understand where it has been. Uhuru and Ruto governed together for a decade. They won two presidential elections side by side, in 2013 and 2017, forging what they called the Jubilee brotherhood and presenting it to Kenyans as an unbreakable political bond. That bond shattered spectacularly. By 2022, Uhuru had not only refused to back his deputy's presidential bid but had thrown his full political weight behind opposition leader Raila Odinga — the very man they had both defeated twice. Ruto won regardless, but the rupture between the two men was total and, by all available evidence, permanent.

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Former President Uhuru Kenyatta



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Kenya leads Africa's clean cooking push with \$600M investment drive

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Kenya yesterday co-hosted with Norway the first high-level clean cooking event on the African continent's behalf, held on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York, unveiling a KSh600 million investment opportunity targeting schools, healthcare facilities, and correctional institutions. The event marks a decisive shift in how Africa frames the clean cooking deficit — not as a humanitarian concern but as a structural infrastructure gap demanding serious capital mobilisation. Millions of African households still cook over open fires and polluting stoves, a reality that drives preventable deaths, deepens poverty, and stalls the continent's green transition. "Clean cooking is energy infrastructure, vital to public health, economic opportunity and Africa's green transition," Kenya's delegation stated, setting the tone for discussions that centred on local-currency financing, guarantees, and investment instruments capable of converting latent demand into bankable projects. Norway's co-sponsorship lent the event significant diplomatic weight. The New York gathering serves as a curtain-raiser for the Second Africa Clean Cooking Summit, scheduled for Nairobi in January, where Kenya intends to turn yesterday's political commitments into concrete funding agreements.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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Group Executive Chairman

M. Danson

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/>

Our Contacts

P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262

Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke,

News Desk: news@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Web:** www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke

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NEWS IN BRIEF



An angry mob yesterday descended on two individuals accused of attempting to abduct an elderly woman in Murungaru Town, Kinangop, Nyandarua County, meting out instant justice before authorities could intervene. Witnesses said the suspects were caught in the act as they allegedly tried to bundle the woman away, triggering outrage among residents who had grown increasingly wary of a spate of incidents targeting vulnerable members of the community. The swift and violent response from the crowd underscored the depths of public frustration with insecurity in the area. Police later arrived at the scene and took the two individuals into custody, where they received medical attention. Authorities have launched an investigation into the attempted abduction as the elderly woman was confirmed safe.



Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe yesterday travelled to Taita-Taveta County for direct talks with local ranchers as the government stepped up efforts to tap into the region's vast but largely underutilised livestock wealth. The engagement brought together ranch owners and stakeholders in what officials described as a critical conversation about transforming Taita-Taveta into a competitive livestock production hub. Kagwe emphasised the government's commitment to providing practical support, including improved veterinary services, better market access, and infrastructure development across ranching zones. Taita-Taveta holds some of Kenya's most expansive rangelands, long regarded as an underperforming economic asset despite their enormous potential. Officials said yesterday's engagements marked the beginning of a structured government push to ensure the county's livestock sector finally delivers tangible returns for ranchers and surrounding communities.



National Government Administration Officers across Nyandarua County yesterday completed a specialised training programme in grassroots data management, equipping them with practical skills to improve the accuracy and reliability of information gathered at the community level. The training, designed to strengthen the foundation of evidence-based planning and policy formulation, brought together officers drawn from across the county's administrative units. Facilitators emphasised the critical role frontline administrators play in capturing credible data that ultimately informs government decisions on resource allocation, service delivery, and development priorities. Officials noted that gaps in grassroots data collection have historically undermined planning processes, resulting in policies disconnected from the realities facing ordinary citizens. The newly trained officers are expected to immediately apply the skills within their respective jurisdictions, feeding more reliable information into the national planning framework.



A bitter confrontation erupted in the Senate yesterday as Kenya Kwanza-allied legislators and opposition senators clashed sharply over the decision by several Cabinet Secretaries to travel to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, bypassing formal invitations to appear before the House. Opposition senators accused the CSs of treating Parliament with contempt, arguing that the snub represented a deliberate assault on legislative oversight. Kenya Kwanza senators fired back, defending the officials' attendance at the high-level international forum as a legitimate government obligation that took precedence. The confrontation laid bare deepening tensions between the executive and legislature over accountability and parliamentary authority. Senate leadership is expected to take up the matter formally today as pressure mounts on the absentee Cabinet Secretaries to provide a satisfactory explanation.



Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga has thrown his office into an uncomfortable spotlight after publicly accusing his Deputy Governor's driver of misusing a government vehicle to ferry women at night. Kahiga claimed he personally followed the driver on one occasion after observing him pick up several women from a fast-food establishment in Nyeri town and proceed to drop them off at separate locations. The governor said the vehicle, an official government car assigned to the Deputy Governor's office, was being used outside its authorised purpose. The allegations have raised immediate questions about the supervision of government assets and the conduct of staff within the Deputy Governor's office. Authorities are expected to launch an internal inquiry into the matter as pressure mounts for accountability.



Kenya yesterday took a significant step in positioning itself as a continental leader in artificial intelligence after sealing a landmark partnership with Anthropic, one of the world's leading AI safety and research companies. The agreement, welcomed by Kenya's Special Tech Envoy Ambassador Philip Thigo, signals the government's determination to ensure that AI development on Kenyan soil reflects local languages, institutions, and national priorities rather than being shaped entirely by foreign interests. Thigo described the deal as a decisive move toward data sovereignty and inclusive economic growth. The partnership is expected to accelerate the development of AI systems tailored to African contexts while creating opportunities for local researchers, technologists, and institutions. Kenya joins a small group of African nations actively shaping the global artificial intelligence agenda on their own terms.

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Youth A communication and media student argues that Kenya's youth are already shaping the digital economy

Young Kenyans and the digital economy: Opportunity, access, and the road ahead

BY Victorine Nekesa

@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's digital economy has become an important part of everyday life, creating new opportunities for young people to learn, work, communicate, and build businesses. With the rapid growth of smartphones, internet access, digital platforms, and mobile money services, young Kenyans are increasingly using technology not simply for entertainment but as a genuine means of earning a living.

One of the most significant ways young people are participating is through online employment and freelancing. Many offer services such as graphic design, writing, photography, programming, digital marketing, and virtual assistance through online platforms — working with clients both within Kenya and abroad without leaving the country. For a generation that has grown up with technology, the barriers to entry are lower than they have ever been.

Social media has become an equally important tool for young entrepreneurs. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp enable business owners to advertise products, communicate with customers, and reach markets well beyond their immediate communities. A young person selling clothes, food, beauty products, or handmade items can promote a business at relatively little cost — something that would have been unimaginable a generation



ago.

Mobile money and digital payment systems have further transformed the landscape. Services such as M-Pesa have made it significantly easier for young entrepreneurs to send and receive payments, manage small businesses, and participate in online commerce. Digital financial tools have reduced some of the barriers that once made it difficult for young people to start and sustain businesses.

Technology has also opened doors to learning and skills development. Young Kenyans can access online courses, tutorials, educational videos, and professional training from institutions across the world — acquiring skills that improve their chances of employment or entrepreneurship without the cost or logistics of formal study abroad.

Despite these opportunities, serious challenges remain.

Limited access to affordable and reliable internet contin-

ues to disadvantage young people in many communities. The cost of smartphones, computers, and data services prevents some from fully engaging with digital opportunities. A lack of adequate digital skills makes it harder still to compete in an increasingly technology-driven job market.

Online safety is another growing concern. Young people face real risks from cybercrime, online scams, identity theft, and the misuse of personal data. Greater awareness of digital security and responsible technology use is not optional — it is essential.

The government, educational institutions, private companies, and other stakeholders all have a role to play. Investment in affordable internet infrastructure, digital skills training, and entrepreneurship programmes can open participation to more young Kenyans. Schools and universities can do more to

strengthen digital education so that graduates leave with practical skills that match the demands of a changing workplace.

Kenya's young population is one of its most valuable assets in building a competitive digital economy. With the right skills, infrastructure, and support, young people can become creators of digital products, entrepreneurs, employees, and innovators — rather than simply consumers of technology developed elsewhere.

The future of Kenya's digital economy will depend, in no small measure, on how effectively its young people are prepared and empowered to shape it. Getting that right is not only about individual opportunity. It is about employment creation, innovation, and long-term economic growth.

IPOA urges policing rethink after wave of officer killings



Independent Policing Oversight Authority

BY Alice Njoki

@themtkenyatimes

The Independent Policing Oversight Authority has called on the National Police Service to urgently strengthen its policing strategies and adopt evidence-based approaches following a sustained wave of attacks and killings targeting police officers across the country. IPOA chairperson Anne Makori said the pattern of attacks was deeply troubling and demanded a structured institutional response rather than reactive measures. "We cannot continue losing officers at this rate without a serious examination of how policing strategies are designed and implemented," Makori said. The authority pointed to intelligence gaps, inadequate officer protection protocols, and the need for stronger community policing frameworks as areas requiring immediate attention. National

Police Service spokesman Resila Onyango acknowledged the concerns, saying the service was reviewing deployment strategies in high-risk areas. Human rights organisations have also weighed in, arguing that while officer safety is paramount, any strategic review must equally address how police engage with communities to build the trust that makes effective policing possible. IPOA has indicated it will publish a formal report on the attacks, covering recommendations on training, equipment, intelligence sharing, and support structures for officers in volatile environments. For a service already navigating public scrutiny over conduct and accountability, the latest wave of attacks adds urgency to reforms that observers say can no longer wait.

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Politics Kindiki's latest defence was anchored largely on projects in Murang'a. During his tour, he inspected the ongoing construction of Gakoigo Stadium and the Mbombo-Gwa Thamaki road

Kindiki defends Kenya Kwanza record: Can projects alone define a government?

The Deputy President is touring construction sites and counting kilometres of tarmac — but the real measure of development is whether ordinary lives are improving

BY Collins Kibet

[@themkenyatimes](#)

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has stepped up his defence of the Kenya Kwanza administration's development record, arguing that the government is implementing its manifesto project by project despite sustained criticism from political opponents.

Speaking in Maragua, Murang'a County, yesterday, Kindiki inspected ongoing development projects and urged Kenyans to focus on what he described as tangible government work rather than political divisions. His message comes at a politically charged moment. With the 2027 General Election drawing closer, the record of President William Ruto's administration is increasingly becoming the centrepiece of the political conversation.

Kindiki's latest defence was anchored largely on projects in Murang'a. During his tour, he inspected the ongoing construction of Gakoigo Stadium and the Mbombo-Gwa Thamaki road. Government officials have put the cost of Gakoigo Stadium at approximately KSh900 million. The facility is planned to accommodate around 10,000 people and will include a football pitch, athletics track, terraces, and changing rooms. The stadium is presented by the government as part of a broader national sports infrastructure expansion — one it describes as among the largest such programmes in the country's history.

Road infrastructure has also featured prominently in Kindiki's message. He highlighted the proposed Mbombo-Gwa Thamaki road, describing it as a project costing billions of shillings, and called for it to begin and be completed within one year. He also said the government has been clearing outstanding payments to contractors, putting funds paid to road construction firms at KSh179B — money he said was released to facilitate completion of ongoing works.

The issue of stalled projects is particularly important, because announcing a project and completing it



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

are two very different things. A road that exists only in a budget document does not improve transportation. A stadium that remains incomplete does not provide opportunities to young athletes. The real test of any development agenda is implementation, completion, maintenance, and public benefit.

At the national level, the Kenya Kwanza administration's development strategy is officially anchored in the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, known as BETA. The government's 2026 Budget Policy Statement identifies agriculture, micro, small and medium enterprises, housing, healthcare, and digital infrastructure as priority areas, alongside broader economic enablers such as energy and transport.

Agriculture is particularly significant, given that millions of Kenyans depend directly or indirectly on farming. Kindiki has highlighted government interventions including reduced fertiliser prices and measures aimed at improving returns for farmers in dairy, coffee, and tea. Yet the effectiveness of such interventions ultimately depends on accessi-

bility and consistency. A farmer may welcome cheaper fertiliser but still face challenges around market access, transport costs, unpredictable weather, and commodity prices.

This is where the government's development narrative meets the lived experience of ordinary Kenyans.

Infrastructure can create genuine economic opportunity — connecting farmers to markets, reducing travel times, supporting businesses, and improving access to essential services. But citizens also judge their government through the cost of food, employment prospects, household expenses, access to healthcare, and the ability to earn a sustainable income. A new road may be welcome to a young graduate, but it does not by itself solve the challenge of finding work. A new stadium may matter less to a struggling household than food prices or school fees.

Kindiki's argument is therefore not simply about the number of projects being undertaken. It is also about how Kenyans interpret government performance. He has urged residents to separate development from political competition and warned against

divisive politics, saying leaders should work for the people and allow political disagreements to take a secondary position.

That argument will grow increasingly important as the country approaches its next election. Development projects often become political symbols during campaign seasons — evidence of government activity for some, and subjects of contestation over costs, priorities, and timelines for others. The important issue is that public debate should be grounded in verifiable evidence rather than political rhetoric alone.

Kindiki's assertion that the administration is implementing its manifesto project by project raises a broader question: how should citizens measure development?

Should it be measured by kilometres of road constructed? By the number of schools, markets, and hospitals completed? By youth employment figures? Or by the combined effect of infrastructure, economic opportunity, public services, and household incomes? There is no single measure that captures every dimension. Each project carries a different intended

outcome, and citizens experience development differently depending on their circumstances.

Political accountability requires more than highlighting successful projects. It also requires acknowledging delays, unfinished works, financial constraints, and initiatives that may not deliver their intended benefits. Citizens have a legitimate interest in knowing how much projects cost, who benefits, when they will be completed, and whether they represent value for public money.

The same standard applies to the opposition. Criticism of government projects is an essential part of democratic debate, but it becomes more meaningful when accompanied by evidence and credible alternative proposals. Kenyans deserve a political conversation that moves beyond slogans and personalities to address practical questions about employment, infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture, and the cost of living.

As 2027 approaches, the Kenya Kwanza administration will have to explain not only what it promised but what it has delivered. Kindiki has indicated he is comfortable being judged on development rather than political point-scoring. Whether the projects currently under way eventually translate into broad and lasting improvements will depend on their completion, quality, accessibility, and economic impact.

Kenya needs infrastructure — but it also needs jobs. It needs roads, but also affordable transport. It needs markets, but traders need customers and purchasing power. It needs stadiums, but young people also need pathways to turn talent into sustainable livelihoods.

Development cannot be reduced to concrete, asphalt, and buildings alone. Its ultimate purpose is to improve people's lives.

The central question facing the Kenya Kwanza administration is therefore not simply whether it is building projects. It is whether those projects are delivering the opportunities, services, and improvements that ordinary Kenyans were promised. That is the standard against which every development agenda should ultimately be judged.

Politics The recent Jubilee Party transition — in which Uhuru formally stepped back from active leadership while retaining the position of patron — was not the quiet political retirement it was presented as

The kingmaker's last move: Uhuru's 2027 gambit

As Kenya's former president steps back from Jubilee's leadership, his shadow over the 2027 election grows longer — and his determination to deny Ruto a second term grows stronger

BY Dan Mwangi

[@themkenyatimes](#)

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta is quietly repositioning himself as the most consequential behind-the-scenes force in Kenya's 2027 General Election, wielding his influence as Jubilee Party patron, his vast economic networks, and his deepening opposition alliances to construct what allies describe as a unified alternative capable of ending President William Ruto's tenure after a single term. The architecture of that effort — and the extraordinary personal animosity driving it — is now reshaping Kenyan politics in ways that will define the country's direction for a generation.

To understand where Kenya is heading, it is necessary to understand where it has been. Uhuru and Ruto governed together for a decade. They won two presidential elections side by side, in 2013 and 2017, forging what they called the Jubilee brotherhood and presenting it to Kenyans as an unbreakable political bond. That bond shattered spectacularly. By 2022, Uhuru had not only refused to back his deputy's presidential bid but had thrown his full political weight behind opposition leader Raila Odinga — the very man they had both defeated twice. Ruto won regardless, but the rupture between the two men was total and, by all available evidence, permanent.

What has followed is a cold war conducted through proxies, court rooms, party structures, and carefully timed public statements. And now, with August 2027 approaching faster than most Kenyans have fully registered, Uhuru is making his most deliberate moves yet.

The recent Jubilee Party transition — in which Uhuru formally stepped back from active leadership while retaining the position of patron — was not the quiet political retirement it was presented as. It was a calculated repositioning. By creating space for former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i to assume the party's active leadership, Uhuru has installed a political figure with formidable administrative experience, a strong technocratic reputation,



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

and — critically — the potential to consolidate a voting bloc that Ruto currently has no answer for.

Matiang'i's appeal in Kisii, Nyamira, and the broader Nyanza region is significant and should not be underestimated. The region has historically delivered decisive electoral margins, and a credible candidate with genuine roots there changes the arithmetic of any presidential contest materially. If Matiang'i can consolidate Nyanza behind a unified opposition candidate — whether himself or another — the electoral map begins to look very different from the one that delivered Ruto's 2022 victory.

The High Court ruling by Justice Bahati Mwamuye, which delivered a significant legal victory that thrust the judge into political conversation, added another dimension to this evolving landscape. Legal rulings that touch on electoral or party matters rarely stay purely legal in Kenya's political environment — they become instruments of positioning, and the attention the ruling attract-

ed signalled that the opposition is watching the courts as carefully as it is watching the streets.

Meanwhile, Uhuru's recent embrace of Ndindi Nyoro — the Kiharu MP who has been among the more vocal Mount Kenya voices — and his pointed call to former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua to work constructively with others to secure an opposition victory in 2027 during the Jubilee handover event, revealed the former president's hand more clearly than anything he has said in months. He is not simply a patron in name. He is an active architect.

Gachagua's own political trajectory since his dramatic impeachment by Parliament adds yet another volatile element to this mix. His base in Mount Kenya — the vote-rich region that delivered Ruto's 2022 margin — is now contested territory. Gachagua has made no secret of his grievances with the President, and his alignment with the opposition coalition, however it eventually takes formal shape, would represent a seismic shift in the electoral land-

scape. Mount Kenya without Ruto's lock on it is a fundamentally different election.

The potential coalition taking shape — Matiang'i consolidating Nyanza, ODM secretary-general Sifuna and allied western Kenya formations delivering the western bloc, Gachagua peeling away Mount Kenya and Maasailand votes, People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua adding her political weight, and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka anchoring lower Eastern and coastal constituencies — represents, on paper, a formidable electoral force. If those blocs can agree on a single presidential candidate and hold their formations together through to polling day, the mathematics present a serious challenge to an incumbent who is already navigating economic headwinds, public frustration over the cost of living, and a restive political class.

The word "if" carries enormous weight in that sentence, because Kenyan opposition coalitions have a well-documented history of fracturing under the pressure of personal ambition, regional calculations, and the temptations of negotiated arrangements with the very government they set out to defeat. Uhuru knows this better than anyone. He has been both the beneficiary and the architect of such fractures in the past.

But something feels different this time. Uhuru's motivation is not purely political calculus. It is personal. In a speech this week, he stated plainly that he does not believe Ruto won the 2022 election legitimately — a remarkable public statement from a former president about his immediate successor, and one that removes any remaining ambiguity about where Uhuru stands. A man who governed with Ruto for ten years, who knows the architecture of Kenyan power more intimately than almost anyone alive, and who commands the loyalties of a significant section of the political establishment, has declared in plain language that the current president's mandate is, in his view, illegitimate.

That declaration does not exist in a vacuum. Uhuru's economic power — rooted in one of Kenya's most

significant family business empires, with interests spanning real estate, agriculture, media, and finance — gives him resources that pure political patronage cannot match. His international networks, built over a decade of state visits, diplomatic relationships, and engagements with global institutions, mean that his influence extends well beyond Kenya's borders. Former heads of state carry weight in boardrooms and diplomatic corridors long after they leave office, and Uhuru has lost none of that currency.

The family legacy amplifies everything. The Kenyatta name remains, for a substantial section of Kenyan society, synonymous with the founding generation of the nation's political identity. That is not simply nostalgia — it is a living political asset that Uhuru can deploy in ways that newer figures cannot replicate.

Ruto, for his part, is not a passive observer of any of this. He has survived fiercer political storms than the current one, and his ability to adapt, reframe, and outmanoeuvre opponents has been consistently underestimated by those who have tried to remove him from the centre of Kenyan politics. He will enter 2027 as an incumbent with state resources, an established party structure, and a coalition of his own that, whatever its internal tensions, has not yet collapsed.

But the central question of the next eleven months is no longer simply who wants to be president. It is whether the opposition can do what it has never managed to do before: agree on one candidate, hold together, and sustain a unified campaign from declaration to polling day. If it can, Uhuru's gambit may well succeed. If it cannot, Ruto wins — and the former president's most ambitious political project ends in the same place as the ones before it.

Kenya's elections have always been decided in the spaces between the grand announcements and the quiet deals. That is where Uhuru Kenyatta has always been most dangerous — and where he is working hardest right now.

UN Kenya arrived in New York with a record to build on and a reputation to protect. Over the past two years, the country has emerged as an increasingly consequential voice in multilateral forums

Kenya takes its case to the world: Ruto at the UN

At the 81st General Assembly in New York, President Ruto carried a multilateral agenda shaped by peacekeeping, climate leadership, and the push for a reformed global order

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday delivered Kenya's national statement at the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, using one of the world's most watched diplomatic platforms to advance the coun-

try's multilateral agenda on peace, climate change, artificial intelligence governance, and urgent reform of the United Nations system itself. Ruto led a high-powered Kenyan delegation to the annual gathering of world leaders, which this year converged around six declared priorities: peace and security, accelerating the Sustainable Development

Goals, climate resilience, human rights, digital governance, and UN reform.

Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Korir Sing'oei had set the tone for the visit last week, telling journalists in Nairobi that the stakes at UNGA 81 were unusually high. Three major processes were converging simultaneously — the implementation of agreed UN



President William Ruto

reforms, the selection of a successor to Secretary-General António Guterres, whose tenure is nearing its end, and a high-level review of the global financial architecture. "This is the highest global negotiations venue," Sing'oei said. "The absence of any head of state sends a message."

Kenya arrived in New York with a record to build on and a reputation to protect. Over the past two years, the country has emerged as an increasingly consequential voice in multilateral forums — a posture rooted in its willingness to lead where others have hesitated. The deployment of Kenyan police officers to Haiti under the Multinational Security Support Mission stood as the most visible demonstration of that posture. The mission, widely credited with stabilising Port-au-Prince and restoring some degree of normality to a city gripped by gang violence, gave Kenya a seat at tables it might otherwise have observed from a distance.

At last year's 80th General Assembly, Ruto had used his address to pose a question that reverberated through diplomatic corridors: whether the United Nations remained relevant to the demands of the 21st century. He called for renewal rather than decay, warning that institutions collapse not from a lack of noble ideals but when they drift into irrelevance. That challenge resonated — and Kenya's return to New York this week carried the weight of that ongoing argument for reform. Climate leadership has be-

come another pillar of Kenya's international identity. With 93 per cent of its electricity generated from renewable sources, the country has positioned itself not merely as a nation adapting to climate change but as a continental driver of solutions. The Nairobi Declaration on climate, advanced at the Africa Climate Summit, remains a reference point in global climate negotiations, and Kenya's delegation was expected to press for concrete progress on financing commitments from developed nations — commitments that have been slow to materialise.

The UNGA 81 platform also provided an opportunity to advance Kenya's growing profile in the digital economy and AI governance. Special Tech Envoy Ambassador Philip Thigo, who accompanied the delegation, has been central to Kenya's push to ensure that artificial intelligence development reflects African contexts, languages, and priorities. The landmark partnership sealed with Anthropic, one of the world's leading AI safety companies, gave Kenya fresh credibility on that front going into the New York discussions.

On the margins of the General Assembly, Ruto was expected to hold bilateral engagements with multiple heads of state and government, continuing the diplomatic work of consolidating Kenya's partnerships and pursuing opportunities in trade, investment, and regional security. The President was also scheduled to launch the Kenya Diaspora

Impact Platform — a new initiative designed to formalise and deepen the relationship between the government and Kenyans living abroad, whose remittances have become one of the country's most significant sources of foreign exchange.

The selection of the next UN Secretary-General loomed large over proceedings. With Guterres approaching the end of his tenure, several countries have been actively lobbying for their nationals to assume the role — a process whose outcome will shape the organisation's direction for the next decade and beyond. Kenya's position on that selection, and its ability to build coalitions among African member states, will be closely watched.

Back home, Ruto's attendance at UNGA came against a backdrop of domestic political noise — including controversy over Cabinet Secretaries who chose to travel to New York rather than honour parliamentary invitations to appear before Senate committees. That tension added an uncomfortable domestic dimension to what was otherwise a week defined by Kenya's international ambitions.

At its core, Kenya's participation in UNGA 81 reflected a country that has chosen to engage the world rather than wait for the world to engage it — a posture that carries both opportunity and obligation, and one that Ruto has staked considerable political capital on sustaining.

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Politics Kalonzo has long maintained that the presidential tickets he shared with Raila in both 2013 and 2017 won those elections but were not declared victorious

Kalonzo warns IEBC over 2027 poll

The Wiper Patriotic Front leader revisits three disputed elections and puts the electoral commission on notice ahead of next year's contest

BY Agnes Wavinya

@themkenyatimes

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday warned the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission against what he described as electoral manipulation, revisiting his long and often painful political partnership with former Prime Minister Raila Odinga across the 2013, 2017, and 2022 presidential elections, while putting the commission on notice that the next general election must be conducted without interference.

Speaking before a charged gathering in Kitui, Kalonzo delivered what amounted to one of his most comprehensive public accounts of Kenya's contested presidential election history — a narrative that stretches back more than a decade and continues to shape his political identity and positioning as the country moves steadily toward the 2027 General Election.

Kalonzo has long maintained that the presidential tickets he shared with Raila in both 2013 and 2017 won those elections but were not declared victorious. It is a position he repeated yesterday with characteristic conviction, arguing that the results as announced did not reflect the will of Kenyan voters. "We won those elections," he told the gathering, his tone leaving little room for ambiguity. The claim remains politically contested and has never been upheld through a successful legal challenge, but it forms the cornerstone of Kalonzo's electoral narrative and continues to resonate deeply among his supporters in the Ukambani region.

The 2013 election saw Kalonzo serve as Raila's running mate on the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy ticket. The contest was won in the first round by Jubilee's Uhuru Kenyatta, who was declared victor with 50.07 per cent of the vote. The result was challenged in the Supreme Court but upheld. Kalonzo's insistence that the outcome did not reflect genuine voter preference has remained unchanged in the years since.

The 2017 election carried an even more dramatic trajectory. Kalonzo again partnered with Raila, this time on the National Super Alliance ticket, in what became one of the most



Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka

turbulent electoral cycles in Kenya's post-independence history. The Supreme Court, in a landmark ruling, annulled the presidential election and ordered a fresh poll after finding that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission had not conducted the election in accordance with the Constitution and applicable law. It was a historic judgment — the first of its kind on the African continent — and one that briefly appeared to vindicate the opposition's long-standing concerns about the integrity of Kenya's electoral process.

Yet the repeat election that followed brought its own complications. Kalonzo and Raila, citing concerns about the conditions surrounding the fresh poll and the failure to implement reforms they had demanded, announced that they would not participate. Kalonzo yesterday stood by that decision, describing it as a principled response to political circumstances that had made genuine electoral competition impossible. For his supporters, the withdrawal remains a symbol of resistance. For critics, it represented an abandonment of

the democratic process at a critical moment.

It was the events surrounding the 2022 election, however, that appeared to carry the deepest personal weight for Kalonzo yesterday. His account of the running-mate selection process was notably more emotional than his recollections of the earlier contests — and understandably so.

Having stood by Raila through two bruising presidential campaigns, Kalonzo had reasonable expectations of being named his running mate for a third time. Instead, he found himself subjected to an interview process conducted by a seven-member panel — a requirement he initially resisted on the grounds that his credentials, which included service as Vice-President of Kenya and as Raila's running mate in two previous elections, made such a process unnecessary and, in his view, disrespectful.

"Ilikiwa uchungu sana," he said yesterday, his voice carrying the weight of a man who had not fully made peace with what happened. It was painful. The remark drew an

immediate response from the crowd, reflecting the degree to which that moment had registered not just personally but politically within his support base.

Kalonzo eventually appeared before the panel on 10 May 2022 at the Serena Hotel in Nairobi. He later described the engagement as a "very useful two hours conversation" — a careful choice of words that stopped pointedly short of calling it an interview. Raila ultimately selected Martha Karua as his running mate, a decision that blindsided Kalonzo and prompted him to briefly announce his own presidential candidacy before eventually returning to support the Azimio coalition.

The episode left a mark that has not entirely healed, and Kalonzo's willingness to revisit it publicly yesterday suggests it remains a live element in how he frames his political journey and his expectations going forward.

Alongside his reflections on the Raila partnership, Kalonzo spoke warmly about former President Uhuru Kenyatta, thanking him for what

he described as speaking clearly and honestly about Kenya's political history. The praise was notable given the complex and shifting alliances that have defined Kenyan politics over the past decade. Uhuru won the 2013 and 2017 presidential elections, serving two terms as Kenya's fourth President, before declining to support his deputy William Ruto's 2022 bid and aligning instead with Raila's Azimio coalition. His subsequent public commentary on Kenya's political landscape has been followed closely by opposition figures, and Kalonzo's acknowledgement of it yesterday signalled an ongoing effort to build bridges across factional lines.

But it was Kalonzo's warning to the IEBC that produced the sharpest moment of the day. Turning from history to the future, he addressed the commission and the current political establishment with a directness that left no room for diplomatic softening.

"IEBC hatutakubali tena," he declared. The commission will not be allowed to repeat what he characterised as past conduct.

He went further, issuing a pointed challenge to those he holds responsible for what he describes as stolen elections. The message was unambiguous: the 2027 General Election must be conducted differently, and Kalonzo and his supporters intend to hold those responsible for its administration to account.

The remarks arrive at a moment when Kenya's political parties and their leaders are intensifying their positioning ahead of the next general election. Coalition negotiations are under way, electoral reform debates are gathering momentum, and the question of who will face whom in 2027 remains fluid. Against that backdrop, Kalonzo's speech yesterday served multiple purposes simultaneously — a settling of historical accounts, a rallying of his base, and a public declaration that he intends to enter the next electoral cycle with his eyes open and his guard firmly up.

For a politician whose career has been shaped by proximity to power without its full possession, the message was clear: the next chapter will be different.

Education Although every university produces graduates, some graduates go on to do something bigger — they use their knowledge, skills and opportunities to improve the lives of others

KSh6.4 million up for grabs as MKU searches for its most impactful alumni

Who is the Mount Kenya University (MKU) graduate changing lives, transforming communities or making waves on the global stage?

BY James Wakahiu

@themkenyatimes

Mount Kenya University (MKU) Alumni Directorate has officially opened nominations for the MKU Alumni Award 2026, calling on the University's alumni community in Kenya and across the Diaspora to identify graduates whose work is making a meaningful difference in society.

This is not simply a search for the most successful alumnus. It is a search for impact. That person could soon be recognised with one of the most prestigious honours available to an MKU graduate — and a USD 50,000 (about KSh6.47 million) award.

Changing lives

Although every university produces graduates, some graduates go on to do something bigger — they use their knowledge, skills and opportunities to improve the lives of others.

The 2026 MKU Alumni Award seeks to celebrate such individuals.

The nominee could be a community champion quietly changing lives at grassroots level, an entrepreneur creating employment, a professional excelling in their field, a public leader influencing policy or an innovator developing solutions to society's biggest challenges.

And the impact does not have to stop at Kenya's borders.

MKU alumni living and working in the diaspora are equally eligible for nomination. The overall winner will receive the Sh6.4 million in recognition of their significant contribution towards positively impacting society.

They will also receive a cer-

tificate of recognition, while their name will be permanently inscribed on the MKU alumni wall of honour. The award therefore offers more than financial recognition. It creates a lasting record of an alumnus whose work has made a difference.

In a statement, MKU says the nominee must be an MKU graduate with proven and sustainable contributions in a specific area of impact. They must also demonstrate integrity, professionalism and values consistent with the university's mission.

Maybe they are building a successful enterprise, making a difference through their profession, empowering others, championing innovation, or giving back to their community.

However, MKU employees, university council members, individuals with a conflict of interest, current MKU Alumni Association executive board members and previous annual alumni award winners are not eligible.

While some changemakers are highly visible, others could be doing extraordinary work away from public spotlight. The person who deserves this award may be someone you know personally — a former classmate, colleague, mentor, business partner or community leader.

The MKU Alumni Awards 2026 provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate outstanding alumni who are making meaningful contributions in their communities, professions, businesses and society at large.

From entrepreneurs creating employment and driving innovation to professionals excelling in their respective fields and community leaders making a lasting difference, MKU alumni continue to

demonstrate that the impact of education extends far beyond the classroom.

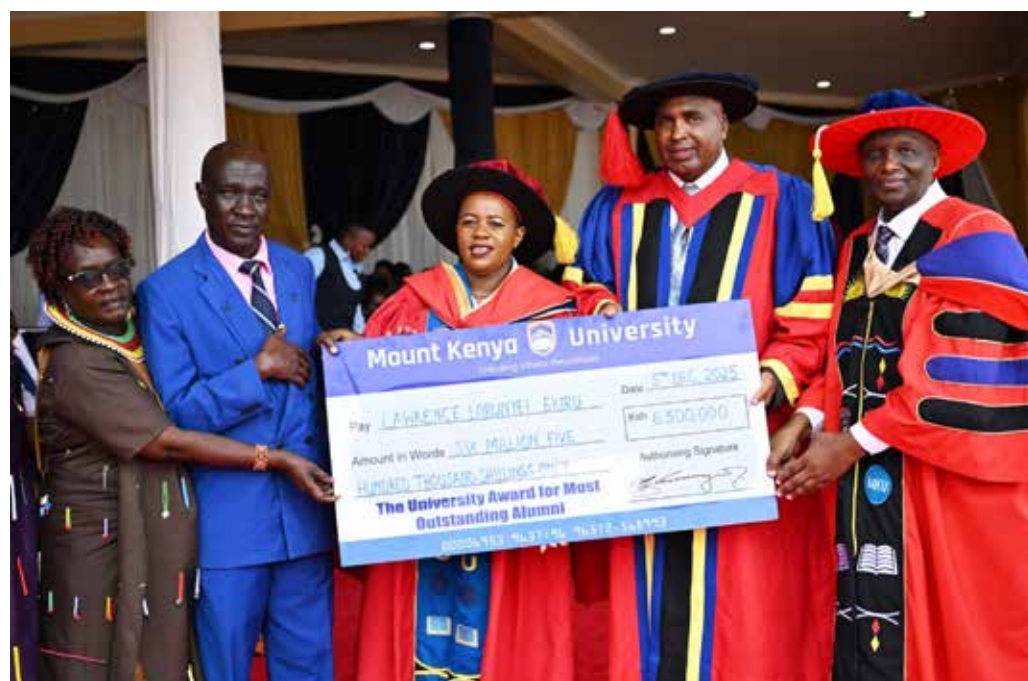
The nominations, whose details are on the MKU website, opened on 1 September 2026 and will close on 30 September 2026. Applicants are required to submit a completed nomination form, the nominee's CV and two reference letters. Only complete submissions will be considered.

The award will be presented to the ultimate winner during the 30th graduation ceremony to be held on Friday 4th December, 2026.

So, who is your MKU changemaker?



Inaugural Alumni Award winner 2025. | Photo: Courtesy.



Inaugural Alumni Award winner 2025 with MKU senior officials led by founder Prof. Simon Gicharu.



Some of the MKU students who graduated last month.

Illicit brew Kenya has conducted countless operations against illicit brews. Police have raided premises. Suspects have been arrested. Outlets have been shut down.

When the brew becomes a death sentence: How many more Kenyans must die?

The latest deaths in Kimende are a painful reminder that Kenya's war on illicit alcohol is far from over

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

The headlines are becoming painfully familiar.

Another illicit brew. Another drinking establishment. Another family waiting for a loved one who will never come home. Another community demanding answers after alcohol that was supposed to offer an escape from everyday pressure instead becomes a source of death.

In Kimende, Lari Sub-County, Kiambu County, three people died yesterday after consuming suspected illicit alcohol, while two others were left in critical condition. Residents have called for renewed action against the manufacture and sale of second-generation alcohol in the area. But perhaps the most disturbing part of this story is not that authorities have uncovered another illegal drinking establishment.

It is that we have been here before.

Kenya has conducted countless operations against illicit brews. Police have raided premises. Suspects have been arrested. Outlets have been shut down. Politicians have spoken. Communities have campaigned. And yet the brews keep returning. The question goes beyond Kimende: why does the problem keep surviving?

A war that cannot be won by arrests alone

The government is responding. A nationwide 100-day Rapid Results Initiative has been launched, bringing together National Government

Administration Officers, police, NACADA, KEBS, the Anti-Counterfeit Authority, KRA, county enforcement officers, and public health officials. In Kiambu, County Commissioner George Matundura recently confirmed that since an operation launched on 24 August, authorities had seized illicit brew, muratina, chang'aa, and bhang, while 106 people had been taken to court. Yesterday, police in Ruiru arrested 12 people and seized 211 litres of muratina alongside assorted suspected counterfeit liquor.

These actions matter. But enforcement alone cannot be the full answer.

If a manufacturer is arrested today and another opens a similar operation tomorrow, the country has not eliminated the problem — it has simply moved it. The harder question is what keeps creating the market for these products.

Someone is buying the poison. In many communities, cheap alcohol fills a gap when legitimate products are beyond reach. A person who wants to drink and has limited money may be tempted by a bottle whose contents cannot be verified. That is where the danger begins. What appears to be a bargain can become a medical emergency, permanent disability, or death.

Young people are paying the heaviest price

A significant and uncomfortable part of this conversation is about young people. Many are entering a world already filled with economic pressure, unemployment, and un-

certainly. For some, alcohol becomes an escape. But the escape can become a trap.

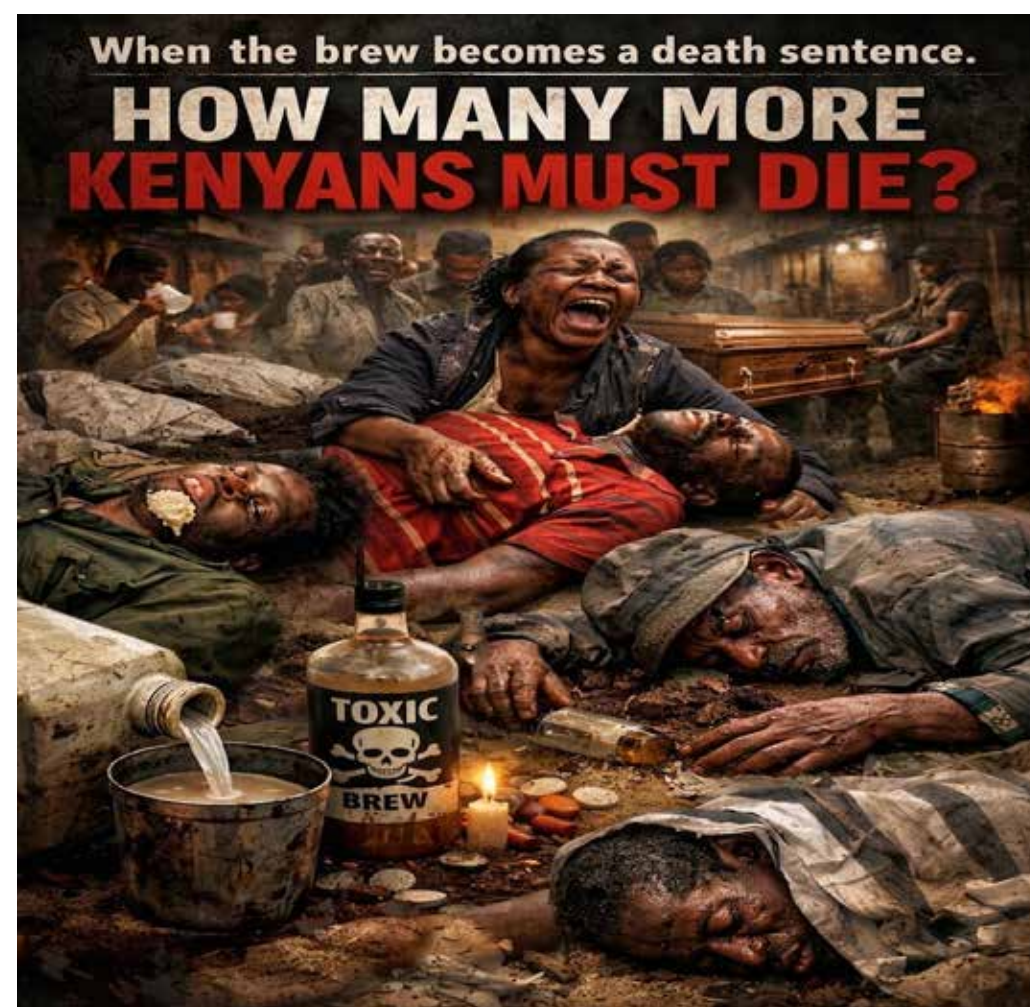
The tragedy is that some of those who die still had dreams. Someone was a son. Someone was a daughter. Someone had a family expecting them home. Somewhere, a mother believed her child was simply out with friends. Instead, the phone rang with devastating news.

This is why illicit alcohol cannot be treated as a policing issue alone. It is a public health issue, a family issue, an economic issue, and a youth issue. Ultimately, it is a national issue.

Beyond the raid

Enforcement must be sustained long after the headlines fade. Are licences being consistently monitored? Are premises being regularly inspected? Are laboratories equipped to test suspicious products? Are manufacturers being traced through the full supply chain? Are communities being given safe, practical ways to report illegal operations before another death occurs?

The Anti-Counterfeit Authority has warned that the problem extends beyond backroom brewing — encompassing counterfeit, smuggled, adulterated, and unlicensed products, including genuine bottles refilled with illicit contents. Consumers can therefore be deceived by packaging that appears legitimate. The fight requires effective product tracing, rigorous testing, sustained intelligence gathering, and genuine coordination between national and



county authorities.

In Kiambu, the County Assembly is considering proposed amendments to the Kiambu County Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, 2024, including stronger licensing requirements, greater community involvement, and changes to alcohol control committees at ward and sub-county levels. Giving residents a stronger, protected voice is particularly important — because people living in affected communities often know exactly where illegal alcohol is being made and sold. The challenge is whether they feel safe enough to speak.

Rehabilitation cannot be an afterthought

There is a tendency to discuss alcohol abuse only after someone dies. By then, it is already too late. Prevention must begin before the bottle reaches anyone's hand.

Families need better information. Schools and universities need honest conversations about substance abuse. Young people need spaces to discuss addiction without condemnation. Those already struggling need accessible, affordable treatment. Addiction cannot always be addressed by arresting the person who drinks. Sometimes the person

needs counselling, rehabilitation, employment, or simply someone to help them believe that life beyond addiction is possible.

Personal responsibility still matters

Government action is essential — but citizens cannot entirely outsource responsibility for their own safety. If the source of alcohol is unknown, the price is suspiciously low, or the seller cannot explain its origin, walking away may be the difference between going home and never making it home. A popular drinking spot is not necessarily a safe one. A familiar bottle is not necessarily genuine. And a cheap drink is not necessarily a bargain — sometimes the real price is paid by the family left behind.

How many more funerals?

In 2024, the National Police Service reported that more than 691,000 litres of illicit brew were impounded and 28,862 people arrested. Those numbers reveal the scale of the problem. But statistics can obscure the human tragedy beneath them.

Three people dead in Kimende is not a statistic. It is three families. Two people

in critical condition are not a footnote — they are two human beings whose families are today waiting and hoping.

Kenya does not need another campaign that activates only after people die. It needs a sustained system that makes it increasingly difficult for poisonous alcohol to be manufactured, transported, and sold. County governments must enforce licensing laws consistently. National agencies must coordinate rather than operate in silos. Communities must find the courage to speak up. And consumers must understand that their choices carry consequences far beyond one night of drinking.

The goal should not simply be to arrest more people. The goal should be to prevent more funerals.

Kenya has heard the warnings. Communities have buried the victims. Families have mourned. Authorities have conducted raids. Now the country must answer the question that returns every time another poisonous brew claims another life: how many more Kenyans must die before this becomes a permanent national priority rather than a temporary response to tragedy?

Knowledge isn't power until it's applied



Knowledge isn't power, as they say,
Until you use it day by day.

A book unopened holds no light,
A lamp unswitched can't make night bright.

We know the wires run through the wall,
But darkness stays till we turn on the call,

The current waits, silent and still,
It needs our hand, it needs our will.

Knowledge is a seed inside,
Wisdom is the growing tide,
But only action makes it bloom,
And lifts the shadows from the room.

To know is good, to do is best,
For action puts knowledge to the test.
And turn your knowing into then.

-K.A.Santhoshi,
9th std,
GMGHSS,
KOMARAPALAYAM,
Namakkal.

Knowledge isn't power until it's applied



We have electricity wires in our homes,
But only when we switch on the button,
The bulb glows.

We have a gas cylinder in our homes,
But we must turn the knob and light the lighter,
Only then the flame lights up.

Knowledge is power,
Knowledge is wisdom,
Knowledge is treasure,
But the application of knowledge is substantial.

Where to use?
Why to use?
How to use?
When to use?

Knowing this helps one achieve success,
Helps us gain confidence,
Helps us understand who you are!
And what you are!

-- N. KANCHANAPRIYA,
SG Teacher,
PUPS, ALANGATTUVALASU,
Pallipalayam union,
Namakkal district.

Be like a safety pin



It is small in size
But helps us to mend clothes or something torn

Whenever my jute bag (lunch) tears
Due to heavy weight or rush
While getting down from bus
During school hours

My handy rescue is safety pin
It binds both handles until evening!
Small thing but great use!
Strong enough to hold!

Let's be like a safety pin
Not making so much noise
But stay humble
When we are broken by any means

Let's us be strong enough to face it boldly
Let the worries weep by seeing our strength!
Never let the hurdles stop us
From reaching greater heights

GSwapna

Be Like a Safety Pin



When everything feels broken,
Don't worry, don't be afraid,
You don't have to fix the whole picture
In a single day.

Just hold your next step firmly,
And take it one by one.
Even the longest journey
Begins with steps so small.

Be like a safety pin,
Quiet, simple, yet strong.
It holds the broken pieces
And keeps them safe from falling apart.

It cannot mend the whole fabric,
It only holds the tear in place,
Until gentle hands can stitch it

With patience, love, and grace.

So protect your heart with boundaries,
And guard your precious peace.
Don't let every painful moment
Steal the strength you need.

Be courageous, bold, and fearless,
Stand strong when life feels tough.
When your heart is broken,
Believe you are strong enough.

You don't have to fix everything,
You don't have to heal today.
Just hold yourself together
And keep moving on your way.

For sometimes, dear heart,
Strength is not repairing every scar
It is holding yourself together
Until you discover who you are.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

The power of a teacher



A gentle voice of a teacher
Makes the children listen properly.
It eases their little minds
And makes them feel that their teacher is kind.

The thought of liberty in a classroom
Makes the little ones feel safe and secure.
They begin to see their teacher as easy-going,
Where learning takes place

In a great manner.
Asking questions is a special way of learning,
Which paves the way for opening
The world of knowledge
That is hidden
In their little minds like a dark room.
A true teacher can light up their darkness
By opening their hearts and minds,
Giving them the confidence
To ask questions freely in the classroom
And build a strong society based on justice.

N DEEPALAKSHMI
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GHSS - SATHUVACHARI
VELLORE
TAMILNADU
INDIA

Talk less+ Listen more = Be Successful



If you want to be successful,
First thing you must do,
Open up your ears wide,
And let wisdom come to you.

Zip up your mouth,
And talk a little less,
When you hear people more,
You learn their heart, their depth.

When you want to say something,
Hold your tongue, hold that word,
Just listen, just listen,
To what is being heard.

Your silence will speak for you,

Louder than words can say,
It tells them what you think,
In a more graceful way.

Unwanted words, once spoken,
Become poison in the milk,
Once mixed, you can't take it back,
It spoils the pure white silk.

So use your words wisely,
Be aware of what surrounds,
Listen to everyone around you,
Let their stories be the sounds.

Listen today, listen more,
Your voice will wait its turn,
One day the world will hear you,
And success to you will return.
RAJITHA D
Creative writer,
GGHSS PADAPPAI
KANCHEEPURAM

Agribusiness While acknowledging that Birds are powerful indicators of environmental health, Mr Flowers confirmed that Kakuzi continues to see steady growth in bird diversity within its borders.

Kakuzi birdwatching tour ends in triumph as Japanese royalty sights rare migratory birds

A recent birdwatching and photography excursion to agribusiness Kakuzi Plc orchards in Murang’a County ended on a celebratory note after a member of Japan’s Royal Family, Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado of Japan, spotted at least two international migratory birds in their natural habitat.

BY James Mwangi
@themkenyaintimes

A recent birdwatching and photography excursion to agribusiness Kakuzi Plc orchards in Murang’a County ended on a celebratory note after a member of Japan’s Royal Family, Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado of Japan, spotted at least two international migratory birds in their natural habitat.

During her recent visit to Kenya to attend BirdLife International’s 2nd Global Flyways Summit, Princess Takamado, also the Honorary President of BirdLife International, spotted and photographed the Eurasian Bee-eater and the Osprey. The two migratory birds breed in Eu-

rope before making long flyway journeys to Africa in the September-October season.

Speaking while welcoming Princess Takamado, Kakuzi Plc Managing Director Mr Chris Flowers said the firm’s continued drive to practice sustainable agriculture and preserve its water catchment area has safeguarded some of Kenya’s most ideal ecological zones, accommodating migratory and native bird species.

While acknowledging that Birds are powerful indicators of environmental health, Mr Flowers confirmed that Kakuzi continues to see steady growth in bird diversity within its borders.

“At Kakuzi, we have seen a steady growth of birds making our orchards, forestlands and other habitats their home,

which is a good indicator of our commitment to conserve the environment,” Flowers said. He added, “Protecting this natural habitat is part of our deliberate contribution to the ongoing global flyway conservation efforts.

Kakuzi’s conservation efforts are further strengthened through its membership of Nature Kenya, the East Africa Natural History Society. This partnership shows our shared commitment to protecting biodiversity, conserving natural habitats, and promoting responsible environmental stewardship. Through this collaboration, Kakuzi supports broader conservation goals that protect ecosystems, promote sustainable agriculture, and strengthen the long-term resilience of Kenya’s

natural resources.

While acknowledging the conservation efforts at Kakuzi now sustaining a growing birdlife habitat, Princess Takamado noted that “Migratory birds do not recognise borders. They connect Asia to Africa, the Arctic to the tropics. The Nairobi Flyways Declaration acknowledges this reality: it needs international cooperation and coordination to keep migratory birds safe.”

She added, “I am excited and proud to see that the scientific community, conservation organisations, and the financial sector are uniting to make this happen. At last!! We stand at an important turning point. We have been waiting for this moment for a long time.”

During her visit to Kakuzi, Princess Takamado, guided by Kakuzi Executive Head - Corporate Affairs Mr Simon Odhiambo, who is also a prominent local birder, en-



Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado of Japan, a member of Japan’s Royal Family (right), with Kakuzi Executive Head Simon Odhiambo (left) during a bird-watching excursion at Kakuzi Orchards in Murang’a County. | Photo: Courtesy.

joyed her day out driving through macadamia and avocado orchards while photographing various local bird species, including the Hinde’s babbler, Purple-crested turtaco, Senegal Lapwing, Pygmy Kingfisher and the African Paradise Flycatcher, among others.

According to the recently launched State of the World’s Birds report, 45% of migratory bird species are in decline. One in nine is threatened with extinction. The 2025 extinction of the

Slender-billed Curlew, last recorded at a Moroccan lagoon in February 1995, marks the first global bird extinction in mainland Eurasia and Africa in recent centuries, with six other migratory species confirmed or suspected to have been lost in the last 150 years.

Species dependent on marine habitats, forests, and coastal wetlands are faring particularly poorly, with seabirds and shorebirds among the most threatened.

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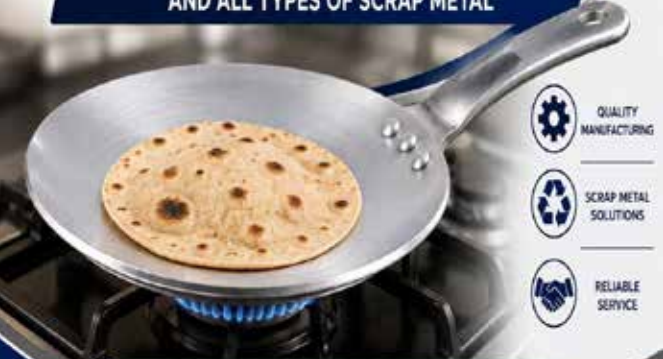
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Politics Dagoretti South Member of Parliament John Kiarie is building his case for a third term around a straightforward message: track record, delivery, and accountability.

Kiarie eyes third term: Dagoretti South MP builds his case on delivery

BY John Kariuki

@themkenyaintimes

Dagoretti South Member of Parliament John Kiarie is building his case for a third term around a straightforward message: track record, delivery, and accountability.

As the 2027 General Election draws closer, Kiarie is framing his continued political journey through what he describes as the record of the Kenya Kwanza administration and the work being carried out by the United Democratic Alliance. That message was at the centre of a recent engagement with Nairobi UDA constituency and ward elected leaders — including chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, secretaries, and treasurers — ahead of grassroots officials' meetings.

Drawing on the maxim "He who wishes to put the world in order must first put his own house in order," Kiarie told attendees that the governing party would return to the electorate with a record it could place before Kenyans for scrutiny.

"As UDA goes back to the electorate, we will have a track record of delivery," he said.

For Kiarie, the argument extends beyond individual political personalities to the broader question of whether parties can demonstrate what they have done with the mandate entrusted to them.

"Parties are not just political election vehicles. UDA has a manifesto and a report card to show," he said.

Kiarie has represented Dagoretti South since 2017 and is currently serving his second consecutive term. His parliamentary role has also expanded well beyond constituency work. He chairs the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Communication, Information and Innovation, a position that has placed him at the centre



Dagoretti South Member of Parliament John Kiarie

of parliamentary oversight on information and communications technology, digital transformation, and innovation. Yesterday, he led committee members during an inspection of projects at Konza Technopolis — a visit he said left the committee encouraged by progress on the ground.

At the constituency level, healthcare infrastructure ranks among the more significant projects associated with Dagoretti South. The Ministry of Defence announced in May last year that it had taken over construction of the Mutuini Sub-District Level IV Hospital — a project intended to transform the facility from an existing 36-bed maternity wing into a fully equipped 400-bed hospital and, ultimately, a Level V facility. Kiarie received the Defence Principal Secretary during a site visit to the project.

The constituency has also continued to receive National Government Constituencies Development Fund allocations. Available NG-CDF data shows approved allocations of KSh192.6 million for the 2025/26 financial year, KSh179.7 million for 2024/25, KSh175.4 million for 2023/24, and KSh145.1

million for 2022/23. These figures represent approved allocations rather than confirmed expenditure.

Beyond Dagoretti South, Kiarie has increasingly used his parliamentary platform to advocate for the government's wider development agenda. He has defended investments in digital infrastructure and innovation, arguing that projects such as Konza Technopolis and digital innovation hubs form part of a broader national transformation agenda.

He has also been vocal in defending the Kenya Kwanza administration's overall record. In a recent address, he argued that the administration had accelerated development and cited healthcare, education, debt management, and roads among areas where he believed progress had been made. Those are political claims advanced by Kiarie and should be understood as such.

His current political argument rests on continuity: that voters should assess the governing party and its representatives not only through campaign promises, but through what has actually been implemented.

For a politician who has

represented Dagoretti South since 2017, the 2027 contest will also place his own record squarely before the electorate. The emerging third-term narrative is consequently being framed around experience and delivery — with Kiarie seeking to take his case to voters on the basis of a record he says can withstand scrutiny.

As UDA's grassroots mobilisation gathers pace, his message is unambiguous: the next electoral conversation should be about what has been delivered, what remains unfinished, and what the electorate expects next.

Kiarie has represented Dagoretti South since 2017 and is currently serving his second consecutive term. His parliamentary role has also expanded well beyond constituency work. He chairs the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Communication, Information and Innovation, a position that has placed him at the centre of parliamentary oversight on information and communications technology, digital transformation, and innovation. Yesterday, he led committee members during an inspection of projects at Konza Technopolis — a visit he said left the committee encouraged by progress on the ground.

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The gavel's mandate: How Cries of “juristocracy” mask the refusal to submit to Kenya’s transformative constitution



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyatimes

In January 2021 the Supreme Court of Kenya, in *Mitu-Bell Welfare Society v Kenya Airports Authority*, restored structural interdicts to their rightful place in the constitutional arsenal. The Court held that Article 23(3) of the 2010 Constitution empowers courts to grant “appropriate relief,” and that the word “including” makes the listed remedies non-exhaustive. Supervisory orders that require the State to report, plan, and return under judicial observation are therefore not judicial overreach; they are the Constitution’s own prescription for making rights real. That is the factual starting point. The issue that follows is political and historical: those who cry “juristocracy” when courts exercise this power are not defending separation of powers. They are defending the old order in which the executive could violate socio-economic rights with impunity and then hide behind the formal doctrine of separated functions.

The 2010 Constitution is not a polite rearrangement of colonial furniture. It is a transformative charter. It was forged after decades of one-party dominance, hyper-amendment culture, and an imperial presidency that treated the judiciary as a junior partner. Its Bill of Rights places socio-economic rights housing, health, education, food, water on the same plane as civil and political liberties. Article 21 imposes a positive duty on the State to “take legislative, policy and other measures, including the setting of standards, to achieve the progressive realisation” of these rights. When the State fails, and citizens bring the failure into court under Article 22, Article 23 hands the courts the authority to fashion whatever relief is required to uphold and enforce the Bill of Rights. Article 259 then commands that every provision of the Constitution be inter-



The gavel's mandate

preted in a manner that promotes its purposes, values and principles; advances the rule of law and the human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Bill of Rights; permits the development of the law; and contributes to good governance. These are not ornamental clauses. They are operative commands.

Structural interdicts flow directly from this textual architecture. A declaration alone often leaves the poor with a paper victory and an unchanged reality. An injunction may stop an eviction today only for the same bulldozers to return tomorrow under a different bureaucratic guise. Compensation may put money in a few hands while the structural conditions that produced the violation remain untouched. A structural interdict does something the traditional remedies cannot: it keeps the court seized of the matter, requires the State to craft a plan, subjects that plan to judicial scrutiny, and monitors implementation. It does not usurp policy-making; it forces the policy-making organs to perform the constitutional duties they have neglected. The Supreme Court was explicit: such orders must be specific, appropriate, clear, effective, and directed at the State agency with the relevant mandate. They are not blank cheques for judicial dictatorship. They are calibrated instruments of constitutional enforcement.

History renders the resistance to these instruments indefensible. Un-

der the independence Constitution the courts largely practiced a formalist restraint that left the executive free to demolish settlements, starve social programmes, and treat socio-economic rights as non-justiciable aspirations. The 2010 Constitution deliberately broke that pattern. It made the rights justiciable. It expanded the remedial toolbox. It instructed judges to develop the law rather than freeze it in colonial amber. When the Court of Appeal in 2016 tried to outlaw structural interdicts by invoking the Civil Procedure Act and the doctrine of *functus officio*, it was not protecting separation of powers. It was attempting to drag the new constitutional order back into the old dispensation. The Supreme Court correctly rejected that attempt. To insist that courts must still operate within the narrow remedial imagination of the pre-2010 era is to treat the transformative Constitution as optional.

The correlation is unmistakable. Every time courts have used structural interdicts—whether in the original **Mitu-Bell** housing litigation, in the early COVID-19 contingency planning orders, or in subsequent education and eviction cases—the resistance has come from the same quarters: an executive that prefers to announce policies without being held to timelines, and a political class that treats judicial supervision as an affront rather than a constitutional dialogue. Public data only sharpen the

point. Kenya’s judiciary continues to receive less than one per cent of the national budget while carrying massive case backlogs. Yet the same institution is expected, when rights are violated, to deliver effective remedies. Starving the courts of resources and then accusing them of overreach when they fashion the only tools capable of making rights meaningful is a cynical manoeuvre. It is the politics of convenience dressed up as constitutional principle.

Those who invoke separation of powers as a shield against structural interdicts misunderstand both the doctrine and the Constitution. Separation of powers is not a doctrine of mutual paralysis. It is a doctrine of mutual accountability under a supreme law. When a matter is live before a court, the Constitution itself assigns the judicial arm the duty to grant appropriate relief. That duty does not evaporate because the relief has budgetary or policy consequences. If the State’s failure to realise the right to housing or health is the result of unreasonable neglect, the court that merely declares the violation and walks away has failed in its constitutional mandate. Article 259 does not permit such failure. It demands interpretation that advances human rights and contributes to good governance. Structural interdicts are one of the few mechanisms that can convert those lofty commands into lived reality for the residents of Mitumba

Village and countless other communities still waiting for the progressive realisation the Constitution promised them.

Original insight reveals the deeper stakes. The cry of “juristocracy” is often less a principled defence of democratic accountability than a demand that the judiciary remain a spectator while the political branches perform their familiar dance of tactical concession without structural change. Kenya’s recent political history is littered with withdrawn bills, reshuffled cabinets, and elite pacts that leave the underlying machinery of exclusion intact. Into that vacuum of genuine political responsibility, the transformative Constitution places the courts not as substitute executives, but as the final institutional voice capable of insisting that rights are not merely aspirational. To disarm the courts of structural interdicts is to return the most vulnerable citizens to the mercy of that vacuum.

The call to action is therefore categorical and directed at every institutional actor. The judiciary must continue to exercise the full remedial authority conferred by Articles 23 and 259, crafting structural interdicts that are precise, time-bound, and respectful of institutional competence, yet unflinching in their demand for compliance. The executive must abandon the posture of injured sovereignty and treat supervisory orders as the constitutional dialogue they are designed to be. Parliament must stop outsourcing hard distributive choices to the courts and then complaining when the courts fill the gap. Civil society and the academy must refuse the false dichotomy that pits judicial creativity against democratic legitimacy; under a transformative Constitution the two are allies, not antagonists. Citizens must recognise that the 2010 Charter is not a museum piece. It is a living instrument that demands continuous enforcement.

Kenya is no longer in the constitutional dispensation of the past. The imperial presidency has been constitutionally dethroned. The courts have been constitutionally armed. Structural interdicts are not the gavel’s usurpation of the crown. They are the gavel’s fulfilment of the people’s mandate. Those who still speak as if the old formalisms survive have simply refused to read the supreme law that now governs them. The Constitution is clear. The only remaining question is whether the political branches will finally submit to it.

The writer is a social commentator

Education It has built a structure in which schools interact continuously through learner-centred activities spanning Grade 2 all the way to Grade 9

Private Schools Cluster–Kasarani: Why schools are choosing the grassroots over the national

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyentimes

Across Kenya’s private education sector, a quiet but significant shift is under way. While the Kenya Private Schools Association remains the dominant national body, regional formations such as Private Schools Cluster–Kasarani are rapidly gaining influence and loyalty among school owners. What began as a localised initiative has steadily evolved into one of the fastest-growing private school caucuses in the country.

With a membership of over 155 schools and expanding across Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajado, Nakuru, and now Kirinyaga counties, the cluster is attracting institutions that are seeking a different model of collaboration. Its growth reflects changing expectations among school directors and a growing appetite for practical, learner-centred networks over heavily politicised national structures.

Much of the appeal comes down to philosophy.

Unlike many associations that spend considerable time on policy debates, leadership wrangles, and organisational politics, Private Schools Cluster–Kasarani deliberately orients its activities around learners and heads of institutions. That practical focus resonates immediately with school directors who are consumed daily by the operational realities of running a school.

Most owners are not primarily interested in policy debates. Their immediate concerns revolve around academic growth, talent development, co-curricular engagement, institutional visibility, and competitive performance. The cluster appears to understand this very well.

It has built a structure in which schools interact continuously through learner-centred activities spanning Grade 2 all the way to Grade 9. That sustained engagement keeps member schools active and



Private Schools Cluster

connected throughout the academic calendar — not only during annual meetings or election cycles.

The academic and co-curricular programmes are particularly attractive because they create direct value for learners. At lower grades, the cluster organises Grade 2 Creative Arts Contests, Grade 3 Spelling Quizzes, Grade 4 Mathematics Contests, Grade 5 Kiswahili Quizzes, and Grade 6 Religious Education Quizzes. These activities give younger learners exposure, confidence-building opportunities, and healthy academic competition at an early stage.

For upper grades, the programmes become broader and more dynamic. Grade 7 learners participate in Science Congress activities, while Grade 8 learners engage in Social Studies quizzes. Mathematics contests run from Grade 6 through to Grade 9, reinforcing numerical competency and encouraging schools to raise performance standards.

The cluster also organises Kenya Junior Secondary Examinations Assessment trials with pooled marking systems — an initiative that many schools find particularly valuable. Pool marking exposes teachers to collaborative assessment practices while helping institutions evaluate

learner performance more objectively. For many private school directors, such systems improve academic preparedness and create genuine professional development opportunities for teaching staff.

Beyond academics, the cluster has invested heavily in communication and talent-based activities. Debate, storytelling, and public speaking competitions for Grades 7, 8, and 9 have become major attractions. These are especially relevant in the competency-based curriculum environment, where communication, creativity, collaboration, and confidence are increasingly emphasised.

The inclusion of Mjaula and Hotuba for Grade 8 learners reflects a sensitivity toward bilingual competency and cultural identity. Schools value platforms that nurture both English and Kiswahili communication skills because they contribute meaningfully to learner confidence and intellectual development.

Co-curricular offerings add another layer of appeal. Chess, swimming, ball games, American football, and skating give member schools diverse talent development opportunities beyond the classroom. Private schools today understand that parents increasingly value holistic education over purely academic performance — and

they seek associations that help them deliver that. The cluster provides exactly that kind of support.

The inclusion of less conventional activities such as American football and skating also creates excitement and differentiation. These programmes set member schools apart from competitors while making their learning environments more attractive to modern parents and learners.

The sense of community the cluster builds is another significant draw.

Regional formations naturally develop stronger interpersonal relationships because members interact frequently and operate within similar environments. School directors build friendships, trust, and collaborative networks more readily than in large national structures where direct engagement is rare.

The membership process itself reinforces that sense of community. Schools seeking to join must submit a formal request letter and be recommended by an existing mem-

ber, alongside payment of a KSh16,000 membership fee. This referral-based entry system creates a culture of accountability. New members arrive through relationships rather than anonymous registration, which strengthens internal trust and reinforces the network’s professional character.

The cluster’s expansion across several counties further demonstrates that schools are actively searching for structures that offer practical value rather than symbolic affiliation. Many school directors today want associations that directly impact learners, strengthen institutional visibility, create networking opportunities, and improve competitiveness.

Operational simplicity is another attraction.

Unlike large national organisations that can become entangled in politics, bureaucracy, and slow decision-making, regional caucuses tend to move faster and respond more directly to member needs. Schools increasingly prefer

structures where decisions are practical, communication is timely, and activities produce visible outcomes.

Importantly, the rise of Private Schools Cluster–Kasarani should not be read as hostility toward the Kenya Private Schools Association. Rather, it reveals what many schools currently desire from educational networks: accessibility, practical engagement, learner-centred programming, and strong grassroots collaboration.

The growth of such clusters carries a message that larger associations would be wise to heed. Schools are no longer satisfied with ceremonial meetings, policy statements, and election politics alone. They want organisations that actively shape learner experiences, support institutional competitiveness, and deliver tangible educational value throughout the year.

The cluster’s rapid expansion across Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajado, Nakuru, and Kirinyaga is evidence that many schools are finding this model highly relevant to their present realities. Whether national associations adapt to these changing expectations may well determine the future direction of private education networking in Kenya.

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Lifestyle For her, professional achievement is meaningful only when it sits alongside service, family, faith, and community impact

Mbali Vilakazi: Turning pain into purpose



By: Anila Bukhari
@themkenyatimes

From grief and childhood wounds, a South African woman builds a movement to heal the next generation

By Anila Bukhari

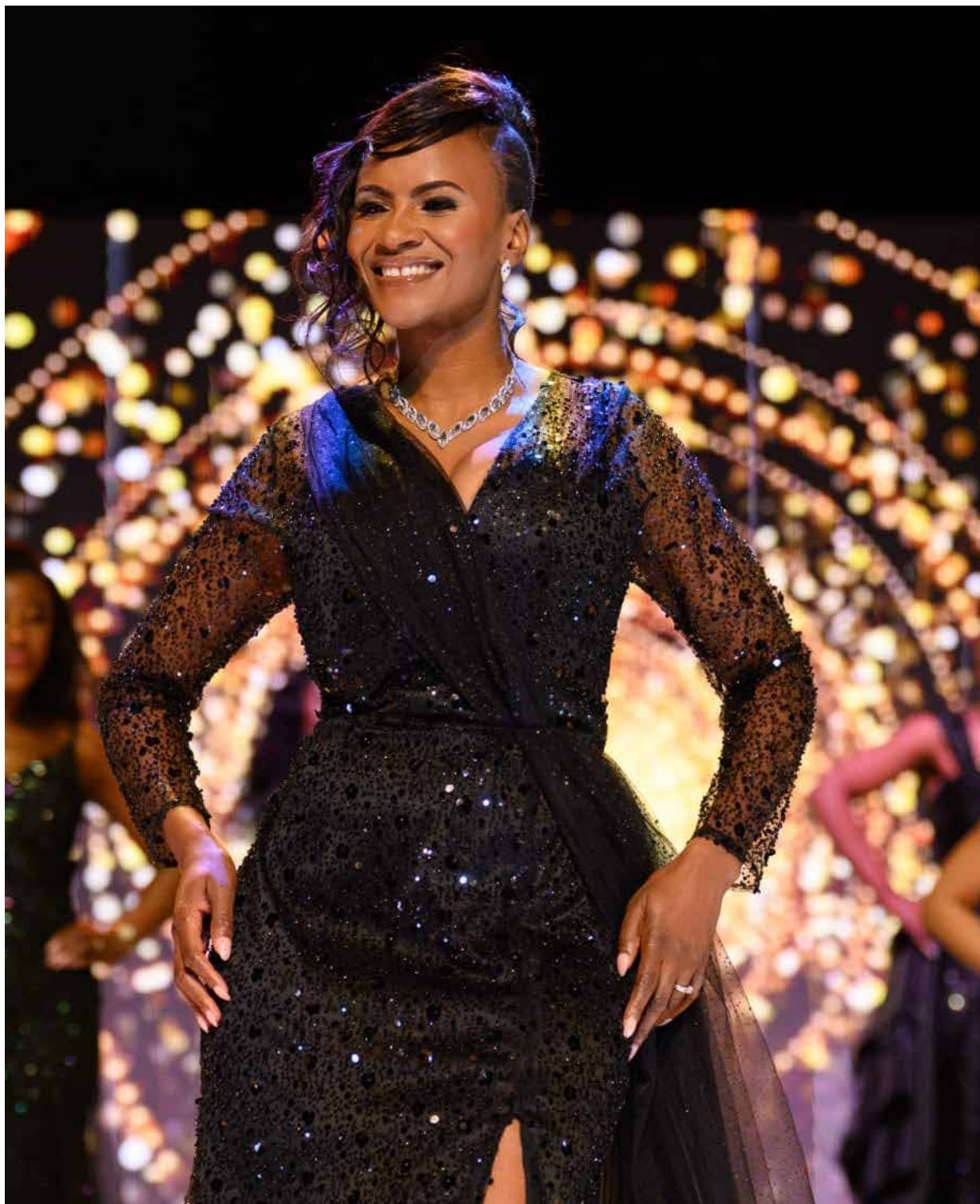
For Mbali Vilakazi, purpose was not discovered in a perfect season of life. It was forged through loss, anchored in faith, and eventually channelled into a lifelong commitment to serve others. Today she is a two-time award-winning Account Executive Analyst in the financial industry, a Marketing Management professional, community activist, pageant judge, Church Elder, wife, mother, founder of IMbalikaLizwi Pageant NPO, and a proud Mrs South Africa Semi-finalist 2026.

Yet her story runs far deeper than titles and public recognition. At its heart is a woman who met some of life's hardest chapters early and chose, deliberately, to turn those experiences into a reason to help others — particularly children and young people who may be carrying emotional wounds of their own.

Professionally, Vilakazi has built a career around people, relationships, and communication. As an Account Executive Analyst in the financial industry, she manages business relationships and works to create meaningful professional connections. Her Marketing Management qualification has sharpened her ability to understand people, communicate effectively, and navigate the demands of a corporate environment. That work has earned her two industry awards — but Vilakazi's definition of success has never been confined to the workplace.

For her, professional achievement is meaningful only when it sits alongside service, family, faith, and community impact.

That belief has become increasingly visible in the work she does beyond her career. Vilakazi has dedicated herself to community initiatives designed to support families and restore dignity — school shoe drives,



Mbali Vilakazi

sanitary pad drives, and food parcel distributions during the December period. While these projects may appear modest on the surface, they respond to very real needs.

For a family experiencing financial hardship, receiving food during the festive season can mean more than a parcel. It can mean being remembered. For a child receiving a pair of school shoes, it can mean walking into a classroom with greater confidence. For a young girl receiving sanitary products, it can mean access

to something essential to her dignity and her education.

This understanding of service is rooted directly in Vilakazi's own story.

The creation of IMbalikaLizwi Pageant NPO was not a business idea or a professional project. It was, as she describes it, a calling — born from a question that became central to her life: "How can I be of service to my people?" The answer developed into an organisation focused on young people and guided by a powerful

theme: Healing the Inner Child — Heal them young, save their future.

The idea is deeply personal.

Vilakazi grew up away from her parents, raised by her grandparents. As a child, she experienced feelings of being unwanted and unloved — emotions that shaped her early understanding of herself and the world around her. Yet as she grew older, her perspective shifted. Rather than viewing her upbringing only through its pain, she came to appreciate what her grandparents gave her: a founda-

tion of faith that would later prove essential.

That foundation was tested severely.

While Vilakazi was in Grade 11, she lost her mother to violence. Shortly after completing matric, she lost her father. Losing both parents during such formative years created a weight of grief that could have altered the entire course of her life. Instead, faith and prayer became part of her path toward restoration. Her relationship with Christ gave her a source of strength through bereavement and, in time, helped her begin a journey of inner-child healing — a journey that would later define the work she chose to do with young people.

Rather than keeping her experiences separate from her purpose, she began asking how the lessons from her own life could help someone else. She became particularly interested in the emotional development of children and the importance of helping them understand their worth before negative experiences take deep root.

That philosophy sits at the centre of IMbalikaLizwi Pageant NPO.

Through the organisation, Vilakazi works to empower young boys and girls through confidence-building, creativity, public speaking, and personal development. Participants are encouraged to create art from recycled materials, develop their communication abilities, express themselves freely, and discover their individual strengths. The goal is not simply to prepare children for a pageant stage.

Vilakazi sees pageantry differently.

For her, it is a powerful educational platform — one that teaches children about confidence, discipline, communication, resilience, and self-worth. Beauty may be part of the traditional pageant experience, but she wants young people to understand that their value extends far beyond appearance. A crown, in her philosophy, should represent responsibility as much as recognition. It should remind a young person that having a voice also creates an opportunity to use that voice meaningfully.

This perspective has shaped her own involvement as a pageant judge. Her understanding of pageantry is rooted in character and purpose, not presentation alone. She believes young people should be supported in becoming confident individuals who recognise their abilities and the contribution they can make to their communities.

Her work with children is therefore

Otukile in Kenya She uses literature to raise awareness and open difficult but necessary conversations about the protection of children and the realities of abuse

Botswanan writer lands in Nairobi: Dr. Otukile visits the country that gave her first break

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyetimes

Dr. Paula O.M. Otukile, a Botswanan writer and human rights advocate, has arrived in Nairobi for the first time, six years after she began writing for The Mt Kenya Times — making good on a long-held desire to visit the country that gave her her first opportunity to write for a daily newspaper.

Otukile is in Kenya for a week-long pan-African gathering of Unitarian leaders from across the continent, focused on strategies for growing the Unitarian movement in Africa. The workshop, which opened yesterday in central Nairobi, brings together delegates drawn from several African countries.

The International Unitarian funding programme has played a significant role in supporting Otukile’s writing and her work combating gender-based violence. As an activist,

she says access to funding is critical — it enables her to extend community outreach efforts and sustain conversations around abuse and child safety.

Otukile uses literature to raise awareness and open difficult but necessary conversations about the protection of children and the realities of abuse — work that has earned her international recognition as an award-winning writer.

Kenya holds particular personal significance for her. She co-authored her debut work, Poetry Soup Anthology, in collaboration with a Kenyan writer, and published her first solo book, Overcoming Failure, in Kenya through Writer’s Pen Publishers.

Speaking yesterday after her arrival, Otukile said she was delighted to finally be on Kenyan soil. She expressed hope of meeting fellow writers during her visit and said she would attend the Nairobi Book Festival if her schedule allowed.



Dr. Paula O.M. Otukile, a Botswanan writer and human rights advocate in Kenya



Type writer, one of the fascinating archaic piece stored in one hotel in Kenya, Paula found.



Dr. Paula on transit at O. R Tambo in South Africa.



Dr. Paula O.M. Otukile, a Botswanan writer and human rights advocate in Kenya

Lifestyle For her, professional achievement is meaningful only when it sits alongside service, family, faith, and community impact

Mbali Vilakazi: Turning pain into purpose

Contd from page 20

inseparable from her own healing.

Vilakazi knows what it feels like to question whether you are wanted. She knows what it means to lose a parent at a young age. She knows the importance of having someone believe in you when you are still learning to believe in yourself. That is why her message is focused on reaching young people early — before emotional wounds harden into limits.

She believes healing need not always begin after years of carrying pain. Sometimes intervention can start during childhood, through encouragement, mentorship, creativity, faith, positive role models, and opportunities to express oneself. Her phrase, Heal them young, save their future, captures that philosophy pre-

cisely.

The Mrs South Africa platform gave Vilakazi a wider stage from which to share her community work, personal story, and vision. As a semi-finalist in 2026, her participation was never simply about wearing a sash. It became another way to demonstrate that visibility can be a vehicle for conversations that matter — mirroring exactly the philosophy she teaches young people.

Alongside her community work, Vilakazi remains committed to her professional career and her responsibilities as a wife and mother. These different roles have shaped her understanding of leadership as something that begins, first, with responsibility to others.

Her story also challenges the idea that purpose must emerge from privilege or ideal circumstances.

Vilakazi’s life was not defined by an easy beginning. She experienced

emotional struggles, parental separation, devastating bereavement, and the uncertainty that can accompany childhood adversity. Yet those experiences did not become the final chapter. They became part of the foundation from which she built her life.

She speaks about her journey not to suggest that hardship is desirable, but to demonstrate that hardship does not determine destiny. The power of her story, in her own view, lies not in what happened to her — but in what she chose to do with it.

That distinction matters.

Vilakazi did not erase her past. She carried its lessons forward and allowed them to shape the way she serves others. Her community projects, professional achievements, pageant involvement, faith, and work with young people may appear to belong to different worlds, but they are connected by one central

idea: people matter.

Whether she is providing food to a struggling family, helping a child receive school shoes, supplying sanitary products, encouraging a young person to speak confidently, or mentoring children through pageantry, Vilakazi is focused on creating moments in which people feel seen and valued.

Her vision for the future reaches beyond personal recognition. She wants to continue creating opportunities for young people to develop confidence, creativity, resilience, and purpose — and to understand that their circumstances are part of their story, but need not become the boundaries of their future.

For Mbali Vilakazi, that is what turning pain into purpose truly means.

It means taking experiences that once caused hurt and allowing them to deepen compassion. It means al-

lowing faith to become a source of restoration. It means transforming personal lessons into opportunities for service. And it means reaching the next generation early enough to remind them that they have value.

Her journey — from a young girl raised by her grandparents to a professional, mother, community activist, pageant judge, Church Elder, founder, and Mrs South Africa Semi-finalist — is not simply a story of achievement.

It is a story of transformation.

And perhaps its most meaningful element is that Vilakazi is not keeping that transformation for herself. Through IMbalikaLizwi Pageant NPO and her community initiatives, she is working to pass hope forward — one child, one family, one opportunity at a time.

Her story carries a simple message: where a person begins does not have to determine where they end.

For Vilakazi, the future is not only something to reach. It is something to help build — especially for the young people who are still learning to believe in themselves.

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Sports >> *Players refuse to train ahead of Saturday's AFCON qualifier against Eritrea, demanding outstanding payments from previous international assignments

Harambee Stars boycott training over unpaid allowances



Harambee Stars players

By **Pascal Okoth**

Harambee Stars players yesterday boycotted training ahead of Kenya's opening 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Eritrea, protesting over unpaid allowances and concerns about their treatment while on national team duty.

The players reported to camp in Nairobi but declined to take part in any training session as they demanded payment of outstanding dues. The boycott comes just days before Kenya face Eritrea at Nyayo Stadium on Saturday.

According to Football Kenya Federation Head of Projects and National Teams Athanus Obango, the players are demanding allowances from Kenya's previous international assignments against Senegal and Lesotho, with the outstanding amount estimated at approximately KSh80,000 per player.

"The issue is that the Senegal allowance is long overdue and they also want the allowance for the Lesotho game. That per player is around KSh80,000," Obango said.

Obango explained that responsibility for paying the allowances lies with the government rather than the FKF, while expressing hope that the matter would be resolved swiftly.

The dispute has also drawn solidarity from players who were not part of the squads for the Senegal and Lesotho matches. According to Obango, some players currently in camp were not involved in those games but have joined the boycott in support of their teammates.

Kenya faced Lesotho twice in June, drawing 1-1 before suffering a 4-1 defeat in the second friendly. The team had earlier played Senegal in November last year, losing 8-0 in Antalya,

Turkey.

The standoff has created uncertainty around preparations for the Eritrea match, with the national team expected to return to training as discussions over the outstanding payments continue.

The boycott is not the first time Harambee Stars players have raised concerns over unpaid allowances. The national team has previously experienced similar disputes, including a notable incident in 2005 when players refused to board a flight to Rwanda for the Cecafa Senior Challenge Cup over the same issue.

The timing of the current dispute could hardly be worse. Kenya begin their 2027 AFCON qualifying campaign against Eritrea on Saturday before travelling to Conakry to face Guinea on 1 October. Eritrea arrived in Kenya yesterday and have already begun preparations for the encounter, increasing pressure

on Harambee Stars to resolve their internal issues and return to full training.

Kenya, together with Uganda and Tanzania, will co-host the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations. Despite being guaranteed a place in the tournament as co-hosts, Harambee Stars are participating in the qualifiers to maintain competitive match fitness.

Head coach Benni McCarthy was expected to address the situation at a press conference today as efforts continued to find a resolution. The South African coach will be hoping the matter is settled quickly so his players can focus entirely on preparations for Saturday's qualifier.

For the players, however, the issue remains straightforward: outstanding financial commitments from previous national team assignments must be honoured before they return to the training pitch.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Club confirms major milestone in plans to build one of Europe’s largest football venues near Old Trafford

Manchester United secure land for new 100,000-seat stadium

By Pascal Okoth

Manchester United have secured the land that will form part of the proposed site for their ambitious new 100,000-seat stadium, marking a significant step forward in the club’s long-term plans to build a new home.

Chief executive Omar Berrada confirmed the development yesterday, saying the club remains firmly focused on progressing the project.

“We are working and focused on our plans to develop our new 100,000-seater stadium, as we have now completed the major milestone of securing the land which will form part of the new proposed location of the new stadium,” Berrada said.

The proposed venue is expected to be built close to the existing Old Trafford, allowing United to remain in the area that has been the club’s home for more than a century. If completed, it would have a capacity of 100,000 spectators, making it one of the largest football stadiums in Europe and the biggest in the United Kingdom.

The project forms part of a wider regeneration plan for the Old Trafford district, encompassing improvements to transport, hospitality, commercial facilities, and public spaces. The proposed development is expected to cost billions of pounds and would represent one of the most significant infrastructure undertakings in the club’s history.

Old Trafford has been United’s home since 1910 and has witnessed some of the most memorable moments in the club’s long history. In recent years, however, discussions about its future have intensified as the club weighed options for modernising its stadium infrastructure. United previously explored extensive redevelopment of the existing ground before settling on the option of a new-build venue.



Manchester United

Securing the land does not mean construction will begin immediately. Several stages remain before the proposed stadium can become a reality, including detailed design work, public consultation, planning approvals, and further development of the broader regeneration plans. The club is expected to continue working with relevant authorities, local stakeholders, and supporters as the process advances.

For United, the project is not simply about increasing capacity.

It is also intended to improve the matchday experience, modernise facilities, and create a venue capable of serving supporters for decades to come. A 100,000-seat ground would also allow the club to develop additional hospitality and commercial opportunities on matchdays.

Old Trafford will remain United’s home throughout the development process. Any eventual move to the new venue would come only after the necessary stages of planning, construction,

and preparation have been completed.

The land acquisition is therefore an important early step rather than the conclusion of the project. But with that milestone now secured, United have removed one of the more significant obstacles facing the proposed development and moved closer to what could become one of the most ambitious stadium projects in English football history.

SPORTS NEWS



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South Sudan: A test of leadership



BY Dennis Wendo

@themtkenyetimes



President Salva Kiir

South Sudan is approaching another defining moment, and this time the warning is coming with unusually strong language from Washington.

The United States has warned that it may impose sanctions and visa restrictions against individuals found to be obstructing humanitarian assistance in the country. The State Department's Bureau of African Affairs says officials at national, state, and local levels have impeded humanitarian operations and treated assistance as a source of revenue.

The message is unmistakable: international patience with impunity surrounding humanitarian access is running out.

For South Sudan, however, this should not be viewed simply as another confrontation with a foreign power. It is a far deeper question about governance, accountability, and the responsibility of the state towards its own citizens.

South Sudan became independent in 2011 amid enormous international goodwill and high expectations. Years of conflict, political instability, and mass displacement have since left millions dependent on humanitarian assistance. The United Nations reported in June that more than 2.5 million people remained internally displaced across the country, including approximately 964,000 in camps and displacement sites. The war in neighbouring Sudan has added a further dimension, with more than 1.3 million people having crossed into South Sudan since 2023.

These are not merely statistics. Behind every figure is a family displaced from its home, a child unable to attend school, a patient waiting for medicine, or a community struggling to survive without reliable access to food, shelter, and basic services.

Humanitarian assistance in such circumstances is not a luxury. It is a lifeline.

That is why allegations that humanitarian organisations are being obstructed, subjected to unnecessary costs, or treated as revenue sources deserve serious attention. The United States — South Sudan's largest humanitarian assistance provider

— has made clear that its future decisions on foreign assistance will be shaped by how the transitional government treats organisations working to reach vulnerable populations. Washington has also linked the crisis to political violence and what it describes as the failure to deploy public revenue appropriately to provide basic services, meet humanitarian needs, and pay public-sector salaries.

The implications reach well beyond the bilateral relationship between Washington and Juba.

South Sudan sits at the centre of an interconnected Horn of Africa security and humanitarian environment. Instability in one country rarely stays contained within its borders. South Sudan shares borders and deep social, economic, and security ties with Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and the Central African Republic. Continued instability contributes to displacement, cross-border insecurity, trafficking, illicit financial flows, and mounting pressure on neighbouring communities and humanitarian systems.

For Kenya and Uganda in particular, the stability of South Sudan carries direct consequences. Both countries have hosted large numbers of South Sudanese refugees and remain important regional partners in

humanitarian, diplomatic, and economic affairs. This makes the current situation a matter of genuine regional concern.

The African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development therefore have an important role to play. Responsibility for South Sudan's future cannot rest entirely with external powers. African institutions must continue pressing for accountability, humanitarian access, and implementation of the peace process — while ensuring that pressure on political actors does not translate into greater suffering for ordinary citizens.

The international community must also exercise care in the design and application of sanctions.

Targeted sanctions and visa restrictions can serve as instruments of accountability, but their effectiveness depends on credible evidence, clear targets, and careful implementation. They must distinguish between those alleged to obstruct humanitarian operations and the wider population that depends on international assistance. The objective should not be to punish South Sudanese citizens for the conduct of political or administrative actors. It should be to change that conduct.

That distinction is critical.

South Sudan cannot afford an en-

vironment in which humanitarian organisations must navigate political, administrative, and financial obstacles simply to reach vulnerable communities. Nor can the country indefinitely rely on international humanitarian assistance as a substitute for functioning public institutions.

The deeper challenge is governance.

A responsible state must progressively create the conditions in which citizens can access basic services without depending indefinitely on external relief. Public resources must be managed transparently. Public servants must be paid. Communities must be protected. Humanitarian organisations must be allowed to operate safely and independently. And political differences must not be permitted to translate into violence against civilians.

The urgency is sharpened by South Sudan's political calendar.

The country is scheduled to hold elections in December, although serious questions remain about the political and security environment surrounding the process. The United Nations has warned that preparations are continuing amid fragile political trust and concerns over inclusivity and the conditions necessary for a peaceful and credible vote. Recent developments have only deepened those concerns. President Salva Kiir dismissed the chairperson of the National Elections Commission last week, just months before the scheduled election, prompting questions about the timing and legal basis of the decision.

This is why humanitarian access cannot be separated from the broader political transition.

A country preparing for elections while millions remain displaced and humanitarian operations face serious constraints requires extraordinary attention to civilian protection, institutional credibility, and political dialogue. The international community should maintain engagement rather than withdraw.

South Sudan needs humanitarian assistance — but it also needs stronger institutions, peacebuilding, accountable public finance, protection of civilians, and credible political processes. The international community should continue supporting the South Sudanese people while making clear that assistance cannot become a substitute for responsible governance.

There is also a responsibility on South Sudanese political leaders to recognise that sovereignty carries obligations. Sovereignty cannot mean immunity from accountability.

Political transition cannot become a permanent justification for institutional failure. And humanitarian assistance cannot become a source of political leverage or private revenue.

The latest warning from Washington should therefore be treated as a moment for reflection rather than merely another diplomatic confrontation.

The United Nations continues to warn about the humanitarian and political consequences of instability. The African Union and IGAD carry a continuing responsibility to support peace and regional stability. But ultimately, the most important stakeholders are South Sudan's own citizens — the people who have endured displacement, conflict, hunger, and uncertainty; whose lives are directly affected when humanitarian access is restricted; and who should be the primary beneficiaries when public resources are managed responsibly.

The Horn of Africa has already endured too many interconnected crises. Sudan's war continues to generate enormous humanitarian consequences. Ethiopia continues to navigate complex internal and regional security challenges. Somalia remains confronted by persistent insecurity. Across the region, humanitarian systems are under pressure and communities are increasingly exposed to political and economic shocks.

Another prolonged crisis in South Sudan would carry consequences far beyond Juba.

The warning from Washington should become an opportunity for a broader African conversation about accountability. The question should not simply be how much international assistance South Sudan can attract. The more important question is whether the country's political and institutional leadership is prepared to create an environment in which assistance reaches those who need it, public resources serve the public interest, and political differences are managed without violence.

South Sudan's people deserve nothing less.

The country was born with the promise of a new beginning. The challenge now is to ensure that promise is not lost between political transition, humanitarian dependency, and institutional impunity.

The world is watching. The region is affected. And for millions of South Sudanese, the consequences are not diplomatic — they are lived.