



Ruto orders foreigners out of Kenya's small trade
 President William Ruto yesterday ordered all foreign nationals engaged in hawking and small-scale retail trade to shut down their businesses by Monday, September 7, 2026

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When a journalist is abducted, ask who fears the truth
 Kenya woke yesterday to a troubling question: what happens to a democracy when a journalist can reportedly be taken from a road, held for hours and found more than 200 kilometres away?

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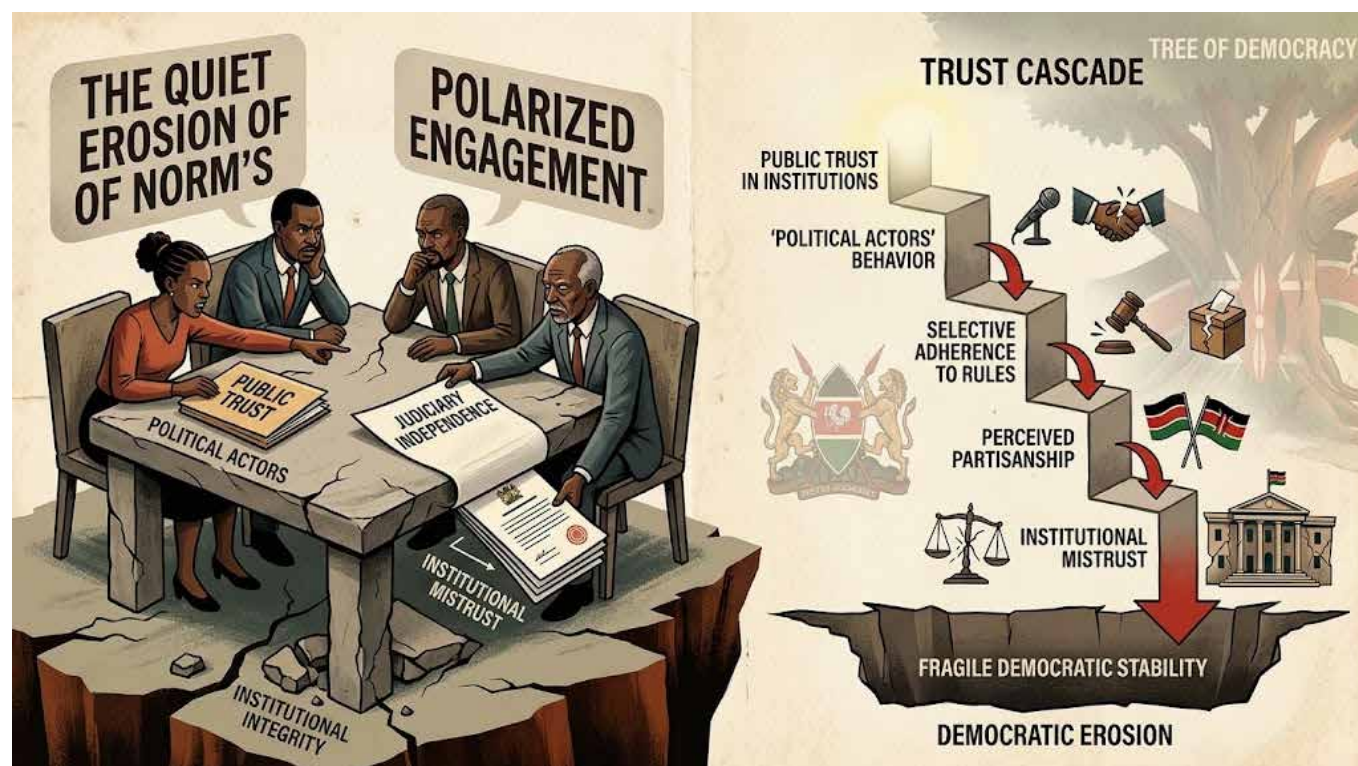
Countdown 2027 As political temperatures rise, early signs of intolerance and institutional mistrust threaten Kenya's democratic stability

Kenya's Road to 2027: Warning Signs of a Looming Crisis

Kenya is less than a year away from the 2027 General Election, but it would be dangerously naïve to imagine that the election begins when ballot papers are printed or when voters finally queue outside polling stations. The election has already begun. It is taking shape in roadside rallies, political realignments, public demonstrations, social-media battles, increasingly confrontational rhetoric and the daily struggle for control of the national political narrative. The most important question facing Kenya, therefore, is no longer simply who will win in 2027. The more urgent question is whether the country is paying sufficient attention to the warning signs emerging before the vote.

History teaches an uncomfortable lesson: electoral disasters rarely arrive without warning. They begin quietly. A political rally is disrupted and society calls it an isolated incident. An opponent is threatened and the matter is dismissed as political theatre. An institution is repeatedly accused of bias without credible evidence, and public confidence slowly begins to erode. A careless ethnic statement is made, shared online and transformed into a political weapon. By the time the country recognises the danger, suspicion may already have hardened into hostility. Kenya must learn to repair these cracks while they are still visible.

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Ballots and barricades: The stark reality of elections amidst deepening institutional mistrust



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The Mt Kenya Times Indian poetry coordinator gets award

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

D. Brinda, The Mt Kenya Times Indian poetry coordinator, won the Creativity Award at the Puthiya Thalaimurai and Kanavasiriyar Teacher Awards ceremony held on 29 August at Vaishnav College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Brinda, who teaches at Melpattam-pakkam Government High School in Cuddalore District, was selected from among ten outstanding educators drawn from across Tamil Nadu, each honoured under a distinct category at the annual Teachers' Day celebrations.

The selection process was rigorous — involving public verification visits, institutional checks and a jury interview — ensuring that only educators with a proven record of impact were recognised.

A teacher since 1994, Brinda has taught in Himachal Pradesh and the Republic of Maldives and has represented India at the Kumamoto Tsunami Awareness Summit in Japan. She has uploaded more than 4,000 educational videos on YouTube, edits a bimonthly creative writers' e-magazine and regularly hosts open-mic sessions to nurture student talent.

At the ceremony, Brinda proudly held a copy of The Mt Kenya Times and expressed gratitude to the newspaper for publishing her creative writers' articles, describing it as a source of pride for her students and contributors.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kenyans should turn to savings and credit cooperatives as a dependable path out of poverty, Cooperatives Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya said yesterday, urging citizens across the country to embrace the sacco model as a practical tool for building financial security. Oparanya made the call as the government intensified efforts to deepen financial inclusion, arguing that saccos offer ordinary Kenyans access to affordable credit, structured savings and collective economic power that banks and informal lending circles cannot match. His remarks come amid growing debate over household debt and the rising cost of living, with millions of Kenyans struggling to access formal financial services. The government has been pushing sacco membership as a cornerstone of its bottom-up economic model, which targets low-income earners, smallholder farmers and micro-traders as the primary drivers of economic growth.



The government yesterday disbursed KSh850.696 million to 425,348 households caring for orphans and vulnerable children nationwide, channelling funds through the cash transfer for orphans and vulnerable children programme in what officials described as a direct intervention to protect Kenya's most at-risk young people. The disbursement provides each qualifying household with structured financial support designed to cover basic needs including food, healthcare and education, reducing the burden on families who have taken in children left vulnerable by poverty, illness or the death of parents. The programme forms part of the government's broader social protection framework, which targets the country's most economically marginalised communities. Officials said the transfers are intended not only to support individual households but to keep vulnerable children in school and out of exploitative labour, strengthening long-term outcomes for an entire generation.



the direct consequence of prolonged incarceration under conditions she described as inhumane, demanding his immediate release on medical grounds. Besigye, who has been held since his abduction from Nairobi in late 2024, has become a symbol of Uganda's deepening democratic crisis ahead of elections due next year. His deteriorating condition has drawn condemnation from human rights organisations, opposition figures and foreign governments pressing President Yoweri Museveni's administration for answers.

Winnie Byanyima yesterday broke her silence over the deteriorating health of her husband, jailed Ugandan opposition leader Kizza Besigye, revealing that he is weak and unable to walk after spending months in detention, as fresh alarm spread over his condition following his hospitalisation. Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS and one of Africa's most prominent voices on human rights, said Besigye's physical state was



Manyatta Member of Parliament Gitonga Mukunji yesterday demanded guaranteed security for journalists following the reported abduction of Standard Group Associate Editor Alex Kiprotich, calling on the government to take immediate and concrete steps to protect media workers across the country. Mukunji said the incident exposed the dangerous conditions under which journalists operate in Kenya and warned that failure to act would signal to perpetrators that attacks on the press carry no consequences. He called for a thorough, independent investigation into the circumstances of Kiprotich's disappearance and demanded that those responsible be held accountable under the law. The lawmaker's intervention adds parliamentary weight to growing calls from media organisations, human rights bodies and civil society groups for the state to treat press safety as a constitutional obligation rather than a matter of convenience.



A court yesterday ordered Meru County government to disclose full details of 230 Early Childhood Development and Education teacher appointments, in a ruling that opens fresh scrutiny over the transparency of the county's public recruitment processes. The order compels Meru County to produce documentation relating to the hiring exercise, including the criteria used to select candidates, the qualifications of those appointed and the procedures followed in conducting the recruitment. The decision follows concerns raised over whether the appointments met the standards required under public service regulations. The case adds to a growing body of legal challenges against county governments over hiring practices, with courts increasingly being called upon to enforce accountability in devolved units. Critics have argued that ECDE recruitment in several counties has been used as a patronage tool rather than a merit-based exercise designed to serve the interests of young learners.



Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission chairperson Erastus Etheke yesterday expressed confidence that strong institutions would guarantee peaceful, credible and fair elections in August 2027, pledging that the commission would conduct a poll that meets both national expectations and international standards. Etheke said the credibility of next year's general election would rest not on individual actors but on the resilience and independence of Kenya's democratic institutions, urging all political players to respect electoral processes and refrain from actions that could undermine public confidence in the outcome. His remarks come as political temperatures rise across the country, with opposition leaders already raising concerns about IEBC preparedness, procurement of electoral technology and the impartiality of state institutions. Etheke's assurance is being closely watched by diplomats, civil society organisations and millions of Kenyans who remember the violence that followed disputed elections in 2007 and 2017.

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Politics Musyoka described the discussions as fruitful, saying the two leaders addressed growing political intolerance

Kalonzo widens his net as Kenya's opposition race tightens

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyentimes

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday met Farmers Party leader Kimani Ngunjiri in Nairobi for talks on political intolerance and the deteriorating national mood, the latest in a rapid sequence of coalition-building engagements with less than a year to the August 10, 2027 general election.

Musyoka described the discussions as fruitful, saying the two leaders addressed growing political intolerance and hate speech that continues to go unchecked. He singled out remarks by Nominated MP Joseph Wainaina as deserving condemnation "in the strongest terms by all right-thinking Kenyans." The meeting was also attended by WPF Spokesperson Ndegwa Njiru, party Treasurer Gideon Mulyungi and EALA MP Kennedy Kalonzo. Ngunjiri was accompanied by Farmers Party officials. "Together we shall Komboa Kenya," Musyoka said after the talks.

The Ngunjiri meeting is one of several high-level engagements Musyoka has pursued this week. A day earlier, he held talks with British High Commissioner Matt Baugh in Nairobi, raising concerns about the preparedness of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission and what he described as a dangerously hostile political environment ahead of 2027. On Tuesday, September 1, he led united opposition princi-



Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday met Farmers Party leader Kimani Ngunjiri

pals in their second round of consultative talks in as many weeks, as the movement deliberates on strategy and candidate selection.

Those sessions have exposed genuine fault lines. Musyoka has been proposing boardroom negotiations to identify a joint presidential candidate, while a faction led by Rigathi Gachagua and Fred Matiang'i has pushed for scientific polling. Gachagua has argued that serious talks should begin only after Christmas, citing the 2002 Narc model as his preferred template. The internal tension is real. Musyoka announced last December that the United Opposition would unveil its flagbearer by March 2026. Four months past that deadline, no announcement has come — and the delay has fed

doubts about the coalition's discipline and cohesion.

Yet the principals keep meeting, held together by a shared calculation: fragmentation hands President William Ruto precisely the advantage he needs. Musyoka has been direct about that danger. "The country is united against one person who pretends that he is busy uniting all Kenyans. We are going to do the necessary — and it is going to be bigger than 2002," he said, invoking the coalition that swept Kanu from power under Mwai Kibaki. The comparison is deliberate. He has also warned allies against abandoning the front for individual gain. "You cannot betray Kenyans who are yearning for change. Kenyans have suffered enough," he said during a recent visit to Kilifi

County.

The Ngunjiri meeting fits a recognisable Musyoka pattern: steady, methodical outreach to smaller parties and regional formations, building a coalition one conversation at a time. It is patient, unglamorous work — but it is how durable alliances are constructed. Whether the finished product will be broad enough and united enough to defeat an incumbent with the full machinery of the state behind him remains Kenya's defining political question as August 2027 approaches.

Who profits from Kenya's debt?



Safina Party leader Jimi Wanjigi

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyentimes

Safina Party leader Jimi Wanjigi has accused a small, organised group of individuals of running what he describes as a criminal syndicate that has systematically looted Kenya through fraudulent public borrowing, warning that debt repayment is projected to hit KSh2.3 trillion in the current financial year.

Wanjigi alleges that no more than eleven individuals have grouped themselves "into a well-organised criminal syndicate to steal public tax revenue through purported public debt," borrowing impossible sums in Kenyans' names while plunging the country into economic ruin.

Describing Kenya as a country in an "economic ICU," Wanjigi argues the nation faces not an ordinary political crisis but a serious economic

emergency, one in which the next election must be treated as a national decision on Kenya's economic future rather than a contest of personalities or tribal loyalties.

Breaking from the broader opposition, Wanjigi has said he would not repay what he terms "odious debts" accumulated by the current administration, and has proposed eliminating illegal borrowing, runaway taxation and misplaced spending priorities. He has also raised alarm over government interest in SACCO savings, warning that ordinary Kenyans risk being pulled deeper into a crisis not of their making.

With August 2027 approaching, Wanjigi's message is unambiguous: the debt syndicate, not the opposition, is Ruto's most dangerous opponent — and the ballot is the only lawful weapon left.

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Trade The announcement was swift, sweeping and deliberately populist. The directive is expected to affect foreigners engaged in small-scale trading

Ruto orders foreigners out of Kenya's small trade

The president's order to expel foreign traders from Kenya's markets is as much an election calculation as it is an economic policy — and it signals how the next eleven months will be fought

BY James Mwangi

@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday ordered all foreign nationals engaged in hawking and small-scale retail trade to shut down their businesses by Monday, September 7, framing the directive as a protection of Kenyan entrepreneurs and signalling the opening chapter of what promises to be the most consequential electoral season in a generation.

Speaking at State House on Wednesday, September 2, before an audience of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise traders, Ruto was unambiguous. "It cannot be that a person comes from China or elsewhere to be a hawker or open a small shop," he said, drawing loud applause from the traders assembled before him. The head of state directed the government to begin the crackdown on September 7, arguing that Kenya's efforts to attract investment were never designed to open the door to foreign petty traders. "We have made efforts to improve the economy. We have not improved investor confidence for hawkers to come to Kenya," he said.

The announcement was swift, sweeping and deliberately populist. The directive is expected to affect foreigners engaged in small-scale trading, although the president did not provide a detailed list of businesses covered by the order or outline the agencies that will enforce it — leaving serious questions about how the September 7 crackdown will be implemented, how authorities will identify affected traders and what legal framework will govern enforcement.

Those questions matter. The government is pushing to accelerate the Local Content Bill, 2025, through parliament, which would give the directive a legal foundation by identifying categories of business that foreigners would not be permitted to operate. "We have a Bill in Parliament on Trade. In that Bill, we have proposed that there should be businesses that foreigners should not do here in Kenya, by law," Ruto said. Until that bill passes, the order rests on presidential diktat rather



President William Ruto

than statute — a distinction that legal observers say will matter when enforcement begins on the streets of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.

The political timing is impossible to ignore. Kenya is scheduled to hold its next general elections on August 10, 2027, and although the polls are still nearly a year away, informal campaigning is already well underway as new political alliances take shape. Ruto, facing a restless electorate and a fractured coalition, needed yesterday's announcement for precisely the reason it worked in the hall: it was direct, it was emotive and it told the small trader, the jua kali artisan and the market woman that the president was on their side.

The political landscape Ruto must navigate between now and August 2027 is formidable. Opposition leaders joined Gen Z demonstrators as recently as June 25, marking the anniversary of mass anti-government protests in 2024 and 2025, during which at least 127 people were killed by security forces. That death toll has not been forgotten. The generation that took to the streets two years running is now an organised,

if loosely coordinated, political force that no presidential candidate can afford to dismiss.

This will also be the first election since 1997 in which Raila Odinga will not feature on the ballot, following his death in October 2025. Odinga's absence has redrawn the electoral map in ways that are still being calculated. Internal divisions have since emerged within the Orange Democratic Movement, one of the main opposition parties, as competing factions contend for the political inheritance of a leader who spent three decades as the defining figure of Kenyan opposition politics.

Cracks are also emerging within Ruto's own broad-based government, where legislators allied to his United Democratic Alliance and Oburu Oginga's ODM are already clashing over a yet-to-be-formulated power-sharing agreement ahead of 2027. The Naivasha parliamentary retreat, convened to paper over those differences, produced photographs of handshakes but, according to insiders, little of substance. The centre, as one senior legislator put it privately, is holding — but only just.

What many political analysts are calling "Season II" of the fallout between Ruto and his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta is also unfolding against the backdrop of 2027 calculations, with the president's allies increasingly alleging that Kenyatta is quietly sponsoring opposition to the Kenya Kwanza administration. Kenyatta has not publicly responded to those allegations, but his movements and associations have been watched with the intensity that only a high-stakes election year produces.

The opposition's problem is not simply choosing the most popular candidate. It must construct an agreement that supporters of unsuccessful aspirants can accept without feeling humiliated, excluded or politically orphaned — and that requires more than hotel meetings and photographs of leaders holding hands. The names most frequently mentioned — Kalonzo Musyoka, former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and impeached former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua — represent constituencies that do not naturally belong under one roof. Raila's death further complicated the landscape by

removing the one opposition figure who had repeatedly held together constituencies that did not naturally belong in the same political home.

Into this fractured political terrain, Ruto has now introduced a trade directive that simultaneously appeals to economic nationalism, positions him as the champion of the hustler economy he built his 2022 campaign upon, and generates the kind of visible, immediate action that drowns out the noise of coalition tensions and governance deficits. The move follows Tanzania's decision in 2025 to restrict non-citizens from operating in a range of small businesses — restrictions that affected Kenyan traders in Tanzania and prompted bilateral discussions between the two governments. Kenya's response to that episode, which included lobbying for exemptions for its own traders, now sits awkwardly against Ruto's sweeping directive, raising questions about reciprocity and regional economic integration that his government has yet to address.

At present, the divisions and lack of homogeneity within opposition constituencies give Ruto an advantage as the most organised political actor heading into 2027. Kenya's electoral landscape will, for the first time, be shaped by three distinct forces: the incumbency, traditional opposition elites and a mobilised Gen Z demographic acting as a powerful third-way force. How those three forces align, collide and ultimately configure themselves will determine whether Ruto secures a second term or becomes the first sitting president in Kenya's multiparty era to lose a re-election bid.

Yesterday's announcement at State House was a reminder of how that contest will be waged — not only in parliament or in party boardrooms, but on the pavements of Nairobi, in the market stalls of Gikomba and in the small shops of every trading centre from Moyale to Mombasa. The hawker directive is, at its core, a political manifesto delivered in the language of the street — and in the eleven months before August 2027, there will be many more.

Politics As political temperatures rise, early signs of intolerance and institutional mistrust threaten Kenya's democratic stability

Kenya's Road to 2027: Warning Signs of a Looming Crisis

"The true strength of a democracy is revealed not by how it protects the powerful, but by how safely its most vulnerable citizens can participate when political temperatures begin to rise."

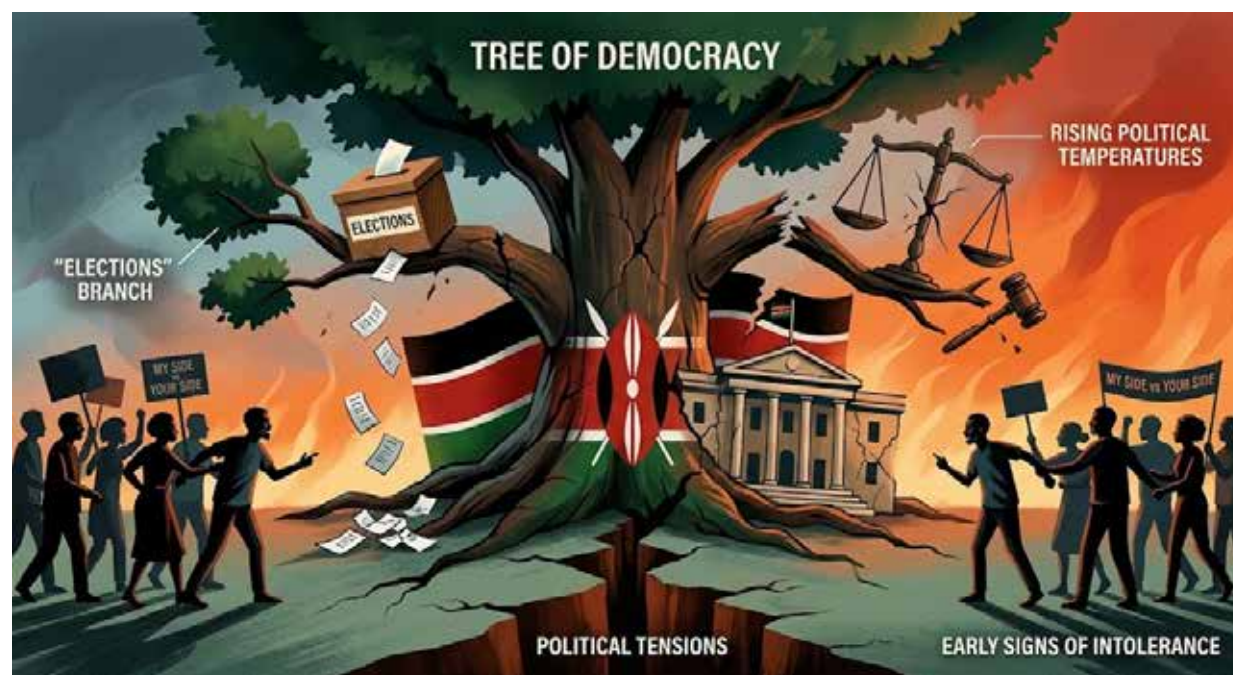


BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya is less than a year away from the 2027 General Election, but it would be dangerously naïve to imagine that the election begins when ballot papers are printed or when voters finally queue outside polling stations. The election has already begun. It is taking shape in roadside rallies, political realignments, public demonstrations, social-media battles, increasingly confrontational rhetoric and the daily struggle for control of the national political narrative. The most important question facing Kenya, therefore, is no longer simply who will win in 2027. The more urgent question is whether the country is paying sufficient attention to the warning signs emerging before the vote.

History teaches an uncomfortable lesson: electoral disasters rarely arrive without warning. They begin quietly. A political rally is disrupted and society calls it an isolated incident. An opponent is threatened and the matter is dismissed as political theatre. An institution is repeatedly accused of bias without credible evidence, and public confidence slowly begins to erode. A careless ethnic statement is made, shared online and transformed into a political weapon. By the time the country recognises the danger, suspicion may already have hardened into hostility. Kenya must learn to repair these cracks while they are still visible.

One of the most worrying signs is the gradual normalisation of political intolerance. Democracy cannot survive where citizens are made to believe that supporting the "wrong" leader makes them enemies of the community. Political rallies should be placed where ideas compete, not battlegrounds where intimidation determines who can speak. A democracy becomes fragile when



As political temperatures rise, early signs of intolerance and institutional mistrust threaten Kenya's democratic stability

politicians require protection from fellow citizens simply because they hold different political views.

The solution begins with leadership. Political leaders must stop condemning violence selectively. A leader who condemns violence only when it affects his or her supporters, but remains silent when supporters commit violence against others, is not defending peace. They are simply defending political interests. Every act of political violence must attract the same condemnation and the same legal consequences, regardless of who commits it or which political side benefits from it.

The security agencies have an equally important responsibility. Kenya needs firm action against those who organise, finance and perpetrate violence. But firmness without impartiality can become another source of instability. If citizens perceive that police officers are quick to disperse one political gathering while ignoring violence elsewhere, public confidence will inevitably collapse. The uniform must never become an extension of political power. It belongs to the Republic and must protect every Kenyan with equal determination.

Perhaps even more dangerous is the gradual destruction of trust in electoral institutions. Elections are

not credible simply because votes are counted correctly. They must also be perceived as credible by the people. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission must therefore pursue transparency not as a public relations exercise but as a democratic obligation. Kenyans should not be told simply to trust institutions. Institutions must demonstrate, through openness and consistency, why they deserve that trust.

Yet politicians also carry a heavy responsibility. Recklessly declaring an election "stolen" before voting has even taken place may energise supporters, but it plants a dangerous idea in the national consciousness. When supporters become convinced that their candidate cannot legitimately lose, democracy is transformed into a contest in which only victory is acceptable.

And then there are persons with disabilities, who must not be treated as an afterthought in Kenya's preparations for 2027. In a politically volatile environment, persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable citizens. This is not because disability makes anyone less courageous or less capable. It is because society and its institutions often fail to provide the protection, accessibility and reasonable accommodation necessary for equal participation.

Imagine political violence suddenly erupting at a crowded rally. A person using a wheelchair may face physical barriers to escape. A person who is blind may struggle to identify a safe route through a panicked crowd. A deaf person may not hear warnings from security officers or announcements directing people away from danger. A person with another form of disability may be separated from an essential support person or mobility aid.

These are not imaginary concerns. Disability advocates and recent electoral discussions have continued to identify inaccessible political spaces, communication barriers, high campaign costs, stigma and violence as significant obstacles to meaningful political participation. Kenya's own disability law recognises the rights of persons with disabilities to protection from violence and to equal participation in political and public life.

Political violence, therefore, does not affect everyone equally. When chaos breaks out, those who already encounter physical and communication barriers are often placed at even greater risk. For a person with a disability, the decision to attend a political rally, party meeting or polling station may involve questions that other citizens rarely have to

consider: Will the venue be accessible? Will I be able to leave safely if violence erupts? Will anyone understand how to communicate with me? Can I vote independently and secretly? A truly democratic election must answer these questions before polling day.

Kenya should consequently place disability inclusion at the centre of its electoral preparedness. Political parties must create genuinely accessible structures and protect aspirants with disabilities from intimidation. The IEBC should ensure that polling centres, voter education and electoral information are accessible. The reinstatement and strengthening of disability-focused electoral coordination mechanisms would provide an important avenue for identifying barriers before they become crises. Persons with disabilities themselves must also be included in designing these solutions. Inclusion designed without the participation of those affected is rarely genuine inclusion.

The digital battlefield presents another growing danger. A fabricated video, manipulated image or inflammatory message can now travel across Kenya within minutes. Long before the truth catches up, anger may already have taken hold. Citizens must therefore develop the discipline to stop, question and verify before forwarding political material. In 2027, misinformation may be as dangerous as a weapon because it can mobilise fear, hostility and violence without anyone knowing who fired the first shot.

Kenya's young people, too, deserve protection from political exploitation. They must never again be treated merely as crowds for hire, online warriors or instruments of intimidation. Their energy should be invested in leadership, innovation and democratic participation, not in defending the ambitions of politicians who may disappear once the election is over.

The road to 2027 must therefore be approached as a national responsibility. The IEBC, security agencies, political parties, the Judiciary, Par-

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“The true strength of a democracy is revealed not by how it protects the powerful, but by how safely its most vulnerable citizens can participate when political temperatures begin to rise.”

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liament, the media, civil society, religious institutions and citizens all have a role in preventing disaster. Recent human-rights warnings have emphasised the risks posed by political violence, intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, and recent abduction of some media personalities as Kenya approaches the election, making early prevention far more valuable than waiting to manage a crisis after it has erupted. The ultimate test of Kenya’s democracy will not simply be the announcement of a winner. It will be

whether every Kenyan—including the person with a disability, the young voter, the political minority and the citizen supporting a losing candidate—can participate safely, freely and with dignity. Kenya still has time. But time must not become an excuse for complacency. The warning signs are already visible. The political temperature is rising. The responsible course is not to panic, but neither is it to pretend that there is no danger. Kenya must choose to act early, speak responsibly, protect its institutions, reject violence and place its most vulnerable citizens at the heart of electoral preparedness. Because when a nation protects those who are most

vulnerable, it strengthens democracy for everyone. The ballot will determine who governs Kenya in 2027. What we do today will determine whether the country emerges from that election stronger, more united and more democratic—or more deeply wounded. “The greatest measure of Kenya’s democratic maturity in 2027 will be whether its most vulnerable citizen can participate in politics with the same freedom, safety and dignity as its most powerful politician.”



Crisis Crisis communication must be treated as an essential component of national preparedness, not an afterthought activated only after disaster strikes.

Crisis communication must reach every Kenyan

As El Niño threatens, the government's last-mile communication gap risks turning a weather emergency into a governance failure

BY James Kilonzo Bwire

@themtkenyentimes

The government's decision to strengthen crisis communication ahead of the anticipated 2026 El Niño rains is timely and necessary. Weather-related emergencies do not test only drainage systems, roads, bridges, health facilities and emergency services. They also test the quality, speed and credibility of communication between public institutions and citizens. When people do not receive accurate information in good time, even well-prepared response plans can fail to protect lives and property.

The inaugural National Crisis Communication Standing Committee meeting, chaired by Principal Secretary for Broadcasting and Telecommunications Stephen Isaboke and attended by Government Spokesperson Charles Owino alongside officials from State departments and agencies, correctly identified last-mile communication as a major weakness in disaster preparedness. The concern goes beyond producing official statements. It is about ensuring that warnings, instructions and updates reach people in forms they can understand and act upon — including those in remote areas, informal settlements and locations with limited access to reliable communication channels.

Crisis communication must be treated as an essential component of national preparedness, not an afterthought activated only after disaster strikes. Communities need information before heavy rains begin, during emergencies and throughout recovery. They need to know expected weather conditions, the risks in their areas, the actions they

should take, the locations of safe facilities and the institutions responsible for assistance. Without this, citizens are forced to rely on rumour, unverified social media posts or second-hand accounts from people who are themselves uncertain about the situation.

The proposed crisis communication playbook is an important step. A functional framework should define who communicates, what information must be verified, how quickly messages must be released and how national agencies will coordinate with county governments. It should also provide clear procedures for evacuations, emergency medical support, temporary shelter, road closures and protection of essential services. The plan must be practical enough to guide officials under pressure and flexible enough to respond to conditions across a country as diverse as Kenya.

That value will only be realised if the playbook reaches beyond Nairobi. National communication provides direction, but counties and local administrations are closer to people affected by floods, landslides, damaged roads and displacement. County officials, chiefs, village administrators, health workers, teachers, religious leaders and community organisations all carry public information to households. A message that remains within government offices or appears only on national television is not an effective warning.

Last-mile communication must also account for Kenya's social, geographic and linguistic diversity. Many people receive information through local radio, public gatherings, mobile phones and community leaders. Others face barriers of limited

literacy, restricted electricity access or unreliable internet connectivity. Crisis messages should therefore be delivered through multiple channels, in language that is simple, direct and locally understandable. Communication that assumes every citizen uses social media or has continuous access to broadcast media will leave people behind.

Timing matters as much as reach. A warning issued too late leaves families with no opportunity to move to safety, protect documents, secure livestock or seek medical help. A vague warning causes confusion. One that is exaggerated erodes public trust. The government must communicate what is known,

Crisis communication must be treated as an essential component of national preparedness, not an afterthought activated only after disaster strikes. Communities need information before heavy rains begin, during emergencies and throughout recovery. They need to know expected weather conditions, the risks in their areas, the actions they should take, the locations of safe facilities and the institutions responsible for assistance. Without this, citizens are forced to rely on rumour, unverified social media posts or second-hand accounts from people who are themselves uncertain about the situation.



National Crisis Communication Standing Committee meeting, chaired by Principal Secretary for Broadcasting and Telecommunications Stephen Isaboke and attended by Government Spokesperson Charles Owino alongside officials from State departments and agencies

what remains uncertain and what citizens should do — avoiding both complacency and alarmism in equal measure.

The language public officials use will shape how the public responds. Reassuring citizens that there is no cause for panic is reasonable, but reassurance must be accompanied by clear guidance and visible evidence of preparation. People should not be encouraged to ignore warnings because conditions have not yet deteriorated. What the public needs is calm, honest communication that supports early action and frames taking precautions as responsible, not fearful.

Crisis communication also requires robust verification of information. During severe weather, false reports spread quickly and interfere with rescue efforts. Misleading claims about road closures, evacuation centres or relief supplies can expose people to further danger. Government agencies should provide regular, clearly identifiable updates so citizens and media can distinguish verified information from speculation. Corrections must be issued promptly whenever inaccurate information circulates.

The media remains a vital partner. Journalists need timely access to responsible officials and technical experts who can explain weather forecasts in plain language. Local radio stations deserve particular attention — they serve communities that national platforms cannot reach

effectively. Supporting them with accurate updates enables responsible reporting without unnecessary alarm. That co-operation, however, should not mean controlling information. Public trust is reinforced when journalists ask difficult questions and officials answer honestly.

Communication must also allow government to listen. A system that transmits only from officials to citizens is incomplete. Communities should be able to report blocked roads, rising water levels, damaged infrastructure and urgent health needs. Feedback from residents helps authorities identify emerging risks that have not yet appeared in formal reports. The proposed framework should include channels for receiving, verifying and acting on information from the public.

The focus on last-mile communication raises pressing questions about resources. Counties cannot deliver effective emergency communication without trained personnel, reliable equipment and funds for public outreach. Communication officers should be included in preparedness planning from the outset, not brought in only after an emergency develops. Training must cover risk communication, media relations, misinformation and engagement with vulnerable groups.

The most vulnerable communities must remain at the centre of the communication strategy. People in flood-prone settlements, families

with members who have disabilities, older people, children, farmers and low-income households may face greater difficulty acting on warnings. Communication should identify the additional support these groups require and make clear where help can be obtained, how emergency services can be contacted and what arrangements exist for shelter and essential supplies.

Trust is the foundation of the entire effort. Citizens are more likely to follow evacuation orders and safety instructions when they believe public institutions communicate honestly. That trust is built through consistency, openness and visible action. It is weakened by unexplained delays, contradictory messages and promises not matched by preparedness on the ground.

Kenya needs a crisis communication system that is coordinated nationally, responsive locally and accountable to the public. The recognition of last-mile communication as a preparedness gap is welcome. The next step must be closing it — through clear responsibility, adequate resources, verified information, accessible channels and continuous public engagement. If communication is treated as a core component of emergency management, the country will be better placed to protect lives and respond with confidence when severe weather arrives.

Abduction Kiprotich was reportedly abducted by armed men along the Gilgil–Nakuru road on Tuesday night while travelling towards Nakuru

When a journalist is abducted, ask who fears the truth

The reported disappearance of Standard Group's Alex Kiprotich is not just a crime story — it is a test of whether Kenya's constitutional freedoms survive contact with political power

BY **Levis Wangamati**
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya woke yesterday to a troubling question: what happens to a democracy when a journalist can reportedly be taken from a road, held for hours and found more than 200 kilometres away? The reported abduction of Standard Group Associate Editor Alex Kiprotich is not merely another disturbing crime story. It is a warning about the shrinking space in which journalism is expected to operate — and it forces Kenya to confront a question it cannot afford to postpone.

Kiprotich was reportedly abducted by armed men along the Gilgil–Nakuru road on Tuesday night while travelling towards Nakuru. He was found safe near Masinga Dam in Machakos County several hours later. His employer said he was shaken by the ordeal. The Media Owners Association, the Media Council of Kenya and human rights organisations quickly called for a swift, independent and transparent investigation. The incident moved beyond one journalist's personal ordeal and into the national conversation about the safety of those who report on Kenya's most powerful institutions.

The most unsettling element is not simply that a journalist was abducted. It is that the alleged abductors reportedly demanded information about the newspaper's sources and linked the incident to Kiprotich's journalistic work. Standard Group Chief Executive Chaacha Mwita said

the abductors demanded that Kiprotich reveal his sources, while the company indicated he had been targeted in an earlier incident in June. These claims must be tested through credible investigation — but if journalism itself was the reason for his disappearance, Kenya is facing something far more serious than an ordinary security incident.

A journalist's sources are not a personal treasure to be surrendered whenever someone with power becomes uncomfortable. They are part of the machinery through which investigative journalism functions, particularly in societies where people with information fear retaliation if their identities are exposed. Sources speak because they trust that journalists can protect them while placing important information in the public domain. If journalists begin to believe that protecting sources could expose them to abduction or retaliation, many will simply stop asking difficult questions. That is how censorship arrives without a government ever announcing that censorship has begun.

Nobody needs to close a newsroom for journalism to become timid. Fear can accomplish much of the same work quietly, one journalist at a time. If reporters begin calculating whether a story is worth the personal risk, some investigations will never be pursued, some sources will never speak and some wrongdoing will never be exposed. The public may continue receiving newspapers each morning, but the journalism inside them could gradually

become less courageous. That is why this reported abduction should concern every Kenyan — including those who disagree with what the Standard publishes.

Press freedom is not a favour extended by governments or powerful individuals. It is a constitutional principle protected under Article 34 of the Constitution of Kenya, which guarantees the freedom and independence of the media. That protection exists because democratic societies require institutions capable of questioning those in authority. The media is not supposed to make government comfortable. Its fundamental responsibility is to inform citizens, scrutinise power and give the public access to information that those in power may prefer to suppress.

Criticism of journalism is legitimate. A newspaper can publish inaccurate stories, reporters can make mistakes and editors can exercise poor judgment. Politicians and citizens have every right to challenge journalism through lawful mechanisms — demanding corrections, presenting evidence and seeking legal remedies. But disagreement with journalism cannot become a licence for intimidation. A democratic society must accommodate criticism without turning political disagreement into a physical threat.

That is where Kenya must draw a firm line. The authorities have a responsibility that goes beyond opening another investigation file and issuing carefully worded statements. Kenyans deserve to know

who abducted Kiprotich, why he was targeted, whether the incident was connected to his professional work and whether anyone within the security establishment was involved. Those questions must not disappear beneath political statements or the next day's headlines.

The police have reportedly opened an inquiry while raising concerns about the reporting surrounding the case. That makes an independent and transparent investigation even more essential. Where allegations touch on security personnel or raise questions about the conduct of state institutions, the public must be able to trust that investigators are not simply clearing their own name. Kenya has witnessed too many controversies surrounding alleged disappearances and police conduct for citizens to accept assurances without evidence.

The government should understand that transparency in this case is not an attack on its authority. It is an opportunity to demonstrate that constitutional promises mean something when tested by uncomfortable circumstances. President William Ruto has repeatedly spoken about protecting the rights and dignity of Kenyans. The reported abduction of Kiprotich now provides a practical test of those commitments. Amnesty International Kenya has also raised concerns and connected the incident to the broader protection of freedom of expression and media freedom.

Words about freedom are easy from a podium. Protect-

Standard Group's Alex Kiprotich

ing freedom when powerful institutions are embarrassed by what journalists uncover is considerably harder. A government that believes in constitutional freedoms should not merely defend those freedoms when they are convenient — it should defend them when reporting is critical, uncomfortable or politically damaging. The true test of press freedom is not whether journalists can praise those in power. It is whether they can investigate those in power without fearing the consequences.

This matters with particular urgency because Kenya is moving steadily towards the August 2027 general election. Elections intensify political competition, and competition inevitably increases the importance of information. Citizens need journalists who can interrogate campaign promises, investigate public spending and challenge narratives presented by both government and opposition. The closer Kenya gets to 2027, the more dangerous it becomes to normalise attacks on journalists. A democracy cannot have credible elections if citizens receive information through an environment shaped by fear.

Responsible journalism requires accuracy, fairness and verification. Journalists must defend what they publish and media houses must correct genuine errors. But professional accountability must never be confused with physical intimidation. The solution to bad journalism is better journalism and lawful

accountability — not fear.

If Kiprotich's reported abduction was connected to his journalism, Kenya has entered territory that should alarm everyone. If it was not, investigators must establish that fact publicly and convincingly. Either way, the country needs answers. Kiprotich should not become another headline that fades once the news cycle moves on. Kenya has a damaging habit of expressing outrage when something shocking occurs, then returning to normal once the cameras leave. That habit must end if accountability is to mean anything.

The question before Kenya is larger than one journalist. It is whether a country that calls itself a democracy can tolerate a climate in which journalists think twice before asking the next difficult question. It is whether constitutional freedoms exist only in legal documents or whether they hold when institutions face pressure.

Because when a journalist is silenced, the public loses a question it might never hear, a document it might never see and a story that might have changed how citizens understand their country. Kiprotich has been found safe. That is the good news. Kenya now needs the other half: the truth. A free press should not have to choose between telling the truth and staying safe. When a journalist is abducted, Kenya should not only ask where he was taken. It should ask what truth someone was afraid he might uncover.



Inflation Transport is another major channel through which inflation spreads across the economy. When the cost of moving people and goods rises, businesses face higher operating expenses

Why Kenya's inflation is becoming harder to escape

Rising prices are no longer a statistic — they are a daily siege on the Kenyan household

BY Collins Kibet

@themtkenyatimes

Rising prices are no longer a statistic — they are a daily siege on the Kenyan household

By Collins Kibet

Kenya's inflation problem is becoming increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens to escape. The rising cost of living is no longer limited to a few commodities but is being felt across essential areas of daily life — food, transport, housing and household services. As prices continue to rise faster than many incomes, families are being forced to make difficult choices about

what they can afford and what they must sacrifice.

The latest inflation review has placed the cost of living at the centre of national debate once again. While inflation figures may appear as technical economic statistics, behind every percentage point is a household struggling to stretch its income. For many Kenyans, the question is no longer whether prices are rising, but whether their earnings can keep pace.

Food remains the greatest source of pressure. Families cannot simply stop buying food when prices increase. They may reduce quantities, change brands or switch to cheaper alternatives, but



Kenya's inflation

the basic need remains. This makes food inflation particularly painful for low- and middle-income households, which already spend a significant portion of their earnings on daily necessities.

Transport is another major channel through which inflation spreads across the economy. When the cost of moving people and goods rises, businesses face higher operating expenses. Those additional costs are eventually transferred to consumers through higher prices. A rise in transport costs can therefore make everything from food at the market to goods in local shops more expensive.

The problem is also connected to the wider economic environment. Kenya depends partly on imported fuel, machinery, raw materials and other commodities. Any major disruption in global markets, exchange rates or international energy prices can find its way into the domestic economy. This means that even when local authorities attempt to contain inflation, external pressures can continue pushing prices upward.

For ordinary Kenyans, inflation is more than an economic indicator — it is a daily reality. A worker whose salary re-

mains unchanged while food, rent and transport become more expensive effectively earns less in real terms. Small traders also face rising costs of stock, transportation and electricity, forcing some to raise prices while others operate with increasingly narrow profit margins.

The danger is that persistent inflation can gradually weaken household resilience. Savings become difficult, investments are postponed and families may be forced to borrow simply to meet ordinary expenses. Young people seeking employment and small businesses trying to survive are particularly vulnerable, as they often have limited financial buffers.

Fighting inflation, however, cannot depend on monetary policy alone. Kenya needs a broader approach that strengthens domestic food production, improves transport systems, reduces unnecessary business costs, supports productive sectors and maintains responsible public finances. Greater efficiency in government spending is equally important, because citizens ultimately bear the cost of an economy where resources are poorly managed.

The government must also

recognise that economic stability should be measured not only through inflation statistics but through the lived experiences of citizens. A country can record economic growth while households continue feeling poorer if wages and employment opportunities do not improve alongside rising prices.

Kenya's inflation is becoming harder to escape because it has become deeply embedded in almost every aspect of economic life. From the farmer producing food to the trader selling it, from the driver transporting it to the consumer purchasing it, rising costs travel through the entire economic chain.

The latest figures should therefore be treated as more than numbers on an economic report. They are a reminder that the real test of economic policy is whether ordinary citizens can afford food, transport, housing and other basic necessities without constantly falling deeper into financial pressure. Controlling inflation is not simply about stabilising a percentage — it is about restoring the purchasing power, confidence and dignity of the Kenyan household.

Every sunset is proof



Every sunset is proof
That endings can be beautiful,
Even after a tiring day,
The sky turns golden and peaceful.

We may do the right things
At the right moment in life,
Yet struggles may surround us,
And make us tired to strive.

Problems may test our courage,
And challenges may make us fall,
But with God's grace beside us,

We can overcome them all.

So do everything with courage,
Be bold and always optimistic,
Believe in God and keep moving—
Let your faith remain realistic.

Never give up in the struggle,
Even when the road seems long,
For every difficult ending
Can become a beautiful song.

Believe, be brave, and persevere;
Let hope shine through the night.
With God's grace and your courage,
Your ending will be beautiful and bright.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

The strongest roots grow in the toughest soil



The stone is carved and shaped
again and again.
After every stroke, it slowly
becomes a beautiful statue.

Likewise, in life, every struggle,
failure, and hardship shapes us into a
stronger and
better person.
Every failure teaches us a lesson, and
every experience give us the
strength to move forward.
The lessons we learn from difficulties
guide us towards success.
The strongest roots grow
in the toughest soil.

Mohana K,PUMS Kovakkulam, Karur, Tamil Nadu,
India.

The strongest roots grow in the toughest soil



The strongest roots grow deep,
Where the soil is hard to keep.

Through the dark, a seed will stay,
Waiting for a brighter day.

With hope and strength, it starts to grow,
Facing winds that strongly blow.

So never fear a time that's tough,
Your roots can make you strong enough.

Hard times help us learn and rise,
Like a plant reaching for the skies.

Remember this when days are hard—
Great strength can grow from every scar.

R. SRIPRIYA
(Creative Writer)
BT ENGLISH
GHSS KOLAPAKKAM KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT
TAMILNADU
INDIA

Beautiful endings like sunset



Every sunrise is beautiful,
It's a bliss to watch the sun
Rising slowly from the horizon,
Bringing light to everyone.

Sunsets are equally beautiful,
With a splash of bright colours,
Painting a lovely picture

Across the sky in different hues.

Beginnings are always beautiful,
But endings too can be beautiful,
Like the happy ending of a book
Or a movie we loved to watch.

Every sunrise promises a beginning,
Every sunset brings the day to rest;
Life needs both beginnings and endings,
And sometimes, the ending is the best.

M.Raddhika
Freelance content writer
Creative Writers
Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, India

Take time to improve but don't waste time to prove



Every mistake can become a lesson and every
small step can take us closer to our goals.
Focus on our development and growth to lead a
successful life.

Spend more time to build ourselves than proving
ourselves.

Sometimes we waste time to prove ourselves to
everyone.

Our actions and achievemental will speak more
strongly than our words.
We need not to win every argument
but answer every criticism to win.

Q. PATRICIA,
BT Assistant,
CREATIVE WRITER,
CUDDALORE.

I am the role model for myself



I look into the glass to see
The only one who set me free,
The one who stood through every storm
And kept my spirit fierce and warm.
No distant icon on a shelf,
I found a hero in myself.
When shadows fell and doubts grew loud,
I learned to walk above the crowd.
I fell, I bled, I picked up grace,

And carved my name in time and space.
Through every scar and silent fight,
I turned my darkness into light.
I am the vision that I seek,
The voice that bids the quiet speak.
The hand that pulls me to the floor
Is hand that opens up the door.
No outer star to guide my night,
I am my own eternal light.
I am the courage, raw and true,
The architect of all I do.
For in the mirror, clear and whole,

I find the leader of my soul....S.P SAAI
SAMYUKKTHA, JOHN DEWEY MATRIC HIGHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL,TAMIL NADU

Hope



When life feels dark and full of pain,
Hope tells us to rise once again.
When we fall, it helps us stand,
And gives us strength to try again.

It keeps our dreams alive and bright,
And guides our hearts through every night.
Even at the final moment, let your hope shine
bright,
With hope in your heart, you can turn wrong into
right.
S Harshini
Grade 8
GHSS Kandigai
Chengalpattu District

Health That invisibility carries a cost. Mental health conditions left unaddressed do not simply plateau. They escalate. They can progress to severe psychiatric episodes

The silent crisis: Why mental health remains the world’s most ignored epidemic



By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
@themkenyetimes

Mental health has long been the poor relation of medicine. Governments dismiss it. Communities mock it. In Kenya, the shorthand is brutal and familiar: wazimu — madness. Yet the reality is far more nuanced, and far more sobering.

Mental health is not madness. It is health — as legitimate, as measurable, and as treatable as hypertension or diabetes. We manage high blood pressure with medication, lifestyle changes, and regular check-

ups. Mental health deserves no less. Research suggests that as many as six in ten people worldwide may be living with a mental health condition without knowing it — and without anyone around them noticing either. That is not a fringe statistic. That is most of the room you are sitting in.

So why does the stigma persist? Part of the answer lies in invisibility. Unlike a broken arm or a fever, emotional pain leaves no visible wound. It does not show on the face, does not slow the walk, does not bleed. And because it is invisible, it is easy to dismiss — even when you are sitting right next to someone who is drowning.

That invisibility carries a cost. Mental health conditions left unaddressed do not simply plateau. They escalate.

They can progress to severe psychiatric episodes, contribute to cognitive decline, and shorten lives. The stakes are not abstract. They are personal, familial, and national.

Mark Burrow, author and psychologist, has argued that the need for emotional care is universal — it crosses gender, class, culture, and generation. He traces the roots of our collective difficulty with mental health back to the earliest architecture of the human brain. Humans, for all their civilisational sophistication, remain animals. Thousands of years of development have softened many primal instincts, but two remain dominant: fight or flight, and fear. Fear, Burrow contends, is the engine of ignorance. We fear what we do not understand — and rather than confront that fear, most people choose denial.

Denial is seductive. If a problem is not acknowledged, it does not exist. Except, of course, it does — and the refusal to acknowledge it makes people more anxious, more isolated, more vulnerable. Stigma is, in this sense, a form of social terrorism: it silences, it isolates, and it compounds suffering. The antidote, as with most forms of prejudice, is education.

The broader picture is harder to ignore. Mental health awareness has improved measurably over the past two decades. But progress has been slow, underfunded, and unevenly distributed. Governments at every level — from county to national — routinely cut mental health budgets while directing public funds toward initiatives with more visible political returns. Citizens are left with fewer



Mental health

services, less support, and mounting stress.

The result is a crisis that keeps climbing, even as its causes are well understood: inadequate education, chronic underfunding, absent policy frameworks, and the relentless accumulation of social and economic pressure on ordinary people.

Kenya cannot afford to keep looking away. Mental health policy must move beyond the classroom and reach every sector — workplaces, hospitals, prisons, rural communities, and the informal economy where millions live without a safety net. The conversation must broaden, the budgets must grow, and the stigma must end.

Mental health is not someone else’s problem. It may already be yours.

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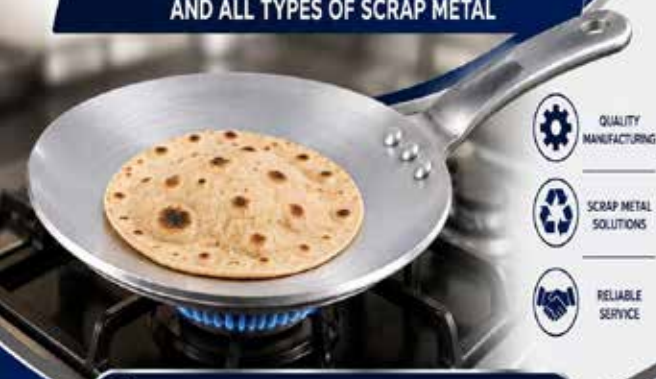
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Press freedom Veterans and their descendants say press freedom is under threat and Kenya's liberation history remains dangerously incomplete

Freedom fighters condemn journalist attacks, demand wider recognition of heroes



MMV Associates CLG Chief Executive Officer Emmah Kassis addressing the press on Tuesday. |

Photo: Courtesy.

BY Brian Gitonga
@themkenyatiimes

A group of former freedom fighters, descendants of liberation heroes and community elders has condemned the continued harassment, intimidation and abduction of journalists, warning that such actions threaten press freedom and set a dangerous precedent.

Speaking at separate forums convened by MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria, the group said journalists must be allowed to carry out their constitutional duties without fear or intimidation.

MMV Associates CLG Chief Executive Officer Emmah Cherotich Kasis and elders from the Pokot community, led by Mzee Julius Mataara, called on government officials and security agencies to stop targeting journalists over their work.

The leaders said press freedom was protected by the Constitution and urged individuals or institutions aggrieved by media reports to pursue lawful mechanisms for addressing their complaints, rather than resorting to threats, harassment or abductions.

They warned that attacks on journalists could undermine

democratic accountability and erode gains made in protecting freedom of expression and access to information.

The remarks were made as the Pokot elders gathered to celebrate the nomination of one of their own by the National Heroes Council for national recognition. The elders thanked the council for acknowledging their community's contribution to the country, saying such honours were important in preserving Kenya's history and recognising those who had made sacrifices for the nation.

The occasion also gave descendants of freedom fighters an opportunity to renew calls for the government to broaden the process of identifying and honouring participants in Kenya's independence struggle.

At a meeting held Tuesday at Blue Post Hotel in Thika, Kiambu County, descendants said many veterans and their families had continued to live in poverty for decades after independence. They called for a comprehensive national exercise to identify, document, verify and compensate genuine freedom fighters whose contributions had remained largely unrecognised.

Led by Kasis, Richard Shibiribiri, Jackson Apua, Emma Cherotich, John Okelo and Michael Lemuyan, the de-

scendants said numerous former fighters had sacrificed their livelihoods, property and, in some cases, their lives for the country's independence but were now struggling to survive. Some surviving veterans, they said, were living in abject poverty, facing homelessness and landlessness.

The hardships had also extended to the families of former fighters, many of whom continued to bear the social and economic consequences of sacrifices made by their parents and grandparents. Some descendants said they had faced difficulties accessing education and other basic opportunities despite their families' role in Kenya's liberation.

Their concerns came a day after the National Heroes Council released a list of individuals expected to be recognised at this year's Mashujaa Day celebrations in October, reigniting debate over the criteria used to identify and honour national heroes.

The descendants argued that recognition should not be confined to individuals whose names had featured prominently in official historical accounts. Thousands of men and women who participated in the independence struggle, they said, had been left out of the country's formal record

qualify an individual where credible historical evidence established their contribution.

They also urged the government to strengthen efforts to document and preserve the history of Kenya's independence struggle, warning that failure to record the experiences of surviving veterans could result in the permanent loss of important historical accounts as that generation continues to age.

The descendants said Kenya's liberation history should be treated as national heritage and preserved for future generations. Recognition, they added, should go beyond ceremonial honours to include measures that restore dignity to surviving veterans and provide long-awaited closure to families that had carried the burden of the liberation struggle for generations.

Genuine freedom fighters, they said, deserved to be recognised while still alive — not remembered only after their deaths.



Pokot elders addressing the media yesterday

and deserved to be identified and honoured.

The group called for an inclusive framework through which surviving freedom

fighters and their families could be identified and verified, adding that absence from existing official records should not automatically dis-




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Human right History does not whisper this lesson; it shouts it. In the late nineteenth century, religious trustees silenced inquiry that challenged dogma

The ivory tower's shame: Free speech must rise again or higher education dies



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themtkenyetimes

In 2024, a survey of more than six thousand faculty members across fifty-five major American colleges and universities revealed a chilling statistic: 35 percent of professors admitted they had recently toned down their written work for fear of causing controversy. That figure is nearly four times higher than the 9 percent of social scientists who reported the same self-censorship at the height of McCarthyism in 1954. The academy, once the place where ideas were forged in the fire of open contest, now cowers before the possibility of offense. This is not caution. It is intellectual anemia. Higher education exists to test and refine ideas. Open debate, free speech, and the right to speak without fear are not optional ornaments; they are the oxygen of that process. When they are withheld, the university ceases to be a university and becomes a finishing school for orthodoxy.

History does not whisper this lesson; it shouts it. In the late nineteenth century, religious trustees silenced inquiry that challenged dogma. During the First World War, patriotic fervor purged “disloyal” professors. In the McCarthy era, the mere suspicion of leftist sympathy cost careers and warped research agendas. Each wave of zealotry claimed the same justification: the protection of fragile minds or the purity of the institution. Each time the result was the same stunted thought, silenced dissent, and a generation of scholars who learned to prune their sentences before they wrote them. Today’s climate differs only in the fashionable direction of the taboo. The mechanism remains identical: fear replaces argument, and the fear itself becomes the argument.

The data now paint a landscape of institutional failure. In the most recent comprehensive student sur-



Free speech

veys covering more than a quarter of a million undergraduates across hundreds of campuses, the average free-speech climate score is a failing grade. One hundred sixty-six of 257 institutions earned an F. Majorities of student’s report that certain topics above all the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are simply too dangerous for honest conversation. Record numbers now say it is at least sometimes acceptable to shout down a speaker, block entry to an event, or even use violence to prevent speech. Faculty, for their part, report that only one in five believe a conservative would fit well in their department. Self-censorship has become so normalized that many academics hesitate to answer even anonymous surveys. The correlation is unmistakable: where ideological monocultures harden, the willingness to test ideas evaporates.

Consider the metaphor of the crucible. A crucible does not pamper the metal placed inside it; it subjects that metal to extreme heat so that impurities rise and are skimmed away. The university was designed

to be society’s crucible for thought. Ideas enter raw, contested, sometimes ugly. Through sustained argument they are refined or discarded. When administrators, activists, or the loudest faction of students decide certain ideas are too “harmful” to be tested, the crucible is emptied. What remains is not safety but sterility. Knowledge does not advance by consensus; it advances by collision. The heliocentric model, the germ theory of disease, the equal moral worth of every human being each of these truths had to fight its way past entrenched orthodoxy. A campus that treats disagreement as violence is a campus that has forgotten how truth is born.

The emotional cost is profound. A young scholar who learns early that certain questions will cost her career does not merely withhold a sentence; she withholds a part of her mind. The habit of self-censorship becomes second nature, and the second nature becomes identity. Students graduate fluent in the approved vocabulary yet incapable of defending their own conclusions under pressure. Faculty,

once hired to pursue truth wherever it leads, become managers of reputational risk. The result is a quiet tragedy: institutions that once produced the intellectual energy of a civilization now manufacture graduates skilled at signaling and silent about everything that matters.

This is not a partisan grievance. Censorship has come from both left and right across different decades, and the recent rise in attempts to punish speech from the opposite political direction only proves the point. The disease is not one ideology; it is the belief that any ideology is entitled to a veto over inquiry. When a majority of students at elite institutions declare that controversial speakers of either stripe should be barred, the problem is no longer political capture. It is the death of the intellectual immune system.

The remedy requires categorical action from every actor who still claims to care about higher education.

Administrators must abandon the fiction that their primary duty is to keep the peace by silencing the discordant. Adopt and enforce institu-

tional neutrality. Defend the right of any invited speaker to be heard, even especially when the speech is despised. Refuse to investigate or punish constitutionally protected expression. Trustees and donors must stop writing blank checks to institutions that treat free inquiry as a public-relations liability. Condition funding on measurable commitments to open debate and transparent free-speech policies. Faculty must recover the courage their predecessors once possessed. Speak the unpopular sentence. Publish the unfashionable paper. Refuse to sign loyalty oaths dressed up as diversity statements. Students must reject the intoxicating simplicity of cancellation. Learn the difference between disagreement and dehumanization. Demand that their education includes the discomfort of genuine argument.

Legislatures and accreditation bodies have a role as well: require public universities to publish clear free-speech guarantees and to report annually on speech-related disciplinary actions. None of these steps is radical. They are the minimum conditions for an institution that claims the privilege of educating the next generation.

The deeper insight is this: a society that cannot tolerate open debate inside its universities will eventually lose the capacity for open debate outside them. The habits of mind formed between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two become the habits of citizenship. When those years are spent learning that certain thoughts are too dangerous to utter, the public square inherits the same silence. The marketplace of ideas shrinks to a boutique of approved opinions. Innovation slows. Trust erodes. Polarization hardens because people no longer practice the difficult art of listening to what they hate.

Higher education does not exist to protect students from ideas. It exists to prepare them to test ideas including the ones that frighten them. The right to speak without fear is not a luxury granted by administrators; it is the precondition of the entire enterprise. Every time a campus chooses comfort over contest, it betrays its own purpose. The data are clear. The history is clear. The moral claim is clear. Restore the crucible, or watch the metal grow soft and useless. The choice is no longer abstract. It is urgent, and it belongs to every person who still believes the university should be a place where the mind is free.

The writer is a social commentator.

Award Teachers' Day is observed annually on 5 September, the birthday of former Indian President and philosopher Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Tamil Nadu teacher wins national creativity award at Puthiya Thalaimurai honours

A government school teacher from Cuddalore District was recognised among ten outstanding educators from across Tamil Nadu in a rigorous three-stage selection process

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

D. Brinda, a teacher at Melpattampakkam Government High School in Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu, won the Creativity Award at the Puthiya Thalaimurai and Kanavasiriyar Teacher Awards held on 29 August at Vaishnav College, Chennai, in a ceremony marking Teachers' Day in India.

Teachers' Day is observed annually on 5 September, the birthday of former Indian President and philosopher Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and is marked across the country with events honouring educators who have made exceptional contributions to their profession.

The Puthiya Thalaimurai ceremony, broadcast by the Tamil-language television channel of the same name, brought together approximately 500 guests and ran from 6pm to 9:30pm. It opened with the traditional Tamil Thai Vazhthu, the invocational song in praise of the Tamil language, before proceeding to honour ten teachers drawn from across Tamil Nadu, each recognised under a distinct category.

The ten recipients and their categories were: Mrs Renuka for language development; Mrs Brinda for creativity; Mr Rajan for science awareness; Mr Manohar for innovative practice; Mr Narasimman for rural service; Mrs Sudha for girl child education; Mrs Hemalata for inclusive education for children with special needs; Mrs Chitra for tribal education development; Mr Martin Joseph for special education; and Mr Kannan for activity-oriented teaching.

The selection process was notably rigorous. Applications were invited from across the state and scrutinised by a panel of eminent members. A re-



D. Brinda proudly holds The Mt Kenya Times international newspaper during the award ceremony

porter team from the channel then conducted unannounced visits to verify each teacher's work on the ground, speaking with parents, current and former students and members of the public at nearby locations including local bus stands. Shortlisted candidates were then verified through their respective heads of institution before proceeding to a jury interview conducted by reputed educational figures. Final selections were made only after candidates had passed each of these filters, with pre-shoot visits to schools and homes allowing the production team to observe classroom environments and interactions with children firsthand.

Brinda's journey to the award stage has been anything but conventional. She began her teaching career in 1994 at Dalhousie Public School in Himachal Pradesh, before taking her expertise internationally to the Republic of Maldives. She has also represented India at the Kumamoto Tsunami Awareness Summit in Japan, an experience that broadened both her professional outlook and her

commitment to education as a tool for community resilience. Now based at Melpattampakkam Government High School, Brinda has built a reputation for teaching methods that reach well beyond the classroom. She conducts seminars, quizzes and role-play sessions as part of her regular practice and has uploaded more than 4,000 educational videos for students from Class 3 to Class 10 on her YouTube channel — a resource that extends her reach to learners far beyond her own school. She participates in educational broadcasts on both Educational Television and Doordarshan, and edits a bimonthly e-magazine for creative writers. She was also part of a world record event for the publication of 150 books in a single day and regularly hosts open-mic sessions designed to nurture student creativity and confidence.

At the ceremony, each awardee was introduced through an audio-visual presentation before being invited to the stage, where they received a pen shield and certificate



D. Brinda receives award from education officer.

from eminent personalities in attendance. The hall received each recipient warmly, with Brinda's introduction drawing sustained applause from the audience.

In her remarks after receiving the award, Brinda expressed gratitude to The Mt Kenya Times for publishing articles from her creative writers' platform, describing the newspaper's support as a source of pride and encouragement for her students and contributors.

The Puthiya Thalaimurai Teacher Awards have established themselves as one of Tamil Nadu's most credible platforms for recognising educators who go beyond the prescribed curriculum to make a lasting difference in their students' lives. For Brinda, the recognition affirms a career built not on comfort but on curiosity — one classroom, one video and one student at a time.

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

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Politics Tanzania provides a second compelling example in John Pombe Magufuli, who taught mathematics and chemistry before entering politics

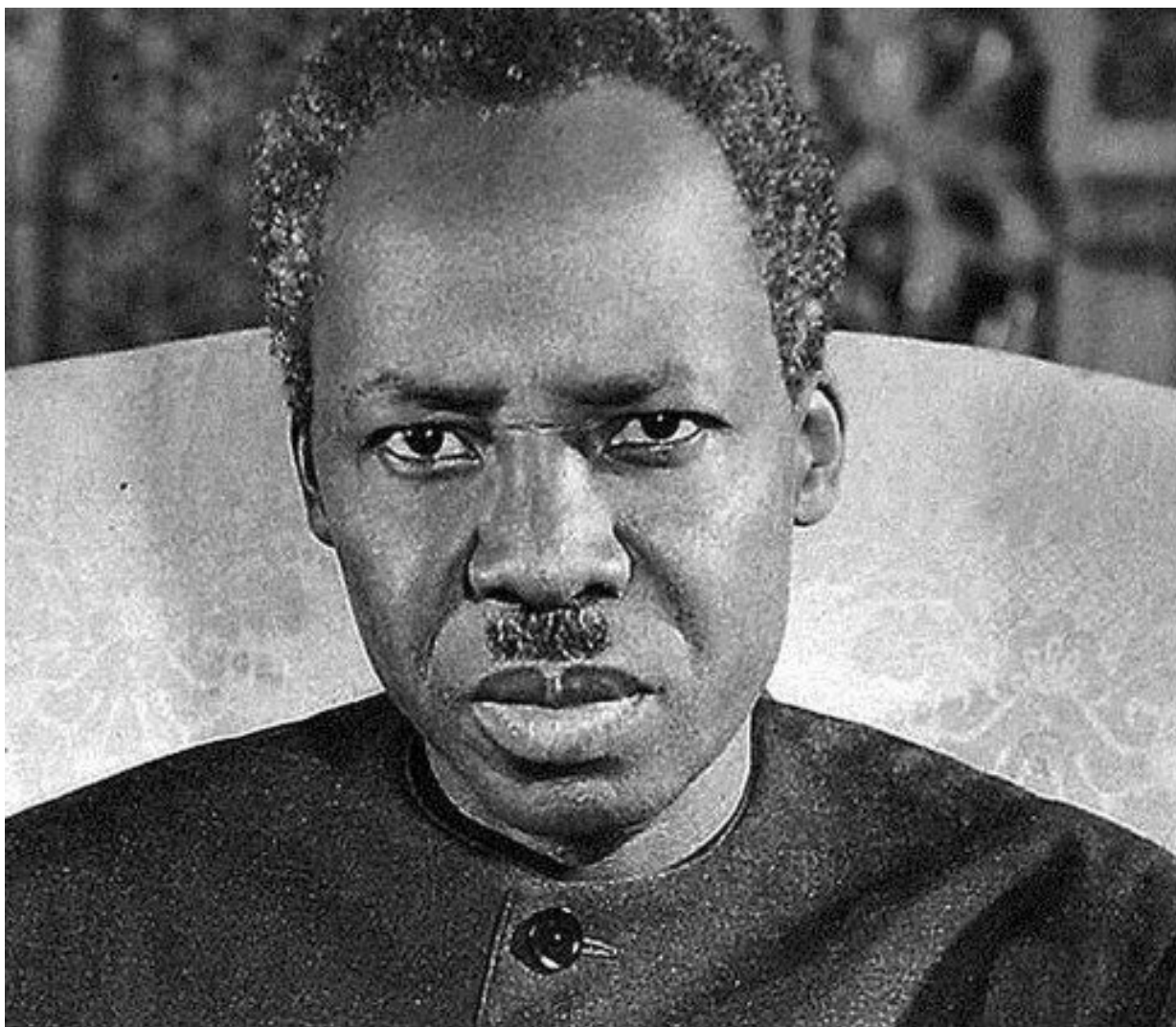
From the classroom to State House: The teachers who became presidents

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyatimes

Leadership is most commonly associated with lawyers, economists, military commanders and career politicians. Yet history offers another remarkable pathway to the highest offices of government: the classroom. Across Africa, Asia and beyond, men and women who once stood before learners, prepared lessons, marked books and patiently explained difficult concepts eventually rose to become presidents and prime ministers. Their journeys demonstrate that teaching is not merely a profession concerned with examinations and academic grades. It is a discipline that builds communication, patience, critical thinking, mentorship and the quiet but powerful ability to shape society.

One of the most remarkable examples is Julius Nyerere, the founding president of Tanzania. Before entering politics, Nyerere trained and worked as a teacher, instructing students in mathematics and biology. His classroom experience deeply influenced his belief that education was the foundation upon which any meaningful national development must be built. After independence, he placed education at the centre of Tanzania's nation-building programme, making it both a political priority and a personal conviction. His story is significant not merely as biography but as evidence that the analytical discipline of teaching — the need to break down complexity, to communicate clearly, to assess honestly — can translate powerfully into the demands of governance.

Tanzania provides a second compelling example in John Pombe Magufuli, who taught mathematics and chemistry before entering politics. His classroom background became a visible part of his public identity throughout his career. He rose through parliament and government to the presidency, carrying with him the habits of a man trained to demand precision, impose discipline and solve problems methodically. His trajectory from teacher to head of state remains one of the most striking illustrations of the classroom as



Julius Nyerere, the founding president of Tanzania

a leadership training ground.

Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe taught English and history before becoming the country's long-serving president. His teaching career took him across different parts of Africa and exposed him to the lived realities of colonial education — an experience that informed his political consciousness and anti-colonial convictions. His story also carries an important caution: an educational background does not guarantee enlightened political leadership. Mugabe's controversial and ultimately damaging legacy is a reminder that the classroom produces skills, not character. Integrity, humility and respect for democratic institutions must be carried into power alongside everything else.

Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah followed a similar arc. He worked as a teacher before becoming one of the central figures of the African independence

movement and his country's first prime minister and president. His educational experience gave him an appreciation for the transformative power of knowledge and political consciousness — qualities that proved essential in mobilising a generation toward liberation. Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, too, began his professional life as a teacher before becoming one of Africa's most prominent independence leaders. Across the continent, educators were often at the forefront of the struggle against colonial rule, precisely because they understood that knowledge and power were inseparable.

Nigeria's Goodluck Jonathan taught biology before entering public administration and eventually becoming president. His journey reflects how teaching builds the very skills that political life demands: public speaking, confidence, strong inter-

personal relationships and a grounded understanding of communities and the people within them. In a political landscape often dominated by wealth and connections, his rise offered a reminder that the credibility earned in a classroom can be a form of political capital in its own right.

Beyond Africa, India's Manmohan Singh — who served as prime minister and had a distinguished career as an economist and university professor — demonstrates another dimension of the teacher-to-leader pathway: the route of expertise. His academic life, which involved teaching, research and rigorous intellectual engagement, equipped him with the capacity to understand evidence, analyse competing arguments and make decisions guided by long-term consequences. In complex modern states, that capacity is not merely useful — it is indispensable.

Kenya's own Mwai Kibaki, the country's third president, worked as an economics lecturer before entering politics. His transition from university teaching to government reflected a broader movement of intellectuals into public service that shaped Kenya's early post-independence decades. The classroom, in his case as in many others, served as a training ground for national policy-making — a place where the habits of planning, assessment, research and clear communication were first developed and tested.

The pattern across all these lives raises a straightforward question: why do teachers so often possess qualities that prove useful in political leadership? The answer lies in the nature of the work itself. A teacher must communicate ideas to people of different abilities and backgrounds. A teacher must manage time, resolve conflicts, motivate individuals, evaluate performance and adapt constantly to unexpected challenges. Every school day requires hundreds of small leadership decisions. In many communities, particularly in rural areas, the teacher is among the most educated and most trusted figures in public life.

Teaching also develops patience of a particular kind. A politician may deliver one speech and leave the platform. A teacher may explain the same concept repeatedly, in different ways, until every learner in the room understands it. That persistence — the refusal to give up on a slow outcome — can be enormously valuable in public leadership, where the most important national problems rarely have quick solutions.

The lesson for today's teachers is not that every educator should seek political office. It is something more fundamental: teaching is itself a form of leadership. Every time a teacher inspires a learner to think critically, speak confidently, respect others or pursue excellence, that teacher is contributing to the future of society. Presidents and prime ministers may occupy State Houses, but many of their earliest lessons about discipline, responsibility, communication and perseverance were almost certainly learned from someone who stood at the front of a classroom.

The road from the chalkboard to the highest office in the land may be uncommon. History shows, however, that it is very real — and that it sometimes begins with something as unremarkable as a mathematics lesson on a Tuesday morning.

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



Childhood



BY Eshniyozova Sevinch
@themtkenyatimes

The streets of the village were truly wonderful. The chirping of birds, the deep green of the grass, the playful mischief of the lively children, and the warmth of the village people — seeing all of this fills a person’s heart with joy from within. I myself was born in just such a paradise-like village. Here, no one is a stranger to anyone else. Everyone knows one another. If someone is in need of help, people help them. The open-hearted-

ness of village people cannot fail to conquer one’s soul. Today I would like to tell you a story. My most cherished period is my childhood. There is no human being who does not long for their childhood. When we were schoolchildren, we used to run to the small shop next to our school, because everything in that shop was sold at affordable prices. But the shop a little further away was completely the opposite — everything there was very expensive. We children used to say to one another, “Don’t people have any conscience left? If they sold things at fair prices, everyone would buy from them.” Days passed. We grew up and finished school. Each of us became absorbed in our own work and affairs. Then one day, a piece of news reached

my ears — that a fire had broken out at Oysha aunty’s shop, the one a little further from our school. I heard that a great amount of goods and money had burned to ashes in the fire, and that after this incident, Oysha aunty’s health had taken a turn for the worse. Suddenly I remembered those old days — how she used to sell goods to people at excessively high prices, forgetting, in the process, feelings such as conscience, shame, and honor. A human being is such a creature that thinks only of today and never of tomorrow, failing to realize that all the gold, silver, and money in this world are not worth a single coin. There are indeed people who, chasing after the vanities and pleasures of this world, forget even their own flesh and blood.



It is not for nothing that they say, “Fifteen nights of the moon are bright, and fifteen are dark.” What is in your hands today may slip away tomorrow. And so, people ought to live with gratitude for the

blessings given to them, and show love and compassion toward their close ones and kin. I came to understand that in this world, a person should strive not merely for wealth, but to be a truly humane hu-

man being.
Eshniyozova Sevinch
Student of Termiz University of Economics and Service.

Counties CAIPs are the first step towards industrialisation. They provide for aggregation, value addition and the foundation for the first steps towards manufacturing

Eight county industrial parks to open by year-end, Kindiki says

BY Marion Karimi
@themtkenyatimes

The government will operationalise eight County Aggregation and Industrial Parks before the end of 2026, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki announced yesterday after receiving final technical preparedness reports for the first cohort of facilities. Kindiki said each of the eight counties will initially focus on value addition based on products widely available in their respective regions. Meru and Embu will begin with macadamia processing, while Kirinyaga will focus on tomato paste manufacture. The remaining parks are located in Kisii, Busia, Migori, Garissa and Wajir.

“CAIPs are the first step towards industrialisation. They provide for aggregation, value addition and the foundation for the first steps towards manufacturing. All the countries we are looking up to — South Korea, Malaysia and China — grew their economies through value addition and cottage industries,” Kindiki said. The programme forms part of President William Ruto’s KSh2.4B plan to establish common-user facilities in every county aggregation and industrial park across Kenya, with the parks designed to provide shared industrial infrastructure to businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, while creating new market opportunities for farmers and producers. Meru is closest to completion, with

commissioning expected within September, pending outstanding legal and documentation procedures. “I am satisfied that a lot of work has been done; most of these CAIPs are almost ready,” Kindiki said. The Ministry has developed guidelines on the operationalisation of CAIPs to ensure uniformity and strict observance of standards before commissioning, with county governments required to undergo thorough technical assessments before facilities are cleared for use. For Kenya’s farmers, smallholder producers and the millions employed in the informal economy, the parks represent something long promised and rarely delivered — industry that comes to the county rather than demanding the county come to the city.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *Uganda's finest edge a tense final in Kigali as Agnes Nabukenya's extra-time strike ends Kenya's continental dream

Kawempe Muslim stun Kenya Police Bullets to claim 2026 CECAFA crown

By Alfred Lobawoi

Kawempe Muslim Ladies of Uganda were crowned 2026 CECAFA Women's Champions League Qualifiers winners after a tense, hard-fought final in Kigali, Rwanda, defeating Kenya Police Bullets 1-0 through an extra-time goal to book their place at the CAF Women's Champions League.

The final at Kigali Pelé Stadium was everything a championship match should be — physical, tactical and unrelenting. Both sides cancelled each other out through ninety minutes of competitive football, with Kenya Police Bullets defending with discipline and organisation to keep the scoresheet blank at full time. For long periods it appeared as though the Kenyan side, runners-up at the 2024 edition of the same tournament, might finally convert their continental ambition into silverware.

Kawempe's captain Agnes Nabukenya had other ideas. The midfielder and talisman, who had been a constant menace throughout the tournament, produced the decisive moment when it mattered most — rising in extra time to net the winner that shattered Kenya's championship hopes and sent the Ugandan camp into euphoria. It was a goal worthy of winning any final: composed, precise and delivered under the most suffocating pressure.

For Kenya Police Bullets, the loss stings with particular force. This is the second time in three years that they have reached the regional final only to finish as runners-up, mirroring their defeat at the 2024 tournament. They gave everything on the pitch and will feel they deserved more from the contest, but Nabukenya's quality in the extra period proved the difference between the two sides.

The bronze medal match earlier in the day produced football of



Kawempe Muslim Ladies of Uganda were crowned 2026 CECAFA Women's Champions League Qualifiers winners

an entirely different character. Ethiopia's Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, the reigning 2024 champions, dismantled South Sudan's Yei Joint Stars FC with a commanding 6-1 victory to claim third place. The Ethiopians controlled the match from the opening whistle, combining sharp movement with clinical finishing to give Yei Joint Stars little opportunity to settle. Striker Emush Dandamo was the standout performer across the entire tournament, finishing as top scorer with six goals — a tally that underlined Ethiopia's attacking quality even in a campaign that fell just short of the final. Yei Joint Stars took fourth place and were separately recognised with the Fair Play Award, a distinction that acknowledged their conduct across the competition.

The broader significance of Kawempe's triumph becomes clearer when set against the history of the regional qualifiers. Since the CECAFA Women's Champions League Qualifiers

began in 2021 as a gateway to the continental CAF competition, the winners' roll of honour has read like a map of East and Central African football's rising ambition. Vihiga Queens of Kenya lifted the inaugural trophy, followed by Simba Queens of Tanzania, then JKT Queens, also of Tanzania, before Commercial Bank of Ethiopia took the crown in 2024. Kawempe Muslim now join that distinguished list, becoming Uganda's first club to win the title and extending a tradition in which no side has retained the trophy across consecutive editions.

Their victory in Rwanda earns them direct qualification for the main CAF Women's Champions League, where they will represent the CECAFA region against the continent's elite club sides. It is a platform that the Ugandan women's game has been working towards, and Kawempe's performances throughout the qualifiers — composed, organised and anchored by individual quality at key moments — sug-

gest they will not arrive merely to make up the numbers.

Individual honours at the tournament reflected the winning side's dominance. Nabukenya, whose extra-time winner defined the final, was awarded the Most Valuable Player trophy — recognition for a campaign in which she led from the front and delivered when her team needed her most. Teammate Saidah Namwanje claimed the Golden Glove as the tournament's best goalkeeper, a second major individual award for Kawempe that underscored the collective quality running through the squad.

For Uganda's women's football, the morning after in Kigali carries a simple, powerful message: Kawempe Muslim Ladies are champions of East and Central Africa — and they are heading to the continent.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The Napoli and Scotland midfielder must now prioritise his health over football after a cardiac condition was detected during a routine medical examination

McTominay faces heart procedure after arrhythmia diagnosis

By Pascal Okoth

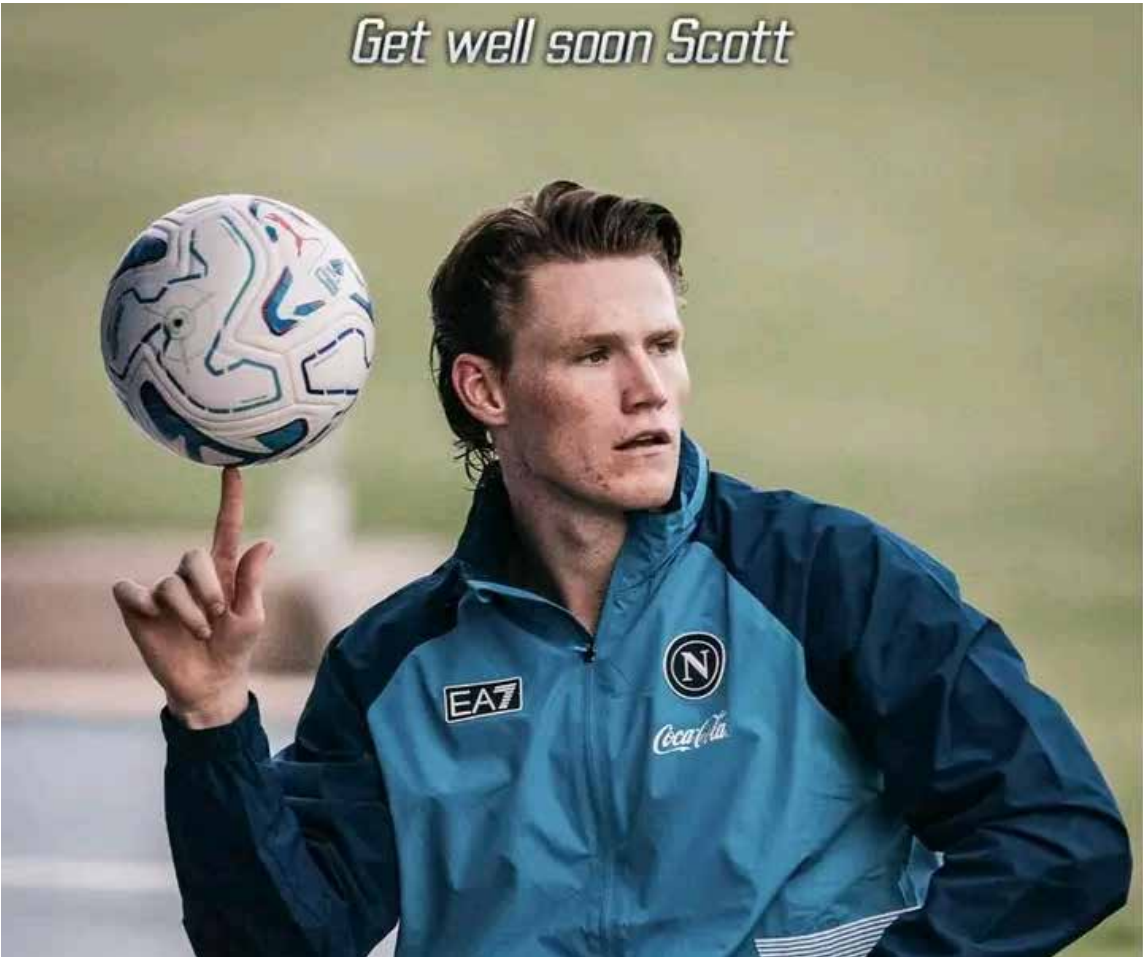
Scott McTominay is set to undergo a heart procedure after being diagnosed with a mild, benign cardiac arrhythmia, temporarily halting what had been an impressive season with Napoli and Scotland.

The 29-year-old Scotland international was diagnosed following medical examinations carried out after he was substituted during a recent Serie A fixture. While the news has understandably alarmed supporters, the condition has been described as mild and benign — meaning it is not considered life-threatening.

McTominay is expected to undergo pulsed field ablation, a modern procedure used to treat certain types of irregular heart rhythms by targeting the areas of the heart responsible for abnormal electrical signals. The decision to proceed was taken after doctors completed further examinations and determined that intervention was the safest and most appropriate course of action to allow him to return to football.

The development is a significant setback for Napoli, who have relied heavily on the Scot since his arrival from Manchester United. McTominay quickly established himself as a key figure in the Italian side, bringing energy, physicality, defensive discipline and a threat in the final third. His absence will be keenly felt in midfield, particularly during a congested period of the season.

Scotland face a similarly difficult situation. McTominay is expected to miss the national team's upcoming Nations League fixtures as he focuses on treatment and recovery. Over recent years he has grown into one of the team's most influential players — a midfielder who contributes goals as readily as defensive work, and whose aerial strength and late runs into the



Scott McTominay.

penalty area have become reliable weapons for manager Steve Clarke.

Replacing that combination of physical presence and attacking output will not be straightforward. Clarke will need to reorganise a midfield that has been built, in no small part, around McTominay's particular set of qualities.

At Napoli, the club is expected to give him the time he needs to recover fully rather than rushing him back into competitive action. McTominay adapted quickly to Italian football after leaving Manchester United and earned widespread praise for his versatility across different midfield roles, giving Napoli tactical options that few other players in their squad could provide.

The midfielder is expected to re-

turn after the international break, though his precise comeback date will depend on the success of the procedure, the pace of his recovery and subsequent medical assessments. He will require full medical clearance before returning to training and competitive football.

For McTominay personally, the news arrives at an unfortunate moment. He had been cementing his reputation as one of Serie A's most effective box-to-box midfielders and was looking forward to contributing to Napoli's campaign and Scotland's Nations League push. His journey — from Manchester United's academy to first-team regular, and then to Napoli — has been defined by persistence and ambition. That journey now enters a necessary pause.

The diagnosis has prompted a wide outpouring of support from fans, teammates and the broader football community. The message from all quarters has been consistent: health first, football second.

That message reflects the reality of the situation. The arrhythmia may be benign, the procedure established and the prognosis encouraging — but nothing is routine when the heart is involved. Both Napoli and Scotland understand that. So, it appears, does McTominay.

The football world will wait for updates from his medical team. Until then, the focus is singular and entirely appropriate: his procedure, his recovery and his safe return to the game.

SPORTS NEWS



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Dr Shaky Abo Alfatoh: The woman who brought healing to 100 million lives



By: Ayesha Talib
@themtkenyatimes

From the streets of Cairo to magazine covers in London and New York, Dr Shaky Abo Alfatoh’s story is not simply about yoga. It is about breaking barriers that most people did not even know existed. Alfatoh grew up in Cairo and graduated from the American University in Cairo before doing something no one in the region had done before — she became the Middle East’s first certified yoga therapist. At a time when wellness was still whispered about in hushed tones, she chose to speak about it loudly, through movement, breath and healing. It was a bold decision, and it changed the course of her life. Today she is Chief Executive of Yoga Therapy World Studios, building a global brand around holistic health that reaches far beyond anything she might have imagined when she first stepped onto a mat in Egypt. Her work goes well beyond the studio. Through workshops, digital content and wellness initiatives, Alfatoh has reached more than 100 million people worldwide — a figure that speaks not only to the scale of her ambition but to the depth of a genuine need she identified and chose to meet. It was not an easy path. Yoga therapy was, and in many parts of the world remains, poorly understood. In the Middle East, where conversations about mental and physical wellness carry additional cultural weight, pioneering such a practice required more than professional training. It required conviction and the willingness to be first in a field where there was no roadmap and no one ahead of her to follow. What she built instead was a framework — one that blends the ancient discipline of yoga with ev-



Dr Shaky Abo Alfatoh

idence-based therapeutic practice, making it accessible to people managing chronic illness, stress, trauma and the ordinary but relentless pressures of modern life. Her approach treats the body and the mind not as separate concerns but as one integrated system, which is both her professional philosophy and her lived experience. The international recognition that followed was not incidental. Appearances on magazine covers in London and New York reflected a growing global conversation about wellness, in which Alfatoh had already carved out a distinctive and credible voice. She was not chasing a trend. She had been working in this space long before it became fashionable, and that

groundwork gave her authority that no amount of publicity could manufacture. Her story also carries a particular significance for women in the region. To build a professional identity in a field as visible and as physically expressive as yoga therapy, to lead a global organisation, and to do so from a starting point in Cairo rather than a Western capital, is to demonstrate something important: that geography is not destiny, and that the Middle East produces pioneers as capable and as ambitious as anywhere else on earth. Alfatoh is careful not to frame her work in purely personal terms. The mission of Yoga Therapy World Studios, as she describes it, is not about



Dr Shaky Abo Alfatoh

her. It is about making therapeutic wellness available to people who might otherwise have no access to it — whether because of where they live, what they can afford or what their culture has traditionally told them about seeking help. That inclusive instinct is perhaps what most distinguishes her from the many wellness figures who have built large followings on aspiration alone. Alfatoh’s reach is built on access, on content and programmes designed to meet people where they are rather than demanding they meet her where she is. One hundred million lives is not a

number that arrives by accident. It is the result of consistent work, a clear sense of purpose and the willingness, sustained over many years, to take a field that others dismissed and prove — methodically, practically, publicly — that it matters. From Cairo to London to New York, Dr Shaky Abo Alfatoh has done exactly that. And by most indications, she is not finished.