Sat & Sun, September 5-6, 2026

Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times

WEEKEND ePAPER

www.mountkenyatimes.co.ke

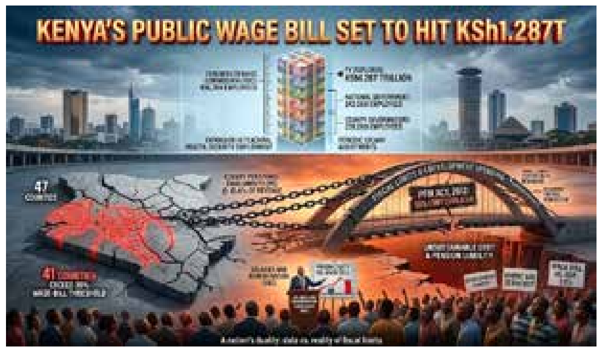
KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900) No. 0308 themtkenyatimes

Countdown 2027

Karua: Kenya is sliding back into rule by fear

P.9

Martha Karua, the People's Liberation Party leader



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5,080 new AP constables graduate as Ruto demands accountability from expanded police force

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Kenya graduated 5,080 Administration Police Service constables yesterday, with President William Ruto declaring that the true measure of ongoing police reforms would be how officers treat and protect the citizens they serve.

The recruits passed out at the National Police College, Embakasi A Campus, in the 59th Passing-Out Parade of Administration Police recruits, completing nine months of training. The graduation marks one of the largest single additions to the Administration Police Service in recent years.

Ruto said the deployment forms part of a broader government effort to expand the National Police Service's capacity to confront banditry, terrorism and organised crime, while strengthening its presence in communities and along Kenya's borders. The expansion comes at a time of heightened security concern in several counties, particularly in the north and north-west, where cattle rustling and armed conflict have persisted.

The president's emphasis on accountability, delivered before a parade of freshly uniformed officers, was pointed. Kenya's police service has faced sustained criticism over brutality, extrajudicial conduct and impunity — concerns that have intensified scrutiny of how recruits are trained and deployed.

Five thousand new officers is a number. How they conduct themselves will be the real story.

















Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times


The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative.
It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Ndindi Nyoro drew a substantial crowd at Masakuu Market in Ruiru yesterday, with the Kiharu MP using the stop to deliver one of his more direct political messages of the ongoing People's Tour.

Nyoro, whose tour has been building momentum across the country, used the platform to take direct aim at what he described as the government's use of fear as a political instrument. He called on the state to end the abduction of journalists and the intimidation of critics, arguing that such tactics had no place in a democratic Kenya.

"No one is buying fear in Kenya," he told the gathering — a line that landed with the crowd and captured the tone of a tour that has increasingly positioned itself as a counter-narrative to the current administration.

Nyoro also used the Ruiru stop to make the case for the People's Party, presenting it as a political home for all Kenyans regardless of region, ethnicity or economic background. The pitch was deliberate. With the 2027 General Election drawing closer, the People's Tour is as much about political groundwork as it is about public engagement, and Ruiru — a fast-growing, densely populated constituency on Nairobi's northern edge — is exactly the kind of battleground that will matter.

The reception at Masakuu Market was warm, and Nyoro closed the stop with gratitude to the residents of Ruiru for turning out in numbers, thanking them sincerely and describing them as the backbone of what he hopes becomes a national movement.

Moses Kuria, the former Cabinet secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry, yesterday backed President William Ruto's expulsion of Tata Chemicals Magadi from Lake Magadi, warning that Kenya faces economic irrelevance within five years if it does not fundamentally change how it manages its natural resources.

"If we do not do things differently, Uganda, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania will overtake Kenya's economy in the next five years," Kuria said, adding that the country must stop exporting raw materials while importing finished goods made from those same resources.

Ruto had issued the eviction order after accusing Tata Chemicals of operating at Lake Magadi for a century without building meaningful local industry. "That Tata company has had the contract for 100 years, yet it has not built anything in Kajiado. It has not established a factory here, and it has not employed our people. The other day, I told them to pack their bags and leave," the president said. Any incoming investor, Ruto added, would be required to establish glass and chemical manufacturing plants in Kajiado County as a condition of entry.

Kuria pointed to Indonesia as a model, noting that its ban on exports of unprocessed nickel had transformed it into the world's sixteenth largest economy and the dominant global producer of the mineral. "Indonesia's economy has ballooned because they banned exports of raw nickel," he said.

Tata Chemicals Magadi, operating at the lake since 1911, had its operations suspended on July 28, 2026, following compliance and licensing concerns. "To move forward," Kuria said, "we must focus on what lies below the surface."

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka led mourners in paying their respects to the family of the late Justice Joseph Mbalu Mutava yesterday, assuring the widow, Jessica Mbalu, and her family that they did not face their grief alone.

"To Jessica and the entire Mbalu family, please know that you do not walk this difficult journey alone," Kalonzo said. "We mourn with you, we pray with you and we stand with you. May the memories of a life well lived give you strength in the days ahead."

The funeral brought together a broad cross-section of Kenya's political leadership, reflecting the esteem in which Justice Mutava was held across party lines. Among those present were Democratic Party leader and Speaker Emeritus Justin Muturi, DAP-K party leader Eugene Wamalwa, Makueni Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr., former Mukurweini MP Kivutha Kibwana, senators Daniel Maanzo, Agnes Kavindu Muthama and John Methu, who represented former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

Also in attendance were members of the National Assembly including Rose Museo, Susan Kiamba, Patrick Makau, Thaddeus Nzambia, Irene Kasalu, Dan Mwashako, Joshua Kimilu, Stephen Mule, Julius Mawathe, Jane Kihara and James Mwangi Gakuya, alongside Wiper Patriotic Front spokesperson Ndegwa Njiru and other leaders.

Kalonzo thanked all those who made the journey to stand with the family, saying their presence in a moment of grief would not be forgotten. He called on God to grant Justice Mutava eternal rest and to give the Mbalu family the strength, comfort and courage to face the days ahead.

Kenya's banking sector and a leading green development organisation joined forces yesterday to close a financing gap that has long frustrated both entrepreneurs and lenders in the country's emerging green economy. The Global Green Growth Institute and the Kenya Bankers Association signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding in Nairobi, committing to strengthen sustainable finance, expand green investment and build a stronger pipeline of bankable climate and biodiversity projects across Kenya.

The partnership addresses a circular frustration that has stalled green financing for years. Entrepreneurs complain that banks will not lend. Banks counter that there are not enough viable green projects to finance. "This partnership is about closing that gap," said Nagnouma Kone, GGGI's head of the Kenya office. "We are bringing together small and medium enterprises, financial institutions and public sector actors to move beyond discussion and create real transactions that accelerate Kenya's green transition." Kenya Bankers Association Chief Executive Raimond Molenje said the banking industry had a central role to play. "This partnership provides an opportunity to strengthen market readiness, build institutional capacity and support the development of practical financing solutions that can unlock investment into sustainable and green growth opportunities across the economy," he said.

The agreement was signed during the launch of the International Climate Initiative-funded Symbiotic Project in Nairobi. Under the partnership, the two organisations will develop green financing products, explore instruments such as sustainability-linked bonds and green loans, de-risk green lending and provide technical assistance and training to financial institutions.

Women-led small businesses, which face the steepest barriers to green finance, are among the priority beneficiaries of the collaboration.


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Politicians Methu did not elaborate on the nature of Oburu's condition or offer a timeline for his return to active public duties

Methu pays visit to ailing Oburu, finds senator in good spirits

The Nyandarua senator made a personal call on his colleague as the veteran legislator continues his recovery

BY Joyce Wairimu
@themtkenyatimes


Nyandarua Senator John Methu yesterday visited veteran legislator Senator Oburu Odinga

Nyandarua Senator John Methu yesterday visited veteran legislator Senator Oburu Odinga at his Nairobi residence, finding the elder statesman in good spirits as he continues his recovery.

Methu, who made the visit in a personal capacity, said he was heartened by what he found. "I was happy to find my colleague Senator Oburu Odinga in high spirits," he said, offering a reassuring signal to the many Kenyans who have followed the senior senator's condition with quiet concern.

Oburu, the elder brother of Orange Democratic Movement leader Raila Odinga and one of Kenya's longest-serving legislators, has been a familiar and commanding presence in the Senate chamber across several political generations. His voice has carried through some of the country's most consequential debates — on devolution, resource allocation, constitutional interpretation and the perennial question of how power is distributed between Nairobi and the counties. His absence from public life, however brief, has not gone unnoticed by colleagues, political observers or the constituents who have come to associate him with a particular brand of blunt, experienced counsel.

Methu's decision to visit was not announced in advance, nor was it choreographed for cameras. It was a personal call, the kind that requires no justification beyond the simple recognition that a colleague is unwell and deserves to know he is thought of. In that sense, the visit stood apart from the transactional nature of much of Kenya's political interaction, where appearances are frequently calculated and gestures carry agendas.

The significance of the moment is perhaps best understood against the backdrop of the current political climate. Kenya is deep in the early manoeuvring of its pre-election season, with the 2027 General Election drawing political actors into sharper and more combative positions by the week. Alliances are being tested. Friendships are being weighed against ambition. Personal loyalties are constantly being renegotiated in the arithmetic of coalition-building. Against that backdrop, a senator setting aside the noise to sit with an ailing colleague across party lines carries a meaning that is easy to overlook and worth preserving.

Methu did not elaborate publicly on the specifics of Oburu's condition or offer any indication of when the veteran senator might return to his duties in the chamber. What he offered instead was something more straightforward — a firsthand account of a man who, despite whatever has kept him from public view, remains himself: alert, engaged and, by all appearances, in good heart.

For Oburu's family, his supporters in Siaya and Nyanza, and the wider community of Kenyans who have watched his decades of public service with respect and occasional exasperation — the kind reserved only for politicians one takes seriously — that reassurance matters.

Kenya produces no shortage of political drama. It produces considerably fewer moments of uncomplicated human decency. Yesterday in Nairobi, there was one.

KRA waives all tax penalties in year-end amnesty

KRA

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya Revenue Authority yesterday announced a full waiver of interest, penalties and fines on qualifying tax debts accumulated up to December 31, 2025, giving taxpayers until December 31, 2026 to clear their principal obligations without additional charges.

The amnesty is among the more significant relief measures the taxman has extended to individuals and businesses in recent years. For taxpayers carrying long-standing arrears, the waiver eliminates what are often the most punishing elements of a tax debt — the compounding interest and accumulated penalties that can, over time, dwarf the original obligation and place settlement permanently out of reach.

KRA has in recent years intensified its compliance drive as the government pursues more ambitious revenue targets. The amnesty represents a tactical shift: rather than pursuing every shilling through enforcement, the authority is offering a clean exit to those willing to settle voluntarily before the year closes.

Taxpayers with qualifying debts would do well to act early. The December 31 deadline is firm, and the window, though generous in scope, will not remain open indefinitely. For businesses and individuals alike, settling now — without the burden of penalties — is a considerably better outcome than facing enforcement later with those charges restored.

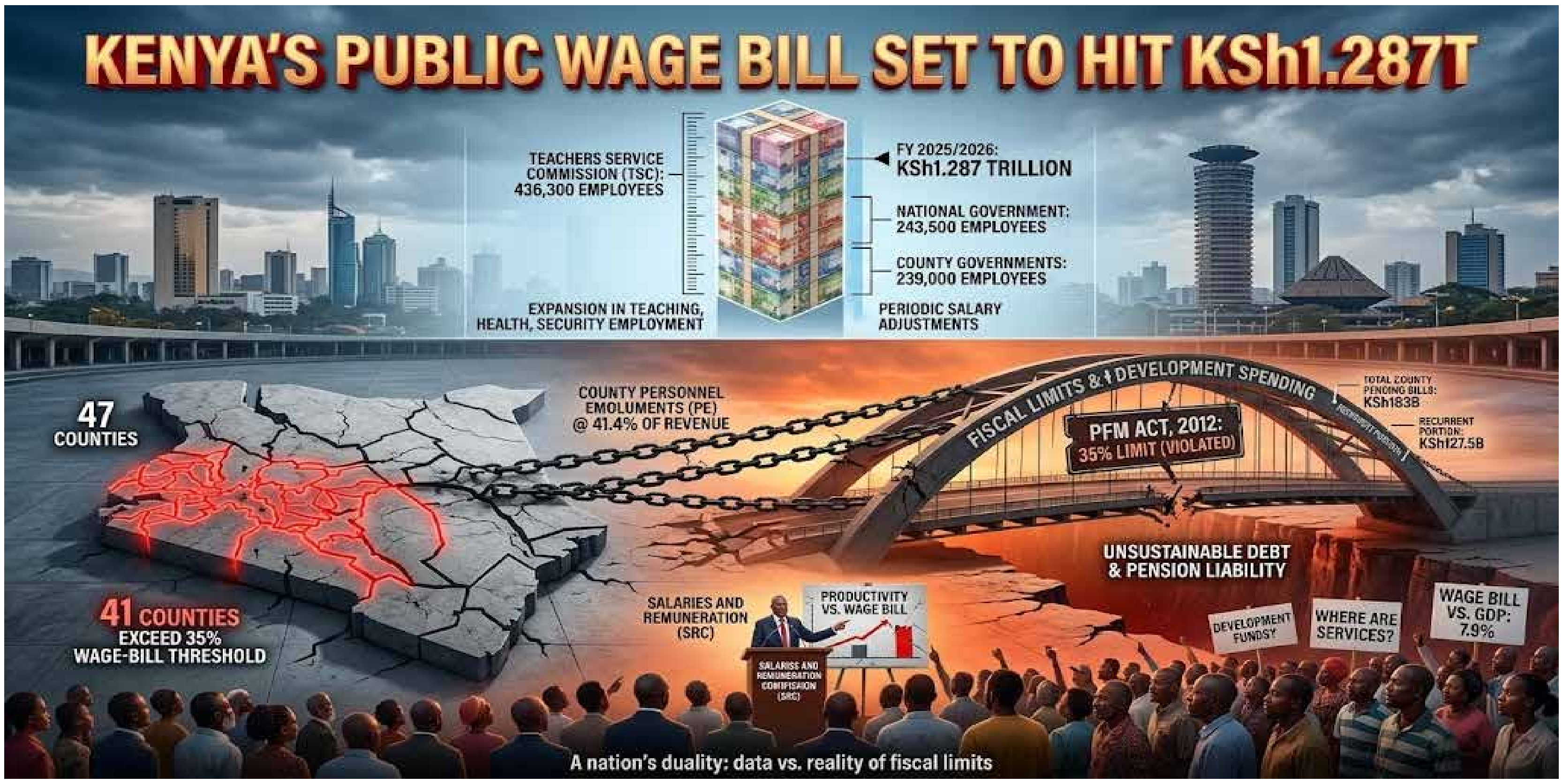
The offer is real. The deadline is not.

Wage bill The national wage bill stood at KSh1.247 trillion in the financial year 2024/2025 and is provisionally expected to rise to KSh1.287 trillion by the close of 2025/2026

Kenya's public wage bill set to hit KSh1.287T as county spending strains fiscal limits

New SRC data shows employment in public service surpassing one million workers, but most counties remain above the legal wage threshold

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes



Kenya's public wage

New SRC data shows employment in public service surpassing one million workers, but most counties remain above the legal wage threshold

By Grace Wanja

Kenya's public sector wage bill is projected to reach KSh1.287 trillion in the current financial year, the Salaries and Remuneration Commission revealed yesterday, as new data shows sustained growth in public employment alongside persistent fiscal pressure on county governments struggling to keep personnel costs within legal limits.

The figures are contained in the SRC's Fourth Quarter Wage Bill Bulletin for the period April to June 2026, covering the financial year 2025/2026. They paint a picture of a public service that is growing in headcount and cost, while regulators and treasury officials work to ensure that expansion does not outpace the revenue available to sustain it.

The national wage bill stood at KSh1.247 trillion in the financial year 2024/2025 and is provisionally expected to rise to KSh1.287 trillion by the close of 2025/2026. The growth has been driven largely by expansion in the teaching, health and security sectors, alongside periodic salary adjustments tied to the cost of living. In nominal terms, the trajectory is upward. In fiscal terms, however, the picture is more nuanced.

The wage bill as a proportion of ordinary revenue — a critical measure of sustainability — stood at 41.82 per cent in 2024/2025 and is projected to fall to 40.68 per cent in the current year. The decline, modest as it is, reflects the dual effect of fiscal consolidation measures and improved revenue collection. For policymakers, it signals progress, even if the ratio remains well above what most development economists would consider comfortable for a country with Kenya's infrastructure and social investment needs.

The county government picture is considerably more concerning. Across the first nine months of 2025/2026, personnel emoluments in county governments rose by 11 per cent, from KSh154.94 billion to KSh171.36 billion. The ratio of personnel costs to revenue declined slightly, from 46.8 per cent to 44.12 per cent, but remained far above the 35 per cent ceiling set by the Public Finance Management Act of 2012.

Only five counties managed to stay within the legal threshold during the period. Tana River recorded the lowest ratio at 27 per cent, followed by Kwale and Nakuru at 30 per cent each, Uasin Gishu at 31 per cent and Kirinyaga at 32 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, Taita Taveta and Homa Bay each recorded ratios of 63 per cent, while Machakos reached 58 per cent — figures that suggest wage commitments in those counties are consuming resources that would otherwise fund services and development.

The national government fared better. Personnel emoluments as a proportion of total revenue remained below the 35 per cent PFM threshold throughout the first nine months of both financial years under review, rising only marginally from 27.6 per cent to 28.1 per cent. As a share of total expenditure, the ratio actually fell, from 30.5 per cent to 28 per cent, suggesting that the national government has maintained reasonable discipline in managing its wage commitments relative to overall spending.

The employment data underlying these figures tells its own story. According to the Economic Survey 2026, public sector wage employment grew by 4.6 per cent in 2025, accelerating from 3.1 per cent in 2024. Total public service employment has now surpassed one million workers, reaching 1.07 million in 2025, up from 884,700 in 2020. The Teachers Service Commission remains the largest public employer and recorded the fastest employment growth of any category, with its workforce expanding by 6.2 per cent from 410,700 employees in 2024 to 436,300 in 2025. Ministries and extra-budgetary institutions accounted for 243,500 employees, with county governments close behind at 239,000.

Beyond the headline numbers, the SRC has been active on several fronts. In June, the commission convened the first National Productivity and Performance Conference at the Kenya School of Government, bringing together public service stakeholders over three days. The conference produced seven resolutions aimed at strengthening productivity, improving service delivery, enhancing revenue mobilisation and reinforcing institutional accountability — commitments that will need to be tracked carefully if they are to move from resolution to practice.

The commission also filed its first Annual Compliance Report on the Management of the Public Service Wage Bill, fulfilling a court order and establishing what may become an important accountability mechanism for public wage governance. Additionally, SRC issued advice to 42 institutions on collective bargaining negotiations over the past year, guiding the process by which trade unions and employers arrive at agreements that must ultimately receive SRC clearance before being registered as legally binding at the Employment and Labour Relations Court.

The SRC said it remains committed to guiding negotiating parties towards equitable and sustainable outcomes, balancing the interests of workers and employers while protecting taxpayers through prudent management of public resources.

The bulletin's findings arrive at a moment when Kenya faces competing fiscal pressures — the need to sustain a growing public workforce, deliver services to citizens and service a substantial national debt, all within the limits of revenues that have historically fallen short of targets. The data suggests the system is holding, but only just. The counties where wage ratios have reached 63 per cent are not simply statistical outliers — they are administrations where the space to deliver anything beyond salaries has effectively closed.

For Kenya to keep its public wage bill on a sustainable path, the numbers will need to keep moving in the right direction. The trend is cautiously encouraging. The margin for error is not.

Politics Karua's statement is more than ordinary opposition rhetoric. It touches the delicate and always contested relationship between political power and citizens' freedoms

Karua's warning: Is Kenya slipping back into the politics of fear?

With 2027 approaching, a veteran opposition leader's challenge to the Ruto administration cuts to the heart of Kenya's democratic health

BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes

Martha Karua warned yesterday that the days of ruling through fear are numbered, injecting fresh heat into Kenya's already charged political environment and raising a fundamental question about the direction of the country's democracy as the 2027 General Election draws closer.

Karua's statement is more than ordinary opposition rhetoric. It touches the delicate and always contested relationship between political power and citizens' freedoms. In a functioning democracy, criticism is not an act of rebellion — it is the oxygen of accountability. Opposition leaders, journalists, activists and ordinary citizens must be free to question government decisions without intimidation. When fear begins to replace open debate, democracy risks becoming a performance in which citizens watch politics from a distance rather than participate in it.

The timing of the warning matters. With 2027 approaching, alliances are shifting, political ambitions are sharpening and the competition for public support is intensifying by the month. Every government action is increasingly being read through an electoral lens. Opposition leaders, for their part, are seeking to convert public dissatisfaction into political momentum, and Karua, a veteran of Kenya's most consequential political battles, understands better than most how to land a message that travels.

The allegations surrounding abductions, intimidation and the excessive use of state power have further complicated the national conversation. Such accusations are serious and deserve to be treated seriously — neither dismissed as propaganda nor accepted without evidence. They demand independent investigation, transparency and a willingness to be accountable. A government confident in the strength of its institutions should have nothing to fear from credible scrutiny. The refusal to engage such concerns, or the habit of attributing all criticism to political mischief, only deepens public unease.

Martha Karua

President William Ruto's administration will argue, as governments routinely do, that it holds a constitutional mandate to govern and that its record should be judged on policies, development programmes and economic performance rather than on the accusations of political opponents. Ministers have repeatedly challenged critics to offer alternative solutions rather than relying on condemnation alone. That is a fair point as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. Governance is not only about delivery — it is also about conduct, and the manner in which a government treats dissent tells citizens a great deal about whether it trusts them.

Kenya's democratic test, however, extends beyond the rivalry between Ruto and his opponents. The larger question is whether institutions can remain stronger than the individuals who occupy them. Parliament, the courts, the police, the electoral commission and the media must be capable of operating independently regardless of who sits in State House. When institutions bend to power rather than holding it accountable, the constitutional architecture that Kenyans fought hard to establish begins to hollow out from within.

Fear, it should be noted, does not always announce itself loudly. Sometimes it settles quietly into behaviour — a journalist who hesitates before filing a story, an activist who decides against attending a demonstration, a public servant who chooses not to question an unlawful instruction, a citizen who swallows a grievance because speaking feels dangerous. When such behaviour becomes widespread and normalised, democracy may remain alive on paper while weakening steadily in practice. The forms persist. The substance retreats.

The Constitution guarantees Kenyans freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, political participation and human dignity. These are not privileges extended at the discretion of a particular president or political party. They are rights that belong to citizens by virtue of citizenship. Protecting them is therefore not a partisan act — it is not about supporting the opposition or attacking the government. It is about protecting the country itself, and the kind of political culture that Kenyans want to pass on.

As Kenya moves towards 2027, the political contest should be fought through ideas rather than intimidation, through persuasion rather than threats, through evidence rather than propaganda. Leaders should be competing for the confidence of citizens, not their silence. The distinction is not a small one. Confidence is earned. Silence can be induced. A government that confuses the two has misunderstood what legitimacy means in a democracy.

Karua's warning should provoke a broader national reflection — one that goes beyond the question of who will win the next election. The deeper question is whether Kenya will enter that election as a confident democracy in which citizens can speak freely, institutions can act without fear and political disagreements can be resolved through the ballot rather than through intimidation.

A democracy does not grow strong because citizens praise those in power. It grows strong when citizens can challenge those in power without consequence.

And perhaps that is the sharpest edge of Karua's message: when citizens become afraid to speak, democracy goes quiet — and a quiet democracy can be more dangerous than a noisy one.

Politics Mogaka argued that West Mugirango had been overlooked for years despite its representatives sitting within the Jubilee administration

Mogaka blasts Uhuru over West Mugirango neglect, backs Ruto for second term

The MP says a decade of Jubilee rule left his constituency behind — and that aligning with Kenya Kwanza has changed that

West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka during the commissioning of the 12-Kilometre Bondeni -Magombo Road, said that since his cooperation with the Kenya Kwanza government has already resulted in several projects| *Photo:* Elizabeth Angira

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themtkenyatimes

West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka yesterday accused former President Uhuru Kenyatta's administration of failing to deliver meaningful development to his constituency during its ten-year tenure, while throwing his full weight behind President William Ruto's bid for a second term.

Mogaka made the remarks at Bonyamatuta Ward in Nyamira County during the commissioning of the Bondeni-Magombo Road, a project he presented as evidence of what his constituency stands to gain from closer cooperation with the current government.

The MP, who entered Parliament on a Jubilee Party ticket, was direct about his frustrations with his former political home. "I realised that my constituency was not doing well in terms of projects compared to other constituencies," he said. "That is why I decided to work closely with President Ruto so that I can bring projects to my people."

Mogaka argued that West Mugirango had been overlooked for years despite its representatives sitting within the Jubilee administration, and that the decision to align with Kenya Kwanza had already begun to yield results. He urged residents to back Ruto for a second term, saying sustained cooperation with the national government would accelerate development across the constituency.

He also turned his attention to former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and former West Mugirango MP Vincent Kemosi, both of whom remain associated with Jubilee, and accused Kenyatta of misleading them by retaining them within a party structure that he suggested offered little political utility.

"If Uhuru is true to himself, he should not mislead them," Mogaka said. "He should tell them the truth. For example, if Matiang'i is a presidential candidate, he should not be a deputy party leader of Jubilee. He should be a party leader because, as a presidential candidate, you need a party to bargain with even when there is a coalition."

The MP also directed pointed criticism at leaders affiliated with the Orange Democratic Movement, challenging them to move beyond condemnation and engage the national government in pursuit of tangible projects for their constituents. "Instead of criticising, they should come out with projects that are more beneficial to our people," he said.

The commissioning of the Bondeni-Magombo Road served as the backdrop for Mogaka's broader political argument. The project, stretching approximately 12 kilometres, was presented by the MP as a direct product of his working relationship with the Ruto administration — a relationship he says he intends to maintain until ongoing projects across the constituency are completed.

For Mogaka, the road is more than tarmac. It is a political statement: that development, not party loyalty, should drive representation — and that West Mugirango is, at last, beginning to catch up.

West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka during the commissioning of the 12-Kilometre Bondeni -Magombo Road, said that since his cooperation with the Kenya Kwanza government has already resulted in several projects| *Photo:* Elizabeth Angira

AGOA KEPSA Chief Executive Carole Kariuki welcomed the outcome in unambiguous terms. “This is a significant and welcome outcome for Kenyan businesses and workers,” she said.

Kenya secures AGOA extension to 2028, unlocking continued duty-free access to US market

KEPSA Chief Executive Carole Kariuki

The renewal protects 66,800 jobs and KSh60B in apparel exports — but the private sector says the clock is already ticking on a permanent trade deal

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance yesterday welcomed the signing into law by United States President Donald Trump of an extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act through December 2028, securing continued duty-free access to the American market for Kenyan exports and offering critical breathing room to a textile and apparel sector that had been watching the negotiations with mounting anxiety.

The extension, which retains all existing provisions including the third-country fabric programme, follows months of sustained advocacy by KEPSA alongside government and regional partners. It builds on an initial one-year extension that had reauthorised AGOA through December 2026, and now stretches the window to the end of 2028 — directly aligning with the operational stability framework that Kenya’s private sector had been pushing for.

KEPSA Chief Executive Carole Kariuki welcomed the outcome in unambiguous terms. “This is a significant and welcome outcome for Kenyan businesses and workers,” she said. “AGOA has been the single most effective US trade policy tool for Africa over the last 25 years, and this extension, with the third-country fabric provision intact, gives our apparel and textile sector the certainty it needs to keep investing and creating jobs.”

The numbers behind that statement are considerable. In 2024, Kenya exported goods worth $470 million to the United States under AGOA, the bulk of it apparel. The programme supports an estimated 66,800 direct jobs, three quarters of them held by women, and underpins close to 800,000 livelihoods across the broader value chain. For factory owners, procurement managers and the workers on their production floors, the uncertainty surrounding AGOA’s renewal had become a real and immediate problem — one that was beginning to affect order books, delay investment decisions and freeze expansion plans.

The retention of the third-country fabric provision is particularly significant for Kenya’s garment manufacturers, who rely on the clause to source fabric inputs from outside the United States while still qualifying for duty-free treatment on finished goods exported to the American market. Had that provision been stripped from the renewal, the competitive economics of Kenya’s apparel sector would have shifted materially and quickly.

KEPSA had lobbied for a longer extension than the two years now secured, arguing that a more durable horizon — or, failing that, a transition window long enough to negotiate a bilateral free trade agreement between Kenya and the United States — was what the sector truly needed. While the 2028 deadline falls short of that ambition, Kariuki and the alliance have chosen to frame it as an opportunity rather than a concession. The window exists. The question is what Kenya does with it.

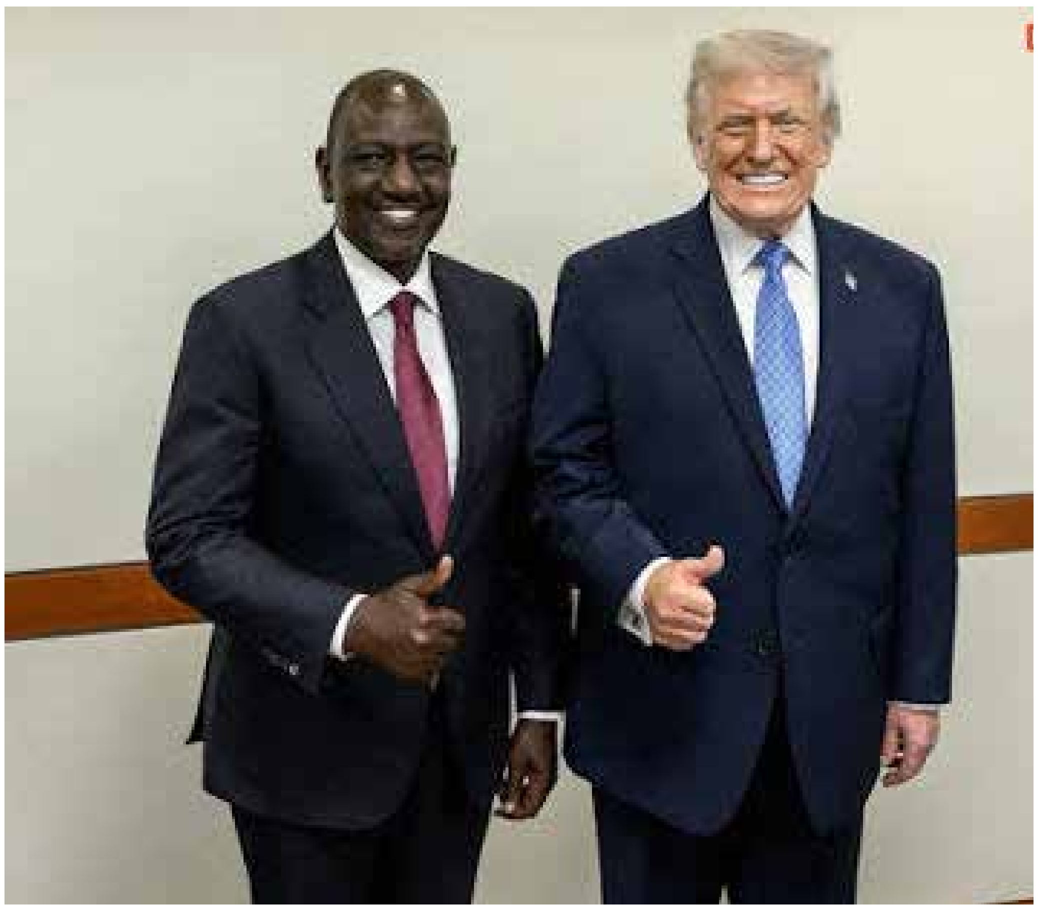
President William Ruto’s direct engagement with US counterparts on the AGOA question received specific acknowledgement from KEPSA, as did the role of Kenyan parliamentarians who championed the issue domestically. The renewal did not happen in a vacuum — it was the product of sustained diplomatic and advocacy effort at multiple levels, and KEPSA was careful to recognise those contributions publicly.

The alliance also used the moment to flag the situation facing other AGOA beneficiary countries, some of which continue to face uncertainty about their standing under the programme. KEPSA called for continued regional engagement to ensure the programme’s benefits are preserved and, where possible, extended across sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya’s gains, the alliance implied, are most durable when the broader regional framework that underpins AGOA remains intact.

Looking beyond 2028, KEPSA said it would continue working with its members, the Government of Kenya and development partners to ensure businesses capitalise fully on the current extension while pressing for a longer-term, predictable framework for US-Kenya trade. The two countries have held discussions on a bilateral trade deal for several years, with negotiations stalling and restarting at intervals that have frustrated business on both sides. The 2028 deadline gives those discussions a new urgency.

For Kenya’s textile and apparel workers — the women on production lines in Nairobi’s export processing zones, the smallholder cotton farmers in western Kenya, the logistics operators and suppliers woven into the value chain — the renewal is immediate and practical relief. Investment decisions that had been deferred can now be revisited. Orders that had been held back can move forward. The factories will keep running.

But the two-year clock is already ticking. And KEPSA’s message, beneath the relief, is clear: the extension is a bridge, not a destination. Kenya must use the time to build something more permanent — because 2028 will arrive faster than anyone expects, and the sector cannot afford to have this conversation all over again.



President William Ruto’s direct engagement with US Donald Trump

Health The case for local production is nevertheless compelling. Kenya's dependence on imported health products leaves it exposed to disruptions entirely beyond its control

Kenya can make its own medicine — But can it make healthcare reliable?

Local pharmaceutical manufacturing is gaining momentum, but factories alone will not fix a fragile health system

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya is beginning to confront an uncomfortable truth about its healthcare system: a country can have hospitals, doctors and ambitious health policies and still remain dangerously exposed if it cannot reliably secure the medicines its people need.

That vulnerability is now being addressed through a growing push to manufacture medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and medical devices locally. The Pharmacy and Poisons Board says 13 pharmaceutical manufacturers are progressing towards establishing or expanding production facilities in the country, signalling a potentially important shift in how Kenya approaches health security.

The development deserves optimism, but not uncritical celebration. A pharmaceutical factory is only the beginning of a much longer journey between a medicine being manufactured and a patient receiving it safely and affordably. Kenya's challenge is therefore larger than increasing the number of factories. It is about building a health system in which medicines are produced to high standards, properly regulated, efficiently procured, distributed without unnecessary interruption and ultimately available to the people who need them. Anything less risks confusing industrial activity with healthcare progress.

The case for local production is nevertheless compelling. Kenya's dependence on imported health products leaves it exposed to disruptions entirely beyond its control. Global emergencies, transport interruptions, foreign exchange pressures, manufacturing shortages and shifting international supply chains can all affect both the availability and price of medicines. The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated how quickly countries discover that global supply chains are not guaranteed. Kenya already has more than 35 licensed pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities, according to PATH, but many remain underutilised — meaning the country possesses part of the foundation required for greater self-reliance without yet having fully used it.

This is why Kenya's Health Products and Technologies Local Manufacturing Strategy 2026–2030 matters. The strategy seeks to strengthen domestic production while improving the broader environment surrounding health-product manufacturing. It is not simply an industrial policy dressed as a health programme. It is an attempt to connect manufacturing capacity with national health security, reduce supply-chain vulnerabilities and build a more sustainable domestic pharmaceutical sector.

There is an economic argument here as well. When medicines are manufactured locally, the benefits can extend well beyond the pharmacy shelf — creating employment, developing technical expertise, stimulating investment and strengthening related industries. Pharmaceutical manufacturing also offers Kenya an opportunity to become a regional supplier rather than merely a consumer of medical products. The ambition to position the country as a pharmaceutical and health-innovation hub therefore carries implications for both public health and industrial development.

Yet there is a danger in allowing "Made in Kenya" to become an achievement in itself. A medicine does not become better because it crosses fewer borders. Nor does a locally manufactured product automatically become affordable, effective or accessible. The real test is whether it meets rigorous standards and reaches the patient at the right time, at a price that does not make treatment unreachable. National pride should never substitute for pharmaceutical quality.

That is where regulation becomes as important as production. The Pharmacy and Poisons Board is preparing to implement new Good Pharmacy Practice Standards from January 2027. The standards are intended to strengthen professional oversight, improve safety and address problems such as unsafe dispensing and antimicrobial misuse. Recent concerns from pharmacy professionals about the regulations prompted the Ministry of Health to clarify that the standards do not prevent duly registered diploma holders from practising — a controversy that reveals a broader truth about reform: good intentions can still generate uncertainty when implementation is poorly communicated.

A nation's duality: from self-sufficiency in production to challenges in distribution and care

Stronger standards are necessary if patients are to trust Kenya's pharmaceutical system. But regulation must be clear, proportionate and arrived at through genuine consultation. The objective should not be rules that look impressive on paper. It should be a system in which every participant understands their responsibility and patients ultimately receive safer care.

Kenya must also resist interpreting self-reliance as isolation. There is no practical reason to manufacture every medicine consumed domestically. Some products will remain cheaper or more efficient to import, particularly where local production would require enormous investment for relatively small markets. The objective should not be pharmaceutical autarky. It should be strategic resilience — producing locally where capacity and economic rationale exist, while maintaining reliable international partnerships for products that are impractical to manufacture at home.

That distinction matters because protectionism creates its own problems. If local manufacturers are shielded from competition simply for being local, patients could ultimately pay more for products no better than imported alternatives. Government procurement must reward quality, reliability and value — not nationality alone.

The supply chain presents another challenge entirely. Producing a medicine is not the same as delivering it. A factory can operate efficiently while a patient in a remote county still faces a shortage. A warehouse can be full while poor distribution leaves a hospital without essential supplies. Healthcare security depends on the entire chain functioning together, from manufacturing and regulation through to procurement, storage, transportation and dispensing.

Kenya's pharmaceutical ambitions should ultimately be judged at the level of the ordinary patient. The questions that matter are less glamorous than factory counts or investment figures: Can a parent obtain the medicine their child needs? Can a patient afford a prescribed treatment? Can a rural hospital maintain adequate stocks? Can Kenyans trust the quality of what they are buying?

These questions also explain why pharmaceutical reform cannot be separated from the wider healthcare system. Manufacturing without regulation creates risk. Regulation without adequate supply creates shortages. Supply without affordability creates exclusion. Affordability without quality creates danger. Kenya needs to stop treating medicines as isolated commodities and start treating them as part of a complete public-health ecosystem.

Recent developments offer cautious grounds for confidence. Thirteen manufacturers are moving towards new or expanded production, a five-year strategy for local health-product manufacturing is in place, and regulators are tightening pharmacy-practice standards. These are meaningful steps towards a more resilient system — strengthening the capacity to produce medicines while improving the rules governing how they reach patients.

But implementation will determine whether ambition becomes transformation or another promising document. Factories must become productive rather than ceremonial. Regulatory institutions must have the capacity and independence to enforce standards without interference. Procurement systems must be transparent and efficient. Distribution networks must reach beyond major urban centres.

There is also an opportunity to think beyond Kenya's borders. A stronger domestic pharmaceutical industry could eventually serve neighbouring African markets as countries across the continent seek greater control over their medical supply chains. Kenya, with its existing manufacturing base and regional economic position, is placed to participate meaningfully in that shift.

The measure of success, in the end, should not be the number of pharmaceutical factories Kenya can count. It should be the number of patients who no longer have to worry about whether the medicine they need will be available, safe and affordable. That is a considerably higher standard. It is also the only standard that matters.

Kenya does not merely need to manufacture its own medicine. It needs to manufacture trust in its healthcare system — and that will not be earned through slogans or factory openings alone. It will be earned when local production, strong regulation, reliable distribution and affordable treatment finally converge around the person who matters most: the patient waiting for care.

Elections The review board's finding that the tender lacked clarity and objectivity raises questions that the commission will need to answer publicly.

IEBC told to overhaul elections technology tender

The procurement review board found the commission's requirements unclear and insufficiently objective

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission suffered a significant procurement setback yesterday after the Public Procurement Administrative Review Board ordered it to review and amend its tender for a new elections technology system, ruling that the commission's requirements were unclear and insufficiently objective.

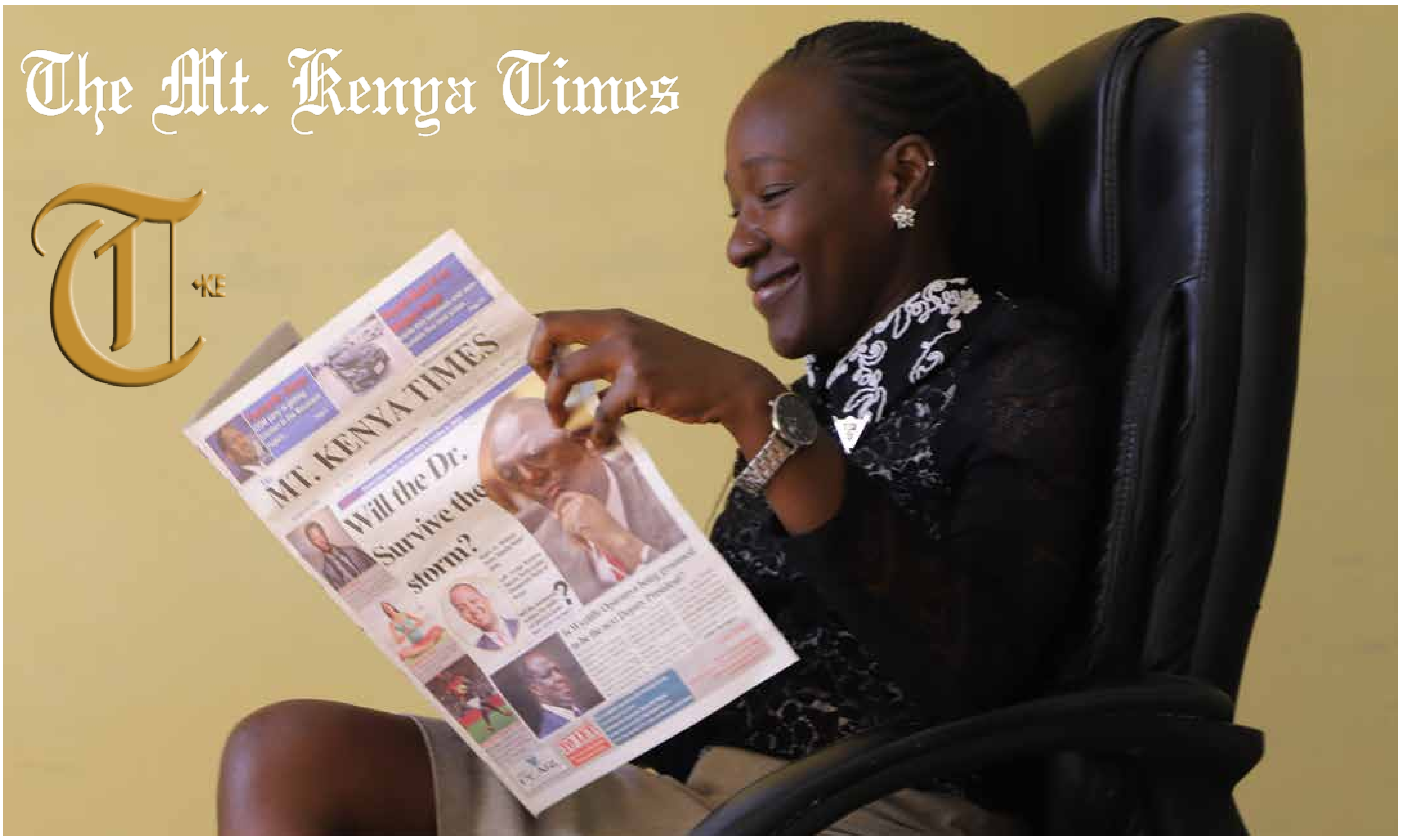
The ruling halts what had been one of the IEBC's most consequential procurement exercises ahead of the 2027 General Election. A credible, well-functioning technology system sits at the centre of Kenya's electoral process — from voter registration and identification to the transmission of results — and any delay or dispute in acquiring one carries implications that extend well beyond administrative inconvenience.

The review board's finding that the tender lacked clarity and objectivity raises questions that the commission will need to answer publicly. Procurement processes for sensitive electoral infrastructure must be beyond reproach, not merely in outcome but in every stage of their design. Vague specifications invite legal challenge, create space for manipulation and ultimately undermine public confidence in the institution responsible for delivering a credible election.

For the IEBC, which is still rebuilding its public standing following years of internal division and contested elections, the setback is unwelcome but not irreversible. The board's intervention, uncomfortable as it is, offers the commission an opportunity to get the process right before a flawed tender produces a flawed contract — and a flawed system at the worst possible moment.

The commission must now move with both urgency and precision. Kenya cannot afford to arrive at 2027 with its electoral technology still in dispute.

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission



If only i could be as gentle as my mother

If my life were as beautiful as blossoms,
I wish I could alight on them like a butterfly.
Never fading, forever smiling and thriving,
If only I could be a person as gentle as my mother.

With delicate wings, a crescent moon in grace,
Loving and beloved, even as the seasons change,
The most radiant butterfly would be my mother,
If only I could be a person as gentle as my mother.

A single day would pass like an entire century,
Soaring high in the heavens with a grateful heart,
My mother embraced goodness without needing
words,
If only I could be a person as gentle as my mother.

Will I ever be granted the grace to be like her,
To walk through life without envy in my heart,
To turn my face away from the untruths of this
world?
If only I could be a person as gentle as my mother.

Did Almighty God create her so intentionally,
Writing my mother's name as the meaning of
kindness,
Making her the finest among all good souls?
If only I could be a person as gentle as my mother.

Oh God, add long and blessed years to her life,
Grant her abundance beyond all measure,
Bestow upon her the fullness of Your endless
blessings,
If only I could be a person as gentle as my mother.

I am Buvajonova Qizlarxon. I was born on
September 17, 2010, in Oltinkol district,
Andijan region, Republic of Uzbekistan. Currently,
I am a 10th-grade student at School No. 6 in
Khondiboghi neighborhood, Oltinkol district.

Star

Twinkle twinkle little star,
In space moves like a car.
Looks like white and shine,
And I want to see the stars again.
The stars look so beautiful in the sky,
Looks very small to our eye.

NAME : R.kavipriya
CLASS : 8th standard
SEC : B
SCHOOL : G.H.S.S kandigai
DISTRICT : Chengalpattu

Beauty of life is found in simple moments

Daily happenings, though simple
Are worthy enough to create memories,
Filling our hearts with joy over time
Beautifying ordinary moments into something
special and divine.

Every single moment should be aesthetic
Only then the person can be considered
optimistic,
If a person starts appreciating ordinary things
He'll be elevated to the level of an angel with
wings.

One who sees beauty even in ugly things
His heart is the purest of all beings,
It's hard to find such noble creatures
Whose hearts see goodness beyond all features.

Spending time with family members,
Getting mesmerized with the morning dews,
Forgetting everything on a baby's smile
Finding satisfaction in fulfilling beloveds' wishes _
all add to the beauty of life.

Be grateful to the Almighty
For the sense of appreciating beauty,
Cherish every moment, whether big or small
And realise that the simplest joys are the titanic
treasures of all.

Manimozhi Albert
Graduate Teacher of English
Govt. Girls Hr. Sec. School, Sandhaipettai,
Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Simple & joyful moments make our life lovely!

Beauty is seen in rising sun
Tiny tots giggling fun
Time spent & laughed with our friends

Sudden unexpected rain
Cool atmosphere
Painted clouds & rainbow
Drizzling & shivering small birds

Crows & squirrels
With wet feathers & wet fur
Running to get into their nests & burrows
Tailor bird building its nest
Is always cute to watch
Stitching each leaf with its beak
To provide a cozy soft cushion like
to it's fledgling!

A small act of kindness
Kind words spoken to fellow passengers &
friends!
Kind words spoken helps
To get rid of worries!
Simple words & simple activities
Makes our life more meaningful!
Beauty of life is seen in simple moments!
It's so precious, save it & enjoy!

GSwapna
Agricultural Instructor
GHSS Thirupputkuzhi
Kanchipuram District

Journey of Life as a CW family member

What an amazing experience I have here !
Really blessed I am as a budding Poetess here
God's grace is powerful ever near
Thank God for everything Who leads me without
fear

Since May 2020 I have been experiencing poetry
Starting with " Ice cream " first chill
Continuously looking for so many thrills
No issues for reviews yet goes on still
I am enjoying my poems of emotions till ...
Dawn to dusk thinking of CW team work skills
Admin Brindha the innovative legend lady of more
skills
Unique as Moon so cool in expressions
United States all over the world
Our precious togetherness is peaceful and bold

CW family member I am...
Miles to go before I sleep
Files of poems I have to keep
Obstacles bother as family friends relatives
circles
Move on hopefully to achieve something as
miracles

Our Lord God Almighty bless CW family members
Let's cheerfully enjoy His everlasting grace
remember...!!!

ALICE.P.,
GRADUATE TEACHER,
GHS - THORUVALUR ,
RAMANATHAPURAM.Dt.

Ufukara

Ya mgambo nimeliza, ujumbe ninawajuza
Japo wengi mwaumiza , bila pole kumaliza
Kwa uchungu mwajikaza,kisabuni kumaliza
Tujitume kujikaza, utaiti kukomesha

Kina baba waumia, pande zote zakauka
Hawana wa kulilia, matatizo yachimbuka
Kila wanapokimbia,kama moto yanawaka
Tujitume kujikaza, utaiti kukomesha

Madeni yanafurika,hamna wa kulipia
Ni wengi walazimika,majeneza kuingia
Ndiposa wakazizika,twakopa kupitishia
Tujitume kujikaza, utaiti kukomesha

Hatuna pa kulalia, sote leo tunalia
Na nguo za kuvalia,ukata zaashiria
Yakini tumebakia, kisicho dawa kulia
Tujitume kujikaza,utaiti kukomesha

Majumba kama Jalala,twaishi nayo mashaka
Na njaa sisi twalala,kitumai kuamka
Maisha kama ya jela,twaishi kama mateka
Tujitume kujikaza, utaiti kukomesha

Beti sita namaliza,ni bidii twahimiza
Tujitume kujikaza,na makumbi kuyajaza
Na ushindi tukawaza, kwa bashasha tukacheza
Tujitume kujikaza, utaiti kukomesha

MALENGA ALI WA MSUMARI MPYA
WACHIRA.V.WAGAKI
SHULE YA KARIMA

Highway KeNHA has issued eviction notices to businesses and homeowners along the B101 corridor ahead of a major construction drive

Traders given 30 days to leave road reserve as KSh5.5B Nanyuki–Doldol highway upgrade begins

Nanyuki–Naibor Turnoff–Doldol road

BY Angela Mwanga
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya National Highways Authority yesterday issued 30-day eviction notices to traders, homeowners and other occupants along the Nanyuki–Naibor Turnoff–Doldol road, ordering them to vacate the B101 corridor as preparations for a KSh5.5 billion highway upgrade gather pace.

KeNHA said it has already identified and marked structures considered unauthorised within the road reserve. Those who fail to comply with the notice risk having their structures demolished once the authority moves to clear the corridor ahead of construction.

The upgrade of the B101 road — which links Nanyuki through Naibor Turnoff to Doldol — is among the more consequential infrastructure projects planned for the region. For motorists, traders and communities that depend on the corridor daily, improved tarmac, better drainage and enhanced road safety would represent a meaningful shift in how people and goods move across the area.

But the notices have landed hard on those who have built their livelihoods along the roadside. Many of the affected traders are small-scale operators who have occupied their current locations for years, sometimes decades, accumulating steady customer bases and informal networks that cannot simply be packed up and moved within a month. Relocation, for them, is not an administrative inconvenience — it is a financial disruption with consequences that may outlast the construction period itself.

The tension is familiar. Infrastructure development in Kenya has long struggled to reconcile the urgency of building with the reality of the people who happen to be in the way. Road reserves have, over time, become home to entire informal economies — fruit vendors, hardware stalls, mechanics, food kiosks — whose presence is technically unauthorised but whose contribution to local commerce is undeniable. When the bulldozers arrive, it is rarely the structures that are complicated to remove. It is the lives attached to them.

KeNHA's notices do not address what, if any, support will be extended to displaced traders. The authority has not publicly indicated whether relocation sites have been identified, whether compensation is under consideration or how the enforcement process will be monitored for fairness. These are not peripheral concerns. How they are handled will determine whether the project is remembered as a catalyst for regional development or as a case study in how not to engage affected communities.

The B101 corridor, once upgraded, is expected to ease the movement of agricultural produce from the fertile zones around Laikipia and Isiolo counties to markets further afield. Better roads reduce post-harvest losses, lower transport costs and improve access to schools, hospitals and other services for communities that have long contended with difficult terrain. The long-term case for the upgrade is not in dispute.

What remains in question is the process. A 30-day window is tight under any circumstances. For a trader who may have nowhere to go, no savings to cover the cost of relocation and no certainty about what comes next, it can feel less like a notice and more like an ultimatum.

Authorities would do well to remember that the success of infrastructure projects is measured not only in kilometres of tarmac laid or contracts signed, but in the degree to which communities feel the process treated them with dignity. Transparent communication, early engagement with affected parties and a clear plan for those displaced are not optional extras in responsible infrastructure delivery — they are part of the work.

The B101 upgrade has the potential to transform connectivity across a significant stretch of northern Kenya. Construction timelines, funding arrangements and technical specifications will all matter. But so will the 30-day clock now running for the traders standing in its path.

Health Where does all that unexpressed pain go? Into anger. Into alcohol. Into isolation. Into depression. Into early death. Kenya loses hundreds of men every year to suicide

The silent crisis: Men's mental health

Across Kenya and the world, men are suffering quietly — and the silence is costing lives

By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes

Men's mental health

We have built a world where a man is taught to be strong, not vulnerable. To provide, not to feel. To endure, not to express. From boyhood, the script is familiar: be a man, men don't cry, toughen up. And so men learn to bury it — the heartbreak, the pressure, the failure, the fear, the loneliness. They smile at work. They laugh in the group chat. They post "I'm good" while quietly drowning.

The truth is simple, and it needs saying plainly: men bleed too. Just not always where anyone can see it.

Strength is not the absence of emotion. A man who cries is not weak — he is human. Real strength is not pretending you feel no pain. Real strength is admitting you do, and choosing to keep going anyway. We applaud men for being pillars. But even pillars crack when they are never allowed to rest.

The weight carried in silence

Consider what is expected of a man. He must succeed at all costs. He must never show vulnerability. He must remain financially, emotionally and mentally stable for everyone around him. He must solve problems, never talk about them. When he loses a job, he cannot grieve openly. When a relationship ends, he must move on without complaint. When he is overwhelmed, he is told to man up.

Where does all that unexpressed pain go? Into anger. Into alcohol. Into isolation. Into depression. Into early death. Kenya loses hundreds of men every year to suicide — and most never told a single person they were struggling.

The numbers make sobering reading. Globally, men are three to four times more likely to die by suicide than women. In Kenya, more than 75 per cent of suicide cases involve men, most aged between 20 and 45. One in three men will experience anxiety or depression during their lifetime, yet fewer than 25 per cent will seek professional help. Rather than talking, many turn to alcohol, drugs, aggression or complete withdrawal from the people who could help them most.

The reasons are not difficult to understand. Culture has long told men that vulnerability is weakness. Stigma means that seeking therapy is still labelled, in many circles, as being unstable or insufficiently masculine. The pressure to provide means a man's sense of worth becomes inseparable from his income and his success — and when either falters, his identity can collapse alongside it. Many men simply have no one they can speak to with complete honesty about their pain. There is no safe space, so there is no conversation.

What needs to change

To men: it is acceptable to not be fine. Talking is not weakness. Crying does not diminish you. Your emotions are legitimate. Find one person — a trusted friend, a counsellor, a mentor — with whom you can be genuinely honest. Suppressing everything will cause far more damage than any setback ever could.

To women, friends and family: if a man opens up to you, receive it carefully. Do not dismiss it. Do not say you thought he was stronger than that. Do not share what he told you with others. That single moment of openness may have cost him more courage than anything else he has done. Honour it accordingly.

To society more broadly: the way boys are raised needs to change. They can be strong and sensitive. They can lead and still lean on others. They can provide and still be supported emotionally in return. These things are not contradictions. They are what whole, healthy human beings look like.

Men grow anxious before difficult conversations. They grieve after love ends. They lie awake worrying about the future. They grow exhausted from being the steady one that everyone else leans on. Behind every "I'm fine", there is frequently a story that has not yet found a listener.

Mental health in men is not an abstract concept. It is the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing that shapes how a man thinks, manages stress, relates to those around him and makes decisions. Good mental health does not mean perpetual happiness. It means having the capacity to cope, to regulate emotions and to ask for help when it is needed — without shame.

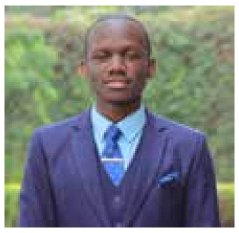
The path forward is not complicated, though it requires genuine commitment. Therapy and honest conversations about mental health need to be normalised in churches, workplaces, schools and community gatherings. Men need to be asked, directly and sincerely, whether they are truly all right — and then actually listened to when they answer.

Because a mentally healthy man is a better father, a better partner, a better leader and a better human being. And he deserves the same care and compassion that he is so often expected to provide for everyone else.

Men do not need to be fixed. They need to be heard.

Politics ....

The blind sentinel: Kenya's parliament as the executive's willing instrument



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
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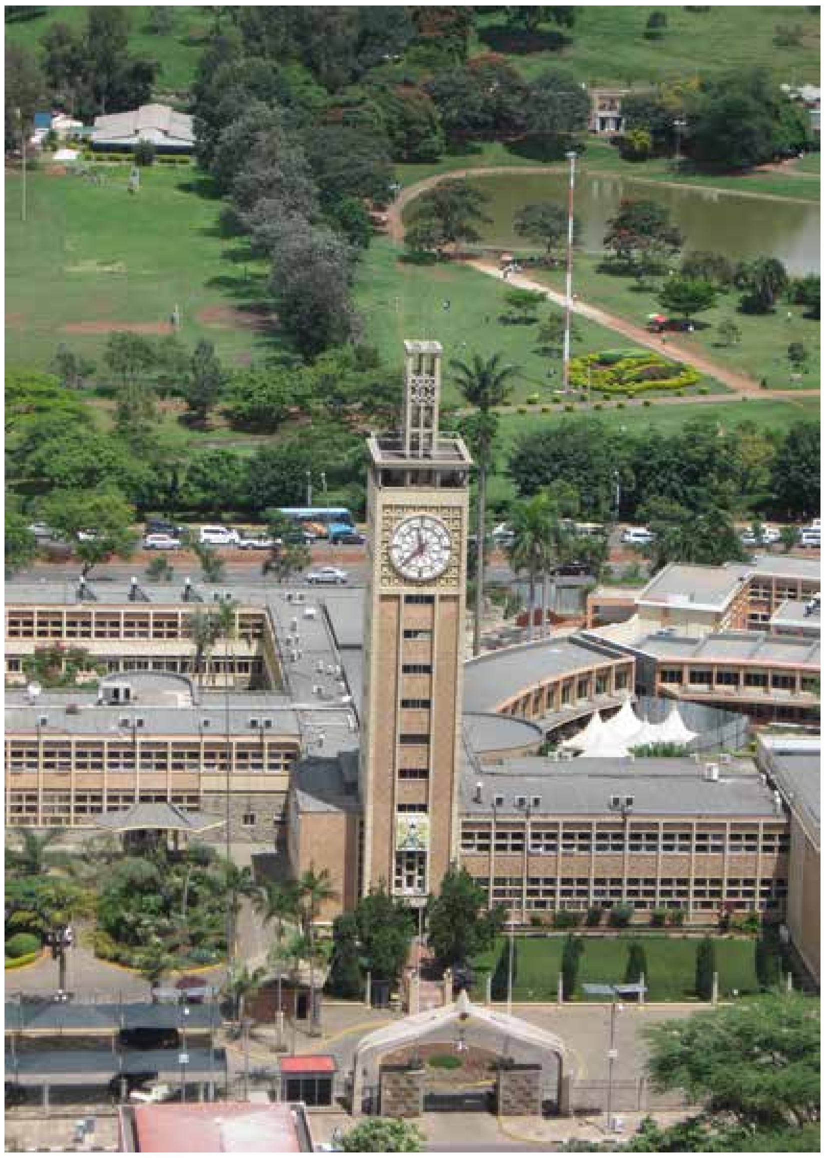
In the year of our Lord 2010, Kenyans rose as one and forged a Constitution that placed Parliament at the centre of the Republic's democratic architecture. Article 94 declared that legislative authority derives from the people and is vested in Parliament; Article 95 charged the National Assembly with oversight of State organs, the review of the conduct of the President and other State officers, and the appropriation of public funds. The Public Appointments (Parliamentary Approval) Act was meant to turn the House into a rigorous gatekeeper of integrity. That was the promise. Sixteen years later the institution stands exposed as a body that has largely abdicated those duties, particularly in the passage of executive-sponsored bills, the near-automatic approval of presidential nominees, and the hollow performance of oversight over public authorities. The result is not mere institutional failure. It is a betrayal that corrodes the very foundation of representative government.

History is a stern teacher. In the early years after independence the National Assembly often functioned as an extension of the executive will. Under both Kenyatta and Moi, executive bills passed at rates that sometimes exceeded 80 percent, reducing the House to little more than a ceremonial echo chamber. The return of multiparty politics in 1992 and the reforms that culminated in the 2010 Constitution were supposed to reverse that trajectory. Parliament was given fiscal autonomy, stronger committees, and explicit powers of scrutiny. For a brief season it flexed those muscles. Then the old habits returned, dressed in new parliamentary robes. The current House has not merely drifted; it has marched deliberately back into the executive's shadow. Majority members treat independence as a disposable luxury. The minority may still have its say, but the majority has long since decided that the executive shall have its way unquestioned, unexamined, and frequently rewarded.



Kenya's parliament

Consider the legislative record. When the Finance Bill of 2024 arrived, the streets of Nairobi and other cities filled with young Kenyans whose futures were being mortgaged by new taxes and levies. Public participation, that constitutional requirement so often invoked and so rarely honoured, was treated as a box-ticking exercise. The bill sailed through. Allegations of monetary inducements handouts, "sweeteners," development promises held hostage circulated with the persistence of a national scandal. The same pattern has repeated itself with housing levies, health insurance schemes, and other measures that transfer wealth from the many to the few while insulating the powerful from consequence. A legislature that cannot or will not subject executive proposals to genuine interrogation has ceased to be a legislature. It has become a notary public for presidential ambition.

The approval of nominees reveals the same moral and intellectual collapse. Chapter Six of the Constitution demands integrity. The Public Appointments Act requires examination of procedure, constitutional compliance, and personal suitability. In practice the process has become a ritual of endorsement. In 2024 the National Assembly received hundreds of public memoranda challenging Cabinet nominees on grounds of integrity, competence, and gender balance. Most were dismissed on technicalities or simply ignored. Nineteen of twenty-one were waved through after hearings that too often resembled polite interviews rather than adversarial scrutiny. Academic credentials remained in doubt; past associations with questionable networks went unprobed; constitutional thresholds on representation were treated as optional. When a former Cabinet Secretary later admitted that members had openly solicited money during vetting, the House did not erupt in shame. It continued business as usual. A body that sells its approval power ceases to be a guardian of the public interest. It becomes a marketplace.

Oversight of public authorities fares no better. Auditor-General reports flag irregular expenditure running into hundreds of billions. Parliamentary recommendations are implemented at a dismal rate sometimes as low as one in five. Departmental committees accumulate unanswered statements from Cabinet Secretaries while chairpersons chase political futures. Debt ceilings are adjusted or ignored with barely a murmur. The House that should stand between the citizen and the Treasury instead stands beside the Treasury, nodding. When the President himself publicly accused parliamentary committees of demanding bribes to pass favourable legislation or to influence impeachment proceedings, the response from the benches was defensive rather than purifying. The accusation landed because it rang true to a public that has watched the same drama for years: money changes hands, bills pass, governors fall or rise according to the size of the envelope, and the Constitution is left holding an empty bag.

This is not mere political theatre. It is the systematic hollowing out of the separation of powers. A parliament without foresight is a parliament that cannot see beyond the next electoral cycle or the next disbursement. It cannot weigh the long-term cost of debt against short-term political survival. It cannot protect the minority's right to be heard when the majority has already sold its voice. Democracy, as the saying goes, is the rule of the majority with the minority's voice protected. In the present arrangement the majority has exchanged that protection for access, patronage, and quiet envelopes. The minority's voice becomes background noise, and the public interest is reduced to an afterthought.

The tragedy is compounded by the absence of shame. Members who once thundered about accountability now accept the role of rubber stamp with practiced ease. They collect allowances for committee sittings that produce little accountability. They defend the indefensible with procedural technicalities. They treat the Constitution as a document to be cited when convenient and ignored when inconvenient. The edifice of the grundnorm the foundational law has been reduced to a convenient backdrop for transactional politics. This is doleful not because it is unexpected, but because it was avoidable. The tools of independence were written into the 2010 text. The will to use them has been systematically surrendered.

What then is to be done? The first call is to the members themselves. Reclaim the dignity of the office. Reject the envelope. Subject every bill and every nominee to the full force of constitutional scrutiny. Demand that committees produce results rather than excuses. The second call is to the citizenry. Public participation must become more than a formality; it must become a sustained demand for accountability. Vote with memory. Refuse to reward those who traded oversight for comfort. Civil society and the media must continue to document, name, and shame the transactions that turn representation into brokerage. The judiciary must remain vigilant when the House abdicates, for the Constitution is not a self-executing document. And the executive, if it possesses any residual respect for the architecture it claims to serve, must stop treating Parliament as a subsidiary department and start treating it as a co-equal branch.

Kenya did not fight for a Constitution so that its Parliament could become a conveyor belt for executive convenience. The current House has chosen the path of least resistance and greatest reward. That choice is not destiny. It is a decision that can be reversed by those who still remember that power is a trust, not a personal estate. Until that reversal occurs, the nation will continue to pay the price in eroded trust, mounting debt, and a democracy that looks increasingly like a carefully staged performance rather than a living compact between rulers and ruled. The sentinel has closed its eyes. The question that remains is whether Kenyans will force them open again.

Opinion Kenya must resist the temptation to turn one controversial festival into a convenient scapegoat for a nation's broader moral failures.

The national moral panic will not save Kenya

Summertides has sparked outrage — But the deeper crisis lies elsewhere

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Summertides festival in Malindi

Every few years, Kenya discovers a new moral enemy. One season it is TikTok. Another it is alcohol. Then comes a controversial concert, a nightclub incident or, this time, the Summertides festival in Malindi. The outrage is loud, the condemnations swift, and politicians rush to occupy the moral high ground. Yet once the noise fades, the deeper problems remain untouched.

The disturbing videos circulating after the festival deserve condemnation. Public indecency, reckless drunkenness and behaviour that offends both the law and common decency have no place in any civilised society. Those responsible should be held individually accountable. Organisers who failed to provide adequate security and enforce basic standards must equally answer for their shortcomings.

But Kenya must resist the temptation to turn one controversial festival into a convenient scapegoat for a nation's broader moral failures.

A society does not lose its values over a single weekend. It loses them gradually — through years of failed leadership, collapsing institutions and a culture that increasingly rewards excess while punishing integrity.

It is telling how quickly some leaders found their voices after Summertides. The same figures who remain silent as billions disappear through corruption suddenly became passionate defenders of morality because a few young people misbehaved at a beach party. Their outrage would carry far greater weight if it extended to the theft of public resources that denies millions of young Kenyans decent schools, jobs and healthcare.

Kenya's greatest moral crisis is not a dance floor in Malindi. It is corruption that has become normalised. It is leaders who preach virtue while raiding public coffers. It is youth unemployment that leaves educated graduates idle and frustrated. It is the growing hopelessness pushing many young people towards escapism — alcohol, drugs and reckless entertainment.

The uncomfortable truth is this: festivals expose cracks that already exist within society. They do not create them.

Social media has made matters considerably worse. Algorithms thrive on outrage. One shocking video spreads faster than a thousand ordinary moments. Within hours, isolated incidents become the national narrative. Millions who never attended the festival confidently conclude that everyone present behaved irresponsibly. Nuance disappears. Context is sacrificed for clicks.

The selective outrage is deeply hypocritical. Every election season, Kenya witnesses political rallies where hate speech is cheered, violence erupts and public property is destroyed. Football matches sometimes descend into hooliganism. Road carnage caused by drunk driving claims innocent lives almost daily. Yet few demand the abolition of politics, football or highways. Why, then, should an entire festival be judged solely by its worst moments?

That is not an argument for lowering standards — quite the opposite. It is a call for consistency.

Entertainment cannot become a lawless zone. Organisers must invest seriously in security, emergency response, crowd management and strict enforcement of public order laws. County governments should issue licences based not merely on projected revenue but on demonstrable safety plans. Police should protect law-abiding revellers while acting firmly against criminal conduct. Freedom without responsibility quickly degenerates into chaos.

Parents also have questions to answer. Character is not taught at the entrance to a festival. Respect, self-control and responsibility begin at home and are reinforced in schools, places of worship and communities. When thousands of young people struggle to distinguish freedom from recklessness, society cannot outsource all blame to event organisers.

Criticism alone, however, will not solve the problem. Young people are searching for belonging, identity and opportunity. Many face unemployment despite years of education. Others watch corruption rewarded while honest work goes unrewarded. In such an environment, entertainment often becomes more than leisure — it becomes an escape from disappointment. Until Kenya addresses the deeper economic and social frustrations confronting its youth, controversies like Summertides will keep recurring under different names.

Ironically, the very festival that drew condemnation also generated income for hotels, restaurants, transport operators, beach traders and countless small businesses in Malindi. Tourism remains one of Kenya's most important economic pillars. Destroying the industry through reactionary bans would punish thousands of ordinary workers who had nothing to do with the misconduct captured on social media.

Kenya stands at a crossroads. The country can continue responding to every controversy with emotional outrage and political grandstanding, or it can confront the uncomfortable truths each crisis reveals. Festivals need better regulation. Young people need stronger mentorship. Families need to reclaim their role in shaping values. Leaders need to demonstrate integrity before preaching morality. Above all, the law must apply equally — to revellers on a beach and to officials in government offices.

Summertides should not merely be remembered for controversial videos. It should force Kenya to ask a far more difficult question: why is it easier to condemn youthful excess than to confront the corruption, inequality and leadership failures steadily eroding the nation's moral foundation?

Until that question is answered honestly, every new scandal will simply become another convenient distraction from the crisis that truly threatens the soul of the Republic.

Faith & Religion **Faith is not pretending everything is fine — It is choosing to trust what God said when nothing around you agrees**

When God has spoken: Learning to hold on to his word

BY Ansasira Janet
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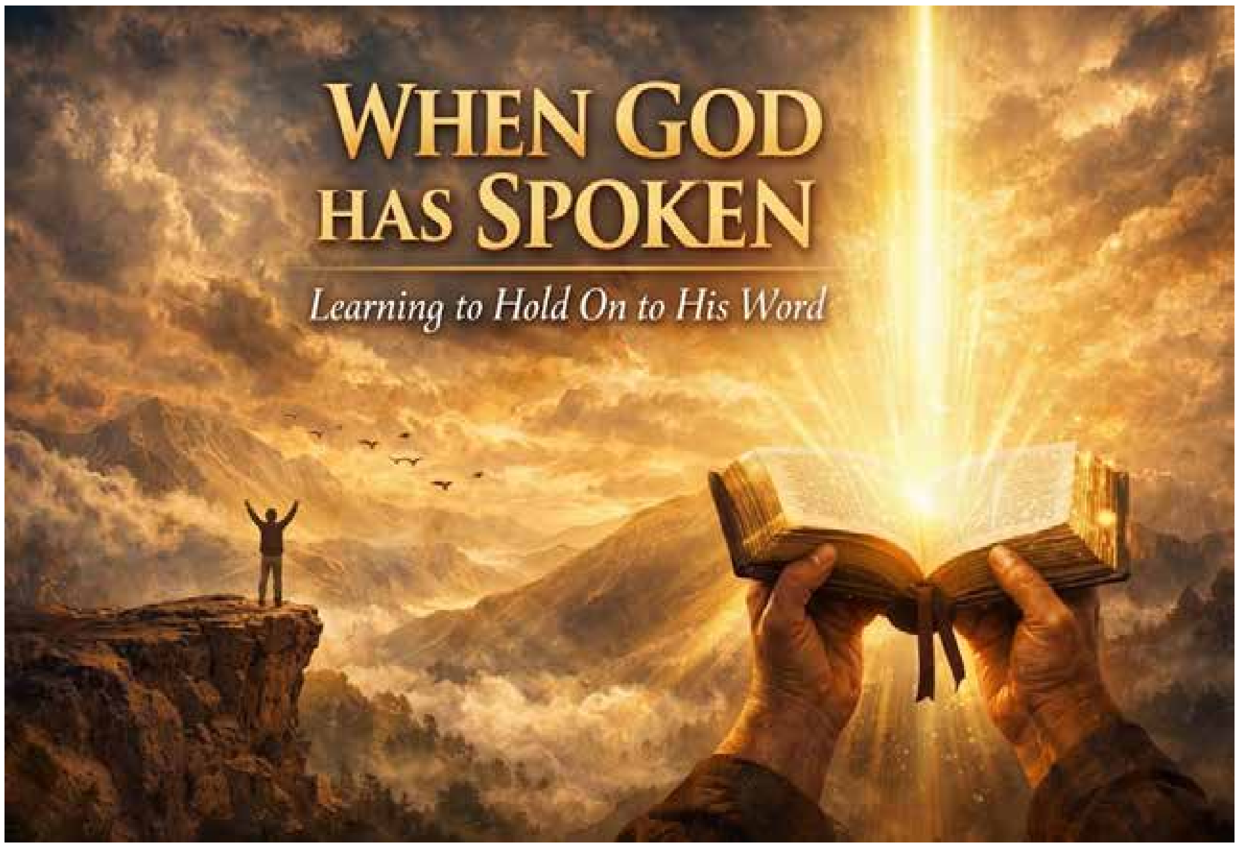

There are seasons in life when faith becomes genuinely difficult — not because we have stopped believing in God, but because what we are experiencing looks nothing like what he promised us.

You pray, but the answer seems delayed. You believe for restoration, yet circumstances appear to be getting worse. You hold on to a promise, but time passes and nothing seems to change. In those moments, one of the greatest battles of faith is not simply believing that God exists — it is continuing to believe that his Word remains true when everything around you seems to say otherwise.

You might find yourself doubting not his existence, but his faithfulness. Perhaps you have seen him come through for you before. You have absolutely no doubt he is real. But this time, quietly, the question surfaces: will he come through for me again?

Faith is not pretending that everything is fine. Faith is choosing to hold on to what God has spoken even when the situation looks nothing like the promise. Scripture calls his people to do exactly this, again and again.

Isaiah 55:11 says: "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

God's Word is not empty speech. When God speaks, his Word carries purpose. Human beings make promises and fail to keep them. Circumstances change overnight. People change their minds. Doors close. Plans collapse. But God's faithfulness is not determined by the stability of our circumstances. This means that sometimes faith is simply returning to the Word God has spoken and reminding ourselves: he has not changed just because our situation has.

Holding on when the answer is delayed

One of the hardest parts of faith is waiting.

We often want God's promises fulfilled according to our timetable. But Scripture shows us that waiting is not a sign that God has forgotten us. There are things he does in us while we are waiting for what he has promised — things that could not happen any other way.

Hebrews 10:23 gives us a clear instruction: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." The writer does not merely say hold on to hope. He gives us the reason we can: he who promised is faithful.

Our confidence is not ultimately in our own ability to remain strong. It rests in the character of the One who made the promise.

There may be days when faith feels weak. There may be moments of questioning, crying, discouragement and confusion about how things will possibly work out. But faith does not mean we never struggle. Sometimes faith is simply refusing to let go. You may not understand the process, but you can still trust the One leading you through it.

In Ezekiel 12:21–28, God speaks with striking directness. He tells his people he is going to end the proverb circulating in Israel — the one that says the days are prolonged and every vision fails. He declares: "I will lay this proverb to rest and they shall no more use it in Israel." That is a word worth meditating on. God is not indifferent to the weariness of waiting. He addresses it.

Contending with God's Word

There is a dimension of faith that is easily overlooked: contending.

In Genesis 32, Jacob wrestled through the night and refused to let go until he received a blessing. He said plainly: "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Jacob's encounter reminds us that there are seasons when faith requires persistence — praying again, seeking God again, standing on his Word again, continuing to believe even when the outcome is nowhere in sight.

Contending does not mean trying to force God's hand or demand something he has not promised. It means refusing to abandon what God has spoken simply because the fulfilment has not yet appeared. There is an important difference between demanding our own will from God and standing firmly on his revealed Word.

When God has spoken, we can bring that Word back to him in prayer. We can remind ourselves of his promises. We can say, Lord, I do not understand what I am seeing, but I choose to trust what you have said. That is perseverance. And perseverance, Scripture tells us, produces character — and character, hope.

When the vision seems slow

Perhaps one of the most difficult experiences in faith is watching time pass while nothing visible changes.

Habakkuk understood this. He lived in a season when what he saw around him raised serious questions about God's intervention. Yet God spoke to him clearly in Habakkuk 2:3: "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

There is something quietly powerful about those words — though it linger, wait for it. What feels like God's delay is not always God's denial. We tend to measure faithfulness by speed. But Scripture teaches that God's purposes operate according to his timing, not ours. The waiting season can become the very place where patience deepens, character is strengthened and dependence on God grows into something unshakeable.

This does not mean every desire we carry is automatically a promise from God, nor that every difficult situation will unfold exactly as we imagine. Genuine faith begins with knowing what God has actually said — and then trusting him with the outcome.

When circumstances contradict the promise

We return to the Word. We pray. We wait. We contend. And we continue walking with God.

Holding on to his Word does not mean ignoring reality. It means refusing to allow reality to become bigger than God's faithfulness. There may be seasons when everything appears to be moving in the wrong direction. There may be moments when the promise seems impossible. There may even be times when, like Job, you lose things you never imagined you could lose.

Yet the testimony of Scripture is consistent: suffering does not have the final word.

Faith sometimes looks less like a triumphant declaration and more like a quiet decision made in the middle of pain: I will still trust God. It may look like waking up the next morning and praying again. It may be opening the Bible when you feel like giving up. It may be choosing obedience when you cannot see the outcome. It may be saying, I do not understand this season, but I will not walk away from God because of it.

That is still faith.

Hold on

If God has spoken to you through his Word, do not allow a difficult season to make you forget who spoke.

Hold on to his Word. Hold on to his promises. Hold on to hope. Contend in prayer. We may not know what tomorrow will bring. We may not understand why some prayers take longer than others. We may not be able to see how the pieces of our lives will come together. But we can know this: God is faithful.

King David declares it in Psalm 138:2 — that God has magnified his Word above all his name. His Word is that important. That sure. That unshakeable.

If you walked away from God because you felt he was taking too long, if you became disappointed and hurt and quietly gave up — return to him. He is faithful. And if you have never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, or if you simply found yourself drifting far from God, you can come back today. Say this prayer sincerely, from the heart:

Dear Lord Jesus, merciful Saviour, I return to you today. I recognise that I am a sinner and I ask that you forgive me. I confess with my mouth that you are my Lord and Saviour. I give you my life. In your grace and mercy, save my soul, so that on the day you return, you will find me without spot or wrinkle — and I will be with you forever. Amen.

Rented room **You iron that dress you would never wear at home. You borrow lashes. You tell your sister you are sleeping at a friend's place**

The rented room where destinies are lost

Behind the WhatsApp poster and the 20k entry lies a trap as old as Scripture itself

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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It is 8:47 pm on a Friday. You are alone in your single room. Your roommate has gone to the village. Rent is due next week and you have no idea where it will come from. Then your phone lights up.

A poster is making rounds across three WhatsApp groups — purple and black, a girl in a short dress, bold lettering: CITY SINGLES LINK-UP. Kireka. Bunga. Makindye. Entry 20k. BYOB. No Parents. No Rules. Beneath it, a voice note from a friend you trust, laughing: "Babe, you have to come. Everyone is coming. There will be sponsors. You will get your rent. Don't be boring."

You hesitate. You have exams next week. You were raised in a God-fearing home. But you are tired of being lonely in a crowded city. Tired of watching everyone else appear to live while you are merely surviving. So you tell yourself: I will just go and dance. I won't do anything bad. I will just network.

You iron that dress you would never wear at home. You borrow lashes. You tell your sister you are sleeping at a friend's place. You walk through a gate. The music is loud enough to drown your conscience. The lights are dim enough that no one can see shame on anyone's face, including yours.

By 3 am, someone has put something in your drink. By morning, you are walking home with 50k in your bag and a hollow feeling in your chest you cannot quite name. You went looking for fun and belonging. You came back emptier than when you left.

This is not just your story. It is the story of thousands of young people across our cities every single weekend. And what looks like a new trend is actually a very old trap — one the Bible warned about from the beginning.

It began in the days of Noah. Genesis 6 describes a world that had

The rented room

become one long, unending celebration of the flesh. People were eating, drinking, marrying — living entirely for physical pleasure with no thought of God. Wickedness became normal. Righteousness became unfashionable. Noah, who refused to join in, was mocked and called outdated. They partied until the floods came — and proved that a life built on pleasure without God has no foundation capable of holding.

Then came Sodom and Gomorrah, and this is perhaps the clearest mirror of what happens in rented rooms today. By Genesis 19, immorality in Sodom had ceased to be shameful. It had become culture — even celebration. Orgies, drunkenness, gang lust. Desire had grown so consuming that men lost their humanity entirely. When angels came to rescue Lot, the men of the city surrounded his house demanding access to them. Lust had turned them into something unrecognisable.

Is that so far from today? Today, girls are drugged and assaulted while too disoriented to stand. Boys are lured with money into acts they never imagined. Phones record everything — for blackmail, for sale, for ruin. What begins as a good time ends as trauma. God rained fire on Sodom not because he hated people, but because he hated what sin was doing to them.

Later, there was Belshazzar's feast in Daniel 5. A king staged the most exclusive party of his era — a thousand nobles, his wives and his concubines in one hall. He brought out the sacred vessels from the temple of God and used them to drink alcohol and toast false gods. He took what was holy and turned it into something disposable. In the middle of the music and laughter, while cups were still in hand, a finger appeared and wrote on the wall: Mene, Tekel, Parsin — you have been weighed and found wanting. He died that same night.

Every time we take our bodies — which Scripture calls the temple of the Holy Spirit — and offer them to strangers in a single room, we are doing precisely what Belshazzar did. We are hosting an unholy party in a holy place.

And then Jesus told the story that completes the picture. In Luke 15, a young man took everything his father had worked for, moved to a distant city and squandered it in wild living. That one word — squandered — captures exactly what happens in those rooms. School fees borrowed with tears, squandered. Virginity intended as a gift, squandered. Health, peace of mind, spiritual sensitivity — exchanged for a single night that will not even be remembered clearly by morning.

That young man only came to his senses when he had lost everything and found himself eating alongside pigs. Many young people only wake up when a pregnancy test returns positive and the man has blocked them. When a video leaks. When a medical result changes everything. When depression sets in and sleep no longer comes without chemical help.

Let us be honest about what actually happens when that gate locks — because it is not simply dancing.

Fornication becomes entertainment. Strangers who met two hours earlier share a mattress on the floor. Married men remove their wedding rings in the bathroom. Young women who arrived as friends end up competing for the same sponsor. Drunkenness becomes mandatory. Sobriety is mocked because a sober person in that room reminds everyone else that what is happening is wrong. You are pressured to drink, to smoke, to swallow something — your clarity is inconvenient.

Privacy disappears entirely. What people once watched in secret is now performed in front of others, and phones are always recording. One video is sufficient to unravel a degree, a future marriage, a family's reputation. And many lose far more than dignity. Girls wake up without phones, without bags, without memory — because their drink was spiked. Some are exploited by men who arrive posing as wealthy sponsors. They leave with a little cash for rent. They leave behind things no amount of money will ever recover.

People do not keep returning to these rooms because they are evil. They return because they are lonely in a city that can feel suffocating in its crowds. Because they are broke and someone has offered to help. Because they are heartbroken and desperate for a few hours of forgetting. Because social media has convinced them that being reckless is confidence, that intoxication is freedom, that sleeping with many people is power.

But it is a trap. The enemy never offers a free party. He always presents the bill later — with interest. Guilt that blocks prayer. Anxiety that blocks sleep. Infections. Unwanted pregnancies. Addiction. And a spiritual emptiness that no sound system, however powerful, can ever fill.

If you have been in that room, this is not written to shame you. It is written because you can still walk out. God is not angry at you — he is concerned for you. The same God who pulled Lot out of Sodom before the fire fell, the same Father who ran towards the prodigal son while he was still carrying the smell of the pigsty, is calling you today.

Your body is not a party venue. It is a temple. Your future is too significant to be exchanged for a 20k entry and a bottle of something cheap. This weekend, let that room stay empty. Delete the group. Turn off your data. Say no. Choose friends who will take you somewhere that builds you rather than breaks you. Choose one night of loneliness over a lifetime of regret.

The city will forget you. The people in that house will not remember your name by Monday. But God will never forget you — and he is the only one capable of giving you the joy you are truly looking for, without destroying you in the process.

Sports >> *The versatile Atlético midfielder steps away from international duty on his own terms, a World Cup winner

Llorente calls time on Spain career at 31

By **Pascal Okoth**

Marcos Llorente announced his retirement from international football yesterday, bringing an emotional close to his journey with the Spanish national team at the age of 31.

The Atlético Madrid midfielder confirmed the decision in a personal statement, making clear that his age played no part in the choice. "I have decided to bring my time with the Spanish national team to an end despite being aware that I am still young," Llorente said. "It is a personal decision, one I have thought about very carefully and, above all, one that comes from the heart."

Llorente spent considerable time weighing his future with Spain before arriving at the decision, describing it as deeply personal rather than driven by form, fitness or the prospect of fading opportunities. He also took time to acknowledge what the experience had meant to him. "It has been an honour to represent my country," he said.

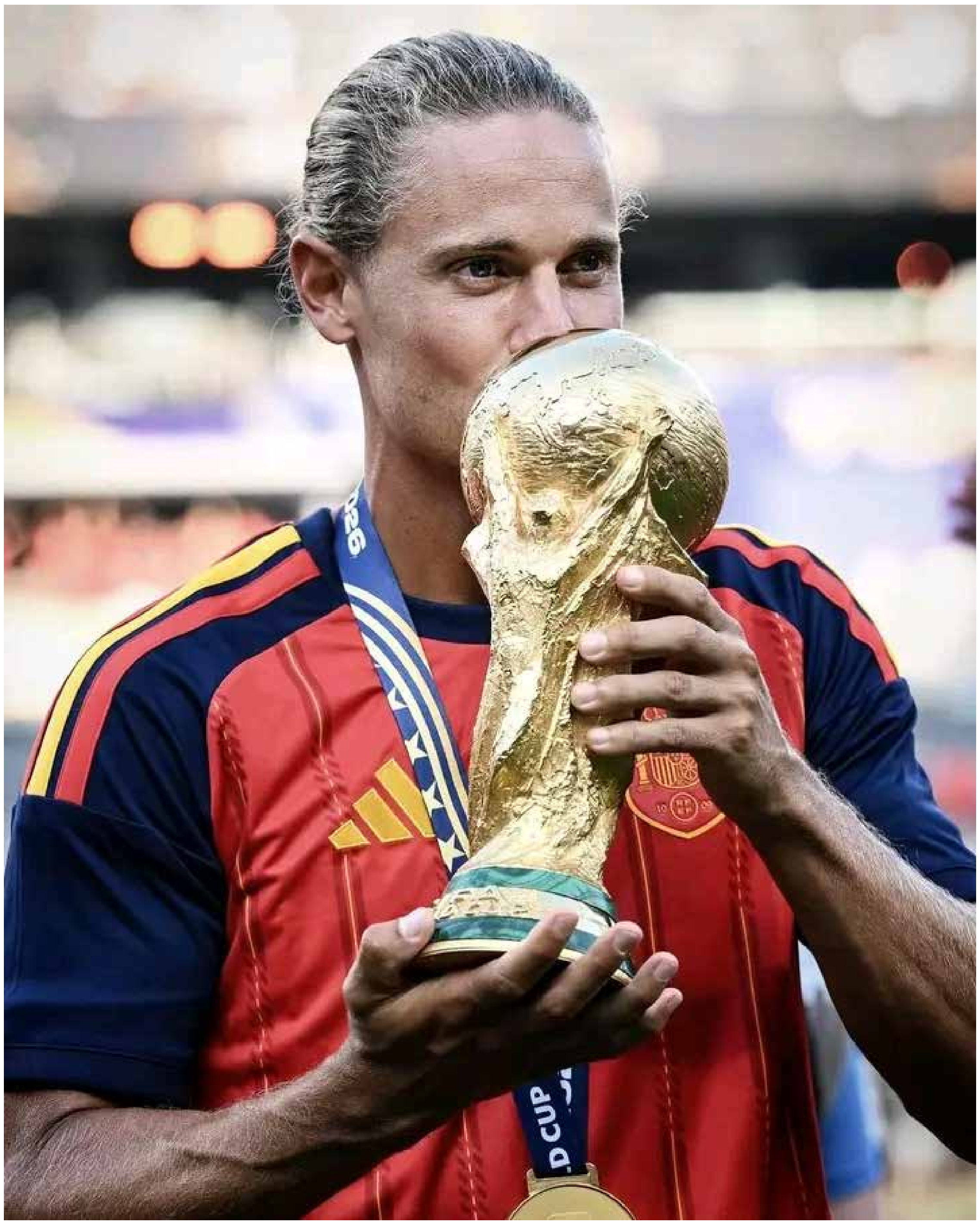
The retirement will come as a surprise to many. Players of Llorente's quality and age frequently remain available to their national teams well into their mid-thirties, and his tactical versatility — equally comfortable in central midfield, wider positions or deeper defensive roles — made him a reliable option for successive Spain managers.

That adaptability defined much of his international career and allowed him to contribute across different systems and tournaments. The pinnacle came with a World Cup winner's medal, one of the sport's rarest distinctions and a memory that will endure long after his final appearance in a Spain shirt.

His departure marks the end of a significant chapter for a generation of players who sustained Spain's standing among the world's leading football nations. For supporters, the emotions are likely to be mixed — disappointment at losing an experienced, committed servant of the team alongside recognition of everything he gave.

At club level, Llorente's career continues. Stepping away from international duty at this stage may allow him to manage his workload more carefully and extend his years at the highest level of the club game, where his experience and positional intelligence remain considerable assets.

He leaves the international stage having represented his country with distinction, collected the sport's ultimate prize, and chosen, on his own terms, precisely when to go.


Marcos Llorente

Sports >> *The Olympic and world 800m champion closed a landmark week with a meet record in Belgium, days after his world 1000m record was ratified

Wanyonyi crowned Diamond League champion for fourth straight time in Brussels

Emmanuel Wanyonyi wins in the Brussels Diamond League. PHOTO/WANDA DIAMOND LEAGUE

By **Martin Weche**

Emmanuel Wanyonyi won his fourth consecutive Diamond League trophy in the men's 800m yesterday, clocking a meet record of 1:41.80 at the season-ending final in Brussels to cement his status as the dominant force in middle-distance running.

The Olympic and world champion was in a class of his own at the Wanda Diamond League finale, finishing well clear of Algeria's Djamel Sedjati, who crossed in 1:42.71, while France's Yanis Meziane took third in a personal best of 1:42.87. The winning margin was decisive, the performance emphatic, and the occasion fitting for a young athlete who has spent the past year redefining what is possible in his event.

The Brussels victory arrived at the end of a week that will be difficult to match in Wanyonyi's career. On Thursday, World Athletics ratified his world record in the men's 1000m — a mark of 2:11.83 set at the Monaco Diamond League on July 10 — surpassing the previous record of 2:11.96 held by fellow Kenyan Noah Ng'eny. Within the space of four days, Wanyonyi had a ratified world record to his name and a fourth Diamond League title on his shelf.

For a runner still in the early stages of what already looks like a historic career, the symmetry of the week was striking. The 1000m record had been anticipated since Monaco, where those present witnessed a performance of startling maturity. The Brussels final provided the exclamation point.

Wanyonyi's dominance of the Diamond League 800m is not a recent development — it has been building across a season in which rivals have consistently found themselves running for places rather than victory. Sedjati, one of the finest 800m runners in the world, arrived in Brussels with the credentials and the competitive intent to challenge. He finished nearly a full second adrift. Meziane, meanwhile, ran the race of his life to claim third, his personal best a reminder of the quality assembled in a final that Wanyonyi nonetheless made look straightforward.

The meet record adds another layer to a performance that was never simply about winning. Brussels has a long and distinguished history in athletics, and a meet record at the Diamond League final carries weight beyond the result itself. It signals that Wanyonyi was not merely managing a title defence — he was pushing the boundaries of what the race could offer.

Kenya's tradition in middle-distance running is among the richest in global athletics, but even within that tradition, Wanyonyi's emergence has been remarkable. He became Olympic champion in Paris, claimed the world title, and has now wrapped up the Diamond League crown for a fourth successive time — achievements that, taken together, place him in rare company. The ratification of the 1000m world record, a discipline that sits outside the Olympic programme but carries significant historical prestige, adds further dimension to his growing legacy.

What distinguishes Wanyonyi is not merely the results, impressive as they are, but the manner in which they are achieved. There is a composure in his racing that belies his age — a willingness to impose his rhythm on a race rather than react to others, to run his own event with a confidence that has, on more than one occasion this season, made the outcome feel settled well before the finish line.

The Diamond League season is now concluded, and the standings confirm what the races themselves have consistently suggested: that Wanyonyi is, at this moment, without peer over two laps of the track. Whether rivals will close the gap through the winter and into next season remains the central question of middle-distance running. On the evidence of Brussels, and of the week that preceded it, the burden of proof rests firmly with them.

Kenya has produced generations of middle-distance champions. Wanyonyi, still young, already counts himself among the finest of them.

The MT. KENYA TIMES
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375778 201602

From damaged skin to thriving brand: The story behind Nongi Skincare

By: Ayesha Talib
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For almost as long as she can remember, Ayesha Talib has been involved in one form of business or another. Over the years she has sold different products, constantly searching for opportunities to create, grow and build something with lasting value. What she did not anticipate was that her most significant business journey would be born not from a market opportunity, but from one of the most distressing experiences of her life.

Her path into skincare began when a product damaged her skin in ways she never expected. She developed green veins, stretch marks, severely dark knuckles and an uneven skin tone. At one point, the discolouration on her knuckles became so pronounced and so difficult to cope with emotionally that she began wearing gloves simply to hide them from view.

She was not thinking about building a brand. She was thinking about her skin.

What followed was months of research, product trials and a determined search for something — anything — that would restore what had been taken from her. It was a deeply personal process, driven entirely by necessity. But somewhere along that road, something shifted. The search for a personal solution began to feel like something larger. A pattern emerged. A purpose took shape.

That purpose became Nongi Skincare.

The name carries the weight of its origins. Nongi was not conceived in a boardroom or developed through consumer surveys. It was born from lived experience — from the particular frustration of looking at your own reflection and not recognising what you see, from the exhaustion of trying product after product with no meaningful result, and from the quiet but determined conviction that there had to be a better way.

"I know what it feels like to look at your skin and not recognise what you see," Talib says. "I know the frustration of trying different products and desperately wanting your skin back."

That intimacy with the problem is precisely what she wanted Nongi to reflect. Not just another skincare label making familiar promises, but a brand designed with genuine understanding of what it means to struggle with your skin. Behind every concern — the dark patches, the uneven tone, the stretch marks that seem resistant to everything — is a real person who deserves to feel confident and comfortable again. That, she says, is the belief at the heart of everything Nongi does.

Building the brand has not been a straightforward process. Talib has invested not only financially but personally — drawing on years of entrepreneurial experience, hard lessons learned across different industries, and a resilience forged through the very experience that started it all. Every product developed, every formulation refined, every milestone reached carries particular meaning because she knows exactly where the journey began.

What is striking about the Nongi story is how it reframes the relationship between hardship and opportunity. In most entrepreneurial narratives, the founder identifies a gap in the market and moves to fill it. Talib's story works differently. The gap she identified was in her own life, in her own skin, and the solution she built for herself gradually became the solution she offers to others.

There is something quietly powerful about that. Skincare is an industry crowded with brands competing on aesthetics, price and influencer appeal. Fewer are built on the kind of authentic, personal reckoning that Nongi represents. The founder did not arrive at this business through ambition alone. She arrived through vulnerability, persistence and a refusal to accept that nothing could be done.

Today, Nongi Skincare continues to grow, shaped by Talib's ongoing commitment to developing products that genuinely address the concerns she once faced herself. The brand remains, in her own words, a reflection of her journey, her resilience and her belief that the experiences which break us can sometimes become the foundation for something meaningful.

She is the first to acknowledge that this is still early days. The brand is finding its footing, expanding its reach and continuing to earn the trust of customers who recognise in its story something of their own.

For Ayesha Talib, that connection — between her experience and theirs — is exactly the point.

And she is clear that this is only the beginning.

Ayesha Talib

Published at Shashil Court Westlands & Printed at Mombasa Road, Nairobi by Exponential International Limited. P.O. Box 101675 - 00101 Nairobi.
Email: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke | To place Adverts: Email: ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke Tel: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262, 0781 894 777. www.mtkenyatimes.com