



Ruto: Why are some African leaders hesitating on the Lamu refinery?
Kenya's ambitious plan to establish a major petroleum refinery in Lamu has entered a critical phase following the official launch of the Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery project. **Page 8**



Sifuna's party wins its name — and Kenya's opposition race begins in earnest
The Political Parties Disputes Tribunal yesterday handed Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna a victory that goes well beyond a legal technicality: it cleared the path for the Linda Mwananchi Movement to secure its name **Page 12**

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Countdown 2027 **"For too long, Africa has exported raw materials and imported finished products, exporting wealth and jobs," Ruto**

Lamu's KSh2.2 trillion bet

President William Ruto and Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote yesterday broke ground on the KSh2.2 trillion (\$16B) Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery in Lamu, launching what is set to become the largest oil refinery in East and Central Africa — but the ceremony exposed as many divisions as it celebrated ambitions.

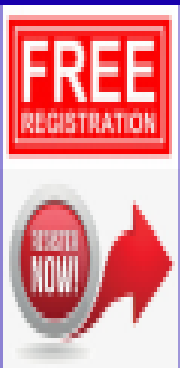
The groundbreaking was attended by the presidents of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni; Benin, Romuald Wadagni; and Togo, Jean-Lucien Savi de Tové, as well as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and senior representatives from other African countries also attended the ceremony. Notable by their absence were Tanzania's Samia Suluhu Hassan — who sent a deputy minister — and Rwanda's Paul Kagame. Tanzania's president had publicly reprimanded Ruto in May 2026 for unilaterally announcing a joint oil refinery in Tanga without prior consultation.

The refinery, being developed by Dangote Industries, is designed to process up to 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day, making it one of Africa's largest planned refining facilities. Beyond petroleum, it is an integrated industrial complex anchoring a 1,000MW power plant, a plastics factory and fertiliser and chemicals manufacturing.

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President William Ruto and Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote yesterday broke ground on the KSh2.2 trillion (\$16B) Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery in Lamu



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Ruto launches KSh2.2 trillion Lamu refinery in East Africa's biggest energy bet

BY Jane Njeri

@themtkenyatomes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday presided over the groundbreaking of the Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery in Lamu, a KSh2.2 trillion (\$16B) project billed as the largest of its kind in East and Central Africa.

Four heads of state and high-level delegations from across the continent attended the ceremony, underscoring the regional stakes of a project that Ruto described as a turning point for Africa's industrial ambitions. "For too long, Africa has exported raw materials and imported finished products, exporting wealth and jobs," Ruto said. "We are firm in our determination to reverse this trend."

The refinery, developed in partnership with Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote, will process 700,000 barrels of crude daily and anchor an integrated industrial complex that includes a 1,000MW power plant, a plastics factory and fertiliser and chemicals manufacturing. Economists project the project will expand Kenya's economy by 12 per cent, attract an additional \$4B in annual foreign direct investment during its four-year construction phase and create 60,000 direct jobs.

Officials said the facility will also accelerate the transformation of the Lamu Port South Sudan and Ethiopia Transport Corridor into a major industrial hub, reducing the region's dependence on imported refined petroleum and easing pressure on foreign exchange reserves. Africa's resource curse — vast raw wealth leaving the continent unprocessed — has endured for generations. If this refinery delivers on its promise, Lamu may be where that story finally begins to change.



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, his family and the Democracy for the Citizens Party yesterday conveyed their condolences to People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua following the death of her father, Mwalimu Jackson Karua. Gachagua said the loss of a parent was among life's most painful experiences and extended his sympathies to Karua and her siblings during what he described as a profoundly difficult moment. The party's Secretary General Designate, Senator John Methu, led a delegation that visited the family in person to pay their respects. "Losing a dad is a painful ordeal. We continue to pray for you at this difficult moment," Gachagua said, calling on God to grant the family strength, peace and comfort as they mourned. Mwalimu Jackson Karua's soul was commended to eternal rest.



Kenya's 2025/2026 coffee marketing year closed yesterday with the final Nairobi Coffee Exchange auction generating KSh841.3 million from the sale of 17,765 bags, as the sector simultaneously opened a new chapter with the launch of the 2026/2027 coffee year today. The new season brings a significant structural change to payment arrangements, with Stanbic Bank joining the Direct Settlement System alongside the Cooperative Bank of Kenya, giving dealers at the exchange a second banking partner for transaction facilitation. New KPCU led the final auction with 3,918 bags sold, followed by Alliance Berries with 3,806 bags, Kipkelion with 1,579 bags, CEBBA with 1,255 bags and Kirinyaga Slopes with 1,181 bags among the leading sellers. The close of the season marks one of the exchange's busiest trading periods in recent memory.



Kenya Tea Development Agency-managed factories yesterday declared bonus payments to farmers following the supply of more than 1.09 billion kilogrammes of green leaf for processing during the 2025/2026 season. Factory directors met on Wednesday to analyse monthly green leaf payments, revenue from tea buyers, electricity costs, management fees, petroleum expenses and employee salaries before arriving at the declaration. The review covered the full range of operational costs against earnings before the bonus figure was confirmed. The announcement brings welcome relief to smallholder farmers who have sustained green leaf supply volumes through a demanding production season. KTDA-managed factories remain the backbone of Kenya's smallholder tea sector, which accounts for the bulk of the country's tea output and is a critical source of rural income across the tea-growing counties.



Zimbabwean businessman Wicknell Chivayo and his wife Lucy Muteke were among six people killed yesterday when a helicopter crashed in the Marondera rural area east of Harare, a family spokesperson confirmed. Chivayo, one of Zimbabwe's most prominent and controversial businessmen, had been a central figure in several high-profile government contracts and was widely known for his flamboyant public profile and close associations with senior political figures. His death, alongside that of his wife and four others, marks one of the most significant losses in Zimbabwe's business community in recent years. The cause of the crash had not been officially confirmed at the time of going to press. Aviation authorities and police were reported to have launched investigations into the circumstances surrounding the incident.



Kenya's proposed tobacco control legislation has become a battleground between competing institutional interests, with county governors, the Kenya Cancer Institute and the National Treasury pulling the draft bill in sharply different directions ahead of its anticipated tabling in Parliament. Governors are pushing for greater county-level authority over tobacco regulation and revenue, arguing that devolved governments bear the heaviest burden of tobacco-related public health costs. The Kenya Cancer Institute is pressing for stricter restrictions on tobacco marketing, packaging and point-of-sale display, citing rising cancer incidence linked to smoking. Treasury, meanwhile, is resisting provisions that could reduce excise revenue from one of the government's more reliable tax streams. The divergence threatens to delay legislation that health advocates say is already overdue, leaving Kenya's tobacco control framework among the weakest in the East African region.



Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday pushed back against accusations that the opposition opposes foreign investment in Kenya, insisting the coalition's position on the Lamu refinery and related projects was rooted in demands for due process and equitable benefit-sharing, not obstruction. Musyoka, who served as Vice-President in the coalition government that developed Vision 2030, said he, the late President Mwai Kibaki and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga were among the architects of the LAPSET Corridor and Lamu Port as flagship national development projects. He said the opposition remained committed to that vision but would not endorse deals that concentrated benefits among a connected few. "Lamu Port must be for Kenya and for Kenyans, not a few Ruto-backed individuals," Musyoka said, drawing a clear line between welcoming investment and accepting opaque arrangements.

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Security Meru gubernatorial hopeful calls for compensation for livestock theft victims

Kinoti Marete backs Samburu security operation, rallies Meru aspirants to PPK

"When we have been crying as Meru residents, some people in Samburu have been clapping because they have been benefiting from stolen animals," Marete said.

BY Brian Gitonga

@themtkenyatimes

Meru gubernatorial aspirant Kinoti Marete Jr has thrown his weight behind the ongoing security operation in Samburu County, arguing that sustained action against cattle rustling is essential to protect livestock keepers in Meru's northern grazing areas.

Marete said residents who have repeatedly lost animals to raiders have suffered serious economic harm and deserve equal consideration alongside concerns being raised about the operation's impact. He urged security agencies to pursue suspects regardless of their community or county of origin.

Speaking at a press briefing in Kinoru, Meru County, Marete alleged that some Samburu residents had benefited from livestock stolen from neighbouring communities, and insisted the operation must continue.

"When we have been crying as Meru residents, some people in Samburu have been clapping because they have been benefiting from stolen animals," Marete said.

The operation has drawn concern from some Samburu leaders and residents over its effects on civilians and livestock. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has defended it publicly but directed security officers to exercise caution and minimise harm to non-combatants



Meru gubernatorial aspirant Kinoti Marete Jr Addresses the press

| Photo: Brian Gitonga

and animals.

Marete said livestock keeping remains the primary source of livelihood in Meru's northern grazing zones, where unreliable rainfall makes crop production difficult. He argued that persistent cattle theft had pushed already vulnerable families deeper into poverty.

"The government should continue with this operation because our people in Meru have become poor. In some of these areas, there is little else they can do apart from keeping livestock because there is not enough rain to grow crops," he said.

Marete praised Murkomen's handling of the security situation, saying his assessment of the Interior ministry had shifted positively in light of the current measures. He called for the law to be applied equally regardless of a suspect's social standing or place of origin, arguing that consistent enforcement

would help restore trust among affected communities.

"We are telling Murkomen to continue with the operation so that we can bring cattle theft to an end. Even if a suspect comes from Meru, action should be taken against them," Marete said.

He also called on the national government to establish a formal compensation framework for livestock owners who have lost animals to rustling. Marete urged authorities to begin documenting affected farmers and the scale of their losses, saying compensation would help families rebuild livelihoods after years of hardship.

"There is a huge need for the government to compensate those who have lost their animals. There should be an exercise to establish the livestock that has been lost so that affected farmers can be considered for compensation," he said.

Marete also used the briefing

to outline his political plans under the People's Party of Kenya (PPK), on whose ticket he intends to contest the Meru gubernatorial seat at the 2027 General Election. The party is led by Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro.

He said PPK plans to open a county office in Meru as it expands its structures and recruits members and aspirants ahead of the polls. Marete dismissed claims from political rivals that Nyoro and PPK were being deployed to divide the Mt Kenya vote, saying the party should be judged on its policies and proposals for the region rather than on political rhetoric.

Despite expressing support for Nyoro's broader agenda, Marete said he expects the PPK leader to engage Meru residents directly and account for how his political plans would address the county's specific challenges.

"I have told our people in Meru that we will not follow any presidential candidate without knowing how Meru residents will benefit. Whether it is Matiang'i or Ndindi Nyoro, they will have to come to Meru and speak to the people," Marete said.

He closed by inviting those eyeing elective positions in Meru to consider joining PPK, saying the planned county office would serve as a base for recruitment and coordination ahead of the election.

Museveni backs Lamu but keeps Uganda's money at home



Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni with President Ruto

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyatimes

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni yesterday backed the KSh2.2 trillion Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery in Lamu but told the groundbreaking ceremony that Uganda would not invest in the project, saying his country was already committed to building its own refinery.

Speaking alongside President William Ruto and Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote at the Lamu ceremony, Museveni said Uganda had made its refinery plans long before the Lamu project took shape and was not in a position to abandon them. His remarks drew laughter from the audience but carried an unmistakable message about the limits of regional solidarity when national interests diverge.

"In Uganda we have some

petroleum. We are going to build a small refinery and because we had planned this a long time ago, we cannot change that," Museveni said.

Museveni said he had held prior discussions with Ruto about Uganda's position, and separately indicated he wanted to establish what had happened to an earlier plan to site a regional refinery in Tanzania's Tanga port before making any further commitment to the Lamu project.

The remarks underline one of the central tensions facing large regional infrastructure projects in East Africa: countries may endorse the vision in public while quietly protecting their own energy strategies in private.

Ruto's refinery has its groundbreaking. Securing Uganda's investment may prove a longer negotiation.

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Lamu refinery President William Ruto has been at pains to clarify that the absence of several African leaders from the Lamu ceremony should not be read as opposition

Ruto: Why are some African leaders hesitating on the Lamu refinery?

The groundbreaking was celebrated, but the harder task — convincing neighbours the economics work for them too — has only just begun

BY Collins Kibet

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Kenya's ambitious plan to establish a major petroleum refinery in Lamu has entered a critical phase following the official launch of the Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery project. Presented as a potential game-changer for Kenya's energy sector and the wider East African economy, the multibillion-shilling project generated considerable excitement at its groundbreaking. Yet behind the fanfare lies a question that will ultimately determine the project's fate: why are some African countries still hesitant to commit financially?

President William Ruto has been at pains to clarify that the absence of several African leaders from the Lamu ceremony should not be read as opposition. Some had scheduling conflicts, others sent senior representatives. Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan could not attend due to a bereavement. Rwanda's President Paul Kagame was reportedly unable to make it owing to technical difficulties. Diplomatic absence, Ruto argued, does not equal economic rejection.

That is a fair point. But investment is a different matter from attendance. Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni was present at the ceremony yet indicated his country was not immediately committing to the project. Uganda has its own refinery ambitions and has also sought clarification on an earlier regional refinery proposal linked to Tanzania's Tanga port. This illustrates one of the central tensions in large regional infrastructure projects: a country can support economic integration in principle while simultaneously protecting its own national interests in practice.

For Kenya, Lamu represents far more than another industrial development. It is being positioned as a project capable of strengthening energy security, generating employment, attracting international capital and establishing Lamu as a significant petroleum hub for the region. If completed at the proposed scale, the

refinery could reshape the economic profile of the coastal region and supply refined petroleum products to markets well beyond Kenya's borders.

But governments do not commit public resources on the basis of political speeches. They examine costs, projected returns, infrastructure capacity, market demand, energy policy alignment and the long-term credibility of a project before signing anything. For countries such as Uganda, which are already pursuing their own petroleum development strategies, investing in a neighbouring country's refinery requires a clear and demonstrable economic justification.

Regional competition adds another layer of complexity. East Africa hosts several overlapping ambitions involving ports, pipelines, oil infrastructure and refineries. Kenya's Lamu project enters an environment where neighbouring states are themselves jostling to become energy and logistics hubs. Uganda's oil development plans, Tanzania's infrastructure agenda and other regional petroleum projects could all influence whether governments view Lamu as complementary infrastructure or as a rival.

Environmental and land concerns cannot be brushed aside either. Large-scale industrial development in Lamu has historically generated serious anxiety among local communities and environmental groups over land rights, livelihoods and ecological impact. For investors, such concerns raise additional questions about regulatory certainty, community relations and the project's long-term sustainability — questions that demand clear, credible answers.

Ruto therefore faces a genuinely delicate task. Kenya must persuade its neighbours that Lamu is not simply a Kenyan venture seeking regional money, but shared infrastructure capable of delivering tangible benefits to all participating economies. That requires transparency — on financing, ownership structures, expected returns, environmental safeguards and how the gains will be distributed among partner countries.

The question, ultimately, is not whether African leaders believe in



President William Ruto the official launch of the Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery project

Lamu. The more important question is whether they believe the economic model works for their own countries. Regional cooperation becomes meaningful when governments can point to concrete benefits for their citizens, not when they participate simply because of diplomatic goodwill or political pressure.

Kenya also has an opportunity — and an obligation — to demonstrate that major infrastructure projects can deliver for ordinary people. The residents of Lamu will want to know what the refinery means for jobs, local businesses, roads, housing and access to services. Kenyan taxpayers will equally want clarity on the country's financial exposure and realistic projections for economic return.

The Lamu refinery deserves scrutiny that goes well beyond the spectacle of a groundbreaking. Its success will not be measured by how many African heads of state attended the launch. It will be measured by whether it attracts sustainable investment, creates meaningful employment, strengthens energy security and delivers verifiable benefits to communities and the broader region.

Africa needs transformative infrastructure capable of connecting its economies and expanding industrial capacity. But successful regional projects require more than declarations and ceremony. They require confidence, transparent financing, sound economics, environmental responsibility and genuine trust among participating nations.

For Kenya, Lamu could become a

significant pillar of its energy and industrial future. But convincing neighbours to invest will depend on demonstrating, in practical and credible terms, why the project works for them too.

The real test has moved well beyond the groundbreaking. It is now about whether Kenya can turn the promise of Lamu into a proposition that the region actually believes in.



President William Ruto

Refinery “For too long, Africa has exported raw materials and imported finished products, exporting wealth and jobs,” Ruto told the assembled leaders.

Lamu’s \$16B gamble: Africa’s biggest refinery divides the region

Five heads of state broke ground in Lamu yesterday, but Uganda’s refusal to invest exposes the fault lines beneath East Africa’s most ambitious energy project

BY David Kimani

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto and Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote yesterday broke ground on the KSh2.2 trillion (\$16B) Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery in Lamu, launching what is set to become the largest oil refinery in East and Central Africa — but the ceremony exposed as many divisions as it celebrated ambitions.

The groundbreaking was attended by the presidents of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni; Benin, Romuald Wadagni; and Togo, Jean-Lucien Savi de Tové, as well as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and senior representatives from other African countries also attended the ceremony. Notable by their absence were Tanzania’s Samia Suluhu Hassan — who sent a deputy minister — and Rwanda’s Paul Kagame. Tanzania’s president had publicly reprimanded Ruto in May 2026 for unilaterally announcing a joint oil refinery in Tanga without prior consultation.

The refinery, being developed by Dangote Industries, is designed to process up to 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day, making it one of Africa’s largest planned refining facilities. Beyond petroleum, it is an integrated industrial complex anchoring a 1,000MW power plant, a plastics factory and fertiliser and chemicals manufacturing. Ruto said the project would boost Kenya’s economy by 12 per cent, attract \$4B in annual foreign direct investment during its four-year construction

phase and create 60,000 direct jobs. Refined petroleum products are targeted for countries including Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“For too long, Africa has exported raw materials and imported finished products, exporting wealth and jobs,” Ruto told the assembled leaders. “We are firm in our determination to reverse this trend.”

Dangote, whose Lagos refinery already processes 650,000 barrels per day, cited Lamu’s deeper waters, suitable ground and access to the Indian Ocean as the factors behind choosing Kenya over Tanzania. He said he expected Ruto and other African leaders to return to commission the refinery within 40 months.

The loudest dissent came not from an absentee but from a guest. Museveni attended the ceremony yet made clear, to laughter from the audience, that Uganda was not investing. He said Uganda had long planned to establish a small refinery in Hoima to serve its domestic market and parts of the interior of Africa, and wanted first to establish what had happened to an earlier regional plan to site a refinery at Tanzania’s Tanga port. “I want to discuss with President Samia and Ruto and find out what happened to that refinery of Tanga, what was the problem, so that we harmonise,” Museveni said.

Uganda and Kenya were originally supposed to build a pipeline together to get oil from Lake Albert to Lamu Port, but Uganda pivoted to Tanzania, committing its crude to a pipeline running to Tanga. With commercial production yet to begin in Kenya’s own oil fields, and the



President William Ruto and Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote, heads of state and high level dignitaries group photo during yesterday broke ground on the KSh2.2 trillion (\$16B) Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery in Lamu

South Sudan pathway also stalled, the Lamu refinery could be forced to rely on volatile international markets for its crude supplies — a vulnerability that neither Ruto nor Dangote addressed directly yesterday.

The project is expected to draw 70 per cent of its financing from debt and 30 per cent from equity, with regional governments approached about taking stakes. Museveni’s refusal to commit leaves a significant

gap in that regional ownership model. The emerging projects at Lamu, Tanga and Hoima are now positioning Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as competing petroleum hubs, with consequences for landlocked markets including Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and eastern DRC.

The project faces additional headwinds at home. A Kenyan court has ordered preservation of parts of the site pending proceedings in a case

brought by local residents over land and compensation disputes, though Ruto dismissed the legal challenges as attempts at extortion and vowed construction would proceed.

Dangote’s ambition is not in doubt. What Lamu now needs is crude, capital and the kind of regional solidarity that yesterday’s ceremony promised but did not quite deliver.



Politics Political leaders, Kariuki said, have a responsibility to communicate in a manner that does not unnecessarily heighten tensions or drive divisions among Kenyans.

Kariuki urges poll messaging responsibility

Business leader and real estate director Dr. Hezekiah Kariuki Mwangi calls for political discourse anchored in peace, stability and national cohesion as Kenya moves towards the 2027 General Election.

BY Waithaka Kariuki

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Politicians have been urged to exercise greater responsibility and caution in their public statements as Kenya approaches the 2027 General Election, with business leader and Comfort Homes Director Dr. Hezekiah Kariuki Mwangi calling for political discourse that promotes peace, stability and national cohesion.

Kariuki said the approach taken by political leaders in the period leading up to an election matters enormously because their words can influence public attitudes, shape

community relations and affect the broader environment in which businesses and ordinary citizens operate.

He urged politicians to be mindful of what they say when addressing supporters and the wider public, particularly as political activity gradually intensifies ahead of the 2027 polls.

Political leaders, Kariuki said, have a responsibility to communicate in a manner that does not unnecessarily heighten tensions or drive divisions among Kenyans.

His remarks come as preparations for the next General Election gather momentum,

with different institutions expected to undertake the various activities necessary for an orderly electoral process.

Kariuki also stressed the importance of relevant government agencies accelerating their preparedness for the election. He said early preparation and coordination by institutions involved in the electoral process would help build public confidence and ensure that the necessary systems are in place well before Kenyans go to the ballot.

His call places equal emphasis on institutional preparedness and responsible political communication.



Dr. Hezekiah Kariuki Mwangi

For the private sector, political stability and predictability are important considerations. Businesses make investment, employment and expansion decisions within the wider economic environment, and uncertainty during election periods can weigh heavily on those decisions.

Kariuki has previously spoken about the importance of responsible leadership and focusing on issues that affect ordinary Kenyans. In August 2026, he urged business owners to maintain strong relationships with clients and uphold integrity, transparency and focus as they pursue sustained growth. That same emphasis on responsibility and trust runs through his latest message on the political environment.

His comments also highlight the connection between a stable operating environment and the ability of businesses to contribute meaningfully to the economy.

Through Comfort Homes, Kariuki has been active in the real estate sector — an industry whose performance is closely tied to consumer confidence, investment appetite and access to land and housing.

Comfort Homes says it has operated for more than a decade, with more than 8,000 clients, over 25 projects and more than 5,000 title deeds issued. The company says its focus includes making property ownership more accessible through affordable land options and flexible payment arrangements.

The company's journey has attracted recognition within the real estate industry. Comfort Homes was named Real Estate of the Year 2025

at the Starbrand Awards, with the recognition citing its performance and brand development in Kenya's property sector. Kariuki himself received recognition at the Mizani Awards, where he was named CEO of the Year 2025 for his contribution to the growth and professionalisation of the real estate market.

Earlier, the Pacesetter Awards recognised him as Pacesetter CEO of the Year and named Comfort Homes as Pacesetter Real Estate Dealer of the Year.

These recognitions have helped build Kariuki's profile as an entrepreneur who has combined business development with public commentary on issues affecting the economy and the property sector. His latest intervention therefore extends beyond real estate to the wider question of the environment in which businesses and citizens operate.

As Kenya moves closer to 2027, Kariuki's message is clear: political competition should not lose sight of the country's broader interests. He urged politicians to remember that Kenya's economy does not pause during an election period and that businesses, employees, investors and families continue with their daily lives regardless of the political calendar.

He also emphasised the need for relevant agencies to move with speed in their preparations. Early institutional readiness, he said, can reduce uncertainty and allow stakeholders to plan with greater confidence.

That call for preparedness carries particular weight for sectors such as real estate, where investment decisions

involve substantial resources and long-term commitments.

For Kariuki, responsible political communication and institutional preparedness go hand in hand. Political leaders can articulate competing ideas and policy positions while also recognising the importance of maintaining an environment in which citizens can participate peacefully and businesses can continue to operate and grow.

His message is ultimately one of responsibility — responsibility among political leaders in their choice of words, responsibility among institutions in preparing for the electoral period, and responsibility among citizens in how they receive and respond to political messages.

As the country heads towards another General Election, the role of public communication will remain significant. Kariuki's voice from the private sector adds to the broader national conversation on 2027 preparations, calling on political leaders and institutions alike to approach the period with seriousness and a clear focus on Kenya's stability and continued economic progress.

For a businessman whose career has been built around property ownership and investment, the message is consistent with his wider emphasis on trust, transparency and responsible engagement. Comfort Homes counts transparency, integrity, reliability and innovation among its stated values — and Kariuki is now urging those same principles to take root in the country's political environment as Kenya prepares to go to the polls.

Babies Tens of thousands of student mothers are navigating lectures, deadlines and childcare with little institutional support — and some universities are making it worse

Carrying babies while studying: The real struggles of student parents on Kenyan campuses

BY Njeri Mickeydan Kioko

@themkenyaintimes

Research shows that student motherhood in Kenyan public universities stands at around 18 per cent, with an estimated 40,000 female students between the ages of 17 and 24 giving birth every year. That is not a small number. It is a significant portion of the student population navigating one of the most demanding periods of their lives while simultaneously raising a child.

But here is what many people are reluctant to admit: Kenyan universities were simply not designed with these students in mind. The structures, schedules and policies assume a student with no dependants, no childcare responsibilities and no one waiting at home. When you become a parent while still a student, you cannot stop being either. And the university system does not always make room for both.

Start with the most obvious struggle: money.

Raising a child costs money. Studying costs money. For most student parents, there is never enough of either. A study of student mothers at Kirinyaga University found that 41 per cent were unable to cover their basic expenses, while 33 per cent had used part of their school fees to meet parenting obligations. These are students diverting money meant for tuition to buy food and diapers. Some have taken academic leave purely for financial reasons.

The costs accumulate in ways non-parenting students never have to consider — clinic visits, baby food, transport, emergencies. One student mother described her daily reality plainly: she skips meals so her child can eat, walks to

campus to save on fare, and buys second-hand clothes to afford formula. These are not lifestyle choices. They are survival strategies.

Compounding the pressure, many public universities now demand lump-sum fee payments before students can register for examinations. For a young parent already stretched to the limit, that demand can mean the difference between continuing their education and dropping out entirely.

Even where money is managed, time remains an unrelenting constraint.

Babies do not respect timetables. They fall ill at 2am. They need feeding every few hours. They cry when you are trying to study and do not understand that examinations are tomorrow. The same Kirinyaga University research found that 41 per cent of student mothers had missed class since having a child, and nearly half said they could only study at night, after the baby was asleep. Some said they simply could not concentrate during the day.

These are students who want to learn, who are paying fees they can barely afford, sitting in lectures so exhausted they cannot absorb what is being taught. As one student mother put it: “Sometimes I feel guilty because I am not fully present either as a mum or as a student.”

Grace, a 23-year-old third-year student at Rongo University studying education, is smart, hardworking and determined. She is also a mother. Before her university opened a daycare centre, she had a morning routine she does not like to discuss. She would dress her baby, lock the child inside her hostel room and walk to class. There was

no one to watch the baby. She could not afford help. Attendance was compulsory. So she locked the door, said a prayer and hoped.

One afternoon she returned to find her baby had somehow locked the door from the inside. She stood outside panicking, called for help, and eventually someone broke the door open. The child was unharmed. Grace was not. Something inside her broke that day.

Her story is not exceptional. It is the reality facing thousands of student parents across Kenya. A study at Kirinyaga University found that 66.7 per cent of student mothers could not afford a babysitter. Only 10.3 per cent received financial support from partners, and another 10.3 per cent received help from family. The rest improvised — leaving babies with friends, rushing between hostels and lectures to breastfeed, or, like Grace, making choices that no parent should have to make.

In December 2025, Kisii University issued a memo titled “Prohibition of Children in the Classroom Set-up.” It noted that parenting students were bringing children onto campus and directed security officers to prevent it during weekdays. The memo acknowledged that childcare “can sometimes be challenging” but insisted the classroom was a professional space where children were not appropriate.

Consider what that memo did not ask. It did not ask why students were bringing babies to class. It did not ask what those students were supposed to do instead. It simply banned the babies and called it policy.

A lecturer at South Eastern Kenya University, writing in response, noted that univer-



Carrying babies while studying

sity structures “were not designed with student parenting in mind” and that affected students felt they were “treated as outsiders.” That is the core of the problem. Student parents are not asking for special treatment. They are asking for basic recognition that they exist.

Behind the statistics is a layer of struggle that does not appear in data: shame. In many Kenyan communities, pregnancy during studies carries heavy social stigma. Student mothers are sometimes viewed as irresponsible. Some are rejected by their families. Some are abandoned by the fathers of their children. The Kirinyaga University study found that 46.2 per cent of student mothers reported experiencing stigma because of their situation.

That stigma keeps many silent. They do not seek help for fear of judgment. They struggle alone, convinced their situation is a personal failure rather than a systemic one. There is also a gender dimension that cannot be ignored. Female students frequently carry the full weight of pregnancy, childcare and emotional stress, while male counterparts avoid accountability. The result, as one student at Kenyatta University wrote, is “bitterness, missed opportunities and cycles of inequality.”

Despite the challenges, there are genuine signs of progress. Rongo University in Migori County established a Child Care Centre that has become a reference point for other insti-

tutions. Funded in partnership with ChildFund and the Lake Region Development Programme, the facility serves children aged six months to three years and handles between 20 and 30 infants daily. By the end of the first quarter of 2026, it had supported 55 student mothers who contribute KSh50 per day towards running costs.

The results have been significant. Student mothers who had considered dropping out are staying enrolled, attending lectures and performing better academically because they are no longer consumed by anxiety about their children.

Other institutions are following. MMUST has announced plans for a campus daycare. The University of Nairobi is advancing a childcare and lactation facility proposal, with a policy dialogue held in February 2026. Karatina University hosted a mentorship seminar for 98 student mothers in April 2026. The University of Eldoret held a Young Mothers’ Day in February 2026 to celebrate and empower student mothers on campus.

Every public university in Kenya should have an affordable, accessible childcare facility. The Rongo University model demonstrates it is achievable even with limited resources. Institutional policies must also become more flexible — a student who misses class because a child is ill should not be penalised, and a student who has no childcare alternative should not be banned from campus.

The government’s proposed shift to universal funding, announced in July 2026, could help if it results in targeted support for student parents rather than blanket allocations that ignore the additional costs they face. Universities must also actively dismantle the culture of shame surrounding student parenthood, making support structures permanent rather than occasional. And crucially, fathers must be part of the conversation. As one coordinator at the University of Eldoret observed: “The children also belong to fathers, and if we don’t involve the young fathers in these conversations we are losing out on the young men.”

Thousands of student parents across Kenya are still choosing between their education and their child’s safety, still being managed as problems rather than supported as students. Their determination deserves more than silence.

Parenthood and ambition should not have to compete for the same hours in the day. And no mother should ever have to lock her child in a room just to attend class.

Njeri Mickeydan Kioko is a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication at Chuka University.

Politics The ruling matters because the name is the movement. Linda Mwananchi — protect the citizen — is not merely a party label

Sifuna's party wins its name — and Kenya's opposition race begins in earnest

A tribunal ruling hands the Nairobi senator his political identity just as the countdown to August 2027 turns urgent

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

The Political Parties Disputes Tribunal yesterday handed Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna a victory that goes well beyond a legal technicality: it cleared the path for the Linda Mwananchi Movement to secure its name, its brand and, with it, the institutional foundation for what is rapidly shaping up as the most consequential opposition presidential campaign Kenya has seen since the death of Raila Odinga.

The Tribunal, chaired by Innocent Muganda, set aside the Registrar of Political Parties' August 7 decision declining to reserve the Linda Mwananchi Movement name and its abbreviation, LMM. The ruling found that the Registrar's rejection was without legal justification under the Political Parties Act, dismissing the argument that the name was confusingly similar to the Liberty National Democratic Alliance, known as LINDA. The Registrar has seven days to reconsider the application in accordance with the Tribunal's findings. It is a deadline that Sifuna's camp will be watching with considerable intensity.

The ruling matters because the name is the movement. Linda Mwananchi — protect the citizen — is not merely a party label. It is a slogan that has filled rally grounds across Western Kenya and Nairobi, a brand that has given Sifuna a political identity distinct from

the ODM he once served as secretary-general before being removed earlier this year. Without the name, the movement risked losing its most potent public asset just as the 2027 General Election, scheduled for August 10, enters its most critical organising phase.

A TIFA poll placed Sifuna climbing from virtually no measurable national support in 2025 to 15 per cent by June 2026, with 44 per cent support within ODM as the party's preferred presidential candidate. A separate Infotrak survey placed a Kalonzo-Sifuna combination at 23 per cent support, ranking it among the opposition's most preferred presidential pairings. These are not the numbers of a peripheral figure. They are the numbers of a man who has inserted himself at the centre of Kenya's most competitive electoral contest in a generation.

To understand how Sifuna arrived here requires understanding the vacuum he moved into. Raila Odinga's departure from the domestic political stage — first into the broad-based government arrangement and then through his death — left the opposition without its defining figure and its most reliable coalition architect. Without a credible presidential candidate from Western Kenya since Kijana Wamalwa in 1997, the region, the second largest voting bloc after Mt Kenya, has largely been a battleground for swing votes. Sifuna, a first-term

senator who built his profile through combative opposition rhetoric and an instinctive ability to connect with younger, urban voters, saw the opening and moved into it with remarkable speed.

His Linda Mwananchi movement, originally an ODM faction opposed to the party's support for President William Ruto's broad-based government, has gained traction particularly among young people disillusioned with the country's political establishment. He has repeatedly appeared in Raila-branded attire at rallies, deploying the former premier's legacy as a borrowed legitimacy while simultaneously building an identity entirely his own. He told radio stations in Western Kenya that he would tour all counties before deciding whether to formally challenge Ruto, adding: "We want to push our Linda Mwananchi movement until it becomes consequential such that when we say we will have a presidential candidate and a running mate, we indeed stand a chance of winning the election."

The vehicle for that candidacy appears to be taking shape. Trans Nzoia Governor George Ntembeya confirmed last week that Sifuna is likely to contest the 2027 election under the United Democratic Party, which would serve as a national outfit rather than a purely regional vehicle. Ntembeya was emphatic that Sifuna should seek the presidency itself, not a running-mate position — a signal



Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

that Sifuna's Western Kenya base is not willing to play the subordinate role it has historically occupied in opposition coalitions.

Sifuna and Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka held talks earlier this month on forging a united opposition, with both agreeing that opposition leaders must work together to mount a credible challenge to Ruto. The meeting did not produce a joint candidate announcement, but it set out the architecture of a coalition conversation that will dominate Kenyan politics well into 2027. The key figures at the table include Kalonzo, Sifuna, former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i — a gathering of formidable but competing presidential ambitions that must be resolved if the opposition is to avoid repeating the fractured candidacies of previous elections.

The mathematics are unforgiving. Sifuna's push to unite Western Kenya under Linda Mwananchi threatens to dis-

mantle the historical Azimio voting bloc, creating severe mathematical complications for all major political players ahead of the 2027 polls. If Sifuna commands the Mulembe nation vote and aligns it with urban youth support in Nairobi, he becomes indispensable to any opposition coalition. If the coalition fractures, Ruto — with the advantages of incumbency and a consolidated Mt Kenya base — becomes a difficult incumbent to dislodge.

The government is watching. Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration has shown in previous electoral cycles that it understands the danger of a unified opposition better than most, and will work methodically to keep the opposition coalition fragmented. The broad-based government arrangement, which brought ODM formally into the fold, was in part a strategy to defang the most organised opposition machinery the country possessed. Sifuna's refusal to accept that arrangement and his determination to build an

alternative structure is precisely what makes him, in the eyes of both his supporters and his opponents, the most consequential opposition figure currently active in Kenyan politics.

Yesterday's tribunal ruling will not resolve the deeper strategic questions — who leads the coalition, who takes which slot on the ticket, which communities deliver which votes. But it does something important. It tells Sifuna's supporters, and his rivals, that the machine is being built, the paperwork is being filed, and the brand that has packed rally grounds from Kakamega to Mathare is not going away.

Ten months from August 10, 2027, Kenya's most unpredictable election in years is beginning to take shape. Sifuna now has his name. The harder question is whether he can build the coalition broad enough to use it.

Teachers The MP was firm that politics should be kept away from classrooms and that school sponsors should not interfere with school programs.

Keep off politics from teachers - West Mugirango MP tells off sponsors at Kiangungu Prayers Day

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themtkenyetimes

West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka has called for an end to political interference in the management of schools, saying teachers must be respected and allowed to do their work without intimidation from politicians and school

sponsors.

Speaking at Kiangungu school during prayer day, the MP was firm that politics should be kept away from classrooms and that school sponsors should not interfere with school programs.

He said frequent wrangles caused by external interests were disrupting learning and demoralizing teachers, which

in turn affects the performance of students.

“Let us keep politics out of our schools. Our teachers must be respected. They have been trained and employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to teach and manage our schools. Let TSC do its work without interference,” Mogaka said.

He noted that some schools



West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka has called for an end to political interference in the management of schools | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

in the region have been experiencing conflicts where sponsors and local politicians attempt to influence the appointment of principals, BOM members and even dictate how school funds should be used.

He warned that such interference is harmful to education standards.

“When you bring politics into a school, you kill the morale of teachers and confuse our students. A school sponsor’s role is to support the spiritual and moral growth of students, not to run the school or fight teachers. Let principals and teachers be given space to run schools professionally,” he added.

Mogaka said his office will continue to support education through the NG-CDF kitty by improving infrastructure, paying fees for needy students, and ensuring schools have adequate learning materials.

He challenged parents to also play their role by supporting their children and working closely with teachers.

He urged the KCSE candidates at Kiangungu Secondary School to remain focused, disciplined and prayerful as they prepare for their final examinations.

He encouraged them to believe in themselves and aim for high grades to join univer-

sities and colleges.

“The future of West Mugirango depends on you. You are the doctors, engineers, teachers and leaders we are waiting for. Do not be distracted. Use the few remaining months to revise hard, respect your teachers, and pray to God for success,” he told the candidates.

The MP also announced that his office will support the school’s infrastructure development to create a better learning environment.

“Let us keep politics out of our schools. Our teachers must be respected. They have been trained and employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to teach and manage our schools. Let TSC do its work without interference,” Mogaka said.

He noted that some schools in the region have been experiencing conflicts where sponsors and local politicians attempt to influence the appointment of principals, BOM members and even dictate how school funds should be used.

”

He promised to allocate funds for the completion of ongoing projects in the school.

The school principal, Ms Sarah Okeyo, thanked the MP for honoring the invitation and for his continued support to education in the constituency.

She said the Prayers Day was important to spiritually nourish the candidates and give them confidence ahead of the national exams.

“The presence of our MP today has motivated our students and teachers. We have been facing challenges but we are determined to post good results this year. We fully agree that teachers should be respected and allowed to work without political interference,” the principal said.

Parents and students who attended the event also lauded the MP’s message, saying teachers need support and not pressure from outside forces.

They said if teachers are respected and schools are left to run professionally under TSC guidelines, academic performance in West Mugirango will improve.

The day ended with special prayers for the candidates, teachers and the school fraternity, with religious leaders calling for peace, discipline and hard work in all schools.



Mother



A mother is a treasure whose worth the world
can never measure,
In both realms, no greater wealth exists than her
love’s pure pleasure.

May a mother’s name forever sit on lips like a
sacred prayer,
Whoever holds her dear, opens their heart to

Divine light there.
Life flows like a river’s wave, not a single moment
still,
Without a caring mother’s blessing, no fortune
can a soul fulfill.

A hundred greetings, a hundred praises to the
mother’s name eternally,
Long live her stainless devotion, may her presence
endure endlessly.

O Dilovar, if you wish to reach the peaks of
fortune and light,
Become as dust at your mother’s feet, with
devotion and pure delight.

Dilovar Safaraliyev is a 4th-year student at
Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of Uzbek
Language and Literature.

Sometimes life tests us, not to reveal our
weaknesses, but to help us discover our strengths.



Life is a secret gift.
No one knows when life will bloom like the spring of
April or fade like the days of May.
However, sometimes life tests us to see how
strong we can become through struggles.
It reveals our mistakes and helps us discover our
best qualities.

Weakness is not a failure. Instead, it can lead us
towards strength.

Just as a child does not run at first but begins by
learning to walk, that hesitation is not weakness;
it is the foundation for running.

Everything has a beginning, and there may be
hesitation in the early days.
However, practice makes us stronger and more
confident. Struggles reveal our strength and
shape us into stronger and braver people.

So, don’t worry about difficult days. Face them
boldly and use them as opportunities to improve
yourself.
What seems like a weakness today may become
your strength tomorrow.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block Villupuramdt

Life’s test



If the result is PASS,
I thank God for His blessings.

If the result is FAIL,
I will not think my hope is lost.

Because every test teaches me something,
every struggle makes me stronger,
and every result brings me closer
to the person I am meant to become.

I may not know the reason for the test,
but I trust the One
who gives me the strength to face it.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

Sometimes life tests us,
not to reveal our weakness,
but to help us discover our strength.

Sometimes I wonder,
“Why did this happen to me?”
Yet, I never lose my hope.

When life gives me a test,
I believe the result will surely come.
I trust God,
and I believe everything will be fine.

Abracadabra – the magic of your words



Every word you speak is a seed,
Scattered in the soil of your mind,
It takes root in your thoughts,
And shapes the life you are yet to find.

What you think, you begin to say,
What you say, you begin to be,
What you repeat, takes root in you,
And becomes the life you see.

Words are whispers that water thought,
Thoughts are rivers that shape your way,

A sentence spoken with faith and fire
Can turn a dark night into day.

Abracadabra—create as you speak,
Let every syllable carry light;
For words can build bridges of courage,
Or turn a bright morning into night.

So choose your words as you choose your seeds,
Plant hope where fear has grown,
For the garden of life responds to
The thoughts and words you have sown.

Think with purpose, speak with grace.
Let faith be the voice you hear.
For the words you plant within your mind
May become your reality here.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator,Writer,Motivator

Happiness is not a destination; it is
how we choose to live each day



Happiness is not far away,
It can be found in every day.

A smile, a friend, a sunny sky,
A little bird that passes by.

Help someone and share a smile,
Make every moment worth the while.

We need not wait for joy to come,
We can make our own, one by one.

So live each day with love and cheer,
And keep happiness always near.

Sripriya R
BT ENGLISH GHSS KOLAPAKKAM
KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT

Never-stolen heart



Halfway gone,
Old and shrunk with time,
Stopped looking for love,
Drawing inward like a turtle’s head.

A soulmate never found,
Perhaps written nowhere
In the pages of this life.

Time gone
In the ruthless ship,
Hungry at heart,
Frozen, still emotionless.

A heart that yearned for love,
No joy found anywhere,
Accustomed to whatever it received,
Never truly enjoyed her.

Loneliness crippled,
Fought for her love,
Never succeeded.

A vacuum—
Never to be filled.
Viji. T
Ghs kvpudur
Namakkal
Tamilnadu
India

Innovation The issues identified will form the basis of an upcoming Agritech and Artificial Intelligence hackathon, where young innovators will be challenged to develop practical solutions

Gusii innovators call for collective action to advance climate-smart food systems



By: Elizabeth Angira

In southwestern Kenya, farming remains at the heart of many families' livelihoods. But the changing climate is increasingly making it harder for farmers to predict what each season will bring.

Prolonged droughts, floods and shrinking land sizes are putting pressure on agricultural production, raising concerns about how communities will continue producing enough food for future generations.

It is against this backdrop that Gusii innovators, farmers and other players in the agricultural sector are calling for collective action to develop climate-smart food systems that can respond to the changing realities on the ground.

The call came during a pre-hackathon problem-mapping meeting organised through Fie Labs Innovation Hub, bringing together farmers, value addition practitioners, logistics providers, innovators and other stakeholders to identify some of the challenges affecting the local food system.

The meeting was not about presenting solutions. Instead, participants were asked to speak about the problems they encounter in their farms, businesses and communities.

The issues identified will form the basis of an upcoming Agritech and Artificial Intelligence hackathon, where young innovators will be challenged to develop practical solutions.

Speaking during the meeting, Fie Labs Innovation Hub Manager Jeremy Riro said the programme has deliberately been structured in stages to ensure that innovations are



Fie Labs Innovation Hub Manager Jeremy Riro said the programme has deliberately been structured in stages to ensure that innovations are developed from real community needs. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

developed from real community needs.

He said the first stage is problem mapping, where farmers and other stakeholders explain the challenges, they face.

"Today is about problems, nothing about solutions," Riro said.

The problems gathered from the community will then be taken to the hackathon, scheduled for October 26 and 27, where young innovators will work on possible solutions with mentorship and technical support from the Google Developers Group (GDG) Kisii.

Riro said the organisers will return to the community in November to present the solutions developed during the hackathon and receive feedback from the people who initially identified the problems.

The community will be expected to assess whether the proposed innovations are practical, whether they can work in the region and what needs to be improved.

"Technology is just as good as if it is applicable," Riro said.

Turning local problems into technological solutions

The initiative comes at a time when technology, particularly artificial intelligence, is increasingly being explored as a tool for addressing challenges in agriculture.

Riro said AI and data could

help farmers make better decisions by providing information on weather patterns, markets, storage and post-harvest losses.

For instance, weather data could help farmers understand how changing weather conditions may affect production and guide them on when to plant or harvest.

Market data could also help farmers determine when to take their produce to the market, while data on storage conditions could help identify factors contributing to food spoilage and reduce post-harvest losses.

The hackathon will therefore bring together young people from institutions of higher learning for an intensive problem-solving process.

Over a 48-hour period, the innovators will work on challenges identified by farmers, processors, industry players and other community stakeholders.

Riro said the problems gathered during the mapping exercise will be organised and turned into challenges for the young innovators to work on.

Some of the innovators involved in previous editions of the programme are also returning to participate in this year's initiative.

The programme is being implemented in collaboration with Kisii University, which is hosting the activities, and GDG Kisii, which is providing technical expertise.



Emily Onkaro, a member of the Kisii Beekeepers Group based in Bonchari, Suneka, said the engagement had helped her and other farmers understand that their challenges could be part of the innovation process. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

Riro said involving young developers is important because the focus is on finding ways in which AI can be applied to agriculture and food systems to advance climate-smart solutions.

Farmers at the centre of the innovation process

For the organisers, the strength of the programme lies in putting farmers and other practitioners at the centre of the innovation process.

Rather than innovators sitting away from the community and developing solutions based on assumptions, they are meeting farmers directly and listening to their experiences.

Davies Ogega, a fourth-year student at Kisii University and an innovator, said the team is currently mapping challenges across different stages of the agricultural value chain.

"We are currently handling several problems ranging from production to market access, all the way to value addition," Ogega said.

He said the exercise is helping innovators understand the specific challenges within the region and identify areas where technology could have an impact.

"We are co-creating with them. We are figuring out the problems that the community is facing, and the practitioners themselves who are in the community are giving us the problems," he said.

The approach, he said, gives innovators an opportunity to develop solutions based on actual experiences rather than assumptions.

From ideas to viable businesses

Riro said the journey will not end when the hackathon is over.

Solutions that prove practical and have the potential to grow will be taken through an incubation programme at Fie Labs Innovation Hub.

The incubation process will support innovators in turning their ideas into viable businesses, while the acceleration stage will connect them to partners, markets and capital needed to scale.

The aim is to create a pathway that takes an idea from a community problem, through innovation and testing, to a viable start-up.

Riro also called for more financing to reach communities and grassroots innovators dealing directly with climate-related challenges.

He said some interventions can be addressed through government financing, but more resources should also reach farmers, manufacturers and other stakeholders working at the local level.

"These climate challenges are being experienced where we are working directly with the community," he said, adding that grassroots stakeholders need access to capital closer to where they operate.

He pointed to Fie Labs' venture studio, Fie Ventures, as one of the mechanisms through which innovators can receive capacity-building support and access to capital to scale their ideas.

Farmers find a platform to speak about their challenges

For farmers who attended the meeting, the problem-mapping exercise provided some-

thing they said they have lacked for a long time an opportunity to openly present the challenges affecting them.

Emily Onkaro, a member of the Kisii Beekeepers Group based in Bonchari, Suneka, said the engagement had helped her and other farmers understand that their challenges could be part of the innovation process.

She operates Bonanga Agencies, working with local farmers involved in beekeeping.

Onkaro said farmers in rural areas often have problems but lack platforms where they can present them to people capable of developing solutions.

"We have our problems in the rural areas that we have never found a place to present. But now that we have been given the opportunity, we have discussed and tabled our problems," she said.

She expressed hope that the process would lead to practical solutions that farmers could eventually use in their daily work.

"We are really here with a lot of hope that Agritech is going to assist us and bring solutions to the problems that we have," she said.

Developers listen to farmers

For Gaudencia Omondi, a representative of GDG Kisii, the programme is different because developers are first exposed to the real-life problems facing farmers before they begin developing solutions.

He said GDG Kisii has part-

Innovation The issues identified will form the basis of an upcoming Agritech and Artificial Intelligence hackathon, where young innovators will be challenged to develop practical solutions

Gusii innovators call for collective action to advance climate-smart food systems

Contd from page 15

nered with Fie Labs for several years and is supporting the Gusii Innovation Week 2026 programme by bringing developers together with farmers and other practitioners. “What makes Gusii Innovation Week special and different from other hackathons is that we really have the first phase of the hackathon, which is the problem mapping, where developers meet the actual farmers,” Omondi said. He said participants included people involved in livestock keeping, indigenous crops and horticulture, giving developers an opportunity to hear about challenges across different areas of agriculture.



Davies Ogega, a fourth-year student at Kisii University and an innovator, said the team is currently mapping challenges across different stages of the agricultural value chain. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

Omondi said many of the problems raised during the exercise remain largely untapped, creating opportunities for developers to explore new technological solutions.

The second edition of Gusii Innovation Week will be held at Kisii University from October 26 to 30, 2026. The first four days will focus on the Agritech AI Hackathon



Gaudencia Omondi, a representative of GDG Kisii, the programme is different because developers are first exposed to the real-life problems facing farmers before they begin developing solutions. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

and the Food Systems Innovation Summit, while the final day will feature an Innovation

Ecosystem Tour showcasing different innovations across the county.

For the organisers, the larger goal goes beyond a week-long event. It is about creating a stronger connection between farmers who understand the problems on the ground and young innovators with the skills to develop technological solutions. As climate change continues to affect agricultural production, the organisers believe that solutions developed with communities rather than for communities have a better chance of responding to the realities farmers face. The challenge now is to turn the problems identified during the mapping exercise into innovations that farmers can actually use, afford and scale.

KEMSA advances digital traceability for safer medicines

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyatiimes

Digital traceability is emerging as a critical pillar in strengthening medicine safety, supply-chain accountability and health-system resilience across Kenya. Speaking at the PharmaRegAfriSummit2026, Kenya Medical Supplies Authority Deputy Director for Supply Chain Management and Warehousing John Kabuchi highlighted the growing role of digital systems in tracking Health Products and Technologies from their source to health facilities across the country. The systems enhance visibility across the supply chain, helping strengthen accountability, improve stock management and support the timely delivery of quality health products to healthcare providers and patients. Through digital transfor-



KEMSA CEO Dr. Waqo Dulacha Ejersa

mation and stronger supply-chain systems, KEMSA is contributing to a more transparent, responsive and resil-

ient health-products ecosystem in Kenya.



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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI



KEBS Ngari took part in discussions on the Action Plan for Developing Countries, alongside consideration of the World Bank report on standards

Ngari takes Kenya’s standards leadership to the global stage

KEBS Director General Esther Ngari’s participation at the 2026 ISO Annual Meeting in Paris places Kenya at the centre of conversations shaping the future of international standardisation.

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyaintimes

Kenya’s voice in the global standards arena is gaining renewed visibility under the leadership of Kenya Bureau of Standards Director General Esther Ngari, whose participation at the 2026 ISO Annual Meeting in Paris has placed the country at the heart of important conversations shaping the future of standardisation. Held under the theme “A future built on trust,” the ISO Annual Meeting brings together standards leaders from across the world to deliberate on issues that influence international trade, innovation, economic development and participation in global value chains. On the opening day, Ngari participated in the 60th ISO

DEVCO Plenary, where members discussed priorities and initiatives aimed at strengthening the participation of developing countries in the international standards system. Her engagement reflects the increasingly important role Kenya is playing in global standards discussions and highlights the value of experienced leadership in ensuring that the interests of developing economies remain part of those conversations. Ngari also took part in discussions on the Action Plan for Developing Countries, alongside consideration of the World Bank report on standards. The discussions underscored the importance of standards in supporting sustainable economic development, facilitating trade and enabling countries to participate more effectively in global value chains.

Her participation in the breakout session on the digitalisation of the standards ecosystem further demonstrated her engagement with emerging issues reshaping the standards landscape. Digital technologies are increasingly influencing how standards are developed, delivered and used, making digital transformation an important part of the future of standards institutions. Ngari’s involvement places KEBS within these forward-looking conversations as standards bodies globally explore new ways of responding to technological change. Perhaps most significantly, Ngari presented Kenya’s candidature for the ISO Council for the 2027–2029 term under Group 4. The presentation gave Kenya an opportunity to share its experience and demonstrate its commitment

to contributing to the continued strengthening of the international standards system. For KEBS, such engagement reflects an institution increasingly positioning Kenya not merely as a consumer of international standards, but as an active participant in shaping the systems that underpin global commerce and quality infrastructure. Ngari’s presence in Paris therefore goes beyond attendance at an international meeting. It represents Kenya’s continued engagement with a global standards community where decisions and technical discussions can have a direct bearing on trade, industry, innovation and economic growth. Her leadership at KEBS has placed particular emphasis on ensuring that the bureau remains engaged with international standards develop-



KEBS Director General Esther Ngari

ments while continuing to support Kenya’s quality infrastructure. At the ISO Annual Meeting, that responsibility has taken on a global dimension, with Ngari participating in discussions covering developing countries, digitalisation, sustainable economic development and the international governance of standards. Her ability to engage across all these areas reflects both the breadth of responsibilities facing modern standards institutions and the importance of leadership that understands national priorities alongside the international standards environment. The meeting’s theme, “A future built on trust,” is particularly relevant to the work of standards bodies. Trust in products, services, measurements and conformity assessment is fundamental to consumers, businesses and international trade alike. As Kenya seeks greater opportunities in global markets, credible standards and quality infrastructure remain important foundations for competitiveness. Ngari’s participation at the meeting therefore offers an important platform for Kenya to articulate its experience, learn from other standards organisations and contribute meaningfully to global conversations. Her role also demonstrates the importance of African representation in international standardisation. Developing countries have distinct economic realities and market needs, making their active participation essential in ensuring that global standards support inclusive and sustainable development. Through the ISO DEVCO discussions, Ngari has been part of conversations specifically focused on strengthening developing countries within the global standards system. Her presentation of Kenya’s ISO Council candidature further underscores the country’s willingness to contribute to international standards governance. As the ISO Annual Meeting continues in Paris, Ngari’s engagement provides another clear indication of Kenya’s growing participation in global quality and standards conversations. For KEBS, it is an opportunity to showcase Kenya’s experience, build international partnerships and remain connected to the innovations shaping the future of standardisation. For Ngari, it is another international platform through which she is representing Kenya’s standards institution and championing the country’s participation in a system that increasingly influences trade, industry and economic development. At a time when quality, trust and conformity are becoming ever more important in global markets, Kenya’s active participation in these conversations matters deeply. And at the heart of that engagement is a KEBS leadership working to ensure that Kenya remains visible, relevant and actively involved in shaping the standards environment of tomorrow.

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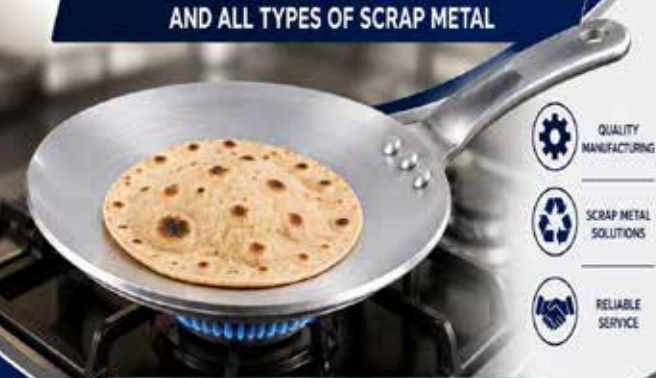
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Social justice This is the factual starting point of a deeper disease: the deliberate conversion of law into a weapon under the banner of social justice, public order, or national security

The blind lady's dagger: When “social justice” sharpens Kenya's laws into political blades



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor
Odhiambo

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In the months following Kenya's 2024 Finance Bill protests, authorities charged at least seventy-five demonstrators many of them young, leaderless, and previously unknown to the criminal justice system with terrorism-related offences under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Bail conditions soared. Simultaneously, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions withdrew or quietly abandoned corruption cases against several political allies of the executive. Over four hundred and fifty other protesters faced serious criminal counts. Amnesty International Kenya documented at least one hundred and twenty-eight deaths, three thousand arrests, and more than eighty enforced disappearances across the protest wave. These are not isolated statistics; they are the arithmetic of selective justice.

This is the factual starting point of a deeper disease: the deliberate conversion of law into a weapon under the banner of social justice, public order, or national security. The disease does not belong exclusively to any single regime or ideology. It belongs to any power that discovers the law can be made to serve ends other than equal, predictable, and impersonal application. In Kenya the progressive Constitution of 2010, with its explicit commitment to social justice, dignity, and the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights, has become both shield and sword. The same instrument that was meant to constrain arbitrary power is now routinely invoked to legitimize its expansion.

Consider the historical lineage. Colonial authorities wrote vague witchcraft ordinances and sedition statutes precisely because ambiguity is power. An elderly widow on the coast can be branded a witch, murdered, and her land seized with minimal risk of



successful prosecution because the law itself validates the community's superstition. Post-independence regimes refined the technique: detention without trial, Public Order Acts, and later the language of national security. The 2010 Constitution was supposed to break that chain. Instead, new instruments Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act provisions, broad terrorism definitions, and the elastic concept of “public participation” have been pressed into the same service. A software developer who builds a tool to help citizens email objections to a Finance Bill is arrested for “unauthorized interference with a computer system.” A prison officer-turned-activist is charged with publishing false information. Film-makers linked to a critical documentary face similar treatment. The offences carry the weight of serious crime; the political message is unmistakable.

The irony is surgical. Social justice, properly understood, demands that the law remain blind to status, tribe, and political usefulness. When the law is weaponised in its name, the opposite occurs. Allies of power receive the soft glove of withdrawn charges and delayed prosecutions. Critics receive the iron fist of terrorism counts, high bail, and prolonged pre-trial detention. The scales of justice do not merely tip; they are deliberately loaded. One side is weighed

with the rhetoric of equity and transformation; the other is crushed by the reality of selective enforcement. The result is not justice redistributed but justice redistributed according to political convenience.

This is not abstract theory. It produces measurable corrosion. Public confidence in the justice system remains low; the World Justice Project ranks Kenya poorly on equal treatment and absence of corruption. When ordinary citizens watch high-profile graft cases evaporate while a twenty-year-old protester is held on terrorism charges for allegedly damaging property, they learn a practical lesson: the law is not a common standard but a resource available to those who control the levers of prosecution. The lesson is corrosive. It teaches that rights are contingent, that protest is safer when it serves the powerful, and that the Constitution's soaring language about human dignity can be recited while the same dignity is stripped from those who inconvenience the state.

Literary devices illuminate the pathology. The law becomes a dagger sheathed in the velvet of social justice rhetoric. The blindfolded Lady Justice is handed a second blade and told that the first was insufficiently progressive. The poison is poured into the well of legal neutrality and then declared pure because the pourer claims noble intent. History sup-

plies the mirror: every authoritarian experiment has claimed to advance some higher justice racial purity, class equality, religious orthodoxy, or developmental urgency. Kenya's version wraps itself in the language of the 2010 Constitution and the unfinished business of equity. The packaging changes; the mechanism does not.

Deep insight requires facing an uncomfortable correlation. The more expansively “social justice” is defined encompassing not only formal equality before the law but outcomes, historical redress, and the progressive realisation of every socio-economic right the greater the temptation to treat ordinary legal processes as obstacles rather than safeguards. Courts are urged to become engines of transformation. Prosecutors are urged to prioritise certain categories of offender. Legislators are urged to draft vague, aspirational statutes that invite administrative discretion. Each step appears compassionate in isolation. Collectively they produce a legal culture in which the ends justify the means and the means become increasingly arbitrary. The correlation is not accidental: expansive moral claims invite expansive legal power; expansive legal power invites selective application.

The actors who must reverse this trajectory are multiple and specific. The Judiciary must reclaim

the discipline of neutrality. Social Transformation through Access to Justice is a worthy administrative goal; it must never become a licence for outcome-driven jurisprudence that privileges favoured litigants or favoured narratives. Judicial officers who treat the Constitution as a political programme rather than a constraining charter erode the very institution they serve. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions must be restored to its constitutional independence.

Selective withdrawal of charges against the connected and zealous pursuit of the inconvenient is not prosecutorial discretion; it is prosecutorial capture. Parliament must prune vague, overbroad statutes particularly those governing cyber-crime, public order, and terrorism that invite abuse. Ambiguity is not progressive; it is the oxygen of lawfare. Civil society and the legal profession must abandon the selective outrage that condemns state excess only when the victims are ideologically convenient. Consistency is the price of credibility. Citizens must demand equal application of the law even when it disadvantages their preferred political camp. A right that exists only for one's allies is not a right; it is a privilege.

The weaponisation of law in the name of social justice does not expand justice; it privatizes it. It converts a public good into a private arsenal. Once that conversion is normalized, every subsequent claim of justice becomes suspect because the instrument itself has been compromised. Kenya's progressive Constitution was not written to be a political cudgel. It was written to bind the powerful and protect the powerless under the same rules. When those rules are bent for any higher purpose however eloquently framed the powerless eventually discover that the purpose was never theirs.

The remedy is not more passionate rhetoric about social justice. The remedy is the cold, unfashionable insistence that the law remain impersonal, predictable, and equally applied. Anything less turns the Constitution into a decorative document and the courtroom into a theatre of selective morality. Kenya has already paid too high a price in blood, trust, and institutional integrity to continue this experiment. The dagger must be returned to its sheath. The scales must be rebalanced. The blindfold must be restored not as a symbol of indifference, but as the only reliable guarantee that justice will not become another name for power.

The writer is a social commentator

School Yet the most successful schools rarely operate this way. They understand a powerful principle: a relational school will always outperform a transactional one.

A relational school will always outperform a transactional one

Why the schools that build genuine human connections consistently leave fee-chasing institutions behind

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyaintimes

One of the greatest mistakes many private schools make today is reducing education to a purely commercial activity. In some institutions, everything revolves around invoices, outstanding balances, admission targets and headcount. Parents are treated like customers. Learners are treated like statistics. Teachers are treated like grade-producing machines. In such an environment, education loses its soul. Yet the most successful schools rarely operate this way. They understand a powerful principle: a relational school will always outperform a transactional one. A transactional school focuses on exchange. Parents pay fees; the school delivers lessons. Once payment is delayed, the relationship turns cold and mechanical. Communication becomes hostile. Learners feel unwanted. Every interaction feels like a business transaction. A relational school operates differently. It understands that education is fundamentally human. It prioritises relationships before transactions. It sees parents as partners, not merely sources of revenue. It sees learners as individuals with emotions, fears, talents and dreams. It sees teachers as mentors, not just employees. That difference changes everything. Parents are naturally drawn to environments where they feel respected and emotionally connected. They may initially choose a school because of its facilities or academic record, but they stay because of relationships. When parents feel known, heard and appreciated, loyalty deepens. Many school administrators underestimate the emotional dimension of schooling. They

assume parents care only about grades. Academic performance matters greatly, of course, but parents also pay close attention to how their children are treated each day. They notice whether teachers are approachable. They observe whether school leaders communicate warmly or dismissively. They assess whether the institution genuinely cares about their child beyond the next fee deadline. A transactional school often reveals itself during difficult moments. When a parent falls behind on fees, the child is humiliated in front of peers. When a learner struggles academically, the school is quick to label them weak. When a parent raises concerns, the administration becomes defensive. Policies are enforced without empathy. Communication feels threatening rather than supportive. Such schools may survive for a time — particularly if their academic results hold up — but families begin leaving emotionally long before they leave physically. Relational schools handle difficult situations differently. They understand that every family experiences hardship at some point. They balance firmness with humanity. They communicate with respect even during disagreements, and they seek solutions rather than confrontations. This does not mean schools should abandon structure or ignore policy. It means that systems should be guided by wisdom and compassion. Parents are far more cooperative when they feel respected rather than cornered. Children, too, perform better in relational environments. Learners thrive where they feel emotionally safe and genuinely valued. A child who knows that teachers care develops confidence. They participate more actively, build discipline from within rather

than through fear, and come to associate school with belonging rather than pressure. In transactional schools, fear becomes the primary management tool. Learners comply because they fear punishment. Teachers perform because they fear the administration. Parents cooperate because they fear embarrassment. Such environments may appear orderly on the surface, but beneath that surface lies emotional distance and quiet resentment. Relational schools build community instead. They celebrate birthdays, achievements and milestones. Teachers know their learners personally. School leaders move freely among students. Parents feel welcome on the school grounds. Communication is open and respectful, and families develop a genuine emotional attachment to the institution. That emotional attachment becomes a significant competitive advantage. In today's education market, many schools offer similar facilities, similar curricula and similar promises. What truly sets schools apart is culture — and specifically, how a school makes families feel. A parent may forget the speech delivered at an academic clinic, but they will never forget how the school stood with them through a difficult family moment. They may forget examination statistics, but they will remember the teacher who patiently encouraged their struggling child. Relationships create memories that no marketing budget can manufacture. Teachers also stay longer in relational schools. Staff turnover is one of the most persistent challenges facing private institutions. Many teachers leave not simply over salary, but because of toxic environments. Transactional institutions drain staff

emotionally, focusing entirely on output while offering little personal or professional support. Relational leadership transforms workplace culture. Teachers feel valued. Their opinions are heard. Their welfare is considered. Collaboration improves, morale rises, and when teachers are emotionally healthy, learners benefit directly. Relational schools also enjoy stronger reputations within their communities. Parents naturally recommend schools where they feel genuinely connected. Word-of-mouth referrals grow because families trust the institution deeply.

Such schools build long-term stability because their growth rests on relationships rather than aggressive advertising. This principle matters most during economic hardship. Families are far more likely to remain loyal to schools that treated them with dignity in difficult times — schools that listened, supported and communicated honestly. Transactional schools, by contrast, often lose families quickly when challenges arise, because there was never any genuine emotional connection to fall back on. Ultimately, schools must decide what kind of institution

they want to be. It is entirely possible to run a school efficiently while remaining humane. It is possible to maintain rigorous standards while still nurturing warmth and empathy. These are not opposing values. Education is not merely the transfer of content. It is the shaping of human beings — a process that requires relationships, trust, patience and emotional intelligence. The schools that will thrive in the years ahead are not necessarily those with the grandest buildings or the loudest advertising campaigns. They will be the schools where learners feel genuinely cared for, teachers feel truly valued, and parents feel deeply respected. In education, relationships are not a soft extra. They are the foundation of lasting success.

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

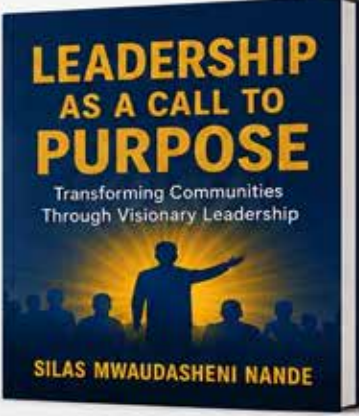
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Women's rights The Coalition brings together organisations with decades of experience in promoting women's participation in media, media development, gender advocacy and press freedom

Seven women's rights organisations in Africa launch coalition for gender equality and media sustainability

Seven women-led African media and gender-focused organisations

BY Elizabeth Angira

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have launched the Coalition for Gender Equality and Media Sustainability in Africa (CGEMSA), a continental alliance aimed at advancing gender equality, strengthening media sustainability and supporting organisations working to build more inclusive and resilient media ecosystems across Africa.

The Coalition brings together organisations with decades of experience in promoting women's participation in media, media development, gender advocacy and press freedom. Its formation comes at a time when organisations advancing gender equality, women's rights and independent media are facing growing sustainability challenges, including declining funding, shifting donor priorities and increasing pressures on civil society.

Recent data underscores the urgency of these challenges. The UN Women Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2026 reports that a survey of 855 women-led and women's rights organisations across 52 crisis-affected countries and contexts found significant impacts on organisational sustainability.

Advocacy and accountability efforts were among the first areas affected, with 31 per cent of organisations reporting reduced capacity to advocate and 21 per cent scaling back longer-term gender equality work. Nearly half of the organisations surveyed reported having six months or less of operational funding, while two in five considered suspension or closure likely within the following year.

The media sector is facing similar pressures. The Free Press Unlimited 2026 report highlights the impact of declining international support on independent media globally, noting that up to 80 per cent of surveyed independent media outlets had been forced to downsize following sudden reductions in international aid. Such pressures have affected the ability of media organisations to sustain public-interest journalism and serve their communities effectively.



Coalition for Gender Equality and Media Sustainability in Africa (CGEMSA)

Against this backdrop, CGEMSA has been established to provide a platform for collaborative resilience, resource mobilisation, knowledge exchange and collective action across Africa. The Coalition recognises that the challenges facing gender-focused organisations and independent media are interconnected and require stronger collaboration rather than isolated responses.

The founding members are African Women in Media (AWiM), Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWiK), Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA), SisterSpeak 237, Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), and Women in Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL).

African Women in Media (AWiM) will serve as the Coalition Secretariat, providing coordination and administrative support. The Coalition's strategic direction and priorities will, however, be collectively shaped by its founding member organisations, drawing on their diverse experiences and expertise from across the continent.

Together, the members will work to mobilise strategic partnerships and resources, promote regional collaboration and strengthen enabling environments for gender equality and sustainable media development.

"Organisations across Africa have long spearheaded gender equality and media development. As media

continues to drive transformative social change, new digital media is unlocking dynamic opportunities for cross-country partnerships across the continent. Yet, amid declining funding for civil society and media initiatives, many organisations face unprecedented challenges.

"This Coalition brings these efforts together, creating a powerful collective platform to mobilise resources, champion regional collaboration and empower our organisations to continue driving meaningful change beyond our borders."

Queenter Mbori, Executive Direc-

tor, Association of Media Women in Kenya, on behalf of the founding members

Dr. Yemisi Akinbobola, Chief Executive Officer of African Women in Media (AWiM), said the Coalition reflects a shared commitment to sustaining and strengthening the work already being undertaken by organisations advancing gender equality and media development across Africa.

"The Coalition represents a shared commitment to sustaining and strengthening the critical work that organisations across Africa are al-

ready doing to advance gender equality and media development. As the Secretariat, AWiM is honoured to support coordination and partnership-building among the founding members while ensuring that each organisation's expertise, priorities, and experience remain central to the Coalition's direction.

"Investing in this collective effort means investing in a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable future for African media."

Over the coming months, CGEMSA will focus on strengthening collaboration among its founding members, advancing shared advocacy priorities, facilitating knowledge exchange and building strategic partnerships that can help organisations expand their impact.

The Coalition will also engage development partners, donors and private-sector stakeholders to mobilise support and investment for gender equality and media sustainability initiatives across Africa.

About the Coalition for Gender Equality and Media Sustainability in Africa

The Coalition for Gender Equality and Media Sustainability in Africa (CGEMSA) is a pan-African alliance of women-led media organisations, gender advocates and industry allies working together to strengthen an inclusive, sustainable and equitable media ecosystem across Africa.

Through collective advocacy, knowledge exchange and strategic partnerships, the Coalition supports organisations advancing gender equality in and through the media while promoting stronger, more resilient and sustainable media institutions across the continent.



Anti-corruption These figures should, however, be understood correctly. They do not constitute the total “cost of corruption” to Kenya

Kenya’s anti-corruption war needs stronger pointmen at the grassroots



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

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“The strength of any huge force is in the strength of its front line men.”

Kenya has never lacked anti-corruption institutions, laws, strategies, commissions, committees or public declarations. What the country has struggled to build consistently is a seamless connection between these institutions and the ordinary citizen who encounters corruption not as an abstract national statistic, but as a missing road, an incomplete classroom, an unavailable medicine, a demanded bribe, an abandoned project or a public service deliberately withheld. This is where the country’s anti-corruption conversation must now turn.

The launch in March 2025 of the Anti-Corruption Strategic Guiding Framework for Kenya’s Justice Sector was an important recognition that corruption cannot be defeated through isolated institutional action. The framework contains five pillars and 76 programmes and seeks to coordinate actors across the justice sector. Chief Justice Martha Koome observed at the launch that previous siloed approaches had not produced the desired results. That observation should extend beyond national institutions to the grassroots architecture of accountability.

The available figures tell a story of both progress and unfinished work. During the four financial years from 2021/22 to 2024/25, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission reports recovery of approximately KSh11.13 billion in public assets. Over the same period, the Commission reports that proactive interventions averted approximately KSh28.14 billion in potential public losses. Together, these represent about KSh39.27 billion in reported recoveries and losses averted.

These figures should, however, be understood correctly. They do not constitute the total “cost of corruption” to Kenya. Recovered assets are



Kenya’s anti-corruption war

not the same as total money stolen, while losses averted are estimates of potential losses prevented through intervention. The true cost is wider: delayed development, distorted procurement, poor-quality infrastructure, lost investment, weakened institutions, diminished public trust and the humiliation experienced by citizens forced to pay for services



The available figures tell a story of both progress and unfinished work. During the four financial years from 2021/22 to 2024/25, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission reports recovery of approximately KSh11.13 billion in public assets. Over the same period, the Commission reports that proactive interventions averted approximately KSh28.14 billion in potential public losses. Together, these represent about KSh39.27 billion in reported recoveries and losses averted.

that should ordinarily be available to them.

The 2024 National Ethics and Corruption Survey brings that human reality into sharper focus. Conducted across all 47 counties among 5,960 adults, the survey found that 30.5 per cent of respondents had encountered bribery, while 52.1 per cent had witnessed the giving of bribes in public offices. Even more troubling, 97.2 per cent of bribery incidents went unreported, with fear of retaliation and lack of confidence in reporting mechanisms identified among the reasons.

This is perhaps the most important warning for Kenya’s anti-corruption establishment. A corruption system can only be as effective as its ability to hear what citizens know, protect those who speak and act on credible information. If almost all bribery incidents remain unreported, the problem cannot simply be that citizens do not care. It may also mean that citizens do not sufficiently trust the machinery available to them.

This is precisely why County Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Committees, or CACCOCs, deserve renewed attention. Established to take anti-corruption awareness, pub-

lic participation and oversight closer to communities, they occupy a unique position in Kenya’s integrity architecture. They are potentially the eyes and ears of the national system at ward and community level.

A national investigator may eventually discover that millions were irregularly spent on a public project. But the citizen living beside that project can know much earlier that the contractor never arrived, that the alleged beneficiaries do not exist, that the borehole produces no water, that the road exists only in a procurement document or that materials delivered to a public institution do not correspond with what was paid for.

The grassroots citizen sees corruption in its raw form.

That is why CACCOCs should not be treated merely as committees for public education meetings. Properly supported, trained and connected to national accountability institutions, they could become Kenya’s most important early-warning network against corruption. Their mandate could be strengthened through structured county corruption-risk registers, evidence-based reporting, project monitoring, public participation, referral mechanisms and mandatory

feedback from institutions receiving complaints.

The problem is not necessarily the absence of institutions. It is the absence of sufficient synergy between institutions.

A citizen who identifies an irregularity should not have to navigate a maze of government offices before finding somewhere meaningful to report it. There should be a clear pathway from citizen observation to CACCOC documentation, referral to the appropriate oversight or investigative agency, investigation, corrective action, recovery where necessary and feedback to the community.

The same principle applies to county governments. Devolved government has brought public resources closer to the people, but it has also brought accountability challenges closer to the community. Citizens therefore need equally strong mechanisms to monitor how those resources are planned, procured, spent and translated into services.

Kenya’s anti-corruption strategy must consequently evolve from an architecture that primarily reacts to major scandals into one that prevents corruption from maturing into a scandal in the first place. The strongest national institution cannot be everywhere at once. Its effectiveness depends partly on the quality of its pointmen and pointwomen on the ground.

The military understands the importance of the frontline. So does policing, disaster response and public health. Anti-corruption should be no different. The strength of any huge force is the strength of its pointmen. If Kenya’s national anti-corruption institutions are the strategic command, CACCOCs can become an organised frontline—provided they are properly trained, resourced, protected and genuinely integrated into the national system.

The next chapter of Kenya’s anti-corruption struggle should therefore not be another declaration that corruption is a national menace. Kenyans already know that. The question is whether the country will build an accountability system capable of hearing the citizen before public resources disappear.

Kenya has demonstrated that assets can be recovered and losses prevented. The next test is whether those gains can be matched by a powerful grassroots system that detects corruption earlier, documents it better and connects the citizen directly to institutions capable of acting.

If that bridge is built, the ordinary Kenyan will no longer be merely a witness to corruption. The citizen will become an essential participant in preventing it.

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Sports >> *A red card after 25 minutes made the task easier, but England still had to earn their 2–0 win over Czechia

Gordon and Kane fire England to victory in Prague

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

England bounced back from their opening Nations League defeat to Spain with a convincing 2–0 win over Czechia at the Fortuna Arena in Prague yesterday, with Anthony Gordon and captain Harry Kane on the score-sheet to give manager Thomas Tuchel his first Nations League victory in charge of the national side.

The result lifted the mood around the England camp after a disappointing start to the competition and sent a clear message that Tuchel's side were capable of responding under pressure.

Czechia had begun the match with genuine energy and purpose. Playing in front of their home supporters at a charged Fortuna Arena, they pressed England high up the pitch from the first whistle and looked sharp and well-organised in the opening exchanges. England were forced to be patient, working their way into the game gradually and slowly establishing control of possession without yet creating anything of real danger.

The hosts defended with discipline and intelligence, staying compact and denying England the spaces they needed to build momentum. For much of the first half, it was Czechia who looked the more settled side, and the contest appeared set for a closely fought evening.

That changed sharply in the 25th minute. A challenge involving Czechia midfielder Pav Sulc on Elliot Anderson was met with a straight red card, leaving the hosts with ten men for the remainder of the match. The decision was decisive. While England had been working hard to impose themselves before the dismissal, the numerical advantage now shifted the entire complexion of the game in their favour.

Yet even with ten men on the



England bounced back from their opening Nations League defeat to Spain with a convincing 2–0 win over Czechia

pitch, Czechia refused to buckle. Their defensive shape remained disciplined and organised, and England found it difficult to turn possession into clear-cut opportunities. The visitors pushed forward persistently in search of an opening, but the Czech backline held firm and forced England to be patient. Despite having a man advantage for more than an hour, Tuchel's side could not find the breakthrough before the interval. The two teams went into the dressing room level at 0–0, with England frustrated and the home supporters still daring to believe.

The second half brought a different England. Tuchel's team emerged with greater urgency and directness, and the breakthrough came quickly. Just two minutes after the restart, Trent Alexander-Arnold found space on the right flank and delivered a dangerous, whipped cross into the penalty area. Gordon was perfectly positioned to meet it, and he finished with confidence to put England ahead in the 47th

minute.

The goal brought immediate relief to the travelling England supporters and gave the visitors the foothold they had been seeking. Czechia tried to reorganise and remain compact, limiting the damage as best they could, but the momentum had shifted decisively. England were now in control, moving the ball with greater fluency and creating chances with increasing regularity.

The second goal arrived in the 69th minute and it came from the man England always look to in important moments. Kane found space around the edge of the penalty area, steadied himself and produced a powerful, well-placed finish that gave the Czech goalkeeper no chance. It was a captain's goal in every sense — calm, composed and clinical when the moment demanded it. The strike put England 2–0 ahead and ended Czechia's hopes of salvaging anything from the evening.

Kane's effort also reinforced his enduring value to the England setup. Questions have occasionally surfaced about his form and fitness at international level, but yesterday he provided the kind of authoritative contribution that reminds everyone why he remains indispensable to this team.

The final whistle confirmed a 2–0 victory for England. For Tuchel, it was an important and necessary response after the opening defeat to Spain, and his players delivered exactly the reaction he had demanded.

Attention now turns to the return fixture. England face Czechia again on Tuesday, 6 October, at Wembley Stadium, where they will have home support driving them forward. Czechia will arrive stung by yesterday's result and eager to restore some pride. On the evidence of Prague, the second meeting should be a sharper and more fiercely contested affair.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Barcelona’s captain heads home early as both club and country opt for caution over a minor muscle problem

Raphinha cuts Brazil duty short after muscle scare

By Pascal Okoth

Barcelona have been handed a fresh injury concern after Raphinha was withdrawn from Brazil’s international squad and returned to Spain following a muscle problem sustained during the match against Australia.

The winger experienced discomfort during the game, prompting Brazil’s medical staff to act cautiously. Although the injury is not considered serious — initial reports describe it as a small area of oedema with no indication of a significant tear — the national team decided against taking unnecessary risks with one of their most influential attacking players.

The decision to release Raphinha was reached in consultation with Barcelona, with both medical teams agreeing that returning him to his club was the safest course of action. He will now undergo further assessment at Barcelona, where the club’s medical staff will oversee his recovery and determine the full extent of the problem before making any decision on his availability for upcoming fixtures.

For Brazil, it means losing a key attacking option during the international window. The priority, however, is straightforward: protect the player and avoid the risk of aggravating an injury that could worsen with continued play.

At 29, Raphinha has grown into one of the most important figures at Barcelona. Since arriving from Leeds United, his pace, creativity, work rate and consistent contribution of goals and assists have made him central to the club’s attacking structure. His standing has grown further with the captaincy, a responsibility that has added another dimension to his role within the dressing room and the broader squad. That increased importance is



Raphinha

precisely why Barcelona will be particularly careful in managing his return. The club are entering another demanding stretch of fixtures and cannot afford to lose their captain for an extended period because of an injury that was not properly managed at the outset.

The early indications are encouraging. Describing the problem as a small oedema has offered genuine reassurance that Raphinha may avoid a lengthy absence, and the message from both camps remains relatively measured. Nevertheless, muscle injuries require careful handling, and Barcelona are expected to take a conservative approach un-

til the examinations are complete and a clearer picture emerges.

The coming days will be telling. If the medical assessment confirms the initial findings, Raphinha could return to training and competitive action relatively quickly. For now, his situation is being treated as a precautionary withdrawal rather than a serious setback — a distinction that will matter greatly to Barcelona supporters anxious about the weeks ahead.

Brazil, for their part, have handled the situation responsibly. Rather than keeping Raphinha with the squad and risking further damage, they chose to release him promptly and allow

him to receive proper treatment at club level. It is the kind of decision that reflects well on the relationship between the national team and Barcelona, and on the broader management of a player who matters enormously to both.

Supporters at the Camp Nou will now wait for the results of the club’s assessment, hoping the muscle scare proves to be no more than a brief interruption to what has been an impressive season for their captain.

With a packed schedule ahead, Barcelona need Raphinha fit. On the available evidence, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic.

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Your certificate has no power of its own: It borrows power from the brand you are killing



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Let me tell you the truth no one told you on graduation day. They did not tell you because the drums were too loud, the gowns were too new, and the joy was too great to spoil.

On that day, you did not receive a certificate. You received a share certificate.

What they placed in your hands was not paper. It was a living share in a company called your school. That paper has no power of its own. Its value rises and falls every single day after you leave, depending on whether the institution you left behind is still alive, still respected, still relevant, still breathing.

Your academic document works exactly like a currency note. A fifty-thousand-shilling note, on its own, is just paper and ink. Its value is borrowed from the credibility of the central bank that backs it. If that bank collapses tomorrow, the note in your hand becomes worthless, however crisp it looks. Your certificate works precisely the same way. When you present it to an employer in Kigali, an embassy in Canada, or a university in Germany, they are not looking at your name. They are asking two invisible questions: is this institution still credible, and is it traceable and verifiable?

If your school has become irrelevant, if its email bounces, if its website was last updated years ago, if it is perpetually mired in scandal, your certificate — however genuine, however hard-earned — becomes a suspicious note from a collapsed bank. The human resources manager says: we could not verify this institution. And you lose the opportunity. Not because you failed, but because you abandoned the examiner.

Just look at the world around you.

There is a reason you find KISOBA members in almost every corner of the globe. You land at Heathrow, you find them. You walk into a bank

in Nairobi, you find them. In every serious office, every ministry, every NGO, every hospital, you still find NIHOGA, still find MOGA, still find SMACK, still find NSOBA, still find SPOBA. They are chairing boards, signing cheques, hiring and firing. Is it because they were made differently? No. It is because they understood one secret we have refused to grasp. They kept their schools and their brands relevant, and so their documents stayed relevant.

We, on the other hand, graduated and thought graduation was divorce. So we put the certificate in an envelope, the envelope in a file, the file in a cupboard — and then went to bars and insulted the very school that printed our future. We never returned. When a younger cousin asked where to study, we said, do not go there. My brother, my sister, you think you are punishing the school. You are not. You are punishing yourself. You are burning your own bank.

Consider why verification matters more than ever. Today, no one is hired without it. Companies use Zverify, TrueProfile and First Advantage. They send a verification email to the registrar. If your school is active and responsive, that email is answered within twenty-four hours and you get the job. If your school is irrelevant, that email sleeps for months and you lose the position to someone whose school replied faster — even if they had lower grades than you.

I have seen this with my own eyes. I have seen brilliant graduates denied opportunities at embassies because their former college no longer has a functioning registry. I have seen a woman with a first-class degree lose a three-thousand-dollar UN position because her former college had closed, changed names, and no one could answer a verification email. She was punished not for failing, but for belonging to a dead brand. She thought keeping her school alive was not her business, until her school's death killed her own dream.

Accreditation, too, is not a one-time event. Many of us think it happened once when we enrolled. Accreditation bodies review institutions every single year. If quality drops — poor staff, no research, crumbling infrastructure — the institution is down-



Seminary

graded and its previous awards are questioned. When you speak well of your school, refer students to it, return to give a guest lecture or mentor a student, you are not doing charity. You are maintaining the accreditation value of your own degree. Harvard alumni are not merely loyal. They are strategic. They know that the more Harvard shines tomorrow, the more their degree from decades ago shines tomorrow. SMACKISTS know this. That is why they defend their schools like a mother defends her child.

Then there is the hidden transcript. Your first transcript shows your grades. Your second, hidden transcript is your alumni network. Who gave you your first job? Often, a senior from your school. Who recommended you for a scholarship? Often, a former lecturer who still remembered you. If your school is relevant, that network is warm and active — a functional alumni association, a SACCO worth billions, a mentorship platform, opportunities circulating daily. If your school is dead, the network is scattered. You become an academic orphan.

The great schools turned their institution into an identity, not just a

building. You are not someone who passed through SMACK. You are a SMACKIST for life. Even at seventy, a man who graduated decades ago still introduces himself that way and doors open — not because of what he earned then, but because what he left behind continues to grow in relevance. They have built chapels, won championships, produced presidents. His share has appreciated. We, on the other hand, hide our school. And when you hide your mother, your mother cannot defend you when you are in trouble.

They also return physically. On any given Saturday, you find old boys of SMACK at SMACK, old girls of Namagunga at Namagunga — mentoring, building, giving career talks. When was the last time you returned not to collect a transcript, but simply to give? They refer their own. A SMACKIST whose child is born today already knows where that child will go to school. Their enrolment never drops because their marketing is blood, family and lineage. We tell our relatives to go elsewhere. So who will keep it good if not you?

And they live in a way that advertises the school. The most powerful advertisement is not a billboard. It is

you. When a SMACKIST delivers a boardroom presentation with excellence, people ask where he was groomed. If you are excellent, your school becomes excellent. You are the school after the school. If you are mediocre, your school wears that too.

So here is my final plea. Stop acting as though you and your school divorced. You did not. You are married for life. That certificate in your cupboard is breathing. It inhales when your school inhales. It dies when your school dies.

From today, make a covenant. Speak well of your school. Defend it when it is attacked. Return to it. Update your details with the alumni office. Refer a young person to it. Live in such a way that when people see you, they respect where you came from.

Dead schools produce dead documents. Living schools produce living documents. And whether a school lives or dies is not decided by the Vice Chancellor or any accreditation body. It is decided by you — the alumnus who thinks he is done.

You are not done. You have just begun.