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Justice, yes. But justice of a particular and limited kind. The sentence delivered Friday in Mombasa punishes one man — the principal architect

Cult leader

Justice, yes. But justice of a particular and limited kind:



200 years for cult leader Paul Mackenzie:

Does this bring religious sanity?

By: **John Kamau**

There was no outburst in the courtroom. No tears. No visible remorse. Paul Nthenge Mackenzie, former taxi driver turned self-styled pastor, stood in a grey polo shirt and black trousers inside a tent erected outside the Mombasa High Court and listened, expressionless, as Justice Diana Kavedza sentenced him to 200 years in prison for the murder of 191 people — 190 of them children. It was, by any measure, one of the most consequential criminal sentences in Kenyan judicial history. Outside, the families of the dead wept. Some had travelled for days. Stephen Mwiti, 48, a father who lost six of his children to the Shakahola forest and whose wife is among the convicted accomplices, spoke quietly to journalists. "I lost friends too," he said, "and my younger brother. It's justice to the people we lost over there in Shakahola."



Paul Nthenge Mackenzie

Justice, yes. But justice of a particular and limited kind. The sentence delivered Friday in Mombasa punishes one man — the principal architect, the manipulator-in-chief, the voice that told parents their children would meet Jesus if they stopped eating. In her sentencing determination, Justice Kavedza described Mackenzie as the principal architect of the criminal enterprise, noting that he had led Good News International Ministries and presided over meetings where he directed followers to fast to death. The

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Coca-Cola invests US$1.22m to rescue Namibia's most critical water basin

The Swakop River Basin

Coca-Cola



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From the Margins to the Centre

Governor Kadiva Hamutumwa, her first sixteen months in office, and an agenda for a lasting Ohangwena legacy

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A special place in my heart for the young mothers sitting for KCSE

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Virat Kohli: The chase master who taught cricket the art of conquest

"The Diaspora Times Global"

Exporting Teachers, Importing Standards: *Is Namibia ready to strengthen classrooms in The Bahamas, and what does the request reveal about the regulation of teaching at home?*

1. A request that deserves a careful answer

On the margins of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Antigua and Barbuda this week, The Bahamas asked Namibia for help. Prime Minister Philip Davis sought qualified Namibian teachers for Bahamian classrooms. According to New Era, the request targets mathematics, science and technical vocational subjects (Hembapu, 2026).

Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare responded with measured willingness. He undertook to evaluate the request through the relevant state institutions. He also promised to balance Bahamian needs against Namibian staffing requirements, professional standards and the availability of specialised educators (Hembapu, 2026). The two leaders further agreed to review a proposed memorandum of understanding on political and diplomatic consultations.

The request flatters Namibia. It also

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KCB Bank Tanzania integrates PayPal into mobile app in East African digital banking first

The partnership gives Tanzanian freelancers, entrepreneurs and businesses a direct link to global payments through a platform they already use

By: **Grace Wanja**
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KCB Bank Tanzania has become the first bank in the country to integrate PayPal services directly into its mobile banking application

KCB Bank Tanzania has become the first bank in the country to integrate PayPal services directly into its mobile banking application, in a move that connects Tanzanian customers to international payments without requiring them to leave their existing banking platform. The partnership, announced yesterday in Dar es Salaam, marks a significant step in the expansion of cross-border digital financial services across East Africa and positions KCB at the front of a rapidly shifting banking landscape.

The integration allows KCB customers to create or link a PayPal account directly through the KCB Mobile App, receive international payments from clients and customers around the world, make eligible global payments wherever PayPal is accepted, and withdraw their PayPal balances into their KCB accounts in Tanzanian shillings through a process the bank describes as simple and secure. For the growing number of Tanzanians earning income across borders — freelancers, content creators, tourism operators, small business owners and entrepreneurs selling into international markets — the development removes a layer of friction that has long complicated access to global digital commerce.

The timing is deliberate. Tanzania's economy is producing an increasingly outward-looking generation of workers and business people who collaborate with international clients, serve global customers and access digital services that require reliable cross-border payment infrastructure. Until now, navigating that infrastructure typically meant operating across multiple platforms, each with its own login, its own fees and its own verification requirements. KCB's integration collapses much of that complexity into a single, trusted application.

Josina Njambi, Head of Digital Financial Services at KCB Bank Tanzania, said the partnership represented a meaningful shift in what customers could expect from their bank. "Today, customers are no longer limited by geography," Njambi said at the launch. "They can work with clients in other countries, run businesses online, sell to international markets and access services from across the world. Our role as a bank is to make those financial connections simpler, safer and more accessible."

Njambi was direct about the ambition behind the move. "With PayPal now integrated into the KCB Mobile App, we are making that smarter way more accessible," she said, framing the partnership not as a technical upgrade but as a reflection of the bank's broader commitment to meeting customers where their economic lives are actually taking them.

The PayPal integration sits alongside KCB Bank Tanzania's recently launched "Ina-Make Cents" campaign, a consumer-facing initiative that uses humour and relatable everyday scenarios to prompt Tanzanians to examine their financial habits and consider more effective approaches to managing money. Where the campaign raises questions about behaviour, the PayPal integration offers a practical answer — a tangible demonstration of what more considered digital banking can look like in action. The two initiatives, though distinct in character, carry a consistent message: that smarter banking is not an abstract ideal but something immediately available to customers through the tools already in their hands.

For KCB, the partnership is not simply about adding another payment option to an existing menu. The bank has been explicit that the opportunity lies in making global financial connections accessible through a platform customers already know and trust, rather than asking them to adopt yet another application or navigate yet another onboarding process. The practical mechanics of the integration reflect that logic. As part of the onboarding journey, customers can access PayPal and other digital banking services directly within the KCB Mobile App, alongside the broader benefits available to newly registered customers.

The move will be watched closely across the region. East Africa's digital banking sector has grown rapidly in recent years, driven by mobile penetration, a young and technology-literate population, and a regulatory environment that has generally been receptive to financial innovation. The integration of a globally recognised payment platform into a local banking application raises the competitive bar and signals that Tanzanian banks are prepared to pursue partnerships that extend their customers' reach well beyond national borders.

For small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, the implications are significant. Access to PayPal has long been a practical prerequisite for doing business with clients in Europe, North America and other markets where the platform is dominant. Having that access embedded within their primary banking relationship, rather than requiring separate account management and manual transfers, simplifies both the administrative burden and the financial risk associated with international transactions.

KCB Bank Tanzania has framed the partnership within its broader purpose — described by the bank as being "for people, for better" — and characterised its ongoing investment in digital innovation as central to that mission. The commitment to delivering secure, convenient and customer-focused banking experiences has been a consistent theme in the bank's public communications, and the PayPal partnership gives that commitment a concrete and measurable expression.

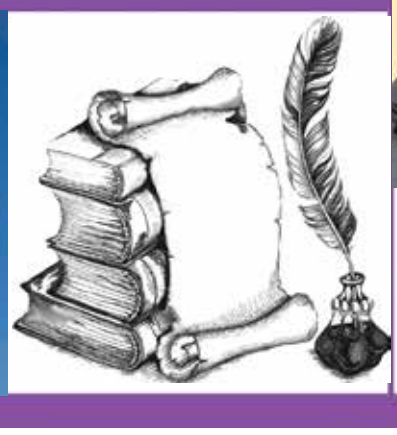
For the Tanzanian freelancer working with a client in London, the content creator receiving payment from a platform headquartered in California, or the tourism operator invoicing guests who booked from abroad, yesterday's announcement changes something practical and immediate about how they move their money. In a country where the intersection of local ambition and global opportunity is becoming ever more visible, that is a development worth noting.

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University

Why university students are dying: The crisis no one wants to talk about

Drug abuse, reckless gambling, dangerous relationships and unchecked peer pressure are quietly claiming young lives on Kenya's university campuses

By: **Daniel Mwangi**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- **Those promises, for far too many, do not survive the first few weeks of campus life.**
- **The annual freshers' night — a fixture at most Kenyan universities — is where the unravelling often begins. Intended as a social welcome, it frequently doubles as an introduction to alcohol, cannabis, miraa, tobacco and other substances. The social pressure to participate is intense. For a young person desperate to belong, refusing can feel like social exclusion. And so the experimentation starts, the wrong friendships form, and what begins as curiosity edges gradually towards dependency.**

Kenya's universities are losing their students at an alarming rate, and the conversation about why is long overdue. Every year, young men and women arrive on campus carrying their families' hopes, their own ambitions and the hard-earned grades that earned them a place in higher education. Many leave in a coffin. The question that demands an honest answer is: what is happening to our university students, and why are so many of them dying?

The journey typically begins with promise. Students arrive as freshers — some fresh from secondary school with grades of C+ and above, others advancing from diploma programmes, and others pursuing technical and vocational training. Laikipia University, like many institutions across the country, accommodates all three pathways. What they share on arrival is a common goal: to graduate with first class honours or, at the very least, a strong second class upper. They make quiet promises to themselves and to the families who sacrificed to get them there.

Those promises, for far too many, do not survive the first few weeks of campus life.

The annual freshers' night — a fixture at most Kenyan universities — is where the unravelling often begins. Intended as a social welcome, it frequently doubles as an introduction to alcohol, cannabis, miraa, tobacco and other substances. The social pressure to participate is intense. For a young person desperate to belong, refusing can feel like social exclusion. And so the experimentation starts, the wrong friendships form, and what begins as curiosity edges gradually towards dependency.

Addiction carries a predictable financial logic. As students drain their Higher Education Loans Board disbursements and exhaust parental support — and sometimes dip into their own fee funds — the desperation for money grows. It is at this point that the paths diverge dangerously by gender, though neither direction leads anywhere safe.

Some female students begin frequenting clubs with the deliberate intention of meeting older, wealthier men — commonly referred to on campus as mababaz — who fund their lifestyle in exchange for companionship. The arrangement is transactional and, for some, it becomes a game of deception. When those men realise they have been misled, the consequences can be violent. Women have been poisoned. Women have been killed. These are not rumours circulating at the campus gate; they are tragedies that have already claimed real lives.

Male students facing the same financial pressure tend to find destruction through a different door. Online gambling platforms, particularly betting games such as Aviator, become an obsession that swallows whatever money remains. When the funds run out entirely, some turn to crime — phone snatching, livestock theft from surrounding communities, street-level robbery. The communities do not wait for the courts. Mob justice is swift, and young men have been beaten to death on the spot for offences that a functioning criminal justice system might have handled very differently.

Then there is the road. Drug-impaired students, many without valid driving licences, race motorcycles and cars on busy highways. The accidents that follow are not accidents in any meaningful sense — they are predictable, preventable deaths that happen because intoxicated young people behind the wheel of a vehicle on a public road have no realistic chance of arriving safely. Some die immediately. Others do not survive the journey to hospital.

Toxic relationships account for another layer of tragedy. Infidelity, jealousy and emotional manipulation create a volatile environment in which sexually transmitted infections spread unchecked, unwanted pregnancies occur, and unsafe abortions — carried out in secrecy and without medical supervision — claim the lives of young women who had no one to turn to. For others, an HIV diagnosis received without adequate psychological support and counselling becomes the trigger for suicide. These deaths are recorded quietly, mourned privately and rarely examined publicly for what they reveal about campus culture and the absence of proper student welfare systems.

The pattern is clear. What is killing university students in Kenya is not a single cause but an interlocking chain of peer pressure, substance abuse, financial desperation, gender-based violence, reckless behaviour and institutional neglect. Universities, families and policymakers must look this crisis in the face and respond with urgency, resources and honesty. The funerals have gone on long enough.

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KEPSA

Ruto orders KEPSA roundtable anchored in law as private sector secures landmark policy wins

From electric vehicle duty exemptions to EU data adequacy and KSh15B in health debt clearance, Kenya's sixth presidential business roundtable delivers a sweeping package of directives — and a guarantee that the platform will outlast any single administration

By: **Grace Wanja**
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President William Ruto last week directed that the Kenya Private Sector Alliance's Presidential Roundtable be anchored in legislation, a move that will institutionalise structured dialogue between the private sector and the presidency and ensure its continuity across successive administrations — a commitment that marks the most significant structural shift in Kenya's public-private engagement framework in years.

The directive came during the sixth KEPSA Presidential Roundtable, held on Wednesday 4 November at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi. More than 150 participants attended, including a government delegation comprising Cabinet Secretaries and Principal Secretaries, KEPSA member organisations, the Diplomatic Corps and development partners. The event was convened in collaboration with the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry and the Kenya Investment Authority.

Held under the theme "From Gatekeeping to Open Policy," the roundtable addressed six thematic areas: energy, finance and banking, trade facilitation and market access, information and communications technology, social enterprise covering health and education, and the regulatory framework. The breadth of the agenda reflected the ambition of the platform itself — a forum that has, over successive administrations, evolved from periodic consultation into the principal mechanism through which Kenya's business community engages directly with executive government on economic policy.

KEPSA Chief Executive Officer Carole Kariuki described the roundtable as "a critical platform for identifying what has been done in the economy, where we want to go as a country and the business bottlenecks that need to be resolved together." That framing — honest about what remains unresolved — set the tone for a session that produced a substantial list of presidential directives alongside genuine acknowledgement that implementation has historically been the harder half of the equation.

KEPSA Board Chair Jas Bedi opened with a measured assessment of Kenya's economic trajectory, acknowledging improvements while insisting that macroeconomic indicators alone are insufficient. He cited the reduction of the Central Bank Rate from 13 per cent to 8.75 per cent, foreign exchange reserves equivalent to six months of import cover and projected economic growth of 5.6 per cent as evidence of restored stability. But he was direct about what the numbers must translate into. "The true measure of investment is not found in policy papers, but in factories established and jobs created within the economy," Bedi said. "Investments must create active businesses that earn foreign exchange and provide sustainable employment for our youth." The applause that followed suggested the room had heard variations of that challenge before and was watching carefully for the response.

On energy — a sector whose dysfunction has long constrained Kenya's industrial ambitions — the presidential directives were specific and time-bound. Ruto directed the full operationalisation of the Kenya National Energy Compact Action Plan before the end of 2026, targeting 100 per cent clean electricity generation and universal electricity access. He directed that all outstanding and stalled Power Purchase Agreements held by Kenya Power be concluded within two weeks. He committed the government to mobilising public investment, including through the National Infrastructure Fund, to develop an additional 10,000 megawatts of generation capacity. A framework granting duty exemption on the first 100,000 electric vehicles will be developed within one month. Net metering, bulk supply and open access regulations are to be operationalised by December 2026, with the competitive procurement framework to follow on the same timeline.

Trade facilitation produced equally concrete outcomes. Ruto invited private investors to take up opportunities in Berths 11, 12, 13, 14, 23 and 24 at the Port of Mombasa, signalling a deliberate push for greater private sector participation in port infrastructure. He committed to finalising ongoing trade discussions with India and the United States, including negotiations on a Preferential Trade Agreement focused on market access for key Kenyan exports. On the contentious question of VAT refunds and pending bills, the President urged the private sector to work with government to identify and eliminate fraudulent claims, ensuring that legitimate businesses receive what they are owed — a nod to a process that has frustrated credible operators for years.

The ICT agenda carried what may prove to be the most globally significant announcement of the day. Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and the Digital Economy William Kabogo confirmed that the technical evaluation of Kenya's EU data adequacy process has been completed, with approval expected by 16 November 2026. If confirmed, Kenya would become the first African country to secure EU data adequacy status — an arrangement that would allow the transfer of EU personal data to Kenya without additional transfer mechanisms, dramatically enhancing the country's attractiveness for investment in Business Process Outsourcing, cloud computing, data centres, fintech and artificial intelligence. For a country that has invested heavily in positioning Nairobi as a continental technology hub, the timing could not be more consequential. Ruto also directed the removal of the 25 per cent import duty on mobile phones before December and the elimination of import tariffs on tech devices for young people working in the gig and creative economy.

Health and education generated a set of directives that will be felt most immediately by ordinary Kenyans. The government confirmed that KSh4 billion has already been released to settle National Hospital Insurance Fund legacy debts for providers with claims under KSh10 million, helping smaller health facilities remain solvent. Ruto committed a further KSh15 billion to clear debts owed to providers with claims exceeding KSh10 million, subject to the completion of an ongoing verification exercise. The SHA Plus health insurance package, targeting middle-income earners and developed in partnership with private insurance providers, will launch on 9 November. Travellers entering Kenya with valid travel insurance will be exempted from the newly introduced mandatory US$44 inbound travel insurance fee — a directive that addresses an immediate deterrent to inbound tourism. Pharmacy and Poisons Board regulatory reforms, designed to promote exports of locally manufactured pharmaceutical products, are to be concluded by December.

The Council of Governors Chairperson, Governor Muthomi Njuki, added a devolution dimension to the trade facilitation discussion, committing county governments to harmonise and standardise fees, levies and charges through implementation of the County Licensing (Uniform Procedures) Act. "County governments will work together to create a more predictable and business-friendly environment by eliminating duplication of roles and inconsistencies in the charges imposed on businesses across counties," Njuki said — a commitment that, if implemented uniformly, would address one of the most persistent complaints from businesses operating across multiple counties.

Ruto closed with a candid acknowledgement that promises require proof. "While meaningful progress has been made in addressing some of the concerns raised, we acknowledge that more remains to be done," he said. "We will therefore sustain our engagement and intensify efforts to resolve outstanding bottlenecks and create a predictable, transparent and enabling environment in which business thrives." A follow-up meeting between the President and KEPSA is scheduled before the end of 2026 to review progress against the directives issued last week.

The legal anchoring of the roundtable means that follow-up meeting — and all those that come after it — will no longer depend on the goodwill of the administration in power. For Kenya's private sector, that guarantee may ultimately prove more durable than any single directive issued from the podium at KICC.

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Motivation

A special place in my heart for the young mothers sitting the 2026 KCSE

As thousands of candidates open their exam papers, some carry a burden most will never know — and they deserve our respect, not our judgment

By: **Ashford Kimani**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- **Kenyan society can be remarkably unforgiving towards young mothers. The fingers are pointed quickly, the whispers travel fast, and the moral judgments come easily. Words such as careless, irresponsible and undisciplined are deployed without hesitation. Some people look at a pregnant schoolgirl and immediately conclude that she has ruined her future. Others behave as though she has committed an unforgivable offence against the community. What is too often forgotten is that behind every pregnant schoolgirl is a complicated story — and very often, a man whose contribution to that pregnancy attracts remarkably little public attention.**
- **Where is that man? Where is the boyfriend who impregnated the girl? Where is the adult who took advantage of a school-going child? Where is the person who participated in creating the very circumstances for which the girl is now being publicly punished? Why does society condemn the pregnant girl far more loudly than it demands accountability from the man responsible?**

Tonigt, my heart goes out to a very special group of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education candidates: the young mothers. The girls who will walk into examination rooms carrying burdens that many of their fellow candidates may never fully understand. Some are expectant, struggling with the physical demands of pregnancy while trying to concentrate on demanding questions. Others have already given birth and will sit their papers knowing that somewhere outside the school compound, a baby is waiting for them — and wondering whether the child has been fed, whether they are sleeping peacefully, whether they are crying, or whether the grandmother looking after them is coping.

For these girls, the KCSE is not simply an examination. It is an extraordinary test of academic ability, emotional strength and personal resilience, all at once.

Let me be clear about one thing. This is not an attempt to celebrate or encourage teenage pregnancy. It is a serious social problem, and everything possible must continue to be done to protect girls from circumstances that interrupt their education and expose them to enormous responsibilities at such tender ages. But condemning teenage pregnancy should never translate into condemning the young women who live with its consequences. Society can discourage early pregnancy without humiliating the girls who find themselves in that situation. It can uphold moral standards without abandoning compassion. Above all, it can acknowledge difficult circumstances without pretending those circumstances do not exist.

Kenyan society can be remarkably unforgiving towards young mothers. The fingers are pointed quickly, the whispers travel fast, and the moral judgments come easily. Words such as careless, irresponsible and undisciplined are deployed without hesitation. Some people look at a pregnant schoolgirl and immediately conclude that she has ruined her future. Others behave as though she has committed an unforgivable offence against the community. What is too often forgotten is that behind every pregnant schoolgirl is a complicated story — and very often, a man whose contribution to that pregnancy attracts remarkably little public attention.

Where is that man? Where is the boyfriend who impregnated the girl? Where is the adult who took advantage of a school-going child? Where is the person who participated in creating the very circumstances for which the girl is now being publicly punished? Why does society condemn the pregnant girl far more loudly than it demands accountability from the man responsible? Why does the girl carry the shame, the pregnancy, the disruption to her education and the social stigma, while the man walks around freely — sometimes, grotesquely, boasting about it?

This double standard must be confronted. A society that consistently shames pregnant schoolgirls while conveniently overlooking the men responsible has misplaced its moral priorities. If the protection of children is taken seriously, outrage must be directed towards exploitation, irresponsibility and the culture of impunity that allows men to escape accountability with ease and without consequence.

But tonight, I want to move beyond the circumstances that brought these girls into motherhood. I want to acknowledge their determination to continue with their education. Consider what it means to sit a three-hour examination while carrying an unborn child — battling morning sickness, exhaustion, backaches and the persistent discomforts of pregnancy, yet remaining composed enough to interpret a Chemistry question or work through a Mathematics problem. Consider being in an examination room with the mind divided between the paper in front of you and the small life depending entirely on you.

For those who have already delivered, the challenge is perhaps even more emotionally demanding. A breastfeeding mother spending hours away from her baby faces interrupted sleep, physical exhaustion and the anxiety of separation. While other candidates spend their evenings revising, she may be changing nappies, preparing formula or soothing a crying infant through the night. When others rise early to review their notes, she may have been awake for hours already, attending to a restless child.

Yet these young women have shown up. They have reported to examination centres. They have picked up their pens. They are sitting the same papers as everyone else, and they are refusing to surrender their educational futures simply because life has taken an unexpected turn. That, in itself, is worth something.

When some of these young mothers post impressive results, those grades will deserve recognition of a particular kind. Behind each mark may lie sleepless nights, tears, difficult decisions, physical discomfort and a fierce determination not to let motherhood become the end of their education. Their results should remind everyone that a difficult beginning does not determine the entire course of a life.

A special tribute is also owed to the grandmothers — the women who have temporarily taken responsibility for their grandchildren so that their daughters can concentrate on their examinations. These are the unsung figures of this examination season. While their daughters sit in examination rooms, they are at home nursing babies, preparing meals, changing nappies and providing the quiet reassurance that every young mother needs to get through the day.

Some of these grandmothers may have been devastated when they discovered their school-going daughters were pregnant. Yet when the examination season arrived, they set their emotions aside and stepped in, because they understood that whatever had happened, their daughters still deserved a future. That is motherhood. That is sacrifice expressed through action rather than words.

To the young mothers sitting KCSE this year: do not allow society's judgment to define you. Your pregnancy is not your academic identity. Your motherhood is not the end of your ambitions. You may have made mistakes, or you may have been caught by circumstances entirely beyond your control — but neither should rob you of the chance to rebuild your future. Write those papers with courage. Give every question your best. Your child deserves a mother who has not given up on herself.

And to the grandmothers holding the babies while their daughters write: thank you. You are doing far more than babysitting. You are helping preserve a young woman's future.

As Kenya celebrates the thousands of candidates sitting the 2026 KCSE, let us spare a particular thought for these young mothers. Let us judge less, encourage more and remember that compassion does not require the abandonment of principle. Sometimes, the people who most need encouragement are precisely those whose circumstances make it easiest for society to condemn them. Their stories are not over.

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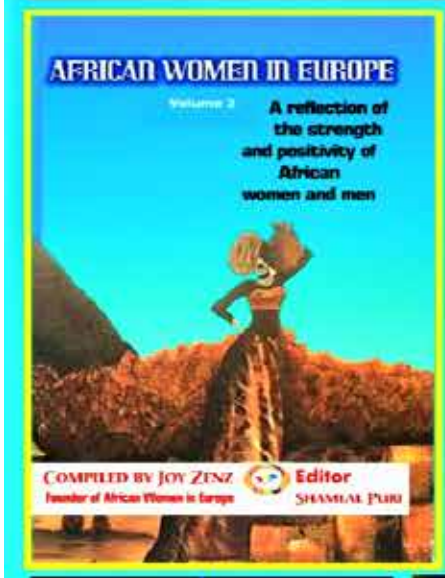
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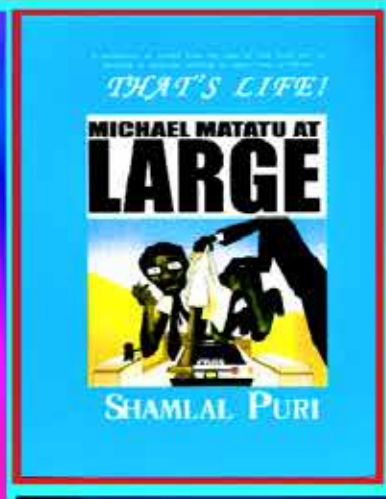
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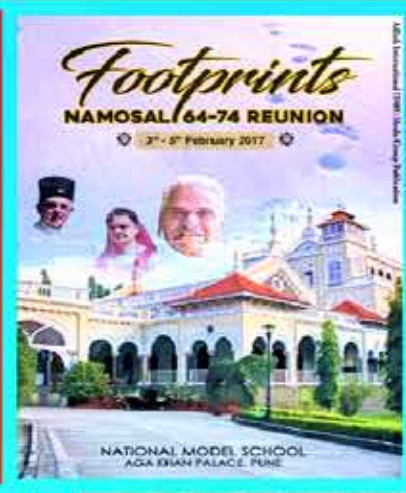
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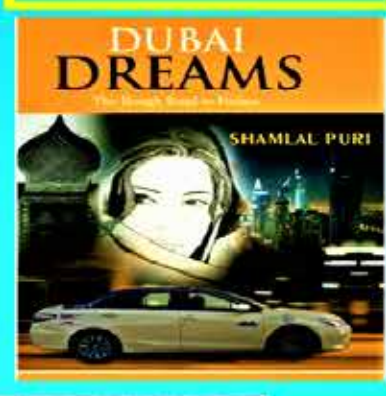




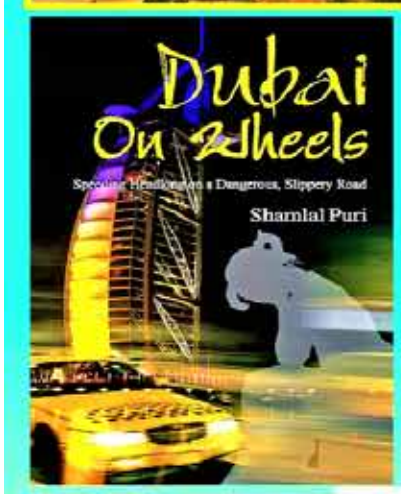


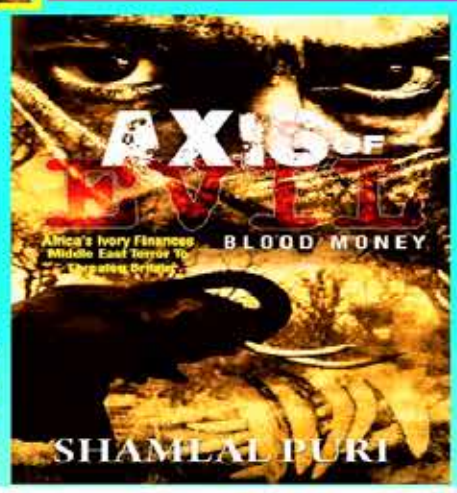


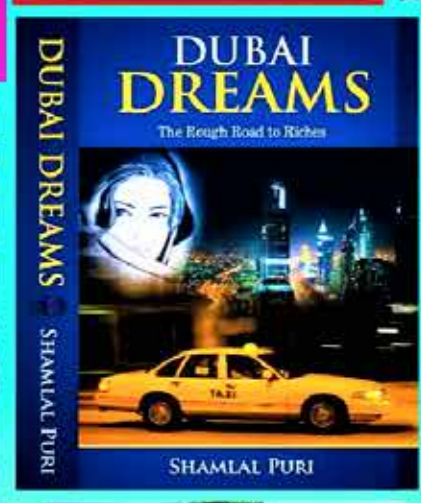
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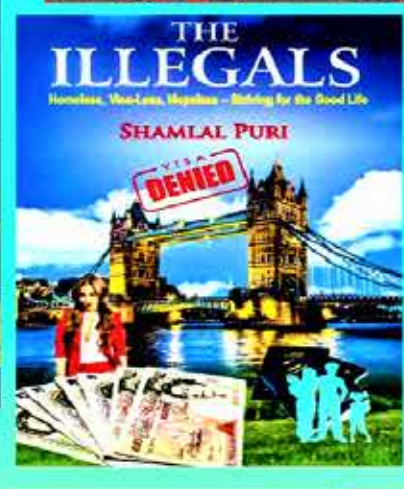


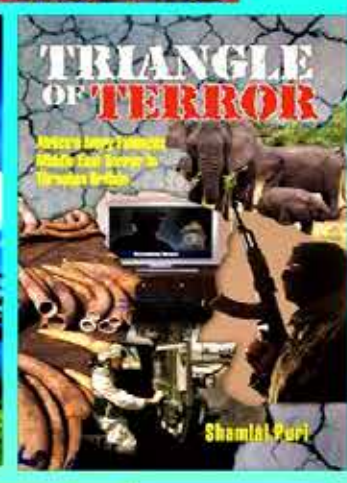
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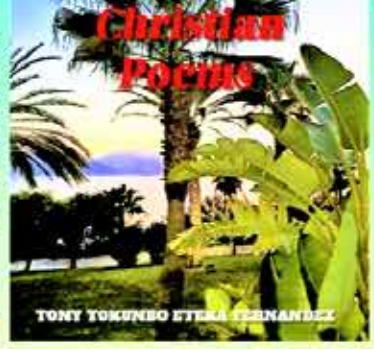












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African News

200 years for cult leader Paul Mackenzie: Does this bring religious sanity?:

The Shakahola massacre sentence closes one chapter, but the institutional failures that allowed 448 people to die in a forest demand answers that a prison term alone cannot provide

By: **John Kamau**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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Paul Nthenge Mackenzie

Worth Noting:

- **That gap — between the acknowledgment of failure and the accountability for it — is a gap that the Mombasa sentence does not close. It cannot. Courts sentence the convicted. They do not discipline the negligent officials who enabled the conditions in which conviction became necessary.**
- **The legislative response has been equally frustrating. The Religious Organisations Bill, introduced following the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Shakahola Massacre, was formally withdrawn by its sponsor, Tana River Senator Danson Mungatana, after widespread clerical opposition. The Pentecostal Voices of Kenya, the Federation of Evangelical and Indigenous Christian Churches of Kenya, Muslim leaders and the Inter-Religious Churches of Kenya all lined up against the bill, warning that it threatened constitutional freedoms and created vague offences capable of being used to harass religious leaders. The government then began work on a new draft Religious Organisations Policy drawing on the presidential task force recommendations, though that too attracted immediate and organised resistance.**

two sets of sentences — 100 years for murder by starvation across 183 counts, and 100 years for eight direct homicides — will run consecutively, ensuring a combined term of two centuries. The prosecution had urged the court to impose the death penalty, arguing the scale and circumstances of the killings warranted the ultimate punishment. The court declined. It chose instead a sentence that, in the words of Justice Kavedza herself, ensures that "prolonged imprisonment would provide sustained accountability while preserving the possibility that the convicts could disclose the whereabouts of children whose remains have not yet been recovered."

That last clause — children whose remains have not yet been recovered — is worth sitting with for a moment. It is a reminder that even now, three years after the first bodies were found in those shallow graves and latrines near Malindi, the full extent of what happened in Shakahola forest is not fully known. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has reported 448 bodies recovered. Mackenzie faces a separate case involving a further 52 deaths connected to another location. Further excavations in the forest have pushed the overall death toll beyond 400, and investigators have continued to find evidence of prolonged, systematic suffering carried out over an extended period. The numbers, already staggering, may yet rise. Some of the dead may never be identified. Some of their families may never have closure.

This is what Mackenzie wrought. And this is what the systems of government, policing, intelligence and child protection failed to stop, despite having been given every opportunity to do so.

The youngest victim was a baby who had lived for only 12 days. Twelve days. The child had not yet seen a sunrise beyond the first fortnight of its existence when it was permitted — by adults, by parents, by the absence of any intervening authority — to die. Justice Kavedza, in her sentencing, specifically highlighted the vulnerability of child victims who depended entirely on adults for food, water and protection as a significant aggravating factor, and noted that the Constitution and the Children Act impose a duty on parents to feed, protect and preserve the lives of their children. She further established that the fasting was not a voluntary religious undertaking but was enforced through an organised system of indoctrination, intimidation and violence. Mackenzie's accomplices threatened and beat victims to ensure they followed his orders.

This was not a congregation that chose death. This was a population under siege, stripped of agency by a man who had spent years constructing the theological architecture of their submission.

Before founding his church, Mackenzie was charged four times for his sermons while working as a taxi driver, but was acquitted due to lack of evidence. In 2019, he was accused of being linked to the deaths of two children who died of hunger and suffocation and were buried in the Shakahola forest. He was released on bail pending trial. The local police had received recurring complaints from religious leaders and the community against his activities from as early as 2017. The county security committee had summoned Mackenzie and warned him against his radical teachings and subjecting followers to inhumane conditions. He was warned. He was charged. He was bailed. He was summoned. And then, between January 2021 and September 2023, while the machinery of the Kenyan state continued its slow, disinterested orbit, 448 people — most of them children — died in a forest.

The Commission on Administrative Justice, Kenya's ombudsman, described the conduct of officials from the National Government Administration and the National Police Service as a "gross dereliction of duty," found the deaths preventable, and recommended disciplinary action for six officials. The Independent Policing Oversight Authority's chief executive, Elema Halake, characterised the entire episode as a multi-agency failure. The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims said pointedly that "the government, starting with the police, National Intelligence Service, political leaders and the Ministry of Interior, slept on their job with regard to Mackenzie's activities thus allowing the Shakahola deaths to happen." President William Ruto acknowledged in 2023 that government agencies should have been able to prevent the deaths and said he took responsibility as president. He subsequently named individuals who would have to answer for the failure, citing intelligence services and the Criminal Investigation Department specifically. It is not publicly established, to date, that any of those individuals has been held accountable in any formal, documented way.

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African News

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Paul Nthenge Mackenzie

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too attracted immediate and organised resistance. Senator Mungatana confirmed he had formally written to Senate Speaker Amason Kingi to withdraw the bill.

Bishop Francis Omondi of the Anglican Church offered what may be the most piercing summary of the impasse: "The laws are present, we have enough regulatory policies but they are not followed." That observation cuts to the heart of the matter. Kenya has approximately 40,000 registered religious organisations, with minimal oversight of their actual operations. The problem is not an absence of statute. It is an absence of enforcement culture, institutional will and coordinated inter-agency response — precisely the same absence that allowed a known extremist to operate in a forest for the better part of three years.

The tension at the centre of this debate is real and must be confronted with clarity rather than evasion. Kenya's Constitution, under Article 32, guarantees freedom of conscience, religion, thought and belief. That protection is not decorative. It is foundational in a society where faith is woven into the daily fabric of life for the overwhelming majority of citizens. A government empowered to determine which religious beliefs are acceptable and which are not would pose its own serious threat to constitutional freedoms and create dangerous opportunities for political interference in spiritual life. That path has its own body count in the history of authoritarian governance, and it is not a path Kenya should travel.

But the answer to that concern is not to leave religious institutions insulated from meaningful scrutiny in the name of protecting constitutional freedom. The answer is targeted, rights-consistent regulation — focused specifically on unlawful conduct, child protection, financial exploitation, public safety and institutional accountability. The Constitution does not protect the right to starve a twelve-day-old child. It does not protect the right to run an indoctrination camp behind a fence in a coastal forest. It does not protect the right to threaten and beat people into compliance with a theology of self-annihilation. What the Constitution protects is genuine religious practice, freely chosen, by adults capable of choosing. Shakahola was none of those things.

The urgency of that reform is sharpened by developments since the original massacre came to light. In 2025, police exhumed at least 32 more bodies near Shakahola, raising fears that cult activity had continued even after Mackenzie's arrest, and raided a separate sect's compound where two bodies were found and 57 people were rescued from a cult leader's control. The emergence of Kwa Binzaro as a second site of cult-related deaths confirmed what many had feared: that Shakahola was not an aberration. It was a symptom of a regulatory environment so porous that a man could build a death camp from scripture and emerging leaders could observe his methods and replicate them. Police have since admitted that the lessons of Shakahola were not fully applied before Kwa Binzaro.

That admission should not pass without consequence.

Kenya's intelligence agencies, the National Police Service, local administrators and child protection authorities must urgently strengthen the coordination mechanisms that identify dangerous conduct before it reaches catastrophic scale. Reports of children being denied food, families being isolated from wider society, followers being threatened for questioning leadership — these are not ambiguous signals. They are, as the Shakahola investigation demonstrated beyond doubt, the operational signature of a religious criminal enterprise. They should trigger immediate, documented, multi-agency response. Not deference. Not bureaucratic diffidence. Not the quiet hope that the problem will resolve itself without the inconvenience of intervention.

Religious extremism rarely announces its intentions. It enters through the door of human need — the need for belonging, for healing, for meaning, for hope in conditions of hardship. The willingness to surrender independent judgment to a figure of spiritual authority is not, in itself, a failure of character. It is a human impulse that charlatans throughout history have recognised and weaponised. Mackenzie was not a uniquely sophisticated operator. He was a taxi driver with a Bible and an understanding of desperation. The sophistication was institutional: it lay in the systems that looked at him repeatedly and found, each time, insufficient reason to act.

There are others. Some are already operating. Some may already have disciples who are fasting in undisclosed locations. The 200-year sentence sends a message, and that message is not nothing. "The objectives of sentencing, particularly retribution, denunciation and deterrence, require that punishment be experienced as a tangible loss by the offender," Justice Kavedza said, in a passage that will be quoted in every future criminal case involving religious extremism in this country. Those words will carry weight in future courtrooms. They should also carry weight in the offices of police commanders, county administrators, intelligence directors and cabinet secretaries who are, at this moment, receiving reports about individuals whose conduct bears the hallmarks of what happened in Shakahola.

The question is not whether those reports exist. They do. The question is what happens to them next.

For 448 people buried in a forest near Malindi, the answer came too late. For the twelve-day-old who never learned to crawl, the system's failure was not an abstraction. It was everything.

The sentence is necessary. It is not sufficient. And the families who stood outside that courthouse in Mombasa yesterday, some weeping, some silent, some simply staring at the tent where the man who destroyed their families was told he would spend the rest of his natural life in prison — those families deserve more than a verdict. They deserve a Kenya in which the warnings are heard before the graves are dug.

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola invests US$1.22m to rescue Namibia's most critical water basin

A sand dam, 235 hectares of restored land and two new boreholes form the backbone of a project that could determine Windhoek's water future

By: **James Mwangi**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



The Coca-Cola system has committed US$1.22 million to a water security and ecosystem restoration project in Namibia's Swakop River Basin, targeting one of the most water-stressed urban environments in sub-Saharan Africa and forming part of a nearly US$25 million continental water stewardship initiative spanning 20 African countries by 2030.

The investment, announced last week in Windhoek, is directed at the //Gam-i Swakop Basin Resilience Project — a nature-based intervention designed to strengthen the long-term water supply feeding Namibia's capital city and the communities surrounding it. Windhoek sits in a region defined by low and unpredictable rainfall, high evaporation rates and groundwater systems under sustained pressure from a growing urban population and recurring drought cycles. The Swakop River Basin is a vital artery in that system, and its deterioration carries consequences that extend well beyond the river itself.

The project's physical components are both immediate and long-term in their intent. Two sand storage dams will be constructed to capture and slow the movement of water through the catchment, allowing for increased infiltration into the soil and improved groundwater recharge. Two boreholes will be drilled specifically to support recharge of the Windhoek aquifer — the underground water reserve upon which the city depends. Across the basin, 235 hectares of degraded land will be restored through the clearing of invasive alien plants, vegetation that competes aggressively with indigenous species for water and accelerates soil erosion. Seven hundred and fifty trees will be planted in river buffer zones and in environmentally degraded areas within Windhoek's informal settlements, where the need for green cover and ecological stabilisation is most acute. Alongside the physical infrastructure, a water resilience action plan has been developed to guide the basin's long-term management.

The project is being implemented in collaboration with the Global Water Challenge and WWF Namibia, bringing together corporate investment, international conservation expertise and local environmental knowledge in an arrangement that its architects describe as a model for multi-stakeholder water governance.

Alfred Olajide, Vice President of East and Central Africa Operations at Coca-Cola, framed the investment in terms of geographic specificity rather than broad corporate commitment. "Because water challenges are local, our approach to water security is focused on local action and collaboration," Olajide said. "The Coca-Cola system remains focused on helping to promote water stewardship, increasing water use efficiency, and treating and returning safe water to communities." The emphasis on local action is deliberate. Water insecurity in Windhoek is not interchangeable with water insecurity in Mombasa or Lagos. The Swakop Basin has its own hydrology, its own land use pressures and its own community dependencies. Solutions borrowed wholesale from elsewhere rarely hold.

Henry Friedrich, General Manager of Coca-Cola Namibia Bottling Company, was direct about the responsibility that operating in a water-scarce environment imposes. "As part of the Coca-Cola Beverages Africa group, we have a responsibility to assist those who face water scarcity and to help protect local water resources where we operate, especially in places with the biggest challenges," Friedrich said. "Through the Africa Water Stewardship Initiative, the system aims to help protect important watersheds and to improve access to water and sanitation in local communities." For a bottling operation whose core product is water-dependent, the investment carries a commercial logic as well as a social one — but that does not diminish the practical value of what is being built.

The scientific dimension of the project is articulated most clearly by WWF Namibia's Country Director, Dr Juliane Zeidler, whose organisation brings the ecological expertise that determines whether the nature-based solutions deployed will function as intended over time. "Water is one of Namibia's most precious and increasingly vulnerable resources," Zeidler said. "This project is an opportunity to demonstrate how investing in healthy ecosystems can deliver tangible benefits for people, while also helping communities become more resilient to future climate pressures. We hope the lessons and partnerships developed through this initiative can inform similar approaches elsewhere in the country."

That last point carries significance beyond Namibia. The Swakop Basin project is explicitly positioned as a demonstration case — a site where the effectiveness of sand dams, invasive plant clearing and buffer zone reforestation can be observed, measured and replicated. If the intervention produces the groundwater recharge levels and ecosystem recovery that its designers project, the methodology becomes exportable to other catchment areas across southern Africa facing similar pressures. The documentation of outcomes is therefore as important as the outcomes themselves.

The //Gam-i Swakop Basin Resilience Project sits within the Coca-Cola system's Africa Water Stewardship Initiative, launched in 2024 with a mandate to address water challenges across 20 African countries by the end of the decade. The nearly US$25 million committed under the initiative represents one of the larger corporate water stewardship programmes on the continent, and its breadth — spanning countries with vastly different hydrological profiles, regulatory environments and community structures — reflects both the scale of Africa's water challenge and the complexity of addressing it coherently.

Olajide concluded with an observation that underscores the structural logic of the entire initiative. "Collaboration is essential to addressing shared water challenges effectively. Coca-Cola and its authorised bottlers continue to work with governments, businesses and civil society organisations to design and implement strategic interventions." In a region where water scarcity is projected to intensify under climate change, and where the gap between urban water demand and reliable supply is widening in city after city, the case for coordinated, locally anchored investment has rarely been more pressing.

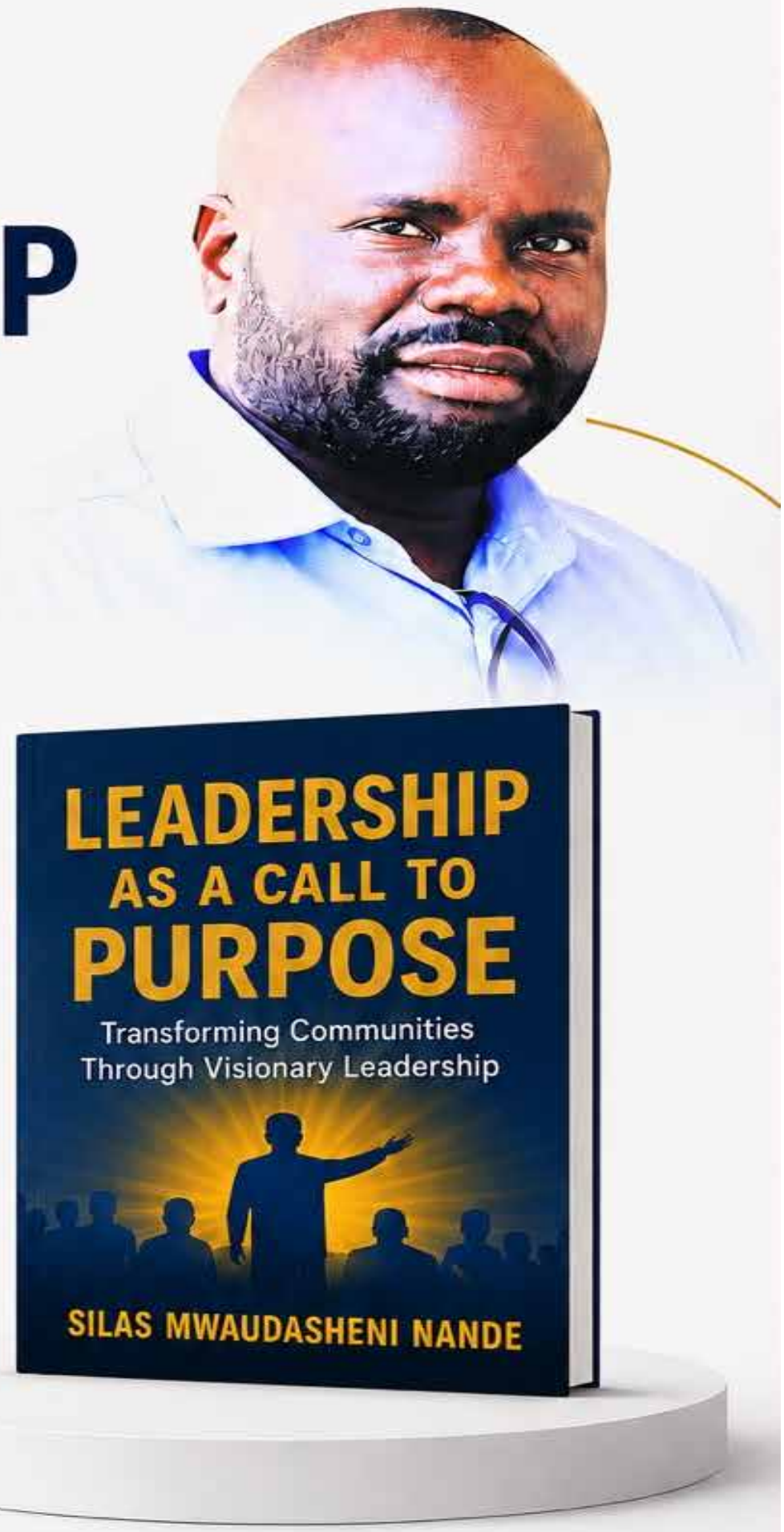
For Windhoek, the sand dams and boreholes are practical infrastructure. For the Swakop Basin, the restoration work is an ecological intervention. For the families in informal settlements who will see trees planted and groundwater levels stabilised, the project is something more immediate: evidence that the city's water future is not simply being managed, but actively protected.



SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

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WORLD

Exporting Teachers, Importing Standards

Is Namibia ready to strengthen classrooms in The Bahamas, and what does the request reveal about the regulation of teaching at home?



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes



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tests Namibia. A country that exports teachers makes a public claim about the quality of its teachers. It also makes an implicit claim about the systems that train, certify and discipline them. This article asks whether Namibia can sustain both claims.

The argument proceeds in five steps. First, it describes the Bahamian shortage. Second, it compares educational quality in the two countries, using the most recent official results. Third, it assesses the Namibian supply of teachers. Fourth, it examines the law on professionalisation and regulation of teaching in both countries. Fifth, it considers the ethics of recruitment before closing with practical proposals.

My position is clear. Namibia can contribute meaningfully, but only on specific terms. Any arrangement should target genuine surplus, protect Namibian classrooms and rest on professional regulation that Namibia does not yet possess. Handled well, the request could accelerate overdue reform at home. Handled poorly, it could export the weaknesses of the Namibian system.

2. The Bahamian shortage in context

The Bahamas operates 162 public schools spread across 24 islands. In July 2026, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Chester Cooper placed the public school population in the 40,000 range. He estimated the shortage at about 300 teachers (Bahamas Information Services, 2026).

Cooper made the conditions for foreign recruitment explicit. If vacancies remained after every reasonable local effort, particularly in specialist subjects and the Family Islands, the government would recruit abroad. He added that every international recruit would face verification of qualifications, credential assessment, vetting and equivalency requirements (Bahamas Information Services, 2026).

The government has pursued several routes at once. It launched a drive to attract Bahamian graduates, retirees and former teachers. It welcomed an offer from Ghana to assist with recruiting up to 300 teachers (Campbell, 2026). It also invited other countries to help, seeking a spread of disciplines and nationalities (Russell, 2026a).

The Ghanaian announcement provoked strong resistance. Bahamas Union of Teachers president Belinda Wilson complained that the union learnt of the plan from a Ghanaian official. She also noted that some 2025 graduates of the University of The Bahamas had not yet been hired (Russell, 2026a).

The government replied that Bahamians would receive first claim on vacancies. Cooper stated that foreign recruits would be engaged through standard contracts, with benefits comparable to those of Bahamian teachers. He listed vetting by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Interpol, the Public Service Commission and the Department of Labour (Campbell, 2026).

Progress has been partial. By late September 2026, Cooper reported more than 100 Bahamian recruits, with roughly another 100 candidates at various stages of vetting (ZNS Bahamas, 2026). That vetting includes the National Accreditation and Equivalency Council of The Bahamas (NAECOB). In October 2026, a new industrial agreement raised entry pay for trained teachers to $30,100 and the maximum to $54,000 (Russell, 2026b).

Three lessons follow for Namibia. The Bahamian demand is real but limited in scale. It is concentrated in specific subjects and remote islands. It is also politically sensitive, because organised Bahamian teachers view foreign recruitment with suspicion. Any Namibian offer must therefore be modest, targeted and respectful of Bahamian stakeholders.

3. Comparing educational quality: two systems under strain

Any comparison of educational quality must begin with a caution. The Bahamian and Namibian examinations are different instruments. They use different grading systems, candidate pools and progression rules. Their results cannot be ranked on a single scale. They can, however, reveal patterns of strength and weakness.

3.1 The Bahamian picture

The 2026 Bahamian national examinations showed modest overall gains alongside serious weakness in core subjects. Of 6,169 candidates registered for the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE), only 360 earned at least a C in mathematics, English Language and a science. That figure is 5.83 per cent of all candidates (Babb, 2026).

Mathematics was the gravest concern. The A to D pass rate in BGCSE mathematics fell to 33.3 per cent, while the number of A to D passes declined by 14.1 per cent. Across all subjects, the A to D pass rate nevertheless rose to 71.49 per cent (Babb, 2026). Good results in technical, vocational, arts and humanities subjects therefore mask a fragile core.

The diagnosis offered by Bahamian officials is instructive. Director of Education Dominique McCartney-Russell reported a ministry study of mathematics results across ten years. It identified learner anxiety, weak engagement and teachers who struggled with mathematics themselves (Babb, 2026). The Bahamian shortage is therefore partly a shortage of competent mathematics teaching, not merely of adults in classrooms.

3.2 The Namibian picture

Namibia shows a similar profile of improvement within weakness. In the 2025 Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO) examinations, 38,692 full-time candidates registered. Nationally, 36 per cent qualified to progress to the Advanced Subsidiary level (!Uri#khos, 2026). Some 40.3 per cent met the revised benchmark of at least 25 points in five subjects.

The foundation phase is more troubling. In January 2026, Education Minister Honourable Dr Sanet Steenkamp made a sobering admission. At least seven in ten Namibian children aged ten cannot read a comprehensive English text or do basic mathematics (Kheibes, 2026). She referred to a national Grade 3 assessment as the basis for this concern. The ministry has responded with Jolly Phonics, teaching at the right level and early-grade reading and mathematics measures.

System conditions compound the problem. The Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU) reported about 2,400 schools and 35,000 teachers in mid-2026. It described class sizes above approved norms, with ratios reaching 45 or 55 learners per teacher in some cases (Education International, 2026). It also reported that 70 to 80 per cent of the education allocation goes to personnel costs.

Namibia nonetheless invests heavily. According to the NANTU report, the country allocates about 8.9 per cent of gross domestic product to education. That share exceeds the international benchmark of six per cent (Education International, 2026). The central problem is therefore less the volume of spending than its conversion into learning.

3.3 What the comparison means

The honest conclusion is uncomfortable. Neither system is a strong performer in mathematics and science. Namibia cannot present itself as an exporter of proven excellence in exactly the subjects The Bahamas needs most. Its secondary progression rates and foundation outcomes forbid such a claim.

The comparison also reveals complementarity. Both systems teach in English at secondary level. Both serve dispersed rural or island communities. Both are wrestling with weak mathematics outcomes and teachers' subject knowledge. Namibian teachers who have succeeded under these constraints could bring relevant experience. The real question is whether Namibia can identify those teachers reliably.

Impact must also be defined properly. Filling a vacancy is not the same as improving learning. The Bahamian ministry has itself linked weak mathematics results to teachers who struggle with the subject (Babb, 2026). A Namibian recruit with weak subject knowledge would fill a post without solving the problem. The relevant test is therefore demonstrated competence in the classroom, not nationality or certificates alone.

This test applies with equal force at home. The same Namibian ministry that would select teachers for The Bahamas is fighting learning poverty in its own early grades. Credibility abroad depends on credibility at home. A selection process strong enough to reassure Nassau would also serve Namibian learners well.

4. The supply question: a surplus of the wrong kind?

On paper, Namibia has teachers to spare. In July 2025, representatives of unemployed teachers told Her Excellency President Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah that over 15,000 education graduates were without work (NAMPA, 2025). The President replied that the government could not absorb all of them. She directed the ministry to complete verification of their credentials first. The government has since expanded appointments. Ahead of the 2026 academic year, the ministry appointed 1,767 teachers, exceeding its target of 1,140 posts (New Era, 2026). It is also exploring structured internship pathways for unemployed qualified teachers. Even so, the gap between graduates and funded posts remains wide.

The difficulty lies in the composition of the surplus. NANTU reports an oversupply of primary school teachers but a shortage at high school level (Education International, 2026). The Bahamian request, by contrast, targets mathematics, science and technical vocational subjects. These are precisely the secondary specialisms in which Namibia remains short.

This mismatch carries a real risk. If Namibia sends experienced secondary mathematics and science teachers abroad, it will deepen its own shortage. Rural schools in regions such as Ohangwena, Kunene and Omaheke would bear the cost.

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WORLD

Exporting Teachers, Importing Standards

Is Namibia ready to strengthen classrooms in The Bahamas, and what does the request reveal about the regulation of teaching at home?

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Prime Minister Dr Ngurare appeared alert to this danger when he spoke of national staffing requirements (Hembapu, 2026).

A second risk concerns quality within the surplus. NANTU secretary general Loide Shaanika has argued that many unemployed graduates meet only the Namibian standard. In her assessment, they do not even meet the standards of Angola, Zambia or South Africa (Shipena, 2025). That is a striking admission from a union leader. It warns against assuming that every unemployed graduate is ready for a foreign classroom.

Shaanika also recalled an instructive history. When Namibia lacked mathematics and science teachers, its schools relied on colleagues from Nigeria, Ghana and Zimbabwe (Shipena, 2025). Namibia therefore knows teacher migration from the receiving end. It should apply the lessons it learnt as a host now that it may become a source.

Where, then, does real capacity lie? It lies in a narrow band of well-qualified secondary specialists who are unemployed or underemployed. It also lies among technical and vocational instructors. Identifying them requires a credible national record of qualifications and competence. That requirement leads directly to the legal question.

A realistic profile of a suitable candidate is therefore narrow. Such a teacher would hold a recognised degree with a major in mathematics, physical science, biology or a technical field. He or she would have taught successfully at senior secondary level, with verifiable examination results. The teacher would not currently fill a scarce post in a Namibian rural school. Few unemployed graduates will meet every element of this profile, and that is acceptable. A small, excellent cohort would serve both countries better than a large, uneven one.

5. The legal framework: can Namibia certify what it exports?

5.1 The current Namibian position

The Basic Education Act 3 of 2020 came into force on 5 October 2023, apart from one section on early childhood development. It establishes a Teaching Service consisting of persons employed in the public service (sections 108 and 109). It requires the Minister to prescribe a code of conduct for that service (section 111).

The Act does not, however, establish a professional register of teachers. Its definition of a teacher is revealing. The definition includes a staff member who lacks a teaching qualification but has other abilities relevant to teaching (section 1). In law, therefore, a Namibian teacher is a category of employee, not a licensed professional.

Discipline follows the same logic. A teacher at a State school who breaches the statutory duties commits misconduct under the code and the Public Service Act (section 114(5)). Accountability is administrative. It attaches to employment, not to a licence to practise. A teacher who leaves the public service, including for service abroad, largely falls outside that machinery.

The Act does anticipate reform. Section 4(3)(f) allows the Minister to determine policy on the professional education and accreditation of teachers. Section 4(3)(q) covers international relations in basic education. These provisions offer a basis for policy and for cooperation. They do not create a statutory professional regulator.

5.2 The Teaching Profession Bill

The intended remedy is the Teaching Profession Bill. Minister Steenkamp addressed the National Assembly on the draft Bill and its regulations on 18 September 2025 (National Assembly of Namibia, 2025). National consultations followed in all fourteen regions until 17 October 2025.

The Bill would establish a Teaching Profession Council of Namibia. The Council would register teachers, regulate the profession and grant practice certificates (Shipena, 2025). It would review teacher education programmes before accreditation and make continuous professional development compulsory. Without valid registration, no person would be permitted to teach in Namibia.

The Bill has drawn both support and criticism. NANTU has campaigned for a regulator since 2011 and supports the Bill. Shaanika linked it directly to mobility, arguing that Namibian teachers should be trained to teach elsewhere in the world (The Namibian, 2025).

The Teachers Union of Namibia welcomed professionalisation but raised objections. Its secretary general, Mahongora Kavihuha, argued that the proposed board limits the voice of practitioners. He also noted that the draft imposes no obligations on employers of licensed teachers (The Namibian, 2025). These criticisms deserve resolution before enactment, not after.

Public sources consulted for this article show no evidence that Parliament has enacted the Bill as at 7 November 2026. Its present parliamentary stage should be confirmed with the National Assembly before any agreement relies on it.

5.3 The Bahamian position

The Bahamas has also modernised its law recently. The Education Act, 2026 received assent on 23 March 2026 and repealed the Education Act of 1962. Section 48 obliges the Minister to recruit and engage suitably qualified persons for public schools. Section 49 requires the Minister to develop standards for teaching, appraisal, professional development and ethical conduct.

The Bahamian Act, like its Namibian counterpart, creates no independent teacher licensing council. Under section 14, NAECOB registers and accredits schools and institutions. NAECOB also evaluates academic credentials. Regulation of the individual teacher therefore remains a ministerial and public service function in both countries.

5.4 Implications for a bilateral arrangement

This legal landscape has three consequences. First, The Bahamas will judge Namibian teachers mainly by their documents and by vetting. NAECOB will assess degrees and diplomas, and the police and Public Service Commission will assess character. Neither country can attest to current fitness to practise through an independent register.

Second, Namibia cannot presently issue the kind of professional attestation that mobile professionals in regulated fields carry. A Namibian teacher dismissed for misconduct abroad could return home without any professional record following him or her. Equally, a competent teacher could return without formal recognition of the experience gained.

Third, the form of the agreement matters. Under Article 32(3)(e) of the Namibian Constitution, the President negotiates and signs international agreements. Under Article 63(2)(e), the National Assembly agrees to their ratification. Article 144 makes binding international agreements part of the law of Namibia.

A binding labour agreement would therefore carry domestic legal force once ratified. A memorandum of understanding framed as a political commitment would not. The choice affects the enforceability of pay, conditions and return guarantees. Formal legal advice from the Attorney General should settle which instrument suits the purpose.

Employment status raises a further question. Cooper has indicated that foreign recruits would serve on standard Bahamian contracts (Campbell, 2026). Namibian recruits would therefore be employees of the Bahamian government, not members of the Namibian Teaching Service. The Basic Education Act and its code of conduct would not govern their work abroad. Namibian influence over their welfare and conduct would rest almost entirely on the bilateral instrument.

5.5 Can the agreement advance professionalisation?

The answer, I argue, is yes, provided Namibia sequences its steps correctly. External demand creates a practical incentive to complete the Teaching Profession Bill. A receiving country will reasonably ask who certifies a Namibian teacher. Namibia should answer with a statutory council, not merely a ministry letter. The agreement could also give concrete content to regional ambitions.

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Emirates

Emirates Group posts US$1.1B half-year profit despite Gulf conflict and soaring fuel costs

The Dubai aviation giant weathers airspace closures, doubled jet fuel prices and a 22% passenger drop to remain solidly in the black — but the numbers tell a story of strain beneath the resilience

By: **David Kimani**
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Worth Noting:

- **That the Group remains profitable at all is, by any measure, a feat of financial management and operational discipline. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group, was direct about the nature of what the past six months demanded. "It has been a demanding six months, and once again our business model and our people stood up to the test," he said. "Against unprecedented regional challenges and high fuel prices, the Group has delivered a profit before tax of AED 4.1 billion. Customer demand held firm and our cargo operations made a strong contribution, keeping revenue and cash levels healthy even as global jet fuel prices doubled against the same period last year."**
- **The fuel story sits at the core of the Emirates airline results. Despite a 12 per cent reduction in fuel uplift due to lower operations, the airline's fuel costs before hedging rose by 60 per cent compared with the previous half-year.**

The Emirates Group announced a profit before tax of AED 4.1 billion (US$1.1 billion) for the first six months of its 2026-27 financial year yesterday, a result that would have been unremarkable in calmer times but stands as a significant achievement against the backdrop of an active regional conflict, doubled jet fuel prices and widespread airspace disruption across the Gulf that reshaped global aviation for much of the period.

The figures, however, tell two stories simultaneously. The headline profit masks a dramatic deterioration from the same period a year earlier, when the Group posted a record performance. Profit before tax is down 66 per cent. Revenue has fallen 12 per cent to AED 66.2 billion (US$18 billion). The Group's cash position has contracted from AED 59.6 billion (US$16.2 billion) in March to AED 54.1 billion (US$14.7 billion) in September. These are not marginal movements. They are the financial imprint of a conflict that disrupted one of the world's busiest aviation corridors at the precise moment fuel costs were already climbing.

That the Group remains profitable at all is, by any measure, a feat of financial management and operational discipline. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group, was direct about the nature of what the past six months demanded. "It has been a demanding six months, and once again our business model and our people stood up to the test," he said. "Against unprecedented regional challenges and high fuel prices, the Group has delivered a profit before tax of AED 4.1 billion. Customer demand held firm and our cargo operations made a strong contribution, keeping revenue and cash levels healthy even as global jet fuel prices doubled against the same period last year."

The fuel story sits at the core of the Emirates airline results. Despite a 12 per cent reduction in fuel uplift due to lower operations, the airline's fuel costs before hedging rose by 60 per cent compared with the previous half-year. The Group's fuel price risk management strategy generated gains of AED 7.1 billion, significantly cushioning the blow and reducing the net fuel cost increase to 13 per cent. Without that hedge, the results would have looked considerably worse. Fuel now accounts for 34 per cent of the airline's operating costs — its single largest expense — and the trajectory of global jet fuel prices will remain the most consequential variable in the Group's second-half performance.

Emirates airline carried 21.8 million passengers between April and September 2026, down 22 per cent from the same period last year, with passenger seat factor dropping from 79.5 per cent to 72 per cent. These figures reflect the dual pressure of intermittent airspace restrictions that forced routing and schedule reductions, and the reshaping of consumer travel decisions by government travel advisories to and through the UAE. By 30 September, the airline had restored operations to 91 per cent of its pre-disruption network, serving 150 airports across 78 countries and territories — a recovery that Sheikh Ahmed credited, in part, to the UAE government's coordination of stakeholders and its management of the post-conflict resumption of air transport activities.

Where passengers retreated, cargo advanced. Emirates SkyCargo transported 1.2 million tonnes in the first half of the year, only marginally below the same period last year, but cargo revenue surged by 52 per cent. The regional conflict had reduced available airfreight capacity across the Gulf while simultaneously disrupting marine transport, pushing shippers towards air alternatives and driving a sharp increase in freight rates. The cargo division added five new Boeing 777 freighters, deployed its first passenger-to-freighter converted aircraft, and expanded its freighter network with new destinations including Almaty and Zhengzhou. In a period when the passenger business was contracting, SkyCargo became the airline's most powerful engine of revenue.

The commitment to investment through adversity is a consistent theme in how the Emirates Group has responded to the crisis, and the numbers bear it out. Between April and September, the airline received delivery of nine new Airbus A350 aircraft and completed full cabin refurbishments on 12 aircraft. Its Starlink high-speed Wi-Fi installation programme equipped 36 more aircraft, bringing the total Starlink-enabled fleet to 57 aircraft. The airline's retrofit programme — described as one of the world's largest — represents a planned investment of over US$7 billion to bring Emirates' latest cabin products across its entire fleet, a commitment that continues regardless of the turbulence in its financial results. In May, Emirates broke ground on a US$5.1 billion engineering and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul facility at Al Maktoum International Airport, with completion expected in the mid-2030s.

Commercially, the airline launched two cabin innovations that generated notable attention: the U-dream headrest built into Economy Class seats and electronically controlled privacy dividers in Premium Economy — both described as industry firsts. New concept lounges opened in Munich, Frankfurt and Manchester, and the airline's retail footprint expanded to over 30 travel stores. Emirates also extended its sponsorship agreements with Arsenal Football Club until 2033 and Real Madrid until 2031, maintaining its global brand positioning even as it managed costs elsewhere with considerable care.

The Group's ground handling and travel services arm, dnata, posted a profit before tax of AED 410 million (US$112 million), down 51 per cent from the same period last year, against revenue of AED 11 billion (US$3 billion), down 7 per cent. The result reflects reduced airline and travel traffic at the UAE hub during the period, partially offset by the strength of dnata's international operations. The division secured a seven-year ground handling licence at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, signed a cargo partnership with Silk Way Group in Singapore, and secured inflight catering contracts with Cathay Pacific across airports in the United Kingdom and the United States. An AU$32 million investment to build a new cargo facility at Western Sydney International Airport was announced, and construction of a catering facility at the same site remains on track for a 2027 opening.

dnata's travel division contributed AED 1.4 billion (US$373 million) to revenue, down 31 per cent compared with the same period last year, partly reflecting the divestment of Travel Republic and Netflights in the United Kingdom, which ceased new bookings from November 2025. The integration of Imagine Cruising and Travelbag, bringing together two complementary travel portfolios, was completed during the period.

Sheikh Ahmed offered carefully measured optimism for the second half of the financial year. "We enter the second half of our 2026-27 financial year with measured optimism," he said. "While keeping a close watch on costs and geopolitical developments, we remain focused on delivering what Emirates and dnata are known for — safety, quality and customer satisfaction. We've weathered challenges before, and with our strong cash position and solid foundation built up over the years, the Group is well-placed to navigate the headwinds of volatility and high fuel prices."

Whether the second half delivers a recovery will depend on factors largely beyond the Group's control: the trajectory of the Gulf conflict, the direction of global jet fuel prices and the speed at which travel advisories are lifted and consumer confidence restored. What is not in doubt, on the evidence of these results, is that the Emirates Group has demonstrated an institutional resilience that most aviation businesses would struggle to match. It has absorbed a 66 per cent decline in profit, a doubling of fuel costs and the most significant regional disruption in its operational history — and it has remained in profit throughout. That is not a small thing. In aviation, in a crisis, staying airborne is itself the achievement.

WORLD

Exporting Teachers, Importing Standards

Is Namibia ready to strengthen classrooms in The Bahamas, and what does the request reveal about the regulation of teaching at home?

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Shaanika reported that NANTU is working with sister organisations in the African Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities on a continental framework for teacher mobility (The Namibian, 2025). A Bahamian arrangement would test such mobility in practice. It could inform Namibian standards for registration, professional development and portability.

The danger lies in reversing the sequence. If teachers depart before the Council exists, the ministry will improvise verification. Such improvisation would set weak precedents. It would also leave Namibian teachers abroad uncertain about recognition, conditions and reintegration.

The Council could serve mobility in several concrete ways. It could maintain a public register confirming that a teacher is qualified and in good standing. It could answer verification requests from foreign employers and from bodies such as NAECOB. It could recognise professional development completed abroad when teachers renew registration. It could also record findings of serious misconduct, so that unsuitable persons cannot move between systems unnoticed. Each function protects learners, while also giving honest teachers a portable professional identity.

6. The ethics of recruitment and the rights of teachers

International teacher recruitment has a troubled record. Mawhinney (2025) describes aggressive recruitment by wealthy Commonwealth states, particularly from Africa and the Caribbean. He documents overseas-trained teachers paid on unqualified scales despite full training. He also reports heavy losses of teachers from Ghana and Jamaica.

Commonwealth education ministers adopted the Protocol for the Recruitment of Commonwealth Teachers in 2004. The Protocol seeks to balance the right of teachers to migrate against the integrity of national education systems (Mawhinney, 2025). Teacher unions have recently called on member states to recommit to it. Both Namibia and The Bahamas are Commonwealth members and should apply its principles.

Those principles cut both ways. As a source country, Namibia must protect its own shortage subjects. As a host, The Bahamas must offer Namibian recruits conditions equal to those of local teachers. Minister Cooper has already promised comparable benefits under standard contracts (Campbell, 2026). That promise should be written into any bilateral instrument.

Protection of the teachers themselves deserves equal attention. Teachers posted to small and distant islands may face isolation, high living costs and limited support. The Bahamian agreement of October 2026 includes hardship and geographical posting allowances (Russell, 2026b). Any bilateral instrument should confirm that Namibian recruits qualify for these allowances on the same terms. It should also provide consular contact and a clear procedure for grievances.

The global context raises the stakes. Mawhinney (2025), drawing on the Global Report on Teachers by UNESCO, notes that the world needs 44 million additional teachers by 2030. Africa south of the Sahara accounts for about one in three of them. Namibia cannot treat its teachers as an export commodity while its own learners remain underserved.

7. What Namibian teachers could genuinely offer

Having stated the risks, fairness requires an account of strengths. Many Namibian teachers work in combined schools, multigrade classes and remote villages. Many manage large classes with scarce resources. These experiences are directly relevant to small Family Island schools.

Namibian teachers also work in multilingual classrooms. Many teach through English while supporting learners whose home language differs from the language of instruction. That experience builds skill in explaining mathematical and scientific language with care. It is a transferable strength wherever learners find abstract concepts difficult.

Namibian technical and vocational instructors could add further value. The request explicitly names technical and vocational subjects (Hembapu, 2026). Bahamian results already show relative strength in vocational areas (Babb, 2026). Instructors with trade qualifications and industry experience could consolidate that strength.

Finally, Namibian teachers would return home with valuable experience. Exposure to another curriculum, examination system and school culture would enrich Namibian schools. A circulation of talent, rather than a permanent loss, should therefore be the governing design principle.

8. Recommendations

The following proposals would allow Namibia to respond positively while protecting its learners and advancing its own reforms.

1. Enact the Teaching Profession Bill first. Parliament should prioritise enactment once the concerns of practitioners are addressed. The new Council should register every teacher selected for The Bahamas before departure.
2. Recruit only from verified surplus. Selection should draw on unemployed or newly qualified teachers whose credentials the ministry has already verified. Serving secondary mathematics and science teachers in rural schools should not be released unless they are first replaced.
3. Test subject competence, not only certificates. Candidates should sit assessments of subject content and teaching method aligned with the BGCSE syllabus. Given the Bahamian diagnosis of mathematics teaching, demonstrated competence matters more than paper.
4. Use a binding instrument with clear terms. The agreement should specify contract duration, equal pay and allowances, housing, medical cover and return travel. It should also guarantee recognition of foreign service for promotion and seniority on return.
5. Involve teacher unions in both countries. NANTU and the Teachers Union of Namibia should help design selection criteria. Bahamian unions should be consulted from the outset, avoiding the friction that followed the Ghanaian announcement.
6. Provide structured induction. Recruits should complete induction on the Bahamian curriculum, assessment, child protection law and island culture before deployment. Mentoring by experienced Bahamian colleagues should follow arrival.
7. Build reciprocity into the partnership. The arrangement could include joint professional development and exchange of expertise in technical and vocational education. Reciprocity turns a labour transfer into a genuine partnership.
8. Monitor and report publicly. Both ministries should track placements, retention and learner outcomes, and report to their parliaments. Evidence, not diplomacy alone, should decide whether the arrangement expands.

9. Conclusion

Namibia has the people to help The Bahamas, but not yet the systems to guarantee their quality. Its surplus lies mainly in primary education, while the Bahamian need lies in secondary mathematics, science and vocational subjects. Its outcomes, though improving, do not justify a claim to export excellence.

The request should nonetheless be welcomed. It holds up a mirror to the Namibian teaching profession. It asks who certifies Namibian teachers, who disciplines them and who vouches for their competence. At present, the honest answer is the employer, not the profession.

If Namibia uses this moment to enact the Teaching Profession Bill, verify qualifications and protect its own classrooms, the agreement could become material to professionalisation. It would then serve Bahamian learners, unemployed Namibian graduates and the standing of teaching itself. That is the partnership worth building.

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Diaspora

Kenya and Egypt forge nuclear partnership to power Africa's energy future

NuPEA's engagement with Cairo offers Nairobi a rare chance to learn from a continental neighbour already building its first reactor — but ambition must be matched with institutions, trust and national ownership

By: **James Kilonzo Bwire**
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Egypt Ambassador Hatem Yousri Hosni and NuPEA CEO Justus Wabuyabo. Photo courtesy

Kenya's nuclear ambitions took a significant step forward when Nuclear Power and Energy Agency Chief Executive Officer Justus Wabuyabo met Egypt's Ambassador to Kenya, Hatem Yousri Hosni, to explore cooperation between the two countries on nuclear energy development — a meeting that signals Nairobi's intention to build its programme through African solidarity rather than external dependence alone.

The encounter was more than a diplomatic formality. It marked a deliberate choice by Kenya to look sideways across the continent, rather than only northward or eastward, in search of guidance on one of the most consequential infrastructure decisions a developing nation can make. Egypt is currently constructing its first nuclear power plant at El Dabaa on the Mediterranean coast, placing it at precisely the point in the nuclear development journey that Kenya is working towards. That proximity of experience — not decades of hindsight, but the live, complex, unresolved experience of a country managing active construction — is what makes Cairo's offer of resources and expertise genuinely valuable.

Kenya's interest in nuclear energy is not simply about electricity. It is about building the reliable foundation upon which national development rests. A dependable energy supply is essential for a country seeking to expand manufacturing, create employment, improve public services and absorb the pressures of a rapidly growing population. Nuclear power, when developed with strong institutions, skilled people and genuine public trust, can contribute meaningfully to long-term energy security and to Kenya's broader development ambitions. The Nuclear Power and Energy Agency's role in coordinating this journey is therefore not a narrow technical responsibility. It is a national one, with implications across health, agriculture, education, industry and science.

Egypt's value as a partner lies precisely in the specificity of its experience. El Dabaa confronts Egypt with questions that Kenya will inevitably face as its own programme matures — questions of project preparation, regulatory readiness, workforce development, safety culture, public communication, site management, technology selection and institutional coordination. Egypt has not yet solved all of these problems. That, paradoxically, makes its experience more useful. A country that is currently navigating challenges in real time can offer Kenya something that established nuclear powers cannot: a contemporaneous account of what it actually feels like to build a first nuclear power plant from scratch, with all the uncertainty, the renegotiation and the institutional growing pains that entails. Kenya can learn to anticipate obstacles before they become costly, and to understand that nuclear development is not merely about constructing a facility — it is about creating a complete national system capable of managing complex technology responsibly across generations.

Kenya's nuclear agenda operates on two parallel tracks, and both stand to benefit from Egyptian cooperation. The Nuclear Power Programme is intended to deliver electricity generation capacity on a long-term horizon. The Research Reactor Programme serves a different but equally important purpose. A research reactor can support scientific training, medical applications, agricultural innovation and industrial services. Kenya has identified Konza Technopolis as the planned location for its research reactor, a facility expected to contribute to education, healthcare, the production of medical isotopes, and the development of a new generation of scientists and engineers. This reveals a nuclear vision that is broader than kilowatt-hours. It is a vision that recognises nuclear science as a tool for improving cancer diagnosis and treatment, strengthening agricultural research and creating opportunity for young Kenyans in advanced technical fields.

Egyptian cooperation can serve both tracks simultaneously. On the power side, El Dabaa's experience offers lessons in managing large-scale nuclear construction programmes, including their financial, logistical and political dimensions. On the research side, cooperation can help Kenya develop the human capacity and technical knowledge required to operate a research reactor safely and productively. The two are not independent. A research reactor is not merely a scientific installation — it is the training ground for the professionals who will later support the nuclear power plant, the regulatory system, emergency preparedness arrangements and the broader safety culture that underpins the entire national programme. Without that foundation of human capacity, a nuclear power plant is an aspiration without an operating workforce.

One of the strongest arguments for Kenya-Egypt cooperation is that it represents African solutions to African challenges. Too often, the implicit assumption in advanced technology development has been that knowledge flows in one direction only — from the industrialised world to the developing one. Partnerships among African states challenge that assumption. They build confidence, reduce dependence and ensure that solutions are grounded in African realities rather than exported from distant contexts. Egypt's willingness to share its resources and expertise is a meaningful demonstration of continental solidarity, evidence that nations on this continent can support one another in building strategic capabilities without waiting for knowledge to be transferred exclusively from elsewhere.

Kenya must, however, approach this partnership with clarity and purpose. Cooperation must not dissolve into symbolic diplomacy that generates communiqués without practical outcomes. It should produce concrete deliverables: training exchanges, technical visits, regulatory dialogue, safety culture development, joint research, public engagement strategies and connections between Kenyan universities and Egyptian professionals with active nuclear experience. Kenya's institutions of higher learning — universities, polytechnics, technical colleges — will need to produce engineers, physicists, technicians, health professionals, regulators and project managers who understand not just nuclear technology but the full weight of its responsibilities. Cooperation with Egypt can accelerate that process.

The groundwork for such a partnership already exists. The International Atomic Energy Agency has supported Kenya in developing nuclear infrastructure, encompassing workforce development, legal and regulatory frameworks, training, fellowships and an Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review. The Nuclear Power and Energy Agency is charged with promoting and implementing the Nuclear Power Programme, conducting research and building sector capacity. The National Nuclear Regulatory Authority has been established. Potential sites for nuclear power plants have been identified. Extensive stakeholder engagement has taken place. These are not trivial achievements. They form a base upon which Kenya-Egypt cooperation can be meaningfully constructed rather than invented from nothing.

Public trust must remain at the centre of that construction. Nuclear energy is a sensitive subject, and citizens have every right to assurance that it will be developed safely, transparently and equitably. Kenya's government and the Nuclear Power and Energy Agency must continue explaining why nuclear power is being pursued, how safety will be enforced, how communities will be meaningfully engaged and how the benefits will be distributed. Egypt's experience in communicating with its own public around El Dabaa — with all the scepticism, the anxiety and the legitimate questions that accompany such a project — offers Kenya a living case study in managing public expectations around a major national nuclear undertaking. Trust is not manufactured through press releases. It is built through consistent information, honest engagement and a visible and unwavering commitment to safety.

Institutional strength is equally non-negotiable. A successful nuclear programme requires an independent regulator, a competent operator, clear legislation, emergency preparedness systems, environmental safeguards, security arrangements and a workforce that fully understands its obligations. No single agency can carry that weight alone. Ministries, regulators, universities, research institutions, county governments, professional bodies and host communities all have indispensable roles. The NuPEA-Egypt engagement should reinforce Kenya's commitment to strengthening each of these actors, ensuring that cooperation builds national capacity rather than substituting for it.

There is a broader continental significance to this relationship that should not be underestimated. Africa faces a mounting need for reliable energy to sustain industrialisation, healthcare, education and economic transformation. Nuclear energy is not the only option, but for countries that choose to pursue it, well-structured cooperation can make the journey considerably safer and more informed. Kenya and Egypt working in partnership sends a message across the continent that African nations can collaborate on advanced technologies, share expertise across borders and build collective capability without subordinating national sovereignty in the process.

The meeting at the Nuclear Power and Energy Agency offices should be understood as a practical step, not a ceremonial one. Egypt's offer must be matched by Kenya's commitment to invest in people, institutions, safety and public engagement. If handled with discipline and long-term intent, this partnership can help Kenya move from ambition to capability — from a nation that aspires to nuclear energy to one that is genuinely prepared to manage it. Kenya's nuclear journey will succeed only if it is built on preparation, transparency and national ownership. Egypt, walking a similar path, offers Nairobi a rare and timely hand. The task now is to take it, and to make it count.

Diaspora

From the Margins to the Centre

Governor Kadiva Hamutumwa, her first sixteen months in office, and an agenda for a lasting Ohangwena legacy



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
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For decades, Ohangwena has carried a heavy label. National conversations often described it as poor, remote and slow to develop. The numbers tell a different story about its importance. According to the 2023 census, the region is home to 337 729 people. That makes it the second most populous region in Namibia, with about 11.6 per cent of the national population (Ohangwena Regional Council, n.d.).

Ohangwena stretches along a long northern frontier with Angola. It lies on the Cuvelai basin and sits above one of the most important groundwater systems in the north. It has produced generations of teachers, nurses, soldiers and political leaders. Yet the gap between this potential and the daily reality of many households has long defined regional politics.

On 1 July 2025, Her Excellency, the President, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah appointed Kadiva Hamutumwa as Governor of Ohangwena. She became the first woman and the youngest person ever to hold the office in the region (Haihambo, 2025a). Many in the region believe the President chose well. Sixteen months later, it is fair to test that belief against the record.

This article attempts that test. It draws on State of the Region reports and verified press coverage. It credits what has been achieved. It also names what remains unfinished. Finally, it proposes a set of agendas that could turn a promising start into a permanent legacy for the people of Ohangwena.

The Region She Inherited

Any assessment of a governor must begin with the conditions she inherited. Ohangwena covers about 10 703 square kilometres, roughly 1.3 per cent of the land area of Namibia. It is a long and narrow region along the southern border of Angola. It borders the Cunene and Cuando Cubango provinces of Angola to the north (Ohangwena Regional Council, n.d.).

The landscape is flat and semiarid. Annual rainfall ranges from about 480 millimetres in the west to 600 millimetres in the east. The western part lies within the Cuvelai network of oshanas, which brings seasonal floodwater from the Angolan highlands. The eastern part is covered by Kalahari woodland (Ohangwena Regional Council, n.d.). This geography explains a recurring paradox. The region can suffer floods in one season and severe water shortages in the next.

The social indicators are equally demanding. The regional council reports a fertility rate of 4.6 children per woman. It also reports life expectancy of 45 years for women and 43 years for men (Ohangwena Regional Council, n.d.). These figures should be verified against the latest national health data as there was no such records during this article is going for print. Even so, they point to a young and fast growing population with heavy needs in health, education and employment.

In short, the new governor did not inherit an empty canvas. She inherited a large, young and largely rural population. She also inherited high expectations, scarce water and a fragile labour market. These conditions frame every achievement and every shortfall discussed below.

A Governor Appointed for Delivery

The context of the appointment matters. Hamutumwa was one of seven governors appointed on 1 July 2025. The appointments completed the team of fourteen regional governors under the Eighth Administration (Jason, 2025). At State House, the President set a demanding standard. Governors would be judged on the implementation of the Sixth National Development Plan, not on promises. Unemployment, especially among young people, was named as a central concern (Jason, 2025).

Hamutumwa came to the office from outside the usual political pipeline. At the time of her appointment, she was an executive at the Namibia Water Corporation (NamWater). She was also president of the Namibian Exile Kids Association (Jason, 2025). Both roles proved relevant. Her work at NamWater gave her direct knowledge of water infrastructure. Her leadership of an association of children born in exile gave her experience in organising young people around economic participation.

At the handover ceremony in Eenhana, she confronted the old label directly. She acknowledged that Ohangwena had often been described as poor and underdeveloped. She answered with a statement of conviction: "I believe in the power of our people" (Haihambo, 2025a). She also warned councillors that she had no time for gossip or retrogressive attitudes.

The outgoing governor, Sebastian Ndeitunga, listed the challenges she inherited. These included access to clean water, poor roads, flood management and complicated land questions. He also pointed to weak infrastructure for attracting investment (Haihambo, 2025a). From the first week, therefore, the terms of the assignment were clear. The region needed water, roads, jobs and investment. It also needed a style of leadership that could mobilise people rather than wait for Windhoek.



Governor Kadiva Hamutumwa

Listening Before Leading

Hamutumwa began with consultation rather than announcement. In her first months, she paid courtesy visits to the Oukwanyama, Ondonga and Uukwambi Traditional Authorities. She also visited former President Hifikepunye Pohamba at his home in Okaghudi Village (Shuuya, 2025). Pohamba urged her to confront poor roads and water shortages in remote communities. He also warned firmly against the theft and misuse of public resources. She described these engagements as part of a broader strategy to consult stakeholders across the region. Her guiding slogan, #ByUsForUs, promotes local ownership of development (Shuuya, 2025). She then undertook familiarisation visits to the constituencies of the region.

This sequence was more than ceremony. In rural northern Namibia, traditional authorities play a central role in communal land allocation. They also shape community attitudes towards new projects. A governor who wants land for green schemes, factories or schools must work closely with them. By opening her term in their courts, Hamutumwa built the relationships that later projects would require.

The visits also produced evidence for policy. Hamutumwa later explained that the tours revealed a dual reality. Local innovation was alive, but it was held back by poor infrastructure and limited access to markets (Kambowe, 2025). That diagnosis became the foundation of her investment agenda.

Water as the Foundation of Everything

No issue defines Ohangwena more than water. Speaking at State House on the day of her appointment, Hamutumwa said her NamWater experience would help secure supply from the Ohangwena Aquifer. She linked water directly to food production and to local manufacturing (Namundjembo, 2025). She later called for the urgent development of the aquifer for domestic, agricultural and industrial use. She also proposed earth dams to capture rain and floodwater as a regional water security strategy (Windhoek Observer, 2025).

The record since then shows concrete movement. In October 2025, she commissioned the rehabilitation of an old earth dam in Oshikunde Constituency. The project aimed to improve water storage for people and livestock, especially during dry seasons (MICT Ohangwena, 2025).

Her 2026 State of the Region Address reported broader progress for the 2025/26 financial year. Eighteen boreholes worth N$4.6 million were drilled across several constituencies. Five further water projects worth more than N$13.2 million were at various stages of implementation. Solar pumps were installed at rural water points, and livestock dams were rehabilitated and expanded (Haihambo, 2026b).

The largest milestone was the completion of the Omashaka–Eenhana Bulk Water Supply Scheme. It includes more than 200 kilometres of pipeline, three reservoirs and six elevated storage tanks. Its reverse osmosis plant can produce 1 000 cubic metres of potable water per day. Once fully operational, the scheme is expected to meet projected demand of about 10 million litres a day by 2037 (Haihambo, 2026b).

In addition, consultants have been appointed for the Ohangwena Aquifer Climate Resilient Water Supply Project. The project provides for six mini desalination plants in the Epembe, Omulonga and Oshikunde constituencies (Haihambo, 2026b).

A fair analyst must add a caution. Bulk water schemes take years to plan, fund and build. The Omashaka–Eenhana scheme did not begin in July 2025. Much of this record belongs to the wider government system and to earlier administrations. What a governor contributes is focus, coordination and persistent follow-through. On that measure, Hamutumwa has kept water firmly

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at the top of the regional agenda.

Opening Ohangwena for Business

The most distinctive feature of her term is the investment agenda. In December 2025, she opened a workshop in Eenhana to develop the Ohangwena Regional Investment Strategy and Action Plan. She described Ohangwena as "a region of extraordinary untapped economic potential" (Kambowe, 2025).

Her office worked with the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board to establish a Regional Investment Committee. The committee includes professionals, youth representatives and members of the Oukwanyama and Ondonga Traditional Authorities (Kambowe, 2025). She argued that government alone cannot supply the scale of investment the region requires. She also aligned the strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

In September 2026, this work reached a public milestone. Hamutumwa launched the Ohangwena Regional Investment Map and Action Plan at the Helao Nafidi Expo (Shuuya, 2026). The Minister in the Presidency, Dr Charles Mubita, spoke at the launch. He reminded the audience that "No region develops by accident" (Shuuya, 2026). The map identifies opportunities across economic sectors. It seeks investment that creates jobs, develops skills, supports local enterprises and retains value within the region.

There are early signs of traction. The 2026 State of the Region Address reported that investors had been secured for projects in textile manufacturing, healthcare and the creative industries (Haihambo, 2026b). The committee continues to market opportunities in agriculture, tourism, hospitality and manufacturing. She later visited a Chinese agricultural project that has operated at Eenhana for about twenty years. There, she stated that the region is ready to make land available for food security and employment (Nepembe, 2026d).

In February 2026, she set out four strategic projects for the year (Haidula, 2026). The first was a textile manufacturing factory. The second was a large agricultural project at Ekoka. The third was the start of construction of a Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) campus in Eenhana. The fourth was the intensification of water supply projects. These are bold commitments. Their completion will be the true test of the investment agenda.

Education: Dignity for Teachers, Hope for Learners

For readers in the education sector, her most tangible achievements may lie in schools. In 2025, she visited Helao Nafidi Combined School in Oshiti shaHaihonya village, deep in the Okongo area. Teachers there lived in corrugated iron shacks. The school had a single teachers' house shared by several staff members.

In October 2025, she handed over the construction site for an eight-bedroom teachers' house, estimated to cost N$1.4 million (MICT Ohangwena, 2025). By April 2026, the house was complete. It was sponsored by AffluentGen Group as a pilot project and was built with the help of workers from the local community (Wakudumo, 2026). She explained the project as a case of "listening to the concerns on the ground and responding with urgency" (Wakudumo, 2026).

The acting principal described the change as life-changing. She noted that many young teachers had avoided rural postings because of such conditions (Wakudumo, 2026). This matters far beyond one school. Teacher housing is one of the quietest drivers of rural learning outcomes. Where teachers cannot live with dignity, schools lose experienced staff and struggle to fill posts. A single house will not solve that problem. It does, however, demonstrate a model of partnership that can be repeated.

A similar instinct appeared at Mawila Primary School in Ekokofi Village. Parents there had built corrugated iron shelters for children who walk up to six kilometres to school. Hamutumwa donated 20 beds and 17 mattresses to the community hostel. She also pledged to mobilise funding for proper hostel facilities (Nepembe, 2026b).

The broader education data reported in her 2026 address are encouraging. Learner enrolment rose from 130 479 in 2025 to 136 279 in 2026. The number of teachers rose from 4 661 to 4 906. Schools offering the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Advanced Subsidiary level increased from 11 to 16 (Nampa, 2026).

The region ranked fourth nationally at Advanced Subsidiary level, with 70.76 per cent of learners attaining quality symbols. It improved to sixth place at Ordinary level, with 37.36 per cent. In the 2025 Grade 3 assessment, literacy rose from 44.5 per cent to 47.35 per cent. Numeracy rose sharply from 25.51 per cent to 43.08 per cent (Nampa, 2026).

Honesty again requires a caveat. These gains belong first to teachers, principals, parents and the regional education directorate. A governor does not teach classes. Yet a governor can create conditions, mobilise partners and keep education visible among regional priorities. Hamutumwa has done this consistently.



Governor Kadiva Hamutumwa

Serious gaps remain. About 1 750 learners dropped out of school in Ohangwena in 2025, and boys accounted for 65 per cent of them (Nepembe, 2026a). At an engagement with the First Gentleman, Hamutumwa called for collective support for boys. She stated that "Supporting boys is not in competition with supporting girls" (Nepembe, 2026a).

The region also recorded more than 10 000 teenage pregnancies between 2021 and 2025 (Nepembe, 2026c). Learners with disabilities face a severe shortage of specialised schools. The only specialised school in the region, Usko Nghaamwa School, currently serves learners with hearing impairments only (Haihambo, 2026a). These problems will determine whether the recent education gains prove durable.

Youth, Skills and the Jobs Question

Unemployment is the most serious threat to regional stability. The labour force results of the 2023 census are sobering. Unemployment in Ohangwena rose from 33.3 per cent in 2018 to 47.2 per cent in 2023. This was among the largest increases in the country (The Brief, 2025).

Hamutumwa has used her platform to connect young people with national instruments. In October 2025, she addressed 610 graduates of the NEV TVET Hub, a partnership of the Nakayale, Eenhana and Valombola vocational training centres. She urged them to apply to the National Youth Development Fund (Haihambo, 2025b).

It is important to be precise about this fund. It is a national instrument, launched in September 2025 and capitalised with more than N$257 million (Haihambo, 2025b). It is not a regional fund created by her office. Her contribution has been to promote it, mobilise applicants and encourage young people to think as entrepreneurs.

Her message to graduates was direct. "Namibia needs you, not just to be job seekers, but job creators," she said (Haihambo, 2025b). She also welcomed the upgrading of vocational training centres into Technikon colleges. She argued that the future belongs to plumbers, electricians, builders, technicians and hospitality professionals.

This emphasis on technical skills is sound. Ohangwena does not need more young people waiting for scarce public service posts. It needs young people who can build, repair, process, market and export. The challenge is to ensure that skills, finance and markets meet in the same place. A young welder in Okongo needs more than a certificate. He needs startup capital, a workshop, reliable electricity and customers who can pay. A young farmer in Okadidiya needs water, inputs, storage and a buyer. The regional role is to bring these elements together so that national funds produce local enterprises that survive.

Agriculture and Food Security

Agriculture remains the backbone of the regional economy. The 2026 address reported that the government ploughed about 3 635 hectares for 1 817 crop farmers. More than 6 500 farmers received improved seed varieties and fertiliser. Fourteen livestock auctions generated more than N$5.7 million for 168 farmers (Haihambo, 2026b; Nampa, 2026).

At the Ekoka green scheme, three production boreholes were drilled during the year. About 130 hectares were cultivated, creating temporary work for 200 people. The project produced sorghum, pearl millet, maize, cowpeas and about 7 000 bales of hay (Nampa, 2026). Livestock marketing also received attention. A permanent weighing scale was installed at the Ndevahoma Auction Kraal, and three mobile scales were procured with European Union support. Four tractors and implement sheds were provided at agricultural development centres in Omauni, Ongula ya Netanga, Endola and Epembe (Nampa, 2026). These are modest numbers for a region of this size. They are, however, a foundation on which a larger agricultural economy can be built.

Governance, Integrity and Social Protection

Development without integrity does not last. In February 2026, Hamutumwa told public servants that appointments must rest on competence and integrity, not favouritism. She demanded zero tolerance for corruption. "The people of Ohangwena expect results - not promises; action - not explanations," she said (Haidula, 2026). She cited the discipline of the Singapore public service as an example and called for consequence management for underperformance.

Institutional indicators support this message. The Ohangwena Regional Council obtained clean audit opinions for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. It also launched a five-year strategic plan for 2024/25 to 2029/30, which aims to make Ohangwena a smart region (Haihambo, 2026b). The Communal Land Board handled 196 illegal fencing cases during the year under review.

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Housing also moved forward. The National Housing Enterprise disburs
million (Haihambo, 2026b). These figures reflect the work of several institutions, but they belong to the regional picture the Governor coordinates.

Her social agenda has been visible. She has spoken against gender based violence and called for stronger protection of people with disabilities. She has also championed the preservation of cultural heritage. In January 2026, she was named among the 100 Most Reputable Africans 2026 under the Humanity and Social Impact pillar (Business Express, 2026). Such lists should be read with care, because their methods vary. The recognition nonetheless reflects the public profile she has built.

An Honest Assessment

How should the first sixteen months be judged? Three conclusions appear fair.

First, Hamutumwa has given the region a clear development narrative. She has replaced the language of poverty with the language of potential. That shift matters, because investors, partners and young people respond to confidence.

Second, she has shown a practical and responsive style of leadership. The teachers house at Helao Nafidi, the beds at Mawila and the Oshikunde earth dam are small in scale. Together, however, they reveal a governor who listens, responds and mobilises partners quickly.

Third, the largest promises remain unfulfilled. The textile factory, the NUST campus in Eenhana, the full use of the aquifer and large-scale job creation are not yet realities. Unemployment, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, crime and recurring malaria remain serious. A governor also works within real limits. Regional governors represent the President and coordinate central government at regional level. They do not control most of the budgets that deliver services.

A further observation concerns method. Many of her visible results came through partnerships rather than through new public budgets. The teachers' house was privately sponsored. The investment committee draws on traditional authorities and private professionals. This approach stretches scarce public resources. It also carries a risk. Partnerships depend on goodwill, and goodwill can fade. Lasting gains will require these arrangements to be written into plans, agreements and budgets.

The fair verdict, therefore, is a promising beginning rather than a completed record. The next phase will decide whether the energy of the first year becomes lasting change.

Agendas for a Permanent Legacy

What could make that change permanent? The following proposals are the views of this writer. They build on priorities the Governor has already named. Each is designed to outlast a single term of office.

1. Make the aquifer a public and measured programme. The Ohangwena Aquifer should be developed under a published regional water master plan. The plan should set annual targets for boreholes, pipelines, desalination plants and earth dams. A public dashboard should show progress by constituency. Water policy that people can see is water policy that they will defend. The plan should also protect the aquifer from overuse. Groundwater that is mined faster than it recharges becomes a short-term gain and a long-term loss.

2. Build an agricultural processing corridor. Ohangwena grows mahangu, sorghum, cowpeas and livestock. Much of the value is lost because produce leaves the region unprocessed. A corridor linking Ekoka, Eenhana and the Oshikango border could host milling, feed production, meat processing and packaging. The African Continental Free Trade Area and the Angolan market make such a corridor commercially rational. Cooperatives and young entrepreneurs should hold a meaningful share of the businesses in the corridor. Otherwise, processing will create value for the region without creating ownership within it.

3. Adopt a Rural School Infrastructure Compact. The Helao Nafidi model should become a regional standard. Every remote school should reach a minimum package: decent teacher housing, safe hostels, clean water, electricity and internet connectivity. Corporate partners, constituency offices and traditional authorities could each adopt schools. A public register would show which schools have reached the standard and which still wait. Connectivity deserves special emphasis. Rural learners cannot compete in a digital economy if their schools remain offline. The goal of becoming a smart region must begin in the classroom.

4. Launch a Learner Retention Initiative. Dropout among boys and teenage pregnancy among girls are two faces of the same crisis. One regional programme should address both. It could combine mentorship, school feeding, life skills, health education and early warning systems for learners at risk. Schools, churches, clinics, parents and traditional leaders should share responsibility for its results.

5. Expand specialised and inclusive education. The region needs more than one specialised school. Earlier proposals for specialised schools at Okongo and Nafidi should be revived and funded (Haihambo, 2026a). Teachers in mainstream schools also need training in inclusive education. A society is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable children.



Governor Kadiva Hamutumwa

6. Turn Eenhana into a learning town. The planned NUST campus should be linked to vocational centres, schools and local industry. Its programmes should match regional needs in agriculture, water engineering, health, education and digital skills. Graduates should be able to study, work and build businesses without leaving the region. Every graduate who stays adds skills, spending power and leadership to local communities.

7. Open the northern trade gateway. Oshikango and Helao Nafidi already form a commercial hub with Angola. The Governor has also proposed developing the Eenhana airstrip into a full airport (Windhoek Observer, 2025). An integrated plan for roads, border facilities, storage and air access is now needed. Such a plan would position Ohangwena as a trade corridor within the Southern African Development Community.

8. Develop cultural and heritage tourism. Ohangwena holds a rich liberation history, traditional crafts and royal heritage. Heritage routes, craft markets and an annual regional festival could create income for rural communities. They would also preserve knowledge that ageing custodians still carry. Schools could partner with elders to record oral histories, crafts and traditional knowledge before they disappear.

9. Institutionalise accountability. An annual public scorecard should report on every major regional commitment. It should show what was promised, what was spent and what was delivered. This would turn the demand for results over promises into a permanent system rather than a personal style.

10. Set measurable health targets. Malaria outbreaks and adolescent health remain recurring concerns in the region. A regional health partnership should set clear targets for malaria control, antenatal care and adolescent health services. Progress should be reported publicly, alongside the education and water scorecards.

None of these agendas requires a governor to act alone. Each requires coordination of ministries, regional and local authorities, traditional leaders, churches, business and civil society. That coordinating role is precisely where a governor can add the greatest value. A governor cannot build every pipeline or classroom. A governor can, however, convene the people who will, hold them to account and keep public attention on results.

Conclusion

Leadership is not measured only by the projects a leader opens. It is measured by the systems a leader leaves behind. Governor Kadiva Hamutumwa has opened her term with energy, visibility and a clear sense of direction. She has consulted widely and championed water and investment. She has also responded directly to teachers and learners in remote schools.

The people of Ohangwena have good reason to feel encouraged. Their region now speaks about itself with confidence. That confidence must now be converted into factories, campuses, pipelines, hostels and jobs. The responsibility does not rest with the Governor alone. Councillors, traditional leaders, principals, business owners, churches and young people all share it. The slogan #ByUsForUs will mean most when every citizen treats it as a personal commitment.

If the coming years deliver even part of the agenda outlined here, Ohangwena will no longer be described as a region at the margins. It will be recognised as a region that chose its own future. That would be a legacy worth leaving.

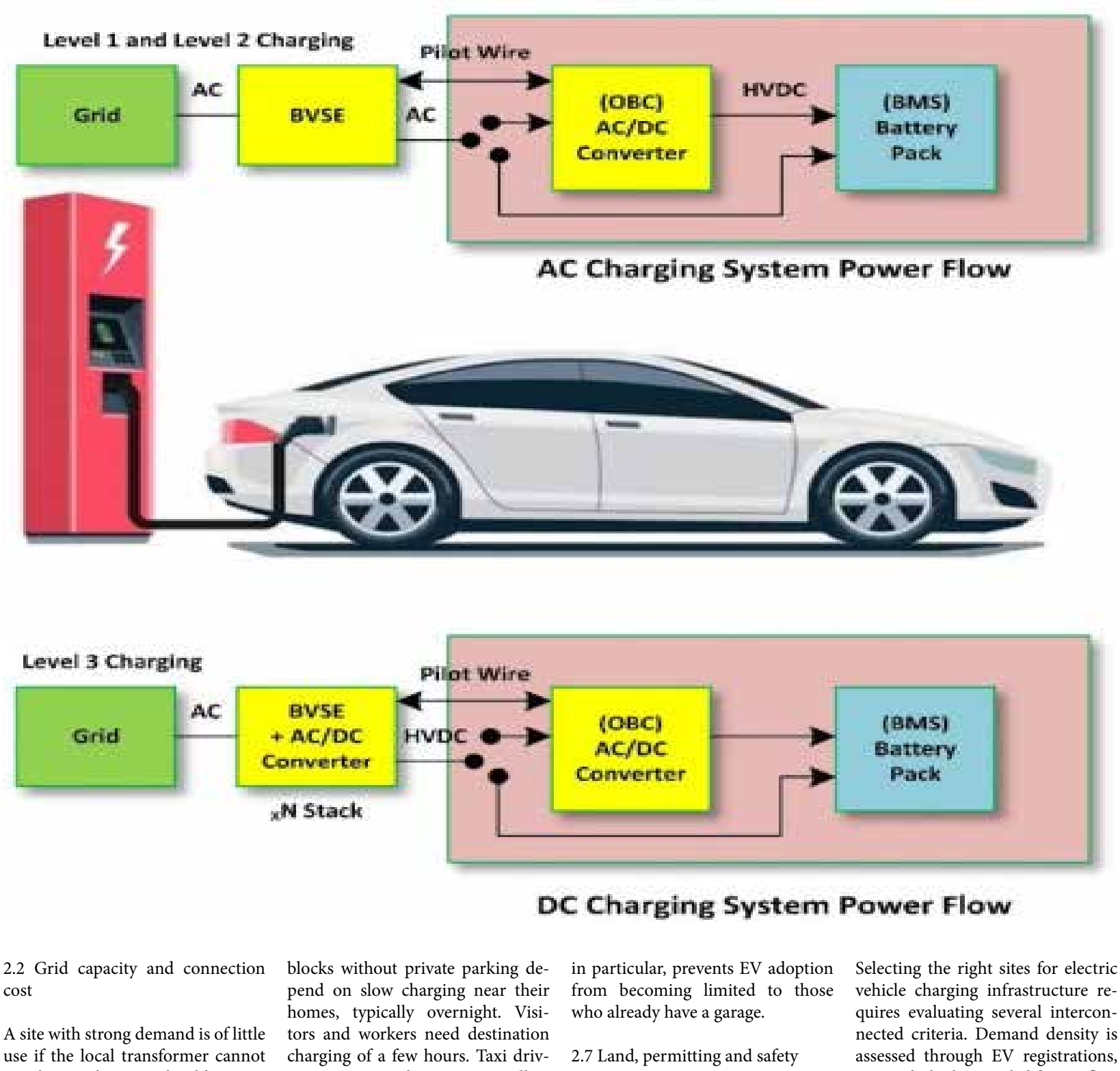
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Criteria for the Optimal Placement of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure across Urban Transport Networks

The rapid growth of electric vehicles (EVs) turns the location of charging stations from a technical detail into a core question of urban transport planning.



By: **Abror Abduvaliyev**
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The rapid growth of electric vehicles (EVs) turns the location of charging stations from a technical detail into a core question of urban transport planning. A charger placed in the wrong district sits idle, while a shortage in the right one pushes drivers back to petrol. This article sets out the main criteria for placing charging infrastructure within a city's transport network: demand, grid capacity, integration with public transport, the type of charging need, timing of use, equity, permitting and economics. The criteria are illustrated with real cases from Uzbekistan, the Netherlands and Shenzhen (China), and summarised in a practical framework that planners can adapt.

1. Introduction

Charging infrastructure is not a stand-alone asset. It sits on the same streets, in the same car parks and on the same electricity grid that the rest of the city depends on, so its placement should be planned together with the transport network rather than after it. The International Energy Agency notes that home charging remains the most popular way for EV owners to charge, but that more public chargers are needed for drivers who have no access to home charging. In dense cities, that group is large.

The question therefore is not only how many chargers a city needs, but where, of what power, and for whom. The sections below treat each criterion in turn.

2. Core placement criteria

2.1 Demand density and trip patterns

The first criterion is where charging demand actually arises: residential districts with many EV owners, commercial centres, workplaces, taxi and delivery hubs, and key points on intercity corridors. Registration data, ride-hailing trip data and parking surveys should be combined into a demand map. Fleet vehicles such as taxis and delivery vans drive very high utilisation and often justify fast chargers on their own.

2.2 Grid capacity and connection cost

A site with strong demand is of little use if the local transformer cannot supply it. Planners should screen candidate sites for spare capacity and connection cost before committing. Where several sites are comparable, those with existing capacity (bus depots, shopping centres, industrial parks) are cheaper and faster to deploy.

2.3 Integration with public transport

Chargers placed at metro terminals, bus stations and park-and-ride facilities serve two purposes. They capture long parking times, which suit slower and cheaper AC charging, and they encourage drivers to combine an EV trip with public transport instead of driving into the centre. Hubs that already have large parking areas and good electrical supply are natural candidates.

2.4 Type of charging need: home, destination and fast charging

Different needs call for different hardware. Residents of apartment blocks without private parking depend on slow charging near their homes, typically overnight. Visitors and workers need destination charging of a few hours. Taxi drivers, couriers and intercity travellers need DC fast charging with short stops. A good plan assigns each location a clear role instead of installing the same unit everywhere.

2.5 Timing and utilisation

The number of plugs is only part of the picture; usable supply depends on when drivers charge. Analysis of a six-month hourly dataset from Shenzhen shows that a city can look well supplied on a charger map and still feel tight if many drivers need chargers in the same time window, which is why charging demand should be managed through pricing and scheduling as well as through new plugs.

2.6 Equity and geographic balance

Without deliberate planning, chargers cluster in wealthy or central areas. Setting minimum coverage targets for every district, and for residents without private parking in particular, prevents EV adoption from becoming limited to those who already have a garage.

2.7 Land, permitting and safety

Access to land and a short approval process often decide how quickly a network can grow. Fire safety clearances, pavement width, lighting and visibility should be checked for every site.

2.8 Economics

Operators need sufficient utilisation to recover capital costs. Early-stage networks may need public support, such as reduced customs duties or subsidised land, while mature networks can rely on market tariffs.

3. A summary framework

The table below combines the criteria into a checklist that can be turned into a weighted scoring model. The weights should be set locally, because a city with mostly private houses will weigh them differently from one dominated by apartment blocks.

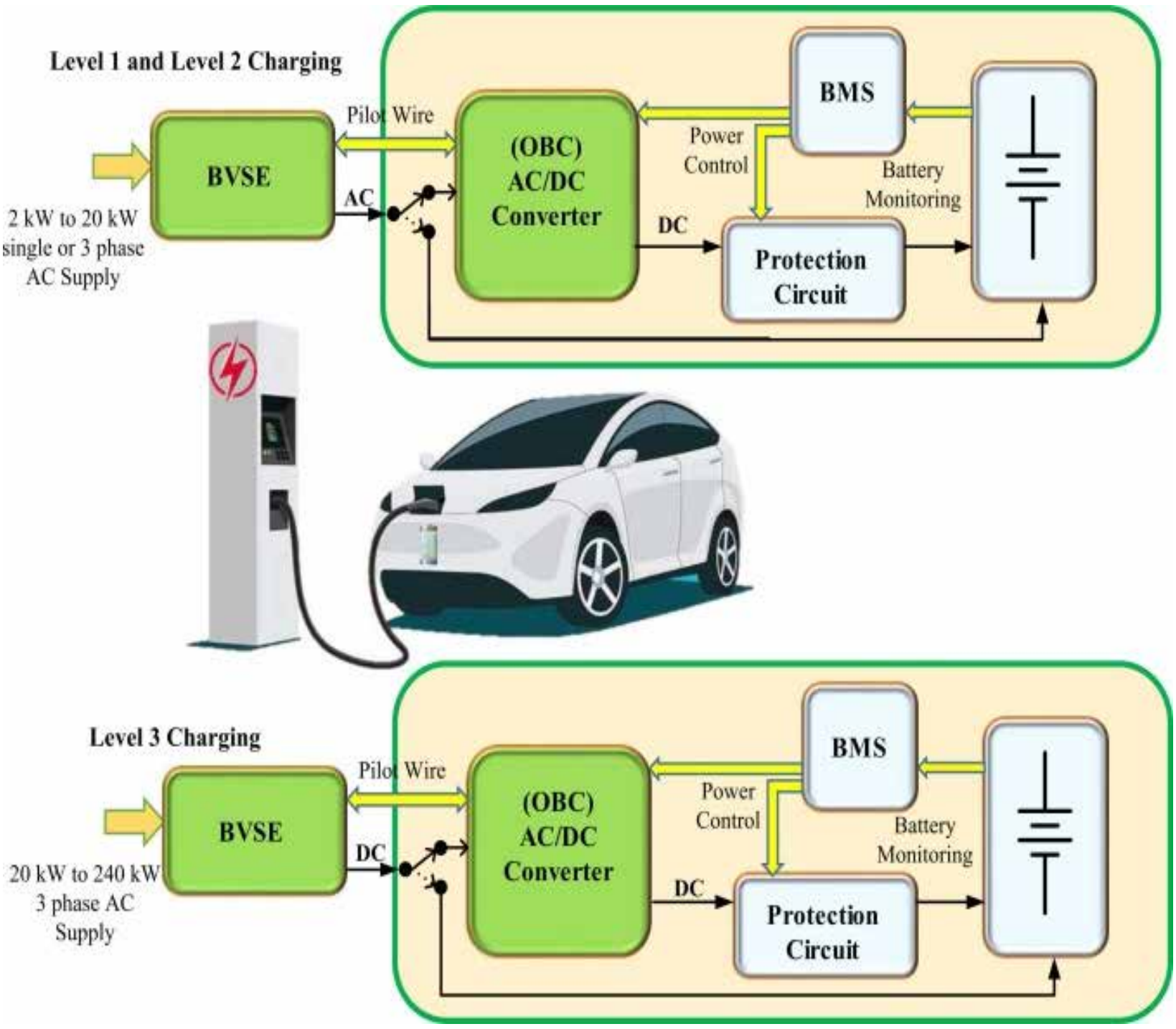
Selecting the right sites for electric vehicle charging infrastructure requires evaluating several interconnected criteria. Demand density is assessed through EV registrations, taxi, ride-hailing and delivery fleet data, and trip origin and destination patterns, with EVs per square kilometre and dwell-time-weighted parking demand serving as the key indicators. Grid capacity looks at spare transformer and feeder capacity alongside the cost and time required to secure a connection, measured by kVA headroom and connection cost per kilowatt. Transport integration considers proximity to metro and bus hubs, park-and-ride facilities, taxi ranks and depots, with walking distance to a hub and hub passenger volume as the relevant benchmarks.

Charging need type focuses on the share of households without access to private parking, expressed as a percentage of homes without off-street parking. Utilisation and timing examines the hourly charging profile and peak-hour queuing behaviour, tracked through sessions per charger per day and peak-hour occupancy rates. Equity and coverage ensures that chargers are dis-

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tributed across all districts rather than concentrated in affluent areas, measured by chargers per thousand residents at district level. Land and permitting assesses lease terms, regulatory approval timelines and safety clearances, with days to permit and the availability of public land as practical indicators. Finally, economics evaluates capital expenditure, applicable tariffs and expected load factors, with payback period and cost per kilowatt-hour delivered providing the bottom-line test for viability.

4. Real-world cases

4.1 Uzbekistan: rapid growth and a strong capital–region gap

Uzbekistan's EV market has expanded quickly. The National Statistics Committee reported 109,200 registered EVs as of 1 April 2026, and the Ministry of Energy has noted that the fleet passed 100,000 vehicles by the end of 2025. Charging infrastructure has grown as well: according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the number of charging stations rose 2.5 times in a year to 1,399 by May 2025, and Tashkent's stations nearly tripled to 820, about 58.6% of the national total. Tashkent and its region together hold roughly 70% of all stations, while the same report shows the number of operating stations falling in Fergana and Syrdarya over six months. In August 2024, Karakalpakstan had only nine stations.

This pattern illustrates the equity and demand criteria: the capital naturally leads on demand, but a purely demand-led approach leaves regional cities and the corridors between them under-served. The government draft published in May 2026 aims for 4,000 stations by the end of 2026.

Policy measures also address the permitting and economic criteria. The procedure for installing and connecting stations was simplified in 2024, with permits for legal entities to take no more than a month, and a special night tariff for EV charging was announced. Plans allow chargers of up to 22 kW near multi-storey buildings and up to 7 kW at private homes, which matches the home-charging need described in section 2.4. State-owned land and premises can be leased for charging stations through the K-Savdo auction system for up to ten years, and charging equipment has been exempted from customs duties until 2027. On the supply side, the Tashkent-based company Pulseev plans 500 chargers by 2026 and 3,000 by 2030.

4.2 The Netherlands: planning for drivers without driveways

The Netherlands is a leading example of public charging at city scale. Public, semi-public and fast charging points reached almost 210,000 in 2025, up from about 181,000 in 2024 and about 63,000 in 2020, and Amsterdam and Rotterdam had about 16,000 and 11,000 respectively. The main driver is housing: roughly seven in ten Dutch households have no private driveway and rely on street parking or shared garages, so public charging is essential.

Data from March 2026 show the typical structure of a mature network: about 126,000 regularly accessible points, 79,025 with limited public access (for example in garages), and only 6,626 fast chargers, with more than 650,000 home charging points on top. Slow, widely distributed charging near homes forms the base, with fast charging in selected locations. A study by the land registry Kadaster, commissioned by ElaadNL, found about 2.5 million Dutch homes with space for their own charge point, which gives municipalities a reason to focus public investment where private options do not exist. The Dutch experience also shows that placement is a continuing task: 38 municipalities, including Hilversum, had fewer charging points in 2025 than a year before.

4.3 Shenzhen: fast charging on existing sites, with demand timing in mind

Shenzhen shows how a city can use its existing infrastructure. By 30 April 2024 the city had 362 supercharging stations, more than its petrol stations, and a later report described the new superchargers as largely built upon existing public charging facilities and distributed in large business complexes, bus stations and industrial parks. Shell's Shenzhen Airport station, with 258 fast chargers, served more than 3,300 EVs a day during its trial run, which demonstrates the effect of a large concentrated demand source.

City rules also support the criteria above: newly built car parks must provide charging with at least 7 kW per charging pole, and new public car parks that include charging or battery swapping are exempt from separate construction approval. At the same time, the hourly Shenzhen data discussed in section 2.5 shows that more plugs alone do not remove the after-work rush, so placement should be combined with tariff and scheduling measures.

5. Recommendations for planners

- Start with data. Build a demand map from registrations, trip data and fleet activity before selecting sites.
- Check the grid. Screen candidate sites for grid headroom and connection cost early; prefer hubs and depots that already have supply.
- Match hardware to purpose. Use slow charging where cars park for hours, and fast charging where stops must be short.
- Plan for equity. Set minimum coverage for every district and for key corridors so that growth is not limited to the capital or the city centre.
- Review regularly. Monitor utilisation by hour and relocate or expand based on real use; the Dutch data show that networks need continuous adjustment.

6. Conclusion

Optimal charger placement balances several criteria at once: where demand is, where the grid can supply it, how well the site links with public transport, and who would otherwise be left without access. The cases of Uzbekistan, the Netherlands and Shenzhen show that the strongest results come from combining supportive regulation, use of existing sites and data-based monitoring. For fast-growing markets such as Uzbekistan, the next stage is to spread the network beyond the capital and along intercity routes while keeping charging reliable and affordable.

Virat Kohli: The chase master who taught cricket the art of conquest

From a quiet December heist in Kolkata to a miracle at the MCG, one man rewrote the language of pursuit



By: **Muzamal Dhothar**
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Virat Kohli

Worth Noting:

- **It began with a quiet act of larceny in Kolkata on 24 December 2009. A 21-year-old with gelled hair and a Delhi accent walked out to pursue a total of 316. He pulled it off. Nobody called him the chase master that day, but inside that innings was the first blueprint of something extraordinary. The certificate of birth, however, arrived on 28 February 2012 in Hobart, Australia, in an encounter that did not merely announce a talent — it announced a practitioner of an entirely different discipline.**
- **India faced Sri Lanka, chasing 321, with the added condition that they had to seal the target within 40 overs to remain alive in the Commonwealth Bank Series final. Lasith Malinga — the nightmare of batsmen across the globe, arguably the most challenging limited-overs fast bowler of his era — stood between India and the finish line.**

There are batsmen who chase totals, and then there is Virat Kohli. When he walks to the crease in a run chase, the scoreboard ceases to be arithmetic. It becomes biography. Every dot ball tightens the pressure, every wicket reshuffles the momentum, and every over rewrites the equation of possibility. Yet the defining truth about Kohli is this: he never chases totals. Totals chase him. That is the essence of the man — a batsman who does not merely absorb pressure but strips it of its power to intimidate. Legends are rarely built overnight. This one was built chase after chase, season after season, each instalment sharper than the last.

It began with a quiet act of larceny in Kolkata on 24 December 2009. A 21-year-old with gelled hair and a Delhi accent walked out to pursue a total of 316. He pulled it off. Nobody called him the chase master that day, but inside that innings was the first blueprint of something extraordinary. The certificate of birth, however, arrived on 28 February 2012 in Hobart, Australia, in an encounter that did not merely announce a talent — it announced a practitioner of an entirely different discipline.

India faced Sri Lanka, chasing 321, with the added condition that they had to seal the target within 40 overs to remain alive in the Commonwealth Bank Series final. Lasith Malinga — the nightmare of batsmen across the globe, arguably the most challenging limited-overs fast bowler of his era — stood between India and the finish line. The responsibility seemed almost impossible. Kohli responded with an unbeaten 133 off 86 deliveries, steering India home in 36.4 overs. He did not simply survive Malinga. He dismantled the great man's aura entirely, treating the most feared yorker in the world as though it were a problem of geometry, not menace.

What followed between 2013 and 2019 was not dominance — it was tyranny. Some innings are celebrated for their elegance, others for the astonishing velocity with which they dissolve the opposition's resistance. Jaipur produced a demonstration of the latter against Australia. Kohli converted a pursuit into an exhibition of controlled acceleration, reaching his fastest century off just 52 balls to seal the contest. His most dangerous innings are not those where class surrenders to attitude. They are those where class becomes the instrument of aggression — where the refinement of technique is deployed not to defend, but to devastate.

If the mastery of fast bowling is an art form, then Kohli is its Picasso. What he produced in Mohali in 2016 was something close to miraculous. India faced Australia in a do-or-die knockout, chasing 161 to reach a World Twenty20 semi-final. The required rate escalated, the match entered dangerous territory, and a single quiet over threatened to unravel an entire campaign. Kohli struck 82 off 51 balls. It was not brute force. It was situational intelligence translated into strokes — a masterclass in reading the moment, absorbing the equation and executing with cold precision. He did not win that chase. He killed it.

If Mohali was perfection, the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 2022 was something beyond it. If Kohli's career were a novel, his 82 from 53 against Pakistan at the MCG would constitute its most cinematic chapter. Before a cauldron of 90,000 screaming supporters, with India reeling at 31 for 4, what transpired next belonged less to sport than to mythology. He did not attack from the outset. He cooked the pressure instead — protecting his wicket, rebuilding the momentum, recalibrating the innings ball by ball, over by over, until the moment arrived for something unforgettable. The shot off Haris Rauf in the 19th over, dispatched for six to shift the equation in India's favour, has since entered the folklore of the game. The numbers — 18.5 runs required from 6 deliveries at the moment of impact — do not begin to capture the weight of what that moment carried. That evening at the MCG became one of sport's permanent addresses.

Kohli himself has never attempted to disguise where he lives on the field. His words carry the inner architecture of a competitor who thrives precisely where others fracture:

"I love playing under pressure. In fact, if there is no pressure, I am not in the perfect zone."

On the peculiar calm that chase mathematics gives him, he has explained: "In T20, I look at the total in numbers of overs to go, not runs and deliveries to go. Overs make it look easier."

The reframing is everything. Where others see a mountain of runs, Kohli sees a sequence of overs — manageable, structured, finite. The mind reorganises the problem before the bat engages it.

On his relationship with aggression, he is characteristically direct: "I do not have to show aggression. I become aggressive when I chase a target. If I do not become aggressive, I am not in the game." There is a distinction embedded in that formulation — the difference between performed intensity and genuine competitive hunger. Kohli's aggression is not theatre. It is the metabolic response of a predator who recognises that the chase has begun.

History will remember Kohli for his centuries, his records and his extraordinary victories in pursuit. But numbers, however staggering, cannot fully explain why his greatest innings remain so vivid in the imagination of cricket supporters across the world. Hobart demonstrated audacity. Mohali clarified calculation. Melbourne illuminated resilience under absolute pressure. Each of these knock becomes not merely a statistical entry but a chapter of sporting identity — proof that one man reconceived what a run chase could be, and in doing so, changed the way cricket understands conquest.

The chase master did not arrive. He was built, innings by innings, in the heat of impossible moments that lesser men surrendered and that he, characteristically, refused to.

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