

Fuliza lawsuit: Are Kenyan mobile lenders protecting consumers or exploiting their vulnerability?

Kenya's digital financial services sector has transformed how millions of citizens access money, make payments and manage financial emergencies.

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Ruto fires back: You cannot carry votes in a bag

President William Ruto yesterday hit back at former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, Wiper Democratic Movement leader Kalonzo Musyoka and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, ridiculing their coalition negotiations as an insult to Kenyan voters

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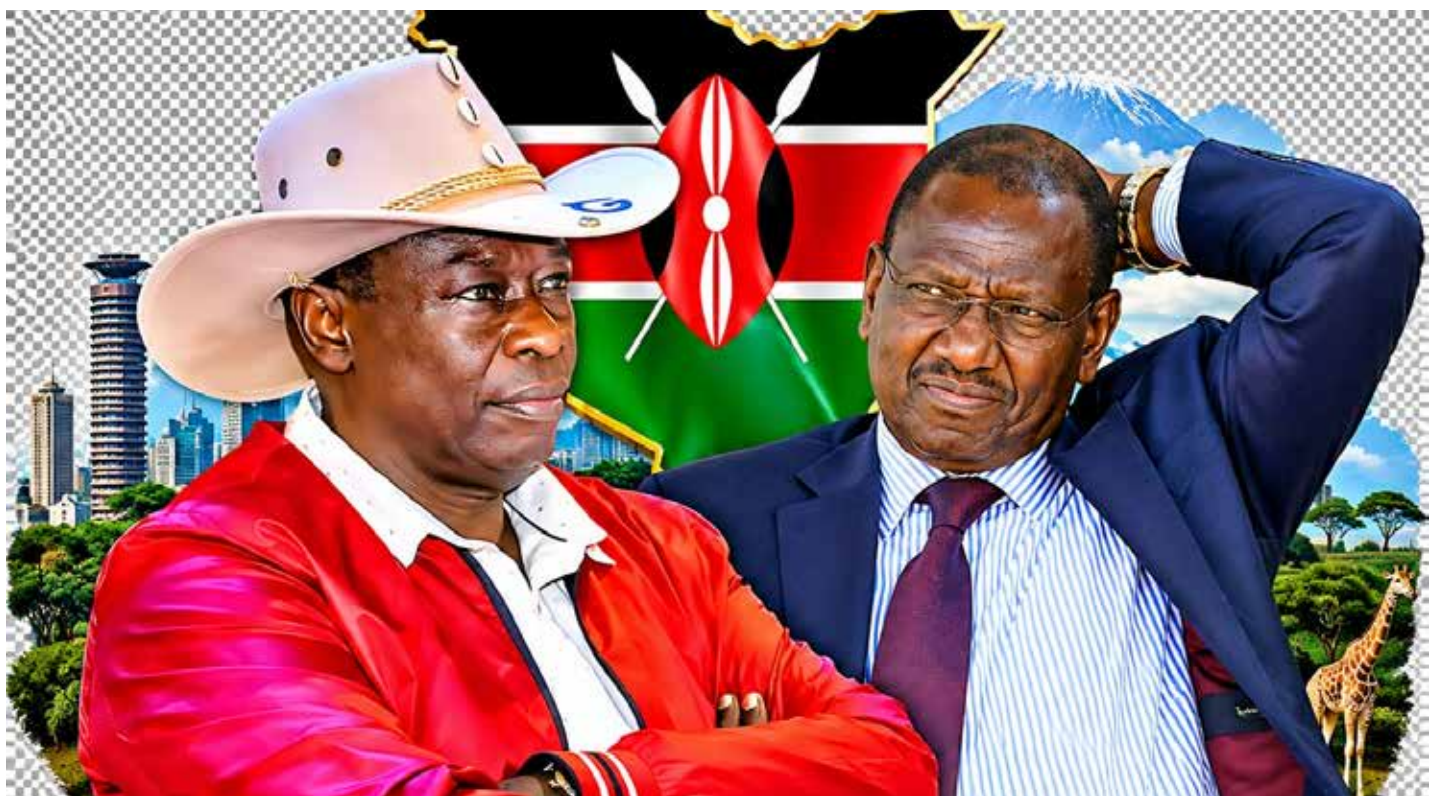
Countdown 2027 "In four years, you have done nothing for them. No roads, no water, no electricity, no airport, nothing. ZERO!" - Gachagua

Gachagua to Ruto: You have done zero

Rigathi Gachagua, the former Deputy President of Kenya and leader of the Democracy for the Citizens Party, has escalated his public offensive against President William Ruto, warning him to stop exploiting his name to court Gusii voters while delivering nothing to the region — and signalling that the broader political battle for August 2027 has already begun in earnest.

The warning, issued in a characteristically combative statement, was vintage Gachagua: direct, personal and strategically timed. But behind the theatre of insults and political point-scoring lies something far more consequential than a falling-out between two former allies. What is taking shape in Kenya's political landscape ahead of the 2027 General Election is a coalition of regional power blocs — anchored by Gachagua on Mount Kenya, Wiper Democratic Movement leader Kalonzo Musyoka in Lower Eastern, and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi Movement drawing from Western Kenya and Luo Nyanza — that together command a combined electoral geography capable of ending Ruto's presidency after a single term.

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A collage of Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and President William Ruto



Gachagua, Sifuna and Tuju unite at Ngemia Cia Watho cultural festival in Murang'a

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and former Jubilee Party secretary-general Raphael Tuju on Saturday joined thousands of revellers at the Ngemia Cia Watho cultural festival held at Thika Greens golf country club in Murang'a County, in a gathering that blended traditional celebration with pointed political symbolism nine months before the 2027 General Election.

The festival, rooted in Kikuyu cultural heritage, drew one of its most politically charged audiences in recent memory. The presence of Gachagua — whose Democracy for the Citizens Party commands significant support across Mount Kenya — alongside Sifuna, whose Linda Mwananchi Movement anchors the Western opposition alliance, reinforced the emerging coalition narrative that has rattled the Kenya Kwanza government in recent weeks.

Tuju's attendance added another layer of intrigue. Once a close Ruto ally and a senior figure in the Jubilee administration, his appearance alongside opposition figures will fuel speculation about further realignments as the 2027 campaign intensifies.

Cultural festivals in Kenya have long served as political barometers. On Saturday in Murang'a, the music played — but everyone heard the message.












Editor's Desk



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja has told the Senate that the city county's pending bills have been reduced from KSh118.79B to KSh75.07B, attributing the KSh43.73B decrease to a combination of direct payments, legal assessments, court-ordered adjustments and the verification of disputed claims.

Sakaja made the disclosure during a Senate appearance in which he sought to account for the progress made on one of Nairobi's most persistent fiscal liabilities — a mountain of unpaid obligations that has strained suppliers, contractors and service providers for years and undermined confidence in the county's financial management.

The governor was careful to clarify that the reduction did not reflect cash payments alone. Internal verification processes, he explained, had identified a significant portion of the original figure as legally contestable or factually disputed, with court determinations and claim audits accounting for a substantial share of the KSh43.73B reduction. The distinction matters: it means the county's actual cash outflow is considerably lower than the headline reduction figure suggests, and that a portion of the liability was resolved through legal and administrative processes rather than settlement.

Nairobi's pending bills crisis has been a recurring subject of Senate scrutiny, with legislators pressing successive county administrations to demonstrate credible progress. Suppliers and contractors have long complained of delayed payments stretching across multiple financial years, disrupting businesses and discouraging firms from bidding for county tenders. The KSh75.07B that remains is not a footnote. It is a continuing obligation that will define the credibility of Nairobi's fiscal recovery — and Sakaja knows the Senate will be watching every shilling of it.



Somalia's Federal Government has formally rejected a Supreme Court ruling issued on 5 November 2026 concerning the country's constitutional amendments and the tenure of elected institutions, deepening a legal and political confrontation at the heart of the state. State Attorney General Sulayman Mohamed announced the government's position, setting out constitutional and procedural grounds for the objection and arguing that the Supreme Court justices failed to follow prescribed judicial procedures in arriving at their decision. The rejection places the federal executive in direct conflict with the country's highest court at a moment of acute institutional fragility. Somalia has been navigating overlapping pressures — an ongoing security crisis, contested federal-state relations and a constitutional reform process that has repeatedly stalled over competing political interests. A government that refuses to recognise a Supreme Court ruling does not merely challenge a verdict. It challenges the architecture of the rule of law itself — and in Somalia, that architecture remains dangerously incomplete.



Democratic Party of Kenya leader Justin Muturi has challenged the credibility of the government's compensation process for victims of the 2024 anti-government protests, demanding answers after reports emerged that only one fatality had been recognised among 157 cases approved for payment.

Muturi called on Professor Makau Mutua, who chairs the Uwiano oversight team, to publish the methodology, complete findings and an independently verifiable account of deaths recorded during the demonstrations — figures he said contradict documentation by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, which recorded at least 60 deaths during the June-July 2024 protests, rising to 73 in subsequent reporting. "If this figure is being advanced as an account of the deaths arising from protests, it amounts to an industrial-scale cover-up of documented human rights violations," Muturi said, warning that the process risked becoming, in his words, "a human rights laundering service."

The former Attorney General insisted that financial compensation could not substitute for accountability, arguing that families of the deceased deserved truth and justice alongside any payment. He called for full implementation of the Victim Protection Act, 2014, and demanded that every reported death be investigated and those responsible for unlawful killings held accountable.

"Compensation is not justice," he said. "Families deserve more than cheques."



Elgeyo Marakwet Governor Wisley Rotich escaped unhurt yesternday morning when his official grey Toyota Land Cruiser Prado collided with a motorcycle rider at Chepkoilel Junction along the Eldoret-Iten Road in Uasin Gishu County at around 8am, leaving the vehicle's bonnet and headlights badly damaged. The motorcycle rider was taken to a nearby health facility and later reported to be in stable condition. An official government driver was at the wheel at the time of the accident, not Rotich himself. Traffic police arrived shortly after as residents gathered at the scene, with photographs showing the governor standing beside an officer at the damaged vehicle. The accident came a day after Rotich clashed publicly with his Deputy Governor, Grace Cheserek, at an empowerment event in Kapyego. The governor interrupted Cheserek mid-speech, telling her to sit down and accusing her of contributing nothing financially to the fundraiser. She refused to leave the podium. "Please let me finish my speech, Governor. You did not bring me here," Cheserek responded, before criticising the county administration over failures in healthcare and education delivery and accusing it of substituting handouts for genuine service. Two incidents in two days — one on the road, one on the podium — have thrust Elgeyo Marakwet's leadership into an uncomfortable public spotlight.

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Elections **"Security arrangements are being considered across every stage," Murkomen said.**

Murkomen assures international partners of peaceful 2027 Kenya elections

Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen tells diplomatic missions that security preparations are under way across all stages of the electoral cycle.

BY Yvonne Wambui
@themtkenyatimes



Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen

Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen yesterday assured international partners that Kenya is committed to holding peaceful, free and fair elections in 2027, pledging that the government is putting concrete security measures in place before, during and after the General Election.

Murkomen made the assurances during a meeting with Refugee Donor Group heads of mission and other international partners in Nairobi, where he outlined the government's approach to safeguarding the electoral process from campaign season through to the announcement of results and the post-election period.

"Security arrangements are being considered across every stage," Murkomen told the gathering, emphasising that effective coordination among security agencies, political leaders, electoral institutions and civil society would be central to maintaining calm throughout the electioneering period.

The assurances carry weight given Kenya's history. The country has experienced serious election-related violence in the past, most devastatingly following the disputed 2007 polls, and the spectre of that period continues to shape how both Kenyans and international observers approach each electoral cycle. For diplomatic missions and development partners, stability is not merely a political preference — it underpins their broader engagement with the country.

International partners have consistently pressed Kenya on democratic governance, human rights, institutional independence and transparent electoral processes. Their confidence in Kenya's political environment directly influences diplomatic relations, foreign investment and development support. Murkomen's engagement with donor representatives signals that the government understands the connection between electoral credibility and Kenya's standing in the international community.

As political parties begin to intensify their activities ahead of 2027, the pressures on the system will only grow. Questions of institutional independence — particularly around the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission — political tolerance and the conduct of campaigns will dominate public discourse in the months ahead. Leaders across the political divide will face scrutiny over whether their rhetoric builds or undermines national cohesion.

Security agencies, meanwhile, will carry an enormous operational responsibility. Citizens must be free to participate in political activities without intimidation, harassment or the threat of violence. That freedom is not incidental to democracy — it is its foundation.

Murkomen's words in that Nairobi meeting room were a necessary beginning. But Kenya's international partners, and more importantly its citizens, will be watching whether those words translate into visible, accountable action on the ground. Adequate financing for security preparations, protection of constitutional freedoms and genuine commitment to cohesion cannot remain items on a checklist.

The 2027 election will ultimately be judged not by the assurances offered today, but by the environment in which Kenyans cast their votes.

Ruto nominates Chelagat as Data Commissioner



Lydia Sitienei Chelagat

BY Grace Wanja
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President William Ruto yesterday nominated Lydia Sitienei Chelagat as Kenya's next Data Commissioner, forwarding her name to the National Assembly for vetting and approval under the Data Protection Act.

Chelagat served as Corporation Secretary and Director of Legal Services at the Communications Authority of Kenya. She emerged from a competitive field of 152 applicants after the Public Service Commission shortlisted 13 candidates for interviews held on 5 October 2026 at its Harambee Avenue offices in Nairobi. Among those interviewed was Media Council of Kenya chief executive David Omwoyo.

Chelagat is expected to succeed Immaculate Kassait, Kenya's inaugural Data Commissioner, whose six-year non-renewable term has ended. Kassait was appointed in November 2020 and oversaw the establishment of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner under the Data Protection Act, 2019. The law limits the holder to a single term with no eligibility for reappointment.

The office has grown considerably in significance as Kenya expands its digital economy, with mounting public concern over how government agencies, financial institutions, telecoms and private businesses handle personal data.

Ruto's announcement also included leadership changes at five state corporations. Waweru Karanja was appointed chief executive of the Privatisation Authority; Wakhungu Patrick Murunga takes the helm of the Regional Centre on Groundwater Resources; and Peninah Wangare Wahome was named chief executive of the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya. John Washington Agutu and Janerose Omondi were named acting chief executives of the National Housing Corporation and Kenya National Entrepreneurs Savings Trust respectively.

Parliament holds the final word — and with Kenya's digital economy expanding rapidly, the scrutiny will matter.

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Business **The dispute could affect approximately 9.1 million current and former subscribers, based on figures presented by Safaricom during proceedings**

Fuliza lawsuit: Are Kenyan mobile lenders protecting consumers or exploiting their vulnerability?

A High Court representative case involving 9.1 million subscribers puts Safaricom's overdraft service under judicial scrutiny — and raises hard questions about transparency in Kenya's digital lending boom.

BY Collins Kibet
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Kenya's digital financial services sector has transformed how millions of citizens access money, make payments and manage financial emergencies. Through mobile lending platforms, Kenyans can borrow within seconds without visiting a bank, completing paperwork or providing collateral. Beneath this convenience, however, lies an increasingly urgent question: are digital lending services genuinely empowering ordinary citizens, or are they trapping financially vulnerable households in a cycle of debt? A lawsuit involving Safaricom's Fuliza overdraft service has brought that debate sharply back into the national spotlight.

The High Court's Commercial and Tax Division yesterday allowed Paul Gakungu Mihango to pursue a representative case against Safaricom over the disclosure of interest and fees charged through Fuliza. The dispute could affect approximately 9.1 million current and former subscribers, based on figures presented by Safaricom during proceedings. The development is significant because it moves the conversation beyond individual customer complaints and places the transparency of mobile lending services under direct judicial scrutiny.

At the centre of the dispute is whether customers receive sufficient information about the actual cost of borrowing. Mihango reportedly approached a Safaricom shop in February 2025 seeking a comprehensive breakdown of charges incurred through Fuliza. His lawyer subsequently argued that the information provided was inadequate. The question his case raises is fundamental to consumer protection: how can ordinary Kenyans make informed financial decisions when they may not fully understand the charges attached to their borrowing?

Safaricom has defended its disclosure practices, maintaining that customers receive information through mini-statements, SMS notifications whenever Fuliza is used and entries reflected in their M-PESA statements. The disagreement, however, highlights an important distinction — the difference between making information available and ensuring customers can actually understand it. A transaction notification may confirm that a fee has been deducted, but consumers may still need a clear explanation of the amount borrowed, applicable charges, outstanding balances and the total sum payable. The court must consider whether existing disclosure practices satisfy the relevant legal and contractual obligations.

Fuliza operates as an overdraft facility allowing eligible M-PESA customers to complete transactions even when their mobile money balance is insufficient. The service runs through a partnership involving Safaricom, KCB Bank Kenya, NCBA Bank Kenya and Sidian Bank, according to terms updated in July 2026. This arrangement demonstrates how telecommunications companies and financial institutions have combined services to expand access to credit. That expansion, however, creates a corresponding responsibility to ensure customers understand what they are signing up for.

Borrowing through Fuliza is not without cost. Published terms provide for applicable interest and administrative fees depending on the outstanding amount and repayment period, including a daily administrative fee capped at KSh30 for each day an overdraft remains unpaid. For households already stretched by food prices, transport, rent and school fees, even modest charges accumulate quickly. Repeated borrowing and delayed repayment can compound financial obligations in ways that customers may not fully anticipate at the moment they accept credit.

The growing dependence on mobile credit also reflects deeper economic conditions. Many Kenyans turn to Fuliza when they face unexpected shortfalls or run dry before their next income arrives. Small traders use it to complete transactions. Workers borrow to cover transport. Low-income earners reach for it to buy essentials. In such circumstances, digital credit offers immediate relief. When borrowing becomes a routine response to insufficient income rather than an occasional emergency measure, however, consumers risk entering a cycle in which incoming money is immediately absorbed by existing debt.

This should not be read as evidence of financial irresponsibility. It reflects the difficult economic realities facing millions of Kenyan households. Unemployment, irregular earnings, rising living costs and limited access to affordable formal credit have made readily available mobile loans appealing for people with few alternatives. A person on an unstable income has little opportunity to build savings or maintain an emergency fund. The challenge is therefore not whether mobile lending should exist, but whether it is being offered responsibly and transparently.

The lawsuit raises broader questions about consumer protection in Kenya's expanding digital economy. Article 46 of the Constitution guarantees consumers the right to information necessary to gain full benefit from goods and services, as well as protection of their economic interests. These principles are particularly important in financial services, where borrowing decisions are made on the basis of information provided by lenders. Transparency is not an additional benefit — it is a fundamental obligation in any consumer-facing credit arrangement.

The court has directed Mihango to publish a notice in an English-language national daily to inform eligible subscribers about the proceedings. A draft notice is expected to be submitted for court approval, after which subscribers will have 30 days from publication to apply to join the case. Permission to pursue a representative lawsuit does not mean Safaricom has been found liable. The central allegations remain subject to judicial determination, and the company retains its full opportunity to defend its practices.

The proceedings could nonetheless establish an important precedent for Kenya's digital financial services industry. Other mobile lending platforms and financial institutions should recognise that technological convenience cannot substitute for accountability. Customers must understand borrowing charges before accepting credit, receive accurate transaction records and have accessible channels through which they can query disputed deductions. Regulators must strengthen oversight to ensure compliance with consumer protection requirements without discouraging responsible innovation.

Safaricom and its banking partners should consider how borrowing information is presented. Clear statements showing original amounts borrowed, applicable fees, accumulated charges, repayments made and outstanding balances would strengthen consumer confidence and reduce disputes. Financial literacy programmes must also be expanded to help citizens understand digital credit, repayment obligations and the real consequences of borrowing beyond their means.

Mobile lending has transformed Kenya's financial landscape. Its long-term success, however, depends entirely on public trust. Kenyans deserve convenient financial products without uncertainty about what those products actually cost. As the court examines the Fuliza dispute, one question sits at the heart of proceedings: should millions of consumers simply trust digital lending platforms, or should those platforms be required to prove they deserve that trust?

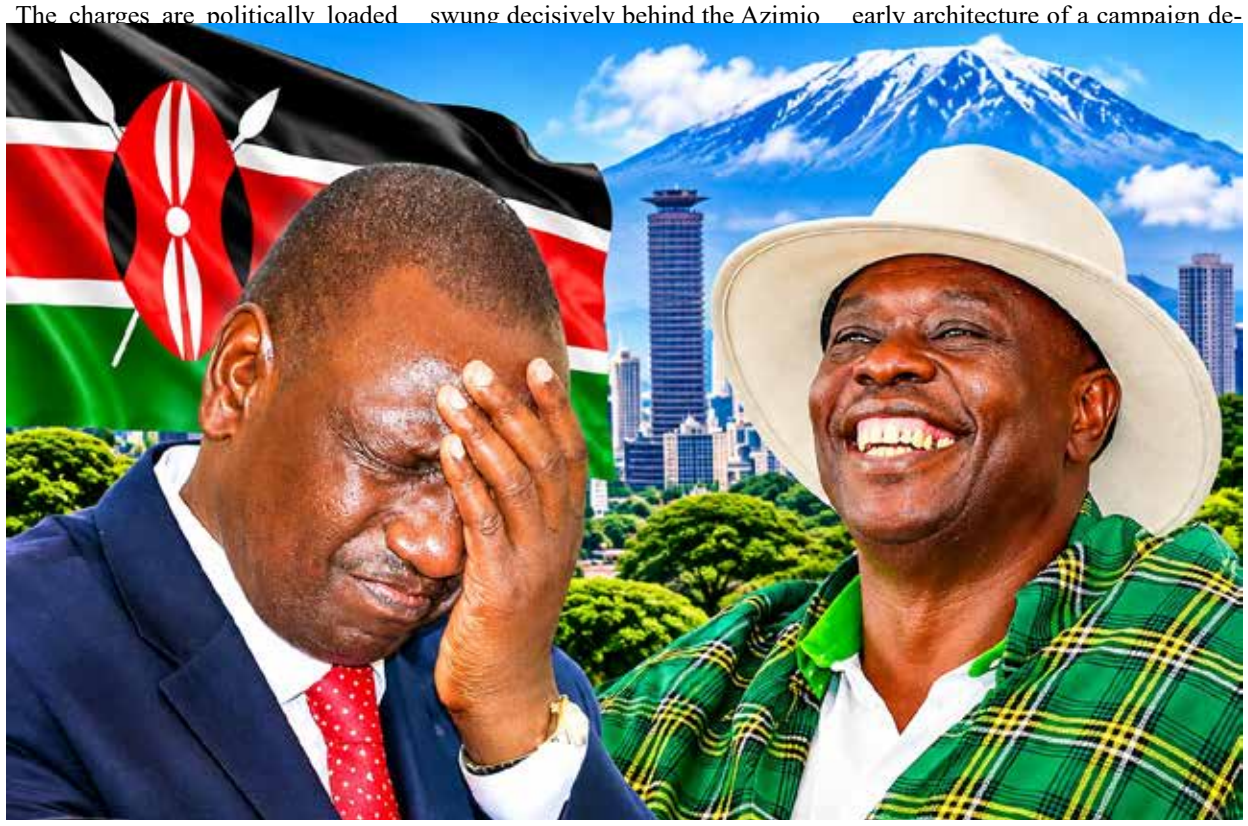
In a country where financial inclusion is a national priority, the answer should not be difficult.

Politics **"In four years, you have done nothing for them. No roads, no water, no electricity, no airport, nothing. ZERO!" Gachagua**

Ruto's 2027 nightmare: Gachagua, Kalonzo and Sifuna forge a coalition that could end his presidency

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's war with President William Ruto has hardened into a structured political alliance that now threatens to make Ruto the first Kenyan president to serve only a single term.

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes



President William Ruto and his former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

Rigathi Gachagua, the former Deputy President of Kenya and leader of the Democracy for the Citizens Party, has escalated his public offensive against President William Ruto, warning him to stop exploiting his name to court Gusii voters while delivering nothing to the region — and signalling that the broader political battle for August 2027 has already begun in earnest.

The warning, issued in a characteristically combative statement, was vintage Gachagua: direct, personal and strategically timed. But behind the theatre of insults and political point-scoring lies something far more consequential than a falling-out between two former allies. What is taking shape in Kenya's political landscape ahead of the 2027 General Election is a coalition of regional power blocs — anchored by Gachagua on Mount Kenya, Wiper Democratic Movement leader Kalonzo Musyoka in Lower Eastern, and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi Movement drawing from Western Kenya and Luo Nyanza — that together command a combined electoral geography capable of ending Ruto's presidency after a single term.

No Kenyan president has ever served only one term. Ruto, increasingly aware of that historical symmetry and what its disruption would mean for his legacy, is fighting to prevent it.

"In four years, you have done nothing for them. No roads, no water, no electricity, no airport, nothing. ZERO!" Gachagua said of the President's record in Kisii and Nyamira counties, where Ruto has been making repeated visits ahead of 2027. The former deputy president dismissed those visits as an exercise in political theatre — a campaign script borrowed from 2022 that substituted familiarity with actual development. "RiggyG is not a road in Kisii or Nyamira. Rigathi is not a water project. Gachagua is not an airport," he said, in the kind of line that lands on social media and sticks in a voter's memory.

The charges are politically loaded but not entirely without basis. Four years into the Kenya Kwanza administration, public frustration over undelivered infrastructure promises — roads, water projects, rural electrification, affordable housing — is palpable in many counties that voted for the government in 2022. Gachagua is not simply venting personal bitterness. He is methodically constructing a political narrative in which Ruto's first term becomes the evidence for why there should not be a second.

The strategy is rooted in arithmetic. Mount Kenya — the most populous voting bloc in Kenya, encompassing Kikuyu, Embu, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Laikipia and Kirinyaga — delivered Ruto his presidency in 2022 when Gachagua was on the ticket and the region voted as a near-unified bloc. Without that bloc, or with it divided, no path to State House is straightforward. Gachagua's control over that electorate, while not absolute, remains the single most consequential variable in the 2027 presidential race. He knows it. Ruto knows it. And Kalonzo Musyoka, whose Wiper stronghold in Lower Eastern delivered Ukambani in a bloc that swung decisively behind the Azimio coalition in 2022, has spent the past year in quiet but deliberate conversation with the DCP's leadership about a shared opposition architecture.

Add Sifuna's Western alliance networks — drawing from Luo Nyanza, Luhya constituencies in Kakamega, Bungoma and Vihiga, and an urban Nairobi base — and the coalition's geographic spread becomes formidable. No single presidential candidate needs to win all three blocs outright. They simply need to deny Ruto enough votes in each region to push him below the constitutional thresholds that determine a first-round victory. The coalition's power lies not in what it wins, but in what it takes away.

Gachagua himself has signalled he may not be the presidential flag-bearer. In recent months he has floated the possibility of supporting DCP Secretary-General John Methu as the presidential candidate, positioning himself as kingmaker rather than candidate — a role that historically carries more durable power in Kenyan politics than the presidency itself. His remarks about the 2027 contest are therefore not merely personal attacks on Ruto. They are the early architecture of a campaign designed to mobilise, coordinate and ultimately direct that combined electoral force.

The former deputy president's reference to what he called the "Ol Kalou template" is telling. At a recent by-election in Ol Kalou, in Nyandarua County, his DCP mobilised ground operations that he claims rattled the government's preferred outcome. "The half dose I gave you in Ol Kalou was just a dress rehearsal," he said, pledging to replicate that model across all 290 constituencies. His language about preventing electoral malpractice and monitoring state institutions suggests the coalition is also investing in a parallel civic infrastructure — polling agents, voter education and legal preparedness — that goes beyond the standard Kenyan opposition playbook.

Ruto, for his part, has not responded publicly to Gachagua's latest broadside, but his behaviour tells its own story. The frequency of presidential visits to Mount Kenya and to the Gusii region — historically a swing zone whose votes can shift outcomes in a tight race — reflects a government that has read its own internal polling and does not like what it sees. The alleged overture to the family of Nderitu Gachagua, the late former Nyeri Governor and Rigathi's brother, which the former deputy president dismissed publicly as a clumsy attempt at political co-option, points to a Ruto team scrambling for symbolic footholds in a region that is slipping.

"You shall vacate State House in shame and humiliation," Gachagua said, in the kind of declaration that would be easy to dismiss as political bravado if the coalition behind it were not so structurally credible.

Kenya arrives at this moment carrying the weight of its own political history. Its elections have rarely been settled purely on policy or development record. Region, ethnicity, economic grievance and the precise choreography of coalition-building have always been the decisive factors. What makes 2027 different is the degree to which a sitting president, with the full resources of the state behind him, faces not a single organised opposition but a dispersed, regionally embedded network of political actors who each control enough voters to reshape the outcome independently — and who have found, in their shared antagonism towards Ruto, sufficient common ground to coordinate.

That coordination is still fragile. Coalitions of this nature in Kenya have a long history of fracturing under the pressure of negotiating positions, running mate demands and the irresistible pull of last-minute deals with the incumbent. Ruto's government will be working every lever available — financial, institutional, diplomatic — to peel members of that emerging bloc away before the 2027 campaign formally begins.

But if the coalition holds, Kenya may be writing a new chapter in its democratic history. The first president to serve a single term. The first to be voted out rather than term-limited out. The first whose own deputy led the charge to remove him.

August 10, 2027 is nine months away. The campaign, in every practical sense, has already begun.

Politics What makes this moment particularly significant is that neither the government nor the opposition can afford complacency

Kenya's political weather: Ruto consolidates as the opposition struggles to find its 2027 footing

With the election still months away, the battle lines are already drawn — and the opposition's greatest enemy may be itself.



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo
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Kenya is entering one of its most consequential political seasons, with events unfolding this month offering an increasingly revealing picture of the road to the 2027 General Election. The formal campaign period remains ahead, but the political temperature confirms the contest has already begun. Leaders are repositioning, regional alliances are being reconsidered, parties are testing their influence and potential presidential contenders are quietly calculating their chances.

What makes this moment particularly significant is that neither the government nor the opposition can afford complacency. President William Ruto's ongoing tour of the Gusii region — covering Kisii and Nyamira — is more than a routine development engagement. It is a strategic political undertaking in a region whose electoral significance cannot be underestimated. The growing visibility of former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i has introduced a new dimension to Ruto's relationship with the Gusii electorate, forcing the President to demonstrate that his administration remains responsive to the region's expectations while confronting an emerging political alternative.

Commissioned projects and infrastructure promises may strengthen government visibility, but their political value will ultimately depend on whether ordinary citizens can identify tangible improvements in their lives. For an electorate grappling with unemployment, rising costs and diminishing purchasing power, political rhetoric is no longer sufficient. People want functioning roads, affordable healthcare and an economy that rewards their labour.

Perhaps the most revealing development, however, is the opposition's continuing struggle to establish a coherent political identity. The tensions involving Rigathi Gachagua, Matiang'i and Kalonzo Musyoka expose the difficult balance between individual presidential ambitions and the collective necessity of building a credible alternative to the incumbent. The reconciliation meeting held on Saturday among the three leaders was an important attempt to restore confidence and prevent personal disagreements from derailing the broader opposition project.

Fundamental questions remain unanswered. Who leads the presidential campaign? How is that candidate selected? What guarantees are extended to coalition partners? How would power be distributed after an electoral victory? The participation and expectations of Martha Karua, Eugene Wamalwa, Justin Muturi, Edwin Sifuna and others further complicate the negotiations. A credible opposition cannot be constructed around the assumption that individual leaders possess exclusive ownership of particular communities or voting blocs.



President William Ruto in Gusii



President William Ruto

Kenya's political maturity increasingly demands a departure from ethnic mobilisation towards a more persuasive national conversation. The electorate is changing — particularly among younger citizens who are impatient with political establishments that offer promises without accountability. Their concerns are defined not by historical loyalties but by employment, economic opportunity, fairness and the integrity of leadership. Any opposition coalition that fails to understand this changing political consciousness risks becoming merely another arrangement of competing interests rather than a genuine national alternative.

Musalia Mudavadi's renewed efforts to mobilise Western Kenya behind Ruto illustrate the importance of regional bargaining in the emerging political equation. His appeal for stronger UDA parliamentary representation demonstrates that the struggle extends beyond the presidency to influence within government and parliament. Yet Western Kenya is not a politically homogeneous constituency, and the competing influence of Wamalwa and Sifuna makes its eventual direction difficult to predict.

The Rift Valley presents a different but equally significant challenge. Ruto's traditional political advantage in the region remains an important pillar of his national strategy, but historical loyalty should never be mistaken for permanent electoral ownership. Economic circumstances, agricultural returns, the cost of living and the distribution of development resources will increasingly influence public judgement. In Nakuru, Senator Tabitha Karanja Keroche's realignment towards Gachagua's Democratic Change Party and the emerging gubernatorial contest against Governor Susan Kihika offer a further indication of how national political disagreements are reshaping county-level competition.

As the country moves through November, the political landscape will be shaped by three interconnected developments: the conclusion of Ruto's Gusii tour and what it reveals about the administration's regional standing; the opposition's ability to transform reconciliation into a practical and binding coalition arrangement; and the continued positioning of regional political actors ahead of the approaching electoral contest.

Ruto currently retains the advantage of incumbency, organisational visibility and access to government platforms. Nevertheless, these advantages cannot indefinitely compensate for governance shortcomings or a widening disconnect between public expectations and actual performance. The opposition, conversely, has a genuine opportunity to capitalise on public discontent — but only if it demonstrates discipline, ideological clarity and a willingness to subordinate personal ambition to a common national purpose.

The greatest danger facing Kenya is that the 2027 election becomes once again a contest of personalities and ethnic arithmetic rather than substantive national questions. The cost of living, public debt, corruption, healthcare, unemployment, agricultural productivity and institutional accountability must occupy the centre of the political debate. Equally, persons with disabilities, women and young people must be recognised as legitimate participants in shaping the country's future — not convenient constituencies to be remembered during campaigns and forgotten after elections.

Kenya does not need another coalition, another presidential candidate or another elaborate campaign promise. It needs leadership that understands the difference between acquiring power and earning the right to exercise it. The electorate must judge political actors not by the size of their rallies or the prominence of their alliances, but by the substance of their ideas, the integrity of their conduct and their demonstrated commitment to public service.

Power is never permanently owned. It is continually renewed — or withdrawn — by the people it is meant to serve.

Drugs Kenya must therefore examine the effectiveness of its maritime surveillance systems, intelligence networks and border management arrangements

Kenya's KSh3.6B drug bust: The dangerous networks turning the coast into a trafficking corridor



A record methamphetamine seizure in Kwale County exposes the sophisticated transnational criminal networks exploiting Kenya's coastline — and the hard work that lies ahead.

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's coastline found itself on Sunday at the centre of an international drug trafficking investigation after 454 kilogrammes of suspected methamphetamine valued at approximately KSh3.6B was recovered in Kwale County. The seizure, made during a multi-agency security operation, is more than another entry in the country's growing list of narcotics interceptions. It raises uncomfortable questions about the networks operating across East Africa, the vulnerability of coastal communities and the capacity of law enforcement agencies to pursue the powerful interests financing the illegal trade.

Detectives working alongside Tanzanian security authorities arrested three suspects in an intelligence-led operation conducted in Shirazi and Ganja la Simba villages in Kwale's Msambweni area. The operation followed information shared across the Kenya-Tanzania border, demonstrating how cooperation between neighbouring countries can help uncover criminal activity that might otherwise remain hidden. The suspects included two Tanzanian nationals and a Ugandan woman. Investigators also recovered two motor vehicles and a motorcycle believed to be connected to the suspected trafficking operation.

Director of Criminal Investigations Mohamed Amin said preliminary investigations suggest the consignment originated in Pakistan and was intended for markets across East and Southern Africa. The exact composition of the recovered substances, however, remains subject to formal laboratory analysis — a distinction that matters because criminal allegations must be established through evidence, not the monetary value attached to a seizure.

The investigation reportedly began with intelligence from a separate narcotics interception in Tanzania. Information obtained from a suspect arrested there helped Kenyan detectives trace possible accomplices and eventually locate the larger consignment in Kwale. This illustrates the increasingly interconnected nature of organised crime. Trafficking networks do not operate within the boundaries of a single country. Their operations involve suppliers, intermediaries, transporters and financiers spread across multiple jurisdictions, making isolated national enforcement efforts inadequate.

The latest seizure comes against the background of another major narcotics interception involving the vessel MV Mashaallah. Authorities previously recovered approximately 1,036 kilogrammes of methamphetamine valued at KSh8.2B from the vessel, with the drugs subsequently destroyed at Bamburi Cement Factory on 24 September 2026. Amin has clarified, however, that the Kwale consignment and the MV Mashaallah shipment are separate cases, with preliminary investigations pointing to different countries of origin and distinct trafficking networks — a distinction that matters to ensure each investigation targets the correct criminal structure.

Kenya's geographical position gives it considerable economic and strategic importance. Its coastline connects the country to international shipping routes, regional markets and commercial networks reaching far beyond East Africa. Those same advantages, however, create security responsibilities that cannot be ignored. Remote settlements, difficult-to-monitor maritime spaces and gaps in regional surveillance create opportunities for organised trafficking networks. Investigators must establish how the latest consignment entered the country, how it was transported to the recovery locations and whether any local or international intermediaries facilitated its movement.

Kenya must therefore examine the effectiveness of its maritime surveillance systems, intelligence networks and border management arrangements. Security cannot depend entirely on occasional operations triggered by information received from foreign authorities. A country that intends to protect its territorial integrity must develop the capacity to identify suspicious movements, investigate financial transactions and follow criminal networks before consignments reach their intended destinations.

The Kenya-Tanzania cooperation that contributed to the Kwale operation is encouraging and demonstrates that intelligence sharing produces meaningful results when neighbouring countries recognise that organised crime does not respect political boundaries. Yet cooperation must extend beyond the exchange of information during major investigations. Joint surveillance, coordinated investigations, shared intelligence databases and consistent prosecution procedures are equally important in preventing criminal networks from exploiting differences between national enforcement systems.

Perhaps the most important question arising from the seizure concerns those who finance and benefit from the narcotics business. While the recovery of 454 kilogrammes represents a significant operational achievement, those physically found at the recovery locations may not represent the full structure behind the operation. International trafficking networks operate in layers. Those who finance the purchase of drugs may never handle the substances. Organisers may operate from outside the country while transporters and local intermediaries manage the physical movement of consignments. Others provide accommodation, vehicles, communication facilities or financial services that keep the operation running.

Amin indicated that investigators are working with the Asset Recovery Agency to trace suspected proceeds of drug trafficking, including cash, vehicles, land and businesses. Financial investigations can expose relationships that ordinary criminal inquiries might overlook. When suspicious wealth is linked to criminal activity through admissible evidence, asset recovery can weaken the economic foundation supporting organised crime. Such investigations, however, require patience, professionalism and strict accountability. The fight against narcotics must not become an excuse for arbitrary confiscation or punishment without due process.

The estimated KSh3.6B value of the recovered drugs attracts attention, but the public should not allow the financial figure to overshadow the human consequences of the trade. Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant associated with serious physical and psychological harm. Its distribution can devastate individuals, families and entire communities. For young people, the availability of dangerous substances presents a particular concern in a country still grappling with unemployment, economic pressure and limited opportunities. The government must ensure that rehabilitation is treated as an important component of public health policy, not an afterthought to security operations.

According to the DCI, the National Police Service recovered more than 21,000 kilogrammes of cannabis between January and October 2026, alongside smaller quantities of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and amphetamine. During the same period, 1,631 suspects were arrested in connection with narcotics-related offences. The figures indicate the scale of enforcement activity but also demonstrate that the challenge extends far beyond individual operations. The National Anti-Narcotics Investigation Bureau has been strengthened through additional recruitment, training and the establishment of more operational stations — investments that must ultimately be measured by successful prosecutions, disrupted financial networks and the prevention of criminal re-emergence.

The three suspects arrested in Kwale have been held in custody for 15 days as detectives continue their investigations, including forensic examination and verification of documents. Their guilt remains a matter for the courts to determine. The presumption of innocence must remain intact even when allegations involve substances worth billions of shillings.

The Kwale seizure deserves recognition as a significant law enforcement achievement. It demonstrates the value of intelligence-led investigations and regional cooperation. Yet its greater importance lies in the questions it leaves unanswered. How did the consignment reach the recovery locations? Who financed the operation? Which individuals or businesses facilitated its movement? And what measures will prevent another network from exploiting the same vulnerabilities?

Kenya's fight against narcotics cannot be judged by the weight of drugs displayed at press conferences or the number of suspects presented before cameras. Its success must be measured by whether the country can dismantle the organisations behind the trade, prosecute those responsible, recover criminal proceeds and protect communities from the consequences of drug distribution. The Indian Ocean should remain a gateway to opportunity, not an advantage for criminal enterprises.

A KSh3.6B seizure may represent a major interruption to one suspected operation. But until the financiers, organisers and beneficiaries behind such networks are identified and brought to justice, the business of trafficking remains a threat waiting for its next opportunity. Kenya must do more than intercept the drugs — it must dismantle the business that keeps bringing them to its shores.

Politics The fault line runs between Gachagua and Matiang'i, and it is not merely personal. It is strategic. Gachagua has been explicit and unapologetic about his transactional vision of coalition politics

Ruto fires back: You cannot carry votes in a bag

President William Ruto dismisses the emerging Gachagua-Kalonzo-Matiang'i coalition as political theatre, but the opposition's weekend reconciliation signals a gathering storm ahead of August 2027.

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes



President William Ruto

President William Ruto yesterday hit back at former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, Wiper Democratic Movement leader Kalonzo Musyoka and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, ridiculing their coalition negotiations as an insult to Kenyan voters and dismissing claims that any politician could carry millions of votes in their pocket.

The President's remarks, delivered during a development tour of the Gusii region, were his most direct public response yet to the accelerating opposition project that now poses the most credible structural threat to his re-election. They were also, in their own way, a measure of how seriously State House is taking what had previously been dismissed as a loose gathering of political losers.

"I hear three people called a meeting and talked about, 'I have a bag of 10 million votes,' and another said, 'I have a bag of 3 million votes,'" Ruto told the crowd, his tone mixing mockery with genuine indignation. "Do you think Kenyans are so gullible that you can walk around claiming to carry their votes? Please, my friends, respect Kenyans, even if only a little. Stop despising them by talking about walking around with their votes."

The speech was timed with characteristic political precision. Two days earlier, on Saturday 7 November, Gachagua, Kalonzo and Matiang'i had sat down in Nairobi in a meeting convened largely at Kalonzo's initiative, aimed at cooling tensions that had threatened to fracture the opposition before it had properly formed. The meeting was not a minor internal disagreement being managed behind closed doors. It was a crisis summit — and the fact that it needed to happen at all revealed both the ambition and the fragility of the coalition Ruto's former deputy is trying to build.

The fault line runs between Gachagua and Matiang'i, and it is not merely personal. It is strategic. Gachagua has been explicit and unapologetic about his transactional vision of coalition politics: each leader must bring demonstrable voter numbers to the table before claiming a share of the presidential ticket. He has assigned himself the Mount Kenya bloc — which he estimates at roughly 10 million votes — and allocated targets to his partners: three million for Kalonzo from Lower Eastern, and between four million and five million for Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna from his Western alliance networks. The model is cold-eyed and arithmetical, designed to ensure that the coalition's eventual presidential candidate is chosen on the basis of proven mobilisation capacity rather than political seniority or historical entitlement.

Matiang'i has pushed back against precisely that logic. His argument is that coalition-building in a country as politically complex as Kenya requires accommodation, not scorecards — that demanding numerical proof of voter loyalty before granting a seat at the table risks alienating precisely the leaders whose networks the opposition needs. It is a reasonable political argument. It is also, critics within the DCP camp would note, the argument most likely to be made by someone who is uncertain whether his own numbers would pass Gachagua's audit.

Kalonzo, whose experience of coalition negotiations stretches back across multiple electoral cycles, stepped into the breach with the instincts of a seasoned mediator. The Saturday meeting appeared, at least outwardly, to produce a truce. Matiang'i posted photographs of the three leaders on social media with the caption: "Brothers will always put Kenya first." The following day, addressing a church congregation in Naro Moru, Nyeri County, he went further: "As the opposition, we may have our differences, just like any household. But we know Kenyans want us united, and I assure you, we will build an unbeatable team, united in purpose and ready to deliver victory with military precision."

The imagery of military precision was striking — deliberate, almost certainly, from a man whose career has been defined by security and institutional authority. It was aimed not at the congregation in Naro Moru but at the broader Mount Kenya electorate, signalling that Matiang'i understands the assignment even if he and Gachagua continue to disagree about the route.

Ruto's response — swift, public and geographically chosen — tells its own story. The Gusii region, covering Kisii and Nyamira counties, is a classic swing zone. It voted broadly for Kenya Kwanza in 2022 but has been a target of intense opposition courtship, partly because Gachagua has claimed, with some credibility, that the government has underserved it. By travelling to Gusii immediately after the opposition's weekend summit, Ruto was sending a message: I am here, I am visible, and I will not cede this ground without a fight.

His dismissal of the vote-counting framework as disrespectful to Kenyans was rhetorically effective but substantively selective. Politicians have always traded in voter blocs. The language of ethnic arithmetic is as old as multiparty democracy in Kenya. What Ruto objected to was not the practice but the transparency — the opposition's unusually open acknowledgement of the transactional bargaining that normally happens behind closed doors. In exposing it, Gachagua has forced a conversation about political accountability that cuts both ways.

The deeper question hanging over all of this is whether the coalition will hold. Kenya's opposition history is littered with promising alliances that collapsed under the weight of competing presidential ambitions, last-minute defections and the irresistible financial pressure applied by incumbents with access to state resources. Ruto's government will be working every available lever — patronage, prosecution, selective enforcement, targeted investment in swing regions — to thin the coalition before 2027.

What is different this time is the intensity of the personal dimension. Gachagua was not merely a political rival of Ruto's. He was his deputy, his running mate, the man who helped deliver the Mount Kenya vote that made the presidency possible. His removal through impeachment last year — the first successful impeachment of a deputy president in Kenya's history — transformed a political relationship into something closer to a vendetta. That changes the calculus. Men who feel they have been wronged do not negotiate or defect as easily as those pursuing purely strategic interests.

Kenya has never voted a sitting president out after a single term. Ruto knows the history. So does Gachagua.

One of them intends to change it.



United Alternative Government

Politics **It is a significant personal turnaround, but also a revealing one. Karauri entered parliament in 2022 as an independent candidate after failing to secure the Jubilee ticket for Kasarani**

Karauri joins UDA, eyes Nairobi governor seat in 2027

The Kasarani MP and SportPesa chief executive makes his political move a week after incumbent governor Sakaja crossed to ODM.

BY Noel Isoyi
@themtkenyatimes



Ronald Karauri was unveiled at UDA headquarters, Hustler Plaza in Nairobi

Ronald Karauri, Kasarani Member of Parliament and chief executive of SportPesa, officially joined the ruling United Democratic Alliance on Monday, declaring his intention to contest the Nairobi gubernatorial seat in the 2027 General Election. Karauri was unveiled at UDA headquarters, Hustler Plaza in Nairobi, where he was received by UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar, National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah, Dagoretti South MP John Kiarie and Nominated Senator Karen Nyamu.

The timing of Karauri's move is striking. His arrival at UDA comes just seven days after incumbent Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja abandoned the party for the Orange Democratic Movement on 2 November 2026. Sakaja, who won the governorship on a UDA ticket in 2022, was unveiled at Chungwa House by ODM Deputy Party Leader Simba Arati and is widely expected to defend his seat on an ODM ticket in 2027. The two men now appear set for a direct contest — but from opposing political homes.

Karauri's journey to UDA was not straightforward. As recently as 29 October, he told radio presenter Alex Mwakideu that he was interested in the ODM ticket for Nairobi governor — a declaration that would have set up a bruising primary fight with Sakaja within the same party. Within days, he had changed course. Standing before UDA officials on Monday, he was unequivocal: "Kiti cha gavana Nairobi ni kiti cha UDA" — the Nairobi governor's seat belongs to UDA.



It is a significant personal turnaround, but also a revealing one. Karauri entered parliament in 2022 as an independent candidate after failing to secure the Jubilee ticket for Kasarani. He went on to defeat the UDA candidate in that election — making his current enlistment into the very party he once beat all the more noteworthy. Politics, as Kenya's electoral history consistently demonstrates, is rarely a straight line.

Ichung'wah, speaking at the unveiling, said President William Ruto had telephoned him in the morning to personally welcome Karauri into the fold. Ichung'wah was bullish about the party's prospects in the capital, declaring: "In 2022, Nairobi was UDA, and in 2027, Nairobi itakuwa ni UDA." The message was clear — UDA views Nairobi as a seat it intends to reclaim and hold, and it is betting on Karauri to deliver it.

Karauri wasted little time unveiling his campaign identity. His slogan — "Nairobi Haijawork. Tunataka Nairobi Fiti" — translates roughly as Nairobi is not working; we want a Nairobi that functions. It is a pitch aimed squarely at the frustrations of ordinary Nairobians: congested roads, unreliable services, uneven development and a city that, despite its economic weight, still fails many of its residents on the basics. Karauri said his campaign would focus on inclusivity, equal opportunities and equitable development across all 17 of Nairobi's constituencies — a signal that he intends to run a city-wide campaign rather than one anchored in his Kasarani backyard.

The timing of Karauri's move is striking. His arrival at UDA comes just seven days after incumbent Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja abandoned the party for the Orange Democratic Movement on 2 November 2026. Sakaja, who won the governorship on a UDA ticket in 2022, was unveiled at Chungwa House by ODM Deputy Party Leader Simba Arati and is widely expected to defend his seat on an ODM ticket in 2027. The two men now appear set for a direct contest — but from opposing political homes.

The road to City Hall, however, will not be clear. Karauri enters a crowded field. Sakaja will be a formidable opponent on an ODM ticket, drawing on incumbency and the machinery of a well-organised opposition party. Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, one of parliament's most recognisable figures, has also been linked to the race, as has Embakasi North MP James Gakuya. Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku is reportedly eyeing the seat as well — and may yet seek the UDA ticket, setting up a potential primary contest with Karauri before either faces the broader electorate.

On that point, Karauri was measured. He said he would respect the outcome of the UDA primaries ahead of the General Election scheduled for 10 August 2027. It is the kind of statement that candidates make early and that the pressures of a competitive primary can quickly test. Whether he maintains that position when the stakes are higher will say much about both the man and the party.

What is clear is that Nairobi's 2027 gubernatorial race is shaping up to be one of the most competitive and politically significant contests in the country. The capital has long been a bellwether for national political sentiment, and the battle for City Hall will draw intense scrutiny. With Sakaja now firmly in the ODM camp and Karauri planting his flag with UDA, the lines are being drawn early.

For a city of more than four million people still waiting for the leadership that matches its ambition, the crowded field of aspirants is both a reflection of Nairobi's political importance and a reminder of how much remains to be done — whoever eventually wins the keys to City Hall.

Should I return?



Should I return?
To he who left me to die in the deserted woods
The Predator that feasts on my weaknesses
The monster who forcefully disbanded my being
The parasite sucking life out of me
He who has a gallon of sinister motives planted
and watered for me

Should I return?
To the tarnished and dusty marriage
To the promises of a better tomorrow
Love coated with unsavoury lies
Being hospitalized in tow
Should I succumb to the fear of a failed marriage?

Nyasha Celeste Makombe Thee Poetic Raindrop

Why?



I know we want to prove a point,
Make ourselves look better in the eyes that don't
even see us...
But...
For a moment,
What is it that we fear and nurse lies always?

Aren't we all grown up already?
Why do we fear so dearly?

Daily we wear our fears...
This way, or is it that way
No...
It's probably no way
And there we stay
Fear all over again...
Did I lie again?
Yes...
Did I gain?
No!
Why do we fear so dearly?

BETTIE ATEMO, NOVEMBER, 2026

The dancing peacock



My dancing peacock is very cute.
Its feathers are very beautiful.
There are many colours in its feathers.

The peacock dances beautifully.
I like peacocks and their feathers.
One day, I saw a peacock.
There were many peacocks in that place.
All the peacocks were dancing together.
They looked very cute and beautiful.
The peacock sang a song.

NAME: Bhaggiyalakshmi. P
CLASS : IX
SCHOOL :GGHS school
Big Kanchipuram

Ignore Hurdles



What if a drop of water is in the middle,
Ants don't mind, they take another route,
What if a spider falls down from its web,
It doesn't stop it's climb out of fear.

What if a bird loses its feather,
It doesn't stop flying higher,
What if a flower loses a petal,
Still it blooms and spreads joy.

The nature teaches you,
One single dark moment,
Does not define your journey,
Just brush it off and proceed.

M.Raddhika
Freelance content writer
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The courage to create



Lucky souls may find a pathway wide,
With fortune and favour walking by their side,
Some doors swing open, as though by fate,
And opportunities arrive at their gate.

Perhaps it is karma, perhaps destiny's art,
A blessing bestowed before they start,
Yet luck is a gift that not all receive,
And not every dream finds doors to believe.

But brave hearts never surrender to fate,
Nor sit in despair before a closed gate,
When failure strikes and the pathways end,
They gather their courage and rise again.

They turn every setback into a seed,
And nurture their dreams with relentless creed,
Like a tiny seed that splits the stone,
They carve their path where none was shown.

They do not wait for the stars to align,
They kindle their own light, their own sunshine,
For while the lucky may welcome the day,
The brave create dawn when skies turn grey.

Opportunities may favour the fortunate,
but they are created by the courageous.
Luck may open a door, determination builds one
where none exists.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator, Writer, Motivator

Need for peace



Peace is a positive vibe,
A great grand gift of God,
Peace creates calmness,
Peace creates a big silence,
Peace correlates with wisdom,
If peace never exists in your life,
You'll be broken to peices,
Practice to live without expectations,
Be an active busy bee always,
Humming briskly while in search of nectar,
Never aim for pseudo fame,
Ever think of betraying others,
Never wish to pluck disabled one's wealth,
Often add positive vibes on you,
Neglect the negative minded people,
Ignore very bad deeds,
Declutter immoral habits,
Have true belief on the Almighty,
Strive hard in the route of success,
Hold tight the hands of truth nd honesty!!!!
Then peace would be your recurring
deposit,
Awarding you a life of gay,
Pass it towards your friends,
To live peacefully forever!!!!

VIJAYALAKSHMI.V.R., GRADUATE TEACHER,
CW WRITERS GROUP,KANCHIPURAM
DISTRICT,TAMILNADU, INDIA.

Money can't buy happiness



All your happiness, excitement, assurance, and resentment depend upon your financial circumstances. A person is respected in proportion to their wealth. Their worth is often judged by the number of digits in their bank account. A son's worthiness is measured by his earnings. A person is considered warm-hearted if they can spend money comfortably.

Finances determine whether you will have to wake up the next day and go to work or whether you can afford to take a break. Your quality of life depends largely on your wealth. A person's social standing is often judged by their spending habits. With money, one can invest wisely in their health, develop better habits, and enjoy vacations.

Then, who said that money can't buy happiness? After all, what else is happiness?

Anjali Tiwari
PGT English
Rewa, Madhya Pradesh
India

Business **Looking back on this season, "Hello Chinese S3" achieved comprehensive upgrades in both content and format. A total of 160 episodes were produced and broadcast throughout the year**

Building bridges through language: Fulfilling the China-Africa promise

"Hello Chinese S3" Concludes Successfully with an additional New Cultural Highlight to the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges

BY Anne Njeri
@themtkenyatimes



As the final scenes roll out, Hello Chinese S3, a program that has built a bridge to Chinese for countless African viewers, is drawing to a close. Jointly produced by the Center for Language Education and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education of China and StarTimes, the program closely aligns with the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges. With vivid footage, it presents a real, multi-dimensional and developing China; with moving stories, it tells of China-Africa friendship. It makes Hello, Chinese no longer merely a simple pronunciation, but a key for African viewers to enter and understand China.

Looking back on this season, "Hello Chinese S3" achieved comprehensive upgrades in both content and format. A total of 160 episodes were produced and broadcast throughout the year, with a total running time of more than 1,600 minutes; it aired for 40 consecutive weeks from its premiere. The program built a multi-dimensional content system integrating Chinese language learning, humanistic storytelling and China-Africa exchanges, offering numerous highlights.

Renewed Format and Upgraded Content

The program delivers Chinese-language teaching through immersive real-life scenarios, focusing on practical vocabulary and everyday expressions and accommodating learners at different proficiency levels, truly enabling them to learn and apply what they have learned.

The cameras enter Confucius Institutes across Africa, documenting the overall development of local Chinese-language education: from curriculum design and localized teaching practices to a rich variety of cultural activities, as well as signature brand events such as the Chinese Bridge Competition and International Chinese Language Day. These scenes vividly showcase the vigorous development and diverse influence of Chinese-language education in Africa.

The program features exclusive interviews with guests from various sectors in China and Africa, listening to their observations and reflections in work and life, promoting mutual learning among civilizations through sincere dialogue, and using documentary-style filming to tell the true stories of 20 Chinese and African individuals who formed a bond with Chinese and fell in love with the language, showcasing the unique appeal of Chinese language learning from diverse perspectives.

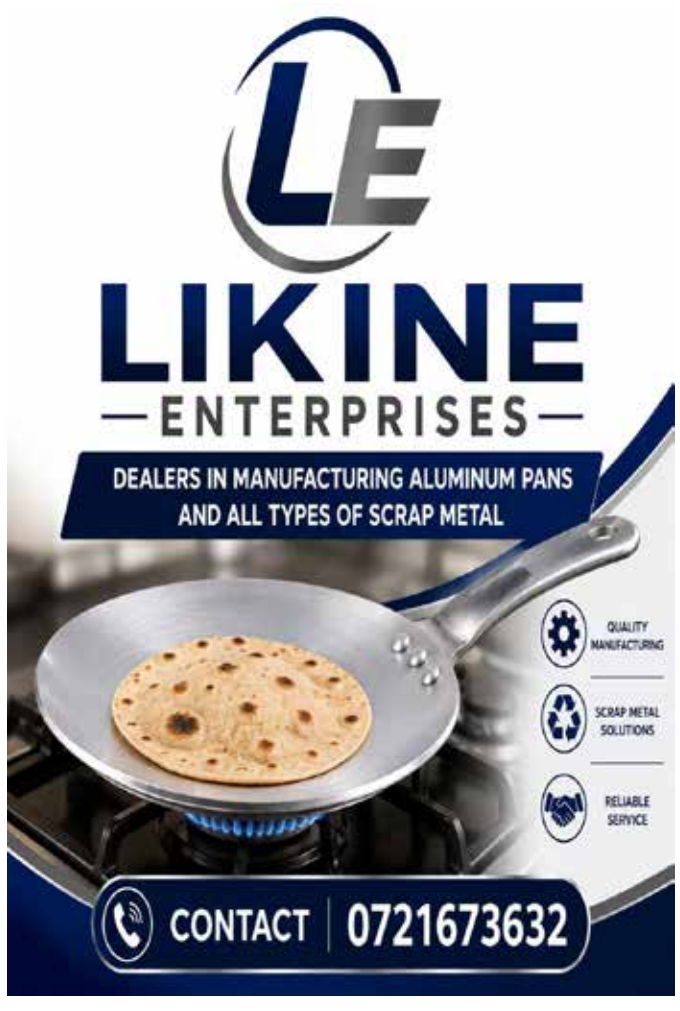
All-Media Coverage, Within Easy Reach

Effective reach would not be possible without the distribution strategy behind it. In addition to airing on three major channelsST Sino Drama, ST Guide E and ST Zonethis season also opened a dedicated section on the StarTimes ON mobile app, allowing on-demand viewing and replay at any time. The program also continuously releases short videos on Facebook and TikTok. With large and small screens working in tandem, it breaks free from the constraints of time and place, building an unrestricted bridge of communication for the promotion of Chinese.

Chinese Language as a Bridge, Everlasting Friendship

As the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges kicks off, the influence of Chinese language education in Africa keeps expanding. The first two seasons reached more than 160 million households on TV, covering over 800 million viewers, with total mobile views exceeding 30 million. Through scenario-based teaching, interviews and cultural showcases, "Hello Chinese S3" immerses audiences in China-Africa interactions. It conveys the power of language to connect civilizations and showcases the outcomes of joint efforts in China-Africa people-to-people exchanges. Going forward, the program will continue to respond to audience needs, enable the language bridge to connect more hearts, and further strengthen China-Africa friendship through continuous dialogue and exchanges.







Songs **Canada did not, however, spare him further heartbreak. He fell in love again and became engaged a second time, only for his fiancée to die of illness before they could marry**

What a friend we have in Jesus: How Joseph Scriven's heartbreak gave the world its most beloved hymn

The story behind one of Christianity's most comforting hymns is not one of triumph, but of repeated loss, quiet service and faith forged in grief.

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Joseph Medlicott Scriven never set out to write a hymn. He set out to comfort his mother.

That distinction matters, because it speaks to the kind of man Scriven was — someone whose first instinct, even in the middle of his own sorrow, was to reach towards the people he loved and offer what little warmth he could spare. The poem he wrote for her in 1855, originally titled Pray Without Ceasing, would eventually become What a Friend We Have in Jesus, one of the most widely sung and deeply cherished hymns in the history of Christian worship. But the story behind those reassuring words is anything but comfortable. It is a story shaped by grief, uprooted plans and the particular loneliness of a man who lost, more than once, the future he had allowed himself to imagine.

Scriven was born in Ireland in 1819 into a family of modest means and received a solid education. He was a young man with reasonable prospects and the ordinary hopes that accompany them — love, marriage, a household of his own. He found what he was looking for in a young woman he planned to marry, and by all accounts their future together seemed settled and bright. Then, on the eve of their wedding, she drowned in an accident. Scriven was left not just bereaved, but stranded at the precise moment when his life was supposed to begin in earnest.

It is the kind of loss that reshapes a person. For Scriven, it redirected him. He left Ireland for Canada in the early 1840s, carrying his faith with him and looking, perhaps, for the distance that grief sometimes demands. What he found there was not escape but purpose. He became known throughout his community for helping people who were poor, sick or struggling — often giving his labour freely to widows and those who could not afford to pay. His generosity was not the performative kind. It was practical, unglamorous and consistent. He simply showed up for people who needed someone to show up.



Joseph Medlicott Scriven

Canada did not, however, spare him further heartbreak. He fell in love again and became engaged a second time, only for his fiancée to die of illness before they could marry. Two engagements. Two losses. The grief that followed was not abstract — it was the specific ache of a man who had twice stood at the edge of the life he most wanted and been pulled back both times.

It was out of this accumulation of sorrow that the poem for his mother was born. She was in Ireland, facing difficulties of her own, and Scriven wanted to offer her something more durable than reassurance — he wanted to offer her a framework for prayer. The poem's central message was direct: human relationships can and do disappoint us, burdens accumulate, loneliness is real, but none of it needs to be carried alone. Take it to God in prayer.

The poem found its way into print and, in 1868, was paired with a melody composed by American musician Charles Crozat Converse. As What a Friend We Have in Jesus, it spread through congregations across denominations and continents, its appeal crossing every boundary that hymns sometimes struggle to cross. It was not sophisticated theology. It was something more immediately useful — a language for people who were hurting and did not know how to say so.

That is precisely why it endures. The hymn understands something that polished, triumphant worship music sometimes misses: that people in pain frequently conceal it. They stay silent because they fear judgment, or because they do not want to burden anyone, or because they have been let down before and learned to manage alone. The hymn meets them where they are. It does not demand that they present a cleaned-up version of their suffering. It simply says: bring it, as it is, and you will not be turned away.

The hymn also carries an implicit challenge. If Jesus is portrayed as a compassionate, available friend, then those who claim to follow him carry some obligation to embody that quality in their own relationships. Faith expressed only inwardly, through private prayer and personal piety, is incomplete. Scriven himself understood this. Despite everything he had endured, he did not retreat into bitterness or spiritual solitude. He kept serving. He kept turning up. His losses made him more attuned to the losses of others, not less.

That is not to romanticise suffering or suggest that grief reliably produces spiritual strength. It does not always. Loss can hollow a person out, and there is no formula that guarantees transformation. The hymn makes no such promise. It offers, instead, a posture — one of honesty before God and openness to being helped. It tells people that mourning is legitimate, that anxiety is not a sign of weak faith and that the act of prayer is itself a form of courage.

Today, What a Friend We Have in Jesus is sung in hospitals, at funerals, in village churches and in cathedral services. It has been translated into scores of languages. It has accompanied people through war, bereavement, illness and the quieter, less dramatic devastations that do not make headlines but are no less real for that. Its reach is a testament to how thoroughly Scriven's private grief connected with something universal.

He wrote it for his mother. The world received it as its own.

The question the hymn continues to press upon every generation is not a complicated one: when the weight becomes too much and familiar sources of comfort fall short, where do we turn? Its answer has not changed in a hundred and fifty years. It is an invitation — to bring the burden, to seek the friendship and, in time, to become for someone else the faithful presence you once so desperately needed.

Ashford Kimani is a teacher of English and Literature who writes on education and social affairs. He worships at CITAM, Kiambu Road. His articles are inspired by the preaching of his senior pastor in the book of Habakkuk.

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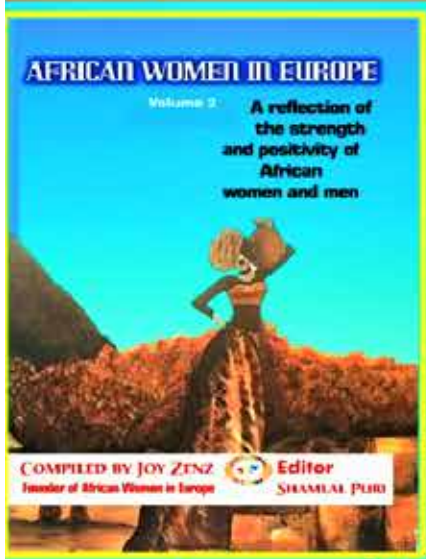
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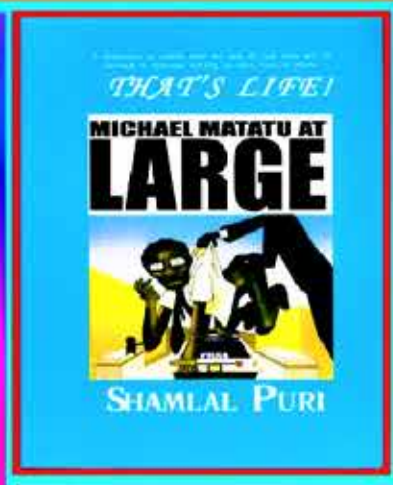
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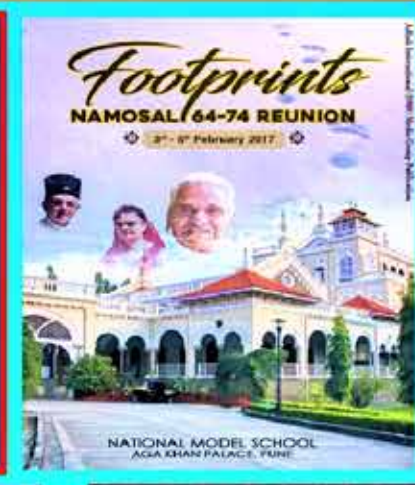
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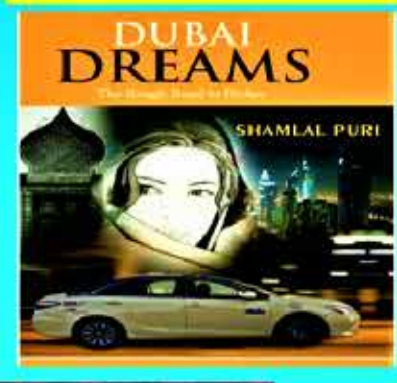


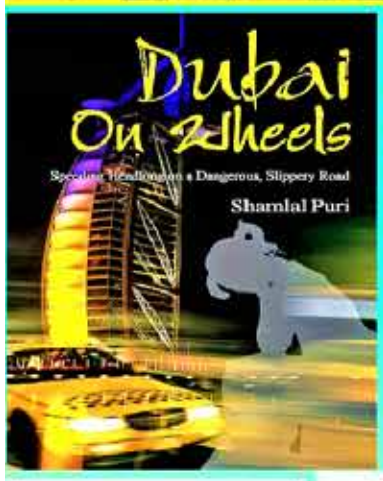


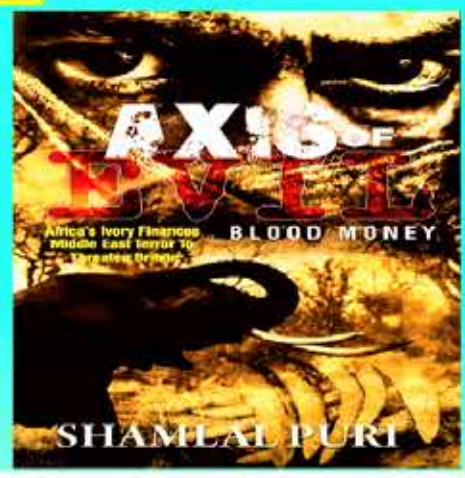


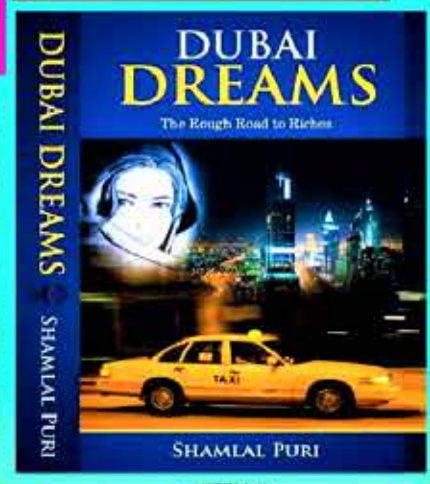


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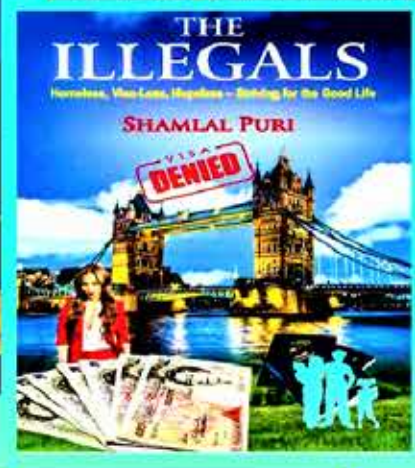




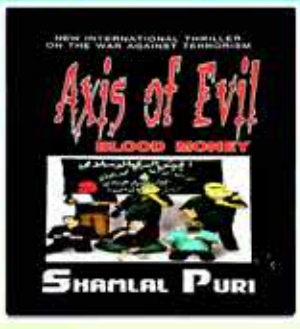




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Leadership **The lesson should have been unmistakable: citizens are not a silent revenue base, and public participation is not a ceremonial stop on the road to a predetermined decision**

The republic of consequence-free leadership: When those who decide never pay the price



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes



Kenya's public debt stood at approximately KSh 13.47 trillion in August 2026, about 66.9 per cent of gross domestic product, according to the National Treasury's public debt dashboard. This is not an accounting abstraction. It is a claim on the labour, taxes and prospects of people who had little or no part in the decisions that accumulated it. It is the cost of choices made in government offices, carried into classrooms without adequate materials, hospitals under strain, businesses starved of confidence and households calculating how to stretch the last shilling.

It is hard to imagine a more reckless way of governing than placing consequential decisions in the hands of people who bear no proportionate cost when those decisions fail. The danger is not simply that leaders may be mistaken; every government will make mistakes. The danger is a political arrangement in which the decision-maker keeps the title, convoy, salary and platform, while the public receives the bill. Failure is privatized in its benefits and socialised in its consequences. The powerful make the choice; the ordinary Kenyan pays the price.

This is an argument for authority disciplined by responsibility. Article 73 of the Constitution makes State authority a public trust: officers serve the people, not rule them. Article 10 binds public institutions to integrity, accountability, transparency and participation. Article 226(5) makes a public officer, including a political office-holder, liable for loss arising from unlawful use of public funds, whether or not that person remains in office. These are constitutional instructions, not ornamental clauses. Their evasion is an affront to the people in whose name government is conducted.

Kenya's recent history supplies an uncomfortable catalogue. The 2024 Finance Bill controversy exposed a failure to understand the relationship between taxation, public trust and public expenditure. Citizens were asked to surrender more of their incomes while demanding answers about borrowing, waste, procurement and the value of services received. KNCHR recorded 39 deaths and 361 injuries by 1 July 2024; its subsequent reporting placed protest-related deaths at 60 by 15 July. No political explanation can make a lost life an acceptable footnote to fiscal policy. Withdrawing the Bill did not restore the dead or discharge the duty to investigate abuses and account for the decisions that brought the country to that point.

The lesson should have been unmistakable: citizens are not a silent revenue base, and public participation is not a ceremonial stop on the road to a predetermined decision. A government that hears objections only after the streets fill has confused consultation with crisis management. Parliament, whose first allegiance is to the Constitution and the electorate, must not become a conveyor belt for executive preference. The question is not whether government can raise revenue. It is whether it can justify the burden, demonstrate necessity, show public benefit and account for every shilling.

The pattern extends beyond fiscal policy. The death of blogger Albert Ojwang in police custody in June 2025 again exposed the distance between constitutional promises and the experience of people subjected to state power. The Kenya Freedom Index, covering January 2025 to June 2026, documented 1,292 protest events, 72 deaths, 707 injuries and 2,187 arrests. These figures describe more than public disorder. They point to a country in which grievances are repeatedly expressed in public because institutions appear deaf to them. Protest is not proof that citizens hate their country; often it is proof that they care enough to demand that it honour its promises.

History should make us wary of mistaking dissent for disobedience. From the colonial state's coercive machinery to the struggle against one-party authoritarianism, Kenya's political story records the cost of concentrating power and insulating it from challenge. The Constitution of 2010 was meant to break with that inheritance. Devolution was not designed to create forty-seven smaller theatres of impunity. A republic is democratic not merely because leaders periodically seek votes, but because power remains answerable between elections.

The economic consequences are severe. Debt service competes with resources for health, education, water, roads and social protection. Poorly prioritized borrowing, distorted procurement and projects announced for political theatre cause damage far beyond the balance sheet: delayed payments, abandoned works, fewer opportunities for young people and heavier burdens on future taxpayers. The World Bank has estimated that corruption and collusion cost Kenya approximately two per cent of GDP annually. That is development denied: clinics not equipped, classrooms not improved, livelihoods not supported and public confidence depleted.

The most corrosive feature is the unequal distribution of consequence. A young person who misses a loan repayment faces penalties; a small trader who fails to remit tax faces enforcement; a worker who neglects a duty risks dismissal. But when public decisions produce waste, unlawful expenditure or institutional failure, accountability too often becomes a theatre of statements, committees, referrals and silence. The citizen is expected to be punctual in paying taxes; the State must be equally punctual in explaining expenditure. The citizen must obey the law; public officers must be the first to submit to it. Anything less is privilege masquerading as public service.

This demands action, not solemn declarations. The Executive must publish intelligible accounts of borrowing, procurement and project implementation, and stop treating criticism as hostility. Parliament must scrutinize budgets and supplementary expenditure on evidence and hold accounting officers to account. Auditor-General findings must trigger time-bound corrective action, recovery proceedings and referrals where required. EACC and DCI must investigate without fear or favour; the DPP must make independent, evidence-based decisions; and courts must remain free from intimidation. IPOA must investigate deaths, injuries and abuses involving police officers. The National Police Service must identify officers, preserve evidence and obey lawful orders.

The issue is one of moral architecture. What kind of republic do we build when those who make decisions are protected from their consequences, while those who never made them must live with the damage? A country cannot punish the poor for being poor, tax the struggling for the failures of the powerful, or demand patience from grieving families while institutions postpone accountability. Public office is not a licence to experiment with other people's lives. It is a fiduciary obligation to exercise power carefully, lawfully and in the public interest.

We must insist on a simple principle: no public decision without a public reason; no expenditure without a traceable account; no abuse without investigation; no proven wrongdoing without consequences; and no office-holder above the law. Leadership is measured not by the confidence with which a decision is announced, but by the evidence with which it is justified and the willingness of its author to answer when it causes harm. Kenya does not lack laws, reports or commissions. It lacks consistent consequences. Until that changes, the public will continue to finance decisions it did not make and endure outcomes it did not choose. That is not democracy's price. It is the price of impunity, and the country must refuse to keep paying it.

The writer is a social commentator

Health **Clinically, anxiety disorders are distinguished from ordinary worry by their duration, intensity and the degree to which they impair daily functioning**

Anxiety disorders in Kenya: A silent epidemic we can no longer ignore

Kenya's anxiety crisis is clinically measurable, theoretically understood and entirely treatable — yet the country continues to look away.



By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes



Illustration

Anxiety disorders in Kenya are routinely dismissed as excessive worry or a failure of faith. The evidence tells a different story. Clinically, neurobiologically and in measurable public health terms, anxiety is one of the most consequential and least addressed conditions affecting Kenyans today — from primary school classrooms to adult workplaces, from rural homesteads to urban high-rises.

The scale of the problem is not in dispute. The World Health Organization estimates that 301 million people lived with an anxiety disorder in 2019 — a figure that rose by roughly 25 per cent during the Covid-19 pandemic. In sub-Saharan Africa, and Kenya in particular, the true prevalence is almost certainly higher than reported. Limited diagnostic infrastructure, deep cultural stigma and the widespread tendency to interpret psychological distress through moral or spiritual frameworks mean that countless cases go unrecognised and untreated.

Clinically, anxiety disorders are distinguished from ordinary worry by their duration, intensity and the degree to which they impair daily functioning. Where everyday anxiety is an adaptive human response to perceived threat, a diagnosed anxiety disorder involves persistent apprehension, physiological hyperarousal and avoidance behaviour lasting beyond six months — criteria set out in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR, 2022). It is not a character flaw. It is a condition.

Three theoretical frameworks help explain how anxiety develops and persists. Cognitive theory, advanced by Aaron Beck in 1976, holds that anxiety is sustained by distorted thinking — catastrophising, overgeneralisation and a selective focus on threat, whereby ambiguous situations are automatically read as dangerous. Biological theory points to dysregulation of the brain's stress response systems, particularly heightened amygdala reactivity, which keeps the body in a state of alert even when no real danger exists. Social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura, demonstrates that anxious behaviours are learned — absorbed through observation, reinforcement and modelling within families and schools.

In Kenya, these frameworks carry particular weight. Research consistently shows that the first five years of life are critical for emotional regulation. Children raised in environments where affection is conditional — where love is tied to obedience or academic achievement — develop significantly higher rates of anxiety, low self-esteem and chronic people-pleasing. They internalise a belief that belonging must be earned and that mistakes mean rejection. That belief, once embedded, is extraordinarily difficult to shift.

The school environment compounds it. Kenya's examination-driven system, combined with overcrowded classrooms and minimal counselling provision, frames academic failure not as a learning event but as an identity catastrophe. When a child's worth is reduced to a grade, failure becomes existential. The American Psychological Association links heavy social media use — now widespread among Kenyan adolescents — to heightened anxiety, intensified social comparison and diminished self-esteem. When approval is quantified in likes and rankings, the cognitive distortion of catastrophising finds constant reinforcement.

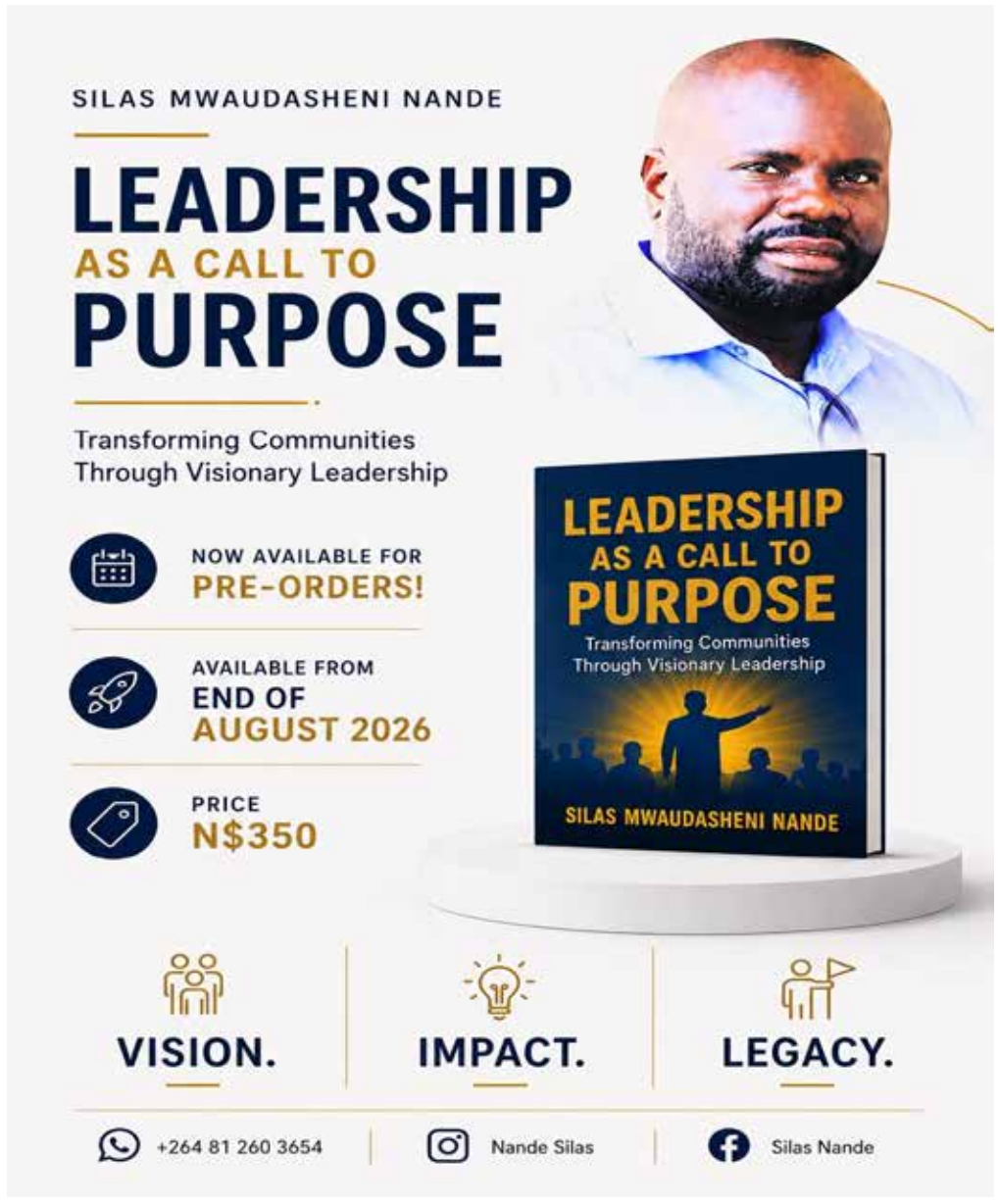
Adverse childhood experiences deepen the picture further. Verbal shaming, corporal punishment and exposure to domestic conflict are associated with long-term hypervigilance. Children from such environments become finely attuned to adult emotional signals — reading a parent's anger from a shift in tone or gait — yet receive no instruction in naming or managing their own emotional states. It is no surprise, then, that anxiety in Kenyan primary healthcare settings typically presents not as a psychological complaint but as headaches, gastric problems, insomnia and palpitations. Patients describe the body. They rarely describe the mind.

Intervention must operate at every level simultaneously. For individuals, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy remains the most evidence-based treatment available, with strong meta-analytic support for its effectiveness in reducing anxiety symptoms through cognitive restructuring and gradual exposure. In schools, social-emotional learning curricula, teacher training in psychological first aid and clear referral pathways to county counselling services are all empirically supported and practically achievable. At the policy level, full implementation of Kenya's Mental Health Act (2022) and the Kenya Mental Health Policy (2015–2030) demands genuine financing, trained personnel and accessible community-based services — not just legislation that sits unread on a shelf.

Self-compassion, too, deserves a place in this conversation. Research by Kristin Neff demonstrates that individuals who respond to failure with self-kindness rather than self-criticism show greater resilience, stronger motivation and better emotional regulation. This is not an argument against accountability. It is a recognition that punitive self-evaluation sustains anxiety rather than resolving it.

Kenya cannot afford to treat mental health as a private burden. Anxiety disorders are prevalent, theoretically explicable and clinically treatable. What is missing is not evidence — it is political will, cultural honesty and adequate investment. A healed classroom produces better learners. A healed teacher shapes a healthier generation. A community that interrupts the cycle of distress passes something better on.

The silence has cost enough.



Politics **Okenyuri made the announcement during President William Ruto's development tour at Ogembo Bomachoge Chache Constituency**

Essy Okenyuri declares 2027 Kisii Woman Rep bid

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themtkenyatimes



Kisii County Nominated Senator Essy Okenyuri

Kisii County Nominated Senator Essy Okenyuri has declared her intention to contest the Kisii Woman Representative seat in the 2027 General Election.

Okenyuri made the announcement during President William Ruto's development tour at Ogembo Bomachoge Chache Constituency.

She said she was ready to take her political career to the next level by seeking an elective position after serving in the Senate as a nominated legislator.

She expressed confidence in her ability to represent women, girls, young people and other vulnerable groups across the county, saying her experience in national leadership had prepared her for the job.

The declaration ends months of speculation among residents and political observers over which seat she would pursue.

Okenyuri also said she was ready to take over from the incumbent, Dorice Donya Aburi, who has expressed interest in contesting the Bonchari parliamentary seat in 2027.

Okenyuri has been involved in parliamentary affairs and grassroots initiatives, particularly in education, women's empowerment and the welfare of disadvantaged communities. In the Senate, she has championed issues affecting women and girls and supported initiatives aimed at improving access to education and creating opportunities for young people.

Education at the centre of her community initiatives

Beyond Parliament, Okenyuri has used the Essy Okenyuri Nyaituga Foundation to advance community development programmes, with education as a key focus.

The foundation was established in 2023 and registered with the Non-Governmental Organisations Co-ordination Board in 2024. It supports disadvantaged communities through charitable, educational and economic empowerment initiatives.

Its programmes include book donations to schools, education bursaries for needy learners, youth and women entrepreneurship, leadership mentorship and community health initiatives.

Through its education programme, the foundation identifies schools with inadequate learning resources and donates books and other materials to them. This is particularly important in rural communities, where some learners struggle to access adequate textbooks.

In September 2024, Okenyuri visited Mosenseme Secondary School in Bomachoge Borabu, where she donated textbooks worth KSh300,000 and encouraged parents and teachers to nurture a reading culture among learners. In July 2025, she donated more than 300 books to Mokorogoinwa Secondary School through the foundation.

The foundation also supports needy students through bursaries and school-fee assistance, while its leadership programme seeks to nurture young people into responsible leaders.

Its women and youth entrepreneurship programme helps beneficiaries identify and make use of available economic opportunities.

Why Okenyuri wears school uniform

One of the most distinctive features of Okenyuri's school outreach is her decision to wear a school uniform to selected school events. She has adopted the uniform as a symbolic way of connecting with learners and reminding them of the importance of education.

She says the gesture shows learners that she, too, once sat at a school desk, and that success is achievable through discipline, commitment, sacrifice and hard work.

By dressing like the students, she says, she hopes to close the distance between political leaders and young people and make it easier for them to identify with her journey.

In many school occasions, she appears in full school uniform and joined students in singing and dancing. She encourages them to remain disciplined and focused on their education.

She has also used such occasions to caution girls against distractions that could interfere with their studies, including early relationships, and to urge them to make responsible decisions about their future.

Her message is that a learner's background should not determine how far they can go, and that education remains a tool for overcoming social and economic barriers.

The Woman Representative seat

The Woman Representative represents women's interests in the National Assembly and supports programmes targeting vulnerable groups, including women, children and persons with disabilities. The seat is county-wide, so Okenyuri will need to win votes across all nine constituencies in Kisii.

With Donya eyeing the Bonchari seat and Okenyuri declaring her interest in the county-wide position, the contest to represent Kisii women is beginning to take shape.

Those who have shown interests to vie for the seat are Dolfine Bwari, Roselyne Nyakona, Bridgit Ombati, Gladsy Ayera among others



Kisii County Nominated Senator Essy Okenyuri

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The silent struggles of campus students

By **Vanessa Gitonga**



Campus students across Kenya are navigating a hidden crisis — one that unfolds not in lecture halls but in the quiet desperation that follows them home. For many, university life is less a journey of self-discovery than a daily negotiation between survival and academic performance.

Financial hardship sits at the centre of this struggle. Rising costs of accommodation, food, transport and learning materials push students to the margins. Many work part-time jobs to stay afloat, squeezing study time from whatever hours remain. The result is not just exhaustion — it is failure, deferred dreams and withdrawal from institutions that promised transformation.

Mental health compounds the crisis. Academic pressure, examination anxiety and an uncertain job market generate levels of distress that universities routinely underestimate. Yet students suffer in silence, deterred by stigma, limited counselling services and a campus culture that equates vulnerability with weakness.

Social media makes it worse. The relentless performance of comfort and success online — curated images of a student life few actually live — deepens isolation for those already struggling. Loneliness, insecurity and financial strain fester behind filters.

Universities and student welfare bodies must act: expand counselling capacity, strengthen financial aid frameworks and build environments where students can speak honestly without fear. Academic excellence built on the concealed suffering of students is no achievement worth celebrating.

Behind every student in a lecture hall is a story the institution may never ask to hear — and that silence is a failure of duty.

Four teenagers held over Dandora phone-snatching spree

By **Oduor Victor**



Four teenagers aged between 13 and 16 were arrested yesterday after a phone-snatching spree that targeted motorists, matatu passengers and pedestrians across Dandora, Kayole, Umoja and along Mutarakwa and Komarock Roads in Nairobi's Eastlands.

The boys operated in small groups, preying on people using phones in vehicles with open windows and pedestrians — particularly women — walking while on their phones. After grabbing a device, they fled shouting "Thief! Thief!" to sow confusion and cover their escape. Several stolen phones were later recovered from a nearby playground.

Their run ended near Mowlem, where police officers on patrol witnessed the gang snatch a phone from a passenger inside a matatu, gave chase and arrested all four on the spot. The suspects are being held at Mowlem Police Station. Under questioning, they reportedly told officers they were raising money for Christmas.

No formal charges had been announced by the time of going to press. The case carries an urgent public-interest dimension: juvenile crime is rising in Nairobi's low-income estates, and the festive season historically brings a sharp surge in opportunistic theft.

Separately, detectives from the Buruburu Directorate of Criminal Investigations on Saturday arrested two adult suspects and recovered a loaded Canik pistol with 11 rounds of ammunition from a house in Baraka, Mowlem. Both remain in custody as investigators pursue possible links to armed robberies in the area.

The streets of Eastlands are sending a warning the authorities cannot afford to ignore.

One million candidates, 261,000 missing: Is Kenya's education system leaving children behind?

By **Harriet Jamoza**



Kenya's 2026 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination drew 1,048,355 candidates — a historic first, crossing the one-million mark for the first time. The country is celebrating. It should also be asking hard questions.

Where are the 261,000 children who disappeared along the way?

Data shows 185,497 learners who sat the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in 2022 never registered for KCSE 2026. A further 75,182 who sat the Kenya Primary School Examinations Assessment in 2023 did not sit the Kenya Junior School Education Assessment this year. That is 260,679 children unaccounted for. The Ministry of Education is now tracing them. The real question is why we are tracing them after the fact rather than protecting them before the crisis.

This examination season has exposed deeper fractures. Three KCSE candidates died. Thirteen went missing in Nairobi. Cheating allegations surfaced in Bungoma, Garissa and Wajir. Students attacked exam officials in Kisii, injuring four police officers. A university student was arrested for leaking papers on Telegram.

Meanwhile, 20,000 students placed at Kenya Medical Training College every cycle fail to report because they cannot access the Higher Education Loans Board funding. KMTC trains 85 per cent of Kenya's health workers. Denying them funding is not an administrative oversight — it is a public health failure.

Kenya cannot celebrate the transition to Competency-Based Education while a quarter-million learners vanish without explanation.

Publish the findings. Seal the leaks. Fund every student.

Campus marriages: Are parents aware their children are playing house at university?

By **Jackline Kathure**



Kenyan parents send their children to university with one expectation: academic success. What many do not know is that some of those children have quietly set up households — cooking, providing and navigating the full weight of domestic life before they have finished their first year.

The trend of students cohabiting on campus is neither new nor rare. First-year women move in with fourth-year men. Young women manage household chores while their partners hustle for rent. The arrangement is dressed up as love. More often, it is convenience masquerading as commitment.

As a fellow student, the reality is clear. Campus life already demands enormous bandwidth — assignments, Continuous Assessment Tests, chasing Higher Education Loans Board disbursements that arrive late if at all. Adding a domestic partnership to that load is not romance. It is a liability.

The consequences are well documented among those living it. Financial pressure breeds depression. Cohabitation without the maturity or means to sustain it leads to unwanted pregnancies, and too often, to abortions that carry lasting physical and emotional consequences. Dreams quietly shelved. Potential quietly buried.

Parents invest years of sacrifice to open doors for their children. Students owe it to themselves — and to that sacrifice — to walk through those doors fully, not distracted by domestic arrangements that belong to a later season of life.

University is for building a future. Not rehearsing one you are not yet equipped to live.



Sports >> ***Manchester United snatched a stunning 4-4 draw against Aston Villa at Old Trafford on Sunday to complete one of the Premier League's most dramatic comebacks of the season.**

United's last-minute rescue: Two late goals deny Villa victory in eight-goal thriller



By **Andalo Christine Ingutia**

Manchester United produced one of the most breathtaking recoveries seen at Old Trafford in years, scoring twice in stoppage time yesterday to rescue a 4-4 draw against Aston Villa in a Premier League encounter that laid bare the defensive fragility haunting Michael Carrick's side.

Villa arrived at Old Trafford and wasted no time making their intentions clear. Alysson Edward put the visitors ahead inside the opening minute, and Nicolas Jackson doubled the advantage in the fourth, leaving a stunned home crowd to wonder what had hit them. United steadied themselves sufficiently for captain Bruno Fernandes to convert a penalty in the 16th minute, and the hosts grew into the game from that point, eventually drawing level when Youri Tielemans struck just before half-time to make it 2-2.

The respite, however, was short-lived. Villa came out after the break with renewed purpose, winning a penalty in the 48th minute that John McGinn dispatched without hesitation. Five minutes later, Leon Goretzka drove home to make it 4-2, and Old Trafford fell ominously quiet. With the clock ticking and United offering little to suggest a way back, the travelling supporters began to celebrate what appeared to be a comfortable away victory.

What followed was nothing short of extraordinary. Joshua Zirkzee pulled one back in the 92nd minute, sweeping the ball into the net to give the stadium a flicker of belief. Then, in the sixth minute of added time, Patrick Dorgu rose to meet a corner and headed powerfully into the goal, sending Old Trafford into pandemonium and completing a comeback that few inside the ground dared imagine possible.

The result made Premier League history. United became the first team to trail by two goals and draw level on two separate occasions in the same match — a statistical footnote that will be remembered long after the emotions of Sunday have faded.

Yet for all the drama of those final minutes, the draw offers only limited comfort. United have now conceded four goals at home in a single league match, and the defensive patterns that produced that nightmare opening — a two-goal deficit inside four minutes — have been a recurring feature of their season. Carrick's side have shown they possess fighting spirit in abundance. What they have consistently failed to show is the defensive organisation and game management that turns spirit into points.

The numbers make for grim reading. United sit 18th in the Premier League table, deep in the relegation zone, with just one league win to their name all season. Conceding early, losing control of matches and relying on late rescues is not a strategy — it is a crisis.

The international break now gives Carrick and his coaching staff a window to address the structural problems that have undermined United's campaign from the outset. The comeback against Villa will be celebrated, as it deserves to be. But dramatic escapes cannot become a habit.

United have avoided another defeat. The harder task — rebuilding a team capable of avoiding the relegation fight altogether — has only just begun.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> ***The ousted vice president is refusing to go quietly, calling the Special General Meeting unlawful and appealing to Fifa and Caf to intervene.**

Mariga vows to fight on after FKF purge at stormy Meru SGM

By **Martin Weche**



FKF vice president and former Harambee Stars midfielder Macdonald Mariga

MacDonald Mariga yesterday vowed to remain in office as Football Kenya Federation vice president two days after delegates at a Special General Meeting in Meru voted to remove him and six other National Executive Committee members, declaring the proceedings unconstitutional and calling for intervention by world football's governing bodies.

The former Inter Milan midfielder and ex-Harambee Stars captain was among seven NEC members stripped of their positions on Sunday when 64 delegates voted by acclamation at the Three Steers Hotel in Meru. Also removed were former AFC Leopards chair Dan Shikanda, NEC representatives Gabriel Mghendi, Bernard Lagat, Collins Kalee and Robert Macharia, as well as women's representative Kerubo Momanyi. Mariga, however, is not prepared to accept the outcome without a fight.

"The affected NEC members remain in office, and their constitutional mandates cannot be extinguished through an unlawful process," Mariga said in a statement. "What transpired in Meru was a deliberate attempt to silence elected leaders who have consistently championed accountability, transparency and good governance within FKF."

His defiance sets the stage for a prolonged legal and institutional battle that threatens to deepen the crisis engulfing Kenyan football at a critical moment. Mariga said he and the removed officials would pursue every available constitutional remedy to challenge what he described as a purge conducted in breach of the FKF constitution.

"We reject the purported dismissal of the seven NEC members and shall not recognise resolutions arising from proceedings conducted in breach of the FKF Constitution. We reserve the right to pursue all available constitutional remedies to challenge the purported resolutions," he said.

Central to Mariga's challenge is his assertion that the SGM lacked legitimacy from the outset. He claimed that 32 legitimate congress delegates were barred from entering the meeting venue, that individuals without proper mandates participated as delegates and that the quorum required under the FKF constitution was never properly established.

"The legitimacy of the proceedings is further undermined by the exclusion of 32 legitimate Congress delegates and credible evidence of impersonation and unauthorised representation," Mariga said. "These irregularities raise serious questions about the authenticity of the attendance register, the legitimacy of the quorum and whether any constitutionally prescribed voting threshold was attained."

The events of Sunday were extraordinary even by the turbulent standards of Kenyan football governance. Mariga arrived at the Three Steers Hotel in a police Land Cruiser accompanied by officers from the Rapid Deployment Unit amid reports that the venue had been surrounded by individuals seeking to prevent certain delegates from entering. What followed descended rapidly into chaos — a shouting match outside the hall, a teargas canister thrown by an unknown individual and delegates scattering for safety before the meeting eventually resumed nearly an hour later.

When proceedings reconvened, the purge was swift. Each official's fate was determined in turn as those present voted overwhelmingly for their removal. Notably absent from the list of officials facing scrutiny was FKF president Hussein Mohammed, whose conduct had also been raised in correspondence circulated a week before the SGM — an omission that Mariga's allies have pointed to as evidence that the process was selective and politically motivated.

Hussein, for his part, was unapologetic. In his closing remarks he framed the removals as necessary surgery on a federation he said had been held back by internal obstruction. "We must fix it and we must do it decisively and aggressively. It will not be business as usual. Now the mandate is clear. The majority of the delegates have spoken. We move and forge forward decisively and deliberately without any fear or favour. You will see significant changes in how we implement and execute our vision," he said.

Mariga has now called on Fifa, the Confederation of African Football and Kenya's Sports Registrar to scrutinise the Meru proceedings urgently, including delegate credentials, attendance records, quorum compliance and the voting process itself. The appeal to Fifa carries particular weight — the global body has previously intervened in Kenyan football governance and any finding of constitutional irregularity could have significant consequences for the federation's standing internationally.

With both sides hardening their positions and legal challenges now a near certainty, Kenyan football faces weeks, possibly months, of institutional uncertainty. The game on the pitch will have to wait while the battle for control of the boardroom plays out — and on current evidence, neither side is anywhere close to backing down.





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Affection

A story of longing, silence, and the quiet heartbreak of doors that should always be open



By: Adizova Sanobar

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Worth Noting:

- **Childhood is the most tender chapter in a girl's life. For many daughters, those early years are wrapped in warmth — a parent's embrace, a mother's voice, the particular safety of a home that belongs to you simply because you were born into it. For Sitora, now a devoted wife and mother of four, that warmth had long since cooled into something she could barely recognise.**
- **She still longed to go back. Not for herself, she told herself — but for her children. She wanted them to know their grandparents, to run across a family courtyard, to feel the embrace of a home rooted in shared history. Yet every visit carried its price. Her brother's irritation was barely concealed. Her sister-in-law's remarks cut quietly but precisely. Two hours was all Sitora could endure before the humiliation became heavier than the longing that had brought her there.**

Sitora stood in her kitchen, phone in hand, heart already bracing for what she knew was coming.

She had rehearsed the call a dozen times. Her brother's number sat on the screen. She pressed dial anyway — because hope, however frail, is the last thing a person surrenders.

"Assalamu alaykum, dear brother. How are you? We were hoping to bring the children over today. Will you be home?"

A pause. Then his voice, flat and impatient: "So that's why you called. Fine, come if you must — but we have neither meat nor bread. Bring everything with you. I have no money to spend on guests."

The call ended. Sitora wept.

Childhood is the most tender chapter in a girl's life. For many daughters, those early years are wrapped in warmth — a parent's embrace, a mother's voice, the particular safety of a home that belongs to you simply because you were born into it. For Sitora, now a devoted wife and mother of four, that warmth had long since cooled into something she could barely recognise.

She still longed to go back. Not for herself, she told herself — but for her children. She wanted them to know their grandparents, to run across a family courtyard, to feel the embrace of a home rooted in shared history. Yet every visit carried its price. Her brother's irritation was barely concealed. Her sister-in-law's remarks cut quietly but precisely. Two hours was all Sitora could endure before the humiliation became heavier than the longing that had brought her there.

She had watched her friends describe weeks spent at their parents' homes — welcomed, fed, fussed over. She listened and said nothing. What could she say? That her brother had once, in winter, taken the coat from his own back to keep her warm? That he had sat at her bedside through illness, praying under his breath, refusing to leave? That the boy who had once split a single piece of bread with her had become, somehow, a man who now charged for the meals at his table?

Time and circumstance reshape people in ways that the children they once were could never anticipate. That knowledge did not make it hurt less.

She was still sitting with the silence of the ended call when her youngest daughter, Oyshakhon, came bounding into the room, eyes bright with excitement.

"Mummy, are we going to uncle's house? Should we start getting dressed?"

Sitora looked at her daughter — at the uncomplicated joy on that small face — and felt the particular cruelty of a moment that required her to choose between truth and protection.

She wiped her eyes. She steadied her voice. She smiled.

"Not today, my love. Your uncle isn't home. We'll visit another time."

Oyshakhon accepted this without question and ran back to play. Children trust their mothers completely. It is both their great gift and their vulnerability.

Sitora turned back to the wall. The question that had been forming all morning finally settled into words, quiet and unanswerable:

Must a daughter now invent excuses just to visit the home where she grew up?

There was no one in the room to answer. There rarely is, for women who carry this particular grief — the grief of a door that was never locked, yet somehow never truly opens.

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