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Countdown 2027

# Paul Mackenzie jailed for 200 years



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*Paul Nthenge Mackenzie*



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# A father's prayer: Ruto celebrates daughter Charlene's wedding in heartfelt message

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

President William Ruto yesterday marked the wedding of his daughter Charlene to Tanzanian entrepreneur Isaya Yunge in Mwanza, Tanzania, with a personal message that set aside the language of politics entirely in favour of something far simpler — a father's love.

"Few moments bring a father greater joy than seeing his daughter find love, happiness and a companion with whom to build a future," Ruto wrote, addressing Charlene directly. "As you and Yunge exchanged your wedding vows in Mwanza, my heart was filled with pride, gratitude and profound happiness."

The President, joined by First Lady Rachel Ruto and the couple's siblings, offered the newlyweds counsel that any parent might recognise: that an enduring marriage rests not on grand gestures but on friendship, patience, kindness and forgiveness. He welcomed Yunge into the family warmly and without formality.

The message, brief and unadorned, carried more weight than a formal address could have managed. Kenya's most powerful man was, for one day, simply a father watching his daughter begin her life.

He closed with a Swahili blessing: God bless and protect your marriage always.












Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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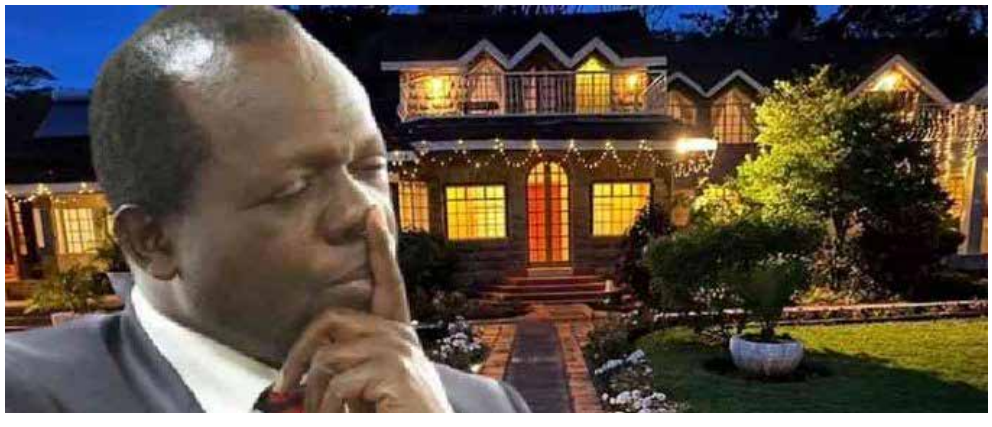
# NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Inooro FM presenter Milcah Nyokabi, known on air as Nyoxx wa Katta, has thrown her hat into the ring for the Juja constituency parliamentary seat ahead of the August 2027 general election. Nyokabi announced her candidacy on Friday via Facebook, appealing for prayers and public support. "With a deep sense of humility, responsibility and unwavering commitment, I offer myself to serve you as Juja MP 2027," she wrote. Her entry adds further competition to an already crowded race in the Kiambu constituency, where Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party has lined up businessman Aloise Kinyanjui as its preferred candidate. Sitting MP George Koimburi, elected on a UDA ticket in 2022, has since distanced himself from Gachagua and declared support for President William Ruto's government. DCP nominations are scheduled for March 2027.



Solomon Waigwa, father of Tanzanian entrepreneur Isaya Yunge, welcomed Charlene Ruto into the family yesterday following her white wedding to his son in Mwanza, Tanzania. "My son, I love you. Congratulations to you and your beautiful wife from the Lord above," Waigwa wrote in a message shared after the ceremony. "Charlene, welcome to the family; this is the day that the Lord has made." Waigwa led the groom's family delegation from Nairobi to Mwanza for the lakeside celebrations, which were attended by President William Ruto and First Lady Rachel Ruto, who escorted their daughter down the aisle. Charlene wore an intricate floral lace gown while Isaya dressed in an ivory double-breasted tuxedo. The white wedding followed the couple's traditional Kalenjin Koito ceremony held on 8 August at Intonna Heritage Farm in Kilgoris, Narok County.



A Nairobi Commercial Court yesterday lifted protective orders that had shielded former Cabinet Secretary Raphael Tuju's remaining hotel property from auction, clearing the way for the East Africa Development Bank to proceed with the sale of Entim Sidai Wellness Sanctuary in a KSh1.9B loan dispute. The ruling marks a significant reversal for Tuju, who had secured the court orders to halt the bank's recovery action against the property. With the shield removed, EADB can now move to auction the sanctuary as it pursues recovery of the outstanding debt. The dispute has wound through the courts for an extended period, with Tuju's properties at the centre of one of Kenya's most closely watched debt recovery battles involving a former senior government official.



Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday took his opposition campaign to Kendu Bay in Homa Bay County, delivering a pointed message that the current government's hold on power was nearing its end. "The predatory regime's days are numbered," Musyoka declared, addressing residents in a rally that formed part of his party's nationwide mobilisation drive ahead of the August 2027 general election. "From Kendu Bay to every corner of this nation, citizens are done being squeezed, taxed and silenced. The time has come — it is liberation time," he said. The Kendu Bay stop signals Musyoka's intent to consolidate support in Homa Bay County, a region that will be fiercely contested as opposition leaders intensify efforts to build a coalition capable of dislodging President William Ruto's administration at the polls.



Singer Kevin Bahati stunned guests at the Argyle Grand Hotel yesterday when an event billed as a KSh1 million-per-head exclusive wedding celebration turned out to be a parliamentary campaign launch. Addressing the gathering, Bahati formally declared his intention to contest the Mathare constituency seat in the 2027 general election. "I, Bahati Kioko, will be vying as the next Member of Parliament for Mathare Constituency," he announced from the stage. The event had been promoted for weeks as a lavish black-tie wedding marking the couple's tenth anniversary, with invitations priced at KSh1 million each. Guests including comedian Oga Obinna, Reverend Lucy Natasha and forex trader Kenyan Prince were among those present. Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku was also reported to have purchased an invitation. Whether any of the hundred guests felt deceived, only they can say.



Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu was convicted of incitement yesterday by a High Court in Dar es Salaam and sentenced to four years in prison, after the same three-judge panel acquitted him of the more serious treason charge that had carried the death penalty. The court ruled that his campaign slogan — "No Reforms, No Election" — constituted incitement to disrupt the October 2025 general election. Lissu, who has been in custody since April 2025, rejected the conviction, telling the court it had manufactured an offence on political directives. He has been granted leave to appeal to Tanzania's Court of Appeal and indicated his intention to seek bail. The case has attracted sustained international criticism amid concerns over the suppression of political opposition in Tanzania following President Samia Suluhu Hassan's disputed re-election with 98 per cent of the vote.

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**Politics** **"Jubilee Party hereby formally lodges a complaint with your office concerning the adoption and intended use of its registered political slogan, 'Mbele Pamoja,**

# Jubilee accuses UDA of stealing its slogan as 2027 election battle lines sharpen

**A dispute over three Swahili words has exposed the intensifying rivalry between Kenya's ruling party and its former political home, with the registrar of political parties now drawn into the fray nine months before the general election**

**BY David Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Jubilee Party yesterday petitioned the Registrar of Political Parties to stop the United Democratic Alliance from using the phrase "Mbele Pamoja" — meaning "Forward Together" — after UDA adopted it as part of its new election slogan, in a row that has laid bare the deepening hostility between President William Ruto's ruling party and the organisation from which it effectively grew.

In a formal complaint dated 5 November 2026 and addressed to the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties at Lion Place, Sarit Centre, Jubilee Secretary General Moitalel Ole Kenta argued that "Mbele Pamoja" is already registered as Jubilee's official slogan and forms a recognised part of the party's political identity. Its appropriation by UDA, Jubilee contends, risks confusing voters about the distinct identities of the two parties at precisely the moment when electoral messaging is beginning to matter most.




**Jubilee Party Secretary General Moitale Ole Kenta addressing in Kisii. PHOTO/ Courtesy**

The dispute was triggered by UDA's announcement on 5 November that it was replacing its previous slogan, "Kazi ni Kazi" — "Work is Work" — with the new formulation "Usawa ni Sawa – Mbele Pamoja," meaning "Equality is Right — Forward Together." The change was formally notified by UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar under Section 20(2) of the Political Parties Act. Ruto had already been using the phrase "Mbele Pamoja" at public rallies in call-and-response exchanges with supporters, suggesting the linguistic shift had been in preparation for some time.

"Jubilee Party hereby formally lodges a complaint with your office concerning the adoption and intended use of its registered political slogan, 'Mbele Pamoja,' by the United Democratic Alliance, as part of the latter's newly announced political slogan, 'Usawa ni Sawa – Mbele Pamoja,'" the party's letter stated. The complaint calls on the registrar to verify and formally confirm that the phrase is registered to Jubilee, issue a cease-and-desist notice directing UDA to halt use of the phrase while the matter is considered, take administrative measures to protect the integrity of the parties register, and provide a written determination setting out the legal basis for whatever action is taken.

Jubilee's legal argument rests on several provisions of the Political Parties Act, Cap. 7D. The party cites Section 20(1)(d), which recognises a party's slogan as a registered particular, alongside Section 34(e), which places an obligation on the registrar to maintain the register and safeguard the distinct identities of political parties. It also invokes Section 34(a) and (g), which provide for the registrar's regulatory, monitoring and investigative responsibilities, including handling complaints between parties.

The legal framework is relatively clear. What is less clear is whether "Mbele Pamoja" was ever formally registered in Jubilee's name in a manner that would survive a challenge, or whether the phrase — common in Swahili political discourse — carries the kind of distinct registered identity that the Act is designed to protect. That is precisely the determination Jubilee is asking the registrar to make.

Beneath the procedural surface, however, the dispute carries a significance that extends well beyond trademark law. Jubilee and UDA share a complicated and deeply personal political history. Ruto built his national political machine within Jubilee, serving as Deputy President under former President Uhuru Kenyatta before the relationship collapsed spectacularly in the years leading up to the 2022 general election. UDA emerged as the vehicle for Ruto's presidential ambitions, drawing heavily on networks, personnel and political capital accumulated during the Jubilee years. The bitterness of that separation has not dissipated. If anything, as the 2027 election approaches and both parties position themselves for a contest in which every marginal advantage matters, it is intensifying.

A slogan dispute may appear trivial against that backdrop. It is not. Political slogans are the condensed expression of a party's identity and electoral proposition. "Mbele Pamoja" encapsulates a message of collective forward movement that both parties now appear to want to own — a signal that they are competing for similar terrain, similar voters and similar narratives of progress and national purpose.

The registrar must now navigate a complaint that is simultaneously a legal question and a political grenade, with nine months remaining before Kenya goes to the polls.

Three words. Two parties. One election. The fight has begun.

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**Passport** The practical difference matters. An ordinary passport supports a citizen's general international movement, entirely independent of their professional status

# Kenya's green service passport: What it is, who qualifies and why it matters

***The government has printed a new category of official travel document for public servants, but its rollout awaits regulations that will determine who gets one and on what terms***

**BY Jane Njeri**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Kenya is preparing to issue a new green-coloured service passport for public servants and state officers who travel abroad on official government assignments but do not qualify for diplomatic passports, Immigration and Citizen Services Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang told Parliament yesterday.

Kipsang made the disclosure when he appeared before the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Administration and Internal Security on Thursday, 5 November 2026. He confirmed that the passports had already been printed and were ready for distribution, but would only be issued once the government completed the regulatory framework governing their issuance. The announcement marks a significant expansion of Kenya's official travel document architecture and raises immediate practical questions about eligibility, privileges and the distinction between different categories of government travel credentials.

The service passport is not an entirely new concept within Kenya's document system. Kipsang noted that service passports had previously been issued to members of the disciplined services — police officers and military personnel travelling overseas on official duties. The planned expansion broadens the category to cover a wider range of public servants and state officers whose roles require international travel but whose positions do not carry the seniority or designated functions that qualify an individual for a diplomatic passport. Precisely which officials will be eligible remains subject to the regulations still being finalised, meaning that not every public servant should assume they will automatically receive one.

Understanding the new document requires situating it within Kenya's existing passport framework. The country currently issues three categories of travel documents, each distinguished by colour and purpose. The ordinary passport, used by the overwhelming majority of Kenyans travelling for personal reasons — holidays, education, medical treatment, business — carries a sky-blue cover under the East African Community's harmonised passport system. The diplomatic passport, reserved for designated senior officials and carrying a red cover, is issued to the President, Deputy President, Cabinet Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, county governors, senior judicial officers and specified security officials, as well as certain spouses and dependants of eligible officeholders. The service passport, green-covered, occupies the middle ground — an official document for government travel that is more widely available than the diplomatic passport but categorically distinct from the document an ordinary citizen obtains.




**Kenya's green service passport**

The practical difference matters. An ordinary passport supports a citizen's general international movement, entirely independent of their professional status. A service passport identifies the holder as a government official travelling in connection with public duties, providing a formal travel credential that signals official purpose to receiving countries without conferring the specific privileges associated with diplomatic status. For public servants currently required to travel on ordinary passports despite undertaking official assignments, the new document offers both a practical improvement and a measure of institutional recognition.

One of the most important clarifications Kipsang's announcement invites concerns the relationship between passport type and travel privileges. A service passport does not automatically entitle its holder to enter any country without a visa. Entry requirements remain determined by the destination country's immigration rules and by any bilateral agreements or arrangements it has concluded with Kenya. Kenya's official electronic visa system does provide for courtesy visas for diplomatic, official and service passport holders travelling on official duties or transiting for official business, but this facility operates subject to applicable conditions and does not constitute universal visa-free access. Holders of the new green passport will still need to satisfy the entry requirements of each country they visit.

Equally important is the distinction between passport colour and diplomatic immunity. Diplomatic immunity is not conferred by the possession of a red passport — it is governed by international law, specifically the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and attaches to individuals who hold recognised diplomatic status and exercise designated diplomatic functions. A service passport holder is not a diplomat and does not carry the legal protections associated with diplomatic accreditation. That distinction has practical consequences for how holders understand their status and obligations when travelling abroad on official business.

The timing of the announcement places this development within a broader context of institutional reform and public administration modernisation that the government has pursued across several departments. The Immigration and Citizen Services department has in recent years expanded its digital infrastructure, streamlined passport processing and worked to bring Kenya's document standards into closer alignment with regional and international frameworks. The introduction of a formal service passport category continues that trajectory, providing a structured credential for a category of official travel that had previously relied on ordinary passports or the more selective diplomatic document.

For the public servants who will ultimately benefit from the new document, the practical implications are clear: an official travel credential that accurately reflects the purpose of their travel, potentially simplifying interactions with foreign immigration authorities and signalling government affiliation in a way that an ordinary passport does not. For the government, it represents a tidier, more coherent document architecture that distinguishes categories of official travel more precisely than the current system allows.

The outstanding question is timing. Kipsang was explicit that issuance would not begin until the regulatory process was complete. Given that the passports are already printed and the institutional rationale is established, the pressure now falls on the government to finalise those regulations without unnecessary delay. Public servants with international travel requirements are waiting, and the document that is meant to serve them is already sitting in a government facility, ready to be used.

Kenya has printed its green passport. The next step is ensuring it reaches the hands of those it was designed to serve — and doing so through a regulatory process that is transparent, timely and clearly communicated to the public servants who need to know where they stand.

**Courts** Justice Diana Kavedza delivered the sentence at the High Court in Mombasa, comprising 100 years for murder by starvation and a further 100 years for direct homicide

# Paul Mackenzie jailed for 200 years: Has Kenya finally confronted religious extremism?

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

**BY Collins Kibet**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Paul Nthenge Mackenzie, founder of Good News International Church (Right)**

A Kenyan court sentenced Paul Nthenge Mackenzie, founder of Good News International Church, to 200 years in prison yesterday for the murder of 191 people — 190 of them children — in what became known as the Shakahola massacre, the most devastating case of religious extremism in the country's history.

Justice Diana Kavedza delivered the sentence at the High Court in Mombasa, comprising 100 years for murder by starvation and a further 100 years for direct homicide. Twenty-eight accomplices received sentences ranging from 10 to 160 years. Mackenzie had denied forcing his followers to starve, maintaining that his congregation fasted voluntarily in pursuit of spiritual salvation. The court rejected that defence entirely and without ambiguity.

The story of Shakahola began emerging in April 2023 when authorities discovered human remains in a forest near Malindi in Kilifi County. What initially appeared to be an isolated missing persons case rapidly became a national humanitarian and security crisis of a kind Kenya had never previously encountered. Investigators uncovered mass graves, emaciated bodies and evidence of prolonged, systematic suffering carried out over an extended period. Some victims were found buried in shallow graves; others were discovered in latrines. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights reported that 448 bodies were ultimately recovered from the forest. Mackenzie faces a separate case involving a further 52 deaths allegedly connected to another location — figures that collectively underline a scale of human destruction that still strains comprehension more than three years after the first remains were found.

Mackenzie had convinced his followers that death by starvation would allow them to meet Jesus Christ and ascend to heaven before the end of the world. He preached a theology of self-destruction, framing suffering and physical death not as tragedy but as spiritual triumph. Adults who had placed absolute trust in his authority surrendered their own lives and, more damningly, the lives of their children. Children cannot be expected to challenge adult authority, interpret competing religious doctrines or refuse to eat when the person they depend on for survival instructs them not to. They died in the greatest numbers. Of the 191 murder convictions handed down yesterday, 190 of the victims were children. That figure is not a statistic. It is an indictment of every system that was supposed to protect them and did not.

No theological argument, however sincerely held or scripturally dressed, can justify denying a child food, medical care, education or the basic conditions necessary for survival. What happened in Shakahola was not faith. It was exploitation — methodical, sustained and catastrophically fatal — dressed in scripture and shielded, for far too long, by institutional inaction.

That institutional failure is the part of this story that a 200-year sentence does not resolve. Reports indicate that Mackenzie had previously attracted the attention of authorities, including earlier arrests and the forced closure of church premises before the forest deaths began. The critical question — why those prior warnings did not produce effective intervention before nearly 200 children and scores of adults were dead — has never been satisfactorily answered in public. It deserves a full, transparent accounting. President William Ruto acknowledged government failure in 2023 and appointed a task force to examine the regulatory framework governing religious organisations in Kenya. Proposals for stronger oversight followed. Meaningful, verifiable implementation has been considerably slower to arrive, and civil society groups monitoring the process have continued to raise concerns about the pace of reform.

The tension at the centre of that reform debate is genuine and must be taken seriously. Kenya's Constitution, under Article 32, guarantees freedom of conscience, religion, thought and belief. That protection is not decorative — it is essential in a deeply diverse society where faith is woven into the fabric of daily life for the overwhelming majority of citizens. A government that feels empowered to determine which religious beliefs are acceptable and which are not would pose its own serious threat to constitutional freedoms and create dangerous opportunities for political interference in spiritual life. That path leads somewhere Kenya should not go.

But the answer to that concern is not to leave religious institutions beyond meaningful scrutiny in the name of protecting constitutional freedom. The answer is targeted, rights-consistent regulation — focused specifically on unlawful conduct, child protection, financial exploitation, public safety and institutional accountability. Churches, mosques, temples and other religious organisations that operate honestly within the law deserve full constitutional protection. Individuals who use religious authority as a mechanism to facilitate criminal activity — to abuse, exploit, confine or kill — must face investigation, prosecution and, where the evidence demands it, the full force of a sentence like the one delivered in Mombasa yesterday.

Kenya's intelligence agencies, the National Police Service, local administrators and child protection authorities must also urgently strengthen their coordination to identify dangerous conduct before it reaches catastrophic scale. Reports of prolonged starvation, child abuse, unlawful confinement and deliberate isolation of families from wider society should trigger immediate, documented response — not bureaucratic hesitation, not deference to religious sensitivity and not the kind of institutional paralysis that allowed Shakahola to continue until the bodies became too numerous to ignore. Early warning systems are only valuable if the institutions receiving the warnings act on them.

Religious extremism rarely announces itself. It develops in spaces where vulnerable individuals — people seeking healing, purpose, community or relief from profound personal hardship — encounter leaders who present themselves as the singular conduit to God's favour. The willingness to surrender independent judgment in such circumstances is not weakness. It is a human need for meaning being exploited by someone with the sophistication to recognise and weaponise it. That dynamic will not disappear because Mackenzie is now behind bars. There are others. Some are already operating.

The broader responsibility therefore extends well beyond government. Media institutions, schools, community leaders, religious bodies themselves and ordinary families all carry a share of the obligation to equip Kenyans with the critical awareness necessary to distinguish genuine spiritual guidance from manipulation. Parents and guardians must remain attentive to changes in children's welfare, education, health and social relationships — particularly where outside influence encourages withdrawal from family, rejection of medical care or hostility towards questioning. These are not abstract warning signs. At Shakahola, they preceded mass death.

The 200-year sentence delivers long-overdue justice for 191 victims. It signals, unambiguously, that Kenya's courts will not treat mass murder as a theological matter or extend leniency to those who weaponise faith to destroy life. That signal matters. It needed to be sent.

But Shakahola was not simply the product of one dangerous and calculating man. It was the product of a system — regulatory, administrative, security and social — that received warnings, registered concerns and ultimately looked away until it was too late for 448 people buried in a forest.

Until that system is genuinely reformed, the sentence is necessary. It is not sufficient.

**Business** Mungania, who joined Safaricom in 2007 as a customer care representative, now leads the financial services function after nearly two decades of progressive responsibility

# Safaricom promotes Boniface Mungania to chief financial services officer

***A career that began on a customer care desk nearly two decades ago has taken one of Safaricom's most experienced operators to the top of the company's financial services division***

**BY Grace Wanja**
*@themtkenyatimes*



Boniface Mungania

Safaricom PLC yesterday confirmed the appointment of Boniface Mungania as Chief Financial Services Officer, effective 1 November 2026, in a promotion that places one of the company's longest-serving and most decorated executives at the helm of a division that sits at the heart of Kenya's digital economy.

Mungania, who joined Safaricom in 2007 as a customer care representative, now leads the financial services function after nearly two decades of progressive responsibility across some of the company's most consequential roles. He reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer. The appointment followed receipt of all relevant regulatory approvals.

His trajectory within the company is the kind that corporate announcements rarely capture fully. He began on the front line, handling customer queries, and built from there — developing what colleagues describe as an unusually grounded understanding of how ordinary Kenyans interact with financial technology. That foundation informed everything that followed. From customer care, Mungania moved into M-PESA business development, where he was present during some of the most transformative years in mobile money's expansion across Kenya and the region.

He subsequently served as a Mobile Financial Services Consultant at Vodafone Qatar, an assignment that gave him international exposure to digital financial systems at a time when mobile money was becoming a genuinely global conversation. Returning to Safaricom, he took on the role of Head of M-PESA Products and Services Development, before serving as Payments Tribe Lead — a position that placed him at the centre of the company's shift towards agile, iterative ways of building and deploying financial products.

Most recently, Mungania served as Director of Public Sector Digital Transformation, a role in which he led nationwide initiatives that reached well beyond Safaricom's commercial interests. Under his direction, digital transformation programmes were extended across agriculture, healthcare, micro, small and medium enterprises, and public finance — sectors that collectively touch the daily lives of millions of Kenyans who may never have heard his name. His work contributed to the development of critical national digital infrastructure, including application programming interfaces, digital identity frameworks and national payments systems that underpin the architecture of Kenya's emerging digital economy.

That body of work earned Mungania the Order of the Grand Warrior, one of Kenya's most prestigious state honours, awarded in recognition of his contributions to transformative national programmes. It is a distinction rarely associated with corporate appointments, and it signals the degree to which his work has extended beyond the boundaries of a single company into something that carries genuine national significance.

Safaricom has built M-PESA into one of the most studied and replicated mobile money platforms in the world. The financial services division Mungania now leads is not simply a product line — it is a platform that processes billions of shillings in transactions daily, supports small businesses, enables government disbursements, underpins insurance and savings products and increasingly serves as the primary financial institution for millions of Kenyans who remain outside the formal banking system. The person leading it carries a responsibility that is simultaneously commercial, social and infrastructural.

Mungania's academic commitments run alongside his executive responsibilities. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Entrepreneurship at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, a detail that speaks to a disposition towards continuous learning that has characterised his career from the beginning.

The appointment arrives at a moment of considerable ambition and pressure for Safaricom's financial services arm. Competition in Kenya's digital payments and financial technology space has intensified, regulatory expectations around data, consumer protection and interoperability have grown more demanding, and the company's expansion into Ethiopia has introduced new questions about how M-PESA's model translates to different markets. Mungania steps into the role carrying the institutional knowledge of someone who has watched and shaped many of those dynamics from the inside.

For Safaricom, the decision to elevate a career insider to one of its most senior positions reflects a confidence in internal talent development that the company has long professed and now, in this instance, has plainly acted on.

For Mungania, it is the culmination of a journey that began nearly twenty years ago with a headset and a queue of customers waiting on the line.



**Wedding** The ceremony's most emotionally charged moment came when Charlene was escorted down the aisle by both her parents — President Ruto and First Lady Rachel Ruto.

# Charlene Ruto weds Tanzanian entrepreneur Isaya Yunge in lakeside Mwanza ceremony

***Kenya's First Daughter exchanges vows before family, friends and prominent guests as two East African families unite in a celebration months in the making***

**BY Yvonne Wambui**
*@themtkenyatimes*



President Ruto and First Lady Rachel walk with Charlene as she arrives for her wedding

Charlene Ruto, daughter of President William Ruto, married Tanzanian entrepreneur Isaya Yunge in Mwanza, Tanzania, yesterday in a high-profile ceremony that drew prominent guests from both Kenya and Tanzania to the shores of Lake Victoria for one of East Africa's most closely watched social events of the year.

The wedding, held on Friday 6 November 2026, was the culmination of a relationship that had captured public attention since the couple's traditional Kalenjin engagement ceremony in August. Mwanza, the lakeside city associated with the groom's family and roots, provided a setting that carried its own significance — a deliberate choice that placed the celebration within the cultural heartland of the man Charlene had chosen to marry, and that brought together two neighbouring countries in a moment of shared joy.

The ceremony's most emotionally charged moment came when Charlene was escorted down the aisle by both her parents — President Ruto and First Lady Rachel Ruto. The sight of the head of state walking his daughter to the altar drew audible reactions from the gathered guests, the kind of unscripted human moment that no amount of careful planning can manufacture. For a figure who occupies so much of Kenya's public consciousness as a political leader, it was a plain and moving reminder that behind the presidency is a father watching his daughter begin a new life.

Charlene wore an elegant white gown with long sleeves, intricate lace detailing and sparkling embellishments, completed with a long flowing veil, a decorative hair accessory and a bouquet of white and red roses. The outdoor venue was arranged around a white floral theme, with a beautifully decorated aisle that set the tone for a ceremony both intimate and grand. Guests arrived dressed for the occasion, the celebrations carrying the warmth and colour that East African weddings are known for, while the lakeside setting lent the event a natural elegance that no decorator could entirely claim credit for.

President Ruto had travelled to Mwanza on Thursday evening ahead of the occasion, accompanied by the First Lady and several invited Kenyan guests. Kapseret Member of Parliament Oscar Sudi was among those who made the journey, sharing glimpses of the pre-wedding activities on social media. The travel arrangements themselves drew attention, with images circulating online of a luxury private aircraft bearing personalised wedding branding — the names Charlene and Isaya set alongside the wedding date and destination. It was a detail that spoke to the scale and meticulous care with which the entire event had been planned, and it offered those following from afar a small window into celebrations that felt simultaneously personal and grand.

The road to Friday's ceremony had been a long and culturally layered one. On 8 August 2026, Charlene and Yunge held their traditional Kalenjin engagement ceremony, known as Koito, at Intonna Heritage Farm in Kilgoris, Narok County. The occasion brought together elders, relatives and friends from both families for cultural introductions, marriage negotiations and the kind of communal celebration that places an individual union within the broader story of family and heritage. Traditional attire, cultural performances, music and dancing marked the day, grounding the couple's relationship in customs that give such occasions their deeper resonance. The choice to honour those traditions fully, before the white wedding that followed, said something deliberate about how Charlene and Isaya approached their union — not as a performance for public consumption, but as a genuine commitment rooted in who they are and where they come from.

In the days immediately before the Mwanza ceremony, Charlene held a series of celebrations with the women closest to her. On 3 November, she hosted a bridal shower in Nairobi attended by close friends, relatives and her sisters. The event adopted a white-and-purple theme, with Charlene dressed in white while her guests wore pink. The venue was decorated with carefully arranged lighting, colourful displays and specially designed cakes bearing messages including "Miss Babe to Mrs Babe" and "Hey Mrs Yunge" — the kind of personalised touches that turned a celebration into something that felt genuinely hers. Sharing photographs from the occasion, Charlene spoke of gratitude for the women who had walked alongside her through different seasons of her life, and of the importance of faith, friendship and a strong support system as she prepared to begin married life.

The following evening, First Lady Rachel Ruto hosted a separate gathering known as the Mother's Blessing. The occasion brought together Charlene's mother, aunts, family friends and older women who offered prayers, marriage counsel and guidance rooted in lived experience. Where the bridal shower celebrated friendship and the joy of the moment, the Mother's Blessing reached for something quieter and more enduring — the passing of wisdom between generations, the kind of guidance that cannot be found in wedding planning checklists but that shapes the character of a marriage long after the celebrations have ended. It was, in many respects, the most meaningful gathering of all.

Security arrangements in Mwanza were significantly reinforced ahead of the ceremony, reflecting the prominence of the occasion and the presence of senior officials from two countries. Mwanza Regional Police Commander Wilbrod Mutafungwa confirmed that additional measures had been put in place around hotels, major roads and the wedding venue, and motorists were advised to expect possible traffic disruptions as guests moved through the city. The precautions were a practical acknowledgement that when a sitting head of state attends a family celebration abroad, the event carries a weight beyond the personal.

Charlene has built a public profile in her own right through youth empowerment initiatives and civic engagements that have made her a recognisable figure independent of her father's office. Her marriage to Yunge, a Tanzanian entrepreneur whose business interests span the region, represents not only a significant personal milestone but a cross-border union that has resonated across East Africa, where the Kenya-Tanzania relationship carries both historical depth and contemporary importance.

As congratulatory messages continued to pour in from public figures and ordinary citizens throughout the day, the celebrations in Mwanza drew quietly to a close. The aircraft will return to Nairobi. The guests will go home. The photographs will circulate for days.

But for Charlene and Isaya, the real work begins now — quietly, privately, and entirely on their own terms.

**Giving-back** **This visit was the result of the warm engagement established during the bishop's visit to Washington, USA in July 2025**

# Strengthening Global Diaspora giving-back partnership with Muranga Catholic Diocese and communities

**BY Mary Karau Ngethe**
*@themtkenyatimes*

This week, on Monday 2nd November 2026, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Murang'a, led by Rt. Rev. Bishop James Maria Wainaina, hosted a delegation from the Catholic Diaspora community in Washington State USA and Titan Shippers (USA)-Kenya office. The purpose of the visit to the Diocese's secretariat was to get together to give hope and dignity to the communities in the diocese, especially people living with disabilities, elderly and patients with movement challenges.

This visit was the result of the warm engagement established during the bishop's visit to Washington, USA in July 2025. The bishop had travelled to the US to visit the Swahili-speaking Small Chrisitan Communities in Washinton State. The head of the diocese connected with the diaspora community, and he fostered deep spiritual fellowship to the worshipers. In return, the diaspora community gave the bishop a warm hospitality through a very warm reception. The worshipers committed to continue supporting the church's mission of evangelism through active prayers, dedication and financial donations. They pledged to maintain their on-going support and enduring friendship with the Catholic Diocese of Murang'a to help expand the reach of Radio Maria projects.

**Donation of wheelchairs and diapers**

During the Bishop's visit to Washington, the diaspora Catholic community hosting him pledged to start an on-going donation of wheelchairs and adult diapers for patients, elderly and people living with disabilities in Murang'a Diocese. This was in response to a request for the donations by the bishop. The worshipers were well represented by Ms Ann Irungu who happened to have travelled to Kenya, and was therefore present in the event.

The donated wheelchairs needed to be shipped from USA to Kenya, and then delivered to the diocese. Shipping donation was done free by Titan Shippers-USA office

**Shipping donation by Titan Shippers LLC**

Titan Shippers is a company registered in Washington USA, operating a business of shipping cargo from US to Kenya by both sea and air. The directors are Catholic worshipers in Washington, as well as members of Diocese of Murang'a. The company committed to offer free shipping services for wheelchairs and diapers. Dominic Karau, originally from Gaicanjiru Catholic Parish, Murang'a Diocese, offered the free shipping and delivery services as the company donation towards the bishop's project. The wheelchairs were donated and shipped to Kenya as promised. The donations also included adult diapers and clothes. Dominic is one of the members of the Swahili speaking SCC in Washington

**Receiving, blessing and distribution of donations by bishop**

On Monday, the donations were delivered to the Diocese Secretariat, and they were received, blessed and distributed to the needy persons by the Bishop Wainaina. The event was a moving experience for the beneficiaries who expressed joy after receiving wheelchairs and diapers from the bishop.

**Next Action:**

The bishop appealed to diaspora community in Washington to continue sending more donations. He said diapers needed continuous replenishing since they were needed on daily basis. The recipients were so needy, that some said they were unable even to go to church without diapers. Some reported that with diapers they would be able to go to the shamba, or even move from one place to another for economic generating activities. This was evidence that:

*"provision of diapers to those who needed them was actually strengthening the economic status of the families. Once this impacting report by the bishop reached the diaspora community, they would identify more with the socio-economic impact of their donations. They are then likely to give more and more. Directors of Titan Shippers will also give more meaning to their donation of free shipping and delivery"*

The Diocese health coordinator, Father Edwin Mwangi, who had coordinated the logistics of the event, thanked the Bishop for agreeing to express the dire needs of the diocese during his Washington visit, and said he looked forward to the next consignment of donations.

Ms Ann Irungu, representing Diaspora, and Ms Mary Ngethe, representing Titan Shippers, both thanked the Bishop for agreeing to personally receive the donations.

Bishop James Wainaina ended the event by praying for the donors and the beneficiaries.

*Author is Mary Karau Ngethe*
*Head of delegation*
*TITAN SHIPPERS LLC*





**Roman Catholic Diocese of Muranga, led by Rt. Rev. Bishop James Maria Wainaina, hosting a delegation from the Catholic Diaspora community in Washington State USA and Titan Shippers (USA)-Kenya office**



**Roman Catholic Diocese of Muranga, led by Rt. Rev. Bishop James Maria Wainaina, hosting a delegation from the Catholic Diaspora community in Washington State USA and Titan Shippers (USA)-Kenya office**

**Grief** The loss carries particular weight for Gachagua, who has navigated one of the most turbulent periods of his public life in recent months.

# Rigathi Gachagua mourns elder sister Eunice Nyangari Gachagua, 77, the family's guiding light

***The former Deputy President leads his family in grief after the death of the woman who held the Reriani household together for seven years following their mother's passing***

**BY James Mwangi**
*@themtkenyatimes*



Eunice Nyangari Gachagua elder sister of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua second left, and his brother second right

Eunice Nyangari Gachagua, elder sister of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, died yesterday in Naro Moru, Nyeri County, at the age of 77, leaving behind a family that had leaned on her steadying presence for more than half a decade.

In a statement released yesterday, Gachagua described his sister as the cornerstone of the Reriani family following the death of their mother seven years ago — a woman who stepped naturally into a maternal role and held her siblings, children and grandchildren together through the quiet authority of her love and counsel. "The late Eunice has been the mother figure in our family since the demise of our mother seven years ago," Gachagua wrote. "We will deeply miss her wise counsel, warmth and the precious moments we shared. Eunice was a happy and warm soul who lit up our hearts."

Eunice was the firstborn child of the late Mzee Nahashon Gachagua Reriani and the late Martha Kirigo Gachagua. She is survived by her daughter Waithera, her son Murimi, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Gachagua extended his condolences directly to each of them. "My family shares in the pain and grief of each and every one of us," he said. "We pray that her soul may rest in peace and that perpetual light may shine upon her forever."

The loss carries particular weight for Gachagua, who has navigated one of the most turbulent periods of his public life in recent months. His impeachment as Deputy President in October 2024 and subsequent return to opposition politics placed him at the centre of Kenya's most contentious political drama in years. Through that storm, family remained the constant. Eunice, by all accounts, was central to that anchor — the kind of presence whose value is felt most acutely in its absence.

Condolences arrived from across Kenya's political spectrum, a reflection both of Eunice's standing within the family and of the regard in which many leaders hold Gachagua despite the political turbulence that has surrounded him. Martha Karua, leader of the People's Liberation Party and a figure who has herself known political adversity, offered her sympathies and praised Eunice's strength and warmth. Former National Assembly Speaker Justin Muturi, who has known Gachagua across years of political engagement, also extended his condolences, acknowledging the depth of the loss for a family already acquainted with grief.

The passing of a firstborn sibling carries a particular resonance in Kenyan family culture, where birth order carries meaning beyond biology. The firstborn is often the keeper of family memory, the bridge between parents and younger siblings, the one who translates the values of one generation into the lived experience of the next. When that figure goes, something irreplaceable goes with them. Gachagua's statement acknowledged as much without saying it directly — the reference to Eunice stepping into their mother's role speaks to the kind of quiet, sustained love that rarely makes headlines but shapes everything.

Photographs from family gatherings, shared alongside tributes from relatives and well-wishers, captured Eunice at the centre of scenes that told their own story — a woman comfortable in the company of her people, whose presence was not commanded but simply felt. Those images, circulating on social media yesterday, prompted an outpouring of messages from Kenyans who may not have known her personally but recognised in her story the universal shape of a life well lived.

She was 77 years old. She had, as Gachagua noted, lived happily. She had raised children, watched grandchildren arrive, and held a family together through its hardest seasons. She had offered counsel when it was needed and warmth when it was not asked for but given anyway.

Kenya has many ways of measuring a life. By any of them, Eunice Nyangari Gachagua's was full.

May perpetual light shine upon her.







The late Eunice Nyangari Gachagua

# Lucky people get opportunity, brave people create opportunities



Luck favours only the brave.
Luck comes only when you are lucky.
If you are brave, you can create opportunities,
You need not depend on anything.

For luck is only a one percent chance,
Whereas hard work and sincerity yield success.

Brave people are always different, they don't rely on luck,
Luck is only a small ray.

When a door is locked,
They don't wait for luck to open it,
Instead, they find a way to open it.
Luck is a mere guest, it will not stay for a long time.

It is foolish to rely on luck.
A wise man will not wait for luck.

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Tamilnadu India

# All I want is "Peace"



The chaos rises higher
Mothers, sisters, wives and daughters burst into tears
No hopes can be seen.
The war between the two countries has ended,
But the war for their living, has started
All I want is the almighty's blessings
and some "peace".

As far as I go,
I can see the ground red.
I can't find anyone alive too.
Green extincted , mixed in red,
And my heart is filled with blue.
All I want is a little yellow and some "peace".

No, the war has not ended
The children are still crying
And fear hearted.
The air is still filled with doubts and screams.
All I want is a white pigeon assuring love and some "peace".

Debadrita Sarkar
Grade XI
Tarakeshwar Mahavidyalaya (H.S Unit)
West Bengal, India

# A single dark moment does not define your journey



Life is a long and continuous journey.
When will it stop? No one knows.
A person faces a lot of turning points in their life.
Life is a mixture of both happy and sad moments.
You will learn how to survive in this fast world from them.

For example, a person attends an exam but fails.
Even though he never gives up his goal,
he tries to continue until he succeeds.
We never judge our life in a single moment of life.
So, we do not bother about whether we face happy or sad moments.
Face them wisely and live confidently.

__ G. YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

# 'जदि है मेरी तू...?': A love story that reflects the bitter truth of society



Love is often associated with happiness, emotions, and togetherness. But sometimes, a love story is not just about two people falling in love; it also reflects the struggles, sacrifices, and realities of the society around them.
Author Sajiya Parveen's novel 'जदि है मेरी तू...?' is one such story that explores love from a different perspective. Through this novel, the author has tried to present the emotions of a person who wants to live life according to her own feelings but finds herself surrounded by social expectations and restrictions.
The story is not limited to love and relationships. Along with the emotions of its characters, it brings forward some bitter truths of society. There are certain things that people continue to follow in the name of culture, traditions, and customs, without thinking about how deeply they can affect someone's life. The novel attempts to highlight these realities through the journey of its protagonist.
The female protagonist reflects the nature and emotional side of the author herself. Through her character, Sajiya Parveen has tried to express those feelings that people often keep hidden within themselves. The pain of remaining silent, the difficulty of expressing one's choices, and the effort to keep smiling despite everything form an important part of the story.
The title 'जदि है मेरी तू...?' itself carries an emotional meaning. It reflects attachment, feelings, and the determination that sometimes becomes a part of human relationships. Through a love story, the author has attempted to make readers look beyond romance and understand the social realities that often remain unnoticed.
Sajiya Parveen believes that every story has something to say, and sometimes fiction becomes a way of presenting truths that people hesitate to discuss openly. With 'जदि है मेरी तू...?', she brings together love, emotions, relationships, and the bitter realities of society, hoping that readers will not only connect with the characters but also think about the message hidden behind their journey.

Author: Sajiya Parveen
Publisher: Penguin Evergreen House

# Big problems bow to a wiser mind.



When problems rise like towering walls,
Don't let your courage break or fall.
Not every storm demands a fight,
Nor does every knot need force or might.

A troubled mind sees mountains high,
And paints its fears across the sky.
Overthinking feeds the flame,
While worry deepens pain and blame.

Pause for a while, let silence speak,
A calm mind finds what fears make weak.
For strength lies not in forceful art,
But in a thoughtful, strategic start.

A little wisdom, rightly applied,
Can turn the toughest of tides aside.
One clever step, one well-laid plan,
Can achieve what force alone never can.

Don't wrestle shadows, don't chase fear,
Think with clarity, see things clear.
For every problem, great or small,
A wiser strategy can conquer all.

Remember this as life's golden art,
Big problems don't need greater force,
But a better strategy and a calmer heart.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator, Motivator, Writer

# Respect everyone



Make it a habit to respect people,
without knowing their qualifications, title, or position.

Respect your elders for their experience,
They are your forerunners and guides,
Respect your youngers as they will be your supporters,
They will lift the world one day.

Respect your colleagues,
Meet them everyday with a smile.

Respect your neighbours,
As they are your helping hands in emergencies,

Respect every soul in the world,
As we all make this world so well.

G. Kavitha,
B. T., Asst.
GGHSS, Big Kanchipuram

**Tanzania** **Lissu rejected the conviction with contempt. "The offence of incitement is one that you, honourable judges, have manufactured," he told the court.**

# Karua demands Lissu's release as Tanzania court conviction draws regional condemnation

The acquittal on treason charges has done nothing to free Tanzania's most prominent opposition leader — and Kenya's Martha Karua says that tells you everything you need to know

**BY Jacinta Njambi**
*@themtkenyatimes*

People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua yesterday demanded the immediate release of Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu after a High Court in Dar es Salaam acquitted him of treason but handed him a four-year prison sentence for incitement, in a ruling that has drawn sharp criticism from democracy advocates across East Africa.

The three-judge panel delivered its verdict on Friday, 6 November 2026, in a case that has kept the chairman of Tanzania's main opposition party, CHADEMA, behind bars since April 2025. The court found that prosecutors had failed to prove a key element of the treason charge, acquitting Lissu on that count. It then convicted him of incitement, ruling that his campaign slogan — "No Reforms, No Election" — was sufficient to establish the offence. "By uttering those words with the intention of disseminating them to the public, the accused incited the public to disrupt the 2025 elections," the court ruled.



**People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua |** *Photo:* Martha Karua

Lissu rejected the conviction with contempt. "The offence of incitement is one that you, honourable judges, have manufactured," he told the court. "You have created an offence that did not exist, and you have done so on political directives." He indicated his intention to apply for bail and confirmed he had been granted leave to appeal to Tanzania's Court of Appeal.

For Karua, the former Kenyan Justice Minister, the verdict confirmed what she described as a politically motivated prosecution dressed in judicial clothing. "The acquittal confirms that there was no case to warrant Mr Lissu's incarceration for over a year or to justify barring him and his party from participating in elections," she said. "He should be set at liberty forthwith." She went further, condemning the incitement sentence as a deliberate mechanism to achieve through a lesser charge what the treason charge had failed to accomplish. "An acquittal should not become a change of charge designed to achieve the same outcome: keeping an opposition leader behind bars," Karua stated.

Her intervention carries weight beyond the symbolic. Karua is positioning herself as a presidential candidate in Kenya's August 2027 general election, and her vocal defence of democratic principles in Tanzania is consistent with a political identity built on institutional accountability and rule of law. That she speaks out at a moment when Kenya's own political temperature is rising adds a layer of domestic resonance to what might otherwise read as regional commentary.

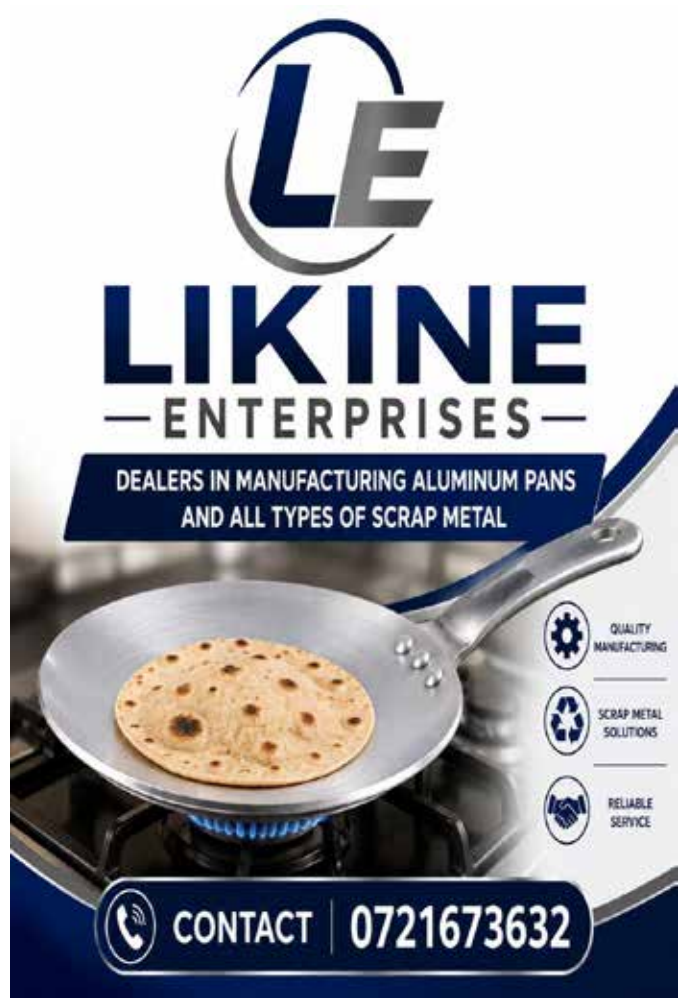
The context in Tanzania is sobering. President Samia Suluhu Hassan won the October 2025 general election with 98 per cent of the vote, after CHADEMA and other opposition challengers, including Lissu, were excluded from the contest. The elections were followed by widespread protests and a security crackdown that an official inquiry found left at least 500 people dead. The treason charges against Lissu were filed in that environment and have attracted sustained international concern about the state of political pluralism in a country that once maintained a more stable, if imperfect, democratic tradition.

"Democracy cannot exist where opposition leaders are imprisoned, political parties are intimidated, and citizens are denied a meaningful choice at the ballot," Karua said. "Political competition is not a crime; it is an essential pillar of democracy." She closed with a demand that left no room for diplomatic ambiguity: "Let Lissu walk free. Democracy must be won through the ballot, not enforced through prison walls."

For now, Lissu remains in custody, pursuing an appeal against a conviction his supporters say was constructed to serve the same purpose as the charge the court just dismissed. The acquittal on treason is, in that reading, not a victory — it is a legal manoeuvre that swaps one instrument of detention for another while the outcome stays the same.

A man walks free of treason. He stays in prison anyway. Martha Karua is right to call that what it is.






**Freedom Road enforcement presents another troubling dimension. Nobody should oppose lawful traffic regulation — road safety is a national necessity**

# Independence without liberation: Are Kenyans free?

***Six decades after independence, the gap between constitutional promise and everyday reality confronts Kenya's national conscience***



**BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo**
*fkipchelimo@yahoo.com*




More than six decades after Kenya attained independence, an uncomfortable question continues to confront the national conscience: are Kenyans truly free, or have they simply exchanged one form of dependence for another? These are not questions born of political pessimism. They arise from the growing disconnect between the promises of independence and the daily experiences of ordinary citizens who pay more, suffer more and increasingly expect less.

A Kenyan who questions government decisions, challenges administrative injustice or expresses dissatisfaction with public leadership should not have to contemplate intimidation, abduction or unlawful detention. Articles 29, 33 and 37 of the Constitution protect personal liberty, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. These rights are not privileges that government may grant or withdraw according to political convenience. Dissent is not treason, criticism is not rebellion, and patriotism cannot be measured by unquestioning loyalty to those in power.

The contradiction becomes equally visible in public service delivery. Kenyans pay income tax, VAT, statutory deductions, licence fees and numerous other levies to sustain government institutions. Yet citizens routinely encounter deliberate delays, unnecessary administrative obstacles and unofficial demands for additional payments to obtain services for which they have already paid. Whether seeking official documents, business permits, police assistance or healthcare, the ordinary Kenyan often finds themselves negotiating an additional financial burden simply to move an otherwise legitimate process forward.

This is not mere administrative inconvenience — it is a subversion of constitutional government. Article 47 guarantees lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair administrative action, while Article 232 requires responsive, prompt and impartial public services. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission's National Ethics and Corruption Survey 2024 documented the persistence of bribery in public service encounters. Corruption has consequently become more than the theft of public resources; it operates as an informal taxation system imposed on people already struggling with the cost of living. The poorest citizens suffer most, possessing the least capacity to withstand additional demands.

Road enforcement presents another troubling dimension. Nobody should oppose lawful traffic regulation — road safety is a national necessity. However, enforcement must never become an avenue for intimidation, humiliation or financial exploitation. Recent complaints concerning the National Transport and Safety Authority, including arbitrary penalties, alleged vehicle damage and questionable roadside conduct, deserve serious scrutiny. Every enforcement action must have a lawful basis, be properly documented and remain subject to accountability. Articles 28, 40 and 47 protect dignity, property and fair administrative action. The law must bind motorists, but it must equally bind those enforcing it.

Perhaps the most painful contradiction in Kenya's independence story is the displacement of professional merit by political patronage. Parents have sold livestock, borrowed money and sacrificed family resources to educate their children. Young Kenyans graduate with impressive qualifications and specialised skills, only to spend years searching for meaningful employment. Some eventually resort to hawking or casual labour — activities that carry no dishonour, but represent a profound injustice when a system rewards political connections over professional competence. Public institutions are not political reward centres. When competence is sacrificed to political loyalty, taxpayers bear the cost through poor management and deteriorating services.

For persons with disabilities, the contradictions of independence are even more pronounced. A qualified professional may be denied employment because an employer equates disability with incapacity. A wheelchair user may encounter inaccessible public offices. A visually impaired citizen may struggle with government digital platforms. A deaf person may be excluded from public participation because interpretation services are unavailable. These are institutional failures, not personal shortcomings. Articles 27 and 54 of the Constitution guarantee equality, non-discrimination, dignity, accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities Act 2025 reinforces these statutory obligations. Yet disability inclusion must move beyond political speeches and ceremonial representation. It must be reflected in employment, healthcare, accessible infrastructure, education and meaningful participation in decision-making. Disability is not an absence of ability, and inclusion is not charity — it is a constitutional obligation and a measure of democratic maturity.

The wider population faces similar questions concerning healthcare, education, housing and economic opportunity. Article 43 guarantees economic and social rights, while Article 174 establishes devolution as an instrument for equitable development and accessible services. Yet families continue to struggle with healthcare costs, young people remain unemployed and rural communities experience inadequate infrastructure. The existence of policies, institutions and budgetary allocations cannot, by itself, constitute successful governance. What matters is whether public investment translates into tangible improvements in people's lives.

Kenya does not need another collection of political promises. It needs institutional accountability. Alleged human rights violations must be independently investigated. Public service charges must be transparent. Corruption must attract real consequences. Enforcement agencies must demonstrate genuine professionalism. Public appointments must be grounded in competence. Parliament and county assemblies must exercise meaningful oversight, while citizens must reclaim their constitutional sovereignty through informed participation and electoral choices that demand better.

The question is not whether Kenya is legally independent — it unquestionably is. The harder question is whether ordinary Kenyans enjoy the practical benefits of that independence. What value does political freedom hold for someone afraid to express an opinion? What meaning does constitutional equality carry for a qualified person with a disability excluded from employment? What is the purpose of taxation when citizens must pay again, unofficially, to access legitimate services? And what is the value of education when political connections consistently outweigh merit?

Kenya has patriotic citizens, professional talent, constitutional protections and enormous national potential. What it urgently requires is leadership that understands public office as responsibility rather than privilege. A nation is not truly independent merely because its flag flies — it is independent when every citizen, regardless of economic circumstance, political persuasion or disability, can live without fear, access their rights without humiliation and demand accountability without intimidation.

Until freedom becomes an everyday experience rather than an annual celebration, Kenya's independence will remain politically accomplished but socially unfinished.

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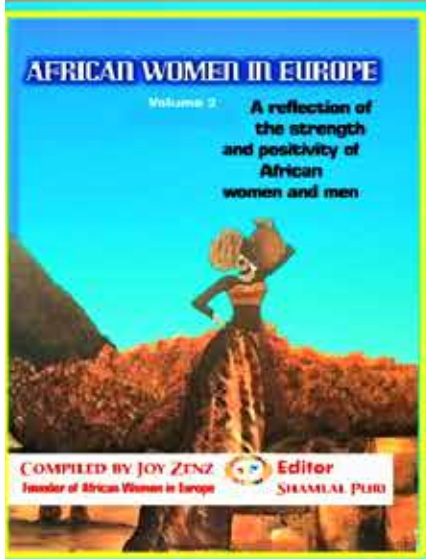
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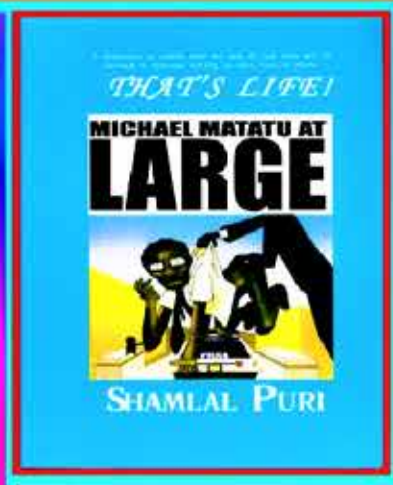
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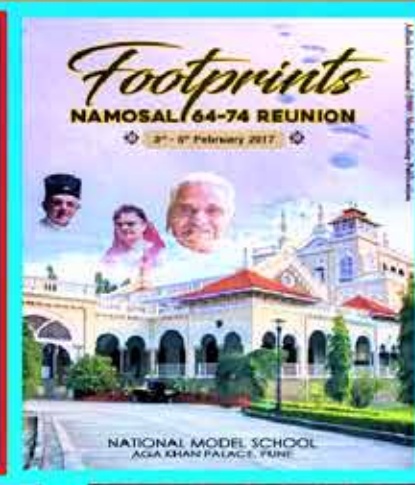
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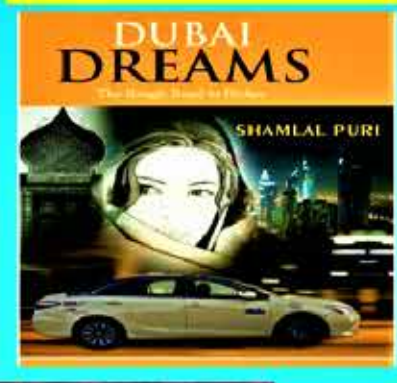


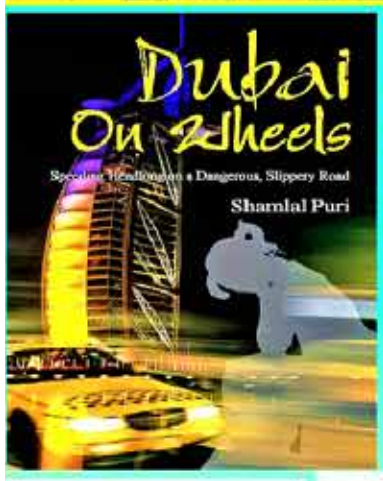


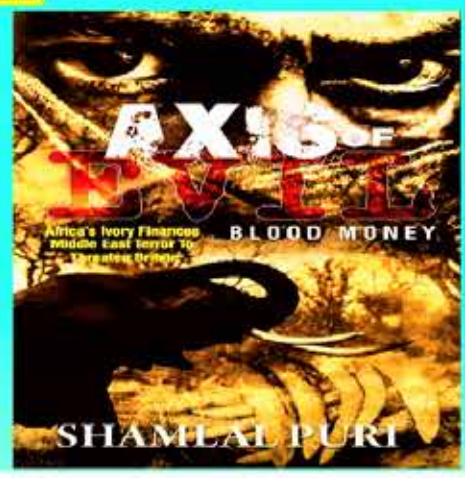


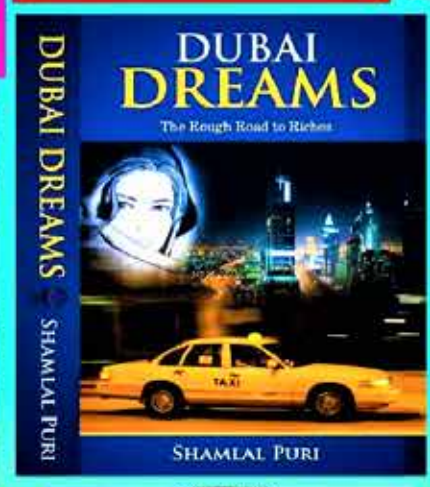




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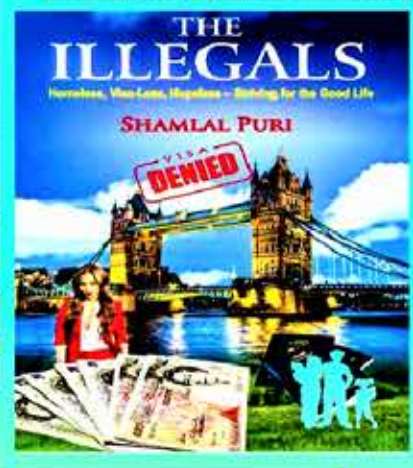


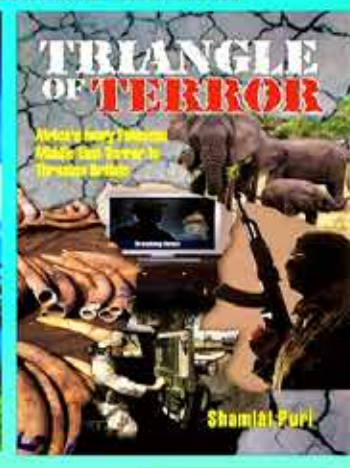



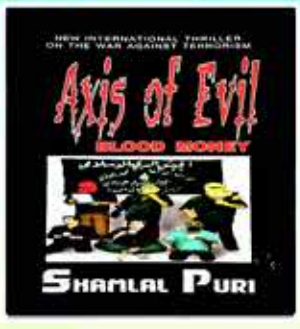




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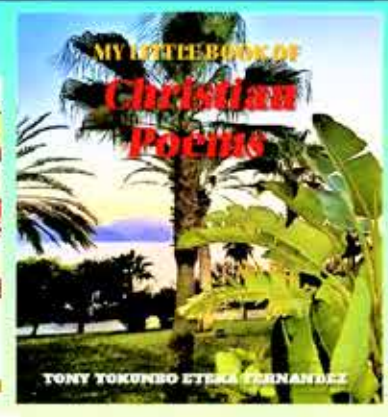









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**Data** Consider the correlation that should alarm every regulator and every citizen. Where data is most concentrated, competition withers and privacy becomes optional

# The auction of the soul: Data Concentration as Kenya's competitive farce against its own privacy



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes




Over 78 million mobile connections now pulse across a nation of roughly 55 million people, while mobile money subscriptions have surged past 54 million and data consumption on 5G alone averages tens of gigabytes per user each month. This is not connectivity. It is the systematic harvesting of Kenyan lives into datasets that travel farther and faster than any colonial railway ever did. Article 31 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, declares that every person has the right to privacy, the right not to have information relating to their family or private affairs unnecessarily required or revealed, and the right not to have the privacy of their communications infringed. The Data Protection Act of 2019 was enacted precisely to give force to that guarantee. Yet the lived reality is a quiet, continuous auction in which that constitutional promise is the first commodity offered for sale.

History repeats itself with clinical precision. In the late nineteenth century, European powers drew lines across African maps and extracted land, labour and minerals under the banner of civilisation and commerce. Today the extraction is quieter, more intimate, and far more efficient. Data is the new soil. Every M-Pesa transaction, every location ping, every WhatsApp message, every biometric scan for a government service or a Worldcoin token becomes raw material for platforms whose servers sit thousands of kilometres away. The farmers of the Rift Valley once watched their land titles vanish into settler hands; now the same communities watch their behavioural patterns, health indicators and social networks disappear into opaque algorithms controlled by a handful of global giants and a dominant local telecom. The continuity is not accidental. It is structural. Concentration of data creates concentration of power, and concentration of power rewrites the meaning of citizenship.

Consider the correlation that should alarm every regulator and every citizen. Where data is most concentrated, competition withers and privacy becomes optional. Safaricom's near-monopoly position in mobile money and data carriage gives it an unrivalled view of Kenyan economic and social life. Cloud infrastructure is dominated by a small club of American and Chinese providers. Social platforms and search engines operate as de facto public squares while remaining private fiefdoms. The Competition Authority of Kenya has begun to acknowledge that access to personal data is itself a parameter of competition. Control of data allows a firm to predict, exclude, and shape markets in ways that no traditional barrier to entry ever could. When the same data that fuels market power is also the intimate record of a person's life, the distinction between competition law and privacy law collapses. One cannot protect the market without protecting the person; one cannot protect the person while permitting the market to devour the person.

The emotional cost is not abstract. A mother in Kibera whose mobile number is reassigned without safeguards discovers that her private communications have become someone else's. A young man whose facial data was captured for attendance at a public broadcaster learns that the system was rolled out without consent or impact assessment. Millions of Kenyans whose records leaked from a health platform or a government registry wake to the knowledge that their medical histories and identity documents now circulate in the wild. The constitutional right is not a philosophical ornament. It is the thin membrane that separates dignity from exposure. When that membrane is treated as a competitive afterthought, the result is a citizenry that must bargain for basic services with the currency of its own intimacy.

The irony is savage. Kenya markets itself as the Silicon Savannah, a hub for digital innovation and a future data centre powerhouse. Officials speak of monetizing anonymized national datasets and of attracting global investment. The language of progress is loud. The language of accountability is whispered. Anonymization is presented as a shield, yet experts know that re-identification risks rise when datasets are combined. Citizens are told their data will fuel national development while the actual value accrues to entities that answer to distant shareholders and foreign regulators. The plantation logic returns: the labour is local, the profit is external, and the original owners of the resource are left with residual rights that require expensive litigation to enforce.

This is not a failure of technology. It is a failure of will and of institutional coordination. The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner has issued determinations and ordered deletions. The High Court has repeatedly affirmed that Article 31 stands on its own feet, independent of the Act, and can reach digital identifiers, biometric systems and surveillance practices. The Competition Authority has begun to examine strategic market positions in digital ecosystems and the role of data silos. These are necessary steps. They remain insufficient while the three institutions operate in parallel rather than in concert. Privacy violations that entrench dominance must be treated as competition offences. Dominance that rests on the systematic extraction of personal data must be treated as privacy violations. The artificial separation of the two regimes is a gift to the dominant players.

What, then, must be done? Parliament must accelerate the integration of data considerations into competition law so that control of personal data is explicitly recognised as a source of market power capable of abuse. The Competition Authority must treat privacy-eroding practices as exclusionary conduct when they lock rivals out of markets or lock consumers into platforms. The Data Protection Commissioner must receive the resources and independence required to move beyond individual complaints into systemic investigations of the largest data controllers. The judiciary must continue to insist that constitutional privacy is not exhausted by statutory remedies and that novel digital harms fall within Article 31's protective reach. Government itself must abandon the fantasy that it can monetize citizen data at scale while pretending the risks of re-identification and secondary use are theoretical. Citizens must demand, as a condition of every public service and every private platform, clear, specific, and withdrawable consent and they must treat the refusal of that demand as a political act.

The deeper insight is this: privacy is not the opposite of progress. It is the precondition of a digital society that remains human. When data concentration is allowed to dictate the terms of competition, the citizen is reduced to a data subject whose only remaining freedom is the freedom to be profiled. Kenya has walked this road before. The land was taken, the labour extracted, the culture dismissed. The digital enclosure now underway is more total because it reaches into the mind and the body at once. The Constitution of 2010 was written precisely so that this generation would not repeat the dispossession of earlier ones. To treat privacy as a competitive parameter rather than a non-negotiable right is to auction the soul of the republic for the temporary advantage of a few platforms. That auction must stop. The actors who hold the gavel; regulators, lawmakers, judges, citizens must refuse to sell.

*The writer is a social commentator*

**Health** **Kenya is not yet free of Ebola. It is, however, closer than it has been since October — and that, for now, is reason for cautious hope.**

# Kenya nears Ebola-free countdown after six recoveries and 18 days without a new case

***With one patient still under care and a mandatory 42-day clock yet to start, health authorities are urging Kenyans not to mistake progress for victory***




Health Director-General Patrick Amoth

**BY Yvonne Wambui**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Kenya moved closer yesterday to being declared Ebola-free after six patients recovered from the disease and the country recorded its eighteenth consecutive day without a new infection, raising cautious optimism that the October 2026 outbreak may be approaching its end.

The Ministry of Health announced on Friday that a sixth patient had recovered from the Ebola Bundibugyo virus, tested negative and been discharged after meeting all required medical conditions. Health Director-General Patrick Amoth confirmed that Kenya has recorded nine confirmed cases since the outbreak was declared last month — six recoveries, two deaths and one patient still receiving treatment.

All nine cases are linked to a single, known chain of transmission. Authorities have found no evidence of community spread, a development that health officials described as significant. The last confirmed new infection was reported on 19 October, making yesterday the eighteenth day of an unbroken run without a fresh case.

Progress on contact tracing has also been encouraging. Of the individuals identified as having been in contact with confirmed patients, 66 have completed the mandatory 21-day monitoring period and returned to their homes without developing symptoms. A further 52 are expected to complete quarantine by 11 November. The government has maintained that anyone who completes the monitoring period symptom-free poses no transmission risk.

Despite the trajectory, Kenya cannot yet begin the formal process of being declared Ebola-free. Under World Health Organisation protocols, the country must complete a 42-day countdown — twice the virus's maximum incubation period — without recording another infection. That countdown will only commence once the final patient has recovered, tested negative and been formally discharged from the treatment centre. Until that happens, the official clock has not started.

The 42-day window is designed to give health authorities sufficient time to establish with certainty that no hidden chain of transmission remains. It is a demanding threshold, and health officials have been careful to frame the current progress as encouraging rather than conclusive. "Continued vigilance, public cooperation and effective surveillance will be essential," the Ministry said in a statement, cautioning against complacency as the number of active cases declines.

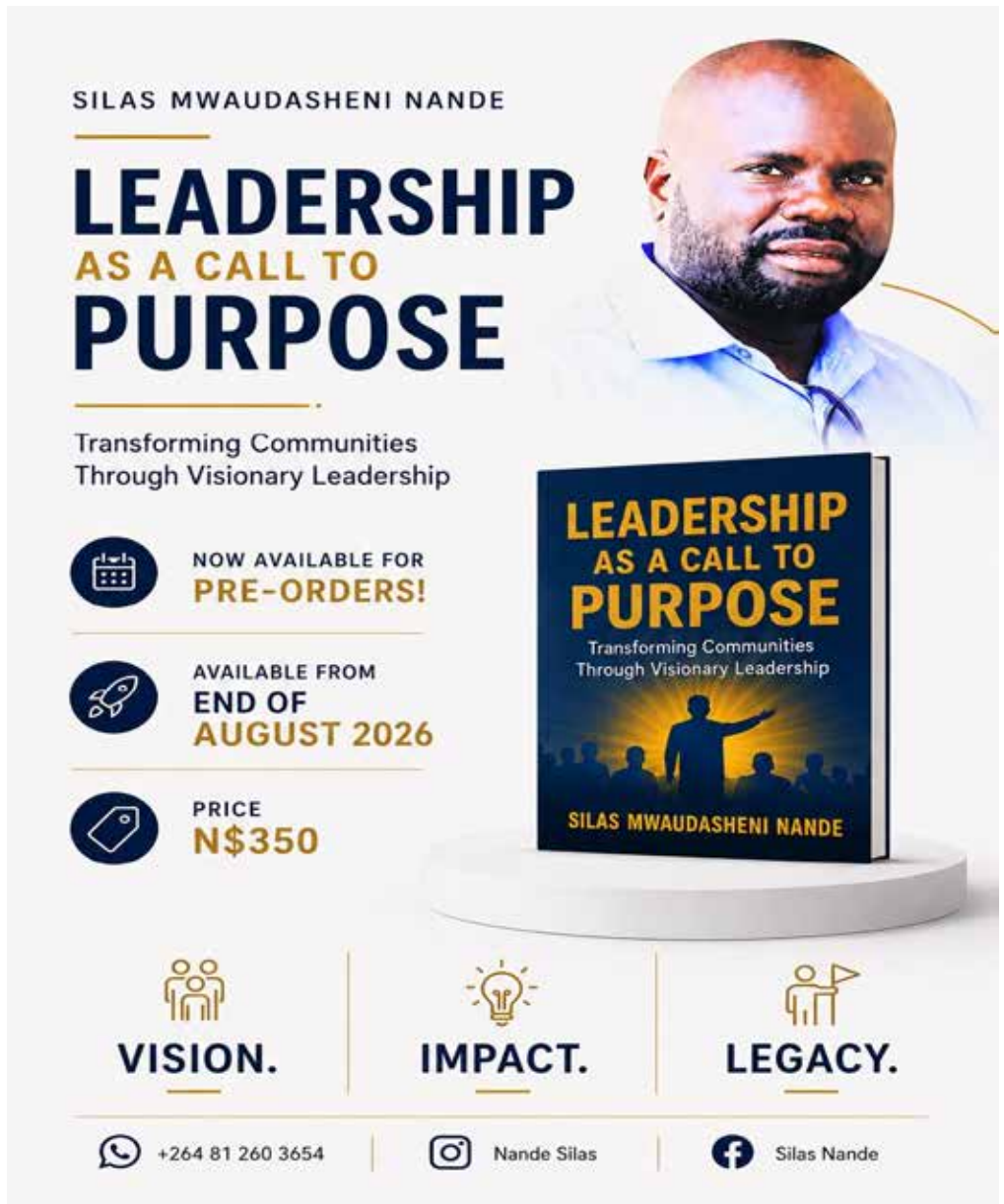
Surveillance at Kenya's 26 designated points of entry has remained intensive throughout the outbreak. More than 760,000 travellers have been screened at border crossings, airports and other entry points since October, and emergency response teams remain on standby to respond to any suspected new infections.

The Ministry has urged the public to seek immediate medical attention if they develop any symptoms associated with Ebola, including fever, unusual weakness, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea or unexplained bleeding — particularly following contact with a confirmed or suspected patient. Ebola spreads through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person or contaminated materials. It does not spread through ordinary casual contact.

Health authorities have also appealed to Kenyans to avoid sharing unverified information about the outbreak and to cooperate fully with officials conducting contact investigations. Those wishing to report a suspected Ebola-related emergency can call the Ministry of Health's toll-free number 719, dial *719#, or send a WhatsApp message to 0700 719 719.

Six recoveries from a disease with a historically devastating mortality rate represent genuine and hard-won progress. The containment of transmission to a single known chain, in a country of more than 55 million people, reflects the effectiveness of early detection and rapid response. But one patient remains in care, the countdown has not begun and the virus has surprised health systems before.

Kenya is not yet free of Ebola. It is, however, closer than it has been since October — and that, for now, is reason for cautious hope.



**South Africa** **By December 1997, South Africa was attempting to confront the ghosts of its past through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

# Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Stompie Seipei and an apology that took nine years

***How the death of a 14-year-old boy and Archbishop Tutu's televised plea exposed the fault lines between political heroism, accountability and the painful limits of reconciliation***

**BY Ashford Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Winnie Madikizela-Mandela**

There are apologies that heal wounds, and there are apologies that arrive so late they reopen them. In December 1997, South Africa witnessed one of the most emotionally charged moments of its post-apartheid history when Archbishop Desmond Tutu publicly pleaded with Winnie Madikizela-Mandela to apologise for the events surrounding the death of Stompie Seipei, a 14-year-old boy from Soweto. It was a moment that exposed the uncomfortable intersection between political heroism, personal responsibility, human suffering and the complicated business of forgiveness.

Stompie was only 14, a child with an entire lifetime ahead of him. In December 1988, he and several other young men were abducted from a Methodist church residence in Soweto and taken to a house associated with Madikizela-Mandela and her bodyguard unit, the Mandela United Football Club. They were suspected of being informers. What followed was horrifying. The boys were beaten and interrogated. Stompie suffered particularly brutal injuries. His body was discovered in January 1989. He was dead, his life reduced to a tragic footnote in the turbulent politics of apartheid-era South Africa.

Jerry Richardson, a member of the Mandela United Football Club, was convicted of Stompie's murder. Madikizela-Mandela herself was convicted of kidnapping and being an accessory to assault. Her six-year prison sentence was subsequently reduced on appeal to a fine and a suspended sentence. She was not convicted of murder, but the controversy surrounding her role in those events would follow her for the rest of her life. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission later made serious findings about her involvement in the abductions and assaults.

Therein lies one of the most difficult aspects of this story. Madikizela-Mandela was not an ordinary political figure. She was a symbol of resistance — a woman who endured imprisonment, harassment, intimidation and years of enforced separation from Nelson Mandela during the apartheid struggle. To millions, she represented courage and defiance in the face of oppression, celebrated as the Mother of the Nation. But political struggle does not confer moral infallibility. A person can be a victim of injustice in one chapter of history and still be implicated in injustice in another. The suffering one has endured does not grant permission to inflict suffering on others.

By December 1997, South Africa was attempting to confront the ghosts of its past through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The hearings involving Madikizela-Mandela were particularly painful. Witnesses gave accounts of intimidation, abductions and assaults associated with her football club. The woman once celebrated as a national heroine was now being asked to account for allegations that had cast a long shadow over her legacy. Then Tutu intervened. He turned towards her and made an extraordinary personal appeal — not a demand for legal explanation, but a direct appeal to conscience. "I speak to you as someone who loves you," he said. Then came the desperate plea: "I beg you, I beg you, I beg you please." He said her greatness would not be diminished by admitting that things had gone wrong. It would, he argued, be enhanced if she found the courage to say sorry.

It was an extraordinary spectacle. One of the most respected religious leaders in the world was pleading with one of South Africa's most celebrated political personalities to acknowledge the suffering associated with her name. Tutu understood that reconciliation could not be built on political reputation, selective memory or the convenient silence of powerful people. A nation cannot heal by pretending its heroes never did anything wrong.

Eventually, Madikizela-Mandela spoke. She acknowledged that things had gone horribly wrong and expressed deep sorrow. She addressed Stompie's mother, Joyce Seipei, and told her how sorry she was. The two women embraced. Cameras captured the moment. For some, it was a genuine act of contrition. For others, it was an apology extracted by public pressure and the moral authority of Archbishop Tutu. The question was unavoidable: Would Madikizela-Mandela have apologised had the whole country not been watching?

Nobody can conclusively establish what was in her heart. But the circumstances invite legitimate questions. Why did it take nine years? Why did it require Tutu's intervention? Would the same words have been spoken in a private room, without cameras and the pressure of national opinion? Saying sorry does not automatically mean one has fully confronted the consequences of one's actions. Sometimes people apologise because they are genuinely remorseful. Sometimes they do so because the weight of public condemnation has become too heavy to bear. The words may sound identical, but the motivations can be very different.

And what of Joyce Seipei? That is where the story becomes almost unbearable. Imagine losing your 14-year-old son in such horrific circumstances, then nine years later the woman associated with those responsible stands before you and says she is sorry. Does a televised apology make the unbearable loss easier to carry? Does the country's need for reconciliation mean that a grieving mother must set aside her pain for the sake of national healing? The embrace between the two women was deeply moving, but it must never be mistaken for proof that the wounds had healed. Forgiveness is personal. It cannot be legislated or extracted from victims to make a political process look successful. A mother who has lost a child owes nobody a performance of forgiveness.

There is a larger lesson here for societies that elevate political leaders into untouchable figures. The struggle against apartheid was necessary and morally justified, but that does not mean every action committed in its name was justified. Stompie's life mattered as much as the reputation of any political personality. His age mattered. His humanity mattered. His mother's grief mattered. Madikizela-Mandela's legacy cannot be understood honestly by telling only the heroic parts of her story, nor should it be reduced entirely to its darkest controversies. History must accommodate both her contribution to the liberation struggle and the serious findings that damaged her record. That is what honest remembrance requires.

Tutu was right that greatness must be accompanied by humility and accountability. But the most enduring lesson may be simpler: no political achievement and no celebrated reputation should ever place anyone above the obligation to answer for human suffering. Madikizela-Mandela said she was sorry. The country heard her. History recorded her words. But the question that no archbishop or reconciliation commission can answer on behalf of a grieving mother remains — are there wounds for which an apology, however powerful, will never be enough?

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Has money replaced love?

By **Vanessa Bore**



Love was once considered life's greatest currency. Today, actual currency appears to be winning. Financial stability has become a primary filter in partner selection, particularly among younger generations navigating an expensive world. Social media has accelerated the shift, packaging wealth as romance and presenting luxury holidays and designer gifts as the truest expressions of commitment. When affection is measured by what a partner can afford, something fundamental has changed.

Yet the picture is not straightforward. Wanting a financially stable partner is not the same as being mercenary. Money pays bills, raises children and absorbs life's shocks. Financial strain is one of the most reliable destroyers of relationships — not because couples stop caring, but because prolonged pressure erodes even genuine affection.

The danger arrives when money stops being a practical consideration and becomes the primary measure of a person's worth. Relationships built entirely around financial benefit gradually hollow out. Loyalty, honesty, emotional availability and companionship — the qualities that sustain a partnership through real difficulty — cannot be purchased. A person may afford every expensive gift and remain entirely absent.

Romanticising poverty is equally misguided. Love should not demand suffering. The goal is a relationship where financial responsibility and genuine affection reinforce each other rather than compete.

Perhaps the question was never money versus love. Perhaps it was always whether we are mature enough to honestly need both — and humble enough to admit it.

## The voice colonialists could not silence: Remembering Francis Khamisi

By **Vincent Omondi**



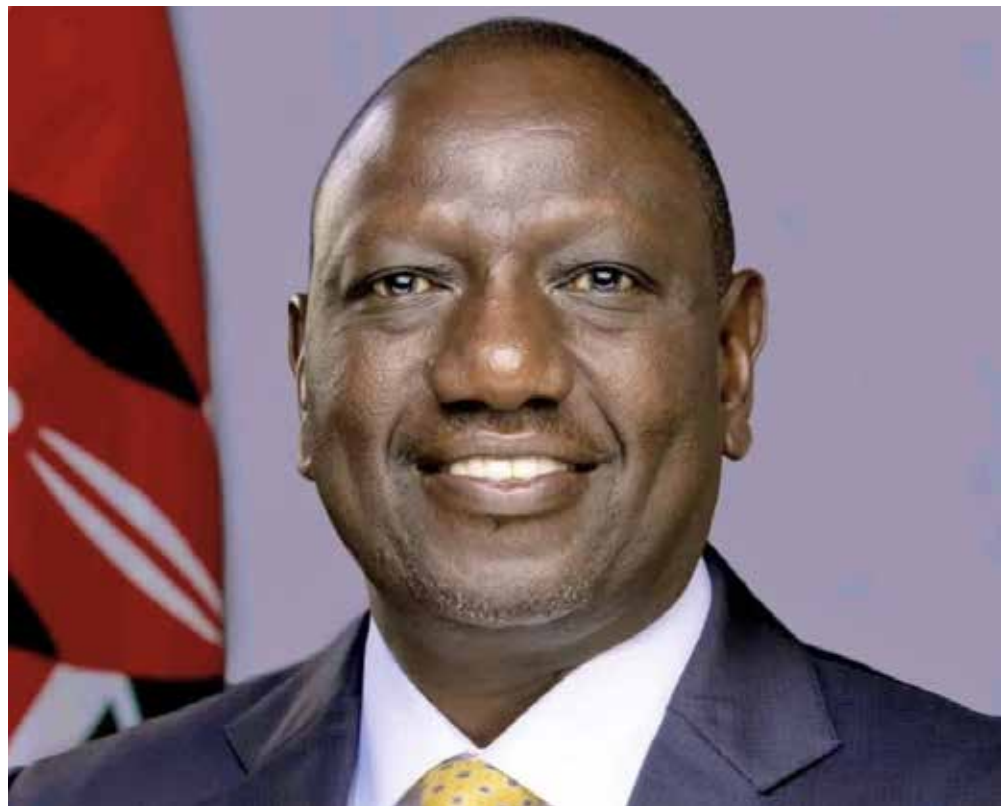

Before press freedom was a right in Kenya, it was an act of defiance — and Francis Khamisi practised it daily. Born at the Coast, Khamisi emerged in the 1940s as one of the most consequential figures in Kenyan journalism, becoming the first African editor of Baraza at a time when colonial interests dominated the media landscape and African voices were systematically marginalised.

In 1945, he went further, founding Mwalimu, a weekly publication that addressed land ownership, workers' rights and politics directly affecting ordinary Africans. It was bold, necessary journalism delivered under conditions designed to suppress it. Financial pressure, hostile printers and colonial administrative restrictions made every edition a small act of resistance. He persisted, later publishing through Hodi and other platforms, refusing to be silenced by obstacles that would have defeated lesser men.

What makes Khamisi remarkable is not merely what he published, but what he proved: that Africans could lead newsrooms, set editorial agendas and hold power to account on their own terms. That conviction, expressed through ink rather than arms, helped lay the intellectual and institutional foundations upon which Kenya's modern media stands.

As Kenya celebrates its media growth and constitutional press freedoms, the architects of that freedom deserve more than passing footnotes. Khamisi was not simply an editor. He was a pioneer who understood, long before independence, that a nation cannot truly govern itself until it can tell its own story.

## Growth is up, but jobs and debt test Ruto's government



**President William Ruto**

By **Oduor Victor**

Kenya's economy grew 5.2 per cent in the first half of 2026, yet a World Bank report released yesterday found that corruption, high public debt and a chronic shortage of formal jobs are preventing that growth from reaching most households. The findings land nine months before the August 2027 general election, as President William Ruto's broad-based government faces mounting questions about results.

The bank raised its full-year 2026 growth forecast to 4.6 per cent from 4.3 per cent, driven by industry and services. NCBA Group chief economist Raphael Agung projected 4.8 per cent growth this year and 4.5 per cent in 2027. The numbers look respectable on paper. The reality on the ground is harder.

World Bank country director Qimiao Fan said almost 84 per cent of Kenya's jobs remain informal, typically offering lower pay and little protection. Government data show roughly 18.1 million Kenyans work informally against 3.5 million in formal employment. Nearly one million young people enter the labour force annually, while only 120,000 to 150,000 formal jobs are created each year. In 2025, the private sector added just 54,500 formal positions. Foreign direct investment has remained below 0.5 per cent of GDP since 2018, well short of the 1.5 to 2 per cent typical of comparable economies.

The fiscal picture is equally concerning. The deficit reached 6.8 per cent of GDP in 2025/26 against a target of 4.7 per cent. Public debt stood at 69.9 per cent of GDP at end-June 2026, with interest payments consuming 5.8 per cent of GDP. Kenya remains at high risk of debt distress.

The bank identified corruption as the single greatest obstacle to broader growth, estimating it costs Kenya roughly 2 per cent of GDP annually. The share of firms describing corruption as a major constraint rose to 39 per cent in 2025 from 25 per cent in 2013. Boda boda riders and market vendors bear the heaviest burden of petty corruption. The bank calculated that moderate anti-corruption reforms could expand the economy by 8.7 per cent by 2035, with stronger action potentially delivering 22.3 per cent growth and 7.7 million better jobs.

Treasury Principal Secretary Chris Kiptoo disputed the growth forecast as too conservative, maintaining the government expects at least 5 per cent expansion. He accepted the risk findings, and a Finance Ministry official said governance reforms are under way.

The broad-based arrangement, formed in March 2025 between Ruto's UDA and ODM following youth-led protests, was intended to calm political tensions. ODM chairperson Gladys Wanga defended it, citing development projects in Luo Nyanza. Senator Okiya Omtatah has argued it has not stabilised the economy. A TIFA poll conducted in May found support for the arrangement had fallen 14 points to 30 per cent, with 56 per cent opposed.

The World Bank did not assess the political arrangement directly. But the metrics it identified — formal job creation, deficit reduction and corruption prosecutions — will determine whether the broad-based government is ultimately judged a success or a convenient arrangement that served politics better than people.




**Sports >>** ***From a struggling family in a small Atlantic island to the pinnacle of world football, Ronaldo's journey remains one of sport's most extraordinary stories**

# Cristiano Ronaldo: The boy from Madeira who rewrote football history

By **Benson Buyabo**

Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro was born on 5 February 1985 in Funchal, on the Portuguese island of Madeira. He grew up in a family that faced genuine financial hardship, the youngest of four children. From an early age, football was his escape and his obsession. He joined local club Andorinha, where his father worked, before moving to Nacional and then earning a place at the academy of Sporting Clube de Portugal in Lisbon. Living far from his family as a young teenager was difficult, but Ronaldo channelled that isolation into relentless self-improvement. During that period he also underwent successful treatment for a heart condition that could have ended his career before it began. It did not slow him down for a single day.

Ronaldo progressed rapidly through Sporting CP's youth ranks and made his senior debut in 2002. His pace, confidence and extraordinary skill caught the attention of visiting coaches almost immediately. In August 2003, Sporting played a pre-season friendly against Manchester United. Ronaldo's performance that afternoon so impressed United manager Sir Alex Ferguson that the English club signed him within days. He was 18 years old, and the world was about to find out who he was.

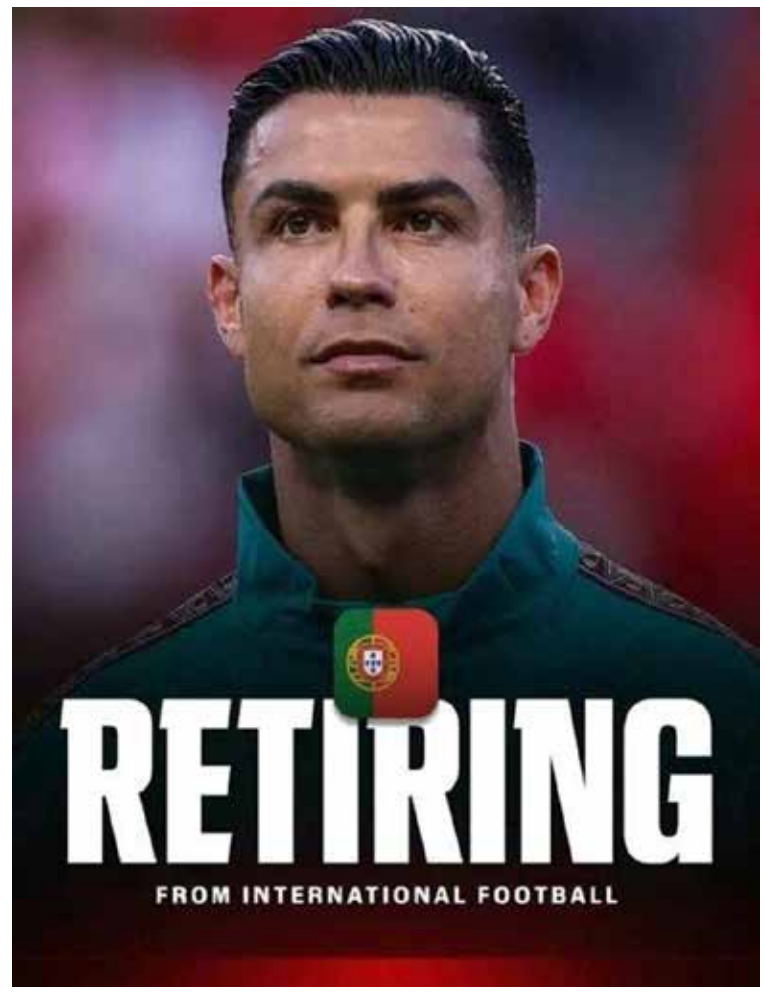
At Old Trafford, Ronaldo wore the iconic number seven shirt and initially dazzled crowds with his trickery and dribbling. Over time, guided by Ferguson, he transformed into something far more dangerous — a complete footballer with lethal finishing, remarkable aerial ability and an insatiable hunger for goals. During his first spell at United, the club won three consecutive Premier League titles, the FA Cup, two League Cups and the UEFA Champions League in 2008. That season, Ronaldo scored 42 goals in all competitions — a staggering return — and was awarded the Ballon d'Or as the world's best player. In 2009, Real Madrid signed him in what was then a world-record transfer.

At the Santiago Bernabéu, Ronaldo became a phenomenon. He scored with both feet and his head, delivered consistently in the matches that mattered most and forged one of sport's greatest rivalries with Barcelona's Lionel Messi. In 438 competitive appearances for Real Madrid, he scored 451 goals, becoming the club's all-time record scorer. He won two La Liga titles, two Copa del Rey trophies and four UEFA Champions League titles, adding four more Ballon d'Or awards to his collection along the way. After nine seasons in Spain, he moved to Italy in 2018.

At Juventus, Ronaldo won two Serie A titles, the Coppa Italia and the Italian Super Cup, and finished as Serie A's top scorer in the 2020–21 season. In 2021, he returned to Manchester United, once again finishing as the club's leading scorer in his first season back. The second spell ended abruptly in November 2022 following a public dispute with club management and a controversial television interview that led to the termination of his contract. It was an uncomfortable exit from a club where he had become a legend, but it did not define him.

In January 2023, Ronaldo joined Saudi Arabian side Al-Nassr. His arrival transformed the Saudi Pro League's global profile overnight and encouraged a wave of high-profile players to follow. He continued scoring with remarkable consistency and won the 2023 Arab Club Champions Cup. His influence on and off the pitch remained undiminished.

For Portugal, Ronaldo made his senior international debut in 2003 and became captain.




*Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro*

He was central to his country's first major international triumph at UEFA Euro 2016, though an early injury forced him to watch the final from the touchline. Portugal also won the UEFA Nations League in 2019 and again in 2025. Ronaldo became the leading goalscorer in men's international football history, surpassing records many believed would never fall, and earned more than 200 caps for his country.

His career total includes five Ballon d'Or awards, five UEFA Champions League titles and four European Golden Shoes. Beyond the trophies, he is admired for his extraordinary physical conditioning, his training discipline and his refusal to accept limits. The boy from Madeira who grew up without much has spent his adult life proving, repeatedly and emphatically, that ambition and relentless hard work can take a person anywhere.

Cristiano Ronaldo has not merely played football. He has redefined what is possible within it.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** ***A bitter dispute between one of Kenya's most prominent road races and the country's athletics governing body is threatening to derail the sport months before a critical election year**

# Eldoret City Marathon fights back: Race officials deny mismanagement as calendar war with Athletics Kenya deepens

By **Martin Weche**



*Eldoret City Marathon race director Moses Tanui in a past function. PHOTO/ELDORET CITY MARATHON FACEBOOK*

Organisers of the Eldoret City Marathon yesterday rejected accusations of financial mismanagement and alleged the race's exclusion from Athletics Kenya's official calendar was an act of institutional revenge, escalating a confrontation that now threatens to overshadow Kenyan road racing in the run-up to the August 2027 general election.

In a strongly worded statement, the organisers described the financial allegations circulating against them as false and defamatory, insisting that every aspect of the marathon's management had been conducted transparently and in accordance with the law. "The organisers of the Eldoret City Marathon wish to address false allegations and misleading rumours regarding the financial management of the marathon," the statement read. "We maintain complete transparency, legal compliance, and dedication to the welfare of athletes and vendors."

The organisers were emphatic that government sponsorship funds had never passed through private accounts. Under World Athletics regulations, Athletics Kenya road running rules and public finance law, they said, such funds are managed through statutory channels and remain fully auditable. All payment trails, audit records and banking workflows, they insisted, are open and verifiable by any legitimate authority.

They did, however, acknowledge one uncomfortable truth: prize money payments to race winners have sometimes been delayed. "Delayed payment cycles — while regrettable — are common across Kenyan road races operating within statutory public fund disbursement timelines," the statement conceded, adding that the marathon has never formally defaulted on athlete payouts across any of its seven editions.

The statement arrived a day after race director Moses Tanui and fellow officials went public with what they described as the deliberate exclusion of the Eldoret City Marathon from the 2026/27 Athletics Kenya calendar. Tanui, a two-time Boston Marathon champion whose name carries significant weight in Kenyan athletics, did not mince his words. The officials attributed the exclusion directly to malice within Athletics Kenya's leadership, linking it to the marathon's vocal advocacy for constitutional reform within the federation — a position that appears to have made powerful enemies.

The timing is significant. Kenya is entering a charged political season, with the August 2027 general election already reshaping alliances, loyalties and institutional behaviour across the country. Sports governance has rarely been immune to political pressure in Kenya, and the Eldoret City Marathon dispute carries unmistakable echoes of that dynamic. Athletics Kenya, like many national federations, operates within a political ecosystem where personal relationships, factional rivalries and electoral calculations frequently influence decisions that are presented as administrative.

Eldoret, the heartland of Kenyan long-distance running, is also politically strategic territory. The North Rift region commands enormous symbolic and electoral weight, and any perception that its flagship sporting event is being marginalised by Nairobi-based administrators risks inflaming sentiments that politicians on all sides will be watching carefully. Sport, in this context, is never merely sport.

The seven-year-old marathon has established itself as a credible fixture on the domestic road racing circuit, providing competitive opportunities for athletes and economic activity for vendors, service providers and the wider Eldoret economy. Its removal from the official calendar does not merely inconvenience organisers — it strips the event of the regulatory legitimacy that attracts sponsors, qualifies athletes for rankings and ensures prize money attracts top-tier fields.

Athletics Kenya has yet to issue a formal public response to the specific allegations made by the marathon's officials. The silence is conspicuous. If the exclusion was indeed motivated by the organisers' push for constitutional reform within the federation, it would represent a troubling precedent — one in which institutional power is used to suppress internal dissent rather than address legitimate governance concerns.

For Kenya's road running community, which remains one of the country's most visible and commercially viable sporting assets, the dispute sends an uncomfortable signal at the worst possible moment. With sponsors, broadcasters and international partners watching, the last thing Kenyan athletics needs is a public governance crisis playing out against the backdrop of an election year.

The Eldoret City Marathon says its books are open. Athletics Kenya must now explain its calendar.






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# Guruve spiritual crusade draws rural communities to three-day faith outreach

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A Pentecostal church based in Kwekwe, Zimbabwe, took its gospel mission deep into the rural hinterland last weekend, hosting a three-day spiritual crusade that drew families, youths and community leaders to a remote village in Guruve district. Christ Kingdom Ministries International, through its newly established branch CKMI Faith Assembly in Chikokonya village, held the outreach from 30 October to 1 November, bringing sustained religious programming to one of the country's more isolated communities.

The crusade centred on the theme Kingdom Life, anchored in the church's core mission drawn from Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations." Preaching was led by Bishop Cecilia Kandemiiri, supported by a dedicated team comprising Reverend N. Makani, Overseer T. Chamunorwa, Evangelists Chademana and Madhara, Reverend S. Matsa and Student Pastor C. Maseko. Messages focused on salvation, restoration, deliverance and Christian hope, drawing congregants from several denominations across the surrounding area. Word-rooted teachings were directed particularly at younger attendees, aiming to instil positive moral values and a spirit of resilience within what remains an agrarian, tight-knit community.

Both daytime and evening services attracted strong attendance, with the atmosphere shaped by a mix of contemporary gospel music and traditional Shona worship choruses. Participants engaged in communal praise, dance and collective worship, and several attendees made first-time commitments to the Christian faith during the three days. The blend of spiritual intensity and cultural familiarity appeared to resonate strongly with a congregation that spans generations and denominational backgrounds.

The crusade's most significant and enduring moment came with the formal ordination of Elder Mucheki, a founding member of the Chikokonya assembly and one of its most committed congregants, as its substantive pastor. The appointment places the new rural congregation under permanent, resident spiritual leadership and formally consolidates CKMI's presence in Guruve. Speaking at the close of the crusade, Kandemiiri expressed warm gratitude to the entire preaching team for their contributions and said the impact of the outreach would continue to resonate long after the final service ended. She described it as laying strong foundations for ongoing spiritual growth, unity and community transformation within Guruve's farming settlements.



*BISHOP, Dr. C. Kandemiiri*

Looking ahead, Christ Kingdom Ministries International has announced concrete plans to construct a permanent assembly building at the Chikokonya worship site. The project forms part of the church's broader socio-spiritual upliftment programme, which seeks to bring not only religious instruction but also moral and community development to Zimbabwe's more remote districts. Roadmaps for further consolidation revivals in Guruve are already being drawn up, with the church indicating that the district will remain a priority area for follow-up ministry.

The church's reach extends well beyond Guruve. Christ Kingdom Ministries International was founded by Kandemiiri on 15 August 2010, following 18 years of ministry under Awake Grace Ministries in Zimbabwe and abroad. Guided by the instruction recorded in Acts 1:8 — to be witnesses "to the end of the earth" — the church has consistently targeted communities with limited access to organised religious programming. Its outreach philosophy prioritises depth over spectacle, focusing on discipleship and long-term community engagement rather than large urban events.

Supporting that mission is the Christian Institute of Theological Studies, CKMI's theological training school, which operates as an extension campus of New Life Temple Bible College in El Paso, Texas, itself affiliated with Logos University in the United States. The institution equips pastors and ministry workers with formal biblical training, strengthening the church's capacity to sustain and lead the congregations it plants across the region.

With additional outreach programmes scheduled across Zimbabwe and beyond its borders throughout 2027, the ministry says its mandate remains unchanged: to reach spiritually underserved communities, make disciples across nations and honour God through the teaching of what it describes as the true, undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Chikokonya village, that mission now has a permanent home — and a pastor to shepherd it forward.

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