



Saitoti estate war: 'I am his son,' man tells court

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Land dispute ghosts haunt Mudavadi as court strips him of estate role

UNENDING COURT BATTLES

Prime CS lost administrator post in stepmother's estate as separate land ownership battle keeps him in court. The decision adds another chapter to a string of property-related court battles involving the senior government official, including a separate dispute in which a company has challenged his claim to a parcel of land in Vihiga



Musalia Mudavadi's late stepmother, Mama Rosebella Jerono Mudavadi

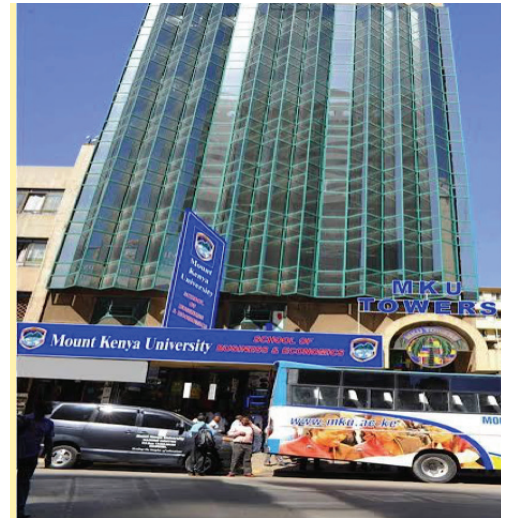


NEW ADMINISTRATORS

Effectively, from the latest ruling, Mudavadi has been stripped-off the mandate and will no longer participate as an administrator of Rosebella's estate leaving Kilwatso and Kegode to take charge of its administration

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Mount Kenya University overtakes UoN as Kenya's most popular varsity as enrolment surges past 700,000

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Kuria: We ‘intervened’ to save uhuru from 2013 run-off

Kuria alleged that he and current Roads and Transport Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir were involved in an intervention involving IEBC servers

BY NJOKI MAINA

Former Trade Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria has made fresh claims about the disputed 2013 presidential election, saying he and other political figures took legal and other steps that helped former President Uhuru Kenyatta avoid a run-off.

Speaking on a vernacular station, Inooro FM, Kuria claimed that he, former President Kenyatta’s allies and senior Jubilee figures intervened over the treatment of rejected presidential votes and alleged that action was also taken involving Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) servers.

Kuria said he, Dennis Itumbi

and Florence Jematiah went to court to challenge the inclusion of rejected votes in determining the threshold required to win the presidency.

“Uhuru knows better what we did for him in 2013 and 2017. He knows the strategy we applied. In 2013, he got the +1 of around six thousand votes,” Kuria said.

Court records confirm that Kuria, Itumbi and Jematiah were among petitioners who filed a 2013 Supreme Court petition challenging the IEBC’s treatment of rejected votes.

The petition argued that including the votes in the final tally affected the percentage achieved by presidential candidates.

Kuria said the case was pursued through lawyers Fred Ngatia and



Caption: Observers and party agents comparing notes at Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's desk at the Bomas of Kenya, the National tallying Center on August 11, 2022.

Njoroge Regeru and claimed that, without the challenge, Kenyatta would have been forced into a second round against Raila Odinga.

“In 2013, we were supposed to have a runoff; he knows it. I saved

him from the runoff,” Kuria said.

He went further, alleging that he and current Roads and Transport Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir were involved in an intervention involving IEBC servers.

“We even did something in the

servers to save him; we did it with Davis Chirchir to save him from facing Baba in a runoff,” Kuria said.

Kuria’s remarks come amid renewed debate over disputed presidential elections following recent comments by Kenyatta suggesting that Raila Odinga won the 2022 election.

The claims, however, represent Kuria’s account and should be distinguished from established judicial findings.

In 2013, the Supreme Court dismissed petitions challenging Kenyatta’s election and upheld his declaration after the IEBC announced that he had received 6,173,433 votes, representing 50.07 per cent of the votes cast.

The Supreme Court also later upheld William Ruto’s victory in the 2022 presidential election after petitions challenging the result, finding that the allegations of electoral irregularities and interference with the results had not been proved to the required standard.



Capsizing boat.

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

Six crew members have been rescued while four others remain missing after a boat capsized in deep-sea waters off Lamu County in an incident that has triggered

Six rescued as boat capsizes off Lamu, toddler drowns in Migori

a search operation.

The MV Shukrani capsized at around 10pm on Wednesday, September 23, at Mwambasani Bay near Kizingitini in Lamu East.

Police said 10 people were reportedly on board the vessel, which had departed from Lamu and was headed to Somalia carrying foodstuffs.

Fishermen operating in the area responded after the boat overturned and managed to rescue six crew members.

The survivors were taken to Kiwayu Dispensary, where they were examined and found to be in stable condition.

They were later taken to Kiwayu Police Post to assist investigators establish the circumstances surrounding the accident.

Four crew members remain unaccounted for as the search continues.

Meanwhile, police in Migori County are investigating the death of a two-year-old girl who drowned after falling into an open well while playing with her five-year-old sister.

The incident occurred at around 5pm on Thursday, September 24, in the Stadium area of Kuria West.

The children had reportedly gone to a neighbour’s compound to play while their mother was at work at a mining site.

Police said the younger girl, identified

as Rael, fell into the open well. Her five-year-old sister raised the alarm, prompting neighbours to retrieve the child and rush her to Kehancha Sub-County Hospital.

However, Rael was pronounced dead while receiving treatment.

Officers from Kehancha Police Station and detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Kuria West, visited the scene and commenced investigations.

The child’s body was moved to the Kehancha Sub-County Hospital mortuary, where it is being preserved pending a postmortem examination.

Public universities face shutdown as lecturers issue strike notice

BY WILSON ONCHARI

Students are likely to suffer massive lectures, examinations, research and other academic activities across public universities after lecturers in Kenya’s public universities threatened to stage nationwide work boycotts beginning Friday next week, October 2, 2026 over the stalled implementation of the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

The Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) issued a seven-day nationwide strike notice on Thursday, September 24, 2026 warning that the strike would begin

at midnight on Friday, October 2, unless the government resolves the outstanding issues within the seven-day window.

UASU through their Secretary-General Constantine Wasonga said the decision followed the failure by university councils, the Ministry of Education and the National Treasury to honour the return-to-work formula signed on November 5, 2025.

“This painful decision follows the persistent failure by the councils of universities, the Ministry of Education, and the National Treasury to honour the Return-to-Work Formula signed on 5th November 2025,” UASU said.

The union also accused the



Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) Secretary-General Dr Constantine Wasonga addressing the media. FILE PHOTO.

government of failing to table a financial counter-proposal for the 2025–2029 CBA despite negotiations having continued since last year. UASU noted that other public-sector employees had concluded their 2025–2029 CBAs

while the agreement covering university lecturers remained unresolved.

The latest standoff followed a meeting between UASU and the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) on September

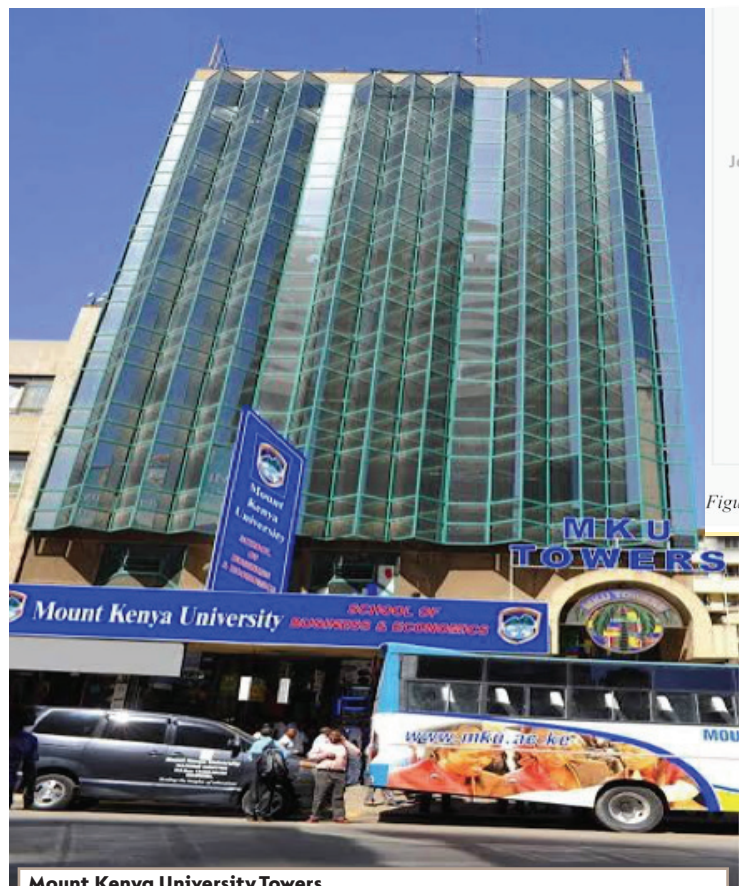
21. According to the union, SRC informed university-sector unions that neither the Ministry of Education nor the Treasury had provided a written commitment that funding for public universities’ CBAs would be provided through the National Exchequer.

“SRC said that it could not therefore issue the constitutional advice required to facilitate financial counter-proposals to the Unions,” UASU stated.

The union said the disclosure raised questions about negotiations conducted at Machakos University since last year.

UASU had on September 18 given the Government and the Inter-Public Universities Councils Consultative Forum one month to negotiate, sign, register and implement the CBA, warning that failure would trigger a seven-day strike notice.

Mount Kenya University overtakes UoN as Kenya's most popular varsity as enrolment surges past 700,000



Mount Kenya University Towers.

The latest 2025 University Statistics Report by the Commission for University Education (CUE) places MKU at the top with 49,294 students, making it the only institution in the country with an enrolment approaching the 50,000 mark.

BY NJOKI MAINA

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has emerged as Kenya's largest university by student enrolment, overtaking traditional public university giants including the University of Nairobi (UoN), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and Kenyatta University (KU).

The latest 2025 University Statistics Report by the Commission for University Education (CUE) places MKU at the top with 49,294 students, making it the only institution in the country with an enrolment approaching the 50,000 mark.

UoN follows with 45,526 students, while JKUAT has 44,946 and Kenyatta University 43,358.

The figures mark a significant shift in Kenya's higher education landscape, where large public universities have traditionally

dominated student numbers. MKU's position at the top highlights the growing role of private universities in absorbing the rising demand for higher education and expanding access beyond the public university system.

The report shows that Kenya's university population has crossed the 700,000 mark for the first time, rising to 707,150 students in 2025, from 628,431 in 2024.

According to CUE, university enrolment increased from 559,620 students in 2023 to 628,541 in 2024 before climbing to 707,150 in 2025.

"Kenya's university enrollment expanded markedly from 559,620 students in 2023 to 628,541 in 2024 and 707,150 in 2025," the report says.

"This represents a 12.3 per cent growth between 2023 and 2024, followed by a stronger 12.5 per cent increase between 2024 and 2025, and an overall 26.4 per cent rise over the three years."

MKU leads private university expansion

MKU's emergence as the country's largest university by enrolment is particularly significant because it comes against a backdrop of continued dominance of the public university sector.

CUE reports that public chartered universities collectively enrolled 534,942 students, up from 469,688 in 2024. Chartered private universities, meanwhile, enrolled 153,099 students.

The remaining students were distributed among public and private constituent colleges and

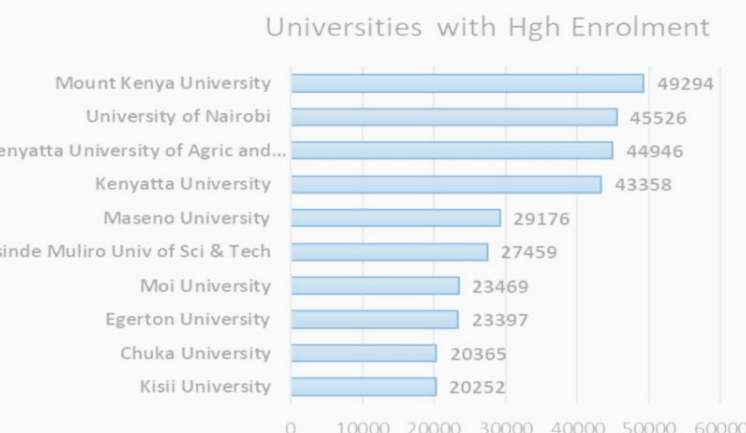


Figure 2: Universities with Leading Student Enrolment. Source CUE UEMIS 2025 ©

Mount Kenya University (MKU) takes the lead of students enrollment as per the report by the Commission for Higher Education (CUE) UEMIS 2025.

institutions operating under Letters of Interim Authority.

The report says the concentration of students in a small number of institutions demonstrates clear tiers within Kenya's university system.

"It is evident from the figure that a small group of universities absorbs a disproportionately large share of students, with Mount Kenya University, the University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Kenyatta University each enrolling over 40,000 students," CUE says.

"This concentration illustrates a clear tiering within the sector, where a handful of large institutions dominate, followed by a middle group of universities with enrollments between 20,000 and 30,000, and a smaller tier just above 20,000 students."

MKU's leading position underscores how private universities have increasingly become an important part of Kenya's response to growing demand for university education.

Rather than operating only as alternatives to public institutions, large private universities are now enrolling tens of thousands of students and helping accommodate a rapidly expanding population seeking higher education.

CUE notes that the prominence of MKU at the top of the enrolment table "underscores the increasing role of private universities in expanding access, complementing the still-dominant public sector."

The development also reflects changing patterns in the university market, with students distributed across institutions offering different programmes, locations, learning models and entry pathways.

Public universities still dominate

Despite MKU's position as the single largest university by enrolment, public universities collectively remain the dominant

providers of university education.

After the four institutions above the 40,000-student threshold, Maseno University had 29,176 students, followed by Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology with 27,459.

Moi University had 23,469 students, while Egerton University recorded 23,397.

Chuka University and Kisii University had 20,365 and 20,252 students respectively.

CUE says the uneven distribution of students reflects the massification of higher education, but also creates disparities among institutions.

"The pattern reflects the massification of higher education in Kenya, where demand for university education has grown rapidly and institutions, particularly large public universities have scaled up to accommodate this demand," the report says.

"At the same time, the uneven distribution of students suggests that many smaller or newer institutions are attracting significantly fewer students, reinforcing disparities within the system."

Gender gap narrows

The expansion of university education has also been accompanied by a narrowing gender gap.

Male enrolment increased from 321,778 to 381,165 students, representing an 18.4 per cent rise.

Female enrolment grew faster, increasing from 237,191 to 325,985 students, a 37.4 per cent increase.

The figures point to a substantial increase in women's participation in university education as overall access expands.

However, CUE warns that rapid growth in enrolment could put institutions under pressure to maintain educational standards.

"The expansion reflects improved access to higher education and stronger human capital development prospects. However, the pace of growth raises concerns about quality assurance, as universities may struggle to match rising enrolment with adequate infrastructure, staffing and resources," the report says.

CUE also warns that the growing number of graduates could increase pressure on the labour market, making closer alignment between university programmes and employment opportunities increasingly important.

More universities, more students

The number of institutions offering university education also increased, rising from 79 to 83 as of May 2026.

The growth was driven mainly by an increase in chartered private universities and public university constituent colleges.

Chartered public universities remained at 38, while chartered private universities increased from 28 to 32.

Public university constituent colleges rose from five to eight, while private constituent colleges remained at two. Institutions operating under Letters of Interim Authority declined from seven to three after four institutions received full university charters.

See continuation on

PG13



Mount Kenya University (MKU) celebrated a momentous occasion as it held its 26th Graduation Ceremony, marking the second graduation event of the year. With over 7,000 graduates stepping into the world as future job creators and professionals, the university reinforced its reputation as a leading institution for empowering global change-makers.

Sh426.85million ex-Kilifi Land Registrar's wealth seized in graft probe

Former Kilifi Principal Land Registrar Felix Mecha Nyakundi, wife and family-linked firms lose cash, prime properties and vehicles after failing to explain wealth

BY NJOKI MAINA

A Sh426.85 million fortune linked to a former senior land official has been ordered forfeited to the State after the High Court found that he and his associates failed to satisfactorily explain how they acquired the wealth.

Former Kilifi Principal Land Registrar Felix Mecha Nyakundi, his wife Stellah Nyaboke Otwor and companies associated with the family will lose millions held in bank and M-Pesa accounts, prime properties in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kilifi, three vehicles and cash seized during an anti-corruption search.

Justice Benjamin Musyoki, in a judgment delivered on September

18, 2026 ordered the forfeiture after finding that the assets could not be satisfactorily reconciled with the defendants' known legitimate sources of income.

The ruling followed proceedings brought by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act.

The case provides a detailed trail of transactions and property acquisitions that investigators said were disproportionate to Nyakundi's earnings.

EACC said its investigations established that Nyakundi and his associates acquired assets worth Sh771.89 million between January 2013 and March 2024.

The acquisitions included Sh467.76 million moved through bank accounts and M-Pesa, properties valued at Sh287.51 million, vehicles worth Sh20.06 million and Sh4.26 million in cash recovered from the defendants' residences.

Yet Nyakundi's gross monthly salary ranged from just Sh69,660 in 2013 to Sh115,630 in 2024, according to the commission.

EACC said the defendants could satisfactorily explain the acquisition of assets worth only Sh58.17 million.

The court consequently ordered forfeiture of Sh233.58 million in bank and M-Pesa funds, properties valued at Sh177.11 million, vehicles worth Sh11.9 million and Sh4.26 million in cash.

Among the transactions the court declared unexplained were Sh50.39 million through Nyakundi's Co-operative Bank account, Sh16.32 million through his NCBA account and Sh27.76 million through his M-Pesa line.

Further transactions involved another M-Pesa line and several accounts belonging to Otwor, including Equity Bank and Equity Investment Bank accounts.

The property trail included Bantu Hotel and Resort Company Limited properties in Nairobi/Block 105, the Bantu Hotel along Kangundo Road valued at Sh107.7 million, the Saro Wiwa apartment block in Utawala valued at Sh35 million and a Mombasa penthouse valued at Sh19 million.

Several parcels of land in Kilifi and Thika were also covered by the



Inset is Lands Ministry senior official Felix Mecha Nyakundi.

forfeiture order.

Justice Musyoki directed banks and mobile-money service providers holding the identified funds to facilitate their transfer to the Government through EACC.

The Chief Lands Registrar and relevant land registrars were similarly directed to facilitate transfer of the forfeited properties, while the National Transport and Safety Authority was ordered to implement the orders relating to the vehicles.

Importantly, the judge noted that the proceedings did not require EACC to prove that the defendants had committed a specific criminal offence.

The court found that the statutory unexplained-assets procedure

focuses on whether the property can be satisfactorily accounted for and lawfully acquired.

The judge also rejected the option of ordering the defendants to pay the value of the unexplained transactions separately after finding that much of the money had already been absorbed into properties and businesses that investigators had traced.

"I am minded to forfeit what has been traced rather than going for restitution," Justice Musyoki said.

EACC welcomed the ruling, saying the recovery would contribute to efforts to protect public resources and prevent retention of assets whose lawful acquisition has not been satisfactorily demonstrated.

Unending controversy stalking Nyakundi



BY CORRESPONDENT

Felix Mecha Nyakundi, who also served as the Thika Land Registrar is not new to controversy.

In 2024, the senior

Ministry of Lands official came under investigation by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) after the

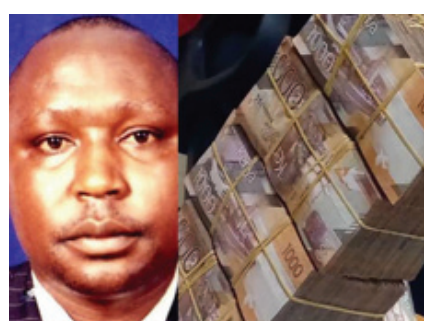
anti-graft agency uncovered 106 properties, 17 vehicles and millions of shillings in cash and financial transactions it said were disproportionate to his known legitimate income.

Felix Mecha Nyakundi, who was then a Principal Land Registrar, became the subject of an EACC

investigation over allegations of abuse of office, misappropriation of public funds and unexplained wealth.

The commission moved to court seeking orders to preserve the assets, arguing that there was a risk they could be sold, transferred or otherwise dealt with before investigations and potential recovery proceedings were completed.

Following search warrants, EACC officers searched Nyakundi's home, business and office premises and recovered



what the agency described as a significant number of land ownership documents, motor vehicle records and banking information.

They also recovered Sh4.6

million in cash from his residence.

The properties were spread across several counties, including Nairobi, Kilifi, Kisii, Kajiado, Makueni and Machakos.

EACC told the court that preliminary investigations indicated that the wealth was not commensurate with Nyakundi's legitimate sources of income. The commission said preserving the assets was necessary

to protect any eventual recovery process.

The case marked the beginning of a wider investigation into Nyakundi's wealth, which later resulted in forfeiture proceedings involving his wife Stellah Nyaboke Otwor and companies associated with the family.

The High Court has subsequently ordered forfeiture of assets worth Sh426.85 million linked to the family after finding that the defendants had failed to satisfactorily explain their acquisition.

Police probe fresh bar death as Kiambu liquor crackdown intensifies



Police and members of the public at the scene where a man died inside Lagunas Tetemesha bar in Kahawa Sukari. The body was moved to the mortuary pending a post mortem, September 23, 2026. PHOTO BY OLIVER MUSEMBI.



BY OLIVER MUSEMBI

Police in Kiambu County have launched investigations into the death of a man who collapsed and died at a bar in Kahawa Sukari on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, amid an intensified crackdown on illicit liquor.

The incident at Lagunas Tetemesha pub caused panic among revellers and residents as security agencies stepped up operations targeting outlets suspected of selling harmful alcoholic drinks, which locals and leaders say have been linked to several deaths in the county.

Ruiru Sub-County Police

Commander Charles Kibathi said preliminary investigations indicated that the deceased had been unwell and had recently been advised by doctors to stop consuming alcohol.

Kibathi said the man entered the bar at about 2pm and ordered a drink, but workers who knew him reportedly declined to serve him because of his medical condition.

"Preliminary investigations indicate that the person has been unwell for some time after he was told not to be taking alcohol. He went to the bar at around 2pm and was denied service by the waiters who knew him well. He then lay on the seats, but was later found unresponsive," Kibathi said.

The police commander cautioned

members of the public against speculating on the cause of death before a post-mortem examination is conducted.

Area Deputy County Commissioner Julius Too similarly said the man had been hospitalised two days earlier and had been advised by medical personnel to avoid alcohol.

"I am appealing to the public and associates of the deceased to be calm awaiting a post mortem report that will establish the actual cause of his death," Too said.

The DCC said security agencies had seized hundreds of litres of suspected illicit liquor during the ongoing Operation Fagia, targeting outlets selling harmful alcoholic products.

Kanyotu land buyers seek state protection as goons invade Sh10billion Ruiru estate



Residents of Imani Estate in Ruiru Kiambu, County at a public utility area that has been converted into a quarry by invaders. PHOTO BY OLIVER MUSEMBI.

The residents, who bought portions of the estate of the former Special Branch boss, the late James Kanyotu, a national spy agency that transitioned to National Intelligence Service (NIS), claim the invaders have been harvesting soil and murram from sections set aside for a school, health facility and police station.

BY OLIVER MUSEMBI

More than 1,000 families occupying a 500-acre estate in Ruiru, Kiambu County, have appealed for state protection following the alleged invasion of the prime property by goons accused of blocking access roads and excavating land reserved for public facilities.

The residents, who bought portions of the estate of the former Special Branch boss, the late James Kanyotu, a national spy agency that transitioned to National Intelligence Service (NIS), claim the invaders have been harvesting soil and murram from sections set aside for a school, health facility and police station.

They have accused local security officials of failing to intervene despite repeated reports, saying the situation has left families living in fear and uncertainty.

The property, estimated by the residents to be worth about

Sh10 billion, lies along the Ruiru-Githunguri Road and has been occupied by the buyers since 2014.

Residents said they recently moved to restore access after the alleged invaders dug trenches across roads leading into the estate. They filled the trenches before chasing away people who were continuing to excavate soil from the nearby public utility land.

"We are living in fear because the police seem to be siding with the people harassing us. Our pleas to the authorities have fallen on deaf ears and the aggressors are acting with impunity," resident Phelomena Nyambura said.

The residents' representatives, led by Environment Committee chairman Patrick Ngumo and legal secretary Mike Kamau, said they possess ownership documents for their individual plots and questioned attempts to interfere with their occupation.

The dispute escalated last year after a court order issued on July 24, 2025 nullified the sale of the property.

According to the residents, those challenging the transaction argued that the land had been undervalued and should be repossessed.

However, the residents subsequently moved to the Court of Appeal, where they obtained orders staying the implementation of the High Court decision and restraining any eviction or interference with their occupation pending determination of the appeal.

Ngumo questioned why proceedings concerning land situated in Ruiru were handled by a High Court in Meru.

"We find it strange and questionable why a court in Meru should issue an order in regard to land located in Ruiru, Kiambu County. One would think we don't have competent courts around here," he said.

The Court of Appeal order issued on February 6, 2026 by Justices S. Gatembu Kairu, M. Ngugi and A. O. Muchelule restrained the respondents or persons acting under them from evicting the applicants, interested parties and other occupants from the property or its subdivisions.

It also barred any interference with their peaceful occupation pending the hearing and determination of the appeal.

Kamau said the residents were now determined to protect the estate from what they described as illegal encroachment, accusing police of failing to act despite reports made at the local police station.

He said the most pressing concern was the alleged conversion of land reserved for public utilities into a quarry, with excavators harvesting soil and murram.

The residents want the national and county authorities to intervene, secure the public utility land and ensure that the court orders protecting their occupation are respected pending the final determination of the dispute.

A home at Imani Estate in Ruiru, Kiambu County whose access road had been blocked by trenches dug out by invaders. PHOTO BY OLIVER MUSEMBI.



Members of Muka Mukuu Farmers' Co-operative Society in Machakos County during a meeting at Kituluni in Matungulu Sub County. PHOTO BY OLIVER MUSEMBI.

Muka Mukuu land row escalates as members allege illegal sales, asset plunder

BY OLIVER MUSEMBI

A potentially explosive land dispute is unfolding at Muka Mukuu Farmers' Co-operative Society in Machakos County, with thousands of shareholders alleging that portions of land around Mt Kilimambogo are being illegally sold even as parts of the mountain's designated forest buffer zone are cleared for farming.

The allegations have opened a wider battle over control of the society, its vast land holdings and other assets, with members accusing the current management of presiding over the alleged disposal of property worth millions of shillings while failing to protect land reserved for shareholders.

The 2,616 shareholders now want the government to investigate the alleged land transactions and the management of the society's assets.

They have also announced a special general meeting on October 3, 2026 at which they intend to elect a new management committee, arguing that previous attempts to force leadership changes through official channels have failed.

The dispute involves more than 6,400 acres bordering the Mt Kilimambogo buffer zone, which members say remains unallocated despite claims that parts of the land have already been occupied, cleared or offered to prospective buyers.

Peter Muasya, who is leading the members pushing for fresh elections, alleges that some individuals have invaded the area and that land buyers could lose their money if transactions are found to be irregular.

Former society management committee member Constantino Mutua warned that continued destruction of vegetation could have serious environmental consequences.

"This is going to cause serious soil erosion when it rains as the area reserved as a forest is on a slope of the mountain. The situation will be disastrous to the environment," Mutua said.

He said Mt Kilimambogo forms part of more than 52,000 acres acquired by Muka Mukuu from a European settler for purposes of settling its members.



Peter Muasya addresses members of Muka Mukuu Farmers' Co-operative Society at Kituluni. The group warned the public against buying land set aside for a forest around Mt Kilimambogo. PHOTO BY OLIVER MUSEMBI.

What does Uhuru know? Intrigues as ex-president claims Ruto did not win in 2022

While Uhuru's claim was without specifics, analysts say there could be much he knows about what happened during the national tallying process at the Bomas of Kenya given that as president, he had access to raw intelligence from the National Intelligence Service (NIS), which he cannot publicly share.

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA, POLITICAL EDITOR

Retired President Uhuru Kenyatta escalated the battle between him and his successor, William Ruto, this week when he sensationally claimed he did not win the 2022 presidential contest against Azimio One Kenya Coalition's the late Raila Odinga.

Reacting to Ruto's consistent assertion that he cannot achieve his mission to oust him come next August's elections by sponsoring the opposition something he did not achieve when he held the reins of power, Uhuru said he did everything he could to help Raila become president only for him to be rigged out.

Speaking in Siaya during his five-day tour of Nyanza barely a fortnight ago, Ruto



President William Samoei Ruto lifts the sword after officially being sworn in as Kenya's fifth President on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at the Kasarani Moi International Sports Centre, Nairobi.

said: "Uhuru did not defeat me when he was president and now I am the president and he is retired. Is he going to defeat me?"

However, Uhuru, who spoke after chairing a Jubilee Party National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on Tuesday this week during which he handed over its leadership to Dr Fred Matiang'i, Uhuru retorted: "When they say they beat me, is it me who was on the ballot or Raila? I did all I could to help Raila become the President of this country... And votes were cast, and to this day, I know that he won that election. I know that. We know, we know!"

In that election, Ruto was declared the winner with 7,176,141 votes against Raila's 6,942,930 but the victory was contested

with the Azimio leader filing a challenge at the Supreme Court, which was unsuccessful.

While Uhuru's claim was without specifics, analysts say there could be much he knows about what happened during the national tallying process at the Bomas of Kenya given that as president, he had access to raw intelligence from the National Intelligence Service (NIS), which he cannot publicly share.

Indeed, before the announcement of the results by Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) chairman Wafula Chebukati that Ruto had won the contest, there was an attempt by the National Security Advisory Committee to have him delay the results pending further

verification.

Chebukati's deputy Juliana Cherera and commissioners Justus Nyang'anya, Irene Masit and Francis Wanderi also broke ranks with Chebukati accusing him of manipulating and unilaterally announcing results that favoured Ruto.

Uhuru's claim has, however, attracted sharp criticism including from the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which Raila led until his demise on October 15 last year.

"The 2022 election and the sacrifices of our departed Party Leader must not be reduced to material for contemporary vote-winning propaganda. Having reopened this matter, President Kenyatta should tell the country the whole story," ODM leader Dr Oburu Oginga said.

On his part, United Democratic Alliance (UDA) Secretary General Hassan Omar said: "Retired President Uhuru Kenyatta continues to live and wallow ... William Ruto conclusively won the 2022 election."

Ahead of next year's elections, Uhuru is seen as the force behind efforts to unite the opposition against with Ruto publicly labeling his as a "rebel leader."

"We accepted that they won. Four years later, it is still Uhuru this and Uhuru that. But when things are not working, you start blaming someone else. Kenyans are smart, they know," Uhuru said on Monday.

While an earlier ruling by High Court judge Lawrence Mugambi had barred Uhuru from holding party positions, another verdict by Justice Bahati Mwamuye opened the door for him to take part in active politics as a private citizen means he will continue to shape the road to the August 10, 2026 elections.

Tame Duale or else!, Senator Haji tells Ruto

"Please take our message to the President, that we will not fully join the UDA party, until Duale is disciplined and controlled. We will join other parties, including the one led by Junet, and you can see I invited him to this event" Haji said.

BY ADIERI MULAA

A fresh political storm is brewing in Garissa County after a gubernatorial aspirant, Senator Abdulkadir Mohamed Haji, warned that continued political animosity involving Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale could complicate President William Ruto's efforts to consolidate support in the region.

Senator Haji says he and his supporters are not ready to embrace UDA party, unless the president reins in Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale, claiming he was a stumbling block to politicians in the North Eastern



Garissa Senator Abdulkadir Mohamed Haji.

region.

He is accusing Duale of creating divisions and meddling in Garissa County politics, at a time when leaders in the region should be mobilising support for President Ruto ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Speaking at a fundraising event for Madarasatul Jamciyatu Al-Fallah in Nairobi on Saturday, September 19, 2026, where Sh63 million was raised, Haji said he and his allies were unable to campaign for the president, because they have been compelled to concentrate on endless local political battles.

"People are asking us when we will start campaigning for the President, yet this man continues to create divisions amongst

us. There is so much political interference by this troublemaker who has kept us busy on the ground", he pointed out.

Senator Haji was speaking in the presence of UDA Secretary General, Hassan Omar Hassan, ODM national chairperson, Governor Gladys Wanga and the party Leader of Minority in the National Assembly, Junet Mohamed.

Haji used the occasion to send a direct message to the President Ruto, through Omar Hassan, saying UDA should not expect to his support in Garissa County, unless the party addressed his concerns over Duale's divisive political activities.

"Please take our message to the President, that we will not fully join the UDA party, until Duale is disciplined and controlled. We will join other parties, including the one led by Junet, and you can see I invited him to this event" he said.

Haji made the remarks in the presence of other senior ODM politicians in the region, including Garissa Governor Nathif Jama and Wajir Governor Ahmed Abdullahi, who is also chairperson of the Council of Governors (CoG).

Senator Haji emphatically told the ODM leaders to be prepared

to receive him and his supporters, should his political relationship with UDA break down.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi, President Ruto's key ally in the broad-based government, and Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja were also among the guests present at the event.

This latest confrontation is the culmination of an increasingly public political rivalry between Senator Haji and CS Duale. The two have exchanged sharp remarks at political gatherings in Garissa County in recent months.

Duale has publicly indicated that he will not support Haji's bid for the Garissa governorship.

In turn, Haji has accused the Cabinet Secretary of undermining his efforts to build a broad political coalition involving influential clans in the county. Their rivalry is unfolding against the backdrop of a crowded race for the Garissa governorship.

Among those positioning themselves for the seat are former governor Ali Korane, former Ijara MP Ibrahim Abass, the outgoing Water Resources Authority (WRA) chief executive officer, Eng. Mohamed Shuriye, former envoys Mohamed Shidiye and Abdiqani Dubat, as well as Senator Haji.

Haji has been seeking to



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale.

consolidate support across the county, has reached a firm political understanding with leaders associated with the Aulihan clan, which commands a significant voting bloc.

He comes from the Samawathal clan, which also has a sizeable presence in Garissa County. However, it remains to be seen, which aspirant Duale will back in the gubernatorial contest scheduled for August next year.

However, his political influence in Garissa makes his eventual position a closely watched factor by political observers, and the aspirants, as various camps seek to build alliances ahead of the 2027 elections.

Haji's warning has opened a new front in the political contest, with the Garissa gubernatorial race increasingly intersecting with the wider battle over President Ruto's support base in North Eastern Kenya.



Fresh test for opposition unity as Matiang'i takes over Jubilee Party

Eyebrows were raised on Monday when Wiper Patriotic Front Leader Kalonzo Musyoka paraded Siaya Governor James Orengo and Suba North MP Caroli Omondi when he announced plans to rebrand Azimio as The Ukombozi Party even as a tussle over who has rights to the name rages. While Omondi was picked by Uhuru as the Azimio Secretary General in light of the fact that ODM remains an affiliate, there are reports Orengo is being positioned to take over from Uhuru.

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA, POLITICAL EDITOR



Retired President Uhuru Kenyatta during Jubilee Party National Executive Council (NEC) where he nominated Fred Matiang'i party leader pending ratification by the upcoming National Delegates Conference (NDC), September 22, 2026.

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta's move to hand over the reins of power in the Jubilee Party to Dr Fred Matiang'i on Tuesday, September 22, 2026 is set to reshape the search for a single candidate to face President William Ruto in the August 10, 2026 contest, analysts say.

Previously, Matiang'i has been challenged to show his weight with former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, who formed the Democracy for the Citizens

Party (DCP) after his October 2024 impeachment, telling him not to ride on the Jubilee Party and instead form his own outfit and also rally the Gusii community behind him before they can sit on the negotiating table.

However, being at the helm of the former ruling party, which a recent opinion poll ranked as the fourth most popular political party nationally, holding about 6 per cent public support and the fact that the party aims to field candidates

across multiple elective positions while negotiating cooperative frameworks within a broader opposition coalition, gives him more bargaining power in the post-Uhuru era.

Uhuru's move to cede power in Jubilee followed High Court Judge Lawrence Mugambi's ruling, which ruled in favour of restrictions that bar retired presidents from holding formal political party office beyond six months after leaving office.

However, Justice Bahati Mwamuye has since decreed that former presidents have rights to exercise their constitutional rights, including engaging in political activities as private citizens.

Political pundits believe it is as a result of the latter ruling that Uhuru announced that while he was stepping down as Jubilee Party Leader, he would remain as a senior advisor and would continue to guide the party as it heads to the 2027 elections.

It remains to be seen if Matiang'i will also get a senior role in the Azimio La Umoja One Kenya Coalition, which is being rebranded as The Ukombozi Alliance, if Uhuru quits his role as chairman.

This will also bring the Linda Mwananchi faction spearheaded by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna into the picture as it remains to be seen whether it will team up with the United Opposition (also called the United Alternative Government), go it alone or seen other alliances.

Eyebrows were raised on Monday when Wiper Patriotic Front Leader Kalonzo Musyoka paraded Siaya Governor James Orengo and Suba South MP Caroli Omondi when he announced plans to rebrand Azimio as The Ukombozi Party even as a tussle over who has rights to the name rages.

While Omondi was picked by Uhuru as the Azimio secretary general in light of the fact that ODM remains an affiliate, there are reports Orengo is being positioned to take over from Uhuru.

Where that leaves Sifuna remains to be seen as Orengo has also expressed presidential ambitions while the former is yet to secure a political party, which is being blamed on the Registrar of Political Parties' office, but he has received invitations from other outfits to run on its ticket, including DAP-Kenya.

The party, which is headed by former Defence Cabinet Secretary Eugene Wamalwa, is a partner in the United Opposition but Gachagua has recently questioned what some of the outfits in the formation will bring to the table.

Barring a challenge to Matiang'i's interim hold on Jubilee, which awaits a National Delegates Conference endorsement, his repositioning also offers him the leeway to forge alternative alliances if the United Opposition project fails.

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA, POLITICAL EDITOR

Bill delays, court cases cast shadow over 2027 elections

With less than 11 months to the next General Election, there is growing concern that the exercise could be derailed by delays by Parliament to pass laws aimed at reforming the country's electoral process and court cases.

Despite a compromise reached between the ruling United Democratic Alliance (UDA) and the Opposition led by the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) to end the standoff that followed the 2022 presidential elections, Parliament is yet to pass Bills emanating from recommendations of the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO), which are considered critical to facilitating a transparent, free and fair election.

One of them is the Elections (Amendment) Bill 2024, which seeks to overhaul almost the entire electoral process from registration of voters, qualifications of candidates, technology procurement to tallying and transmission of presidential election results.

After the Independent Elections



Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) chairman Erastus Edung Ethekeon (center) flanked by fellow commissioners address the media at the commission offices in Nairobi, January 27, 2026.

and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) advertised a tender for the Kenya Integrated Elections Management System (KIEMS), former Attorney General Justin Muturi cautioned that the agency should await passage of the Bill before proceeding with the procurement process as it addresses critical issues such as intellectual property rights, which

have proven controversial in the past.

He challenged President William Ruto, who is seeking re-election, to demonstrate his commitment to a transparent, verifiable and credible election by assenting to the legislation if Parliament passes it but bemoaned that the Bill has been stuck in the Committee on Legal Affairs for over one and half

years.

"The law should establish the necessary safeguards before major technological and vendor commitments are made for the 2027 election. President William Ruto, who is also the UDA presidential candidate, should, in turn, demonstrate his commitment to a transparent, verifiable and credible election by assenting to the legislation if Parliament passes it. The country does not need another explanation for delay; it needs action," Muturi said in a statement last month.

There is also the Elections Offences (Amendment) Bill 2024, which seeks to amend the Election Offences Act (Cap. 66) to strengthen electoral integrity, plug legal gaps, and implement recommendations from NADCO.

If enacted, it will enhance accountability and create specific offenses for members and staff of IEBC; criminalise the unreasonable delay in declaring election results or failing to meet constitutional and statutory declaration

timelines; impose strict penalties and criminal liability for knowingly or intentionally interfering with, altering, or causing the alteration of declared election results; and enforce stiffer penalties for breaches, including fines up to Sh2 million, imprisonment for up to five years, or both.

In the courts, the case pending in the Supreme Court over whether impeached persons can contest in elections pending determinations of their legal challenges, disputes over the KIEMS and voter register tender and a case seeking to have IEBC compelled to disclose the location of polling stations, the national tallying centre and procedures for voter identification and verification are closely being watched.

For instance, if the apex court rules in favour of impeached persons, it would offer a lifeline for former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, who is eyeing State House, and potentially jolt the search for a single opposition candidate.

Saitoti estate war: 'I am his son,' man tells court

James Njagi, the man claiming to be former VP's son seeks DNA test, demands share of estate

BY NJOKI MAINA

A fresh legal battle has erupted over the estate of former Vice-President and Internal Security Minister the late George Saitoti, with a man claiming to be his son asking the High Court to recognise him as a beneficiary and allow DNA testing of the late politician's remains.

James Njagi says he was shut out of succession proceedings that resulted in Saitoti's estate being distributed without his knowledge, despite allegedly being a child of the former Vice-President.

The High Court on Thursday, September 24, 2026 postponed the hearing of his case to October 21, 2026.

Njagi has filed an application seeking suspension of the implementation of the grant and

its subsequent certificates pending determination of his bid to have them revoked.

He claims he was a minor and living outside Kenya when the grant was confirmed in favour of Saitoti's widow, Margaret Wanjiku Saitoti.

According to court documents, Njagi says he was never served with the succession petition, summons for confirmation of the grant or the proposed mode of distribution.

"I have never been involved in any proceedings concerning the administration of my father's estate, nor have I received any information, accounts or assets from his estate since his demise," he states.

He further claims that no guardian or legal representative was appointed to protect his interests while he was a minor.

Saitoti died on June 10, 2012, when the helicopter he was travelling in crashed at Kibiko in Ngong Forest. He was heading to a Harambee fundraiser in Ndhiwa, Homa Bay County.

His personal assistant Orwa Ojode, two pilots and two bodyguards also died in the crash.



Former Vice-President and Internal Security Minister the late George Saitoti.

The estate, which includes land, residential properties, shares and cash, was subsequently distributed between Saitoti's widow and son Zachary Musengi.

Njagi now alleges that his existence as a purported child of

the deceased was never disclosed to the succession court, describing the omission as a material non-disclosure that affected the validity of the grant and its subsequent confirmation.

He wants the administrators

compelled to produce a full account of the estate from the date of confirmation, including income, rents, investments, withdrawals, transfers, expenditure, distributions and liabilities.

Njagi says he fears some assets may already have been transferred, distributed or otherwise dealt with without his knowledge.

In a potentially explosive part of the application, Njagi says he may seek an order for the exhumation of Saitoti's remains for DNA testing to establish whether he is the former Vice-President's biological son.

He proposes that samples be examined by the government pathologist and two independent private pathologists, with each side appointing one.

Through Murage Juma & Company Advocates, Njagi argues that his alleged exclusion was unlawful and prejudicial, insisting that he lacked the legal capacity, knowledge and opportunity to challenge the succession process when the grant was issued, confirmed and later rectified.

The court is expected to consider the application when the matter comes up for hearing on October 21, 2026.

DPP approves murder charges against fifth suspect in Dr Mutiso gruesome murder

BY JAMES WANJIKU

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) has approved murder charges against Kimutai Maritim, making him the fifth suspect to be formally charged over the killing of psychiatrist Dr Victoria Nthunya Mutiso.

Maritim will face the charges alongside Rose Mbithe Mulwa, her daughter Angela Mulwa, her son Chris Mulwa and Police Constable Elijah Kibelion Kimoi.

The five suspects are scheduled to appear before the High Court in Nairobi on September 29, 2026, to take plea following a directive by Justice Alexander Muteti.

Justice Muteti ordered that the suspects be presented physically in court after Mbithe and Angela failed to participate in today's Wednesday, September 23, 2026 proceedings through a virtual link from Lang'ata Women's Prison, where they are being held.



Kimutai Maritim, the fifth suspect in the killing of psychiatrist Dr Victoria Nthunya Mutiso before court, September 23, 2026.



From right to left: The four suspects in the murder of the late psychiatrist Dr Victoria Thunya Mutiso Angela Mulwa, Rose Mbithe Mulwa alias Rose Mbithe Ndeti, Chris Mulwa, Angela Mulwa and Police Constable Elijah Kibelion Kimoi appearing before Justice Kanyi Kimondo at the Milimani Law Courts, August 27, 2026.

A prison officer informed the court: "My lord, the two have refused to appear before court virtually."

The judge subsequently directed that Mbithe, Angela and Chris be brought to court at noon on September 29 for plea-taking.

Their plea had earlier been delayed after Justice Kanyi Kimondo directed that the accused persons undergo psychiatric assessments to establish whether they were mentally fit to plead to the murder charges.

The latest development clears the way for the prosecution to formally commence proceedings against the suspects, who had previously been presented before the High Court but had not entered pleas.

Maritim was arrested on August 22, 2026, after allegedly attempting to visit suspects

detained at Pangani Police Station.

Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) investigators reportedly intercepted him while he was allegedly trying to deliver a loaf of bread and a packet of milk to detainees.

During earlier proceedings, investigators told the court that Maritim was allegedly linked to the planning of the offence and could assist authorities in tracing other suspects who remain at large.

The prosecution has also indicated that the case files involving the accused will be consolidated to enable all suspects facing charges arising from Dr Mutiso's death to take plea together.

Three other suspects arrested in Uganda are expected back before court on October 1, 2026.

They are Police Constable Collins Bett Kilangat, Pius Muiruri Mbugua and Samuel Karanja Gathoni, who were arrested on August 29, 2026 at Kyanja Heights Flats in Nakawa, Kampala, before being returned to Kenya.

The trio have been detained for 30 days to allow investigators to complete their investigations.

The prosecution is being led by counsels Jalson Makori and Pauline Muthuri.

The five suspects now facing the murder proceedings are accused of jointly killing Dr Mutiso on July 29, 2026, at about 9.30am along Mawensi Road in Kilimani, Nairobi County, together with other persons who have not been brought before the court.

They face a charge of murder contrary to Section 203 as read with Section 204 of the Penal Code.

Dr Mutiso, a psychiatrist and former director of the African Institute of Mental and Brain Health, was fatally shot while travelling in a taxi in Nairobi.

Before her death, she had reportedly reported an earlier incident in which two armed men riding a motorcycle allegedly confronted her near Junction Mall along Ngong Road.

Investigators have also examined a long-running property dispute involving Dr Mutiso's family and Mbithe, who was previously married to Dr Mutiso's husband, Professor David Musyimi Ndeti.

The alleged property dispute has featured in the prosecution's account of the circumstances surrounding the investigation.

However, the murder allegations against all the accused remain allegations until proved in court.

With Justice Muteti directed that the five suspects; Mbithe, Angela, Chris, Kimoi and Maritim to appear physically before court on September 29, 2026 for plea taking.

«EDITORIAL»

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A PUBLICATION OF:
THE INFORMER MEDIA GROUP

BOARD CHAIRMAN
• Kinyuru Munuhe

NEWS EDITOR:
• Larry Lesian

POLITICAL EDITOR:
• Eric Nyakagwa

CONTRIBUTORS:
• Adieri Mulaa
• Oliver Musembi
• Antynet Ford
• Emmanuel Kiptoo
• Patrick Wachira
• Wilberforce Kigen
• Gilbert Ochieng
• Njoki Maina
• Wanjiku Waweru
• Suleiman Mbatiah
• Nicholas Waitathu

The Ministry of Education must fix the funding mess now – before an administrative transition becomes a national tragedy measured not in budget lines, but in dreams abandoned, careers delayed and families pushed deeper into poverty

KENYA CANNOT claim to be investing in its future while thousands of young people who have earned places at public universities remain at home because their families cannot raise admission fees or because government funding has become trapped in an uncertain transition.

The unfolding crisis in public universities is no longer simply an administrative inconvenience. It is becoming a direct threat to access to higher education, family finances and the aspirations of an entire generation.

More than 700,000 students were enrolled in universities in 2025, with enrolment rising by 12.5 per cent in one year. Yet academic staffing increased by only 6.4 per cent, underlining the growing strain on institutions.

Now, as a new cohort enters university, the funding system itself is under severe pressure.

The government's transition towards a new framework, pending consideration of the Tertiary Education, Placement and Funding Bill, has created uncertainty over how students will finance their education. Stakeholders have already called for predictable disbursement deadlines and clear distinctions between loans, scholarships, grants and bursaries.

For families living from hand to mouth, uncertainty is not an academic concept. It has immediate consequences.

Consider the case of Davin Kemunto from Nyamira County, who secured admission to Kisii University to study secondary-school teaching but says her parents could not raise the Sh20,000 required for her to report. She applied for a HELB loan but says she is still waiting for financial support.

Her predicament illustrates the human cost of a system being redesigned without sufficient certainty for the people expected to navigate it.

A university admission letter should represent an opportunity, not a financial dead end.

The Ministry of Education must therefore move with urgency to provide clear answers. Students and parents need to know who qualifies for funding, how much they will receive, when the money will be disbursed and what happens during the transition to the new system.

The government cannot suspend one framework while students wait indefinitely for another to become operational.

Neither can it expect poor and vulnerable families to finance the transition through money they simply do not have.

This crisis is compounded by a second threat: the looming lecturers' strike.

UASU has issued a seven-day strike notice, with lecturers set to down their tools on October 2 over the stalled 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The union says university councils, the Ministry of Education and the National Treasury have failed to honour the November 5, 2025 Return-to-Work Formula.

UASU has also raised concern that the Government has not provided a financial counter-proposal for the new CBA.

SRC, according to the union, said it could not provide the required constitutional advice because neither the Education Ministry nor Treasury had provided written commitment that funding would come

Fix the university funding mess before it destroys a generation



Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba (left) and Principal Secretary State Department for Higher Education and Research Dr Beatrice Inyangala at Jogoo House, Nairobi, July 1, 2025.

through the National Exchequer.

These are not isolated problems.

Student funding is in uncertainty. Universities are underfunded. Staffing is inadequate. Lecturers are threatening industrial action. Infrastructure is under pressure.

Taken together, they point to a higher education system approaching a dangerous breaking point.

The government must stop treating each crisis as a separate problem and confront the university funding crisis as a single national emergency.

It must urgently secure funding for students already admitted, ensure that no qualified learner is locked out because of delays in government disbursements, and provide universities with predictable financing.

It must also bring UASU and university councils back to the negotiating table and resolve the CBA dispute before another academic disruption takes hold.

The lecturers' grievances cannot be solved by passing the financial burden to students through higher fees.

Indeed, UASU has questioned how universities would finance staff agreements

if student-fee collections remain uncertain under a changing funding model.

The Education Ministry and Treasury must provide clarity, not competing explanations.

Parliament, meanwhile, must scrutinise the proposed funding legislation carefully and ensure that the eventual framework guarantees continuity of financing from admission through graduation.

A funding system that leaves students wondering whether they can afford to report to university is not a functioning system.

Higher education is not merely another government programme. For thousands of Kenyan families, it is the pathway through which children escape poverty, acquire professional skills and improve the economic circumstances of their households.

Every semester lost, every student forced to defer and every family pushed into unsustainable debt carries a long-term cost.

Kenya cannot afford to create a generation that qualifies for university but cannot afford to attend it.

The Ministry of Education must fix the funding mess now – before an administrative transition becomes a national tragedy measured not in budget lines, but in dreams abandoned, careers delayed and families pushed deeper into poverty.

THE WEEKLY CARTOON





South Sudan's bumpy road to its first general elections

By
JAMES WASIKE

SOUTH SUDAN is approaching a defining moment in its troubled political history.

Nearly 15 years after independence, the world's youngest country is once again promising to deliver what has repeatedly been postponed: its first general election, now scheduled for December 22, 2026.

But the central question is no longer simply whether South Sudan can hold elections.

It is whether the country can move from a prolonged transitional order to an elected government without dismantling the political guarantees and institutional checks that were intended to prevent a return to conflict.

President Salva Kiir's decision on September 22 to dissolve the Transitional Government of National Unity, remove the five vice-presidents and dissolve the national legislature represents a dramatic break with the power-sharing architecture established under the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The government says the move clears the way for the December elections.

Legally, the authorities have also removed some of the conditions that had complicated the electoral timetable.

Amendments to the National Elections Act eliminated requirements for a national census and completion of a permanent constitution before the elections.

The amended framework also leaves the incumbent executive with full constitutional powers until an elected president is sworn in.

From a narrow electoral perspective, this may remove significant procedural obstacles.

From a peacebuilding perspective, however, it raises a much larger question on what happens when the mechanisms designed to manage political competition disappear before credible electoral institutions are fully established?

That question cannot be separated from the history of South Sudan.

The 2018 peace agreement was not merely an arrangement for sharing government offices. It was conceived as a bridge between armed conflict and a more permanent constitutional and democratic order.

Its implementation was linked to security-sector reforms, constitutional processes, institutional reforms and eventually elections.

The African Union has continued to call for full implementation of the agreement alongside inclusive dialogue and credible elections by December 2026.

The problem is that several of these foundations remain incomplete.

Most significantly, the country enters the electoral period with its principal opposition leader, Riek Machar, under house arrest and facing serious criminal charges, including treason. Machar denies the allegations.

Human Rights Watch has raised concerns about due process and the detention of opposition figures.

Machar's political exclusion matters because the rivalry between him and Kiir has



South Sudan President Salva Kiir.

been at the centre of South Sudan's political and military crises since independence.

The 2018 peace arrangement specifically brought the two camps into a transitional coalition in an effort to prevent political competition from again becoming a military confrontation.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Opposition (SPLM-IO), Machar's party, has now rejected the December election process, arguing that the required constitutional, security and legal reforms have not been completed.

This creates a fundamental diplomatic dilemma.

An election without the participation of significant political forces may satisfy the calendar but struggle to satisfy the broader test of political legitimacy.

Conversely, another postponement could deepen public frustration and reinforce the perception that transitional arrangements have become an indefinite substitute for democratic government.

Thus, South Sudan therefore faces two competing risks of an election that is too early, or a transition that never ends.

Neither is a sustainable foundation for state-building.

There is also an institutional question. The elections commission has reportedly faced major financial constraints.

Its former chairman, Abednego Akok Kacool, said in August that the commission required about \$250 million to conduct the election but had received only \$21 million. Kiir subsequently replaced him with the commission's secretary-general, Gabriel Bol Deng.

This matters because elections are not simply a voting-day event.

They require voter registration, electoral logistics, dispute-resolution mechanisms, security arrangements, political-party participation, civic education, ballot administration and credible mechanisms for challenging results.

The geopolitical implications extend beyond Juba.

South Sudan sits at the intersection of East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Nile Basin. Its instability affects neighbouring Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, while its oil resources give the country's political stability wider economic significance.

A disputed election could therefore become a regional security concern rather than merely a domestic constitutional dispute.

For the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the challenge is particularly delicate.

They must encourage South Sudan to end transitional rule while simultaneously insisting that elections do not become a mechanism for replacing one form of political exclusion with another.

International partners similarly face a difficult balance. Excessive pressure for an immediate election could overlook the institutional weaknesses surrounding the process. Yet excessive insistence on perfect preconditions could unintentionally create another justification for indefinite postponement.

The most constructive diplomatic approach may therefore be to focus less on whether elections happen on December 22 at any cost and more on whether the process can command sufficient political confidence to survive the result.

That requires meaningful dialogue among the principal political actors, credible electoral institutions, adequate financing, security arrangements acceptable to the competing political constituencies and a clear pathway towards a permanent constitutional order.

South Sudan's first election should not merely mark the end of a transitional government. It should mark the beginning of a political system in which losing an election does not mean losing access to the state, security or political survival.

The author is Senior Reporter at The Informer Media Group

GRAPEVINE

POLICE TOP BRASS SPLIT OVER POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

THERE IS simmering tension within the senior command of the National Police Service (NPS) over growing concerns about how the service can rebuild public confidence while maintaining its constitutional obligation to remain impartial in the country's increasingly charged political environment.

The Grapevine has it that some senior officers are privately worried that operational decisions being taken within the service could be interpreted as aligning the police with particular political interests ahead of the 2027

General Election.

A senior officer is said to have openly lamented that some key operational assignments are being undertaken without his knowledge or approval, raising fears that any missteps could ultimately be blamed on the wider command and further damage the institution's reputation.

Insiders say the concerns have sparked unease within the upper echelons of the service, with some officers calling for tighter

adherence to established chains of command and operational procedures.

The finger of responsibility, according to the grapevine, is increasingly pointing towards Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Douglas Kanja, who insiders say must ensure that junior officers strictly observe the National Police Standing Orders and established command structures.

The concern is that failure to enforce discipline and institutional



Inspector General of the National Police Service (NPS) Douglas Kanja (left) shakes hands with DCI Director Amin Mohamed. They are flanked by Deputy Inspector General- KPS, Eliud Lagat and DIG-APS, Gilbert Masengeli, Director at the Bamburi Cement in Mombasa ahead of destruction of Sh.8.2 billion methamphetamine haul seized in the Indian Ocean in 2025, September 24, 2026.

neutrality could deepen internal divisions while exposing the service to unnecessary political controversy.

Retailers, entertainment operators and harm-reduction stakeholders warn proposed law could raise costs, hurt jobs and drive consumers to illicit products as business groups warn the Bill could fuel illicit trade

BY JAMES WASIKE

Stakeholders in Kenya's retail, entertainment and harm-reduction sectors have urged parliament to review contentious provisions of the proposed Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill, 2026, warning that some of the measures could increase the cost of doing business, disrupt legitimate trade and fuel the illicit tobacco market.

The stakeholders said the Bill, in its current form, risks imposing additional regulatory and licensing burdens on businesses already grappling with rising operating costs, while creating market distortions that could give illegal traders an advantage over compliant enterprises.

They spoke in Nairobi on Thursday, September 24, 2026 during a public participation exercise conducted by the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Health, as parliament gathers views on the proposed amendments before consideration of the Bill.

While supporting efforts to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco use and strengthen regulatory oversight, the stakeholders called for an evidence-based approach that protects public health without undermining legitimate businesses, employment and government revenues.

The Retail Trade Association of Kenya (Retrak) said

Tobacco Bill sparks business backlash over licences, flavour ban

the proposed requirement for retailers to obtain a separate licence to sell tobacco products would add another layer to an already complex licensing regime.

Retrak Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Wambui Mbarire said businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, are already struggling with multiple licences and rising operational expenses.

"With an already existing licence burden – for instance, on average a supermarket requires 39 licences to operate – this bill puts in a new license that a retailer must get to sell tobacco," Mbarire said.

She questioned the need for another licence when businesses already operate under unified licensing arrangements.

"So, we feel that there's already enough regulation and there are already



Vaping and smoking control measures.

the operating environment and increase compliance costs.

"One more licence just complicates the environment of the ease of doing business and the cost of doing business and defeats the purpose of a unified business permit or a single licence regime," she said.

The Pubs, Entertainment and Restaurants Association of Kenya (PERAK) also raised concerns over what it described as duplication in the proposed licensing

on legitimate traders.

"We have a real concern with the multiple licenses being proposed by this Bill namely, one for traders to operate their businesses and a specific one to sell tobacco products. This will overburden businesses because it will be a duplication of the licensing regime," Kiragu said.

The stakeholders argued that increasing the compliance burden on legitimate businesses without addressing enforcement against illegal traders could have unintended consequences, including driving part of the market underground.

A separate battle is emerging over a proposal to ban flavours in tobacco products.

The Bars, Hotels and Liquor Traders Association of Kenya (BAHLITA) said a blanket ban on flavoured tobacco products could create an opportunity for illicit operators to fill the gap in the legal market.

BAHLITA secretary-general Boniface Gachoka said lawmakers should distinguish between flavours generally and those specifically designed to appeal to children.

"There is no need to ban flavours in tobacco products. We already have flavours in alcohol, cakes and food," Gachoka said.

He said the focus should

instead be on products and flavours that appeal specifically to children.

"The only thing we are saying is that we want to remove child appealing flavours," he said.

Gachoka warned that a broad prohibition could result in a surge in illicit tobacco products, potentially hurting compliant businesses while depriving the Government of legitimate tax and licensing revenues.

"Otherwise banning flavours in tobacco products is simply going to see the incidence of illicit trade in tobacco products balloon significantly and thereby negatively impacting our businesses," he said.

The stakeholders further warned that consumers could turn to unregulated products if legal alternatives were restricted, raising concerns over the ability of authorities to monitor products circulating outside the formal market.

They urged parliament to ensure that any restrictions introduced through the Bill are matched by effective enforcement mechanisms capable of preventing illegal operators from exploiting regulatory gaps.

The debate places public health objectives at the centre of a broader question over

how Kenya should regulate tobacco products without inadvertently weakening legitimate businesses and formal employment.

The stakeholders maintained that they support stronger tobacco-control measures but said regulation should be proportionate, evidence-based and designed to achieve its intended public health outcomes without creating incentives for illegal trade.

The National Assembly Committee on Health is conducting public participation exercises in Nairobi, Uasin Gishu, Bungoma, Kisumu, Meru, Tharaka Nithi and Laikipia counties.

The engagements began on Thursday and will continue through the weekend, giving stakeholders and members of the public an opportunity to submit views on the proposed amendments.

The consultations come as parliament prepares to resume sittings on Tuesday next week following its recess, with lawmakers expected to continue considering legislative proposals before the House.

The business community are also agitating to have tobacco-control measures that strengthen public health safeguards while preserving a viable formal market and not opening loopholes for illicit tobacco trade.



Wambui Mbarire, Retail Trade Association of Kenya (Retrak) CEO speaking outside the Parliament Buildings after the public participation engagement on the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill 2026, September 24, 2026.

enough licenses for retailers and businesses. An additional license defeats the purpose of a unified business permit," she said.

Mbarire warned that the additional requirement would further complicate

framework.

PERAK national chairman Michael Kiragu said requiring businesses to hold both a general operating licence and a separate licence to sell tobacco products would impose an unnecessary burden



A protester holding a placard outside the Parliament Buildings on the sidelines of the public participation engagement on the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill 2026, September 24, 2026

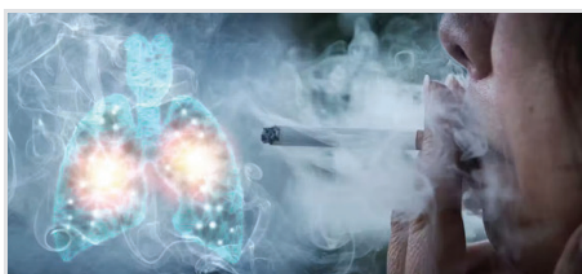
Tobacco smoking fuels deadly lung disease as COPD cases rise

BY NJOKI MAINA

Tobacco use remains one of the leading preventable causes of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a progressive and incurable lung condition that claimed about 3.5 million lives globally in 2021, accounting for five per cent of all deaths.

COPD, which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, damages the airways and air sacs of the lungs, making breathing increasingly difficult.

Although often associated with older people, health experts say



Cigarette smoke remains the main cause of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

the damage can begin decades before symptoms become apparent.

Smoking remains the dominant cause, accounting for more than 70 per cent of COPD cases in high-income countries and about 30 to 40 per cent in low- and middle-income countries.

In poorer regions, exposure to smoke from firewood, charcoal and kerosene, air pollution and occupational hazards also contribute significantly.

Long-term exposure triggers persistent inflammation, narrowing the airways, increasing mucus

production and destroying lung tissue.

Common symptoms include a persistent cough, sputum production, wheezing, recurrent chest infections and progressively worsening breathlessness.

Health experts say tuberculosis survivors may also develop COPD despite successful treatment, while quarry workers, miners and others exposed to organic and inorganic pollutants face increased risks.

A recent review covering Ethiopia, Sudan, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania found COPD affects between seven and 19 per cent of East Africans, with prevalence estimated at 11.3 per cent in

Kenya.

"Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is an incurable condition resulting from irreversible damage of the airways and the air sacs of the lungs," health experts say, warning that continued exposure to tobacco smoke and other pollutants accelerates the damage.

Definitive diagnosis requires spirometry, a test that measures airflow during forceful breathing.

With COPD expected to remain among the world's leading causes of death, experts say prevention must begin with eliminating exposure to tobacco smoke and other harmful air pollutants.

Nakuru's 2007-2008 violence aftermath offers 2027 election warning

BY SULEIMAN MBATIAH

Nakuru's experience of the 2007–2008 post-election violence should serve as a warning as Kenya prepares for the 2027 General Election, peace actors have said.

Midrift Hurinet Executive Director Joseph Omondi said the county still carries the painful legacy of deaths, displacement, destroyed livelihoods and damaged community relations from the violence, but has also demonstrated resilience and reconciliation.

Speaking during the International Day of Peace celebrations at Nyayo Gardens in Nakuru City, Omondi said the county's history made it particularly important for residents and leaders to confront the risks that could threaten peaceful coexistence during the next election.

Nakuru was among the areas that experienced serious consequences of the 2007–08 post-election violence, with communities suffering deaths, displacement, and destruction of livelihoods and damaged relations between neighbors.

"Nakuru County carries both painful memories and a powerful promise," Omondi said, noting that the county had experienced some of the gravest consequences of the violence before embarking on a process of healing and reconciliation.

The remarks came as Governor Susan Kihika described Nakuru's ethnic and political diversity as both an opportunity and a responsibility ahead of the 2027 election.

The county has more than 2.1 million residents spread across 11 sub-counties and 55 wards, while the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) classifies it among Kenya's cosmopolitan counties. Kihika said people from different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds routinely live and interact across the county.

She said peaceful coexistence should extend beyond avoiding physical conflict to the ability of Kenyans to disagree politically and socially without turning those differences into hostility.

"Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is the freedom to disagree without becoming enemies," Kihika said.

The governor said Nakuru's cosmopolitan character placed an added responsibility on its residents to demonstrate that ethnic and political differences could coexist without undermining community relations.

She said the county brought together people from different parts of the country in workplaces, neighborhoods, markets and social spaces, making it a practical illustration of the country's wider diversity.

"If Nakuru can live together, work together and build together, then Nakuru can show Kenya what peaceful coexistence looks like," Kihika said.

Omondi, however, warned that peaceful coexistence could not be taken for granted as political activity intensifies ahead of the 2027 election.

He said electoral violence rarely emerges without preceding warning signs, identifying divisive political language, coded ethnic messages, hate speech, misinformation, threats, intimidation, gang mobilization, manipulation of unemployed young people, attacks



Government officials, civil society representatives and members of the public hold hands in a pledge to promote peace during the electioneering period.

on women in public life and unresolved local grievances among the indicators that should concern communities and institutions.

The peace organization said the challenge was not necessarily a lack of information because communities often identify emerging tensions before they escalate. The critical issue, Omondi said, was whether the information reaches the right institutions, is verified and prompts timely action.

"Violence rarely begins without warning," Omondi said.

His warning was echoed by NCIC chairman Bishop Dr Kepha Omae, who said the country had made progress towards peaceful elections but continued to face risks associated with ethnic mobilization, hate speech, political intolerance, misinformation and violence.

Omae said the NCIC had developed its second "Uchaguzi Bila Noma" roadmap to guide preparations for the 2027 elections. The framework includes civic education, conflict prevention, early warning and early response, peace messaging, stakeholder engagement and hate speech management.

The NCIC chairman said political competition should not undermine relationships between citizens or turn ethnic identities into

instruments of mobilization.

"Political competition must never become a reason for Kenyans to turn against one another," Omae said.

The commission said it was strengthening dialogue at community level to allow grievances to be discussed before they hardened into conflict.

Omae said such dialogue was particularly important because unresolved local grievances could be exploited for political purposes, while fairness and inclusion remained important to sustaining public confidence and national cohesion.

Kihika placed particular emphasis on the role of political rhetoric in either preventing or fueling ethnic tensions, warning that hostility could begin long before physical violence occurs.

"Tribalism does not begin with a stone. It begins with a word," she said, warning against politicians portraying other Kenyans as enemies or turning communities into political weapons.

She urged political actors to ensure that competition ahead of the 2027 General Election remained focused on policies and records rather than ethnic identity.

The governor also called on the NCIC to intervene when individuals repeatedly spread hate, incite communities or use ethnicity to provoke Kenyans against one another.

She said accountability should apply regardless of a person's tribe, political party, office or popularity, arguing that every community should feel it belongs in the political process.

Omondi said early warning mechanisms would be ineffective unless institutions responded to information received from communities.

He said community peace committees were often the first to notice tension, receive information, convene dialogue and intervene before disagreements escalated into violence, describing them as the "eyes, ears and hands" of local peace infrastructure.

"Early warning without early response is incomplete," Omondi said, warning that communities could lose confidence in public institutions when they report threats but receive no feedback or action.

The organization that champions for human rights, peace & security and good governance said early response should not automatically mean deployment of security officers, noting that dialogue, mediation, engagement with political leaders, action against hate speech, psychosocial support, and protection of threatened individuals and correction of harmful misinformation could also be appropriate interventions.

Omondi also called for stronger links between communities, peace committees, civil society, and county administrators, the NCIC, the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management and security agencies.

The NCIC said young people should also be protected from political exploitation as the country moves towards the election.

The commission said it had established more than 1,000 Amani Clubs in schools to expose young people to peace, diversity, tolerance, dialogue and responsible citizenship, arguing that peace education should begin before an election period.

Omae urged political leaders not to recruit or deploy young people to attack opponents, saying youth participation in democracy should not be turned into participation in political violence.

"We implore you not to use young people as instruments of violence," Omae said, urging political actors to give young people genuine opportunities to participate in democratic processes rather than recruit, finance or deploy them against opponents.

The NCIC also called on political parties and candidates to reject hate speech, incitement, ethnic profiling and misinformation, while urging leaders to campaign on issues rather than mobilize citizens along ethnic, religious or regional lines.

For Nakuru, the warnings carry particular significance because of the county's history and its continuing diversity.

Kihika said the objective should not be to create a county in which residents have identical identities or political views, but one in which people recognize one another first as fellow citizens.

"My dream for Nakuru is not a county where everyone looks alike. My dream is a county where everyone feels at home," she said.

She said political differences should not be allowed to turn into ethnic hostility as Kenyans prepare to vote in 2027.

The governor urged citizens to examine what political leaders say and do, how they treat communities different from their own and whether their politics brings Kenyans together or drives them apart.

Omondi said the county's history should encourage institutions and citizens to strengthen prevention mechanisms ahead of the next election rather than wait for violence to occur.

"The 2027 General Elections should not become a test of how effectively we respond after violence has occurred. They should demonstrate how successfully we can prevent violence before it begins," Omondi said.

The NCIC said it would continue monitoring emerging risks, strengthening early warning and response mechanisms, supporting dialogue and working with partners across the country as Kenya prepares for the 2027 polls.

“

SUSAN KIHIKA

Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is the freedom to disagree without becoming enemies.

If Nakuru can live together, work together and build together, then Nakuru can show Kenya what peaceful coexistence looks like.

MKU builds global career pathways as student welfare takes centre stage



Mount Kenya University (MKU) unveils Sh6,500,000 million fund to recognise and award alumni with positive impact in their communities in 2025.

BY WILSON ONCHARI

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is increasingly linking student welfare, practical training and global exposure to employability, rolling out initiatives designed to prepare learners for both Kenyan and international labour markets.

A key pillar is the university's international career pathways.

Since 2023, 81 Kenyan nursing students have benefited from MKU's Germany

Nursing Apprenticeship Programme, with the fifth cohort of 27 apprentices departing in April 2026.

The programme, supported by German partners including Hochschule Koblenz University of Applied Sciences and AG-Career Hub, combines practical training, mentorship and exposure to the German healthcare system.

Varsity's Vice-Chancellor Prof Deogratius Jaganyi earlier said MKU is also pursuing approval to become a TELC examination centre, enabling students to undertake German-language proficiency

examinations locally.

The university is similarly expanding opportunities in the maritime sector.

Its Maritime Academy in Malindi has trained 1,065 students in STCW-related courses, with more than 400 graduates securing placements with international cruise companies, including Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line, Carnival, MSC and Princess Cruises.

MKU has also invested in student welfare and social impact.

In 2024, MKU Founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu directed the unconditional release of certificates

withheld over fee arrears, waiving balances amounting to Sh82 million.

The MKU Foundation has further introduced scholarships, including a full scholarship for environmentalist Truphena Muthoni, while the university's Sh100 million, 10-year alumni grant programme is supporting graduates undertaking community-impact initiatives.

Meanwhile, MKU's partnerships, including its 2025 pact with Abu Dhabi Maritime Academy, are expanding opportunities for curriculum development, internships, exchanges, cadetships and industry engagement.

Prof. Gicharu said the MoU signed on November 18, 2025 is a significant step in strengthening world-class maritime education in Kenya, empowering our seafarers for the global industry.

Together, the initiatives illustrate an institutional strategy focused not only on awarding degrees, but also on welfare, practical skills, international exposure and transition into employment.



Mount Kenya University (MKU) Founder Prof. Simon Gicharu (second left) and Dr. Yasser Al Wahedi (center) formalising the partnership between MKU and Abu Dhabi Maritime Academy.

WORLD NEWS

Ruto calls for permanent African seat on UN Security Council

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

President William Ruto has called for comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council to give Africa equitable and permanent representation, with all the prerogatives and privileges attached to permanent membership.

Addressing the General Debate of the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York, Ruto said Africa must have a meaningful voice in decisions affecting global peace and security.

He said the UN had transformed the world by advancing peace, self-determination and human progress, but acknowledged that the organisation had fallen short



Kenya's President William Ruto addressing the General Debate of the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York, USA, September 23, 2026.

of its promise as conflicts persist, international law is applied inconsistently and inequality remains embedded in institutions intended to uphold sovereign equality.

Ruto also called for reforms to

the international financial architecture, arguing that developing countries face disproportionately high costs of financing development while debt-service obligations squeeze spending on edu-

cation, healthcare and economic opportunities.

"Developing countries need greater access to affordable, long-term capital, guarantees and risk-sharing instruments to finance their development," he said.

The President said financial reforms must be accompanied by greater responsibility by governments, including prudent debt management, stronger institutions, deeper domestic capital markets and tougher action against corruption.

"Governments must manage debt prudently, strengthen institutions, deepen domestic capital markets, honour contracts and confront corruption without equivocation," Ruto said.

He stressed that Africa was not seeking charity or preferential treatment, but a greater role in

shaping the global system.

"Africa does not seek charity or special treatment. We seek a fair opportunity and a meaningful voice in shaping our common future," he said.

Ruto's call comes amid ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, with African countries seeking permanent and non-permanent representation as part of broader efforts to make the Council more representative.

"We must build a global system where every nation has a voice, every people has a stake and every child has a future," he added.

The 81st UN General Assembly, running from September 8, 2026 to September 7, 2027, is themed "Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All."



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Kenya retains East Africa trade hub lead as regional commerce surges



President William Ruto engages exhibitors during the 25th East African Community (EAC) Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Trade Fair in November 2025.

BY WILSON ONCHARI

Kenya has retained its position as East Africa's leading trade and economic hub as commerce across the region accelerated sharply in the second quarter of 2026, according to the East African Community (EAC) Quarterly Statistics Bulletin.

The development comes as Kenya seeks to expand its market share within the bloc and use regional and continental trade agreements, particularly the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to diversify exports and increase manufacturing trade.

Total EAC trade with the rest of the world reached \$52.3 billion (Sh6.81 trillion) in the three months to June 2026, representing a 37 per cent increase from \$38.2 billion (Sh4.97 trillion) recorded in the corresponding period of 2025.

The bulletin shows that regional exports rose 41.3 per cent to \$26.3 billion (Sh3.42 trillion), while imports increased 32.9 per cent to \$26 billion (Sh3.38 trillion).

The stronger export performance pushed the region into a \$300 million (Sh39.1 billion) trade surplus, reversing a \$945.3 million

(Sh123 billion) deficit recorded in the second quarter of 2025.

African markets were a major driver of export growth. EAC exports to the continent increased 44.3 per cent to \$7.2 billion (Sh937.2 billion), accounting for 27.5 per cent of the bloc's total exports.

Shipments to the Southern African Development Community rose 50.8 per cent to \$5.1 billion (Sh664 billion), while exports to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa increased 48.3 per cent to \$3.1 billion (Sh403.5 billion).

Intra-EAC exports also grew by 33.2 per cent to \$3.2 billion (Sh416.6 billion).

However, their share of total regional exports declined from 12.8 per cent to 12.1 per cent as trade with external markets expanded at a faster pace.

Kenya accounted for 43.1 per cent of the region's trade, maintaining its position as a major manufacturing, financial and logistics centre. Tanzania contributed 30 per cent, Uganda 17.9 per cent, while the remaining EAC members accounted for the balance.

China remained the region's largest individual trading partner. EAC exports to China nearly doubled from \$5.7 billion to

\$10.7 billion, largely driven by minerals and other raw materials. Imports from China rose from \$4.7 billion to \$7.1 billion.

The surge, however, underscores the region's continued reliance on commodities. Copper and precious metals accounted for 61.9 per cent of EAC exports, up from 58.7 per cent a year earlier.

Coffee, tea and spices remained key agricultural exports, while petroleum products, machinery, transport equipment and industrial supplies dominated imports.

Kenya is seeking to leverage AfCFTA and other regional frameworks to expand markets for locally manufactured goods and reduce reliance on traditional export destinations.

Investments, Trade and Industry Cabinet Secretary Lee Kinyanjui has said Kenya is expanding its continental footprint by leveraging regional and African trade frameworks to increase intra-African trade and manufacturing exports.

Exports currently contribute about 7.2 per cent of Kenya's GDP and support more than 1.5 million jobs directly and indirectly, with horticulture remaining a major foreign-exchange earner.



Kiambu County Commissioner George Matundura speaks to journalists in Ruiru, on the progress of the ongoing crackdown on illicit drinks, September 25, 2026. Photo by Oliver Musembi.

Kiambu crackdown on illicit alcohol not targeting genuine bars

BY OLIVER MUSEMBI

Kiambu County Commissioner George Matundura has assured genuine bar owners that the ongoing crackdown on illicit and harmful alcoholic drinks is not targeting legitimate businesses.

Matundura said traders operating within the law should not feel threatened by the multi-agency operation, which has resulted in the seizure of thousands of litres of suspected counterfeit and illicit liquor and the arrest of scores of people.

Speaking yesterday in Ruiru, the County Commissioner said the operation was aimed at enforcing licensing regulations and protecting consumers from harmful products.

"I want to assure our traders in the liquor business and specifically bar owners that we are not fighting them. We only want the law to be adhered to. You should not open before or sell after the hours specified in your licences," he said.

The operation, launched on Monday, has so far yielded several seizures in Ruiru. Matundura said security officers confiscated 130 litres of chang'aa, with three people found selling the liquor each fined Sh80,000.

A further 267 litres of muratina were seized, with the owner fined Sh105,000.

Four bar operators were also arrested for violating liquor regulations, while 50 people were arrested for being drunk and disorderly. Authorities additionally impounded 29 cartons of suspected counterfeit alcoholic beverages and 24 rolls of bhang.

Matundura said the operation would continue until illicit and harmful alcoholic products were eliminated from the market.

"We are definitely winning the war against sale of illicit and harmful alcoholic products. We project that in two weeks, jointly with other multi-agency teams, the exercise will be a success," he said.

County Police Commander Kennedy Osando warned bar owners against purchasing alcohol from unverified suppliers, urging them to establish the source and legitimacy of products before stocking them.

"Bar operators are the ones who buy alcoholic drinks from the suppliers, so they must get the right stuff," Osando said.

He also urged consumers to verify alcoholic products using established mechanisms, including scanning bottles where applicable.

Love rivalry turns deadly as Afrigo Band icon Moses Matovu is killed

Police arrest girlfriend as former lover is accused of attacking veteran musician in Kampala

BY TEAM

Shock and grief have gripped Uganda's music industry following the killing of veteran singer, saxophonist and Afrigo Band co-founder Moses Matovu, with police linking his death to a confrontation allegedly involving a woman he was visiting and her former boyfriend.

Matovu, one of Uganda's most celebrated musicians, was attacked at about 5.30am on Thursday in Kibuli, Kampala, after reportedly visiting his girlfriend, Rose Tumusiime, at her residence.

According to Kampala Metropolitan Police, Matovu and Tumusiime were leaving the residence when they were confronted by a man who had previously been in a relationship with the woman.

Police spokesperson Racheal Kawala said preliminary investigations indicated that the incident may have resulted from a



Legendary Afrigo Band leader Moses Matovu who was killed in a suspected love triangle case while on his way to a mosque.

physical altercation.

"It is alleged that as he and the lady were leaving the residence, they were confronted by a male suspect who is also alleged to have previously been in a relationship with the same lady," Kawala said.

Matovu sustained serious injuries and was rushed to Kibuli Hospital by a boda boda rider, but later died while receiving treatment.

Police subsequently arrested Tumusiime to assist investigators as they pieced together the circumstances surrounding the

killing.

The male suspect initially fled the scene, triggering a manhunt.

Police later identified him as Nsamba Vincent aged 41, a private security guard and Tumusiime's former boyfriend.

He was arrested in Ochange Ward, Yesu Amala, Nansana Division, Wakiso District, as investigations continued.

Kawala said detectives were still establishing the exact circumstances that led to the confrontation and Matovu's death, urging the public to remain calm and allow investigators to complete their work.

The killing has sent shockwaves through Uganda's entertainment industry, where Matovu was regarded as a towering figure whose career spanned about five decades.

Music promoter Musa Balunywa mourned the veteran musician while calling for greater protection of artists.

"This is the person we have been looking to, the person we have been referring to for the issues of this industry. So, I call upon security apparatus and the government to protect the artists as well,"



Rose Tumusiime (left), Moses Matovu's girlfriend and reportedly ex-lover to the killer suspect, Nsamba Vincent (right).



Balunywa said.

Musician Kenneth Mugabi described Matovu as a giant who had left an enduring mark on Uganda's cultural landscape.

"We have lost a giant," Mugabi said, adding that Matovu had given Uganda much more than music by helping build, preserve and lead the industry across generations.

Uganda Communications Commission executive director George William Nyombi Thembo described Matovu as a decent man whose music had inspired generations.

"He made rhumba Ugandan," Thembo said, noting Matovu's five-decade contribution to the country's music industry.

He said he had contacted government officials over efforts to have the veteran musician appropriately honoured for his contribution to Ugandan music.

Police have urged members of the public with information about the killing to cooperate with investigators as the circumstances surrounding the alleged love rivalry and fatal confrontation continue to unfold.

Their fallout later became entangled in a dispute involving personal allegations and a DNA test. Otile publicly addressed speculation surrounding the matter and claimed that a DNA test had established that he was not the biological father of Jovial's child



Otile Brown and Jovial while shooting a music video "Matatizo." PHOTO BY COURTESY.

'Keep Jovial away from my funeral,' Otile Brown declares

BY WANJIKU WAWERU

Kenyan R&B singer Jacob Obunga popularly known as Otile Brown has ruled out any reconciliation with former collaborator Juliet Miriam Ayub popularly known as Jovial, saying their bitter fallout has left a wound so deep that he would not want her at his funeral.

Speaking on the Over 1M Podcast hosted by Tony Mwirigi, Otile said his relationship with the Mombasa-born singer had deteriorated beyond repair.

"Where it has reached between me and Jovial, she's somebody that today I dare to say that even if I die today, Jovial is someone who should not be allowed at my funeral," Otile said.

The remarks mark a dramatic turn from the pair's earlier professional relationship, during which Otile played a significant role in Jovial's rise in the music industry.

Otile said he wrote several songs for Jovial, financed music videos, including one costing about Sh250,000, and eventually released her from his record label without demanding payment for split-sheet royalties or a buyout.

The two musicians collaborated on seven songs that became popular with fans, building a successful musical partnership before their relationship broke down publicly.

Their fallout later became entangled in a dispute involving personal allegations and a DNA test.

Otile publicly addressed speculation surrounding the matter and claimed that a DNA test had established that he was not the

biological father of Jovial's child.

The dispute further strained relations between the two artistes, with Otile saying personal attacks during the fallout caused lasting hurt.

Despite their past musical success, Otile said he has no interest in rebuilding the relationship, making it clear that, in his view, the damage to their friendship and trust is permanent.

The singer remains one of Kenya's most commercially successful R&B artistes, with more than 100 million streams across YouTube and Boomplay, but his latest comments suggest that professional success has done little to erase the bitterness surrounding his highly publicised split with Jovial.

Three marriages, big TV and gas cooker: Pritty Vishy reveals what once won her over

BY CORRESPONDENT

Kenyan content creator Pritty Vishy has opened up about her colourful relationship history, revealing that she has been married three times and, at one point, a man's household possessions influenced her decision to settle down.

Speaking on A Gen Z Story, Vishy candidly reflected on her romantic experiences while growing up, saying one of her marriages was partly inspired by the comfort she associated with a man who owned a large television and a gas cooker.

"I've been married thrice. Kuna yenye nilikuwa married because nilipata ako na TV



Local content creator Pritty Vishy.

kubwa na gas," she said.

The revelation amused and surprised the hosts, while offering another glimpse into the experiences that shaped Vishy before she became a prominent social media personality.

Her latest disclosure is

consistent with previous accounts in which she has spoken about relationships she entered at a young age, including some that began while she was still in school.

In one past account, Vishy recalled leaving home after returning late from seeing a boyfriend and eventually moving in with him. She later discovered that the man was allegedly involved in criminal activities and returned home, after which she was taken to boarding school.

She has also previously recounted another relationship in which a man offered her a place to stay while she waited for tensions at home to settle, only for her to later discover that he was already married.

Chris Brown lashes out at critics: 'I'll be the villain'

BY WANJIKU WAWERU

American R&B star Chris Brown has reignited controversy after launching an angry social media tirade against critics, politicians and sections of the entertainment industry, declaring that he is no longer interested in winning over his detractors.

Brown took aim at what he described as hypocrisy in the music and entertainment industries, while asserting his dominance as an artiste.

"Not a single artist on this planet can f— wit me on my worst day," Brown wrote. "I'm tired of being nice. F— yo opinion. I'll be the villain."

His outburst followed a decision by Texas State Representative Venton Jones



American R&B star Chris Brown.

to withdraw plans to honour Brown during the singer's sold-out performance at AT&T Stadium.

Jones apologised to constituents, citing Brown's history of domestic violence.

Brown responded angrily, accusing politicians of

approaching him and then backing away when public criticism emerged.

"Y'all came to me! not the other way around," he wrote, telling critics to leave him alone and allow him to focus on fans who had paid to attend his shows.

Brown's latest remarks come against the backdrop of a career repeatedly overshadowed by controversy.

In 2009, he pleaded guilty to felony assault after attacking then-girlfriend Rihanna, an incident that resulted in probation, community service and counselling.

He has subsequently faced other allegations and legal controversies, including accusations of assault and violence, although not all allegations have resulted in convictions.

Sharks, Mombasa United playoff deal ends FKF league deadlock

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

There is a sigh of relief in Kenyan football after Kariobangi Sharks and Mombasa United agreed to contest a promotion and relegation playoff, paving the way for the delayed 2026/27 Football Kenya Federation (FKF) Premier League season to begin.

The two-legged playoff will start in Mombasa on October 1, with the return leg scheduled for Nairobi on October 6, 2026.

A key sticking point in the negotiations was player eligibility. The two clubs have agreed that newly registered players will be allowed to feature in the decisive



Football Kenya Federation (FKF) President Hussein Mohammed (right) consults with officials.

fixtures, helping resolve a dispute that had threatened to prolong the league stalemate.

The new Premier League season was initially scheduled to kick off on September 19 but was postponed indefinitely following fresh High

Court orders concerning the status of the two clubs.

The dispute arose from changes to FKF rules in 2025, which triggered legal challenges and complicated the promotion and relegation process.

Mombasa United said it had accepted the playoff in the wider interests of Kenyan football, while maintaining that it remained convinced of the legitimacy of its position.

“There are moments in the life of a club when the greater victory is not simply proving that you are right, but protecting the game you love,” the club said in a statement.

The club said accepting the playoff was “not a surrender” or

an admission that its position was wrong, but a sacrifice aimed at ending the impasse.

AFC Leopards chairman Boniface Ambani had earlier called for the two clubs to face off in a playoff, urging FKF and both teams to compromise.

Ambani proposed that Mombasa United accept the playoff while Sharks allow the coastal club to use its current squad.

He noted that FKF rules ordinarily require playoff participants to use squads registered at the end of the previous season. Mombasa United, however, had released several players whose contracts had expired and recruited new players for the 2026/27 campaign.

Harambee Stars strike as football mismanagement deepens ahead of Eritrea clash



The Kenyan national football team, Harambee Stars

BY CORRESPONDENT

Harambee Stars’ preparations for today’s planned 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Eritrea were jolted after players boycotted training over unpaid allowances, while coach Benni McCarthy revealed that he and members of his technical staff have gone months without salaries and worked without permits.

The players camped in Nairobi but declined to train, demanding payment of allowances estimated at Sh80,000 per player for the Senegal and Lesotho assignments.

Football Kenya Federation (FKF) Head of Projects and National Teams Athanus Obango said responsibility for national-team allowances lies with the government.

Eritrea arrived in Kenya on Tuesday and has been training at Police Sacco Stadium ahead of Saturday’s match at Nyayo Stadium.

McCarthy backed the players, saying repeated broken promises had damaged morale.

“The players are very important; their welfare comes first,” he said, adding that some had gone through “four to five camps” without receiving promised allowances. “Nobody in the world works for free.”

The South African coach also disclosed that he and members of his foreign technical bench have operated without Kenyan work permits for about 18 months, forcing them to leave the country after international assignments.

“I come here, do my job, when my job is finished, I get out,” McCarthy said, accusing those responsible for his documentation of allowing his concerns to fall on “deaf ears”.

FKF acknowledged the permit problem, saying it was working with Government agencies to complete the process.

The federation also said one outstanding payment had been cleared and was expected to reflect on Thursday, while other allowances and preparation-related payments remained at different stages of processing.

The latest crisis adds to a long-running pattern of administrative and financial disputes in Kenyan football.

Players previously boycotted national-team duty over allowances, including a 2005 protest that contributed to Kenya arriving late for the Cecafta Senior Challenge Cup and being eliminated.

The federation has also faced recent internal disputes over governance, finances and procurement, including a bitter leadership row that prompted FIFA intervention in May.



President William Ruto (right) flanked by First Lady Rachel Ruto (left) indulge in a heartfelt conversation with Kenyan-born basketball star Madina Okot (center) in New York, USA, September 23, 2026.

Ruto celebrates Kenyan WNBA Star Madina Okot in New York

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

President William Ruto attended the WNBA clash between the New York Liberty and Atlanta Dream in Brooklyn to show his support for Kenyan-born basketball star Madina Okot on Wednesday during his stay in the US to attend the 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Ruto, accompanied by First Lady Rachel Ruto and government officials, watched the game from the sidelines before sharing a light moment with Okot after the match.

Videos circulating online showed the President and the First Lady hugging and chatting with the Atlanta Dream player.

Ruto said he attended the game to support Okot as she represented Atlanta Dream, highlighting her Kenyan

roots on the international stage.

“Attended the WNBA match between New York Liberty and Atlanta Dream in Brooklyn to support Kenyan-born star Madina Okot,” Ruto said in a social media post.

Atlanta Dream also acknowledged the President’s presence, describing the visit as a show of support for Okot.

“From Kenya to the world. Kenya’s fifth and current president, William Ruto, stopped by our final regular season game to show support for our favorite Kenyan, Madina Okot,” the team said.

On the court, Atlanta completed its regular-season campaign with an emphatic 83-65 victory over New York, securing the No. 4 seed and home-court advantage in the opening round of the WNBA playoffs.

Atlanta improved to 30-14 with its fifth consecutive win after dominating the second quarter, restricting New York to just seven points. The Dream led 41-26 at halftime after forcing 15 first-half turnovers and converting them into 13 points.

Allisha Gray led Atlanta with 24 points, including four three-pointers, while Naz Hillmon added 16 and Jordin Canada 12.

New York, which dropped to 26-18, struggled without MVP candidate Breanna Stewart, who missed the game with left knee soreness. The Liberty shot 36.4 percent from the field and 17.2 percent from three-point range.

Atlanta will host either Indiana or Washington in the first playoff round, while New York enters the postseason as the No. 8 seed against Minnesota Lynx.

Trump's White House media ban halted by judge

BY CORRESPONDENT, NEW YORK, USA

A US federal judge has ordered the President Donald Trump administration to immediately restore White House access to journalists from CNN, MS NOW and Politico, ruling that the ban imposed on the three outlets was likely unconstitutional.

US District Judge Timothy Kelly ordered the administration to return the outlets' press passes and barred officials from enforcing the ban for 14 days while the legal challenge proceeds.

He said the news organisations were likely to succeed in showing that the administration had failed

to provide adequate due process before revoking their access.

"The record lacks factual support for defendants' contention that the revocation of plaintiffs' hard passes will in fact protect national security," Kelly said.

The ruling followed a lawsuit filed by CNN, MS NOW and Politico after the White House announced the ban on September 18, 2026.

The organisations argued that the move violated First Amendment protections for freedom of speech and the press, as well as their due process rights.

President Donald Trump had accused the three outlets of publishing "Fiction and Lies" and cited what he described as

inaccurate and negative reporting.

Justice Department lawyers defended the ban, arguing that access to the White House was a privilege rather than an entitlement and that the president had authority to suspend it.

Kelly questioned the administration's national security justification, noting that Trump's initial announcement had focused on alleged problems with the outlets' reporting rather than national security.

He also said the White House appeared not to have given the organisations a meaningful opportunity to challenge the revocation before it took effect.

The administration later cited several stories, including reports



President Donald Trump, seated right, points to reporters as he speaks during an event about healthcare in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday September 18, 2026, in Washington. PHOTO BY COURTESY.

concerning construction at the White House, in defending the restrictions.

The legal battle has drawn wider support from press-freedom organisations and major news organisations.

A coalition including the

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Reuters, The Washington Post and Fox News argued that removing journalists because of perceived editorial viewpoints conflicts with established constitutional protections.

Houthi attacks trigger urgent Audi-Türkiye-Pakistan military talks

BY JAMES WASIKE

Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan are moving to convene an urgent meeting of their military chiefs after a series of Houthi attacks on Saudi territory and civilian and economic facilities, raising pressure on the three countries to activate their new mutual-defence pact.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said the military chiefs will discuss measures to support Riyadh under the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement, amid continued attacks by Yemen's Houthi movement.

The announcement followed an emergency meeting in New York

between Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

"The participants in the meeting discussed the current arrangements for holding an urgent meeting of the chiefs of staff of the three countries in order to find ways to support the kingdom in accordance with the Mecca joint defense agreement," the Saudi ministry said.

The ministers condemned attacks targeting Mecca, Saudi civilian facilities and economic infrastructure, while reaffirming Riyadh's right to defend itself under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

They also praised the readiness of Saudi armed forces and directed attention to measures for strengthening coordination among the three militaries.

The talks come barely weeks after Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan signed the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement on August 7, 2026. The pact provides for collective defence, declaring that an attack against one member will be treated as aggression against all three.

The ministers also discussed progress in establishing the agreement's secretariat, committees and working groups and preparations for their operational launch.

The three countries stressed that any response should uphold international law, state sovereignty, maritime security and freedom of navigation.

They nevertheless reaffirmed support for de-escalation and peaceful solutions to regional conflicts.

Pezeshkian defies Trump as US-Iran talks seek Hormuz deal



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addressing the 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at UN headquarters in New York City, US, September 23, 2026.

BY JAMES WASIKE

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has accused the United States and Israel of fuelling global instability and launching illegal attacks on Iranian civilians and infrastructure, as Washington and Tehran explore a phased deal that could reopen the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday, Pezeshkian delivered a defiant speech that challenged President Donald Trump's claim that Iran was desperate for peace after nearly seven months of war.

"The United States president described us as terrorists. We have been the victims of terrorism," Pezeshkian said.

"Are we the sources of instability? We only seek to live independently."

Holding photographs of children he said were killed in US and Israeli strikes, Pezeshkian vowed that Iran would continue resisting "until our last breath."

His remarks came a day after Trump told the UN he was considering whether to "annihilate" Iran. Trump subsequently returned to Washington ahead of Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit.

The address coincided with diplomatic

efforts in New York aimed at ending the conflict. Sources cited by Reuters said negotiators are discussing a phased arrangement under which Iran would reopen Hormuz in return for Washington lifting its economic blockade. Tehran could also regain access to frozen assets.

A senior Iranian official said: "One way forward would be to solve the crisis in stages. The first would be to end the blockade and reopen Hormuz."

However, the official warned that diplomacy remained difficult, saying, "Our fingers are on the trigger," and that excessive US demands made the prospects of a settlement "extremely low."

Tehran has said it could reopen the waterway within seven days if Washington eases military pressure and lifts the blockade. Regional sources said Iran could move its demand for transit fees into a separate agreement, although Gulf states have rejected the proposal.

Pezeshkian's claims about civilian casualties have also drawn international scrutiny.

The UN's Iran fact-finding mission said it found "reasonable grounds" to believe the US committed a war crime through indiscriminate attacks that killed or injured civilians, including in a strike on a school in Minab.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (center), Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left) and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif posing after signing the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, August 7, 2026.

Land dispute ghosts haunt Mudavadi as court strips him of estate role

BY TEAM

P rime Cabinet Secretary and CS for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi has suffered a fresh setback in a family property dispute after the High Court revoked his appointment as an administrator of the estate of his late stepmother, Rosebella Jerono Mudavadi.

The decision adds another chapter to a string of property-related court battles involving the senior government official, including a separate dispute in which a company has challenged his claim to a parcel of land in Vihiga.

In the latest case, Mudavadi's stepsister, Catherine Kilwatso, successfully challenged his continued role in administering their mother's estate, arguing that he could not be relied upon to protect her interests and those of other beneficiaries in the proposed sale of family property.

Vihiga High Court Judge Reuben Nyakundi revoked Mudavadi's appointment and replaced him with Kilwatso, who will now administer the estate jointly with Geoffrey Kegode Mudavadi.

The order took effect on September 8, 2026.

"One Wycliff Musalia Mudavadi appointment as an administrator be and is hereby revoked and in his place one Catherine Kilwatso Mudavadi together with Geofrey Kegode Mudavadi be and are hereby appointed as legal personal representatives of the estate of Rosebella Jerono Mudavadi," Justice Nyakundi ruled.

The judge also directed that the grant of letters of administration intestate issued on July 9, 2025 be revoked and fresh instruments issued to the new administrators.

Family estate fight

Rosebella died on November 24, 2021, but succession proceedings were not concluded until four years later.

A gazette notice confirming the appointment of Mudavadi and Kegode as administrators was published on May 26, 2025, before the High Court formally issued them with instruments to administer the estate on July 9, 2025.

The administrators were required to administer the estate in accordance with the law and render a just and true account of their dealings.

The dispute centred on Transnzoia/Kapko/258, a family property in Trans Nzoia County that the beneficiaries had agreed should be sold and the proceeds distributed.

According to the court proceedings, the 12 beneficiaries had initially agreed that Mudavadi and Kegode would administer the estate.

But Kilwatso later objected to the manner in which the estate was being handled, particularly the proposed disposal of the property.

Her position changed during the dispute, with the court being told that she ultimately decided not to sell her portion of the property.

The other beneficiaries, however, were prepared to proceed with the sale after her portion had been hived off.

Kegode defended the administration, telling the court that all 12 beneficiaries had agreed to

the filing of a summons for partial confirmation of the grant dated July 28, 2025 to facilitate the transaction involving the Trans Nzoia property.

He said Kilwatso had herself consented to and executed an agreement approving the partial confirmation of the grant and proposed mode of distribution.

Kegode described the grounds raised by Kilwatso in her objection as frivolous, arguing that the beneficiaries would ultimately share the property equally.

He questioned why none of the other beneficiaries had raised concerns similar to those advanced by Kilwatso.

"Indeed the objector has changed her mind to sell her portion of the property but other beneficiaries shall proceed with sale after hiving off her portion," Kegode told the court.

Despite the objections, Justice Nyakundi ultimately ordered the change of administrators, stripping Mudavadi of his role in the estate.

Another property battle

The latest setback comes against the backdrop of another property dispute in Vihiga in which Mudavadi has been embroiled in litigation with Nasibu Holdings Limited.

The company claims it had occupied the contested property for about 13 years before Mudavadi briefly took possession in 2024.

“

JUSTICE NYAKUNDI

One Wycliff Musalia Mudavadi appointment as an administrator be and is hereby revoked and in his place one Catherine Kilwatso Mudavadi together with Geofrey Kegode Mudavadi be and are hereby appointed as legal personal representatives of the estate of Rosebella Jerono Mudavadi



Musalia Mudavadi's late stepmother, Mama Rosebella Jerono Mudavadi



Prime Cabinet Secretary and CS for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi.

The dispute escalated after Vihiga Principal Magistrate Jacqueline Agonda determined that Nasibu Holdings was the rightful owner of the property.

Mudavadi subsequently moved to the High Court, challenging the magistrate's decision and arguing that the trial court had prematurely determined ownership at a preliminary stage.

Environment and Land Court Judge Esther Asati suspended proceedings before the magistrate's court pending the hearing of Mudavadi's challenge.

However, the judge declined Mudavadi's application seeking to remove Nasibu Holdings from the property.

Mudavadi had asked the court to order the parties to return to the status quo that existed before September 24, 2024, when he had briefly been in possession of the land.

Justice Asati rejected the request, noting that Mudavadi had been in possession between July and September 2024 but that the situation had subsequently changed following the trial court's decision.

"To order for status quo as prayed will involve removal of the Respondent (Nasibu Holdings) from the land and handing over of vacant possession to the applicant (Mudavadi). That is not the function of an order of status quo," the judge ruled.

'Illegal possession'

Nasibu Holdings, through Oliver Kehodo Oseno, opposed Mudavadi's case and argued that the suit was defective.

The company told the court that Mudavadi had taken possession of the property in July 2024 without notice or a court order, allegedly forcing Nasibu Holdings out.

According to the company, the trial court subsequently corrected the situation by restoring it to possession.

Nasibu Holdings argued that Mudavadi, having obtained possession without lawful authority, was now asking the High Court to legitimise what the company described as an unlawful act.

The company accused him of seeking the protection of the court to "clothe his actions with colour of the law".

Mudavadi's legal challenge therefore remains separate from the succession dispute involving his stepmother's estate.

The court's decision also leaves the proposed sale and distribution of the Trans Nzoia property subject to the fresh administration arrangements ordered by Justice Nyakundi.

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja's administration has taken President William Ruto's government to court in a fresh battle over control and collection of billions of shillings generated from betting, casinos and other gambling activities in the capital

BY CORRESPONDENT

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja has opened a fresh battle with President William Ruto's led administration over billions of shillings generated by betting firms and casinos, taking the national government to court in a fight over who should control and collect gambling-related revenues in the capital.

Nairobi County has sued the Attorney-General, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA), challenging the Gambling Control Act, 2025 and the Gambling Control (Licensing) Regulations, 2026.

The county argues that the national framework creates overlapping regulatory mandates and threatens its constitutional role in regulating betting, casinos and other forms of gambling.

Nairobi's lawyer, Faith Wanjala, told the High Court that the contested legislation violates devolution and the separation of functions between the two levels of government.

"The impugned legislation creates a national framework which does not adequately distinguish the government's constitutional function of national betting casinos and other forms of gambling and county government's function of betting, casinos and other forms of gambling," Wanjala argued.

She said gambling operators in Nairobi are now required to obtain licences from the GRA while also complying with the Nairobi City County Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act, 2026.

The arrangement, she argued, exposes operators to "double licensing, duplicate fees, overlapping inspections and conflicting enforcement measures".

Wanjala said the GRA had itself acknowledged the risk of double licensing, increased compliance costs and confusion, but subsequently demanded that Nairobi stop collecting gambling licence fees,

Sakaja, Ruto clash over billions from betting and casinos



President William Ruto (left) and Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja (right).

charges and penalties.

In a supporting affidavit, Nairobi's acting director of gambling, betting and lotteries, Alvin Mayoya, accused the authority of taking over functions constitutionally assigned to the county.

"The continued implementation may further result in the issuance of national licenses and the imposition of national regulatory requirements in respect of activities which the petitioner contends fall within the constitutional mandate assigned to the county governments," Mayoya said.

He said Nairobi was not seeking to block the National Government from exercising its constitutional functions, but wanted to prevent interference with county responsibilities.

The dispute comes amid a wider legal challenge to the new gambling regulations, including complaints over steep increases in licensing fees and regulatory requirements.

The court battle could determine who ultimately licenses, regulates and collects revenue from gambling operators in Nairobi.

The suit instituted by the Sakaja led administration puts Nairobi County and the

national government on a collision course over one of the capital's lucrative revenue streams, with the Sakaja administration asserting its authority over licensing and related levies under the county's new gambling law.

The court action comes barely weeks after Sakaja established a 13-member taskforce to review implementation of the Nairobi City County Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act, 2026, amid concerns raised by gaming operators over licensing, fees, compliance and overlapping regulatory requirements.

The taskforce was created through Gazette Notice No. 14177 dated September 4, 2026, following consultations between the county and the Association of Gaming Operators Kenya (AGOK).

Its mandate includes reviewing licensing, compliance, enforcement, taxation, fees and business operations, as well as identifying conflicts and overlaps between county and national government requirements.

The latest legal confrontation therefore brings into sharp focus the question of whether gambling operators in Nairobi should be subjected to parallel regulatory and revenue demands by the two levels of government.

Billions at stake

Nairobi is seeking to assert greater control over the licensing and revenue generated from casinos, online casinos, betting premises, betting satellite shops, public lotteries, prize competitions, pool tables and amusement machines.

The county's 2026 law provides a framework for regulating betting, lotteries and gaming activities within Nairobi, with the County Assembly listing the legislation among laws assented to this year.

The taskforce has specifically been directed to examine licensing fees imposed on different categories of gaming businesses and review the procedures, requirements and timelines for obtaining licences.

It will also examine how existing operators

will transition to the new county framework and identify areas requiring clarification, harmonisation or reform.

The review is expected to produce recommendations on policy, legislation, administration and operations as Nairobi seeks to balance revenue collection with regulation, consumer protection and the sustainability of the gaming industry.

Sakaja's gambling reform team

Sakaja's taskforce is chaired by Nairobi County Chief of Staff David Njoroge, with Nairobi County Executive Committee Member for Business and Hustler Opportunities Dr Anastasia Nyalita as co-chairperson.

The Directorate of Betting, Lotteries and Gaming's Alvin Omuga Mayoya is the secretariat lead.

Other members include County Chief Officer for Business and Hustler Opportunities Lydia Mathia, County Revenue representative CPA Nixon Otieno Awuor, Finance analyst Moses Senator Musa and County Attorney's representative Sylvia Matoke.

Representatives of AGOK are also part of the team, alongside officials from the Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee and the Council of Governors. The taskforce has 21 days from gazette to submit its recommendations to the Governor.

County-national clash

The taskforce has also been ordered to assess the economic contribution of the gaming industry to Nairobi and explore ways of improving collaboration between the county and operators on revenue administration and compliance.

Responsible gambling, consumer protection and safeguards for young and vulnerable people are also part of its mandate.

But at the center of the emerging dispute is the division of regulatory responsibilities between Nairobi and the National Government—and the revenues attached to those responsibilities.

The dispute could have wider implications for betting companies and casinos operating in Nairobi, particularly where county licensing and national regulatory requirements overlap.

Bribery claims rock GRA as betting firms struggle for licenses

The alleged extortion racket is said to have slowed approvals, leaving firms uncertain about their ability to continue operating. GRA has increased the license fee for online bookmakers from Sh200,000 to Sh50million while casino license fees have rose from Sh7million to Sh120million. On the other hand, the online bookmaker application charge has risen from Sh10,000 to Sh5 million, while pool and betting licence renewal fees was increased from Sh5,000 to Sh2.5 million.

BY TEAM

A licensing crisis is threatening to disrupt Kenya's gambling industry, with betting and gaming firms struggling to renew their operating licences amid allegations of bribery and extortion involving rogue officials at the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Kenya (GRA).

Industry insiders claim some officials within the authority, allegedly acting in collusion with a vocal Member of Parliament (MP) and are said to be enjoying the backing of a senior government official, are demanding hefty bribes from operators seeking license renewals.

The alleged extortion racket is said to have slowed approvals,

leaving firms uncertain about their ability to continue operating.

However, by the time of going to publication, efforts to reach either GRA Director General Peter Karimi or GRA Board Chairman Joseph Kirui Limo for comment proved futile as our phone calls through the official provided contacts went unanswered.

"There is a serious extortion racket frustrating the licensing process," our source intimated.

The allegations mirror claims that previously dogged the defunct Betting Control and Licensing Board, where insiders and state officials were accused of soliciting multi-million-shilling payments from operators in exchange for license renewals and approvals even to underserving firms.

The latest controversy comes

as the High Court allows GRA to continue implementing the contested Gambling Control (Licensing) Regulations, 2026, including collecting the new licensing fees, pending determination of a case challenging the regulations.

Justice William Musyoka recently varied an earlier order suspending implementation of the new fees after GRA argued that the freeze had paralysed licensing operations.

The authority told the court that 246 license applications were pending because applicants could not be processed without paying fees prescribed under the new regulations.

GRA has increased the license fee for online bookmakers from Sh200,000 to Sh50million while



Gambling and Regulatory Authority (GRA) Board Chairman Joseph Kirui Limo (left), GRA Director General Peter Karimi (right) and former Director General of the defunct Betting Control and Licensing Board (BCLB) Peter Mbugi (center). FILE PHOTO.

casino license fees have rose from Sh7million to Sh120million.

On the other hand, the online bookmaker application charge has risen from Sh10,000 to Sh5 million, while pool and betting licence renewal fees was increased from Sh5,000 to Sh2.5 million.