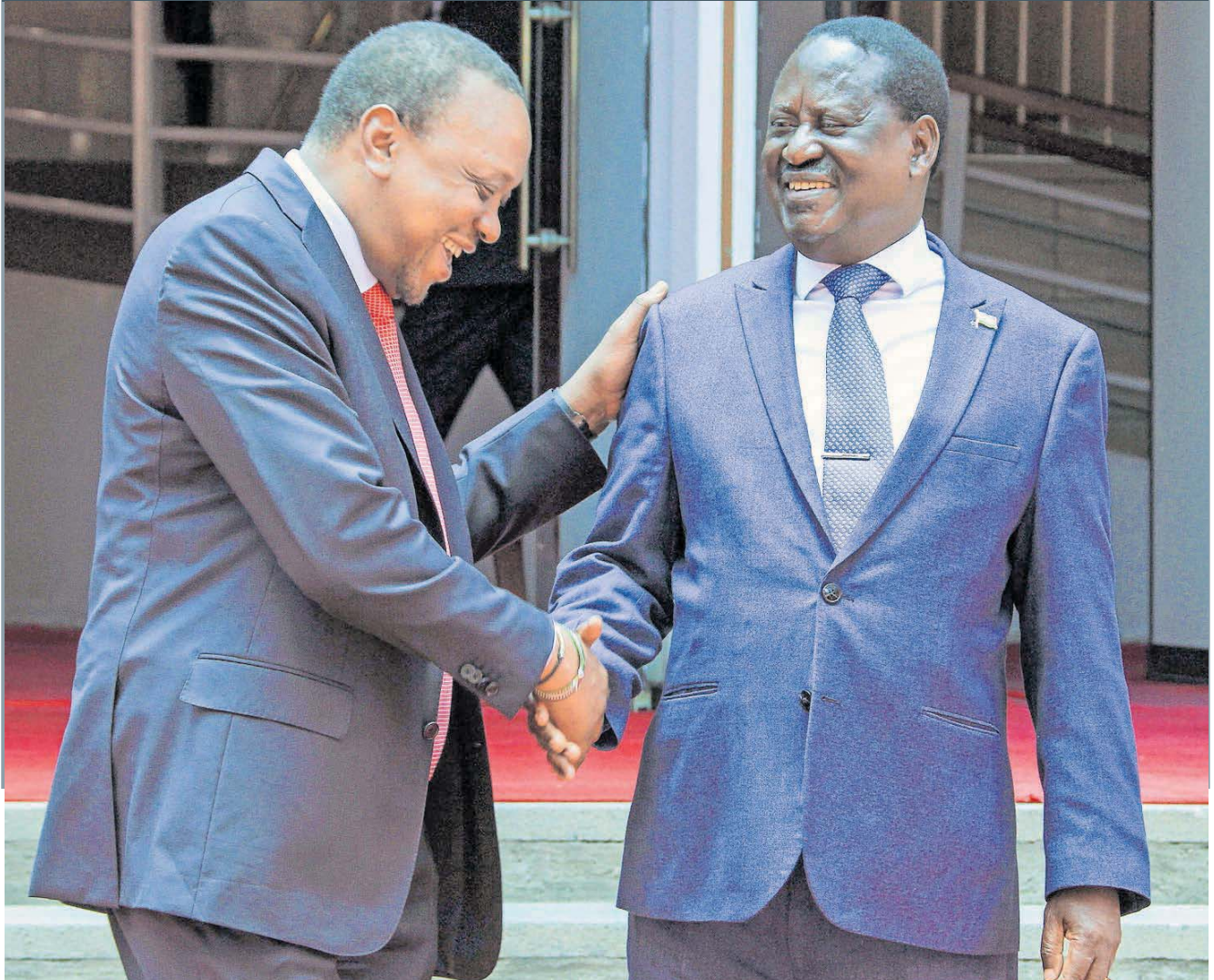


THE Weekly Review

For the Thinking Person

ISSUE NO. 4 | September 25, 2022 FREE WITH 'SUNDAY NATION'



WHICH WAY AZIMIO?

The 'handshake' brothers, Uhuru and Raila, are sailing in choppy waters after a humiliating loss in the August 9 polls. Raila has been a central figure in Kenya's storied political history, but his future is anyone's guess. With Uhuru's slide into retirement, the grand Azimio coalition faces an acid test

The Nation ePaper NOW Available on the PlayStore anywhere, anytime.

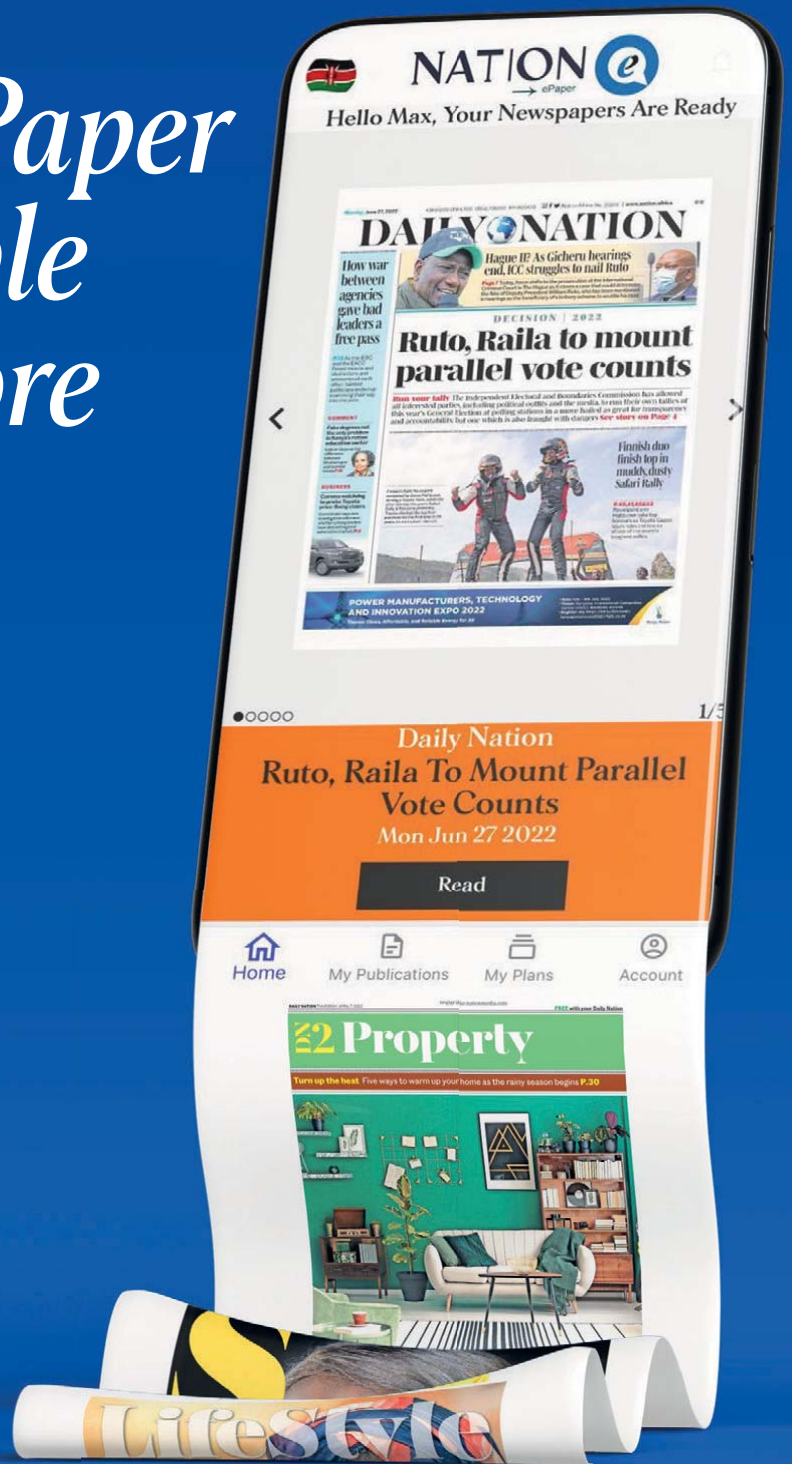
Follow the link to subscribe

➤ epaper.nation.africa.

Scan to
Download



Or download from Google playstore



f Nation

▶ Nation

🐦 Nation Africa

For customer support Tel: 0790 111 111

Email: epaper@ke.nationmedia.com

NATION 
→ ePaper

letter from the editor

We need a strong opposition for checks and balances



Washington Gikunju

Millions of Kenyans who voted dutifully for their preferred candidates, and even those who did not, are waiting expectantly for the delivery of the basketfuls of promises made on the campaign trail.

President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza Alliance-elected MPs have already received a briefing on the ruling party's legislative agenda, while, on the other end of the spectrum, the Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition is getting ready to take opposition benches in Parliament and county assemblies across the nation.

The opposition should take up its role with zest and commit to keeping the Executive and the Judiciary in check. The country is always the loser when the opposition is feeble, since there is no one to tame the excesses of the holders of the instruments of power. The second term of the Jubilee administration is one such example, when the Executive had free reign courtesy of the 'handshake' between the opposition and the government.

Widely unpopular measures, such as tax increases on fuel, easily sailed through Parliament, pushing the cost of living through the roof. As long as the 'handshake' brothers were happy, everything the Executive wanted got done. For five years, the country

Our economy is at such a tipping point that political competition is an absolute necessity for taxpayers to get optimal value for their shilling. Malevolent spending on unproductive projects, or unchecked leakages through corruption, could easily push the fragile economy off the cliff.

was literary back to the one-party era, when no one raised a finger against state immoderation. Public participation, as demanded by the Constitution, became an inconsequential formality.

The folly of it all is that, despite what may be best intentions by government bureaucrats and the political class, no group of individuals or party has a monopoly of brilliant ideas. Constructive opposition and criticism, even at household level, tend to yield better outcomes.

Our economy is at such a tipping point that political competition is an absolute necessity for taxpayers to get optimal value for their shilling. Malevolent spending on unproductive projects, or unchecked leakages through corruption, could easily push the fragile economy off the cliff.

Some political promises are downright populist and impractical, and

the opposition must examine them as such and either shoot them down or put safeguards around them when presented to Parliament for legitimisation.

The promised Sh50 billion Hustler Fund, for example, a noble idea that could potentially transform the lives of many small-scale traders, could also turn out to be a gravy train for corrupt elites, going by past experiences such as the Youth Fund.

The plan to increase NSSF and NHIF deductions must also be viewed with caution, given the huge losses that Kenyan workers have suffered at the hands of corrupt managers of the funds working in cahoots with their political benefactors.

The Azimio coalition must proudly wear the opposition badge and valiantly play on Wanjiku's side to ensure the government delivers on its election promises in the most cost-effective manner.

Draconian Bills that curtail freedoms must never be passed into law. The universal democratic practice is that the opposition is always the government-in-waiting.

Five years is like the blink of an eye. Besides building a better society for all, a good performance on the opposition benches could translate into better tidings at the ballot in 2027.

wgikunju@ke.nationmedia.com

Inside

8 HOW PRESIDENT CONSOLIDATED POWER: Ruto moved with speed to poach National Assembly and Senate members elected on parties affiliated to Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition to boost his numbers.

9 THE WOMAN WHO 'COOKED THE CROC': Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza is not the kind of politician who was expected to defeat two wealthy veteran politicians of the calibre of Murungi and Linturi.

10 THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ECONOMY: Rebuilding the nation's struggling economy using the Bottom-Up model requires new thinking, with growth at the top of the agenda to drive a trajectory of output and jobs.



11 BEAUTY AND PURPOSE IN UNIFORM: Policewoman Emma Brenda Wanjiru uses her social media platforms to talk about single motherhood, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence.

the telescope

■ Producers vow to keep James Bond 'fresh'



A military band plays on the red carpet ahead of the World Premiere of the James Bond 007 film *No Time to Die* at the Royal Albert Hall in west London on September 28, 2021. PHOTO | AFP

New 007 to 'serve King and country'

The next James Bond will serve King and country – but discussions with new 007 studio owner Amazon over the spy film franchise's future direction haven't really started, long-standing producer Barbara Broccoli has said. Broccoli and her half-brother Michael G. Wilson sat down with *AFP* to speak about the future of the 25-movie franchise, moments after having their handprints immortalized in cement at Hollywood's famous TCL Chinese Theatre. The last Bond outing, 2021's *No Time To Die*, was the final installment to star Daniel Craig, and Amazon has since bought 007 studio

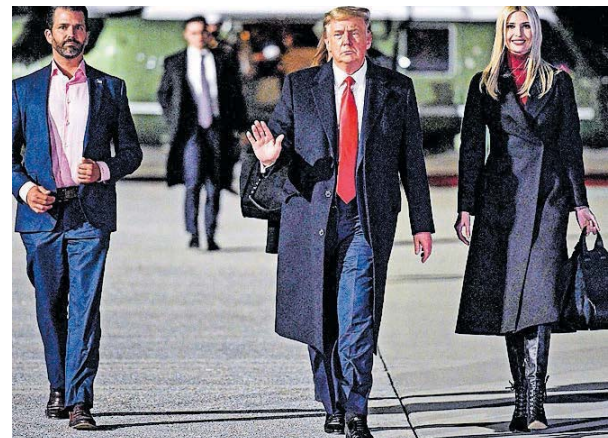
MGM. This means speculation is rife about what changes could lie in store for the world's most famous fictional spy. "We're just beginning our relationship with Amazon. We haven't really started to get involved in the next Bond film yet," said Broccoli. As custodians of the franchise her father Albert "Cubby" Broccoli founded 60 years ago, "we're not always just going to rest on our laurels and keep to a formula", she added. At the center of the rumors and guesswork swirling around the next 007 outing is the matter of who will play the suave superspy with a licence to kill.

■ Former US President hit with a fraud suit

Trump 'inflated net worth by billions'

Donald Trump and three of his children have been hit with a fraud lawsuit after a New York investigation into their family company — the Trump Organization. It alleges that they lied "by billions" about the value of real estate in order to get loans and pay less tax. Prosecutors say the Trump Organization committed numerous acts of fraud between 2011-21. Mr Trump has dismissed the lawsuit as "another witch hunt". The former president's eldest children, Donald Jr, Ivanka and Eric Trump, were also named as defendants alongside two executives at the Trump Organization, Allen Weisselberg

and Jeffrey McConney. The lawsuit has been brought by New York Attorney-General Letitia James, who is the state's most senior lawyer, after a three-year civil investigation. Her office does not have the power to file criminal charges, but is referring allegations of criminal wrongdoing to federal prosecutors and to the Internal Revenue Service. "With the help of his children and senior executives at the Trump Organization, Donald Trump falsely inflated his net worth by billions of dollars to unjustly enrich himself and cheat the system," Ms James said in a statement.



US President Donald Trump (centre), daughter Ivanka Trump and son Donald Trump Jr. make their way to board Air Force One in Marietta, Georgia, on January 4, 2021. PHOTO | AFP

■ Inhabitants scurry to safety before nightfall

Colombian town gripped by gang terror



Long marred by poverty and neglect, the port city of Buenaventura on Colombia's Pacific coast must now also contend with the daily terrors of a merciless and escalating war between rival drug gangs. By mid-afternoon each day, shops

lower their shutters and the streets run empty as inhabitants scurry to safety before nightfall. Those who can lock themselves behind iron gates. Others take what refuge they can in shacks on stilts or zinc huts perched in stagnant water and filth along the unlit, potholed streets. "We are witnessing a new urban and territorial war" in Buenaventura, Juan Manuel Torres of Colombia's Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation told *AFP*.

■ A streamer scammed fans out of money

Now Twitch curbs gambling streams



Twitch has banned sites that stream unlicensed roulette, dice, or slots games as the platform is hit with concerns about getting users hooked on gambling. The decision to tighten its policy beginning Oc-

tober 18 comes after a streamer scammed fans and peers out of money to fuel what he claimed was a gambling addiction. "Gambling content has been a big topic of discussion in the community," Twitch, known for live streaming of video games, has said. Twitch already bans links or referral codes to sites that feature slots, roulette or dice games, but some users have gotten around that by live streaming play.

kenya lens

■ THINGS FALL APART

THE AZIMIO IMPLOSION

The two 'political brothers,' whose parties formed Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition, could be pulling in different directions after one of the most divisive and closely fought elections. Is this the death of the coalition?



Azimio la Umoja flagbearer Raila Odinga (right) with his running-mate, Martha Karua, during their rally at Kasarani on August 6.

● By OSCAR OBONYO

Having come to terms with last month's electoral shocker, the Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya coalition has finally opted to settle down in the opposition amid questions as to who exactly is steering the blue ship.

With President Uhuru Kenyatta's departure and Raila Odinga's loss to the Kenya Kwanza candidate William Ruto, it remains unclear whether the two key principals will want to continue as the political faces of Azimio now and

beyond 2027, or if they will instead play the kingmaker role by propping up another politician as the coalition's flag-bearer.

The Weekly Review has independently established that the Wiper Democratic Movement leader, Kalonzo Musyoka, is in the process of rolling out his presidential campaign to face off with President Ruto in 2027.

In the wings is Martha Karua, Odinga's presidential running mate, waiting for her opportunity. There is also Jeremiah Kioni, the Jubilee Secretary-General, who is

increasingly becoming the face of party. It has retained its team of strategists to help navigate through the tough times ahead as well as keep President Ruto's government on its toes.

These varied positions already point to the presence of independent and conflicting political paths for Azimio leaders and member parties. This reality is buttressed by Saboti MP Caleb Amisi's statement earlier in the week to the effect that his Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) boss, Odinga, will be on the bal-

lot in 2027. Much as these are his personal feelings, they reflect the wishes of many members of ODM. His assertions mirror accusations levelled against the outgoing President by some Azimio politicians that he overplayed his support for Odinga – a factor that portrayed the latter as a “state project” and, therefore, negatively affected his electoral chances.

It is barely two weeks since Ruto's swearing-in as Kenya's fifth President and the apparent read-

...Continued on Page 6

kenya lens

■ HOW LONG WILL THE CENTRE HOLD?

Azimio gasps for breath

...Continued from Page 5

ing by Azimio-allied politicians from different scripts is political fodder for rivals in Kenya Kwanza to exploit. President Ruto is reportedly keen to create a wedge between Kenyatta and Odinga for his own political interests. Little wonder, then, that Kitui Senator Enoch Wambua, Azimio's national treasurer, says any issues within the coalition will be addressed.

The new Deputy Senate Minority Leader holds that those looking forward to the disintegration of Azimio "can continue dreaming", arguing that the outfit is the biggest political coalition in and out of Parliament. "In terms of democratic space for articulation of issues, that space is a lot broader than would be found on the other side. We are determined to hold the Executive to account in a robust, responsible and objective manner," he offered.

While addressing the Azimio parliamentary caucus in Athi River, Machakos County, last Friday, Odinga urged his lieutenants to either remain united or perish. Karua and Kalonzo reminded MPs to work as a team and resist temptation to cross over to the rival camp. Their sentiments were evidently made with an eye on Ruto – alive to the reality that he is the biggest political threat to Azimio's unity and post-poll strategy. The President is keen on consolidating his forces to secure a second term in office. He is aware of the political threat of a combined force of Odinga and Kenyatta and, according to pundits, will do everything possible to divide the two "political bothers". Instructively, Ruto appointed his predecessor as the peace envoy to Ethiopia and the Great Lakes region during his inauguration. While other considerations, including influence and interest of western powers, were at play, the fact that he made the announcement on his historic day speaks to the hurry in which Ruto is to extend an olive branch to Kenyatta.

According to protocol, Kenyatta will report directly to the President – an arrangement that offers the two quality and quantity room for free engagement. This situation is further complicated by reactions of Kenyatta's backers, particularly his political strategist Muthahi Ngunyi, who recently suggested in a tweet that the former President was "happy in retirement". The political scientist went on to advise Odinga against using the same old tactics of protest against Ruto, warning they would backfire. Ngunyi's further invitation to Odinga to embrace national unity has attracted mixed reactions among Azimio supporters. Some within ODM, like Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, have alleged that their party leader "was played".



Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition legislators led by ODM chairman John Mbadi (centre) address the media in Nairobi on August 14. DENNIS ONSONGO | NATION

This line of argument is rather discomfiting to Kioni and other politicians from the Mt Kenya region, who lost their parliamentary seats largely on account of backing the Azimio leader. The former Ndaragwa MP points out that he, alongside others who vied on tickets of Jubilee, NARC-Kenya and other friendly parties, made a huge sacrifice in favour of Odinga and "paid the ultimate political price".

Separately, poll statistics of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) appear to vindicate the Jubilee official's assertion that his team's campaign input indeed paid off. Odinga, who in his last four bids performed dismally in Mt Kenya, registered a major improvement in all the counties.

In the populous Kiambu County, for instance, the ODM leader's vote tally trebled from 69,190 in 2017 to 210,393 this year, with Murang'a and Nyeri recording the highest improvement, from 9,122 to 73,539 votes and a paltry 4,735 to 51,939 votes respectively between 2017 and 2022. In total, Azimio scooped 1,134,826 votes from the region compared with ODM's 573,292 in 2017.

Kioni further argues that the low voter turnout, owing partly to his party leader's plea not to vote for Ruto, contributed to Odinga's "im-

proved performance" in the region.

Besides Azimio, it seems that Jubilee's primary interest is how to claw back political gains so far made by Ruto. Jubilee's quagmire is not unique; since the reintroduction of multi-party politics in 1992, this has become a perennial problem of ruling parties. After surviving the 1997 onslaught, Kanu's 40-year hold on power ended in 2002 under Mwai Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Kibaki's own Party of National Unity (PNU) collapsed after his exit from office in 2013, and now Jubilee is struggling under the same political curse.

Azimio's major parties are confronted with various vested interests of individual leaders, vis-à-vis contrasting political realities. Odinga, for instance, who boasts of having the largest numbers of elected leaders in the outfit, is largely anticipated to give room for another leader. Kalonzo, who has supported him three consecutive times, expects to be the chosen one in 2027, yet Karua considers herself the next in line. According to Senator Wambua, the leadership structure of Azimio – the council and the secretariat – has not changed. But with political interests and realities changing fast, it will be interesting to see how long the coalition will hold.

kenya lens

■ KEEPING THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

FOR RAILA, 'A LUTA CONTINUA'

● By KWENDO OPANGA

Failed presidential candidate Raila Odinga is angry, frustrated and fearful. Angry because electorally, he believes he is a man greatly sinned against. He believes he has won four out of five presidential elections, but not once has he been declared winner.

Frustrated because the more things change politically, the more they remain the same. Odinga has been at the centre of most major political advancements in Kenya yet his foes and other forces, say his allies, appear intent on rolling back the progress with every election cycle. And he is fearful because, says

his perceptive communications adviser Dennis Onyango, President William Ruto and Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua represent a much more evil, insidious and existential threat to Kenya's democracy than many realise.

"He sees them as moving quickly and deliberately to pocket or emasculate segments of society through populist oratory and announcements. He thinks giving them the benefit of the doubt may be too costly and they must be stopped at the earliest opportunity," says Onyango. Onyango was referencing the haste with which President Ruto moved to declare financial autonomy for the National Police Service and arbitrarily announce budgetary allocations to the Judiciary without involving Parliament.

Odinga sees Ruto and his deputy as representing the stealthy return of a crude version of

His fidelity to democratic principles and protection of civil liberties remains steadfast, and as leaders come and go, the struggle continues

President Moi's Kanu party despite the fact that the President was briefly a member of Raila's reform-oriented Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party. Therefore, while a sixth stab at the presidency is out of the question, Odinga cannot be counted out of the political arena or the role he is best known for: keeping the government accountable and uncomfortable. After a tough and lengthy campaign, and after losing the fifth race that many believed would make him Kenya's fifth president, Odinga, 77, is showing that he still has fire in his belly, power in his vocal cords and the courage and energy to continue fighting.

His tried and tested weapons of choice include street action, resistance against the government and boycotting of goods and services produced or provided by those he perceives as enemies of the people and democracy.

Would Baba, as he is better known, lead street demonstrations? His allies are persuaded that if he called for demonstrations he would own them, but others argue that he would appear to be looking to younger politicians to step up to the plate.

These include the young guns in Parliament from ODM like Junet Mohammed and Babu Owino, and their counterparts from the larger constellation of Azimio La Umoja such as Senator Enoch Wambua and Nominated MP Sabina Chege. Indeed, Odinga has pointedly asked Azimio MPs to keep the government honest by effectively playing their oversight role.

Addressing the Azimio Parliamentary Group, he asked the MPs to remember they are part of government by virtue of being in the Legislature, whose oversight role ensures checks and balances on the Executive and Judiciary. Outside Parliament, Azimio expects that former Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka, who is eyeing the presidency in 2027, will take the scrutiny of government a notch higher as he builds his profile and a government-in-waiting.

Therefore, the theatres for Odinga's war include the streets and Parliament. In the crosshairs are the President and DP, the Supreme Court in particular and Judiciary in general, and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

Odinga has been scorching in his attacks on the Judiciary and on Chief Justice Martha Koome. He is calling for a thorough reform of the Judiciary, which he says is captive to the Executive, and which he accuses of bribery

and thuggery. His accusations call to mind the Supreme Court's language in its ruling of September 5, when it dismissed all nine grounds on which Odinga based his petition against the declaration of Ruto as the winner of the August 9 presidential poll.

Koome rather derisively described various submissions by Odinga's lawyers as "hot air", "outright forgeries", "hearsay evidence" and "unproven hypotheses", and further castigated them for taking her court "on a wild goose chase". Odinga has accused Koome of undoing in one year the work that had been done by her predecessors in ten.

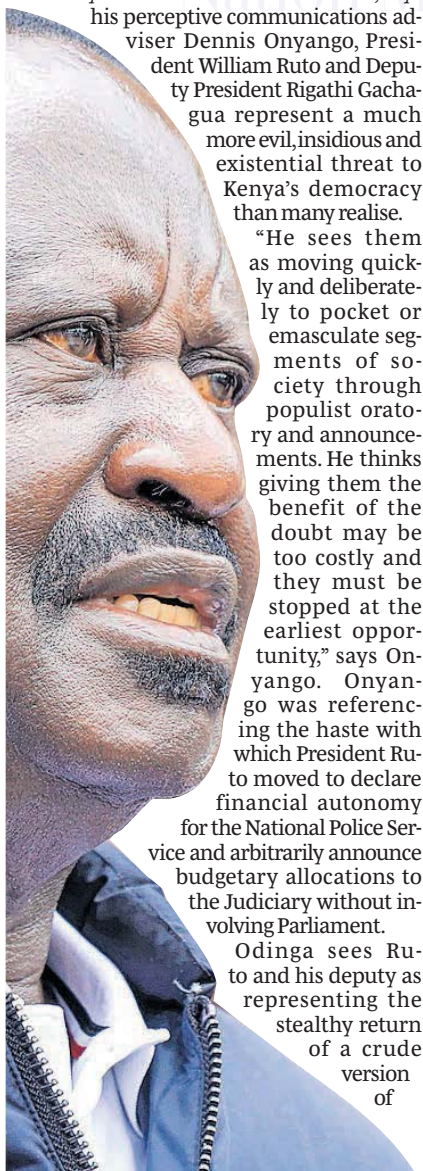
But, says Onyango, his boss' anger is attributable to more than losing an election petition: "Chief Justice David Maraga in 2017 made clear what should take place in the electoral process. Koome takes us back to Justice Willy Mutunga's court (2013), where no such clarity was found." Odinga has wondered aloud how the seven justices of the highest court in the land could give short shrift to all the nine grounds on which his petition was anchored.

In the same vein, Onyango wonders: "Lawyers such as James Orengo, Otiende Amollo and others who are some of the best in the business would never advise Baba to go to court if he had a weak case. The Supreme Court was contemptuous in its handling of the petition."

The language may have influenced Odinga's view of the Chief Justice. Granted, he described Mutunga's court as *bandia* (counterfeit), but he has been harder and unrelenting in taking down Koome. When, at a funeral in Meru after the judgment, Koome described the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court as the intervention of God, Odinga mocked it as the work of the devil.

He has meted out similar treatment on IEBC boss Wafula Chebukati, whom he accused of bribery and of single-handedly subverting the will of the people by serving up "the most botched presidential election ever". This hardline position on the President, Koome and the Judiciary, and Chebukati and the IEBC has led observers to question whether Odinga has had yet another metamorphosis.

Some had argued that, since his rapprochement with then-President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2018, and in the last days of the electioneering, Raila presented himself as a thinking president-in-waiting and cautious statesman, it would not be surprising. Odinga has changed alliances and tactics in the struggle for democracy, social justice and, of course, in pursuit of power. But, as he himself tells it, his fidelity to democratic principles and protection of civil liberties remains steadfast, and leaders come and go, but the struggle continues.



kenya lens

■ CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

RUTO BLUNTS OPPOSITION

The Kenya Kwanza Alliance has seized all the top positions in both Houses of Parliament, leaving Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition bleeding. Who will provide the checks and balances?

● By MACHARIA GAITHO

President William Ruto continues to insist that he values a vibrant opposition that will keep his government in check, but he has moved swiftly and ruthlessly to ensure his Kenya Kwanza Alliance seizes control of both the National Assembly and the Senate in a fashion that could grant him untrammelled power.

Soon after declaration of the presidential election results, which gave the two-term deputy president a rather-thin victory, it appeared that Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya coalition rival Raila Odinga at least had a consolation prize in control of the National Assembly and good prospects for a majority of the Senate as well.

But in a style reminiscent of his mentor, President Daniel arap Moi, following the 1992 elections on return of the multi-party system, the President-elect, whose victory was still pending a Supreme Court decision, moved with lightning speed to poach National Assembly and Senate members elected on Azimio-affiliated parties, and suddenly the map changed.

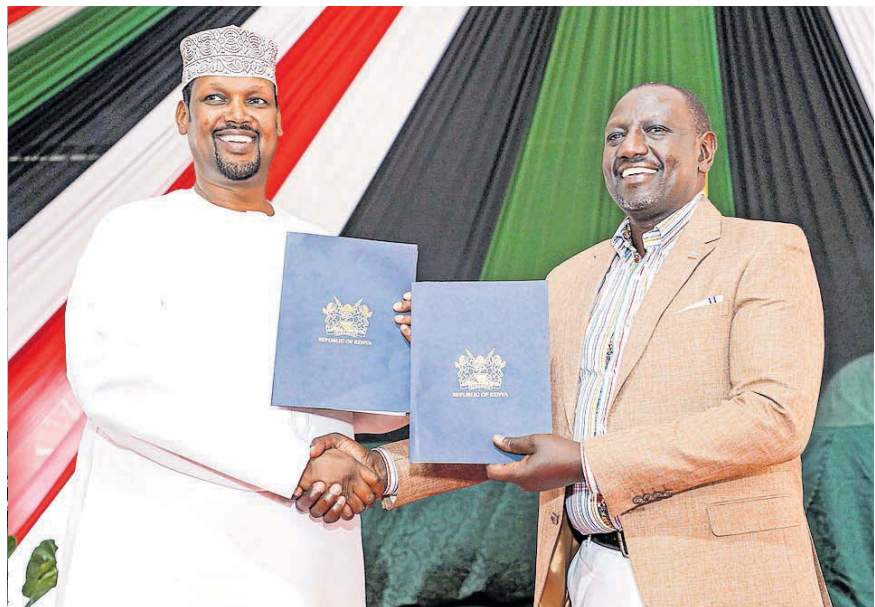
On September 8, three days after President Ruto's victory was upheld by the Supreme Court, Kenya Kwanza candidate Amason Kingi was handily elected Speaker of the Senate after Azimio's Kalonzo Musyoka withdrew at the last minute.

The election of Senate Speaker had approached with Kenya Kwanza enjoying just a one-seat majority – 34-33 – over Azimio, but a large number of defections signalled in advance not only prompted Musyoka's withdrawal, but a boycott by Raila's troops, allowing President Ruto's candidate an easy victory.

Kingi polled 46 of the 66 votes cast, indicating that at least a dozen Azimio senators had cast their votes for Kenya Kwanza. In the National Assembly, Azimio came out of the General Election boasting a clear majority, but again defections turned the tide. Kenya Kwanza's Moses Wetang'ula got 215 votes against 130 for Azimio's Kenneth Marende in the first round of voting. The poll would have gone to second round to give the victor the required majority, but Marende read the signs and pulled out.

Kenya Kwanza also got the Deputy Speaker in both Senate and National Assembly through, respectively, Meru Senator Kathure Murungi and Uasin Gishu County Woman Representative Gladys Shollei.

The battle then turned to determination of which party qualifies to be designated as the



President William Ruto (right) with UDM party leader Ali Roba after they signed a post-election agreement in Nairobi on August 20. JEFF ANGOTE | NATION

Majority. On paper, Raila's Azimio coalition seems a shoo-in, but for defections by various affiliate parties who have crossed over to the Kenya Kwanza side.

The situation has created a legal conundrum as the MPs elected on tickets that are still officially part of Azimio and registered as such with the Registrar of Political Parties have not formally left the coalition.

Key in the mix are Mandera Senator Ali Roba, who moved his United Democratic Movement (UDM) to Ruto's side soon after the presidential election results were announced, as well as Kingi, whose Pamoja African Alliance (PAA) shifted allegiance before the elections.

While the Registrar of Political Parties, Lucy Ndung'u, has informed Parliament that the UDM and PAA legislators are officially in Azimio, she has not pronounced herself on whether that makes the coalition the Majority Party in the National Assembly.

Both UDA and PAA have moved to court with lawsuits seeking declarations that they are not bound by the Azimio coalition agreements as their loyalties are now with Kenya Kwanza.

But even before the High Court rules, the burden in the National Assembly has been left to Wetang'ula. The new Speaker is under

scrutiny for whether he can put his party affiliation aside and emulate his rival, Marende, who, as Speaker in 2009, issued what was widely lauded as a 'Solomonic Judgement'.

During the reign of the Grand Coalition Government put together to end the 2007-2008 post-election violence, President Mwai Kibaki, in keeping with tradition, appointed then Vice-President Musyoka as Leader of Government Business.

However, Raila also laid claim to the post by virtue of the fact that he had assumed the newly-created position of Prime Minister which, according to him, made him second-in-command as well head of government.

It was left to Marende to rule on the rightful Leader of Government Business in the then unicameral Parliament. Raila's ODM enjoyed a majority in the National Assembly over Kibaki's Party of National Unity, and he expected that the Speaker being one of their own, would rule in their favour.

But in an unprecedented move, Marende refused to be drawn into intra-party squabbles, declining to rule on the issue and leaving the post vacant until President Kibaki and PM Raila went back to their coalition organs and sort-

...Continued on Page 23

kenya lens

■ WHEN THE HUNTER BECAME THE HUNTED

● By GITONGA MARETE

Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza is not the kind of politician who was expected to defeat two wealthy veteran politicians of the calibre of her predecessor, Kiraitu Murungi, and former Senator Mithika Linturi.

When she got into the August 9 General Election, Kawira was an underdog. She had just served as Meru Woman Representative for one term after a failed attempt at clinching Buuri constituency seat in 2013. Facing two Mt Kenya East political heavyweights at the ballot on an Independent ticket, all odds were stacked against her. A bullish Murungi (inset) had just launched his Devolution Empowerment Party and put into place “a campaign machinery” whose shocks would “reverberate across the county”, he had boasted.

The former governor dismissed Kawira as “a non-starter” and when Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya dropped his bid for the seat in February, he said God had “gifted” him with the seat. In the run-up to the polls, Murungi christened himself “the crocodile” and told his competitors to be wary of the reptile “in the water” waiting to pounce on its prey. Little did he know the hunter would become the hunted.

Linturi rode on President William Ruto’s United Democratic Alliance (UDA) party wave that swept across the Mt Kenya region like bushfire. He was also supported by six of the nine elected MPs in the county who ran on the UDA ticket. Walking along the streets of Meru town during campaign time, one would have thought the race had only two contestants – Murungi and Linturi – as Mwangaza did not erect billboards.

Despite the show of might by the two powerful men, Mwangaza floored both of them, garnering 209,148 votes to those of her closest challenger, Linturi, who got 183,859 votes, with Murungi coming a distant last with 110,814. The gap between the ‘crocodile’ and the novice he had dismissed as a non-starter was 98,334 votes. Mwangaza even beat Murungi in his own South Imeni constituency backyard, where he served as MP from 1992, when he joined parliament on a Ford-Kenya ticket, until 2013, when he contested the senate via his Alliance Party of Kenya (APK) and won. To win the hearts of the electorate, Kawira had mounted a door-to-door cam-

THE WOMAN WHO ‘COOKED THE CROCODILE’

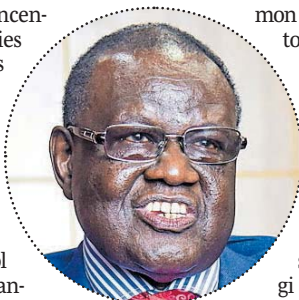


DAVID MUCHUI | NATION

Kawira Mwangaza beat rivals Kiraitu Murungi and Mithika Linturi to win the Meru gubernatorial seat by concentrating her campaign activities on the lower-class members of society, making donations of simple items such as school uniform, desks, blankets and gumboots

paign strategy, concentrating her activities on the lower-class members of society with her ‘Operation Okolea’ programme, through which she made donations of simple items such as school uniform, desks, blankets and gumboots.

She built houses for the poor and offered scholarships, broadcasting all these activities on her local television station, *Baite TV*, which is managed by her husband, Murega Baicu. She gave dairy cows to poor families and promised to uplift low-income earners like boda boda operators and vegetable sellers if she won. In this way, Mwangaza endeared herself to the com-



mon man, catapulting her to governorship. Kawira first demonstrated her political prowess in 2017, when she defeated Florence Kajju to win the Woman Representative seat against an onslaught by Murungi and his allies in the Jubilee Party, whom she

had accused of rigging her out during nominations. Once elected, Mwangaza adopted the grassroots tour strategy that largely contributed to her gubernatorial contest victory, distributing the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (Ngaaf) and promoting her ‘Operation Okolea’ initiative. “While the governor remained in Meru town meeting the elite, I was with the people in

the villages. I ensured public resources from Ngaaf were prudently distributed,” she said. Murungi blamed “internal sabotage” within the Azimio La Umoja coalition for his humiliating defeat, while DEP secretary-general Mugambi Manyara said more than Sh10 million that was meant for Azimio la Umoja and Murungi’s campaigns was diverted to the governor’s team.

According to political analysts, Murungi’s association with Azimio and his campaigns for Raila Odinga in a region dominated by UDA also contributed to Mwangaza’s success. For Kawira, a bishop at her Baite Family Fellowship church, the victory was not a surprise but “prophecy come true”.

“I had told Murungi that he was not only going to lose but would come third. I also said I would beat him with a double-digit margin, which came to pass,” she said at her Makutano home after the elections, where she also hosts the church, *Baite TV* studios and Mwangaza schools. Her husband, a musician, played a key role in her campaigns, and claims to have contributed at least 50 per cent to her victory. Baicu would belt out songs loaded with political messages to work up the crowds. Now, Mwangaza faces an uphill task, including trimming down the Meru government’s bloated workforce, some inherited from the defunct local authorities. Her campaign team trashed Murungi’s development priorities, including planting of trees during the dry seasons, a waste of funds, they said.

Mwangaza, 43, was born at Ontulili, Buuri sub-county in Meru County, where she attended primary school but was unable to proceed to secondary school due to lack of fees. She moved to Marsabit to live with her aunt. “After a year, my aunt enrolled me at Moyale Girls’ Secondary. Four years later, I was the best candidate in Marsabit District with a C+. I ventured into business and later studied a degree in Education, Guidance and Counselling from Kampala International University,” says Kawira. In business, she started off as a vegetable trader at Kiirua market before setting up a hardware shop, through which she clinched a lucrative cement transportation and distribution deal. After a failed attempt at the Buuri constituency seat in 2013, she retreated to her business and in 2015 launched *Baite TV*.

kenya lens

■ WHAT RUTO MUST DO TO JUMPSTART ECONOMY

THE PATH TO RUTONOMICS*Rebuilding Kenya's economy requires new thinking, with growth at the top of the agenda to drive a trajectory of output and jobs*

President William Ruto's supporters at the Moi International Sports Centre, Kasarani, on September 13. With a housing deficit of two million units, nearly 61 per cent of Kenya's urban households are forced to live in sub-optimal conditions and slums. Kenya could tap from a dedicated SWF to fulfil its manifesto promise of affordable housing for Kenyans.



● By MBUI WAGACHA

From the macroeconomic framework to sector policies, rebuilding Kenya's economy requires new thinking, with growth at the top of the agenda to drive a trajectory of output and jobs. Three key issues and weaknesses are public finances, saving and banking. The first is in disarray, the second is feeble as President William Ruto lamented in Naivasha recently, and in the third banks entrap the economy to make super profits by global standards. It is tempting to blame Kenyans for all three, but they are the victims, not the perpetrators of the flaws. The current policy tussle between US President Joe Biden (for 'bottom-up') and British Prime Minister Liz Truss (for 'trickle down') shows just how high the stakes are for the Kenya Kwanza choice.

Public Finances: Call it a Presi-

dent's budget committee or fiscal council for actualising the budget to match and implement the election winning agenda, or even a US-style Office of Budget and Management (OMB). Lack of this expert and politically independent function that outgoing President Uhuru committed to install, then mysteriously abandoned, is costing Kenya dearly in taxpayer-funded leakage and theft of public funds as well as pervasive fiscal errors. Apart from startling gaffs in simple Economics-101 (recall the conflicting petroleum taxes and levies, subsidies, and customs duty exemptions for maize millers more attuned to speculative cargo on ships in the high seas than with Kenyan maize farmers), borrowing became rampant.

As it scaled the heights towards Sh9 trillion by April 6, 2021 (about 65 per cent of GDP), Deutsche Welle quipped: "Is there any logic to the IMF giving loans to governments which have demonstrated a clear lack of accountability processes?"

The Controller of Budget chimed in that in 2020-21, Kenya was borrowing at the rate of Sh3.37 billion per day. This kicked off another gaff, that Kenya was simply "using other peoples' money". We should stop digging and

migrate budget proposals and formulation from National Treasury to a stringent and competent organ in the Office of the President. It should be accountable to the President and prepare for professional budget consultations with the National Assembly. The latter already taps into experts of the Parliamentary Budget Office in budget-making. The OMB should provide independent economic advice to the President, independently evaluate the budget, assess fiscal commitments ex ante, and oversee implementation and rigid periodic reviews.

Propel the savings rate innovatively: Savings have collapsed in Kenya as a casualty of our debts. The position can be explained intuitively. Deteriorating current account and capital accounts mean a country lives beyond its means.

Unless Kenya Kwanza takes a leaf from President Kibaki, who with David Mwiraria as Finance Minister restarted growth and revenue collection from a broken economy, drastically reducing government borrowing to crowd-in private sector borrowing, the banks wait with glee to make a meal of the President's agenda and the Hustler Fund.

It invests (not to say diverts sums borrowed but not invested) more than it saves. The difference must be accounted for by borrowing, a leaky pipe that knocks down the Kenyan shilling and increases external debt.

One path to bypass the borrowing constraint is to redress growth of output, jobs and savings by driving non-debt-creating inflows of capital. Kenya's natural resources sector can be a vital cog in this strategy. Our diversity of resources spans oil, gas, titanium, niobium, soda ash, gold and other rare earth minerals. It calls for a two-pronged strategy: review of contractual engagements with investors to maximise returns, and revenue management. In the latter, Kenya's views are keenly sought after in global high-level deliberations following the award-winning National Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill, 2014.

Developed as a priority part of the Parastatal Reforms Implementation Committee of the outgoing regime, which I chaired, the Bill still awaits passage into law. In my recent invitation to speak at the premier US think-tank, Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, I witnessed the power of other African countries to advance their Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWF)

kenya lens

collaboratively for domestic and cross-border growth.

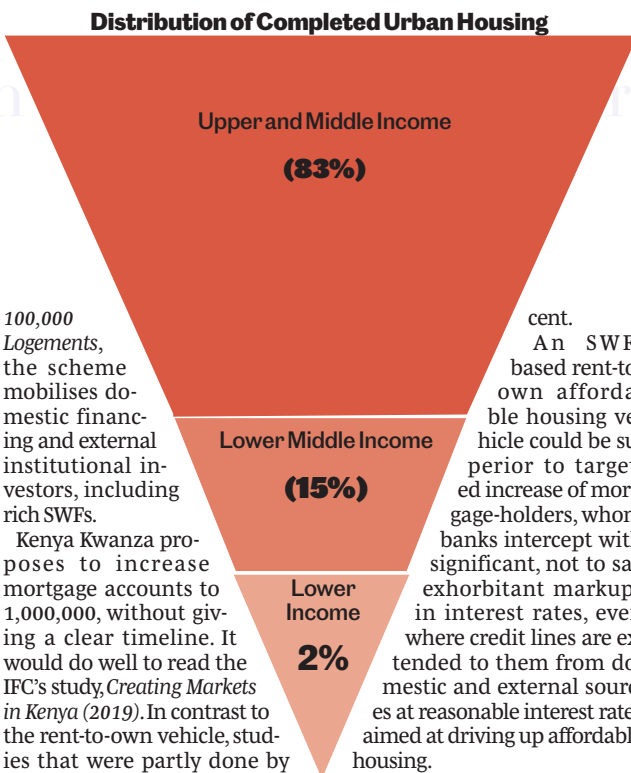
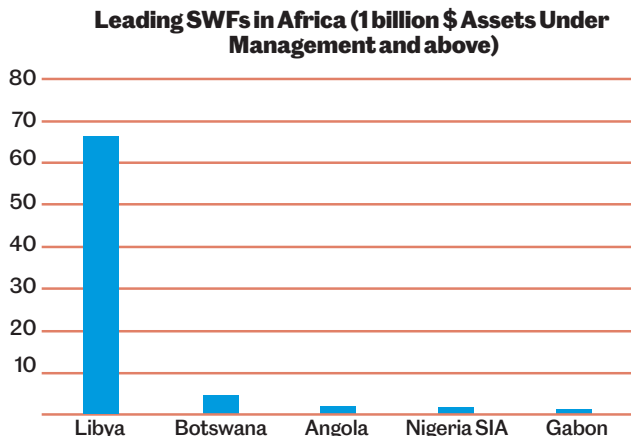
The high-level meeting, dubbed ‘Strengthening the Role of African Sovereign Wealth Funds in the International Financial System’, portrayed new potentials the Ruto government can exploit to drive savings and crowd in non-debt-creating developmental funding from the capital markets. But we would need to pass and implement the Bill.

An SWF is a state-owned investment fund or entity established from various sources- such as commodity and non-commodity economic activities. In commodities, once a country maximises the contractual obligations of investors in natural resources, it then implements a SWF for targeted returns to revenues derived, and expertly manages them for stabilisation, future generations, project developments, etc.

In Africa, SWF investments in profitable development projects are a key factor in reducing perceived risks of investing in the continent. A boom in set-up and sophistication of implementing SWFs is underway. SWFs are increasingly being tapped as catalysts for investment collaboration with other domestic and external investors, including other SWFs, for cross-border projects.

The Boom in SWFs: Starting in 1994, when Botswana’s Pula Fund led the way on the continent, over 14 funds have been founded, with five now operating above \$1 billion in Assets Under Management (AUM). AUM for SWFs and private pension funds increased from \$11 trillion by 2015 to \$15 trillion in 2020. The growth of AUM by SWFs increased by 76 per cent, while the number of investors grew by 54 per cent. SWFs came in handy during Covid-19 which, according to the World Bank, pushed 40 million people in sub-Saharan Africa into poverty.

Relevance of SWFs to the Hustler manifesto promise of housing: A key example of how key promises of Kenya Kwanza could tap from a dedicated SWF is the focus on housing. The informative partnership between IFC and FONSI, Senegal’s SWF, to develop affordable housing within 10 years is an innovative supply side vehicle. The partnership acquires homes from developers and makes them available to low-income households through a rent-to-own scheme. Dubbed



100,000 Logements, the scheme mobilises domestic financing and external institutional investors, including rich SWFs.

Kenya Kwanza proposes to increase mortgage accounts to 1,000,000, without giving a clear timeline. It would do well to read the IFC’s study, *Creating Markets in Kenya (2019)*. In contrast to the rent-to-own vehicle, studies that were partly done by Kenyans portray a bank lending market route that shuts out low-income groups both from access to mortgages and allocation of the finished products.

In what I named in the study the ‘inverted pyramid’ of affordable housing, fewer than 50,000 formally constructed housing units are currently produced annually. Only two per cent of the homes are allocated to low-income segments through the mortgage route. With a housing deficit of about two million units, nearly 61 per cent of Kenya’s urban households are forced to live in suboptimal conditions and slums. Compare this with Nigeria’s 50 per cent and South Africa’s 23 per

cent. An SWF-based rent-to-own affordable housing vehicle could be superior to targeted increase of mortgage-holders, whom banks intercept with significant, not to say exorbitant markups in interest rates, even where credit lines are extended to them from domestic and external sources at reasonable interest rates aimed at driving up affordable housing.

In Kenya, the high (83 per cent) offtake of affordable housing by upper middle-income groups was mostly for investment, not for allaying affordable housing supply. Which brings us to the prospects of the Hustler Fund if filtered through intermediaries in the banking system.

Banking sector as the Waterloo for the Hustler Fund: If the new President wishes to align his medium enterprise and affordable housing agenda by making the fund available through the banking system, he is in for severe disappointments. The regulator, the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has struggled with interest rates. In November 7, 2019, the CBK

warned banks against reverting to punitive interest rates of more than 20 per cent in the post-rate cap regime, promising to adopt the same line on digital lenders, which meant that they would have to justify the expensive loan pricing. But the CBK has in recent days changed its tune on the latter. Paradoxically, in the new digital lending regulations, the same CBK focuses on ‘consumer protection’ but leaves the predatory lending of digitals undisturbed on rates reaching over 3,000 annual per centage rates. Current pricing formulae are opaque and merely transfer rate controls to the CBK, to the point of addressing peripheral parts of lending such as ‘customer care’ over the exorbitant interest rates of digital lending.

It gets worse for bank customers treated to customer care. Our predatory financial sector aggregates mainly customer deposits on the liabilities side. Then, two layers of the assets portfolio side ensure little lending to the domestic economy. Layer one consists of government which, in securities, borrows a significant part of the portfolio, crowding out private sector borrowing. Of the remainder of assets, a set of blue-chip firms with significant foreign (not to say colonial) heritage and ownership borrows to operate its businesses while fighting competition from emergent Kenyan enterprises.

At the end of each financial year, expatriation of after-tax profits ensures little is re-invested in new output expansion and jobs. Among development economists, it is the center-periphery all over again. This is the minefield which the ‘Hustler Fund’ will enter if it attempts to use banks as intermediaries to provide cheaper credit to small and medium enterprises.

Unless Kenya Kwanza borrows a leaf from former President Mwai Kibaki who, with David Mwiraria as Finance Minister, restarted growth and revenue collection from Moi’s broken economy, drastically reducing government borrowing to crowd in private sector borrowing, the banks wait with glee to make a meal of the President’s agenda and the Hustler Fund.

the limelight



Police officers detain a woman in Moscow following calls to protest against partial mobilisation announced by President Vladimir Putin on September 21. PHOTO | AFP



The Bearer Party take the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II from the State Hearse into St George's Chapel inside Windsor Castle on September 19 for the Committal Service.



Iranian demonstrators take to the streets of the capital Tehran during a protest for Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini days after she died in police custody. PHOTO | AFP



A forensic explosives expert examines a crater from a missile explosion at a freight railway station in Kharkiv during Russia's military invasion of Ukraine on September 21. PHOTO | AFP



Birds sit in cages during a bird singing competition in Thailand's southern province of Narathiwat on September 21. PHOTO | AFP



High water levels in the Nome port area in Alaska on September 18. PHOTO | AFP

The Arena

SAVING MOTHER EARTH

*Sandra Ruong'o
is a versatile
photojournalist and
videographer who
documents, educates
and creates
awareness on
climate change and
sustainability*



OPEN SPACE

CATCH THE EYE OF GEN Z

‘WOKE CONSUMERS’: Marketers should appreciate the fact that Gen Zers heavily rely on mobile devices and apps for information. They are the most connected, and the most vocal generation

● BY JACKSON NGARI

In a world of constant change, companies and product brands are unceasingly being challenged to keep up with shifts in consumer behaviour, evolving channels and dissipating traditional outlets. A ballooning challenge (and yet the most opportune) facing companies is the ever-changing preferences of Generation Z’s consumption of brands.

Gen Zers provide a wide target market for product brands such as electronics. They dominate all sorts of markets. To win over the next big faction of ‘Woke Consumers’, brands need to embrace what makes Gen Zers different: their adaptability to change, especially in the modern age, where transparency and authenticity are hugely important to consumers.

This group of burgeoning consumers, born in 1997 or later, will make up 27 per cent of the workforce by 2025. They have grown up in a digital world in which the boundaries between their physical and online lives have converged. Having 24/7 access to information and digital resources has made them more educated, knowledgeable, and self-reliant in deciding which products and services to choose or brands to support.

Zoomers expect seamless interaction with brands across the entire digitally integrated enterprise. They want to actively share their opinions, collaborate and co-create with brands. They usually share opinions in different ways, and when they provide feedback, they are, on average, twice as likely to share positive feedback as to complain. In the process, they expect brands to be highly responsive to their needs. However, most brands have failed to make the necessary or proper engagements.

Pragmatic and alert to unfounded hype, Gen Zers also want brands to be transparent, trustworthy, authentic and relevant. As



a result, brands have a mammoth opportunity with this group — not just to sway them, but to create meaningful connections that can influence their level of brand enthusiasm. Authenticity is the key. Additionally, this generation also gravitates towards brands that stand out from the crowd and embrace uniqueness. As Zoomers begin to come of age, retail and product brands are already feeling the impact mainly on the consumption of their products: consumption as access rather than possession, consumption as an expression of individual identity, and consumption as a matter of ethical concern. Further, they are beginning to wield an influence on purchasing disproportionate to their ages and personal wealth. They have specific ideas about what they want, how they want it and how it should be delivered. They expect detailed personalised attention, and they want to be a part of creating the products and services they desire. Brands who don’t work to understand this audience risk not only losing sales and returns but powerful backlash too. For Gen Zers, the bottom line is simple: if a product, service or experience does not live up to expectation, they will take their business and influence elsewhere. To win over this generation, brands should develop strategies that have the needs of Gen Zers at heart and provide a seamless offline and online experience. Finally, brands should appreciate the fact that Gen Zers heavily rely on mobile devices and apps for information. These are the most connected, and the most vocal consumers.

Mr Ngari is a Communication student at Rongo University

Are you young and ambitious? We would like to hear from you. Send your views and observations on topical issues to: weeklyreview@ke.nationmedia.com

MIND SPEAK



Israel Lugadiru

Although the country is not doing well, we are not in a deep hole. The cause of most of our problems isn’t just the heavy borrowing, but the loss of value of the shilling compared to the dollar, which is the main currency of trade. Cutting of fuel subsidies will save Kenya.
— UoN student leader



Esther Kurraru

We need to plan how to live within our means. Heavy borrowing has brought us to where we are. The Uhuru Kenyatta regime borrowed heavily and Kenyans appear to have taken up the habit. President William Ruto should create employment.
— Nurse



Derrick Barnett

We are between a rock and a hard place because subsidies are unsustainable. The government should act by protecting our taxes. It should curb corruption and improve services. Kenyans are already overburdened with taxes and it’s only fair to deliver services to us.
— Digital marketer



Amos Salaton

Our country is rich in terms of resources. If we can utilise the available resources, reduce expenses, employ a system to end corruption and stop taking loans to avoid aggravating our financial problems, we can make a step towards solving our economic woes.
— Medical practitioner

MY TAKE



• BY WAGA ODONGO

Growing up, I went to school in Tudor in Mombasa, an area ridiculously named after a long dead European royal house, which needs a long overdue name change. Next to our school, after the Moroto slum, we had direct access to the sea. We loved to go down there after class to toss rocks into the ocean and see who could throw furthest. The little mangrove that was there then was dying and the water itself was not swimmable.

There was always a bubbly, soupy froth that covered the water, a constant reminder that the Changamwe refinery was close by. The refinery no longer belches out sulphuric smoke; all its facilities are used for storage now. But it has a lasting legacy. Any mangrove that would have served as fish breeding grounds is now dead and with it a lot of the fishing that occurred around the island.

Most of the fish eaten locally, in particular mackerel, which we call “una”, is now shipped in. Go to the major fish markets in Old Town and you will see huge ice blocks taller than man with fish sticking out, telling of entire shoals frozen soon after capture in the high seas.

The fish feeding the island is caught almost entirely by international trawlers staffed by Filipino and Camerounian sailors. Local fishermen mostly deal with molluscs and crustaceans – octopuses and crabs – which are an acquired taste.

The seas around the coast may have been overfished but we should also be alive to the fact that the port, with its shipments of oil and nearby refinery, have made it worse for the few fishermen left in Mombasa, Kilifi and Kwale and has a profound impact on the food consumed in coast.

The port's many inconveniences do not just come when you sit down at the dinner table. They get you on your way home. Every month, or 13 times a year, a

MOMBASA ON THE MEND

CONTAINER FREIGHT SERVICES: Removing container handling facilities from the port was the greatest act of economic vandalism ever subjected on the island since the Portuguese burnt it to the ground 500 years ago



The second container terminal at the port of Mombasa on June 30. WACHIRA MWANGI | NATION

Super Panamax cargo ship comes to collect Base Titanium cargo of ilmenite, rutile and zircon. The Super Panamax is a behemoth at over a third of a kilometre long and several stories high, and must be gently led across the Likoni Channel. This excruciatingly slow and cumbersome procedure of guiding the ship across the narrow channel might serve as one of the most pronounced cases of the sheer inconvenience the port has on people living in Mombasa and nearby Kwale.

Mombasa residents have had to put up with the shipping needs of five countries constantly interrupting their commute. These vessels, some of which include American and European Union warships, have right of way and the locals can only watch as yet again their ferry is delayed or made to drift wide to allow the true owners of the channel the benefit of its use.

The reason a ferry cannot keep a definite schedule is because the channel sometimes serves ships that are as long as airstrips that have the right way.

And having a port on your shores means boatloads of drugs. Mombasa is now a major artery through which heroin from the East is injected into the country. The problem of drug use is most acutely felt at the coast. Mombasa had a methadone clinic long before Nairobi got one. Heroin use

spread from the coast inwards. The needle exchange programme run in one of these clinics in Kisauni was so successful that several countries across the world have copied it.

You may wonder why an avowedly religious country would hand out needles to drug users with instructions on how to use them. Well, one study found that the HIV prevalence of drug users was almost five times the national average. Alongside all the stories of economic anguish that have accompanied the moving of container handling facilities inland, these problems still remain.

To remove container handling facilities from Mombasa was the greatest act of economic vandalism ever subjected on the island since the Portuguese burnt it to the ground 500 years ago. Mombasa and its environs disproportionately bear the burdens and scars of having the port and the benefits of handling the cargo must revert to the people.

I have read the report by the University of Nairobi touting efficiency gains of using the inland port but I was unconvinced. Why is efficiency given such a premium when containers land in Mombasa? These things spend weeks on the ocean drifting at 30 kilometres an hour. Why must they suddenly be driven at subsonic speeds on a train?

It is not just the hoteliers and

clearing and forwarding staff who are inconvenienced by the order; entire ecosystems have sprung up to support the port.

The decision to have Container Freight Services located 10 kilometres from the port have made the cost of living in the area around Mombasa skyrocket. What are all these people supposed to do? You would find whole estates in Port Reitz filled with containers stacked three-high. The container freight system is a scandal ridden, corrupt enterprise but the solution isn't to completely sidestep it and ship all containers to Nairobi and Navivasha. The clearance process could move faster but can it ever justify uprooting an entire industry with centuries long experience?

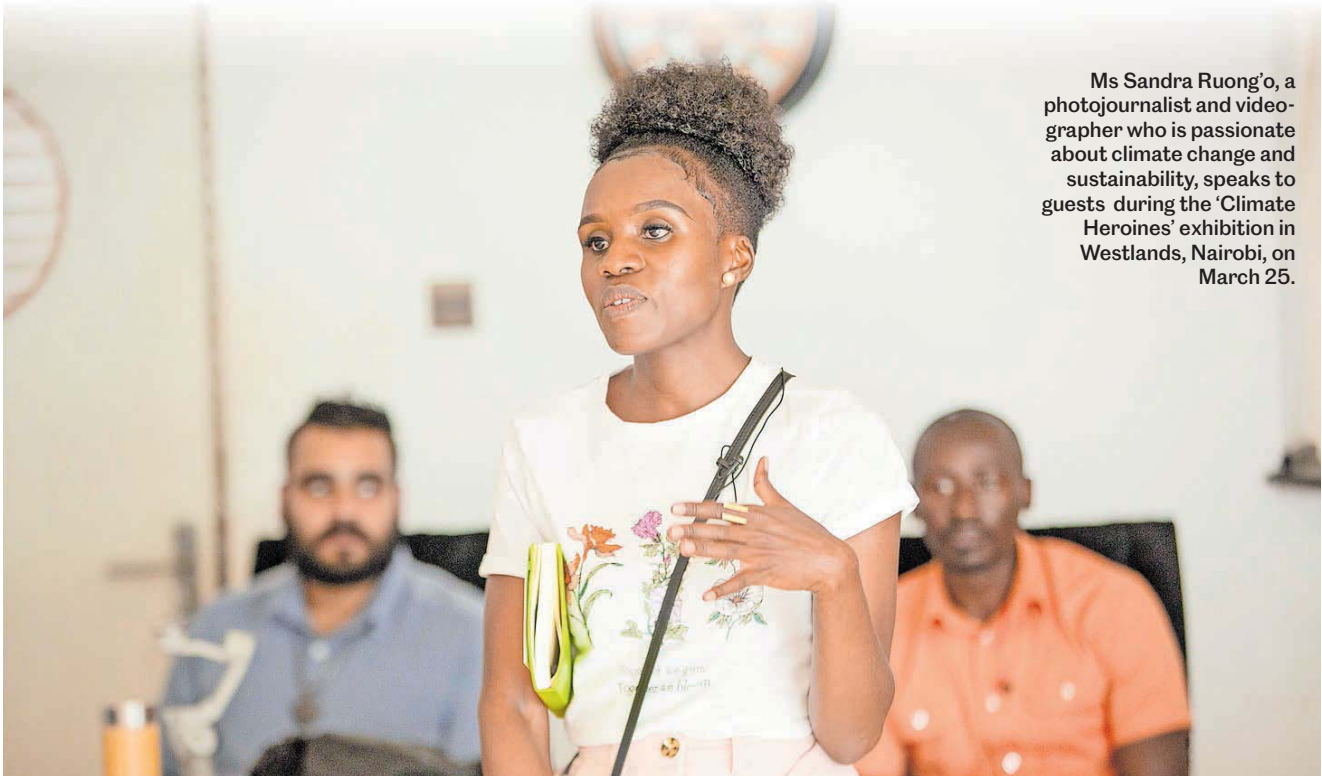
The port is a net earner for the government and puts in more in the national coffers than Nairobi ever sends to Mombasa. The minimum the government can do is ensure its activities remain in the locality. We cannot socialise the benefits of the port calling it a national asset, yet the disadvantages, inconveniences, loss of jobs and ecological catastrophe are privatised to the people of Mombasa. Port operations have been returned by President Ruto to Mombasa where they belong, they should never have left.

Mr Odongo is a Software Engineer

SAVING OUR PLANET, ONE CLICK AT A TIME

CURBING CLIMATE CHANGE

MISSION POSSIBLE: Sandra Ruong’o believes that photographers, videographers and other artists have a critical role to play in bringing attention to the social, economic and political impact of climate change



Ms Sandra Ruong’o, a photojournalist and videographer who is passionate about climate change and sustainability, speaks to guests during the ‘Climate Heroines’ exhibition in Westlands, Nairobi, on March 25.

● BY HILARY KIMUYU

Sandra Ruong’o is a woman at peace with herself and the world around her. But she is also a woman on a mission: to make climate change everyone’s agenda.

At 32, Sandra has spent most of her career as a communications specialist, photographer and filmmaker using stunning visuals and compelling personal stories to move people. “Moving people is exactly what’s needed to save our planet. We cannot afford to stand still any longer, let alone go backwards,” she says.

As the climate crisis becomes more urgent, so, too, does the role of photography in raising awareness. For those who have not been directly affected by the destructive impact of global warming, however, it may seem like an abstract idea and the extent of the impact may not be understood.

According to Sandra, climate photography helps to make real what could only be imagined before. The Nairobi-based photojournalist and videographer documents, educates and creates awareness of climate change and sustainability. “There is a need for photographers in Africa to show the devastating effects of climate change and the efforts of individuals, governments and communities to miti-

gate those effects. I seek to bring attention to the social, economic and political impact of climate change in Africa and beyond.”

With several years of experience in photography in different African countries, Sandra’s work focuses on climate change, politics, gender and development. This year, she held her first solo photo exhibition dubbed *Climate Heroines* to celebrate and highlight the role of women in promoting sustainability and tackling climate change. The exhibition featured nine women and one women’s group.

She describes the event as the highlight of her career. Despite the venture being capital-intensive, she received sufficient support to enable her to continue telling stories.

“I hope to tell more stories about women who are involved in climate sustainability be-

With several years of experience in photography in different African countries, Sandra’s work focuses on climate change, politics, gender and development. This year, she held her first photo exhibition dubbed *Climate Heroines* to celebrate and highlight the role of women in promoting sustainability and tackling climate change.

cause there are very many out here who are doing amazing things. In November, which is a ‘man’s month’, I will be celebrating men with an exhibition on Climate Heroes.”

Does photography pay? As a communications consultant, Sandra makes a living from contracts to take photographs and videos for individual and corporate clients. She also sells framed photographs. “I once sold a black and white image of the Nairobi horizon taken from the Nairobi National Park for USD300. That is when I realised that art sells.”

Images, says Sandra, convey important information but they also inspire emotional reactions. In addition, climate photographers are contributing valuable data to scientists, their images helping to track and quantify current effects and to predict future change.

“The effects of climate change happen on such a slow time scale that they are often difficult to document visually. Repetitive imagery has made people numb to a lot of the important stories about how our changing climate is affecting humans and places around the world,” Sandra observes. “Capturing even a small portion of what people are going through is enough to spark the global conversation I hope for, but we need more than one catalytic moment if we’re going to help fuel re-



Claire Nasike Akello is a food systems expert with Greenpeace Africa. She leads food campaigns, trains locals in ecological agriculture, food and seed sovereignty as an adaptive mechanism to climate change. For those who have not been directly affected by the destructive impact of global warming, it may seem like an abstract idea and the extent of the impact may not be understood. PHOTO | POOL

al collective action to save our planet.”

With the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference just round the corner (November 6-18), conversations regarding climate change are heightening on social media. It can be somewhat overwhelming reading the endless statistics that expose the true extent of the climate chaos humanity is facing.

“Many of us are familiar with the phrase ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’; this has never been more true than in the face of climate change,” Sandra emphasises. “If a photograph causes just one person to stop, think and take action, then that image was worth more than a thousand words, in my opinion.”

With a Bachelor’s degree in Communication and Media from Maseno University, Sandra’s career began in 2014 as a videographer for the Pamoja Together Programme, a collaboration between Boston University, the Great Lakes University and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to demonstrate the impact of donor funding on rural communities.

She has worked with both governmental and non-governmental organisations in Africa. Along the way, her passion for climate change grew and motivated her to get a professional certificate in Business and Sustainability from the European Business University. She turned to *YouTube* and DPS (digital photography school) to sharpen her skills in photography and videography.

She was short-listed in two categories of the East African Wildlife Photo Competition in 2016. The following year, she became the official photographer in the presidential campaign of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga. This year, she was worked with the UN Geneva on International Women’s Day. Sandra is quick to point out that she does not use her images to protest or dissent but instead to create books, exhibitions and events that can stimulate interest, and consequently awareness, of little-known places or particular topics.

////////////////////

The effects of climate change happen on such a slow time scale that they are often difficult to document visually.

Sandra Ruong’o



“We have an amazing planet full of diversity, and we should take action now if we want the next generation to enjoy what we have today. I hope to motivate others to see the natural world the same way I do: as a beautiful, fragile network of living, breathing beings, that deserve to live their lives without detriment due to human activities.” She challenges young people in schools and other learning institutions to raise awareness about climate change through artistic avenues like music, the spoken word, fashion and art.

Sandra is assertive that we no longer have the luxury of sitting around and debating the ‘what ifs’ of this global crisis. “The next chapter of life on Earth will be defined by the actions we take now. As I turn 33 in October, I will plant 33 trees. I want every young person in this country to plant trees and talk to others about it.”



Sumaiya Harunany (left) and Fatma Abdulrehaman Alimohamed from Mombasa. Sumaiya is the founder of Blue Earth Organisation. Fatma is a teacher, environmentalist and co-founder of Blue Earth Organisation. With the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference just round the corner (November 6-18), conversations regarding climate change are heightening on social media. PHOTO | POOL

OVERCOMING NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

● BY AMINA WAKO

Constable Emma Brenda Wanjiru is one of the country's best known uniformed police officers owing to her ravishing beauty and sassy fashion sense. When photos of her in police uniform first surfaced online in 2016, many netizens wondered why she was wasting her beauty in a profession associated with hardness and brutality.

But there is a lot more to Emma than highlighter and high-heels. She uses her social media platforms to talk about single motherhood, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence, speaking about her experiences to encourage others.

"This is how I look at it. God entrusted me with life. Why would I be ashamed of it? I got into a bad relationship and I learned from it. It was not the right time, truth be told. I cannot let anyone put me down for being a single mother. It is fulfilling being a mother. I have done it and there are many other women who have done it," says Emma.

She adds: "You don't have to sit and have a pity party if you find yourself in that situation. Pick up the pieces, dust yourself off, hold your head high and keep moving. Keep working and be proud of yourself because you are doing the best you can."

In Kenya, nearly one in five girls aged 15-19 has already had a baby or is pregnant, according to the Kenya Demographic Health Survey.

The 33-year-old Emma was born and raised in Nyahururu, the elder of two children. Their mother brought them up alone after their police officer father left when Emma was four.

Her mother, who was also in the service, was very strict but gentle. "The values she instilled in me back then molded me into the person I am today. If it was not for her upbringing, I would be a weak person."

While in High school at Ngiriambu Girls High School in Kirinyaga County, Emma would visit her uncle in Kiserian, Kajiado County, during the school holidays. While at her

BEAUTY AND PURPOSE

LADY IN BLUE: Policewoman Emma Brenda Wanjiru uses her social media platforms to talk about single motherhood, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence, speaking about her experiences to encourage others



uncle's home in 2018, just after she finished high school, she met and fell in love with a young man from Ongata Rongai.

For the naïve girl, the journey to her future had just begun, and she pictured herself living happily ever after with her beau. She got pregnant and to hide it from her aunt and her mother, she fled to her boyfriend's place. They lived in a single room in Rongai and life was smooth at first. But the sweet love story did not last long.

"My relationship turned toxic as my child's father began abusing me physically, emotionally and psychologically," she recalls.

This was the darkest time in Emma's life. "He was sure that I would not go back home because I loved him very much. He would tell me that I was nothing, I would never get married if I left him, I would never be successful, and that if I left I would be back. He actually got to my head and I believed him because he was a bit older than I was. I asked myself where I would go, a teenager with no papers, no job, nothing. So I stayed."

Emma slowly slipped into depression and became suicidal. Even then, she had no thought of leaving her toxic relationship. But when her daughter, Lanisha, was eight weeks old, she garnered the courage to walk away from her marriage for fear of being killed, and returned to her mother's home in Nyahururu.

For one year, she worked on healing and finding a way to move forward. She decided to go back to school and moved to Nairobi with her daughter, starting life over in Jericho, Eastlands, where her

mother rented her a one-room house.

She would drop Lanisha at a daycare centre in the morning on her way to attend her social work and community development classes, and pick her up in the evening. After a few months, she found a job as a supermarket sales representative.

"I was very industrious, but I still felt something was amiss with the job. After much introspection, I realised I had always wanted to be a cop."



Emma Brenda Wanjiru during her graduation at Kenyatta University in July. PHOTO | POOL

In October 2012, Emma quit her sales job and went back to Nyahururu to try her luck in police recruitment that was to happen in November.

“For one month I trained hard and religiously because I knew what would be required on recruitment day. I would wake up very early in the morning and run,” she recalls.

She came in fifth, but the National Police Service recruiters only needed four women. Emma had asked God to grant her wish to become a police officer and she wondered why He had not answered her prayer. She need not have fretted because she was called back to the podium after one of the four girls tested positive for pregnancy.

And thus, in January 2013, Emma joined Kiganjo Police Training College in Nyeri, where she stayed for 18 months and graduated in 2014.

“The 18 months were hard because it was the first time I was staying away from my daughter. But I was happy because it was a dream come true. I felt that being a police officer was my calling, and it would get me to the next step. I eventually graduated and everyone was happy for me,” she added.

Like any other careers, police work has its challenges. In 2019, she had a mental breakdown and wanted to quit the service, but one of her bosses asked her to reconsider.

“You are thinking about yourself

but remember, it’s no longer about you. Are you aware of all the people who look up to you? When you quit and give up, what happens to them,” he asked. That advice made her realise that she had a duty to more than herself.

A certified karateka and model, Emma is a role model to many mothers because of her close relationship with her daughter, who turned 14 on September 19.

“She is my greatest achievement, and I support her to achieve her very best because she is multi-talented; she can sing, dance and model.” Emma is also grateful to her mother for the support that she has always given her.

She is considering taking her love for fashion to the next level. “I have been contemplating coming up with a clothesline, but that is a story for another day.”

Even with all the glam and fame, the graduate of Kenyatta University is still haunted by her past. The trauma from the experience of teenage pregnancy, being deserted by the father of her child and the abusive relationship have affected her relationship with potential suitors. “I became too guarded, which sometimes is a bad thing. I lock out people who genuinely want to be in a relationship with me because of my past. I do not want to go back there; it is a dark place.”

For now, Emma hopes that her dark experiences can continue to give some light to others who find themselves in similar situations.

The **911** SIDE
With John Nyaganyaga
jnyaga@ke.nationmedia.com

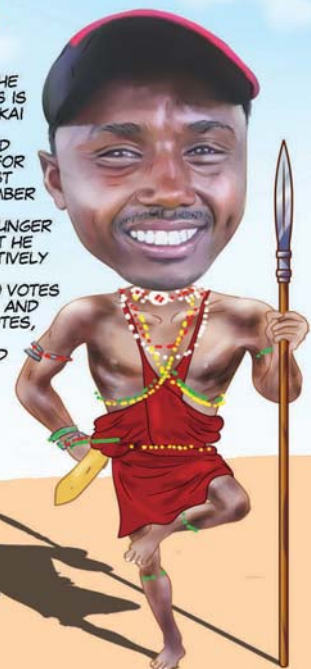
BOTTOM BEFORE LIP

DEPUTY PRESIDENT RIGATHI GACHAGUA HAS URGED KENYANS TO BRACE FOR TOUGH FINANCIAL TIMES AHEAD SAYING THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION INHERITED A BROKE GOVERNMENT WITH NO CASH AT THE TREASURY. DURING AN INTERVIEW WITH NTV, HE DISCLOSED THAT IT WILL TAKE TWO TO THREE MONTHS TO GET THE COUNTRY BACK ON TRACK.
LOOKS LIKE TIME TO TIGHTEN OUR BELTS FOLKS, IF WE CAN AFFORD THEM!



STAR OF THE WEEK

ONE OF THE UNLIKELIEST STORIES TO COME OUT OF THE RECENT GENERAL ELECTIONS IS THAT OF ABRAHAM OSOI ORIKAI FROM KAJIADO COUNTY. THE TWENTY THREE YEAR OLD CLEANER SURPRISED MANY FOR BEING ONE OF THE YOUNGEST PEOPLE TO BE ELECTED MEMBER OF COUNTY ASSEMBLY. NOT ONLY WAS HE MUCH YOUNGER THAN HIS COMPETITORS, BUT HE WAS ALSO BROKE AND RELATIVELY UNKNOWN. BUT AFTER GARNERING 4,700 VOTES AGAINST HIS CLOSEST RIVAL AND THEN INCUMBENT'S 4,300 VOTES, HE IS NOW A HOUSEHOLD NAME NOT JUST IN HIS WARD BUT THE ENTIRE COUNTY. CONGRATULATIONS MHESHIMWA.



opinion



■ Financial autonomy should remind IG that officers cannot break the law in order to enforce it

Police should know civilians are not enemies

In the run-up to the last General Election, the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) presidential ticket of William Ruto and Rigathi Gachagua showed greater interest in improving the welfare of police officers.

Strangely, neither UDA nor the rival Azimio La Umoja made stopping crime and its causes a key plank of their agenda. Indeed, neither side campaigned against the involvement of officers in crime nor their penchant for brutalising the public. But President Ruto swiftly and, by executive fiat, handed the National Police Service (NPS) financial autonomy. This mandates the Inspector General to originate, defend and implement the budget of the service and be its accounting officer. This duty was previously executed by the Principal Secretary in the parent ministry.

Never before has Kenya's top policeman been this empowered. Now Vigilance House, the apex of the police edifice, has the enviable power of deciding for itself what money to have and where, when and why to spend it.

But will a financially empowered Vigilance House better protect Kenyans from criminals? Will police be quick to apprehend criminals and to take them to court? Crucially, will police relate better with the public and, there-

The guiding principle of Kenya's policemen and policewomen is that the public are *adui* (enemy). The officers officially belong to a service, but in practice, work as a force (of control). They protect the interests of the state and the powerful while trampling on the liberties of the public.



**KWENDO
OPANGA**

fore, serve them better?

Consider this: In 2020, the government imposed a night curfew to keep Kenyans safe from the infectious and fast-spreading coronavirus. But before the virus had killed a single Kenyan, officers had killed several persons in the name of enforcing the Covid-19 curfew.

None was more alarmed than the protestant National Council of the Churches of Kenya (NCCK). This is what its leadership told President Uhuru Kenyatta in a memorandum handed him in Nairobi in September of 2020: "As was seen during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was a more graphic representation of what Kenyans daily endure at the hands of the police, there seems to be a widespread disregard of the rights of Kenyans by police and a propensity to go overboard even when it is not called for."

NCCK blamed this atrocity on failure "to address the key issue of the attitude of the police towards citizens and the divide between *askari* (police) and *raia* (public). The police view *raia* as a disorganised mob capable of and intent on mischief while the *raia* view police as a brutish, unreasonable oppressor intent on extortion". The guiding principle of our officers is that the public are *adui* (enemy). The

officers officially belong to a service, but in practice, work as a force (of control). They protect the interests of the state and the powerful while trampling on the liberties of the public.

A financially empowered NPS will continue on this trajectory unless Vigilance takes deliberate steps to turn officers into citizen servants and friends of the public who obey the same laws they enforce. That will happen if financial autonomy reminds Vigilance House that police cannot break the law in order to enforce it and that there is no law when police break the law. Needless to say, policing fails if the public does not trust officers and their stations.

One of the principles of policing developed for London in 1829 asks law enforcers to "recognise always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect". Granted, respect is a two-way street, but *askari* will not earn it from *raia* they treat as enemies. Shouldn't Vigilance House budget for a re-training programme for officers? Shouldn't President Ruto care? They should. Both are paid by the public.

opinion

■ Hustlers won't allow a few leaders to derail the wider goals of social and economic transformation

Ruto must lead by example and rein in all greedy MPs



MACHARIA
GAITHO

It is no surprise that MPs have united across party lines to secure self-interest in bloated salaries and allowances. The pursuit of selfish goals at the expense of poor voters struggling to keep head above water has been the norm since time began, but that is all set to change with advent of a brave new order. We now have in place a 'Hustler' government that places the interests of the poor above the greed of those in leadership.

The legislators who have made it their first order of business to push for enhanced pay packages will get the shock of their lives when President William Ruto, the Hustler-in-Chief and High Representative of the hungry, angry, deprived masses, vetoes their ill-intentioned plans. Ruto, and we must not forget that his Kenya Kwanza Coalition includes the Communist Party of Kenya, will not countenance a situation where Kenyan leaders are about the highest paid in the world while the majority live in poverty.

If the MPs persist, the Leader of the Revolution will personally lead the Hustler Brigade in an 'Occupy Parliament' movement. All those Kenya Kwanza MPs joining their Azimio counterparts in the push to protect bloated pay packages must be put on notice that they are traitors to the revolution, and everyone knows what the penalty for treason is.

Kenya Kwanza was elected on its commitment to fight for the interests of the common man. The Bottom-Up economic agenda cannot be realised where those in leadership only think Stomach Up.

Instead of protecting or increasing the perks presently enjoyed by parliamentarians and others in positions of responsibility, the Kenya Kwanza government will move to restore the abandoned principle where leadership is a selfless call to service, rather than an avenue for accumulation of wealth.

In that regard, President Ruto will not allow Kenya Kwanza leaders, including MPs, governors and cabinet secretaries to earn a shilling more than the median middle class wage of Sh60,000 per month. In view of the high level of responsibility, he will allow housing

If the MPs persist, the Leader of the Revolution will personally lead the Hustler Brigade in an 'Occupy Parliament' movement. All those Kenya Kwanza MPs joining their Azimio counterparts in the push to protect bloated pay packages must be put on notice that they are traitors to the revolution, and everyone knows what the penalty for treason is.



MPs take the oath of office on September 8. The exercise was presided over by the Acting Clerk of the National Assembly Serah Kioko. JEFF ANGOTE | NATION

and commuter allowances of up to another Sh60,000.

President Ruto and Deputy President Gachagua will, of course, lead by example in slashing their own salaries and allowances to no more than double that earned by MPs. The perks they enjoy in housing, entertainment, travel, staff and security will also be sharply reduced in keeping with Kenyan economic realities, and clear distinction drawn between official expenditure and personal expenditure.

As the frontline soldiers, elected and appointed leaders must henceforth appreciate that the Hustler Movement and Bottom-Up approach are not empty campaign slogans.

They are the bedrock principles of the poor first philosophical and ideological frameworks on which this government was elected. It would be a betrayal of millions who voted for Kenya Kwanza if once in government, the leaders forget that they were entrusted with onerous responsibilities on which they must deliver in action and in word.

A Hustler government will not entertain within its ranks leaders who only aspire to ape the dynasties in primitive accumulation of material wealth. The sharp reduction in pay for elected and appointed leaders will not only set an example for austerity policies, but also save the exchequer billions, which will be re-directed to more productive uses such as the Hustler Fund. It will also set an example for the noble pursuit of a more egalitarian society, particularly in reducing the criminal gap

between rich and poor that is about the highest in the world.

Private companies and even state corporations will be encouraged to re-examine their pay structures where the top executives award themselves packages that are competitive in the job markets of the developed world, but condemn their workers to exploitative Third World wages. If the greedy legislators defy President Ruto's executive decree on their pay, they must be prepared to be run out of Parliament, and out of town. The Hustler Revolution cannot allow a few hundred MPs to derail the wider goals of social and economic transformation that will upend the established order and place the needs of the have-nots above the greed of the haves.

The brigade is just warming up. If the MPs don't back down, the ramparts will be breached and they will know that the Russian, French and Iranian revolutions were just Sunday school picnics. That is the message seven million voters expect President Ruto to send to his troops in Parliament.

But if he doesn't have the cojones to stare down the MPs, then he, too, will be seen as a traitor to the revolution and will also be at real risk of being ejected alongside the eating classes. Let there be no mistaking the determination and resolve of the Hustler Movement to install a popular people's revolutionary government dedicated to eradication of bourgeois classes.

Kenya has since Independence been governed by a small clique of collaborators who betrayed the Mau Mau freedom fighters, shoved aside the workers and peasants, stomped on the proletariat and turned national wealth into personal real estate.

Dynasties must fall. Quislings, traitors and vultures of reaction will be run out of their homes, stripped off their property and forced into penury so that they can know the pain of Hustlers.

This brave new world is the era of the children of Mau Mau. Parliament, Judiciary, media, evil society, police, human rights campaigners and other enemies of development, anti-hustler elements and agents of foreign masters who stand in the way of the revolution will be swept aside without mercy.

When the day comes, there will be no place to run and there will be no place to hide.

As Peter Tosh sang, 'Downpressor Man will run to the sea, but the sea will be boiling; he will run to the rocks, but the rocks will be melting'.

gaithomail@gmail.com

kenya lens

■ NOT RETIRING ANY TIME SOON

THE EDGY OLD GUARD

After decades of enjoying power, influence and good money, many ageing politicians are now dancing to a new tune after rejection at the ballot on August 9

● By OSCAR OBONYO

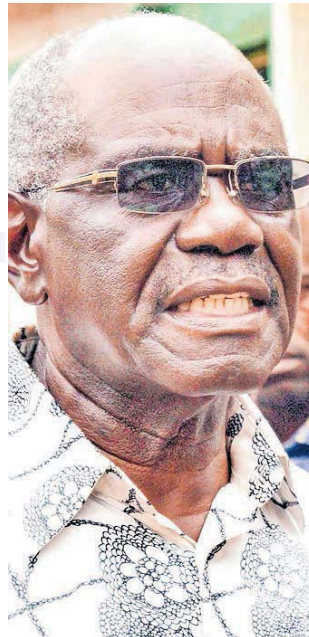
In April last year, former Meru Governor Kiraitu Murungi, who was recovering from a Coronavirus (Covid-19) attack, detailed how politics had robbed him of his life. He further poked fun at Orange Democratic Movement party leader Raila Odinga, stating that in his case health came second to politics.

“I watched with pity, a frail-Raila Odinga, who was being treated for a Covid-19 attack, being literally ‘dragged out of bed’ so that he and the President (Uhuru Kenyatta) could be seen together opening roads in Nairobi and Kajiado, for political optics,” wrote the seasoned politician in a newspaper article, in which he vowed to free himself “from the burden that is political antics and ploys”, and instead pursue personal desires.

And although last month’s poll gave the 71-year-old politician that desired opportunity to proceed home and spend quality time with family, he decided otherwise. Upon being shown the door by Kawira Mwangaza in the governor’s contest, Murungi opted to hang on by shifting political allegiance to newly elected President William Ruto. Murungi’s is a typical case of a willing spirit sabotaged by undying thirst for influence and overzealous cheerleaders. Never mind that he was Imenti South MP for two decades, a Cabinet minister for a decade, and senator and governor for another decade. Quitting this game is never easy for many.

Murungi is just one of the individuals aged 70 and above, who bitten by the political bug and, despite years of enjoying power, influence and good money, are now dancing to a new tune after rejection at the ballot on August 9.

Others include former Makeni Governor Prof Kivutha Kibwana, as well as David Musila, Chris Obure and Jimmy Ang-

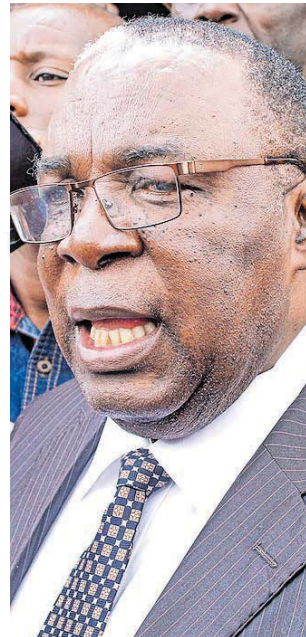


David Musila

wenyi, who previously served as Makeni Senator, Transport Chief Administrative Secretary and MP for Kitutu Chache respectively. Former Kisii Governor James Ongwae, who spearheaded Raila’s campaigns in Nyanza region, also jumped ship to the rival side, after the pronouncement of Ruto as victor.

Although they neither lost in their respective bids this time around nor shifted political allegiance, Kisumu Governor Prof Anyang’ Nyong’o, his Siaya counterpart James Orengo, as well as the newly elected Siaya Senator, Oburu Oginga, are among politicians in this age bracket. Oburu, Raila’s elder brother, has particularly been under pressure to retire.

And despite five unsuccessful attempts at the presidency, the ODM leader himself is not slowing down politically. In the just concluded presidential poll, the 77-year-old’s detractors made the age factor a campaign tool, saying



Jimmy Angwenyi

it would be an inhibiting factor in the performance of his duties.

The tradition of political mergers and coalitions in the country has also facilitated the culture of party-hopping. Murungi who, for instance, has approached each election with a new outfit since the second phase of political pluralism in 1992, has an unmatched record of defections in Kenya’s electoral history.

Murungi first represented the people of Meru South on a Ford-Kenya ticket in 1992, shifting to the Democratic Party, National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and Party of National Unity in subsequent polls of 1997, 2002 and 2007. He was then elected Meru Senator in 2013 on the famed “bus” of Alliance Party of Kenya and Governor in 2017 on a Jubilee Party ticket. This time round, the politician was kitted in the Devolution Empowerment Party’s (DEP) yellow uniform.

Only President William Ruto and Odinga come close to match-

ing this record. Between them, the two political bigwigs have changed parties ten times – five times apiece – Kanu, ODM, United Republican Party (URP), Jubilee and United Democratic Alliance (UDA) for Ruto and Ford-Kenya, National Development Party (NDP), Kanu, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and ODM for Raila.

Murungi views this movement as “political reinvention” – an act that has kept him politically relevant over the years. What is most crucial in modern-day politics, according to the Harvard University trained-lawyer, is service delivery to the people, a factor that requires elected leaders to strategically position themselves each election year in order to access the national cake.

Amid these acrobatic moves, some politicians still stand out for respecting their age and bowing out of the ring upon being shown the door by the electorate. Moody Awori, who lost his re-election bid to Paul Otuoma (newly elected Busia Governor) in 2007, for instance, attributes his defeat to an anti-Mwai Kibaki wave in western Kenya.

In his memoirs, *Riding on a Tiger*, Kenya’s ninth V-P states that his mind was already made up on his last appearance on the parliamentary ballot in 2007 – whether or not he won the seat. True to his word, he neither offered himself for an elective seat nor defected to another party.

Awori, 94, says he turned down political overtures from Odinga after the 2007 poll debacle, maintaining he was happy to retire from elective politics. He nonetheless reassured his constituents of Funyula that he would continue serving them as their leader from outside Parliament.

Awori, who left politics at 79, partly attributes the defection circus to what he considers “an emerging trend where people are seeking public office in parlia-

kenya lens

ment as a means of enriching themselves and not offering servant leadership". Viewed through this prism, it makes sense why politicians change allegiance after rejection at the ballot.

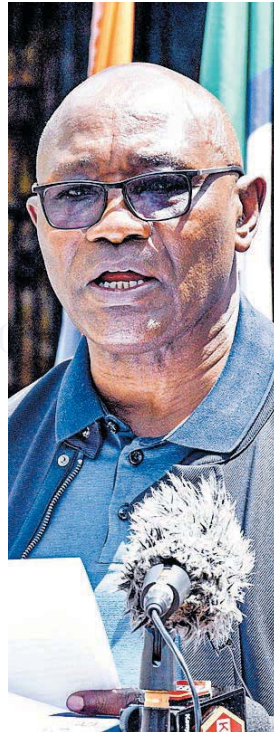
Perhaps because he is also a business tycoon with interests in many sectors of the economy, as well as managing director of several of his family and individual businesses and member of various boards of directors, the nonagenarian may not have been financially incentivised to hang on to politics.

The same is true of the late Charles Njonjo who, after serving as the country's first Attorney-General and later as Kikuyu MP and Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister, quit politics in 1990, never to return. This was after the Cecil Miller-led Judicial Inquiry fingered him for plotting to overthrow President Daniel arap Moi from power. He was 70 years old.

In the case of Njonjo, the persuasion to retire from the "dirty game", as he always called it, was also because he had alternative engagements. Until his death in January this year at the age of 102, Njonjo immersed himself in running his business empire and often teased: "I won't stop working unless I cannot move a limb."

A fairly rare feature in the earlier parliaments since Independence, probably owing to the monolithic nature of politics at the time, defections from one party to the

Awori, 94, says he turned down political overtures from Odinga after the 2007 poll debacle, maintaining he was happy to retire from elective politics. He nonetheless reassured his constituents of Funyula that he would continue serving them as their leader from outside Parliament.



James Ongwae

other have become a way of life for the ordinary politician today.

Prof Kibwana, for instance, who joined Ruto's camp, immediately found a soft landing as a member of the UDA leader's legal team at the Supreme Court, which eventually upheld Ruto's win. The professor of law has been the most acrobatic political-ly, moving back and forth, including offering himself for the presidency, then dropping out of the race in favour of Odinga. He later settled for the senatorial seat, only to be beaten by youthful lawyer and second-term MP Daniel Maanzo.

While lecturing at the University of Nairobi between 1977 and 2002, Kibwana was among those who spearheaded the reform agenda in the 1980s and 1990s as spokesman of the National Con-

vention Executive Council (NCEC). Since joining politics in 2002 as Makueni MP, he has served as Cabinet minister in the ministries of Lands and Settlement, and Environment and Natural Resources.

Ongwae has a wealth of experience too, having worked in the public service for over three decades, starting off as a District Officer, then an immigration officer, management analyst, Director of the Civil Service Reform Programme and as a Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President. Strategically placed in the Odinga campaign, Ongwae was set to reap big had his candidate won.

A member of the powerful and inflexible provincial administration of the 1970s through to 1990s, Musila appears to have finally found peace and flexibility in politics. Since joining elective politics in 1997, the former District Commissioner and Provincial Commissioner has changed parties at will. He has, of particular note, defected from the Wiper Democratic Movement twice.

Apparently, the 79-year-old politician's defection to Ruto's side was anticipated by some. In 2017, Musila vied for the seat of Kitui Governor as an Independent, but returned a couple of months later after losing to NARC's Charity Ngilu, and again exited from Wiper a few weeks before last month's poll to Jubilee Party.

The exodus of the old guard to Ruto's Kenya Kwanza is a source of discomfort for some, however. Nyaribari Chache MP Zaheer Jhanda was among the first people to criticise the political relocations, terming the defectors "opportunists who wanted to reap where they did not sow". The President has given an assurance, though, that those who campaigned for him will be accorded priority in his government.

How the President consolidated power

...Continued from Page 8

ed out the matter. In the interim, he appointed himself chair of the House Business Committee to run the affairs of the legislature until the impasse was resolved.

Marende was widely praised for a ruling that looked at the wider national interest beyond party rivalries and affiliations, and all eyes will now be on whether Wetang'ula, facing a roughly similar situation, can rise above narrow partisan considerations.

There is a difference, however, in that Marende was ruling on a dispute involving members of the same coalition, while Wetang'ula will be deciding which of two rival formations enjoys the stature of Majority Party.

Although on election the Speaker is in theory supposed to discard partisan leaning and assume the neutrality of a judge, that principle is more often observed in the breach.

Wetang'ula, the Ford-Kenya leader, is also more of a political animal than Marende, and what might come into play is the intense dislike for Raila seen when he and western Kenya colleague Musalia Mudavadi jumped ship from the defunct National Super Alliance to join Ruto's presidential campaign. Payback was that he gets the seat of National Assembly Speaker, and he will be aware it also came with the promise to drive the Kenya Kwanza agenda.

As seen during formation of Kenya Kwanza, Ruto runs a tight ship that does not entertain indiscipline and wayward members. This is the discipline that allowed Kenya Kwanza to largely hold together while Azimio was distracted by disorder and lack of focus.

President Ruto is unlikely to entertain a Speaker of either National Assembly or Senate who bucks the party line, and at the Kenya Kwanza retreat last weekend, he made it clear that securing Majority Party posts in both Houses remains a priority.

It was the same focus and determination that drive the Kenya Kwanza quest for chair of the Council of Governors, a largely ceremonial post that was taken by Ms Anne Waiguru of Kirinyaga, again after a number of governors elected on the Azimio slate were persuaded to switch sides.

Complete control of the National Assembly is an even more critical pursuit, and Wetang'ula will not be the one to buck his coalition leader.

SCIENCE & TECH

Elon Musk

SpaceX wants to bring satellite internet to Iran

SpaceX will apply for an exemption from US sanctions against Iran in a bid to offer its satellite internet service to the country, owner Elon Musk has said.

“Starlink will apply for an exemption from sanctions against Iran,” Musk said in response to a tweet from a science reporter.

Musk had initially announced that the Starlink satellite internet service had been made available on every continent — “including Antarctica” — with the company planning to launch up to 42,000 satellites to boost connectivity.

Iranian-born science journalist Erfan Kasraie had said on Twitter that bringing the service to Iran

could be a “real game changer for the future” of the country, which elicited Musk’s response. Launched at the end of 2020, Starlink offers high-speed broadband service to customers in areas poorly served by fixed and mobile terrestrial networks through a constellation of satellites in low earth orbit. — AFP

PUZZLE OF SATURN’S RINGS

An illustration of the solar system, including its eight planets and the sun: Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, asteroide belt, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Below: An observation of Saturn on June 20, 2019 as the planet made its closest approach to Earth, at approximately 1.36 billion kilometres away. PHOTOS | AFP

WASHINGTON

Discovered by Galileo 400 years ago, the rings of Saturn are about the most striking thing astronomers with small telescopes can spot in our solar system. But even today, experts cannot agree on how or when they formed. A new study published in the prestigious journal *Science* sets out to provide a convincing answer. Between 100-200 million years ago, an icy moon they named Chrysalis broke up after getting a little too close to the gas giant, they conclude. While most of it made impact with Saturn, its remaining fragments broke into small, icy chunks that form the planet’s signature rings. “It’s nice to find a plausible explanation,” said Jack Wisdom, professor of planetary sciences at MIT and lead author of the new study. Saturn, the sixth planet from the Sun, was formed four and a half billion years ago, at the beginning of the solar system. But a few decades ago, scientists suggested that Saturn’s rings appeared much later: only about 100 million years ago. The hypothesis



was reinforced by observations made by the Cassini probe, which orbited Saturn from 2004 to 2017. “But because no one could think of a way to make the rings 100 million years ago, some people have been questioning the reasoning that led to that deduction,” said Wisdom. By constructing complex mathematical models, Wisdom and colleagues found an explanation that both justified the timeline and allowed them to better understand another characteristic of the planet, its tilt. Saturn has a 26.7 degree tilt. Being a gas giant, it would have been expected that the process of accumulating

matter that led to its formation would have prevented tilt. Scientists recently discovered that Titan, the largest of Saturn’s 83 moons, is migrating away from the planet, at a rate of 11 centimeters a year.

This changes the rate at which Saturn’s axis of tilt loops around the vertical — the technical term is “precession”. Think of a spinning top drawing circles. Around a billion years ago, this wobble frequency came into sync with Neptune’s wobbly orbit, creating a powerful gravitational interaction called “resonance”. In order to maintain this lock, as Titan kept moving out, Saturn had to tilt, scientists argued. But that explanation hinged on knowing how mass was distributed in the planet’s interior, since the tilt would have behaved differently if it were concentrated more at its surface or the core.

In the new study, Wisdom and colleagues modeled the planet’s interior using gravitational data gathered by Cassini during its close approach “Grand Finale”, its last act before plunging into Saturn’s depths. — AFP

africa lens

■ TENSION ACROSS THE POPULOUS NATION



Supporters of the ruling All Progressives Congress celebrate President Muhammadu Buhari's victory in Abuja on February 26, 2019. Africa's most populous nation goes to the polls in less than five months in what is shaping up to be Abuja's biggest unity and stability test yet since the end of military coups and dictatorship two decades ago. PHOTO | AFP

NIGERIA ON THE EDGE

The road to the February 2023 elections appears bumpy, with a toxic mix of lawlessness, ethnic politics, regionalism, a struggling economy and growing mistrust in systems threatening to tear the nation apart. There are growing armies of insurgents in the north-east, bandits in the north and central, militants in the south, and separatists in the south-east

● BY MOHAMMED MOMOH AND HARRY MISIKO

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, goes to the polls in less than five months in what is shaping up to be Abuja's biggest unity and stability test yet since the end of military coups and dictatorship two decades ago.

The road to the February 2023 elections appears bumpy in every sense of the word, with a toxic mix of lawlessness, ethnic politics, regionalism, a struggling economy and growing mistrust in systems threatening to tear the West African nation apart. The country's security apparatus, electoral commission, judici-

ary and religious fabric are on trial as the dark forces threaten to plunge it into turmoil. The continental economic powerhouse finds itself in a precarious security situation that government and security analysts say only compares to the lead-up to the civil war of 1967 to 1970.

There are growing armies of insurgents in the north-east, bandits in the north-west and north-central, militants in the south, separatists in the south-east, and ritual killers in the south-west. Organised, sporadic and systemic violence continues to spread across its vast territory, uprooting would-be voters from their homes and shaking election plans by the Independent National Electoral Commission (IN-EC) — including torching of offices, killing of

election officials and burning of poll materials. In the north-east, more than 60,000 people have been killed and more than 2.2 million displaced since 2009 in insurgency perpetuated by Boko Haram and Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP).

In north-central and the north-west, faceless bandits continue to kill and maim at will as violent secessionist groups take charge of East and the troubled Niger Delta, vowing to stop elections in its nine states — Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. Among groups advancing a bloody secession campaign is Indigenous People of Bia-

...Continued on Page 26

africa lens

Uncertainty grows as Nigerian polls draw near

...Continued from Page 25

fra (IPOB), whose leader, 54-year-old Nnamdi Kanu, is currently on trial for acts of terrorism and treasonable felony following his arrest and deportation from Nairobi in July 2021. His militia group, Eastern Security Network (ESN), continues to unleash terror on security operatives and citizens considered as “saboteurs” in the five eastern states of Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia.

According to a report by SB Morgen, Nigeria’s leading geopolitical intelligence platform, the country lost no fewer than 964 security agents, including 322 police officers and 642 soldiers, in attacks by insurgents, bandits and secessionists in 2021. In 2022, Information Minister Lai Mohammed recently revealed that ESN had murdered more than 115 security operatives by August.

The violence is fuelled by a potpourri of factors — including historical injustices, marginalisation, self-determination bids, runaway unemployment and rising inflation that have left more than 100 million poor Nigerians struggling. The national annual inflation rate shot to 19.64 per cent in July 2022, the highest since September of 2005, with rising prices of bread, cereals and yam hitting the poor the hardest.

Armed non-state actors

INEC has sounded the alarm that the rising violence, especially the torching of its offices and the destruction of poll materials, are likely to scuttle poll preparations, including voter registration.

INEC chairman Mahmood Yakubu says attacks on the commission’s facilities may undermine their capacity to organise elections and also negatively impact the nation’s electoral processes.

According to official reports, at least 41 INEC offices have been either torched or vandalised across

The continental economic powerhouse finds itself in a precarious security situation that government and security analysts say only compares to the lead-up to civil war of 1967 to 1970.



A police officer secures the entrance of Rivers State collation centre in Port Harcourt, Southern Nigeria, on February 26, 2019, during the elections.

Nigeria by armed non-state actors in the last two years. “These are attacks as a result of election-related violence, protests unrelated to elections and activities of thugs and unknown gunmen,” says Yakubu. More than 95 million registered voters of the country’s 218 million people are set to choose a new Head of State in the sixth presidential election since Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999.

Besides the President, voters will also elect new governors, senators, House of Representative members and state lawmakers in 176,846 polling units between February 25 and mid-March 2023.

At least 14 candidates are eyeing to take over from President Muhammadu Buhari, 78, a retired army general who will bow out after two tumultuous tenures of eight years in the hot seat.

Former Lagos governor and leader of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) Bola Ahmed Tinubu, 70, two-time Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, 75, of the former ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP), and Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP) are the major contenders. Other candidates are Osita Nnadi (Action Peoples Party), Kolawole Abiola (Peoples Redemption Party), Yabagi Sani (Action Democratic Party)

and Ado-Ibrahim Abdulmalik of Young Progressives Party.

Front-runners in the race are drawn from Nigeria’s old regional and ethnic structure, effectively setting the tone for ethnic politicking and voting, a recipe for chaos and a threat to national peace and unity. Tinubu is a Yoruba from the south-west, Abubakar a Fulani from the north while Obi

is an Igbo from the south-east, with each region, some already wracked by violence, seeking to have their son occupy Aso Rock Presidential Villa in Abuja.

The prospects of a violent contest loom, observes Nkasi Wodu, a Senior New Voices Fellow at the Aspen Institute, especially in the face of a battle for survival between the two major political parties who face different tests.

“Analysts have declared that without power, the ruling APC, formed in 2014, to wrest political power from the PDP could disintegrate, while losing a third presidential election in 2023 could have deleterious effects on the PDP. Against this backdrop, the stage is set for a fierce contest,” the lawyer and peace-building expert in Africa writes in *Fragile States Index*.

While Tinubu is riding on the horse of the ruling political party, Abubakar, who has contested the presidential election more than four times, is hoping on his past glory as a former vice president, while Obi, who failed his vice-presidential bid in 2019, is angling for the spoils, capitalising on the youth and Christian vote — groups that felt cheated in APC and PDP nominations.

Analysts have declared that without power, the ruling APC could disintegrate. It was formed in 2014 to wrest political power from the PDP.

Nkasi Wodu, a Senior New Voices Fellow at the Aspen Institute



global lens

■ WALLS ‘FULL OF PAIN’

RUSSIA’S ‘TORTURE CELLS’

Sitting in a ward in the city’s main hospital - which was badly damaged by shelling - pensioner Mykhailo Ivanovych recounts the abuses he suffered: electrocution, beatings, broken bones and needles inserted beneath the skin. His left arm is bandaged and in a sling. He is weary, but his voice is unwavering



Mykhailo Ivanovych visits a destroyed police station in Izyum, eastern Ukraine, on September 18. In towns freshly recaptured by Ukrainian forces, stories of arbitrary detentions and torture by the occupiers are coming to light. In the hospital in Izyum, Mykhailo has recently started to walk again. His arm in a cast and sling is a painful reminder of the Russian presence in the city. PHOTO | AFP

● KYIV

For those held in the dank basement cells of a makeshift Russian prison in the Ukrainian city of Izyum, there was more than one type of torture. The occupiers had a menu of abuses.

Mykhailo Ivanovych, 67, says he experienced most of them. Sitting in a ward in the city’s main hospital — which was badly damaged by shelling — the pensioner recounts the abuses he suffered: electrocution, beatings, broken bones and needles inserted beneath the skin. His left arm is bandaged and in

a sling. He is weary, but his voice is unwavering. “They tortured me for 12 days,” he says.

“They beat me everywhere. They broke my arm. One Russian was holding it and another one beat it with a pipe. They beat me to the point where I didn’t feel anything. They used an electric current on my fingertips — how they burned.”

Then there were the needles pushed into his back. “They were long, and they put them under my skin here and here,” he says, gesturing to his shoulders. “I was taken from there half-dead when our forces liberated this place.”

That was on September 11, when Ukraini-

an forces swept into the city, ending more than five months of Russian rule. During the occupation, the Russians used the city as a launchpad for attacks in the eastern Donbas region, and as a key logistics base.

Mykhailo was detained along with others who the Russians suspected of sabotage. The prisoners were hooded, sharing the cramped conditions and the abuse.

“All of those held with me were tortured,” he says. “Sometimes they took someone from their cells two or even three times in a day. I

...Continued on Page 28

global lens

Inside Russia's 'torture chambers' in Ukraine



Forensic technicians carry a bodybag at the site of a mass grave in a forest on the outskirts of Izyum, eastern Ukraine on September 18. Ukrainian authorities discovered around 450 graves outside the formerly Russian-occupied city of Izyum with some of the exhumed bodies showing signs of torture.

...Continued from Page 27

saw someone being carried out. I think he was dead.” Mykhailo wears a cross around his neck over a striped T-shirt. I ask if he prayed during his time in the cells. “Of course,” he replies. “I had to pray. Anyone would be praying there.” The torture took place in the police station in Izyum. When we enter it is in disarray, with some doors missing and windows blown out. Like much of Izyum, it was shelled by the Russians before they took the city.

Darkness closes in as we descend the stairs to two lower floors of cells. Most are small and bare, apart from grimy bedding and some discarded clothing.

In one cell someone has etched lines on the wall, recording the length of their captivity. The silence is broken by a Ukrainian soldier. “It seems like all these walls are full of pain and suffering,” he says. Mykhailo’s account of suffer-

ing electric shocks echoes other testimony we have heard recently in newly liberated areas — including from a former journalist called Maxim, who said he was held in the same cells.

“They attach electrodes and connect a current, and you begin to shake,” he says. “I was falling from the chair. The pain was too strong. It was pitch black. They tortured us in complete darkness. They had head lamps. I asked my cellmates how long I had been absent, and they told me 40 minutes. I think that you black out after 15 to 20 minutes.” Ukraine is keen to prove that the torture of civilians — a war crime — was systematic, not haphazard. Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky says “10 torture chambers” have been found in recent days in areas in Kharkiv Province retaken by Ukrainian forces.

A short distance from the prison we find investigators at work, combing through a damaged office building used by the Russians as their command centre. We are allowed to enter, wearing protective coverings on our shoes, and face masks, so we don’t disturb the evidence. A sign saying “police” in Russian still hangs over the door. Inside on a desk is a

thumbed edition of a Russian daily newspaper. Lead investigator Leonid Pustovit — wearing white protective overalls — has made a grim discovery. He opens a drawer to show us an axe bearing traces of what looks like blood.

“Our investigation will reveal whose blood it is,” he tells us. He

They attach electrodes and connect a current, and you begin to shake. I was falling from the chair. The pain was too strong. It was pitch black.

Maxim, a journalist



has also found a watch-list kept by the Russians, with names of those thought to be supporting the Ukrainian government.

“They were called ‘the ones with extremist views,’” he says. “They brought them here and interrogated them. They were kept on a short leash.” This broken city is just beginning to tell its stories and reveal how many victims the Russians left behind.

In a pine forest on the edge of the city forensic teams are continuing to exhume human remains from more than 440 graves. The authorities say the dead are mostly civilians, but one grave contained the bodies of 17 soldiers, some with their hands bound and bearing signs of torture.

The regional prosecutor says the Russians had killed almost all of those buried here — one way or another — including by shooting, shelling or air strikes.

As emergency workers carry away remains in a white body bag, Olena Kazabekhov looks on, caught between hope and dread. She has come in search of her father, Petro Vasylychshyn, who served with Ukraine’s 95th Airborne Battalion. The young woman is tearful, leaning on her husband Yuri for support.

“The last phone call we had was on April 17,” he tells us.

“The next day they moved to the frontline, and many of his unit went missing. We know five were killed. Their bodies were found by another unit.”

Tormented by unanswered questions, Yuri says they are almost envious of those who at least have remains to bury. “We know families that were in the same situation as we are now, but they found the bodies, and they are — it’s hard to describe — happier than we are, because at least they found them.”

So far, the military remains unearthed in the forest are of soldiers from a different brigade to his father-in-law’s, so he and Olena may have to search elsewhere. For others, the exhumations have already provided answers. One widely published photo from the burial site showed a decayed hand with blue and yellow bands around the wrist — the colours of Ukraine’s flag. — BBC

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky says “10 torture chambers” have been found in recent days in areas in Kharkiv province retaken by Ukrainian forces.

global lens

■ BRAZIL CANDIDATES TAKE INFORMATION WARS TO TV

● RIO DE JANEIRO

Disinformation on social networks has become routine as Brazil heads for deeply divisive elections, but it can gain traction and a broader audience when it comes straight from the candidates' mouths on national television.

The official start last month of the campaign for the October 2 elections means candidates have huge exposure on TV, including prime-time interviews, debates and daily ad spots paid for with public funds.

In practice, that has meant a flood of false narratives being beamed into Brazilian living rooms, whether it is incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro taking credit for the idea to create a mega-popular instant payments system known as "Pix" or front-runner Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva claiming he was absolved of all corruption charges against him, to cite just two examples.

In reality, Brazil's central bank started working on Pix in 2018, a year before the far-right incumbent took office. And Lula, the charismatic but tarnished leftist who led Brazil from 2003 to 2010, had his controversial convictions stemming from the "Car Wash" corruption scandal overturned on procedural grounds. He was not absolved.

"Campaigns are above all a war of narratives," and candidates often use distorted or outright false statements to sell themselves, says Amaro Grassi, a public policy expert at the Getulio Vargas Foundation. There is nothing new about lies in politics.

But analysts warn TV is now giving broader reach to the disin-

formation that has been raging for months on social networks in Brazil. "Television is still a mass medium" in Brazil, says Arthur Ituassu, associate professor of political communication at Pontifical Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro. Unlike social media, Brazilian television — where the vast majority of audience share is still concentrated among a handful of top networks, notably the dominant TV Globo — reaches a broad population that is "not segmented by nature", he says.

"Television is still a space that reaches the general public, going well beyond the audience that

is already firmly in one camp or the other," says Helena Martins, a communications professor at the Federal University of Ceara. There is also a widely held belief that "if it's on TV, it's true", she adds.

The 2018 race that brought Bolsonaro to power was already awash in disinformation, especially on social media — hugely powerful in a country that has more smart phones than people (an estimated 242 million, for 213 million inhabitants).

If anything, the campaign is arguably uglier this time around, given that the presidential race is highly polarised between the

far-right incumbent and his leftist nemesis. Amid those deep divisions, 85 per cent of Brazilians say disinformation could influence the outcome of the election, according to a poll from the Ipec institute published on September 6.

At the same time, however, polls show there are relatively few voters left to persuade: 78 per cent of voters say their minds are "completely" made up, found a poll from the Datafolha Institute published last week. The same poll found Lula had 45 per cent of the vote, to 33 per cent for Bolsonaro — broadly in line with the institute's previous poll.

No other candidate was in double digits. "There's a very high level of consolidation of voter intentions. That makes it difficult for any narrative to change the picture at this point," says Grassi.

That has not stopped the candidates from seeking to rile up their bases with truth-bending statements, hoping to persuade the odd undecided or third-candidate voter in the process.

Lula, for example, has repeatedly exaggerated his accomplishments on the economy.

Bolsonaro has meanwhile accused Lula of being anti-Evangelical and anti-agribusiness, two powerful groups that lean toward the incumbent. "The idea is to reinforce those groups' rejection of Lula," says Grassi. "Because in an election as polarised as this, it ends up being largely a battle of rejection." — AFP

PRIME TIME LIES

Television is giving broader reach to the disinformation that has been raging for months on social networks as the nation prepares for next month's elections



The 2018 race that brought Bolsonaro to power was already awash in disinformation, especially on social media — hugely powerful in a country that has more smart phones than people (an estimated 242 million, for 213 million inhabitants).

Brazil's presidential candidate for the leftist Workers Party Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva speaks during a campaign rally in Porto Alegre on September 16. The official start last month of the campaign for the October 2 elections means candidates have huge exposure on TV, including prime time interviews, debates and daily ad spots paid for with public funds. PHOTO | AFP

OBIT

■ VETERAN OF INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE

BUSIA'S MAU MAU MAN BOWS OUT

As chairman of the anti-colonial movement's Kavirondo branch, Ex-Senior Chief Wanga Mahanga Oniang' would collect money for assembling home-made guns and providing food for freedom fighters

● By OSCAR OBONYO

About 457 kilometres west of Nyeri town – the epicentre of pre-independence Mau Mau rebellion activities of the 1950s – lies the serene but flood-prone prehistoric town of Mau Mau in Budalangi Constituency, Busia County.

One of the independence heroes from this tiny town was laid to rest a few days ago. Ex-Senior Chief Wanga Mahanga Oniang', who in his youth waged a spirited war against the British Colonial government, curiously passed on a few days before Queen Elizabeth II. In fact, the Queen died on the very day Mzee Mahanga was interred – a coincidence that amazes members of the veteran Mau Mau warrior's family.

Among those who attended his burial were Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya's deputy presidential candidate, Martha Karua, former area MP James Nakhwanga Osoyo, who served as Cabinet minister in the independence government of President Jomo Kenyatta, and ex-Minister and Westlands MP, Fred Gumo. Those who spoke roundly eulogised Mahanga as a brave warrior, diligent servant of the people and patriotic Kenyan.

While the Mau Mau uprising was mainly centered in the Mt Kenya region, Kenyans in other parts of the country played a significant role in the revolution that led to internal self-rule in 1962. Mahanga, for instance, was treasurer of the then Kavirondo branch of the Mau Mau movement, covering the present-day Nyanza and western Kenya regions.

At 27, he was arrested on April 19, 1954 for his role in aiding activities of the national movement. He would collect money from volunteers that was used in assembling home-made guns and providing food for Mau Mau warriors. Mahanga was driven to Nairobi and subjected to three months of torture at the Embaka-



Former Senior Chief Wanga Mahanga Oniang'

si detainee centre before being taken to the Manda Special Detention Camp in Lamu.

Back home in Busia, a motorcade of open vehicles from Port Florence, present-day Kisumu City, descended on the sleepy village of Khulwanyange and stopped at the home of Mahanga. Led by area assistant chief, Ismaili Omojo, the anti-Mau Mau officers disembarked to search the homestead of Mzee David Oniang', Mahanga's father, who was believed to be hiding guns and other weapons in his house.

The operation was a sight to behold as curious villagers gathered around to marvel at the vehicles and heavy military equipment – a rare spectacle in the village. Even several days and weeks after the officers had left, people from as far as the neighbouring Funyula and Ugenya constituencies trooped to Khulwanyange to gaze at the tyre tracks that the Mau Mau's "big machines" had left

in the sandy grounds. The fame of the "wonder operation" spread far and wide and over the time, Khulwanyange came to be known as Mau Mau area.

In 1958, when Mahanga was released from detention from the Mageta Islands in Lake Victoria, to where he had been transferred from Manda, he enhanced the connection between his hometown and the Mau Mau movement even further. Local residents say Mau Mau provided safe passage for detainees – mostly from the Mt Kenya region – escaping from Mageta.

Mahanga settled in Bulwani village in Bunyala location, where he started life with his wives, Wilgada Odinda and Susan Nabwire, with whom he bore 13 children.

Having become a household name, Mahanga was easily elected as a member of the Regional Assembly representing the present-day Budalang'i constituency on May 25, 1963 during Ken-

ya's first post-independence General Election. The following year, he was appointed chief of Bunyala location, working his way up to Senior Chief in 1977. He served the wider present-day Busia County in this capacity until 1981.

For his accomplishments, Mahanga was awarded the Head of State Commendation alongside other senior provincial administration officials by then President Daniel arap Moi at a colourful ceremony at Nairobi's State House on October 22, 1980. In the course of her duty as Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister under President Mwai Kibaki's administration, Karua also met and recognised Mahanga's role in the independence struggle. The Azimio politician received and processed Mahanga's initial Mau Mau petition against the British government.

The decorated warrior was not your ordinary government mouthpiece of the 1960s. He went to the local Osieko Primary School and later Eldoret Union and Kolanya schools for "Ordinary level" and "Advanced level" studies, completing the latter in 1941. Later in life, he enrolled at Maseno Government Training Institute for a course in Public Administration.

His military exploits and knowledge earned him great respect as a leader, and after retirement he was invited to serve on the boards of various institutions. Occasionally, he would address public gatherings during national holidays in Budalang'i and at the county headquarters of Busia.

Incidentally, two of Mahanga's children – David Wanga and Taabu Daniels – have followed in his footsteps. David, who is a project coordinator at the World Vision, has previously served as area councilor, while Taabu is NARC-Kenya party's chief executive officer. Through them, Mzee Mahanga's spirit lives on.

GET YOUR FAVOURITE DAILIES DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME

Fresh and unbiased news delivered to your doorstep

NEWSPAPER
DELIVERY



SMS the word **GAZETI** to **20567**,
Share your preferred delivery location
and our agent will get in touch with you

FREE SMS text and **FREE** Delivery

DAILY NATION

Business
Dailyo

TANIA
LEO

The EastAfrican

Terms & Conditions apply*

24:7:365

IT'S TIME FOR BUSINESS

The world never sleeps, neither do we. Indeed, we understand the needs of global economies and have upped our pace in the race against time to facilitate international trade.

Like clockwork we keep it moving; Importing, exporting, decongesting so that cargo moves in and out efficiently and timely to its final destination. Day and night we are open and ready for business.

Kenya Ports Authority; Growing Business, Enriching Lives.



KPA ON EFFICIENCY

KEBS ISO 9001:2015
Certified Org, No. 087

GATEWAY TO EAST & CENTRAL AFRICA



For more details contact the Corporate Communication Division
Tel: 254-041-2112999/2113999 or email: ca@kpa.co.ke

www.kpa.co.ke | Kenya Ports Authority | @Kenya_Ports | Kenya Ports Authority