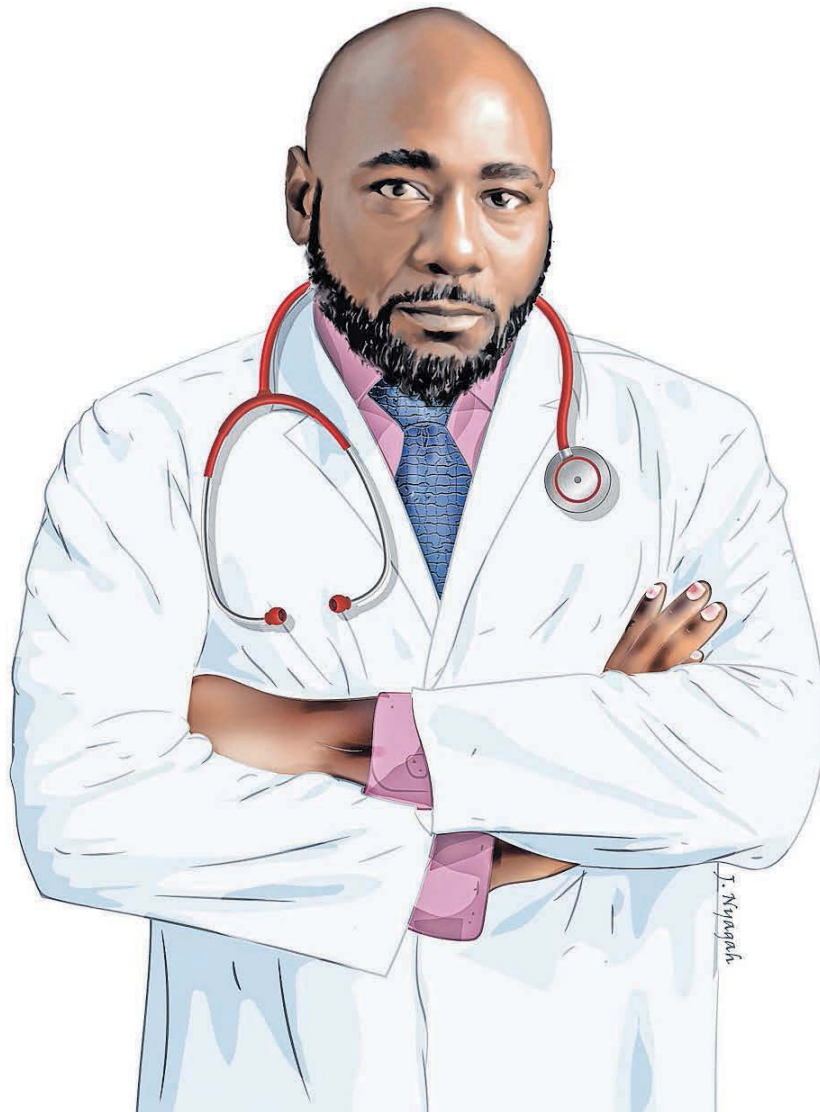


# THE Weekly Review

For the Thinking Person

ISSUE NO. 21 | January 22, 2023 FREE WITH 'SUNDAY NATION'



## THE UHC MIRAGE

**A sickly mess at the NHIF has prevented millions of Kenyans from accessing quality and affordable healthcare. With the police and teachers embracing private firms, the government's plan stands on shaky ground. We reveal the unhealthy divisions at the fund and why universal healthcare remains a pipe dream**

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

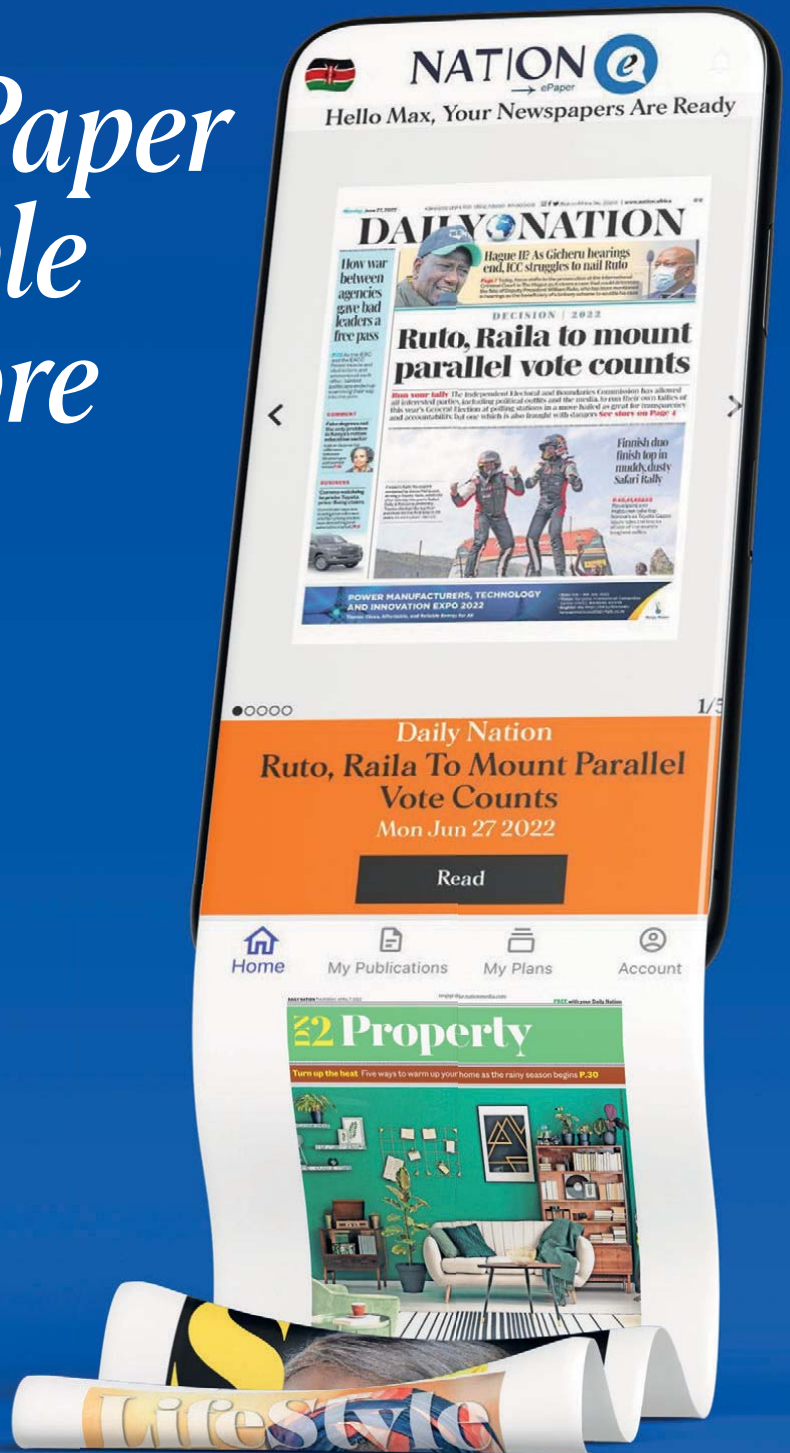
Follow the link to subscribe

➤ [epaper.nation.africa](https://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](mailto:epaper@ke.nationmedia.com)

NATION   
→ ePaper

letter from the editor

# Inside

**10 THE SILENT RUTO-RAILA 'HANDSHAKE':** The former PM sent all his elected members to welcome William Ruto during his recent tour of Nyanza, even as the President's charm offensive in the region left many guessing.

**15 SOCIAL MEDIA BOMBHELL:** Do not give your children smartphones. They are being subjected to content from quacks to try clearly dangerous challenges where, in the end, hospitalisation is a best-case scenario.

**20 DEAR IG, CIVILIANS ARE NOT YOUR FOES:** To members of the public, police officers are extortionists who use their uniforms and firearms for personal gain.

**25 'THANK GOD YOU'RE ALIVE!'** Phones are starting to ring again, bringing joy but also grief and anger as Tigrayans reconnect.



## Government must take UHC seriously to provide health care for all Kenyans

Some of the most important services a government can offer its citizens are security, health and education. These are the most sensitive and demanding tasks and any administration that shirks them easily qualifies as a bad government buttressed by poor and dangerous leadership.

Indeed, the betterment of these departments usually features in all campaign rhetoric. The Kenya Kwanza administration promised that a lot would be done to better healthcare for millions of Kenyans who are unable to afford it.

On the gruelling campaign trail last year, President William Ruto sought votes under the banner of universal healthcare for all Kenyans. The citizenry was assured that after getting into office, his government would roll out the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) programme, ensuring that Kenyans from all walks of life would just go to hospital and be treated free of charge.

The UHC refers to a situation where individuals and communities access quality health services at a cost that does not lead to financial hardship. The quest for this coverage is not a new phenomenon. It has been talked about for far too long but its implementation has remained almost impossible. The pledge to make it work this time round still appears to be a mirage.

The main body that is set to roll it out is the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF). The main contributors are Kenyans in formal employment, who



Allan Buluku

**The biggest hurdle in implementing UHC is underfunding by the government. The health sector receives only six per cent of the entire budget. For this noble venture to take root, the government must increase the number of Kenyans covered by NHIF, rope in more people from the informal employment sector to pay their dues and equip healthcare centres with both medication and qualified personnel to attract even more Kenyans to public hospitals.**

pay through statutory deductions. For these employees, it is mandatory, while for those in informal sectors, who form 83 per cent of the Kenyan work force, it is not.

The main contributors to the fund are thus much fewer than the beneficiaries,

and its main core is the civil service, teachers and policemen. Recently, the National Police Service withdrew its members from their enhanced cover with NHIF, a bad sign that it does not inspire confidence.

The biggest hurdle in implementing UHC is underfunding by the government. The health sector receives only six per cent of the entire budget. For this noble venture to take root, the government must increase the number of Kenyans covered by NHIF, rope in more people from the informal employment sector to pay their dues, and equip health centres with both medication and qualified personnel to attract even more Kenyans to public hospitals.

At present, even those with NHIF cover still avoid going to public hospitals; they burden themselves paying out of pocket to the expensive private hospitals.

In countries where the UHC programme has been in existence for a longer period, all people – rich and poor – access their well-equipped public hospitals.

They avoid the shame of leaders rushing to foreign countries for treatment when they could have had the same at home, if they had been serious enough to make the system work.

UHC is a noble goal that can save many Kenyan lives and ought to be taken with the seriousness it deserves.

*abuluku@ke.nationmedia.com*

## the telescope

### ■ Masit under probe over poll conduct

## IEBC tribunal resumes sittings

A tribunal formed to investigate four Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) commissioners will this week resume its sittings after the long December holiday.

The panel, led by Justice Aggrey Muchelule, will on Monday continue with proceedings against suspended commissioner Irene Masit at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development in Nairobi.

Masit, one of the four commissioners suspended by President William Ruto last year, is facing the tribunal over her conduct during the August 9 presidential election. Together with Juliana Cherera, Jus-

tus Nyang'aya and Francis Wanderi, they rejected presidential results announced by then IEBC chairman Wafula Chebukati.

This is after Parliament approved a petition to have the President form a tribunal to probe their conduct. The other three commissioners resigned. However, Masit stayed put and has challenged the process to remove her from office.

The tribunal began its proceedings on December 20, 2022 and is expected to submit a report to President Ruto after the completion of the inquiry before a decision is made on the fate of Masit.



Irene Masit and Justus Nyang'aya at Pride Inn on September 17, 2022. WACHIRA MWANGI | NATION

### ■ Verstappen looking for his third successive title



Red Bull's Max Verstappen drives in the pit lane during the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka on October 9, 2022.

## The longest F1 season with 23 races

The Formula One season will be the longest ever with 23 races this year, organisers announced on Tuesday despite failing to find a replacement for The China Grand Prix.

Formula One chiefs had been searching for a stand-in since they announced in December the cancellation of the Chinese Grand Prix for the fourth successive year, citing continuing problems related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Portugal and Turkey had been rumoured as potential replacements as both have experience hosting a Grand Prix. The specialist press al-

so reported that China had tried to regain its place due to the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

However, Formula One issued a statement on Tuesday saying the schedule would remain at 23 races leaving a large gap between the third race, the Australian Grand Prix on April 2, and the Azerbaijan race, on April 30.

"Formula 1 can confirm the 2023 season will consist of 23 races. All existing race dates on the calendar remain unchanged."

Red Bull's Max Verstappen will kick off his bid for a third successive driver's title in Bahrain on March 5.

### ■ They're supporting M23, says Tshisekedi

## DRC: Rwanda the source of conflict



DR Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi has accused Rwanda of being the source of instability in the region, in a sharp response to comments made by a Rwandan cabinet minister, Claire Akamanzi, at the World

Economic Forum in Davos.

"Sorry madam, the insecurity issue we have in the Great Lakes region is called Rwanda," he said. Tshisekedi added that "Rwanda is supporting the M23 rebels" to create insecurity in eastern DR Congo — a claim that Rwanda has denied. He accused the rebels of killing more than 100 civilians in Kishishe to "frighten away" the community from the village, which has "precious minerals".

### ■ The company has entered into administration

## UK electric car battery firm collapses



Britishvolt, a UK firm behind a planned gigafactory for electric vehicle batteries, collapsed Tuesday after falling into financial distress.

The start-up, championed by former prime minister Boris Johnson to help drive a greener economy,

had been developing the multi-billion-pound project in Blyth, north-east England. However, on Tuesday, it fell into administration, a process whereby a troubled company brings in outside expertise to try and salvage parts of the business.

Financial firm EY said it would oversee the group's administration, confirming that a formal application for the process had been submitted. "The company has entered into administration," EY said in a statement.

# kenya lens

■ COSY RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPING BETWEEN MCK AND THE GOVERNMENT

## MEDIA CAPTURE: MESS AT THE PRESS

**Dennis Itumbi is one of the most powerful individuals in President William Ruto's propaganda networks. He directs online wars, and his favourite targets include mainstream media houses and senior journalists he charges are against the President.**

**We reached out to the Presidential Communications service boss David Mugonyi for clarification on the specific job descriptions in an establishment that seems to provide plenty of room for duplication of duties, but he did not return calls.**

**While he welcomes dialogue with government, Kenya Correspondents' Association chairman Oloo Janak would like an all-inclusive process where all stakeholders who constitute MCK are given due recognition, if there is no open consultation.**

**Mutual suspicion, which weakened the Kenya Media Sector Working Group after exit of the official regulatory body, the Media Council, has created a situation that is ripe for exploitation by forces that might be intent on a divide-and-rule approach on state relations with the media.**

**Information, Communications and the Digital Economy Cabinet Secretary Eliud Owalo has maintained a series of meetings with media industry players in recent days. Is media policy being championed by the crew around Ruto in State House or the bureaucrats at the ministry?**

**The CS and the PS, Edward Kisiang'ani, will have noted divisions within the industry that might complicate efforts on forging common fronts on critical issues such as pending legislation, the government advertising debt, and guarantees of media freedom.**

**If the Ruto government's relationship with the media is based around lists of enemies and friends as so often suggested on social media activity, it follows that Itumbi and company occupy very influential positions.**

**If the Ruto administration drives policies around capturing the media through economic pressure, pushing for sacking of journalists seen as unfriendly and using pliable allies to take control of the Media Council, the stage could be set for turbulent times**

● By MACHARIA GAITHO

When former Nation Media Group Editor-in-Chief Mutuma Mathiu in his weekly column recently ignited a spat with President William Ruto's social media guru Dennis Itumbi, it might have seemed like foolishly inviting a pig into a mud-wrestling contest.

Itumbi jumped at the opportunity to engage within a forum where he is arguably one of Kenya's most influential players, often reputed to command a large army of keyboard warriors primed to wade into twitter battles.

Yet, more than the exchanges between two

individuals who clearly detest each other was the important backdrop of issues that might define President Ruto's relationship with the media.

Although he holds no official post, and even in the recent list of senior appointments to the Presidential Communications Service was a conspicuous absentee, Itumbi is widely acknowledged as one of the most powerful individuals in Ruto's communications and propaganda networks.

He directs online wars on behalf of Ruto, and amongst his favourite targets are mainstream media houses and senior journalists he charges are against the President.

In the run-up to the August 2022 elections, Itumbi and other members of Ruto's communications team were at the heart of a social media onslaught against 'unfriendly' media operatives.

In November, when Mutuma's reign as NMG editorial boss came to an end, Itumbi and his cohorts went into open celebration on social media. Alongside Mutuma's exit was the shifting of *Daily Nation* Managing Editor Bernard Mwinzi to less demanding responsibilities in the same group.

Then followed retrenchment of crime writer Vincent Achuka, and the glee in the Itum-

Continued on Page 6

## kenya lens

# Is the State set on holding media at ransom?

Continued from Page 5

bi group almost suggesting that those on their hit list were on the way out.

If the Ruto government's relationship with the media is based around lists of enemies and friends as is so often suggested on social media, it follows that Itumbi and company occupy very influential positions given their day-to-day interactions with media.

That is why, as the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, Eliud Owalo, and his Principal Secretary, Edward Kisiang'ani, held a series of meetings with media industry players in recent days, eyes are not just focussed on the outcome of the engagements, but whether the real realm of media policy lies with the crew around Ruto in State House rather than bureaucrats at the Ministry.

One example might suffice. In the early years of the Jubilee regime of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President Ruto, the then Permanent Secretary for Information, Joseph Tiampati, convened a meeting of senior media personalities to give input on a document prepared to guide establishment of government communications policy and structures.

In the middle of deliberations at the ministry boardroom, Itumbi and two colleagues barged in, announcing that they were from State House. Tiampati briefed them on proceedings, but they were clearly not impressed and flatly declared that the entire initiative was a waste of time as the President was his own spokesman and required no help from other quarters. That was the end of it as a browbeaten Tiampati meekly surrendered to the authority displayed by his juniors in the government pecking order and brought the meeting to a close.

Itumbi and his colleagues were then serving President Kenyatta before they were drummed out of State House on transferring allegiance to his estranged deputy, Ruto.

They are now back in senior positions in the Ruto State House, and if the manoeuvres they exhibited during the campaigns are any guide, they are the ones enjoying the President's ear on how to deal with the media.

Those might be the kind of internal hurdles Owalo and Kisiang'ani will have to navigate as they meet various stakeholder groups promising government support for a free and independent media but in an environment where policy might be dictated by extraneous factors such as who enjoys the confidence of key figures around Ruto and who is treated with suspicion.

Meanwhile, the CS and the PS will have noted divisions within the industry that might complicate efforts on forging common fronts on critical issues such as pending legislation, the government advertising debt, guarantees



TV cameramen at the High Court in Mombasa. Major advertisers are shifting to digital platforms at the expense of legacy media. KEVIN ODIT | NATION

of media freedom, and a vacuum in the Media Council of Kenya following expiry of the term of the Council members.

Mutual suspicion, which weakened the Kenya Media Sector Working Group after exit of the official regulatory body, the Media Council, has created a situation that is ripe for exploitation by forces that might be intent on a divide-and-rule approach on the issue of government relations with the media. As at the time of writing, the key government officials had limited their engagements with the Media Council, currently being run by CEO David Omwoyo in the absence of a council.

However, Kenya Editors' Guild President Churchill Otieno and Kenya Union of Journalists Secretary-General Eric Oduor confirmed to *The Weekly Review* that their organisations had also secured appointments and were just waiting to confirm the specific dates.

What is not clear is whether the wider media stakeholders group bringing together the Media Council and representative groups such the two cited above and others like the Kenya Correspondents Association, the Association of Media Women in Kenya, Digital Broadcasters Association, Kenya Community Media Network, Political Journalists Association, Professional Broadcasters Association and the Media Owners Association will bring their joint concerns to the table.

As it is, some of the representative groupings are already uneasy with what seems to be a cosy relationship developing between the Media Council and the government, much like hap-

pened during the Uhuru regime, when Council leaders were seen as too subservient to then CS Joe Mucheru.

According to Kenya Correspondents Association boss Oloo Janak, the approach driven by the Media Council is worrying because it mirrors the same style that from 2019 saw it reduce itself to an appendage of the ministry, pushing a command and control approach to media regulation.

While he welcomes dialogue with government, Janak would like an all-inclusive process where all stakeholders who constitute the Media Council are given due recognition.

He is concerned that if there is no open consultation, there is risk that the recruitment process for the vacant Media Council slots could be compromised, especially if the MCK secretariat and the ministry join forces to influence emergence of a Kenya Kwanza-compliant team.

He urges the government to listen to all media sector players and not just the MCK, noting that the regulatory body remains an independent entity answerable to the stakeholders rather than to government.

He is concerned that statements issued by the MCK following meetings with Owalo and Kisiang'ani send wrong signals as they suggest that the government, rather than an independent co-regulatory body, is the guarantor of media freedom and independence.

He says that while the government can be asked to play a facilitative role, it cannot be the driver of any process of media law review or

## kenya lens

filling of vacant Media Council slots. Oduor, in a separate discussion with *The Weekly Review*, largely concurred. He revealed with the trade union had reached out to Owalo, but the CS wanted to first meet with official institutions such as the MCK before engaging other industry players.

He is sceptical, however, about reports from the meetings with the Media Council that government is being relied on to solve issues afflicting the media, insisting that solutions have to come from within the industry.

One of the issues on which the Media Council had a meeting of minds with the government representatives is taking media owners to task over the spate of layoffs, with both suggesting that the investors and managers were wallowing in wealth while condemning journalists to penury and joblessness.

Kisang'ani, at one meeting, said that most of the Sh1.4 billion or so owed to media houses by the Government Advertising Agency had been paid, leaving a balance of less than Sh250 million, but journalists were still being laid off. Oduor agrees with the ministry and MCK, blaming media owners for mistreating journalists, but notes that dwindling revenues are caused by a variety of factors beyond the government debt. He points at technological



Journalists based in Nakuru during a protest against police harassment on January 29, 2020.

changes and major advertisers shifting to digital platforms at the expense of legacy media.

The government can hardly decree solutions on media business models, but Oduor points to the European Union and other jurisdictions where the major digital players such as Google, Facebook, YouTube and others are by law being forced to give just compensation to traditional media platforms from which they source content and distribute advertising. Government support towards similar initiatives in the media law space in Kenya that go a long way to easing the revenue haemorrhage.

He is also keen that after meeting individual organisations, the CS will eventually meet with the joint stakeholder grouping.

That, however, will be dependent on present rifts being healed so that the Media Council rejoins the Kenya Media Sector Working Group fraternity. Another issue that will be key is State House attitude to media.

The Ruto government assembled a powerful communications team led by his long-time media boss David Mugonyi as head of the Presidential Communication Service. Former *Citizen TV* anchor Hussein Mohamed was appointed State House Spokesperson, while Emmanuel Talam got the slot of Communications Director.

Others returned to the fold after being exiled by Uhuru include Munyori Buku as Public Communications Secretary; Eric Ng'eno, Speechwriter and Director of Messaging; James Kinyua, Director of Branding and Events; and David Nzioka as Digital and Innovations Secretary. Former Nation journalist and later United Democratic Alliance Director of Communications Wanjohi Githae landed the post of Director of Public Communications.

*The Weekly Review* reached out to Mugonyi for clarification on the specific job descriptions in an establishment that seems to provide plenty of room for duplication of duties, with more generals than soldiers, but he did not answer nor return calls.

The big question, however, might be how much influence the communications team

will have on media policy.

If they drive policies around capturing the media through economic pressure, pushing for sacking of journalists seen as unfriendly, and using pliable allies to take control of the Media Council, the stage could be set for turbulent times.



Kenya Editors' Guild President Churchill Otieno



KUJ Secretary-General Eric Oduor

## kenya lens

### ■ RUTO HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED FOR THE SCALING UP OF COVERAGE COUNTRYWIDE



Health Cabinet Secretary Susan Nakhumicha (left) receiving an operations update from the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (Kemsa) chief executive Terry Ramadhani (right) during a tour of the Kemsa Embakasi National Supply Chain Warehouses on November 8, 2022.

# UNIFORMED FORCES DODGE NHIF

**But there are fears that by being insured by a private company, police and prisons officers will be exposed to cartels that could hold them captive**

• By OSCAR OBONYO

**D**igital registration of police and prison officers who have shifted from the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) to the new CIC General consortium medical cover has kicked off, raising questions about the government's ability to undertake healthy and profitable business with its own agencies.

In an apparent own goal, the two government bodies – NHIF and the National Police Service Commission (NPSC) – terminated an ongoing medical cover arrangement, giving

an opportunity to a private firm, CIC General Consortium, to bag the deal.

In a way, the move paints a different picture of the four-month-old government's resolve to foster teamwork and internal business amongst government agencies.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) remains one of President William Ruto's pet projects now and previously under the Jubilee government, in which he served as Deputy President. The President has repeatedly called for the scaling up of coverage nationwide.

However, the process of handling the ten-

der in question, No: MICING/NPS/002/2022-2023 for the provision of medical cover for the members of National Police Service (NPS) and Kenya Prisons Service (KPS), has not been as hitch-free as many would have expected.

The tender, advertised by the NPS on December 7, 2022 and opened on December 15, has attracted protests and criticism from a section of politicians, business people and government officers.

Noting that the police are expected to render services to all, Gatundu South MP Gabriel Kag-

Continued on Page 8



## kenya lens

ombe, for instance, points out that the move by the government to shift key medical coverage to private companies is a risky affair that is bound to interfere with the crucial services that the police offer Kenyans.

In a recent interview, the MP alleges that the move is bound to compromise the government's goal of universal health coverage in the country. The politician fears the move exposes the police and prisons officers to cartels "who will hold them captive".

These concerns notwithstanding, the total 141,961 officers who are targeted in the medical scheme – 109,557 from the NPS and 32,404 from the KPS – appear comfortable with the new arrangement. Under the deal with the NHIF, it emerges, only slightly over 1,500 officers – mostly the senior ranking officers – were able to access good health facilities.

Reached for comment, NPS spokesperson Dr Resila Onyango said the decision was persuaded by financial considerations: "We moved to the Consortium because they offered the lowest and most affordable bid," she explained.

The national insurer made a bid for the renewal of the contract for 2023 worth Sh9.3 billion, but lost to a Consortium of private health providers, CIC General Limited Insurance, Old Mutual General Insurance Kenya Limited and Britam General Insurance at a cost of Sh8.6 billion.

The national insurer's failure to secure the deal has been attributed to lethargy and internal and boardroom infighting, coupled with attempts by a section of insiders to increase the premium. Additionally, the medical cover was active at a time when a number of slots of senior staff, including directors, were vacant, thereby impacting negatively on service delivery. It is also worth noting that the decision to terminate the NHIF tender came at a time when the body's Chairman, Levis Nguyai, and Chief Executive Officer Dr Peter Kamunyo were embroiled in supremacy and management battles. President Ruto has since replaced Nguyai, a former MP for Kikuyu, with Michael Kamau, a former Cabinet Secretary for Transport.

Trouble with the NHIF-NPS medical deal has been brewing for long and, according to reliable sources, the two government bodies held over 20 meetings, half of them at the management level, with the rest being attended by high-level government officials from the relevant entities, including former Interior Per-

**The national insurer's failure to secure the deal has been attributed to lethargy and internal and boardroom infighting, coupled with attempts by a section of insiders to increase the premium. Additionally, the medical cover was active at a time when a number of slots of senior staff, including directors, were vacant, thereby impacting negatively on service delivery. It is also worth noting that the decision to terminate the NHIF tender came at a time when the body's Chairman and CEO were embroiled supremacy and management battles.**



Universal Health Coverage remains one of President William Ruto's pet projects now and previously under the Jubilee government, in which he served as Deputy President.

manent Secretary Karanja Kibicho and former Inspector-General of Police Hillary Mutiyambai. The big boys only came on board following a chain of complaints over poor services. The officers were unhappy with what they considered substandard services from hospitals through NHIF. Initially, the body complained that the sum of KSh4.5 billion allocated for cover was not adequate, a development that compelled the NPS to fork out an annual KSh200 million ex-gratia to take care of the excess claims.

Even then, the figures did not seem to level out and the police did what is naturally expected of them – undertake investigations and demand accountability over use of finances. NHIF reportedly neither availed audited accounts for the investigation nor responded to audit queries from the client.

Owing to the irretrievable differences, the NPS resolved to re-tender the cover and invited NHIF to bid like any other interested parties. This development only accelerated the silent war between the two government institutions. NHIF reportedly scaled down its services soon afterwards and denied hospital access to over 141,461 police and prison officers.

Insiders claim the Fund also disabled its systems and denied all except a paltry 1,500 senior officers access to their services. A senior officer at the national insurer confided to this writer that those with access to special treatment were only 39 prisons officers in job groups N(14), P(6), R(14), S(4) and T (1), while only 1,429 police officers from job groups M(455), N(607), P(247), R(97), and S(23) managed to access the special medical care.

Ideally, this moved technically locked out the

bulk of police officers under the KSh4.7 billion NHIF medical cover, a development that led to thousands of complaints from junior officers and members of their families.

It is at this point that Kibicho and Mutiyambai came into the picture and the matter was escalated to Cabinet level. A decision was made to look for an alternative as NHIF was allowed to put its house in order.

Except for the exit of Nguyai as chairman, little is known about the body's efforts to "put its house in order". Meanwhile, Kamau has come on board and a lot is expected from him to re-vamp the national insurer.

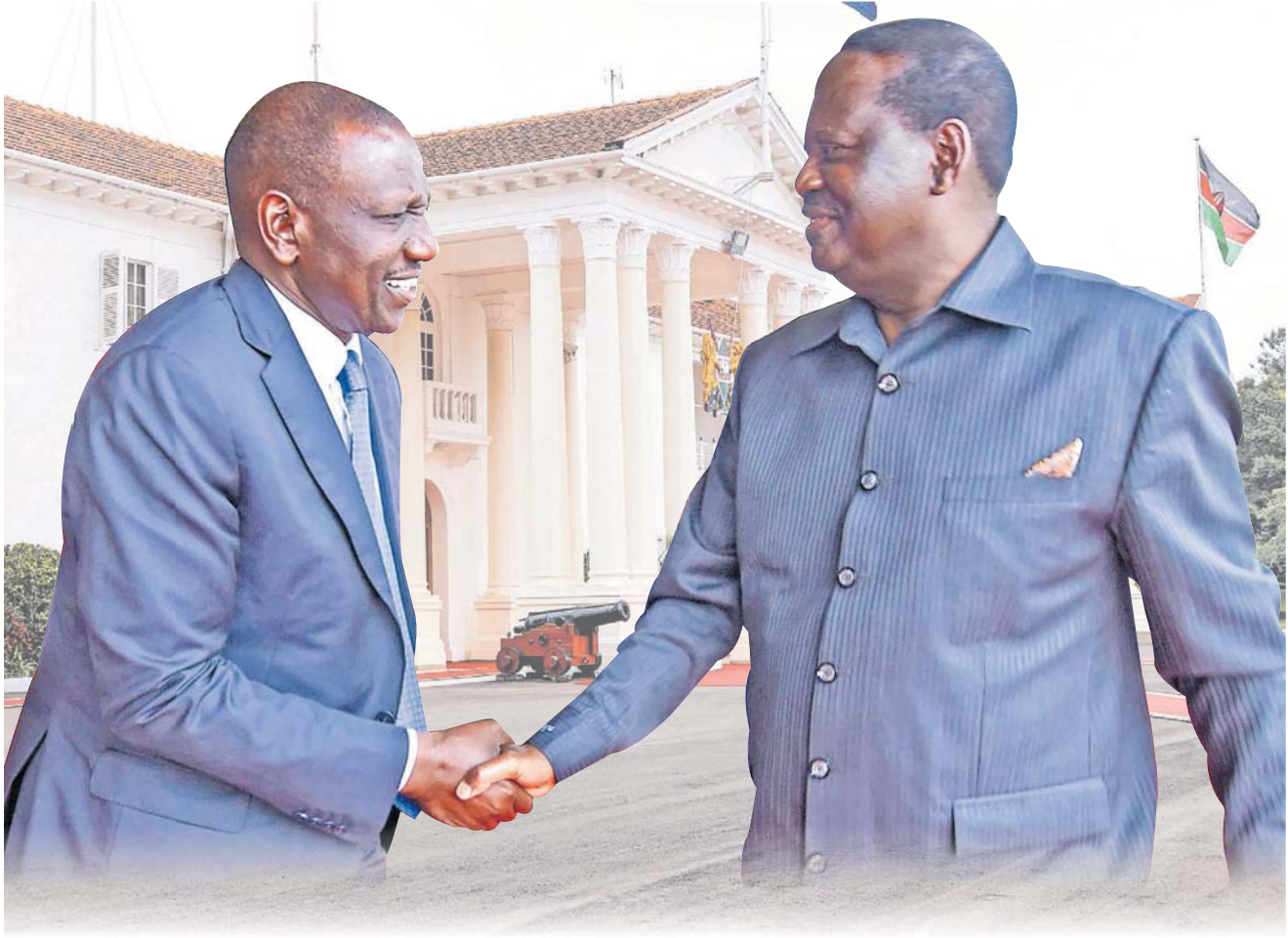
In the meantime, the hullabaloo over the tendering process continues, and perhaps this is where Kamau and Kamunyo may wish to kick-start their clean-up exercise. In one of the cases, whose petition papers have been seen by *The Weekly Review*, Benedict Kabugi Ndungu of Nairobi protests to the Director-General of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority over what he terms "illegalities, irregularities and non-compliances committed in the tender for the provision of medical cover for the members of National Police Service and Kenya Prisons Service".

The issue of a consortium, he argues, is confusing and technically incorrect: "There is nothing called consortium as an eligible bidder in the procurement of insurance services but only private firms, state-owned enterprises or joint ventures. All the mandatory standard forms in this Standard Tender Document Mo. 9 are to be filled by private firms or state-owned enterprises or joint ventures. There are no standard forms for the consortiums."

oscar.tko@gmail.com

## kenya lens

■ THE PRESIDENT'S CHARM OFFENSIVE IN THE REGION HAS LEFT MANY GUESSING



## THE QUIET RUTO-RAILA 'HANDSHAKE'

**The former PM, now becoming a veteran of negotiating from outside, sent all his elected members to welcome the President during his tour of Nyanza**

• By JOHN KAMAU

**A**fter William Ruto's Nyanza visit last weekend that saw the region's elected leaders pay homage to him, one unanswered question was the import of the strategic lobbying that was witnessed.

During the visit, President Ruto was in good spirits – as if history was about to repeat itself. He joked of the one per cent he got from the region, and seemed to suggest that that was now water under the bridge. The banter, the wit and the camaraderie seemed to break the ice. Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, now becoming a veteran of negotiating from out-

side, had sent all his elected members to welcome the President. His brother, Oburu, was there, too. The agenda seemed clear and organised. The list of speakers was deliberately crafted. The usual attack on the former Prime Minister was missing – and those who spoke, from both sides, did it with respect.

Whatever Ruto does with the spirit of goodwill is anybody's guess. What the Nyanza politicians are up to is also guesswork. While the President has said that he does not wish to kill the opposition, their cooperation on matters that require two-thirds majority in Parliament is crucial. The Nyanza region is a clever bet, and President Ruto understands most of the politicians from the region having been part of

the Orange Democratic Movement. For Nyanza politicians, they have also learnt what political isolation means.

For the last five years, despite being in the opposition, the region had found space in Uhuru Kenyatta's State House thanks to the 'handshake' between Odinga and President Kenyatta. For that, they had managed to unlock various projects and got favourable attention as Kenyatta sidelined his deputy, Ruto, and opted to work with Odinga.

The 1966 falling-out between Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Jomo Kenyatta had led to the isolation of the Luo community. More so, the region was skipped in government projects

Continued on Page 8

## kenya lens

and that became a painful lesson in history. The formation of Kenya Peoples Union had removed the Luo Nyanza from the government.

Its leaders could not travel abroad after they were denied passports. Frustrated, as Bruce Mackenzie would later in 1968 write to British diplomats, Jaramogi had written some letters to Kenyatta indicating that he wanted to make peace with Kanu. But, according to Mackenzie, “Mboya had insisted that Odinga should approach him rather than the President. The result was the present deadlock.” That position would be confirmed by Moi in November 1968, when he said that Odinga should return to Kanu unconditionally and “swallow the Kanu policy as it is today”.

Tom Mboya’s death on July 5, 1969 changed the matrix and Kenyatta became a hate figure within the Nyanza region. More so, few within Kanu dared to attend the funeral in Rusinga Island. But four months later, Jomo Kenyatta arrived in Kisumu to open the New Nyanza General Hospital. The trip would significantly alter his relations with Jaramogi after his motorcade was stoned and he was heckled with shouts of “*Dume! Dume!*” – the KPU slogan. In the ensuing violence till his death in 1978, Kenyatta never met Odinga nor returned to the region. More so, he had the top KPU leadership detained. Kenyatta not only used the Kisumu incident as a justification to ban KPU but this was later used by President Moi to silence Jaramogi and block his entry into national politics.

After Jaramogi was released on April 2, 1971, he rejoined Kanu in September that year and sought to start another political journey. By then, his main nemesis, Tom Mboya, was dead but he had to tackle the likes of Odongo Oromo, Mathews Ogutu and Isaac Omolo Okelo, who had filled the void. Jaramogi’s attempt to vie in the 1974 election was thwarted by Kanu after its governing council said only an ex-KPU detainee who had been a Kanu member for three years since his release and had “fully identified himself with the government and party policies and programmes of development” would be approved. It was the end of the road for Jaramogi. Although he was elected Kanu chairman in Siaya District in 1975 and again in 1976, the



President William Ruto shares a light moment with Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga and other local leaders when he commissioned the Homa Bay Market on January 13. TONNY OMONDI | NATION

registrar refused to ratify his election. In April 1978, the Luo Union sent a huge loyalty delegation to seek reconciliation with Kenyatta. It is now claimed that the purpose was reversed by Nyanza PC Isaiah Cheluget and loyalist Luo and Gusii leaders – sparking riots in Nakuru.

With Kenyatta dead, Moi had hoped that he would manage to bring the Luo Nyanza region into his government.

Moi began Jaramogi’s rehabilitation with his 1979 appointment as chairman of the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board. It was his first government post since 1966. Also appointed were his allies Luke Obok and Achieng Oneko, to parastatal jobs. Odinga’s protégé, Oloo Aringo, became a minister – and court jester – in 1980.

In July 1980, Jaramogi was finally readmitted to Kanu as a life member and was prepared to enter Parliament after the March 1981 resignation of Bondo MP Hezekiah Ougo. But after he made a remark in Mombasa on April 4, 1981 accusing Kenyatta of being a “land grabber”, Jaramogi was barred from running.

From out in the cold, he began pushing for change. The formation of Forum for the Restoration

of Democracy in 1990 and its subsequent split into Ford Asili, Ford People and Ford Kenya, denied him a chance to win the Presidency after coming in fourth after Moi, Kenneth Matiba, and Mwai Kibaki.

Dejected, or perhaps strategically, Jaramogi decided to start working with Kanu and was taken by Moi to Turkwel Dam to see the government projects there. This caused tension within Ford Kenya and led to its split. The greatest problem was Jaramogi’s blossoming relationship with Kanu. In May 1993, Jaramogi introduced a policy of cooperation with Kanu to ostensibly aid the development of Nyanza.

He said he believed “from bitter experience” that, in a multi-party state, the only way to ensure that the Luo community obtained access to state resources was to cooperate with the government. Jaramogi moved closer to Moi, more than any other politician. But his death on January 20, 1994, ended the cooperation.

The cooperation would later be picked up by Raila, who inherited his father’s mantle. Shortly after they lost the 1997 General Election, Raila and Kibaki made a joint statement on January 2.

But after four days, Raila released his own statement and congratulated Moi for his victory. Just like his father had done, Raila made a deal with Moi in February 1998, in which Kanu and the NDP would start a ‘cooperation’.

It was this political alliance that would later wreck Kanu from within. During this period, Raila was allowed by Moi to purchase the molasses plant in Kisumu and after he dissolved his party he was made a cabinet minister. Other Luo Nyanza elite got various positions in Moi’s government. Odinga had hoped that Moi would anoint him as his successor, but was shocked when Moi picked Uhuru Kenyatta. But he had managed to stop the isolation of Luo Nyanza.

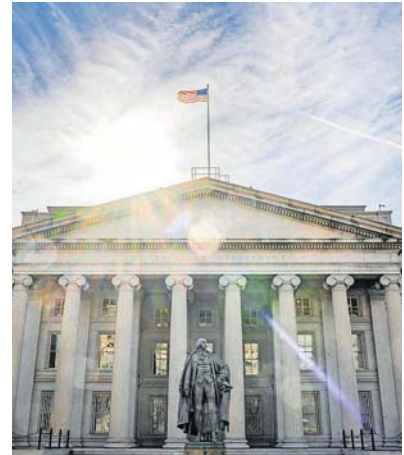
Raila would repeat the same trick in the now famous handshake after he managed to start a working strategy with President Kenyatta. Once again, Raila – despite being in the opposition – played his cards well. With Dr Ruto now firmly in office, it will be interesting to see how Raila and his followers will manage their politics and whether they will negotiate to have some space within.

[jkamau@ke.nationmedia.com](mailto:jkamau@ke.nationmedia.com)  
@johnkamau1

# the limelight



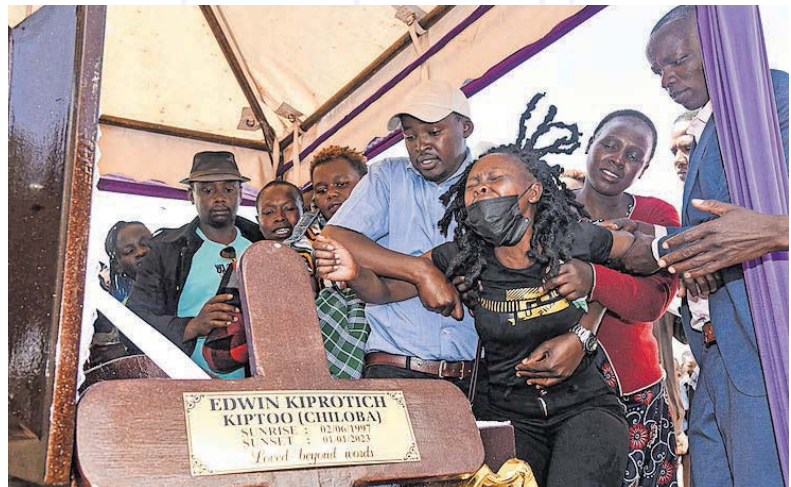
Rescuers pull out the body of a victim who died in a Yeti Airlines plane crash in Pokhara on January 16. Nepal observed a day of mourning for victims of the nation's deadliest aviation disaster in three decades, with 67 people confirmed killed in the plane crash. PHOTO | AFP



The Treasury Building is seen in Washington, DC, on January 18. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the country was projected to reach its legal borrowing limit on Thursday. PHOTO | AFP



Luxembourg's Marc Angel (centre) is congratulated after being elected Vice-President of European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France, on January 18. PHOTO | AFP



Relatives of LGBTQ activist Edwin Kiprotich Kipruto, alias Chiloba, whose body was stuffed in a metallic box and dumped on Kaptinga-Kipkenyo road in Uasin Gishu County, and other mourners view his body during his burial service in Sergoit, Elgeyo Marakwet County, on January 17. JARED NYATAYA | NATION



An employee brings a photo of late Italian Hollywood actress Gina Lollobrigida for the installation of her lying in state at Rome's Capitoline Hill on January 18. PHOTO | AFP



A Ukrainian helicopter releases chaff and flare countermeasures as it flies in the vicinity of Bakhmut, Donetsk region on January 17. PHOTO | AFP



Internally displaced people carry charcoal from the forest at the foot of Nyiragongo volcano in Virunga National Park, DRC, on January 13, following resurgence of the M23 rebellion north of Goma city. PHOTO BY | AFP

The  
**Arena**



# QUICK OFF THE MARK

*Through his innovative mobile platform, Duhqa, Victor Maina is able to deliver supplies to retailers' doorsteps rapidly and at no extra cost*

OPEN SPACE

# How the youth can seize county opportunities

**Housing programme:** These projects are a godsend and their social contribution to the whole county is incalculable

● BY MOSES OJUANG'

In Kenya, elections are never said to be over. There is always that politicking and a campaign mood that lingers long after the completion of a term. While politicians are still jostling for even greater economic perks, the language they use for self-aggrandisement is always shrill and encompassing the entire region of their jurisdiction. They employ "We" where they ought to say "I". This is a fact of our character and is the source of friction in many counties like Meru, Kericho and others that are still squabbling under the radar of public scrutiny.

The power struggles also continue in the national government but we must admit that the Presidency is already in a serious mood, trying to make real the promises dangled at the electorate during the heated campaigns last year.

Last October, President Ruto visited Homa Bay County. It was a time when the local leadership was still hurting and had not yet accepted that they had not won the coveted Presidency.

The result is that many of them snubbed the President's tour.

He never gave up and this year he went back there to a rousing welcome. The message to them was that he is the President of Kenya and not leader of only those who voted for him. That communication sunk in and was very well received.

Apart from this political coup of sorts is the fact that he had an economic agenda that we are sure is going to raise development in the county.

Among them is the completion of road projects that had already started but stalled; the building of a modern market; and the construction of low-cost housing for residents of Homa Bay town.

These projects are the most viable for the county and shall open up huge economic development that has been thwarted by their absence.

This is just the niche that youth in Homa Bay have always lacked. The fishermen along the shores of the lake, who take more than 12 hours to get their catch to the mar-

kets, shall now take less than an hour to cover the same distance and profit from their labour.

The 5,000 units of low-cost housing in the town shall not only provide labour for the youth but shall also lubricate other concerns like sand harvesting, brick making and transportation of materials.

The job opportunities they shall create will help uplift living conditions in the whole county.

The President advised the contractor to recruit labourers from among Homa Bay residents. Similarly, the materials required for their construction will be sourced locally since they are available.

This development could end the mushrooming of slums in Homa Bay town. Most economically vulnerable families in Homa Bay live in the informal settlements of Shauri Yako, Makongeni, Sofia and Misita in structures made of rusty iron sheets.

For the hardworking youth of the county, this is a chance they cannot afford to lose.

We know of labour-intensive work they undertake just to make ends meet, yet what they get from their labour isn't worth the input.

Those sand harvesters, for instance, haul tons of sand into lorries for very low pay; the brick makers work for weeks just sell a single brick at four shillings each, simply because they cannot reach the market and are thus taken advantage of by middlemen. This exploitation must come to an end.

These projects are a godsend and their social contribution to the whole county is incalculable.

Indeed, it is our fervent hope that the same shall be replicated in all counties in this country. That way, we may see a huge difference in the department of our citizenry.

*Mr Ojuang' comments on social issues. mojuang@gmail.com*

*Any feedback on topical issues? We would like to hear from you. Send your views to: weeklyreview@ke.nationmedia.com*



■ MIND SPEAK



**Jedidah Mwangeli**

President William Ruto's visit to the opposition stronghold in Nyanza is an indicator of a maturing democracy that has created an avenue for inclusivity. The President was able to sit down with local leaders to discuss the economic transformation agenda. This is a step forward towards national cohesion through meaningful conversations with those we disagree with.

— *Chief Operations Officer, Landscape Kenya Foundation*



**Joseph Owino**

The two-day state visit by President Ruto to Nyanza, a region that voted for his opponent almost to the last man in the August 2022 polls, was a wise move. The Head of State has unfettered access to all corners of the country and being a political master tactician, he used this opportunity to unveil a number of development projects to woo the region to his side. Only time will tell.

— *Siaya County Youth Senator*



**Margaret Muchoki**

President William Ruto's visit to Luo Nyanza shows his willingness to work with all Kenyans. This will build a good relationship among Kenyans and overcome tribalism. The visit also demonstrates political goodwill from the government to develop the region. It's a sign of political maturity that should be encouraged.

— *Deputy President, Daystar University Students Association*



**Daniel Kiptanui**

Whenever you are confronted by an opponent, conquer him with love. President William Ruto's triumphant entry to the lakeside region aims at bringing the country together. The first statement by the President was to thank the people for the votes they gave him, and for remaining peaceful.

— *Student President, Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology*

## MY TAKE



• BY WAGA ODONGO

Last month, I read a horrifying tale. It was about a nine-year-old girl who climbed atop a chest as her five-year-old brother watched, wrapped a metal dog leash around her neck and hooked the buckle to a nearby door hinge and swung from it.

The girl was trying to recreate the blackout challenge, where children around the world were choking themselves with household items until they black out in order to film the adrenaline rush obtained by regaining consciousness.

The whole thing is done on camera with the resulting video being shared on social media for all to watch. Unfortunately for some, this challenge had led them to recording their own suicides on their phones.

The American girl in the story passed away only hours after watching the challenge. Just weeks before, an Italian girl, 10, had tried the same challenge using a towel to equally disastrous consequences.

The blackout challenge has killed at least 15 children in the past 18 months as social media sites have resorted to using human teams to preview videos that go viral to stop such accidents. The internet has the best things; the internet has the worst things. And we are addicted to it.

Addiction is the inability to stop consuming a substance or performing an activity even when it is clear it causes harm.

I don't suffer from any major addiction, I think. I don't drink, my coffee cups are limited to five on a bad day and I think gambling is for idiots. However, I love YouTube. I can't stop myself watching. I watch historical videos on YouTube constantly without stopping, frittering away what little time I have on this pale blue rock.

As I type this the computer I am working on has a script that stops all YouTube videos from ever playing. It runs in the background and cannot be reset even if I delete the

# SOCIAL MEDIA BOMBSHELL

**Police your children:** Don't give them smartphones...As a parent, it is your duty to delay as much as possible their debut on social sites



browser. To get rid of it I must reboot the operating system. The best and actually only way to stop myself is to ensure the option doesn't even occur.

Historically, we have consumed media that is finite. Books have limited pages; TV wasn't always 24 hours. But now we have boundless media. YouTube defaults to loading the next video for you immediately, social media is an endless scrolling list with each video promising another dopamine hit. The high is just there, slightly out of reach and you can get there if you keep scrolling. Our instincts honed millennia ago are now hopelessly outgunned, unprepared for plenitude without end.

Our phones are delivering an endless torrent of stimuli, all curated to deliver the largest bang of dopamine to our hind brains. And it is hurting us. Social media makes people anxious, angry and alienated. The truth is that these sites are nearly impossible to police. If you ban phrases like Instagram tried to do with anorexia-promoting hashtags, people just switch to using satiric misspelling to get round the detection systems. Videos, meanwhile, need human reviewers, an impossible task when users output is in the millions.

In America, the rate of hospitalisation for girls after attempted suicide increased 67 per cent since 2009. You cannot link that to the

general global economic downturn because if it was, the numbers would go down when the economy improves. The rates of attempted suicide are going up because of image-based social media sites that have undermined women's self-confidence. You are now compared not to the girl next door, but the most beautiful women that surgeons have ever grafted together.

Children, meanwhile, are subjected to videos from quacks to try clearly dangerous challenges where hospitalisation is a best-case scenario. I imagine that if adults struggle with social media, the effects must be worse among children. Social media with algorithmic feeds is barely ten years old so we still don't know the full effect of what it will be like for a generation that doesn't know life before the internet.

These apps act as catnip for children. One social media site was so addictive that the Chinese government required the makers to regularly remind users to take a break and exercise.

Unfortunately, algorithms will deliver stupid ideas and challenges to children too young to fully grasp the risk they are in by engaging in them.

Coincidentally, data privacy laws make the situation worse, not better. The two dead girls I wrote about were too young to be on Tik-

Tok and could have been prevented from joining the site by using age-restricting software. Facial age estimation software exists that is fairly accurate but laws in European countries stop collection of data from minors, meaning that you can't legally take and store their photos for comparison against others. So we have cases where users are asked to enter their ages and underage persons can create accounts.

It is a trade-off between privacy and security. For ultimate peace, I scanned my face to use a certain crypto app, rather than use text message passwords. I can either choose to have a bit more invasion of privacy and my few shillings or I can keep my privacy and wait for the Mulot Boys to clone my sim card and rob me blind.

As a nation, we need policies regarding the usage of social media by children, cognisant of the nuances involved. As part of our Data Protection Act, we need to create guardrails on children's use of social media.

Ultimately, the final arbiter should be parents. No one can protect your children like you can. A smartphone should probably only ever be made available to adults. As a parent, it is your duty to delay as much as possible the debut of your children on social media.

Mr Odongo is a Software Engineer  
wagaodongo@gmail.com

## UNIQUE CAREER PATH

# DRIVEN TO SUCCEED



Erick Wokabi is the proprietor of 'Carnversations', one of the fastest-growing YouTube niche channels on cars with more than 120,000 subscribers. EDDY ASHIOYA | NATION

## Erick Wokabi has made a thriving career of his life-long love affair with motor vehicles through Carnversations, a YouTube niche channel on cars

● BY EDDY ASHIOYA

**T**o whom much is given — stop me if you've heard this one before — much is expected. But before he was given much, it was almost all taken away. He was almost taken away. The story unfolds: he was around five years old then, a child with respiratory problems. One fateful day, someone was smoking around their compound. He inhaled it.

Enter Newton's Third Law: for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Only this time, he couldn't exhale. He got an asthmatic attack. It was seven in the evening, he recalls, the year of our Lord 1999, and cars were few and far between. There was none to take him to the hospital. His dotting mother, with her son in a staring contest with the grim reaper, strapped him to her back and trekked all

the way to the hospital, "several kilometres" away. The way he talks about her, you get a feeling that that day she seemed to be evading death by simply refusing to acknowledge its possibility.

Suffice it to say, he survived. As he was being discharged, a thought lingered: "If mom had a car, she wouldn't have to go through all this." So, what does a boy do? A boy plans to get his mom a car. And as luck would have it, he bumps into a 'Win-a-Car' competition, with not one, nor two, but seven cars up for grabs. The scriptwriters cannot say they did not try. Oh, the car? It was a Daewoo Cielo 1300cc, no judgments if you've never heard of it. It's an aficionado thing, which he now is. He, by the way, is Erick Wokabi, the 29-year-old proprietor of *Carnversations*, one of the fastest-growing YouTube niche channels on cars. (At the time of writing he had 120k subscribers. All organic.)

"The only thing I think I have done is cars," he

tells me as we have coffee at Valencia Gardens on Riara Road. "It's a very expensive venture, and you need strong partners to back you."

For you to make it in the content world you have to be consistent. That means you have to find guys who will actually give you cars every other week. He found one such partner in MotorHub, where he gets cars in exchange for advertising and mentions.

The Agribusiness, Economic, and Food Industry Management graduate from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology had always had his internal engine revving for something else. The office wasn't it, he tells me, waving away one of several incoming calls on his two mobile phones. He is a busy man I can tell. "The problem with this world, sometimes you have to learn the hard way. Unlike in school, in the automotive world you do the exam first, then you learn."

The exam he is talking about is his first for-



ay into the motor world. He started writing on Facebook about cars. He knew cars like one would know every squad member of his favourite football team – plus the support staff.

When his mother finally bought a car – a green Datsun—he was over the moon. He notes that he had always wanted to be a pilot, but aren't drivers just pilots on land? So he learned how to fly cars through mischief. 'Observation and error' are the exact words he used, but what's that Shakespeare said? A rose by any other name?

Erick started the Toyota Hiace community in Kenya. "Which is still active," he assures me. He would publish eBooks on them and sell to his subscribers who had learned of him on Facebook or through word of mouth. "I made a lot of money. One day I made Sh30,000 in less than three hours." His popularity grew like a house on fire, nay, like an engine on fire.

Unbeknownst to him, his endeavours had caught the attention of others, who fluttered their eyelashes in his direction, wooing him to work at their dealerships. It's here that he would learn the ropes while still building his community. He talks of getting a raw deal from the dealerships. He survived on tips and commissions during his days in the trenches, earning a mere Sh10,000 on deals worth hundreds of thousands. But that did not shake him because at least he was in the room. And isn't that what matters? Being at the table?

Ever the visionary, he could already see the writing on the wall. The future was online. "I applied for a leave of office and asked for a Landcruiser to go for the Elgon Challenge."

Only problem was, the car he had earmarked had been sold a day prior. But winners don't make excuses when the other side starts playing the game. He dealt with the cards fate had handed him. "We were offered a Vanguard instead. That was a bad idea but we thought why not? We did a review of the car during the summit challenge and we got rave reviews."

The future was now the present.

With his channel blowing up, Erick took the next logical step. Employment was not giving him freedom and he needed more space. At the height of Covid-19, he left his daily job. He told no one. Except for Ibrahim, who now partners with him at work. "Filming is not easy. Ibrahim had the equipment; I had the content."

It was a marriage made in heaven? You bet. The rest is history. "From this year, we are opening up a second channel specifically for guys who cannot afford these used foreign cars." "The team is bigger now," he says.

"We have a legal team, an accounting depart-

.....  
**Enter Newton's Third Law: for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Only this time, he couldn't exhale. He got an asthmatic attack. It was seven in the evening, he recalls, the year of our Lord 1999, and cars were few and far between. There was none to take him to the hospital. His doting mother, with her son in a staring contest with the grim reaper, strapped him to her back and trekked all the way to the hospital, "several kilometres" away.**  
 .....

////////////////////////////////////  
**I need to have wings. You cannot be in content creation forever. We don't want to be the old guys who refused to evolve. We want to mentor others to take over and pass on the baton. You know, there are always guys who are younger and better. That is the best CSR we can do.**

Erick Wokabi

”

ment, plus technical and editorial." He tells me he has turned down a few big deals, wary of the Chinese finger-lock terms proposed. "If you want to join *Carnversations*, we want to know you like doing the things that you do. We don't want it to feel like you are coming to work."

If the path from promise to promised land looks like it was *rosy, mea culpa* – forgive me, for it was not so. He has had his fair share of controversies, not least when he almost signed away his company. I prod further.

"These guys approach us and want us to do an eight-week campaign. It looked very good until we took it for interpretation. They had put in a codicil that they would own the right to the content and own the likeness of the influencer into perpetuity. . . in short, as long as they have paid you, they own you. We asked them to change the clauses and they said it's not serious. It's just a template," they said. Our lawyer laughed that off. Contracts, he says, are binding.

When he quit at the zenith of Covid, Erick learned a few lessons, some of which you, too, may have learned. "Nothing comes easy." "Develop a thick skin." "If you love what you do, the drive will keep you moving when the results are not coming."

He says the best car he has driven so far is the (Mercedes) G-Wagon. "It's a car that gives you a very rare blend. An off-road car, a sports car but also a practical car. the holy trifacta. I drove it and felt like it has reached for the parts of me that are not seen very often. It's a car with character." The middle child with an elder brother and younger sister is a millennial at heart, but he still has his reservations about modern cars.

"They are not cars." What's his type of car then? "BWM E30. Preferably a two-door. Produced between 1986 and 1995."

Or the Toyota Landcruiser 80 series. When he speaks about cars, you can see his eyes twinkle. I can recognise that look, a look you see only in charismatic churches, the look of a man transported into ecstasy.

To him, a car is more than mobility. It's a piece of art. "You have to drive and enjoy the drive." Currently, he is driving a Subaru Legacy RS, limited edition. "That is the car that made Subaru what it is today." He proceeds to educate me why Subaru was painted blue, because it was delivering for Subarus in the WRC with its golden rims. "It's not a very fuel-efficient car but it's fun to drive. That is the car I drive when I want to go fast." For his daily commute? A 1998 Volvo S40 would do – a green one.

Have things turned out the way he expected at 29? "All of us had things we wanted to do when we finished university. You know, get a wife, and kids and boom. For me, not yet. His gaze is solely focused on the future. He is looking to get a private flying licence.

"I need to have wings," is how he describes it. The bigger challenge for him is flying. "You cannot be in content creation forever. We don't want to be the old guys who refused to evolve. We want to mentor others to take over and pass on the baton. You know, there are always guys who are younger and better. That is the best CSR we can do."

What is the price he has had to pay for ambition? "Late nights. Working in odd places, but we have enjoyed whatever we have done." If you don't love what you are doing you will soon quit. He talks fondly of the East African Safari Classic, of which *Carnversations* was an official partner. He is looking to join the rally as a driver. When? Soon. "This thing will cost you relationships if you do not get people who understand you. Sometimes you have to sacrifice the social bit." He tells me an anecdote of having to cancel a date because he had to reshoot content when they lost audio.

Being famous gives you many things, but it takes something too. Especially when your fame comes as a result of your talent, from the thing you've nurtured and loved. People keep stopping him in the streets to ask him questions about cars. "These are the people who will not understand that you are tired or exhausted." It's a poisoned apple.

How would he describe success? "Being better than you were yesterday." He says his daily mantra is Kai Zen, the Japanese philosophy of being better today than you were yesterday. Maybe explains why he likes driving Japanese.

Of all the car parts, which one would he be? "The engine. You want to run and be the source of the power. The candle that lights the others."

"I don't regret being taken advantage of in my earlier years," he says. Wistfully. Longingly. "Today, I take it as school fees. That's the price I had to pay to learn and to get to where I am."

That reminds me of another Asian trope – Kintsugi – the Japanese art of putting broken pieces back together with gold, built on the idea that by embracing flaws and mistakes, you can create an even stronger, more beautiful piece of art.

eddieashioya@gmail.com

## RETAIL MARKETING

• BY NDUGU ABISAI

It bit him like a bug. The enterprising spirit. In 2019, in the heat of the Mombasa sun, Victor Maina carved out an idea: to sell clean drinking water in biodegradable sachets. At the time, he was working for an international logistics company, so supplies ran through his veins like blood. He teamed up with a friend, Dudu Moilwa, and in Victor's words the business was doing well two years later, when they decided to sell to an investor in Mombasa after they identified another gap in the market. Partnering with a mutual friend, David Angweny, they set up Duhqa, a business-to-business platform for distribution of fast-moving consumer goods. That was in January 2021.

Duhqa has a mobile application that enables merchants to source products from manufacturers in quantities that suit them, and to have them delivered in minimal time, and free of charge, right to their doorsteps, thus reducing the cost of doing business by about 15-20 per cent.

Kariuki Maina, a vendor of street food in Nairobi's River Road, is a happy man.

"I have sold smokies and sausages for the last 11 years. All this while, I have had to go to the shops to source for the products myself, which takes time away from making sales. When I downloaded the app on referral from a friend in the same business, it made my work easier. I just make my order and they deliver within two or three hours at no extra cost. Duhqa makes my work easier," he enthuses.

How did Maina and his pals set up shop? "Initially, we pumped in our own money to get the numbers going. Then we got to a place where we felt the need to expand both locally and regionally. We were growing in triple digits month on month, and we needed more capital to sustain the growth. During this time, we joined the Techstars Accelerator cohort of October 2021. We applied for seed funding of two million dollars, which was granted after rigorous vetting and training," Maina says.

With the funding, they expanded their reach from their initial focus of two regions – Nairobi and Central Kenya – to parts of Eastern Kenya, the peripherals of the Coastal region like Voi and Taita Taveta, and they are now making inroads into northern Kenya, having supplied to merchants in Garissa.

Duhqa is setting up shop beyond Kenya's borders too, with Madagascar being its newest focus. "The reason we took to Madagascar is because they have a mass market as unique as ours. The informal settlements there are faced with poor supply of commodities due to challenges such as bad roads, capital deficiency and insecurity. By providing this platform to them, we make commodities available without much hustle," Maina explains. They have also made inroads into Canada, Rwanda and neighbouring Uganda. Currently, Duhqa serves 8,791 active merchants, having registered above 10,000 members on their platform. They have 42 manufacturers on board as well, whom they link to the merchants. "The active members are the ones who make at

# SUPPLIES IN HIGH GEAR

**Duhqa, a mobile application for supply of fast-moving consumer goods, enables merchants to source for goods in convenient quantities and have them delivered in minimal time for free**



Victor Maina at his warehouse in Nairobi. He set up Duhqa in January 2021. Duhqa has a mobile application that enables merchants to source for inventory in fragmented quantities that suit them from manufacturers.

least two orders a week each."

For Margaret Aloo, a shop vendor in Nairobi's Mukuru kwa Njenga informal settlement, business runs smoother now. "I have a small shop. Finding a supplier who is willing to supply goods in small quantities to my remote location is difficult," says Aloo. "I find Duhqa convenient because they cut short the process of

sourcing for me."

Duhqa has also grown operationally – from a lean team of three running on an asset-light model at the beginning to 50 currently. It has also added new areas of focus, having started exclusively with fast-moving consumer goods and then expanded to cold chain supplies, partnering with a meat processing manufac-



Victor Maina with Duhqa staff in Nairobi. Understanding the market has helped in reducing operational costs for both their business and their clients.

turer. Duhqa now distributes about one thousand packets of sausages to vendors across Nairobi every morning. They supply beef, pork and chicken as well.

At the beginning, it would take up to a whole working day to deliver goods to retailers, which they managed to reduce to six hours. Now they can comfortably promise to deliver in two.

“We know the pain points of our clients. Understanding the market has helped in reducing operational costs for both our business

**Duhqa has grown operationally – from a lean team of three running on an asset-light model at the beginning to 50 currently. It has also added new areas of focus, having started exclusively with fast-moving consumer goods and then expanded to cold chain supplies, partnering with a meat processing manufacturer.**

and our clients,” says Maina. They have also expanded to home deliveries.

Recently, Duhqa launched a product in response to numerous requests from clients they had supplied meat to. “The clients needed drinks to accompany the meats. So we created a product called Duhqa Party, where the app suggests drinks that go well with the types of meat you purchase and delivers it all to you as a package,” Maina explains.

In the pipeline is a partnership with a local financial institution to enable retailers and individual shoppers access to goods on credit. “We are looking at a situation where you, the shopper, want medicine for your child but cannot access it because you do not have cash in hand. After assessing your creditworthiness, we will allow you to get your supplies on credit and pay later on agreed terms. We want to make it easier for people to shop. But much more than that we want to be that shop that you can always go to whether you have money

**When I downloaded the app on referral from a friend in the same business, it made my work easier. I just make my order and they deliver within two or three hours at no extra cost. Duhqa makes my work easier.**

Kariuki Maina, street vendor

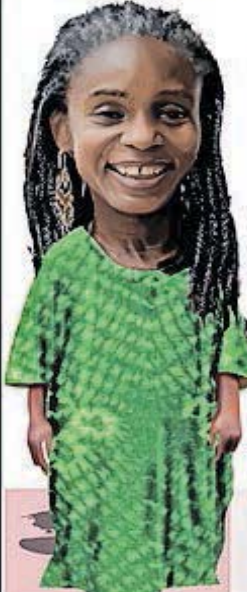


or not,” says Maina.

In a world that is crowded with startups, what has kept Duhqa afloat? According to Maina, it is their understanding that they cannot be a startup forever. This they learned early in their business and therefore pushed themselves to breaking even to ensure their sustainability. “When we started, we understood that by meeting a need, we would break even soon. Profitability meant that we could expand and that is how we modelled our business. We had clarity that ours was a business and we have managed it as such,” Maina concludes.

[nduguabisai@gmail.com](mailto:nduguabisai@gmail.com)

**The FLIP SIDE**  
With John Nyuganyinya  
[juyaga@ke.na:ionmedia.com](mailto:juyaga@ke.na:ionmedia.com)




**WOMAN POWER**

CUMBA TOURE FROM MALI WAS LISTED AS ONE OF 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL AFRICAN WOMEN IN 2019. SHE IS A RENOWNED LEADER IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR, AND A FEMINIST.

“I WAS CALLED A FEMINIST BEFORE I UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANT. WOMEN TEND TO JUSTIFY WHY THEY ARE FEMINISTS. FOR ME, THERE ARE NO IFS OR BUTS, I AM UNAPOLOGETICALLY FEMINIST,” SHE SAYS.

UP UNTIL END OF 2022, MS TOURE WAS THE CO-COORDINATOR OF ‘AFRICANS RISING’, A PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENT FOUNDED IN 2017 TO ERASE BORDERS IN THE CONTINENT AND UNITE AFRICANS ACROSS THE GLOBE, AND TO CALL FOR THE LIBERATION AND REPARATIONS FOR AFRICA. WE CELEBRATE YOU, MADAM TOURE

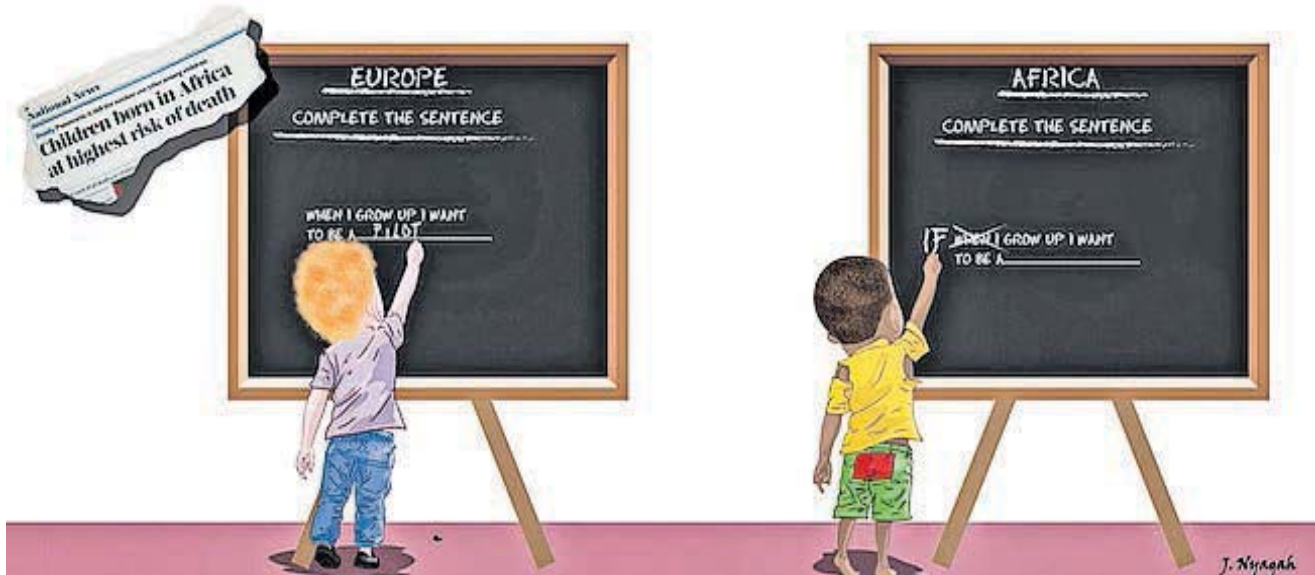


**STAR OF THE WEEK**

ZIMBABWE’S ROBSON CHINHOI WON THE FOURTH LEG OF THE SAFARI TOUR AT SIGONA GOLF CLUB IN NAIROBI ON JANUARY 18TH 2023. HE MADE A STRONG COMEBACK WITH AN ENCOURAGING THREE UNDER PAR 69, TO CLINCH THE TOP CASH PRIZE WITH AN ALL ROUNDS TOTAL OF FIVE UNDER PAR 283 ON WEDNESDAY LAST WEEK.

STARTING THE DAY FOUR SHOTS BEHIND JUNIOR AMATEUR NJOROGE KIBUGU, CHINHOI’S PUTTER SEEMED TO BE BETTER THAN THE THIRD ROUND AS HE MADE THREE BIRDIES AT THE FRONT NINE WITH ONLY THREE BOGEYS COMING AT THE SECOND AND SEVENTH HOLE. CONGRATULATIONS, CHAMP.

## opinion



■ To the public, officers are extortionists who use their uniforms and firearms for personal gain

# Dear IG, civilians are not your enemies

**A**s former Chief Justice David Magara, branded a thug by both President Kenyatta and Deputy William Ruto in 2017, started work on reform of the police and prison services, four serving officers were brought to court and charged with attempted robbery with violence.

Then NTV broadcast footage of the attempted kidnapping of operators of forex bureaus by the said officers. It both captivated and stunned the news-watching and tax-paying public. In the dock, the four officers wore masks and anoraks to successfully hide their identity from a thunder-struck public.

The principal role of the police is to prevent crime and to protect the public from criminals.

Who will the public turn to when the thugs are plain-clothed policemen? When police break the law, then, as I say, there is no law. When officers use their firearms to rob the public, then the service ceases being a law enforcement agency, and becomes a criminal syndicate.

Police will be effective if they have the support of the public. Police will get information from the public if the public trust them and they, in turn, trust the public.

As I have argued here before, police view the public at best as a rabble and at worst as enemies. The police creed is that *adui ni raia* (the public is the enemy).

It is why in 2021 freshly graduated young men with the paramilitary General Service Unit put out a video clip soon after the passing out parade in which they warned the public



**KWENDO  
OPANGA**

about how mean they were (*sisi ni wazii*) and how they would wreak havoc on them. Embarrassed seniors put out a statement denying the young graduates were expounding the values of the force. They were.

When police view the public as enemies rather than partners in fighting crime, then the business of investigation, gathering intelligence and evidence and preventing crime becomes well-nigh impossible. When it is an article of faith among policemen and women that the public is the enemy, the public will give the men and women in blue a wide berth.

To the Kenyan public, officers are extortionists who use their positions, uniforms, coat of arms and firearms for personal gain at the expense of the public and to the detriment of service and justice.

To the Kenyan public, policemen and women are a force of intimidation and coercion, repression and oppression at the service and bidding of those in power.

Put another way, the force that protected Lord Delamere when he shot Africans for sport from the Norfolk and Grogan when he rode his motorcycle into Uthiru at dizzy-

ing speeds, scaring Africans to death for his amusement, now, per President William Ruto, kills and dumps the corpses in River Yala. In the 1980s, they threw them out of the windows of their Nyayo House offices.

Graft in the service is not just systemic, it is institutional.

Indeed, the constable at a road block is the self-same fellow who will rise through the ranks to become a commander based in the county or national headquarters. It is the same fellow who becomes Inspector-General.

And, part of the bribe taken at a roadblock finds its way into the pockets of desk-bound *afandes*.

Little wonder it was Vigilance House that resisted most the reforms that were recommended for the police following the electoral violence of 2007/08 and the advent of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Last, which could well be first, per President Ruto and Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, police have been used to settle scores between political players. It was politicians who called Chief Justice Magara a thug.

[kwendo58@gmail.com](mailto:kwendo58@gmail.com)

opinion

■ ACTS OF TREASON

# Lock them up and throw the keys away



MACHARIA  
**GAITHO**

Someone trusted needs to pay a quiet visit to State House and whisper an itsy-bitsy teeny-weeny secret in President William Ruto's ear.

He needs an urgent reminder that he is President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces.

Numero Uno needs to understand that he is not some random blogger or some political activist crying for attention, but a leader who cannot afford to be seen making cheap political pronouncements or wild allegations that cannot stand scrutiny.

Every public comment that the president makes must be seen to be based on indisputable and verified fact. It carries the weight of government proclamation or policy, and is often the signal for further action.

This is not the campaign period when those seeking election to public office can be forgiven for playing fast and loose with facts.

If the President of the Republic stands on a public podium and proclaims that a specific individual or group was plotting treason, assassination, mass murder, a terrorist bombing or other dastardly crime, it is to be presumed that the investigatory agencies have convinced him so.

It also follows that, unless the suspect is on the run, he has already been arrested and only awaits arraignment where the investigators will now try to persuade a judge that, indeed, the suspect ought to face no less than the mandatory death sentence.

If the President makes such public accusations but there is no evidence of such crimes having been competently investigated, established and the suspects clapped in leg irons awaiting trial, his words are of no more value than the diatribe that is regularly spewed by his hired guns.

That is the only conclusion one can draw from Ruto's sensational claims that there was a plot to abduct and kill Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission chairman Wafula Chebukati so as to prevent the declaration that he, Ruto, was winner of the presidential election last August.

If indeed there is evidence of such a plot, we can presume today that those behind it are under arrest and will soon appear in court.

We can, of course, surmise that the only

persons so desperate to block Ruto's rise to the presidency and having the capability to plot murder of the electoral agency boss would be only those directly invested the seat of power.

The President can only be talking about his predecessor, President Uhuru Kenyatta, and Kenyatta's preferred successor, Raila Odinga.

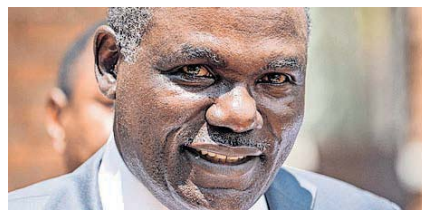
There could be others involved such as then Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and his minions in the security establishment, but those would be mere functionaries at service of those bearing command responsibility.

If, indeed, there was a such a plot to subvert the will of the people employing such extreme methods, those behind it must be forced to face the full force of the law.

It would actually be the height of criminal dereliction of duty to allow Mr Kenyatta, Mr Odinga and others involved in, at the very least, treasonable activities to go about their normal lives, enjoying the protection of government security agencies and use of housing, office space, transport, utilities, food and so on, at the public's expense.

Plots such as those alleged cannot be taken lightly. Anyone involved in attempted subversion must be called to account. The suspects in such cases must be treated with extreme prejudice.

There is no way those who plot against the very existence of this country can be left to roam freely, enjoying their ill-gotten wealth, while we completely ignore the suffering of those who owe loyalty to the so-called Hustler Nation.



**This is no trifling matter and must be treated with the seriousness it deserves. But what if, perchance, there was actually no such plot and the President is simply playing politics? Such an eventuality, too, must be taken very seriously. The President cannot engage himself in such irresponsible and dangerous behaviour without risk of penalties.**

Kenya is a country of law. It is one of the few nations in Africa that have remained functionally independent all through the post-colonial era and now enjoy a thriving democracy.

These hard-earned gains cannot be taken for granted. Anybody who threatens the very essence of our nationhood must be locked up and the keys thrown away.

Where information of such dastardly designs comes from no less a personage than President of the Republic, we have no choice but to take it at face value because it must be based on the most trustworthy intelligence.

It therefore becomes the duty of every Kenyan to arrest on sight the suspects and hand them over to the law.

This is no trifling matter and must be treated with the seriousness it deserves.

But what if, perchance, there was actually no such plot and the President is simply playing politics?

Such an eventuality, too, must be taken very seriously. The President cannot engage himself in such irresponsible and dangerous behaviour and acts of deceit without risk of penalties. This would be the time to put to the test all the legal and constitutional provisions against subversion of executive authority.

\*\*\*

I read of some unemployed comedian somewhere in our Legislature proposing a legal requirement that would make it mandatory for every broadcaster to play a patriotic song before every news bulletin.

That might at first glance seem like a well-meaning suggestion, but it is as foolish as can be. In pure practical terms, advent of the 24-hour news cycle makes it difficult to determine when a news bulletin begins.

More critical, however would be the old adage that patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel. Kenyans fought and died for democracy specifically to free themselves from such bondage.

In an environment where those in leadership are often unable to make the distinction between patriotism and blind or enforced loyalty to an individual or party, such a requirement would amount to taking us back to a very dark period.

*gaitomail@gmail.com*

## kenya lens

## ■ OPPOSITION POLITICS

● BY OSCAR OBONYO

Opposition chief Raila Amollo Odinga's political manoeuvres over the last week have left allies and foes alike perplexed. At one point – through his key allies – he rolled out a warm reception for President William Ruto, his challenger in last August's bitterly contested presidential race, to Nyanza region. Less than 72 hours later he lined up another set of allies in the Capital City to attack the President over his "stolen election".

The contrasting political gestures – just three days apart – mirror the delicate balance and discrete political stratagems of Mr Odinga in 2023. The former Prime Minister, who turned 78 years on the 7th of this month, is under pressure to politically reinvent himself while at the same time holding together his support bases.

Even as he tries to achieve this, the Azimio La Umoja-One Kenya leader is confronted with the difficult task of addressing the issue of competing interests of political partners, especially involving his running-mate in the August poll, Martha Karua, and Kalonzo Musyoka, who was destined to occupy the slot of Chief Minister if the team had formed government.

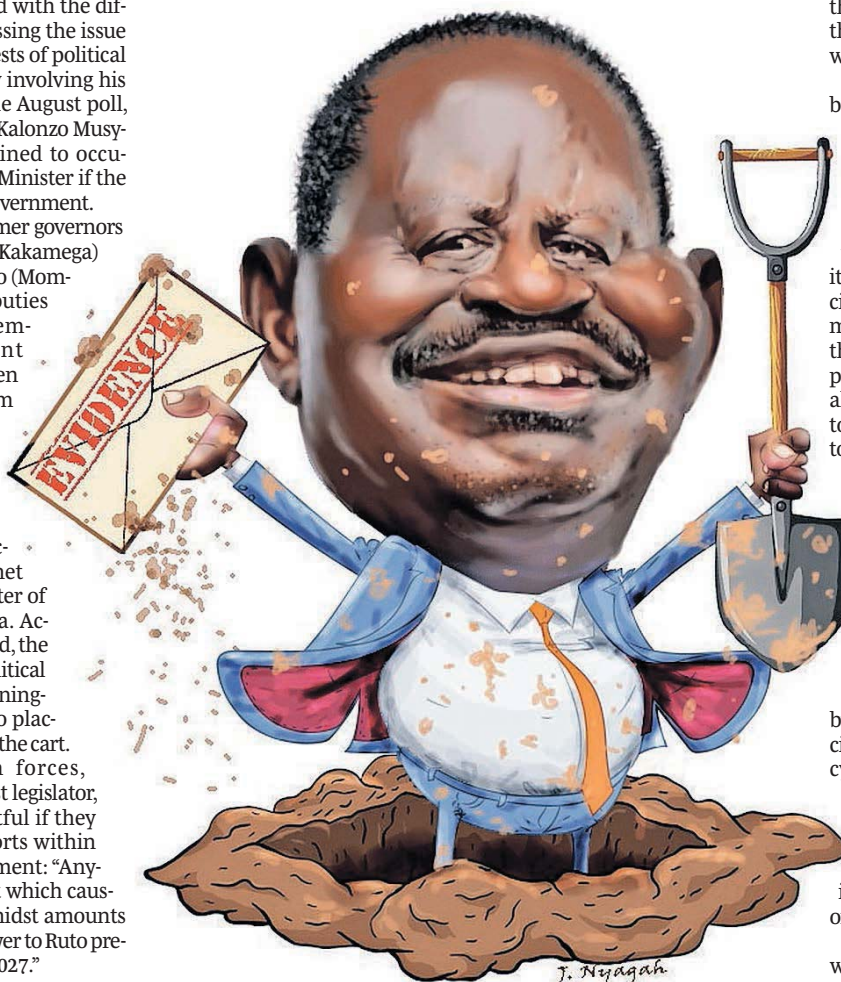
There are also former governors Wycliffe Oparanya (Kakamega) and Hassan Ali Joho (Mombasa), Odinga's deputies in the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), who are keen on succeeding him politically.

Political unity within the Orange party and the larger Azimio, observes the coalition's Secretary-General, Junet Mohamed, is a matter of priority for Odinga. According to Mohamed, the issue of the 2027 political succession is a meaningless exercise, akin to placing the horse before the cart.

The opposition forces, opines the Suna East legislator, can only be impactful if they synergise their efforts within and outside Parliament: "Anything less than that which causes division in our midst amounts to handing over power to Ruto prematurely ahead of 2027."

# INSIDE RAILA'S 2023 GAME PLAN

**Odinga is focussed more on harmony than succession politics within Azimio and in piecing together a formidable force against President Ruto**



Towards this end, a number of workshops and get-together events are lined up for the Azimio coalition as well as separate meetings for member parties. The Orange party is scheduled to meet with a view to "putting its house in order" sometime in March, while Musyoka has hinted at members of his Wiper Democratic Movement congregating next month to weigh in on his political future and that of the party.

Ideally, Odinga is focused more on harmony than succession politics within ODM and Azimio. Sources close to Baba, as he is fondly referred to, confided to *The Weekly Review* that the former Premier was engrossed in piecing together a formidable force against the President.

In fact, one of the reasons why he is not relinquishing his central position within Azimio is his interest in keeping the Ruto administration in close check to ensure the democratic gains realised over the years are not eroded under his watch.

However, Raila's latest loss at the ballot has exposed him, his party and coalition to political vulnerability and fatigue on the part of his perpetual supporters. According to key allies, "clearing the air on the August poll" is at the heart of Odinga's list of priorities this year. The seasoned politician considers this as crucial information owed to Kenyans, besides the fact that it will "correct the impression" of his being a perennial poll loser. His foot soldiers hope, too, that the revelation will bring to a closure the history behind his string of losses.

This is partly what informed the decision by his allies to release a "solid account" of the August exercise. According to Jubilee Party Secretary-General Jeremiah Kioni, Odinga won the poll by over two million votes.

Kioni's claims are buttressed by a report titled *The Most Audacious Attack To Kenya's Democracy*, which is a product of work by poll and information technology (IT) experts from overseas and within who, over the last three months, have been piecing together an evidential report on the 2022 poll exercise.

Raila's close ally, Makau Mutua, who also served as spokesper-

## kenya lens

son of his presidential campaign, states that the team's statement is evidenced on incontrovertible data and knowledge: "You do not expect Azimio to have just sat back and done nothing about an exercise they invested in heavily in terms of energy, sweat, time and money, but which was casually dismissed by the courts as 'hot air'."

The audit report was scheduled to be released sometime next week after Raila's return from a working trip in South Africa. But the exit of Chebukati at a public event attended by the President and the subsequent narrative surrounding the August polls, including Ruto's claims of a plot to kidnap and murder the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission boss, may have prompted the Azimio team into quick action.

This venture, however, has split key players within Azimio, with some dismissing it as having been overtaken by events. Even if, for instance, the report succeeds in convincing Kenyans that Odinga won the August polls, Ruto, who maintains he won "fair and square", will neither be persuaded nor compelled to exit State House. Besides, the Supreme Court has already – rightly or wrongly – dispensed with that matter. So just what is the drive behind Odinga's plot?

Like most politicians allied to the ruling party, National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wa strongly feels that Odinga's is a deliberate ploy to hang on to a support base that "is slowly drifting away". According to Ichung'wa, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) leader wants to hold onto "the fallacy" of rigged elections and the "false hope" that he is doing something to get his supporters to the Biblical Canaan.

Describing him as "the same vintage Raila", the MP for Kikuyu claims the opposition chief is only "up to his old games" of allegedly equating his every election loss to a rigging plot, and thereby dragging the country behind.

Owing to his long political experience, coupled with the support of a galaxy of political leaders the backing of incumbency, Odinga was largely regarded as the front runner in last year's presidential poll – a fact supported by a host of pollsters. Little wonder, then, that the proclamation of Ruto as victor was received with utter disbelief by many and generated complete despondency among Azimio supporters.

Ever since, there has been a simmering discontent in Raila's strongholds and according to Prof Makau Mutua, who served as spokesman of his presidential campaign, the people have been waiting for direction and action. The vocal US-based law lecturer opines that the former Premier will speak to this "when the time is ready".

It is clearly for such concerns and political alertness that Ichung'wa could be right in his assessment that Odinga is feeling the pressure of his support base drifting towards President Ruto and focusing their interests more on the new government as opposed to placing their hopes and future behind a political leader who – either by default or ill schemes – falters perpetually in his efforts to win the presidency.

And Ruto appears alive to this reality, going by his measured sentiments in Siaya, Kisumu and Homa Bay counties – all in Odinga's rural backyard – last weekend. During a working of the region, the President repeatedly implored the residents of the three counties to embrace his administration, pointedly reminding them that there was "no other government you are waiting for".

Nonetheless, as the governors of Siaya and Homa Bay counties, James Orengo and Gladys

Wanga, noted, the leadership of Nyanza region – Mr Odinga's rural backyard – is keener on development than political partnership. The question of "poll theft" remains a thorny one to them.

Mr Odinga's key compatriots in Azimio, Karua and Musyoka, are similarly united with him on the issue of electoral justice. Mr Musyoka, for instance, maintains Mr Odinga – with whom he teamed up with – did not lose in the 2013, 2017 and 2022 presidential poll. The former Vice-President calls for an end to "this culture of stolen elections" and recommends an overhaul of the conduct of elections, including a return to manual transmission of votes.

And Karua, who was Odinga's running-mate, already filed a case with the East African Court of Justice challenging the ruling of Kenya's Supreme Court. The former Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister wants the regional court to order Kenyan authorities to conduct "transparent, independent, and professional investigations into all [the] violations" allegedly committed by the IEBC and the Supreme Court of Kenya.

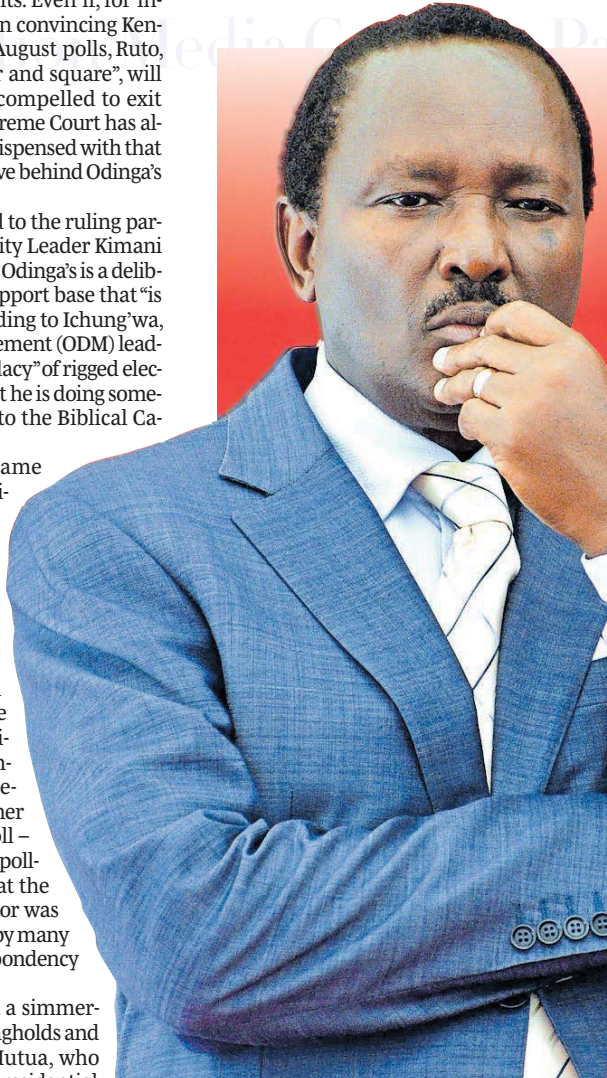
In the initial years after Independence, presidential elections were largely a formality, with predetermined results. In fact, the founding President Jomo Kenyatta was "elected" unopposed all through his presidency, as was his successor, Daniel arap Moi, in 1978, 1983 and 1988.

A semblance of competitive polls only came around in 1992 following the re-introduction of multi-party politics. Over the years, however, the polls were largely manipulated as the State had undue advantage. But the situation got uglier in 2007 following highly disputed and discredited elections, triggering a post-poll violence that claimed over 1,000 lives.

In interrogating the credibility of past elections, though, politicians remain conveniently partisan in their analysis and claims of poll theft. Musyoka, for instance, makes no mention of 2007 in his listing of rigged polls yet this was the year that the vice was perhaps most pronounced and glaring. The Chairman of the then Electoral Commission of Kenya, Samuel Kivuitu, publicly conceded he had no idea who actually won the presidential elections.

Interestingly, Musyoka, who vied for the top seat on an ODM-Kenya ticket, was in the same political wing as Karua, who fronted Mwai Kibaki's re-election on a Party of National Unity ticket. Incidentally, Ruto was a key member of Odinga's ODM and viciously protested "the poll theft" of his party leader's votes. The President went mute on Odinga's 2007 "stolen vote" claim once he teamed up with his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta, in 2013.

Except for 1997, when he vied for the Presidency on National Development Party of Kenya (NDP-K) ticket in a race that he aptly described as a test drive, the former PM has in subsequent races staged electrifying campaigns and lost the top seat narrowly, or rather controversially. It is these "near-misses" that have given his supporters the hope of resurgence in the next poll. Over the years, the near-misses have become the norm, and with political enthusiasm amongst his supporters at its lowest ebb, the task ahead for Raila is, indeed, daunting.



**Azimio La Umoja One Kenya is confronted with the difficult task of addressing the issue of competing interests of political partners, especially Wiper boss Kalonzo Musyoka, who has declared his intention to run in 2027. FRANCIS NDERITU | NATION**

## SCIENCE &amp; TECH

## Alarm as ocean temperatures hit new record



The world's oceans, which have absorbed most of the excess heat caused by humanity's carbon pollution, continued to see record-breaking temperatures last year, according to a new study. Climate change has increased surface temperatures across the planet, leading to atmospheric instability and amplifying extreme weather events such as storms.

Oceans absorb about 90 per cent of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions, shielding land surfaces but generating huge, long-lasting marine heatwaves that are already having devastating effects on underwater life. The study, by researchers in China, the US, Italy and New Zealand, said that 2022 was "the hottest year ever recorded in the world's oceans".

Heat content in the oceans exceeded the previous year's levels by around 10 Zetta joules — equivalent to 100 times the electricity generation worldwide in 2021, according to the authors.

"The oceans are absorbing most of the heating from human carbon emissions," said co-author Michael Mann, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Until we reach net zero emissions, that heating will continue, and we'll continue to break ocean heat content records, as we did this year," he said. Records going back to the late 1950s show a relentless rise in ocean temperatures with almost continuous increases going back to around 1985. Scientists have warned that climbing temperatures have wrought major changes to ocean stability faster than previously thought.

The research, published in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*, was based on observations from 24 scientists across 16 institutes worldwide.

# A NEW ORDER IN SPACE



Putting an astronaut on the Moon has been done before but the next step, to Mars, is much more difficult.

### ● LONDON

**T**here is a new order emerging in space — a race between America and China. But with the demands of space exploration, even these great superpowers won't be able to do it alone.

Hugely technically challenging and costly goals have been touted, not least the aim of people living and working on other worlds, possibly within ten years — but in a divided world where international goodwill is scarce, are they realistic?

Nasa's return to the Moon has begun with its Artemis programme. The first of three missions has been successfully launched. This uncrewed flight tested that the rockets and technology worked. The second mission will take humans further in space than they have ever gone before and the third launch will put astronauts on the Moon for a week, where they will carry out experiments. The long-term goal is to use the Moon as a jumping off point to get to Mars.

But the programme is estimated to cost \$93bn, a heavy

price tag for the American taxpayer, who is already feeling the economic squeeze.

In a report to Congress last year, the US Auditor General's office warned of an "unrealistic development schedule" and likely overruns, adding that Nasa needed to make cost estimates "more reliable and transparent".

Yet although Nasa will get less overall funding than it asked for in 2023, Congress, at the moment, still supports its human space exploration ventures. China has achieved its own fully operational space station, Tiangong, in orbit on schedule. The Chinese space programme has launched probes to the Moon and Mars. It plans to establish an unmanned research station on the Moon by 2025 and then land astronauts on its surface by 2030.

Putting an astronaut on the Moon has been done before but the next step, to Mars, is much more difficult. It is 250 times further away than the Moon and there is no spacecraft currently capable of sending humans to the red planet.

Even if scientists can find a safe way to launch a fuel-heavy

rocket and land it on a planet with such a thin atmosphere, there is the further challenge of returning the astronauts safely home after months in space.

Historically, superpowers have jostled for supremacy above the Earth. America and Russia vied for dominance in the 1950s and 1960s. The Russians put the first man in orbit. The Americans landed a man and planted their flag on the Moon a few years later.

In the 1970s a golden era of cooperation was forged, culminating in the construction of the International Space Station, which began in 1998. Along with 13 other partner nations, the two superpowers built what is now the largest structure in space.

It is not owned by any one nation, and each depends on the other to operate.

It was a symbol of what humanity could achieve if nations put aside their differences and worked together.

But the reality was somewhat different. America prevented China from becoming a partner in the ISS, so the Chinese went their own way.



# africa lens

■ DORMANT LINES CAME BACK TO LIFE IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR

## 'THANK GOD YOU'RE ALIVE!'



Passengers arriving from Tigray are greeted by relatives at the Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa on December 28, 2022. Ethiopia's national carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, resumed commercial flights to the war-torn region of Tigray after a shutdown lasting 18 months.

### Following a ceasefire, phones are starting to ring again, bringing joy but also grief and anger as Tigrayans reconnect with loved ones who suffered through one of the world's deadliest conflicts

#### • NAIROBI

**B**eniam Yetbarek didn't even know his cousin was alive when the phone rang on Christmas Eve and a voice he hadn't heard in two years crackled down the line from Tigray.

Calls to family in the embattled Ethiopian region hadn't gone through since November 2020, when phone and internet services were largely disconnected at the outset of war, and Tigray was cut off from the world.

But following a ceasefire, phones are starting

to ring again, bringing joy but also grief and anger as Tigrayans like Beniam reconnect with loved ones who suffered through one of the world's deadliest conflicts.

"My initial reaction was — thank God you're alive. I don't know how he survived these last two years, but I'm just glad he's alive," said the 30-year-old photographer of the call with his cousin in the city of Axum on December 24. Any relief was short-lived, though.

Beniam's family had already lost a relative to the war and hang on every word as the cousin spoke of fear and hunger in Axum, Eritrean

troops on the streets, and a sick uncle unable to find diabetes medication.

Huddled around the phone, they learned a beloved great-aunt had also died in the months without contact, while a cousin was missing and presumed dead.

"It took the air out of the room," Beniam told *AFP* from Seattle.

"My aunt started crying. Two of my cousins were silent... We were trying to pull it together while the line was active, but once he hung up,

...Continued on Page 26

## africa lens

Continued from Page 25

we just started all quietly praying.”

Phone services were briefly restored in parts of Tigray in early 2021 before being disconnected again in June that year. Dormant phone lines came back to life in December last year, a month after a ceasefire halted a conflict that Western nations estimate killed anywhere between 100,000 and half a million people.

The truce paved the way for re-opening Tigray, a region of six million people, and the lifting of what internet advocacy groups said was among the world's longest government-imposed shutdowns. In Mekele, crowds were thronging phone stores day after day to reconnect their old numbers, said a 29-year-old woman who flew to the city after flights resumed on December 28. “My mother cried when she heard my voice after all these months. I also cried,” said a 42-year-old man in Addis Ababa, who spoke to *AFP* on condition of anonymity, citing security concerns.

Others, however, have received devastating news. “They killed him just outside his house,” said Meharit Gebreyesus of her uncle, one of seven relatives she was told were executed by Eritrean soldiers near Adwa in late October.

Her aunt was safe in Adwa, having taken refuge after her village was looted and razed. A high-profile story of tragedy came from World Health Organization boss Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who said he learned that an uncle was also killed by Eritrean soldiers.

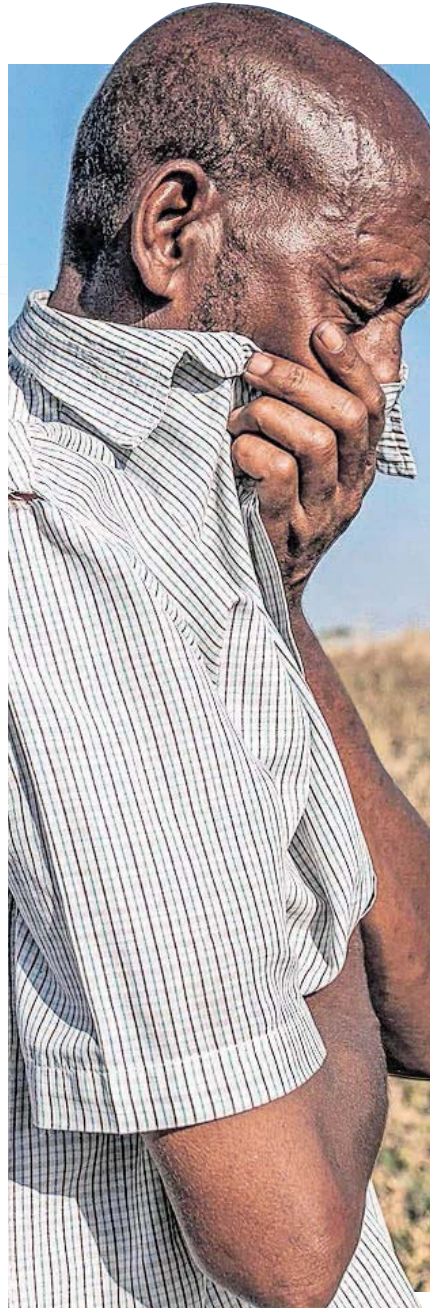
Tigray remains off-limits to foreign journalists and *AFP* cannot independently verify these accounts. But all sides to the Tigray conflict have been accused by independent observers of atrocities, and charges of ethnic cleansing and deliberate starvation have been made. Beniam said not knowing the fate of his family in Axum — where hundreds of civilians were massacred in November 2020 — was agonising. “I wouldn't wish the last two years on my worst enemy,” he said. “The weight of the suspense kills you alone.” A 25-year-old Tigrayan woman told *AFP* she was “speechless” when her sister rang out of the blue from Shire, a city heavily bombed in October, to say the family was safe.

But she was angry, too, at being kept in the dark so long. “I cannot believe that in this century, I had to dream... just to speak to family (and find out) whether they're alive or not.”

More than two months after the warring sides signed a peace deal, service remains patchy even in major cities, with calls cutting out after a few minutes, or not connecting at all. “Without exaggeration, we had to call more than 100 times for that one phone call to go through,” said a 40-year-old woman who spoke with her parents on January 3 for the first time in 18 months.

The state utility said Tuesday that electricity would be fully restored in Tigray within two weeks. A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed told *AFP* that critical infrastructure had been repaired and telecom services restored in 51 towns in Tigray, but did not offer a timeline for the full resumption of communication se-

## Tears, grief as phones ring again in Tigray



A man in the outskirts of Mai Kadra, Ethiopia, on November 9, 2020. Calls to family in the embattled region of Tigray hadn't gone through since November 2020, when phone and internet services were disconnected.

vices. Inquiries to Ethio Telecom, the state telco, went unanswered. Meharit, meanwhile, still cannot reach her 65-year-old father or six sisters in Negash, in southern Tigray, and can do little but pray they answer the phone.

“I don't know if he's alive or not,” she told *AFP*.

The Ethiopian army announced the withdrawal of a regional force from a key Tigrayan city under a peace deal to end two years of war as visiting European ministers said there could be no reconciliation without justice.

France and Germany's foreign ministers visited Ethiopia a day after Tigrayan rebels announced they were starting to surrender their heavy weapons — a key component of the November 2 agreement to silence the guns in Africa's second most populous country. And on Thursday the Ethiopian army said the Amhara special forces — a regional force which backed the government in the war — had withdrawn from the strategic Tigray city of Shire, meeting another key part of the peace deal.

The conflict in northern Ethiopia between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front has claimed untold numbers of lives. French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna said she welcomed “good progress which we encourage to continue” in the peace process. “Hostilities have ceased, aid has been able to reach the regions which had not received it... a return of arms (by rebels) has begun,” she said at a press briefing with her German counterpart, Annalena Baerbock.

But the ministers urged the establishment of a transitional justice mechanism to punish abuses committed during the conflict.

“We, Germans and French, know from our own experience that reconciliation does not happen overnight. But without the prospect of justice for the victims of crimes, reconciliation and lasting peace are not possible,” said Baerbock.

“The question of accountability is important for us with a view to Ethiopia's future and peace process, but also towards strengthening international law,” she said following talks with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Ethiopia's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen told the press conference that Addis Ababa would ensure crimes do not go unpunished. He said Ethiopia had asked the UN human rights office and Ethiopia's own rights commission to deploy monitors in war-affected areas. The devastating conflict that erupted in November 2020 has killed untold numbers of civilians, displaced more than two million and left millions more in need of humanitarian aid.

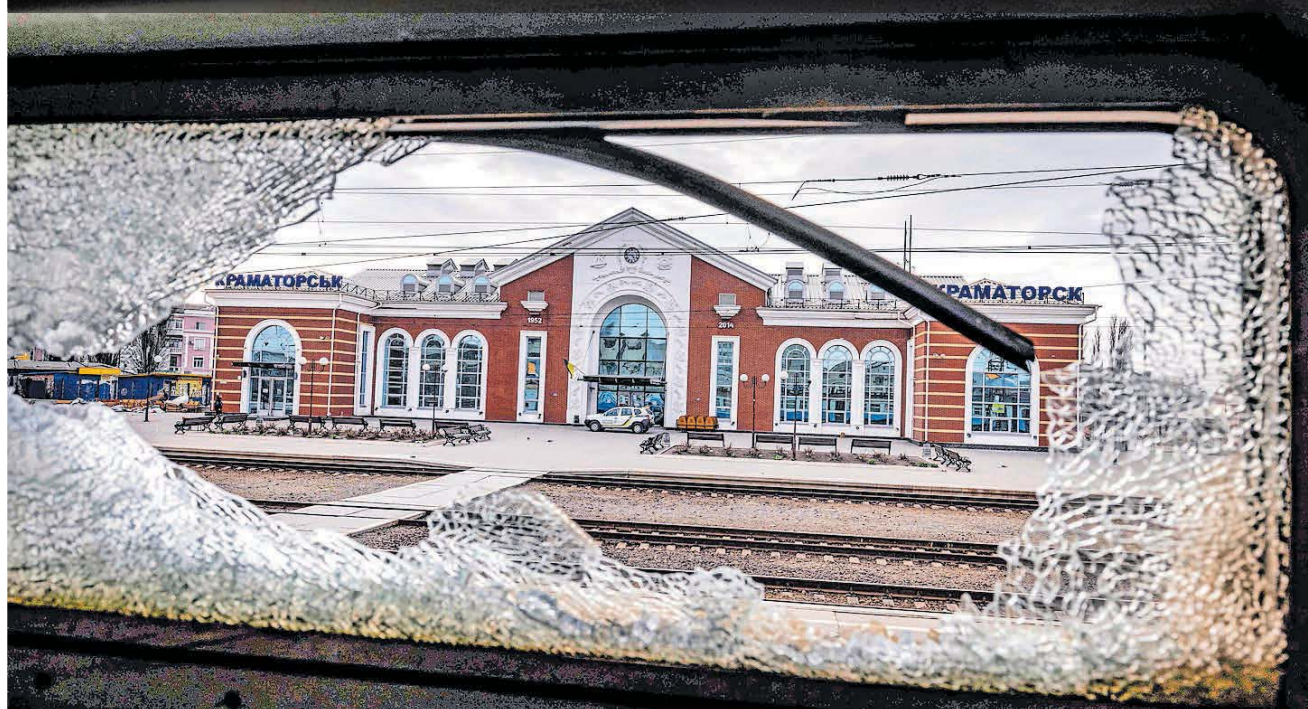
Since the peace agreement was signed in the South African capital Pretoria, there has been a limited resumption of aid deliveries to Tigray, which has long faced dire shortages of food, fuel, cash and medicines. Basic services such as communications, banking and electricity are slowly being restored to the stricken region of six million people, which was cut off from the outside world for much of the war.

— *AFP*

# global lens

■ ABANDONED SUITCASES, CHILDREN'S POSSESSIONS AND FOOD WERE STREWN AROUND

## THE TRAIN STATION MASSACRE



The train station, seen through broken glass in a train car window after a rocket attack in Kramatorsk, eastern Ukraine, on April 8, 2022. A rocket attack on a station killed dozens on April 8, 2022 as civilians raced to flee the Donbas region, bracing for a feared Russian offensive. Sixty-one people were killed, including at least seven children.

**Despite widespread silence over the brutal attack in April last year — one of the deadliest of the war — it has left an indelible mark on survivors and witnesses**

### ● KRAMATORSK

A rocket strike on Kramatorsk's railway station in April last year, which killed dozens, is rarely spoken about in the city near the frontlines in eastern Ukraine.

Despite widespread silence over the brutal attack — one of the deadliest of the war — it has left an indelible mark on survivors and witnesses.

Nearly one year on, there are few signs at the small, red brick building of the events that shook the local community which has bare-

ly had time to heal and reflect as the war rages on.

A 1940s locomotive sits in front of the station, around which the rest of the industrial city was built starting in the 19th century.

On the morning of April 8, an estimated 4,000 civilians gathered to board evacuation trains as Russian forces advanced. At 10:30 am (0830 GMT), the station was struck by a Tochka-U missile which, according to experts, was armed with cluster munitions. Sixty-one people were killed and more than 160 injured, the mayor's office has said.

The bombing is one of several alleged war crimes blamed on Russia since the start of the war, along with the killing of civilians in Bucha near Kyiv, and the battle for Mariupol. Those areas, like Kramatorsk, have had little respite from the conflict's brutality.

To the right of Kramatorsk station's main platform, where the majority of the victims died, there are still some traces of damage from the explosion.

A small garland with soft toys lies next to the station railings in silent tribute to the at least seven child victims. A discreet granite

slab states simply: "There will be a memorial to the victims of April 8, 2022 here." Arriving at the station shortly after the strike that day, an AFP team saw at least 30 bodies in bags, and pavements covered in blood.

Abandoned suitcases, children's possessions and food were strewn around. To this day, stallholders and taxi drivers around the station make only general comments about what happened, shutting down at any mention of the attack.

"It's not good to remember," said

Continued on Page 28

## global lens

# Not good to remember: The train station attack

Continued from Page 27

Alexander, a station greengrocer for 20 years. Kramatorsk station re-opened in October, six months after the strike, retaining its station-master, a small energetic woman with short brown hair, who was on duty that morning. She has declined to speak to reporters. “What do you want me to say? Bodies torn apart, blood, screaming. It was horrible, horrible!” she shouted at AFP correspondents in July. She has declined to give interviews before or since.

Mykola Byba, a fire brigade commander, still avoids walking near the station months later.

“It’s painful,” said Byba, speaking to AFP at the local firehouse.

“That morning, I had arrived early with two of my men to organise the evacuations. Then I went back to the fire station,” he said.

Firefighters, police, volunteers and city employees had been helping civilians flee west, following a call to evacuate from Ukraine’s authorities. The mayor’s office said some 80,000 people were evacuated from Kramatorsk between the start of Russia’s invasion on February 24, 2022 and the day of the strike.

“I remember the first explosion. Very loud. And then a second one, more muted,” Byba said. He and his men rushed to the station.

“When we arrived, we immediately realised the scale of the tragedy. There were horrific scenes. But the thing I remember most was the terrible smell of blood, very strong. Very, very strong.” The firefighters tried to extinguish blazing cars and treat the wounded. “They were dying in our arms,” Byba said.

Anton Malinsky, a council worker, said the crowds present at the station had come from across the region. “I was a few metres from the station. The explosion was so powerful that some people started bleeding from their noses,” he said. Then he was thrown to the ground and trampled by the panicked crowd.

“I am a former police officer and I know how to stop myself getting hurt. I don’t think about it,” he said. A cosy cafe near the station decorated with images of the Eiffel Tower re-opened a few weeks ago.

There, humanitarian volunteer Natalya Slobodyan said life is slowly resuming in the city following a successful Ukrainian counter-offensive in the autumn. “People are coming back. Life is resuming. The mood is improving,” said the mother of three, 36. Following the start of the Russian invasion, Slobodyan threw herself into volunteer work to avoid depression. On April 8, she was supposed to pick up medicine at the station.

“Sometimes life gives you signs. The children were crying and the car wouldn’t start... So when there was the explosion — a sound that will forever ring in my ears — I was still at home,” she said.

She still went to the station after the blast.

“The first thing I saw was a dead child. Then chaos everywhere,” she said. One of her best



Children’s toys and a plaque are placed near the train station in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region on January 16, where dozens of people were killed in a strike in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On the morning of April 8, 2022, an estimated 4,000 civilians gathered at the railway hub to board evacuation trains as Russian forces advanced. At 10:30am a Tochka-U missile armed with cluster munitions struck, killing 61 people and injuring more than 160.

friends was killed that day, she recalled, describing the re-opening of the station as “strange”.

Following the station bombing, Ukrainian and international figures vowed to pursue the perpetrators of the “war crime”. The Ukrainian prosecutor’s office, which leads the investigation, and which at the time said it had evidence of Russian responsibility, declined to comment to AFP. In October 2022, digital investigators from the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR), a non-governmental organisation, said its evidence pointed to “Russia being the likely perpetrator”.

CIR identified three launch sites in Russian-occupied territory, suggesting the missile probably came from Shakhthne village, east of Donetsk city. “We began our investigation on the day of the tragedy,” said Pierre Vaux, one of the authors. Investigators were helped by masses of videos and social media messages published on the eve of and day of the strike. Among the messages was a warning from pro-Russian separatists on April 7 against train evacuations.

On April 8 Russia’s defence ministry warned about possible strikes on stations in the region, where it said Ukrainian troops were arriving.

Russia has denied responsibility, claiming it does not have the type of Tochka-U missile used, calling it a “provocation” by Ukraine.

AFP correspondents saw the Russian words “For the children” — an expression used by pro-Moscow separatists — written on a missile fragment.

No official list of all the victims has been published and most of the affected families have left the region or have refused to speak.

Among the dead were “a teacher, a librarian, adolescents and children with their mothers”, said Oleksiy Ladyka, a journalist with the *Kramatorsk Post* newspaper. Ladyka has identified many of the victims and opened an online memorial. “It was very difficult,” Ladyka told AFP. “Local authorities did not have the names. The military didn’t tell us anything. We looked ourselves, going through social media, activating our sources.

“It was even more complicated because the victims came from different places in the region.” His memorial has 26 names, photos and a few lines describing each victim’s life.

“We will work on the past after the war,” said Andrei Bessonny, the deputy mayor of Kramatorsk. “I was there on April 8. I saw several days after the explosion, we were still finding human remains in different parts of the station. “It is the worst disaster this city has seen, given the number of victims. But it is continuing, it is not over. It’s every day... The Russians have already destroyed half the country. Maybe we are used to it, maybe we have become desensitised.” — AFP

## global lens

■ JANUARY 8 RIOTERS MAY HAVE STRENGTHENED HIS HAND

## LULA: THE UNBREAKABLE MAN

● BRASILIA

**B**y ransacking government buildings in their fervent opposition to leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Brazil's January 8 rioters may have strengthened his hand, at least temporarily, analysts say.

Many, even among the backers of defeated far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro, were shocked by the pillaging of national heritage buildings and artefacts. Immediately after the storming of the presidency, Congress and Supreme Court, Lula gathered leaders of the three institutions — many of them from the political right — for a unanimous condemnation of the events.

Presenting a united front, they affirmed publicly that democracy would not be allowed to falter just three decades after the fall of Brazil's military dictatorship. "The events (of January 8) had the opposite effect" of what was intended, said Mayra Goulart, professor of political science at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. "Lula will no doubt emerge stronger. These assaults have created a climate of national unity for the defence of democracy," she told *AFP*.

The riots happened exactly one week after Lula's inauguration went off with much pomp and ceremony, but in the absence of Bolsonaro, who left the country two days earlier and dodged the traditional duty of handing over the presidential sash.

Thousands forced their way into the seats of power, smashing windows and furniture, destroying priceless works of art, and leaving behind graffiti messages calling for a military coup.

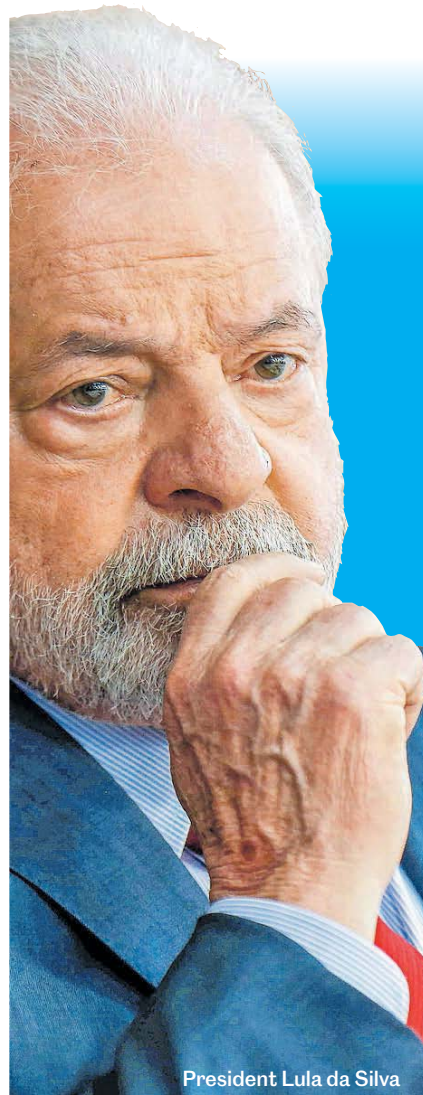
The military did not rise to the call. More than 2,000 alleged rioters were detained, and the authorities are tracking those suspected of having masterminded and financed the revolt that shocked Brazil and the world.

An investigation has been opened into a possible role played by Bolsonaro, whose justice minister was arrested Saturday for possible collusion with the vandals. Condemnation from abroad was unanimous.

Washington, Moscow, Beijing, the European Union, Paris and Latin American capitals expressed their full support for the new president of Brazil — a country that was isolated from the global stage under Bolsonaro.

"The international uproar will reinforce the position of Lula, who will be perceived as an important leader who can contribute to strengthening multilateral forums," said Goulart. Leandro Gabiati of consulting firm Dominionium said Lula's image has been "strength-

**The President faces a difficult task in trying to heal a country marked by deep divisions worsened by a vitriolic election campaign filled with disinformation and fear-mongering**



President Lula da Silva

ened" by his perceived firm but fair handling of the mop-up operation.

Bolsonaro's, in turn, has been harmed. Lula "was challenged and he did quite well", said Gabiati, citing "a balanced attitude that somehow restored normalcy" without an air of retribution.

Lula's government has been firm: "fascists" found guilty of involvement in the riots will face sentences of up to 30 years for "terrorism". As the net also tightened around suspected organisers of the uprising, the government announced a reshuffling of the police and security forces. Security at the presidential palace, it announced, will be cleansed of any remaining Bolsonaro sympathisers left over from the previous administration. Lula will have to "take exemplary sanctions in order to avoid a repeat of this type of demonstrations", said Gabiati.

And even as he needs to deal urgently with pressing problems such as poverty and hunger, Lula will be forced to "expend energy in the investigations... of the putschists", added Goulart. Meanwhile, government work continued this week, with ceremonies held in official buildings still littered with shattered glass and broken furniture to swear in Lula's new ministers.

Lula will face a difficult task in trying to heal a country marked by deep divisions worsened by a vitriolic election campaign filled with disinformation and fear-mongering.

A leftist icon for many, he won the vote by a razor-thin margin of 60 million votes to 58 million for Bolsonaro. Lula's most radical opponents — fuelled by anti-"communist" rhetoric and mistrust of the election outcome — are unlikely to give up.

"I think what happened on January 8 was a huge shock. And I think many of the people who voted for Bolsonaro did not expect or welcome what happened," said Michael Shifter, a senior fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue think tank. Even among those who supported the riots, many were left disappointed by the failure of the military to intervene on their behalf, the analyst told *AFP*.

"I think what we're seeing is (the anti-Lula movement) a little bit fractured for the moment and I think the country has understandably, predictably rallied around Lula for the moment," said Shifter. "But I think that at the same time this movement is still around and ... we probably could expect some sort of more low intensity kind of upheavals and protests and some violence," he added.

"I don't think that is going to disappear."

— *AFP*

## O B I T

■ HIS JOURNEY TO THE NEWSROOM BEGAN BY ACCIDENT 15 YEARS AGO

# OERI TAKES HIS FINAL SHOT

● BY ERIC SHIMOLI

It was one of those accidents that land someone in the newsroom.

William Oeri was a soldier, trained to kill and destroy. But he also carried a camera. In my dealings with the military and police, I knew that anyone in the security sector carrying a camera also doubled as an intelligence officer. Oeri was specifically assigned to the Moi Air Base in Eastleigh, Nairobi.

Newsrooms all over the world attract people from all walks of professional life. There are teachers, former seminarians, economists, lawyers and even ex-police officers. But it was unusual for a military man to join the media.

Oeri's journey to the newsroom began by accident 15 years ago. A military jet had crash-landed at the Eastleigh Airbase one morning but the Kenya Air Force (KAF) had kept a tight lid on news of the accident. There had been an increase of such incidents and the military was embarrassed at the questions being asked by the media and the public about the level of training of our personnel and maintenance aircraft.

Journalists arriving to cover the accident were locked out of the Air Base and there was little independent verification of information on the accident.

But the Daily Nation team both on site and in the newsroom managed to gather information and pieced together a credible account of the incident, which was published. We also got pictures of the downed aircraft. Our scoop annoyed the competition who missed out on the story and the military leadership at the time.

The military ordered an internal investigations into how the information got out and somehow the blame was placed on Oeri. I have never known how the military leadership came to this conclusion, but it came at great personal cost to Oeri and his young family, who were then living at the Air Base.

As is typical with incidents where one is tried and found guilty of an offence in the military, Oeri was quickly arrested, detained and eventually dishonourably discharged and frog-marched out of the Air Base.

His wife, Faith, and children, who were residing in institutional accom-

**Whether looking down the lens of a gun or the lens of a camera, William Oeri lived a full, eventful life in the military and the media**



modation, were evicted and had nowhere to go.

The following morning, a distraught Faith came to the NMG newsroom to reveal that the family had been evicted and Oeri had lost his job.

Catherine Gicheru, who was then news editor and I (deputy news editor) had to work out a plan to rescue the family, and with the help of Editorial administration manager David Aduda, Managing Editor Joseph Odindo and Group Editorial Director Wangethi Mwangi, offered him a position as a contract photojournalist to help him settle down outside the barracks.

Typical of the man, Oeri went about his assignments with gusto and vigour but never betrayed his military allegiance. It was a shame that the military banned him from ever visiting any of their facilities, or boarding their aircraft or vehicles, but Oeri always remained a loyal soldier even during his time in the Nation Media Group (NMG) newsroom, rising to the position of Deputy Photo Editor and later moving on to People Daily.

The only time he came close to revealing his stint with the military was when he told a tight group of friends how he had been part of a team on special operations to extract former Somalia President Mohammed Siad Barre from Somalia and bring him to Kenya as the rebels were about to overrun his palace. In other instances, Oeri was very protective of the military and looked at his colleagues as people who were ignorant about matters defence. Sadly, the NMG missed out on a resource that could have helped us cover the KDF incursion and suppression of Al Shabaab in Somalia, because of the ban on Oeri.

It is a mark of how great the man was that, despite losing all his benefits after being sacked from the military, Oeri used his media job to build up a commendable business empire in Kahawa, Nairobi, Ongata Rongai and Nanyuki. He had investments in apartments, shops and agriculture, among others, and was quick to encourage other newsroom colleagues where there were business opportunities. Those who worked with and knew him called him OC (Officer Commanding) Press. William Oeri died in a grisly accident on the Kenol-Sagana road on January 15.

Go well, OC Press.

William Oeri

[eshimoli@gmail.com](mailto:eshimoli@gmail.com)

# 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  
Daily

DAILY  
LEO

The EastAfrican

Terms & Conditions apply\*



# SPORTS TV!

JAMES  
WOKABI

BERNARD  
NDONG

HOSTS



NATIONFM 96.3<sup>FM</sup>  
WHERE GOOD MUSIC LIVES

SATURDAYS 3PM