The Chronicle
WEEKLY
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Ruto's Gamble: From 'Bottom Up' to 'We've Delivered'

PRESIDENT ANCHORS RE-ELECTION ON DELIVERY, WITH AN ASSUMPTION THAT VOTERS WILL PRIORITISE VISIBLE PROGRESS OVER PERSONALISED POLITICS

A community that never stopped throwing is bringing darts back

DAVID MUNYUA'S RUN AT ALEXANDRA PALACE IN DECEMBER 2025 WAS NOT THE BEGINNING OF KENYA'S DARTS STORY. IT WAS A HOMECOMING.

Kenya is the location. Who owns the story?

THE SECOND SEASON OF THE AGENCY FILMED SOME SCENES IN KENYA. BUT THE MORE IMPORTANT CREATIVE ECONOMY STORY THIS MONTH ARRIVES ON JULY 31

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A community that never stopped throwing is bringing darts back

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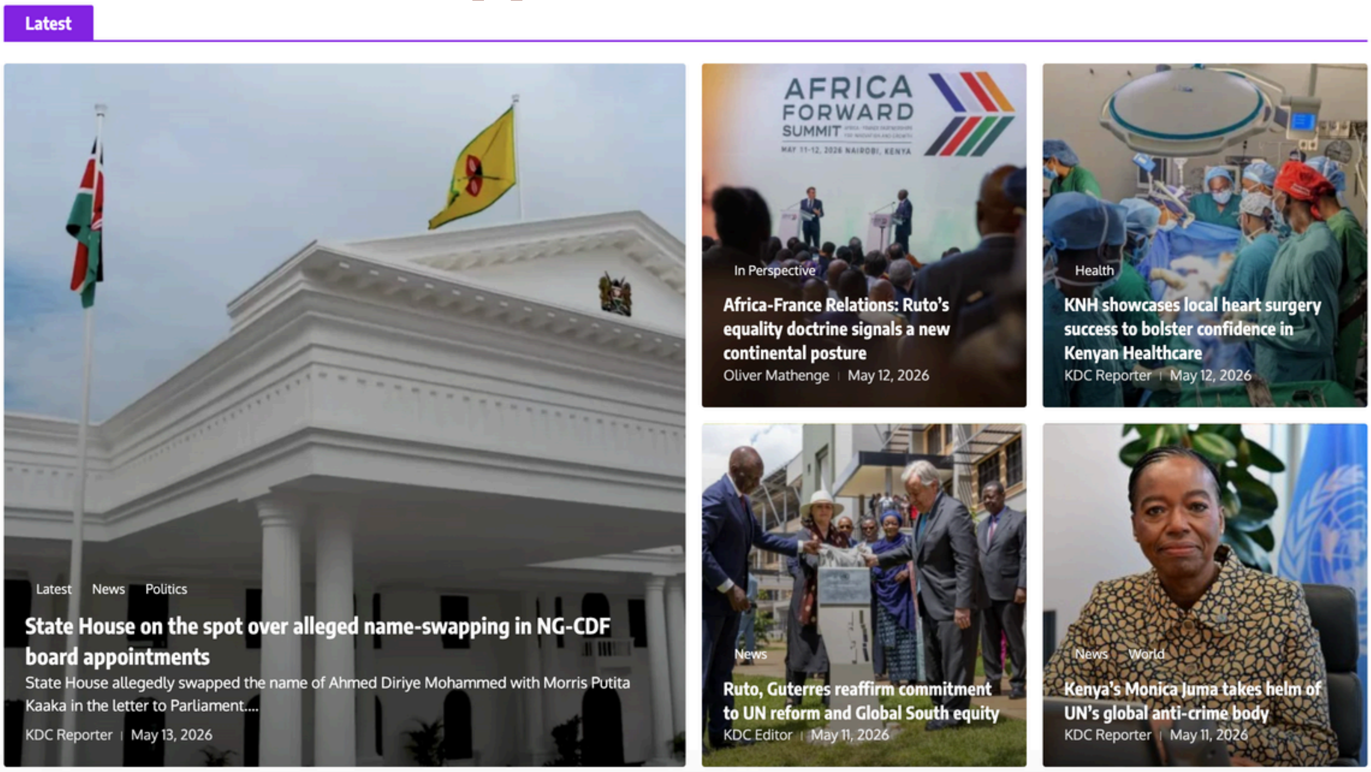

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While the Kenya Daily Chronicle delivers a mix of breaking news and real-time updates across politics, business, health, sports, and lifestyle, the Weekly is its considered, curated counterpart; a deeper read for audiences who want more than headlines.

Published every Monday, The Chronicle Weekly distils the most important stories of the preceding week into a single, authoritative edition. It brings together the Kenya Daily Chronicle's signature editorial strengths: rigorous political reporting, sharp business analysis, contextual perspectives, and vibrant community coverage, in a format designed to be read, saved, and shared.

The Chronicle Weekly occupies a distinct space in Kenya's media landscape: it is neither a wire-driven news feed nor a long-form magazine, but a weekly newspaper of record; structured, comprehensive, and grounded in the journalistic values that define the Kenya Daily Chronicle. Every edition is built around the belief that informed Kenyans make better decisions, stronger communities, and a more accountable nation.

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Editorial Note

As politicians continue to scheme for next year's election, Kenyans are demanding a government that delivers rather than merely promises. This week's issue is, in effect, an audit of what that demand produced.

The cover story asks whether "delivery" can carry an incumbent to a second term. The data story behind it puts numbers to the claim: 230,000 housing units against a manifesto target of a million, 29 million SHA registrations against 4.8 million who actually contribute, fibre optic cable laid at five per cent of the promised scale.

None of these figures lies. All of them require context to mean anything. That is the gap this publication exists to close.

Elsewhere in this issue, the same tension recurs in different registers. Kenya spends Sh160 billion a year importing edible oil, it has the land and rainfall to grow domestically, not because the problem is agronomic, but because the interests profiting from import dependency are better organised than the smallholders who would benefit from ending it.

It is delivery, examined from the other end: the promises the government has not been forced to make, because no one has yet named who benefits from breaking them.

The cost-of-living piece is the necessary companion to the cover story. A government can build the cranes in Kibera and the fertiliser bags in the highlands, and still preside over a household budget squeezed tighter than it was four years ago. Both are true simultaneously. Voters will decide in 2027 which one weighs more.

And the accountability piece is the reminder that delivery, on its own, was never the whole of what June 2024 demanded. Two prosecutions exist against 127 documented protest deaths. A compensation fund exists; the question of who gave the orders does not yet have an answer. A scorecard that only counts roads and clinics, and not this, is incomplete.

We have tried, too, to widen what counts as delivery. The creative economy piece asks who owns the Kenyan story when a Hollywood production shoots on Kenyan streets and leaves with all the rights.

The darts feature asks what it costs a country to let a community sustain a sport for three decades without the institutional backing it has earned.

Neither housing completions nor SHA registrations capture these; they are part of the same national ledger regardless.

The Chronicle Weekly's founding proposition, four issues in, remains that Kenya has enough headlines and not enough arithmetic.

This issue is our attempt at the arithmetic, sector by sector, claim against count, manifesto line against lived experience, on the understanding that a government's record is not what it says about itself, but what survives being checked.

We will keep checking.

Kenya Daily Chronicle Team

Ruto’s 2027 Gamble: From ‘Bottom Up’ to ‘We've Delivered’

On the campaign trail in 2022, William Ruto had a story to tell about Kenya and who it had forgotten. The hustler. The mama mboga. The boda boda operator. The small trader buried under the weight of a top-down economy that had always worked for someone else. Bottom-Up Economics was not merely a policy agenda; it was a diagnosis of national failure and a promise to reverse it.

Four years later, the diagnosis has been quietly shelved. In its place, the Kenya Kwanza administration now offers a different argument: delivery. At every launch, inspection, and commissioning event from Kisumu to Karatina, the President frames his record as the re-election case.

"We challenge our competition. Let them present their scorecard and disclose to Kenyans what better plan they have in making our country better,” Ruto repeats at every political gathering he has attended this year.

It is a gamble on the "delivery election," an assumption that voters will prioritise visible progress over the persistent anxieties of the cost-of-living crisis. It is a confident posture, but whether it is an accurate one depends entirely on which scorecard you use.

The challenge for any incumbent is that governing and campaigning are evaluated differently. Opposition leaders campaign on hope. Governments campaign on evidence. And evidence is rarely unanimous.

When Kenya Kwanza unveiled The Plan in 2022, it presented perhaps the country's most detailed election manifesto in decades. The document rested on one overarching philosophy: Bottom-Up Economic Transformation.

Unlike previous campaigns built around mega-projects or constitutional reform, Ruto's campaign argued that Kenya's economic problem lay not at the top of the economy but at its base.

The administration pledged to create jobs by supporting manufacturing and agriculture, lower the cost of living, expand affordable housing, reform healthcare, digitise government services, modernise education, improve infrastructure, increase electricity access and restore confidence in public institutions.

Not every promise was accompanied by precise timelines, but together they formed a governing agenda against which the administration can now reasonably be measured. Nearly four years later, the picture that emerges is neither one of sweeping success nor outright failure. It is considerably more complicated.

Strongest Case

The administration's strongest case lies in sectors where the government has direct control over implementation. Affordable housing has become the flagship programme of the Kenya Kwanza administration.

Across multiple counties, thousands of housing units are either completed or under construction, supported by the Affordable Housing Levy that survived an extended legal battle before being entrenched in law. Whatever one's view of the levy itself, the programme has moved beyond political rhetoric into visible physical infrastructure.

Similarly, the government has accelerated market construction, road rehabilitation, electricity connections and public infrastructure projects across the country. The administration has also invested heavily in digitising public services.

Passport processing times have reduced significantly compared with the early years of the administration. Government services continue to migrate onto eCitizen. Digital identity systems have expanded, while artificial intelligence and digital employment have become recurring themes in government policy.

Agriculture has also seen sustained intervention. Subsidised fertiliser programmes have continued, coffee sector reforms have been implemented through new legislation, direct payment systems are reshaping how farmers receive earnings, and sugar sector restructuring has re-entered the policy agenda after years of stagnation.

These are tangible interventions. Unlike campaign promises, they can be photographed, measured and visited. That matters politically.

The Contested

Other manifesto commitments are harder to evaluate because they depend not only on government action but on economic outcomes that voters experience in their daily lives. The cost of living remains perhaps the Ruto administration's greatest political vulnerability.

Inflation has moderated compared with the post-pandemic highs experienced in 2022 and 2023, while fuel prices have become more stable than many analysts predicted. Yet many households continue to report that everyday life remains expensive.

Food prices, school expenses, rent and taxation continue to dominate public conversation. Economic statistics and household experience do not always move together. The government may point to macroeconomic stability, but voters often answer with supermarket receipts.

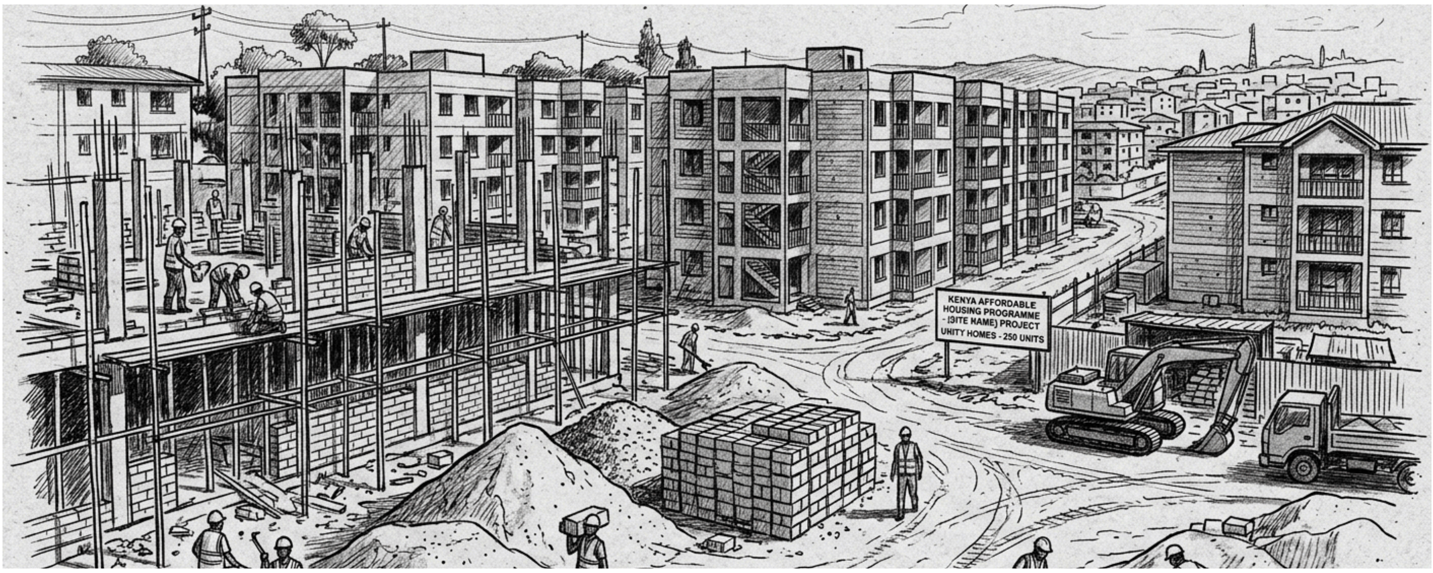
Youth employment presents a similar challenge. The administration frequently highlights digital jobs, overseas labour programmes and investments in manufacturing. Critics counter that formal employment growth has not matched expectations, while many graduates continue struggling to find stable work.

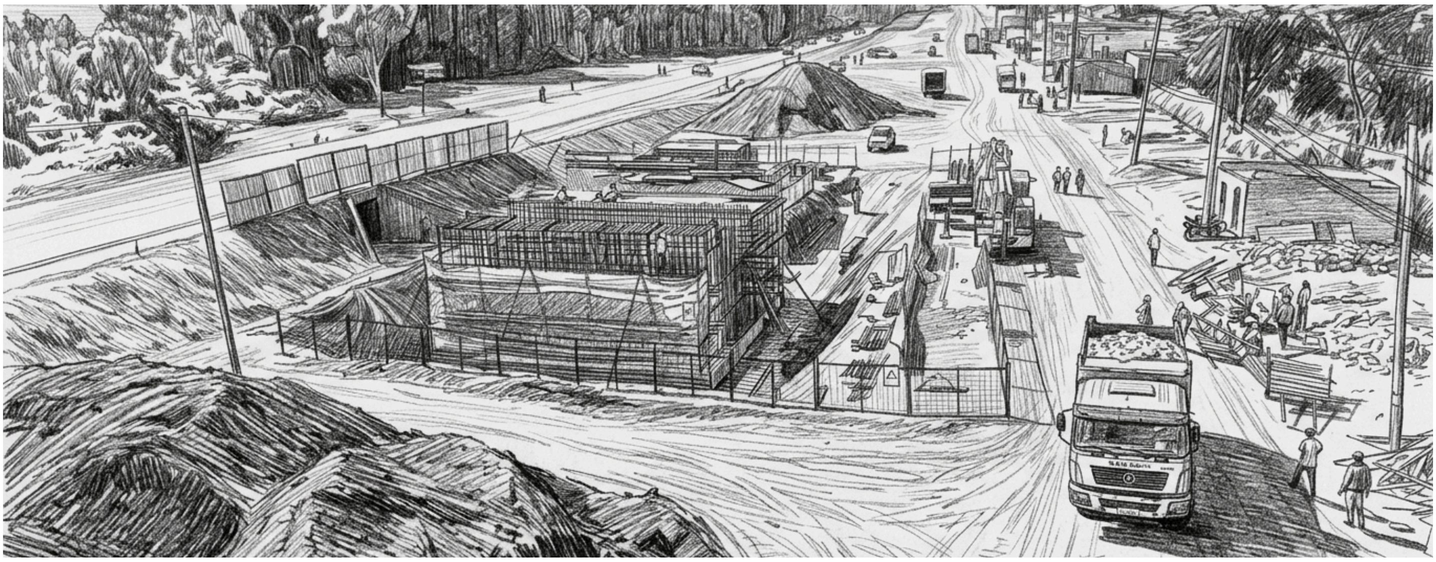
Healthcare reforms illustrate another mixed picture. The transition from NHIF to the Social Health Authority represents one of the most ambitious institutional reforms undertaken during the administration. Millions have registered under the new system. Yet implementation challenges, delayed reimbursements, confusion among patients and complaints from healthcare providers have prevented the reforms from achieving universal public confidence.

Whether voters judge it as courageous reform or administrative disruption may depend less on policy design than on their own experience at hospital reception desks.

The Independent Count

There have been various reports seeking to audit the delivery of the Kenya Kwanza manifesto, and all have had varying verdicts.





It reflects a fundamental disagreement about what counts as delivery: promises initiated versus promises fulfilled, projects under construction versus projects completed, targets announced versus targets met.

The housing programme illustrates the distinction cleanly. The 2022 manifesto promised 250,000 new affordable units every year. In four years, that would amount to one million homes. The 2025 State of the Nation Address claimed 230,000 affordable homes delivered — the "most extensive housing rollout in our history."

Even accepting that figure, it represents roughly one year's worth of the original annual target, spread across nearly four.

The Kenya Kwanza manifesto also promised to grow the number of mortgages from 30,000 to 1,000,000 by enabling low-cost mortgages of Sh10,000 and below. No public data suggests the mortgage market has moved anywhere near that figure.

On digital infrastructure, the government committed to constructing 100,000 kilometres of fibre optic networks. It has completed 4,690 kilometres. It promised 25,000 public WiFi spots; it has established 1,563. The trajectory is positive. The scale is not.

Measurable Change

The record is not uniformly thin, as some Kenya Kwanza promises have translated into measurable structural change.

The fertiliser subsidy, whatever its imperfect implementation, reached farmers who had never previously benefited from government input support.

SHA, despite serious teething problems with hospital onboarding and claims backlogs, has brought millions into a formal healthcare financing system for the first time.

The Hustler Fund, with 21.87 million individuals enrolled and Sh54.9 billion disbursed since launch, represents a genuinely unprecedented expansion of digital credit access at the base of the pyramid, though the same government has acknowledged a 21 per cent non-performing loan ratio, suggesting the programme has served some borrowers into debt rather than out of it.

The road network is more contested. Ruto promised to deliver 1,000 kilometres of new roads, but his administration has suffered from budgetary constraints, leading contractors to abandon work. What the government has substituted, an ambitious pipeline of highway dualling projects announced in successive State of the Nation addresses, is a vision of a future road network rather than evidence of a current one.

But none of the government's delivery metrics addresses the question that most ordinary Kenyans are actually asking: has their life become materially better since September 2022?

Inflation surged to 6.7 per cent in May 2026, the highest level since January 2024, driven by a government-authorised fuel price increase of up to 24 per cent following disruptions tied to the Middle East conflict.

Food prices rose 9.4 per cent year-on-year. Transport costs climbed 16.5 per cent. Private sector surveys showed Kenya's business activity contracting for the second consecutive month, while economists warned that household incomes have largely remained stagnant despite steadily rising living costs.

Kenya's poverty rate remains at 39.8 per cent, youth unemployment stands at roughly 30 per cent, and the fiscal deficit is forecast to widen to 6.1 per cent of GDP in 2026, well above the government's own 4.0 per cent medium-term target.

This is the central tension in the delivery election argument. The government can point to the cranes in Kibera, the SHA registration queues, and the fertiliser bags arriving in the highlands.

What it cannot easily account for is the fuel queue, the school fees that went up, and the loan repayment that came due. Infrastructure is visible. The cost of living is felt.

The Re-election Arithmetic

Political science has long recognised that governments are judged less by the total number of projects completed than by whether citizens believe their own lives have improved.

Kibaki won in 2007, albeit controversially, not by campaigning on roads but by riding a wave of genuine economic optimism, GDP growth above six per cent, a booming middle class, and a sense that the future was arriving. Uhuru won in 2017 on an incumbency advantage and a split opposition, not on a widely acclaimed delivery record.

Ruto's approach reflects what observers describe as ground-up coalition building: rather than relying solely on elite political alliances, he is targeting voters directly through projects. It is a rational strategy, particularly in regions such as Nyanza and Western, where previous administrations left deficits.

Whether it is sufficient depends on whether the voter experiencing a 16.5 per cent rise in transport costs weighs that against the construction site two kilometres away.

The delivery election is a gamble. It assumes that Kenyans will judge the government primarily on what has been built rather than what has been lost.

The opposition argues that many of these projects either began under previous administrations or remain incomplete. Government responds that continuity is itself governance and that completion matters more than groundbreaking ceremonies.

Both claims contain elements of truth, as infrastructure rarely belongs exclusively to one administration. Most major projects span multiple governments, and the political reward, however, usually accrues to whoever delivers the finished product.

The government will argue that it inherited a difficult economy, stabilised public finances, expanded infrastructure and implemented long-overdue reforms. Its opponents will argue that taxation increased, living costs remained high, healthcare reforms struggled, and Kenyans have yet to feel the promised economic transformation.

Manifestos are written with certainty, but their implementation unfolds through compromise, economic shocks, court decisions, budget constraints and political realities.

The real question is not whether President William Ruto has implemented his manifesto in full. He has not. Nor is it whether Kenya has seen meaningful progress in several sectors. It has.

The question voters will answer in 2027 is simpler, more personal and ultimately more consequential.

Has the Kenya Kwanza government delivered enough to deserve another five years? That, more than any campaign slogan or political rally, is likely to determine the next presidency.

DATA STORY

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BY THE NUMBERS

FOUR YEARS OF KENYA KWANZA

William Ruto was elected on a Bottom-Up Economic Transformation agenda that would prioritise ordinary Kenyans over elite interests. Nearly 4 years later, his administration campaigns not on promises but on projects delivered. Some numbers are difficult to dispute. Others remain deeply contested.

KEY INDICATORS

230,000+ Housing units completed or under construction

29M+ SHA registrations (June 2026)

1M+ New electricity connections

Sh158/kg Coffee farmgate price (up from Sh50–60)

391,000 Ajira digital jobs trained

THE ECONOMY

INDICATOR	2022	2026
GDP Growth	~4.8%	~5.0%
Inflation	~9.6%	6.7%*
Public Debt	Sh8.7T	Sh11T+
USD/KES (avg)	~119	~129
KRA Revenue	Sh1.9T	Sh2.7T

*May 2026 — highest since Jan 2024, driven by fuel increases

GOVERNMENT CASE

+ Inflation down from 2022 peak of 9.6%
+ Revenue collection up 42%
+ Shilling recovered from 2024 lows

PUBLIC CONCERN

– Debt up Sh2.3T in four years
– Poverty rate unchanged: 39.8%
– Deficit forecast 6.1% vs 4.0% target

AGRICULTURE

COFFEE FARMGATE
2022 Sh50–60 per kg → 2026 Sh158 per kg

MAIZE PRODUCTION
2022 61.7M bags (50kg) → 2026 85.7M bags (+39%)

FERTILISER PRICE
–60%+
Subsidised programme reduced input costs for smallholders

MILK FLOOR PRICE
2022 Sh37 per litre → 2026 Sh50 per litre

REFORMS

+ Direct Settlement System for coffee
+ Coffee Act 2025 passed
+ Sh18B fertiliser subsidy in 2026/27 budget

NOT DONE

! Sugar factory revival: progress, not completion
! Coffee reform caused short-term price falls
! Not all smallholders access subsidies equally

INFRASTRUCTURE

1M+ New electricity connections

1,000+ km roads upgraded or rehabilitated

2 AFCON 2027 venues under construction

VISIBLE PROGRESS

+ Raila Odinga Stadium nearing completion
+ Kasarani renovations ongoing
+ Major road projects active in 40+ counties

CHALLENGES

– Sh14.5B AFCON funding shortfall
– CAF: No venue meets Category 4 standard yet
– Two stadium contractors withdrew over Sh6B+ in unpaid debt

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

230,000+
Units under construction

2022 **2,235** Units completed before Uhuru left → 2026 **8,367** Units completed by May 2026

MAIN CRITICISM

! Manifesto promised 250,000 per year; 4-year total is one year's target units

! Levy under Court of Appeal review; occupancy data limited

! KNBS: Construction sector contracted 0.7% in 2024

HEALTH

29M+

The gap: 29M registered, but only ~4.8M actively contributing. Financial sustainability depends on contributions, not registration.

2022 **NHIF** Legacy System › 2026 **SHA** New System

CONTESTED

! Sh76B backlog to private hospitals (May 2026)
! Dispute tribunal not yet established
+ Sh65.4B paid to 4,718 facilities (Jul '25 – Apr '26)

DIGITISATION

Days Passport processing (was 3–6 months)

391K Ajira trainees (target: 1M/year)

16/77 Konza City investors operational

DELIVERED

+ eCitizen services expanded
+Konza Phase 1 commissioned (Oct 2025)

THE GAP

– Fibre at 5% of 100,000km target
– WiFi hotspots: 1,563 of 25,000 target

OTHER INDICATORS

Indicator	2022	2026
FERTILISER SUBSIDY (MILLION BAGS)	2.6M	5.3M+
HOUSEHOLDS WITH PIPED WATER	59%	68%
CBC LEARNERS (CUMULATIVE)	1.1M	4.3M
TEA EXPORTS (VALUE)	Sh153B	Sh187B
TOURIST ARRIVALS (INTERNATIONAL)	1.1M	2.0M+
DIASPORA REMITTANCES (INWARD)	Sh331B	Sh462B+
CORPORATE TAX COLLECTIONS	Sh340B	Sh504B+

THE VERDICT: A MIXED SCORECARD

Housing	STRONG
Infrastructure	STRONG
Agriculture	IMPROVING
Digital Government	IMPROVING
Health (SHA)	MIXED
Jobs	MIXED
Cost of Living	WEAK
Public Debt	WEAK

Sources: CBK, National Treasury, KNBS, Ministries

Why Kenya keeps importing what it can grow

Kenya spends Sh160 billion annually importing edible oil. It currently produces just 306,000 tonnes of its 900,000-tonne need, importing the remaining, predominantly palm oil from Southeast Asia.

This is not a natural condition. Kenya has arable land, adequate rainfall across most agricultural zones, and a smallholder farming population with both the capacity and the incentive to grow sunflower, canola, soybean, and coconut at scale.

The edible oil import bill is the largest and most visible case of a pattern that runs across at least five other major commodities.

In each case, the story is structurally similar: a domestic production deficit that is closeable, a persistent import dependency that benefits a specific set of interests, and a reform agenda that has addressed the supply side without confronting the political economy of the distribution side.

Maize: A Claimed Victory Worth Scrutinising

Maize is Kenya's most politically charged agricultural commodity.

It provides over 40 per cent of daily calorie intake, anchors the food security debate, and has historically been the single most manipulated crop in the country's agricultural system.

This has manifested in import exemptions and NCPB purchasing decisions, providing reliable channels for rent extraction by well-connected traders.

The current government's claim on maize is its strongest agricultural headline: domestic imports reportedly fell from 10 million bags in 2022 to zero in 2025, attributed to the fertiliser subsidy programme and value chain support.

The US Department of Agriculture's own 2026 forecast broadly supports the direction, projecting a 32 per cent surge in maize production to 4.5 million metric tonnes, potentially achieving near-equilibrium with consumption for the first time in years.

But the USDA is also explicit that Kenya will remain a net importer of maize in the 2025/26 marketing year, even with the production surge, due to ongoing local supply deficits.

The government's "zero imports" claim and the USDA's "still a net importer" projection are not easily reconciled, and the difference matters because a genuine break in maize import dependency would represent the first time in a generation that one of the most lucrative import channels in Kenya's agricultural political economy has been closed.

Rice: 20% Domestic, 80% Imported

Kenya consumes approximately 1.3 million tonnes of rice annually. Local production contributes just 264,000 tonnes, covering 20 per cent of demand, with rice demand growing at over 10 per cent annually as urbanisation accelerates and dietary patterns shift toward wheat and rice-based foods.

To close the gap, the government has set a target of rice self-sufficiency by 2032, anchored on completing large-scale irrigation projects, including the Galana Kulalu Food Security Project, with Mwea, Ahero, and Bura irrigation schemes also earmarked for expansion in partnership with Japan.

The self-sufficiency target is technically achievable; nearly 80 per cent of Kenya's domestic rice is already produced under irrigated ecologies, meaning the constraint is irrigation infrastructure rather than rainfall or soil suitability.

The State Department of Irrigation requires Sh50.75 billion for the 2025/26 financial year, but has only been allocated a fraction of that figure.

The gap between what irrigation expansion costs and what Treasury is willing to release is the single most honest explanation for why Kenya keeps approving duty-free rice imports as an emergency measure rather than building the infrastructure that would make them unnecessary.

Wheat: Russia's Bread on Kenya's Tables

Kenya consumes roughly 2.73 million metric tonnes of wheat annually, a figure growing at nearly 9 per cent per year as urban populations shift toward bread, pastries, and baked goods.

Domestic production covers a small fraction of that demand.

Russia remains the largest exporter of wheat to Kenya, meaning the country's most basic bread staple is priced in dollars, shipped across two oceans, and subject to geopolitical supply shocks, as the Middle East conflict-related disruptions in 2026 have illustrated directly.

The Wheat Purchase Programme nominally obligates registered millers to buy all locally produced wheat before accessing import licences.

In practice, millers have significant discretion in how energetically they pursue local sourcing, and the incentive structure has historically rewarded importing over investing in domestic supply chains.

USDA projects a 5.6 per cent decline in wheat production for 2025/26, as farmers shift away to alternative crops like barley and canola, due to complications in the domestic support programme. Import dependency in wheat is, on current trends, deepening rather than closing.

Edible Oil: The Biggest Bill, the Longest Road

The Edible Oil Crops Promotion Project, launched in July 2023 at Sh981 million, aims to raise domestic production from 80,000 to 240,000 metric tonnes over five years, nearly tripling current output, though still well short of the 900,000-tonne national need.

Current productivity in oil crop farming averages just 0.3 to 0.5 tonnes per hectare; improved inputs and agronomic support are expected to raise yields to around 2 tonnes per hectare. These are achievable numbers.

The programme has so far distributed canola seeds across 11 sub-counties in Nakuru, covering 1,250 acres, a meaningful pilot, and a fraction of the 250,000-hectare cultivation target.

The more important question is not whether domestic oil crop production can improve. It clearly can.

The question is whether the licensing, distribution, and procurement systems that make cheap Southeast Asian palm oil consistently more attractive than domestically grown sunflower oil will be restructured.

So far, that conversation has not happened in public.

Sugar: Twenty-Two Years, and Counting

The government claims Kenya has effectively broken a 22-year sugar import cycle, with domestic production exceeding 900,000 metric tonnes against consumption of approximately one million tonnes, a remarkable claim if accurate.

Independent analysis from the Institute of Economic Affairs found that Ruto's assertion of an 80 per cent decline in sugar import costs was inconsistent with Kenya National Bureau of Statistics data showing import unit prices rose approximately 20 per cent between 2022 and 2023.

The 2026/27 budget allocates funds to waive historical debts crippling state-owned millers, a structural fix that has been partially funded in successive budget cycles since the 1990s without being fully resolved.

The Common Thread

What links edible oil, maize, rice, wheat, and sugar is not a shortage of agricultural potential. It is a shortage of political will to dismantle the specific interests that make import dependency profitable.

Those interests take different forms across different crops; the palm oil importer, the wheat miller, the maize trader with an NCPB relationship, the sugar smuggler, but they share a structural feature.

They are better organised, better resourced, and better connected than the smallholder farmers whose livelihoods depend on domestic production, finally competing on fair terms.

Kenya's current agricultural reform agenda is the most serious attempt in a generation to shift the production equation.

Fertiliser subsidies, coffee liberalisation, oil crop promotion, irrigation investment, these are real interventions with real effects. What they have not yet done is name the import lobby, map its interests, and legislate against them.

Until that happens, Kenya will continue to spend Sh160 billion importing what its own farmers can grow, and reforming agriculture at the margins while leaving its political economy intact.

They came in Subaru cars; two years later, no one has been charged

On June 25, 2026, the second anniversary of the day protesters stormed Parliament, families of the dead attempted to lay wreaths at the building's gates. They were met with barbed wire.

The wreath-laying happened anyway, against the wire, in the gap between what the country's constitution promises and what its security forces permit. It was, in its quiet way, the perfect image for what accountability in Kenya looks like two years on from the most significant episode of state violence against civilians in a generation.

The facts of what happened in the weeks around June 25, 2024, are not seriously in dispute. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights documented at least 63 deaths, 610 injuries, and 74 enforced disappearances. Amnesty International reported at least 60 killings.

The Missing Voices Coalition recorded 104 police killings in 2024 and 125 in 2025. According to the Human Rights Watch World Report 2026, 26 people linked to the 2024 protests and 15 linked to the 2025 demonstrations remain missing.

The KNCHR has separately documented more than 83 cases of abductions and enforced disappearances since June 2024. Survivor testimonies describe the same operational pattern: plain-clothes officers, Subaru vehicles, movement through multiple police stations, incommunicado detention.

The violence did not end in 2024. It continued. When protesters gathered in June and July 2025 to commemorate the killings, police again opened fire. 41 people died during the Saba Saba protests alone, including 12-year-old Bridgit Njoki, shot in the head by a bullet that pierced the roof of her home while she watched television.

Then, on the second anniversary, just four days before this issue went to press, five activists who had been arrested at Parliament Road resurfaced at Nairobi Women's Hospital with injuries, alleging they had been abducted, beaten, and asked whether they had funded the protests, before being dumped in different parts of the city. A sixth activist, Davis Lichuma, remained missing.

"We were beaten so badly. I cannot even walk," one of the five told journalists. "Why not take us to court if they thought we had committed an offence?" It is a fair question. It has not received a fair answer.

What the Government Has Offered

President Ruto's response to the accountability crisis has taken two forms. The first is rhetorical: in May 2025, he said there was "an accountability mechanism" to bring those responsible to justice.

The second is financial: the government has allocated Sh2 billion for compensation of victims of human rights violations committed during protests between 2017 and 2025, with the KNCHR's Panel of Experts establishing a voluntary programme covering 348 verified victims.

"A nation does not heal by choosing whose pain matters," Ruto said when receiving the KNCHR report. "It heals by acknowledging all suffering, pursuing justice for all."

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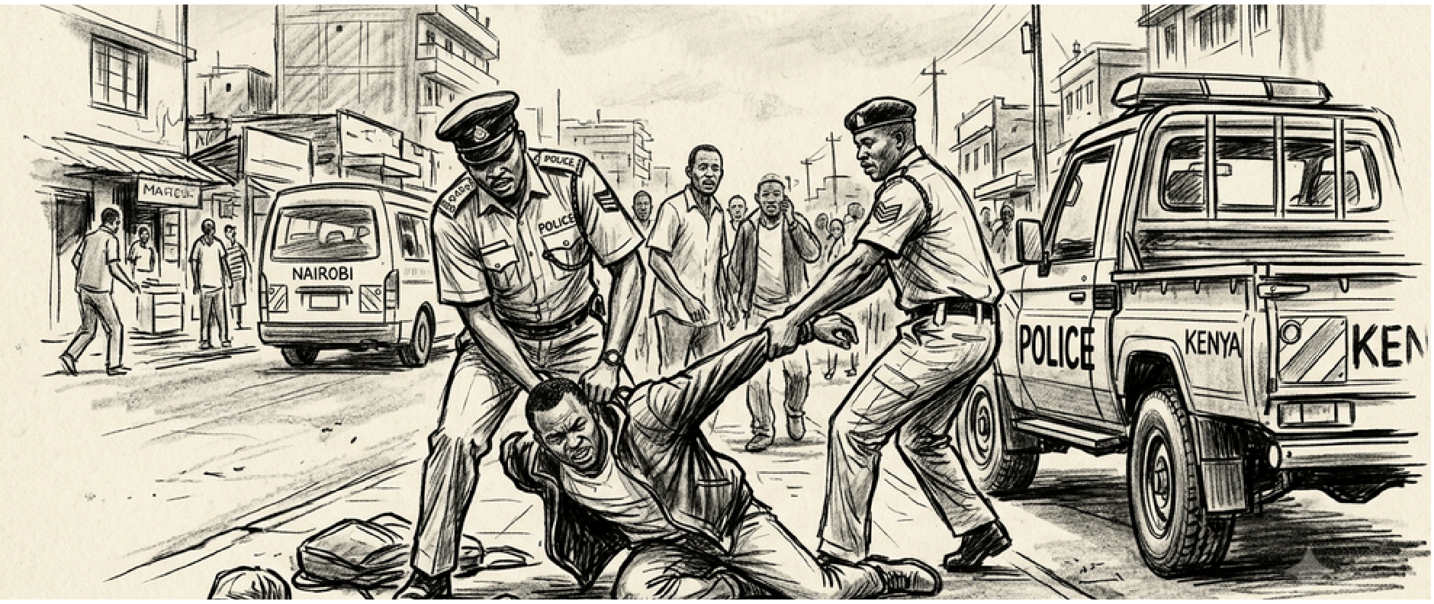


The families of the missing have responded to that framing with a consistent, specific objection: compensation is not accountability. They say that the money will not be enough as long as those responsible are not held to account.

What the Justice System Has Produced

The Independent Policing Oversight Authority has published updates tracking three waves of protest deaths: 2024, the June 2025 commemorations, and the Saba Saba July 2025 protests, totalling 127 reported deaths under active investigation.

One case has reached court: the inquest into the killing of Rex Masai, with a plain-clothes police officer placed at the centre of the case. A second prosecution involves Constable Klinzy Baraza Masinde, charged with shooting mask vendor Boniface Kariuki during the 2025 demonstrations.

Two cases, against 127 documented deaths. The gap is not a function of the law's inadequacy; Kenya's constitution, the IPOA Act, and the penal code all contain provisions capable of sustaining prosecution of security officials for unlawful killing.

The gap is a function of what Kalonzo Musyoka described the day before the second anniversary as "investigative failures"; the evidence required to secure justice, he argued, was never gathered.

Even where prosecution proceeds, an officer may walk free not because innocence was established, but because the case was never built to the standard required to secure a conviction.

The Constitutional Question

Kenya's constitution does not merely prohibit arbitrary arrest, torture, and extrajudicial killing. It requires the state to investigate and prosecute violations of those rights.

Article 49 guarantees the right of every arrested person to be informed of the reason for their arrest and to be brought before a court within 24 hours.

Article 25 lists the rights that cannot be limited under any circumstances, including freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial.

The pattern documented across 2024, 2025, and now the June 2026 anniversary protests is not consistent with the legal framework Kenya gave itself in 2010.

That is not an opposition talking point. It is an observable fact documented by the government's own human rights commission.

What distinguishes Kenya's current accountability moment from its post-2007 equivalent is that in 2008, there was at least a formal architecture of international and domestic accountability: the KNDR, the ICC referral, and a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission.

In 2026, the architecture is thinner: an IPOA with 127 deaths on its docket, a voluntary compensation programme, and two active prosecutions.

The families laying wreaths against barbed wire are not asking for symbolic gestures. They are asking a question the government has not yet answered: who gave the orders?

Until that question is answered, Kenya's 2010 constitutional commitment to the right to life and to accountability for its violation remains, in this specific and documented domain, a promise the state is actively breaking.

The Week in Numbers

240	21	Sh1.46 bn	30
EVACUATEES	**DETENTION**	**INVESTMENT**	**REJECTED**
Number of Kenyans who have been evacuated from South Africa , so far, due to fears of xenophobic attacks.	Days that 8 Utumishi Academy students will be detained as police probe their arsonist attack on fellow students.	Amount that Kipenzi Sugar Limited is committing to build a new sugar factory in Siaya County	Number of promotions at the ODPP that the court has nullified and ordered new hiring process.

Quote of the Week

> The National Police Service has taken note of the persistent circulation of allegations linking its officers to abductions. The Service categorically rejects these claims. They are false, misleading, and unsupported by any credible evidence.

- Police Spokesperson Muchiri Nyaga

KDC Explainer: What Is Manifesto Accountability?

When politicians run for office, they lay out their visions, plans, and promises in a document christened a manifesto. Manifesto accountability is the framework, tools, and civic practice of holding elected officials strictly responsible for delivering on those commitments.

Think of a manifesto as a social contract. Manifesto accountability ensures that this contract isn't just a marketing brochure, but a roadmap for governance.

Why It Matters

Without a mechanism to track these promises, democracy suffers from an "accountability gap." Candidates can promise the moon to win votes, knowing there will be no measurable consequences if they fail to deliver.

When manifesto accountability is actively applied, it shifts politics from personality-driven popularity contests to policy-driven performance assessments. It gives citizens a baseline metric to say: "You said X schools in four years; you have built Y. Why?"

How It Works in Practice

Manifesto accountability generally relies on three pillars:

- **Data-Driven Tracking:** Independent civil society organisations, journalists, or academics extract every measurable promise from a manifesto and log these promises into public databases.
- **Verification and Progress Reports:** Throughout an administration's term, trackers update the status of each promise, categorising them as Not Started, In Progress, Delayed, or Delivered, based on empirical evidence like budget allocations and legislative records.
- **Civic Action:** Citizens and media use this data during town halls, interviews, and subsequent elections to question leaders and make informed decisions at the ballot box.

The Transparency Standard: Accountability requires accessible data. If one claims they fulfilled a promise to improve healthcare, manifesto accountability demands open data: verifiable hospital records or public audit logs, to back the claim.

The Ultimate Goal

Ultimately, manifesto accountability transforms voters from passive spectators into active auditors. By treating a political manifesto as a checklist rather than a wishlist, society ensures that democracy functions effectively between elections, not just on election day.

Chronicle WEEKLY

The cost of living in 2026: What the numbers feel like

On June 25, 2026, demonstrators marked the second anniversary of the anti-Finance Bill protests.

The 2024 protests quickly evolved from a tax revolt into a nationwide expression of frustration over the rising cost of living, shrinking purchasing power, and a growing sense that the economy was no longer working for ordinary citizens.

Two years on, some of the specific tax proposals that sparked the unrest have been withdrawn. The underlying pressure they reflected has not.

What Treasury Itself Heard

Presenting the 2026/27 budget on June 11, Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi acknowledged directly that household financial concerns were the dominant theme raised by Kenyans.

"The message from Kenyans across the country, from our rural villages to our bustling towns and cities, the ordinary mwananchi, is clear and consistent," Mbadi said. "Kenyans want an economy that works for them; an economy where the cost of living is manageable."

He noted that Kenyans had also specifically called for lower taxes on essential commodities, reduced wastage of public resources, and a more decisive fight against corruption.

This is a government, in other words, that has directly heard and acknowledged the cost-of-living grievance from its own public participation process. The question this piece asks is what that grievance actually looks like inside a household budget.

The Food Basket

As 2026 opened, KNBS data showed food and non-alcoholic beverages prices had surged 7.8 per cent over the year, the sharpest increase among all major spending categories, and the single largest contributor to overall inflation.

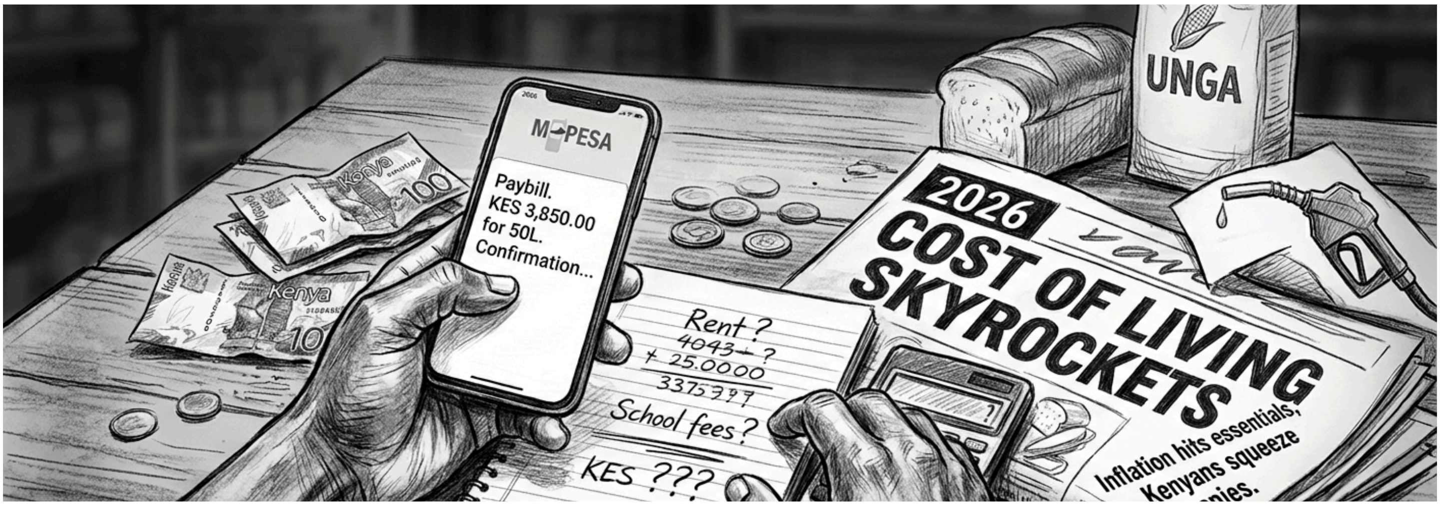
The headline inflation number obscures how unevenly that pressure lands on specific staples. Potatoes rose to Sh94.99 per kilogramme, up 8.3 per cent year-on-year. Tomatoes reached Sh87.18 per kilogramme, a striking 30.3 per cent higher than the previous year. Beef with bones climbed to Sh719.29 per kilogramme, contributing to a 7.8 per cent annual rise in meat costs.

By May 2026, the pressure had intensified rather than eased. Inflation accelerated to 6.7 per cent, the highest since January 2024, with food, fuel, rent, and transport all rising simultaneously, a combination that left even economists describing a fragile situation for households whose incomes have largely remained stagnant.

The Deduction Squeeze

What distinguishes the 2026 cost-of-living story from earlier inflation cycles is the compounding effect of statutory deductions layered on top of rising prices.

Many salaried Kenyan workers are now absorbing simultaneous pressure from PAYE, SHA contributions, the Housing Levy, and increased NSSF deductions, a combination that is straining urban middle-income earners who fall outside government social protection programmes but are increasingly



struggling to absorb repeated economic shocks.

This is the structural bind at the centre of the delivery election argument examined elsewhere in this issue: several of the government's flagship delivery programmes are themselves funded by deductions that directly reduce the take-home pay households have available to absorb the food and fuel inflation hitting them from the other direction.

Transport and Fuel

Transport remains the expense most Kenyans notice first and most directly, for workers living outside city centres, commuting costs now rival major monthly bills, with a growing share of income going simply into getting to work.

When public service transporters staged a two-day strike over fuel costs, the government responded by lowering diesel prices by Sh10 a litre, but the relief did little to reverse the trend, as fares and other service costs had already been adjusted upward and proved sticky on the way back down.

Housing and Rent

Housing continues to shape household finances more than almost any other single cost category.

Once rent rises in Kenya's urban centres, reductions are rare, meaning housing remains the most stable yet stubbornly persistent expense facing urban families; a dynamic that sits in direct tension with the Affordable Housing Programme's stated goal of expanding access to lower-cost housing, examined separately in this issue's business section.

The Electricity Tariff Decision

One of the more telling signals of government anxiety about cost-of-living pressure came in June 2026, when the Treasury froze a planned electricity tariff review that was due to take effect from July 1.

This decision was made explicitly to avoid hitting households and businesses with higher power bills amid the broader inflation surge.

The freeze suggests the administration recognises the political risk of compounding cost pressures on households even as it has, on other fronts, continued to extract new mandatory deductions through SHA and the Housing Levy.

Where the Numbers Sit Regionally

By early 2026, Kenya's cost of living had risen approximately 4 per cent compared to the previous year.

Within East Africa, Kenya ranked seventh by cost-of-living index, at 28.9, up from 28.2 in 2025, meaning living costs are rising faster than the regional baseline, even as Kenya remains less expensive in absolute terms than several other African capitals.

Reading This Against the Cover Story

This piece is not a contradiction of the delivery narrative examined elsewhere in this issue; it is its necessary companion. A government can simultaneously deliver visible infrastructure and preside over a genuine erosion of household purchasing power; both things are true in Kenya in 2026.

The Gen Z protests of 2024 may have succeeded in stopping some unpopular tax proposals, but they did not eliminate the underlying pressures that sparked public anger. Instead, those pressures have migrated from the streets into the quiet, ongoing adjustments Kenyan families are making around their own kitchen tables.

That, more than any single statistic in the government's delivery scorecard, is the data point likely to shape how Kenyans vote in 2027.

Kenya is the location. Who owns the story?

When The Agency Season 2 dropped on Paramount+ last week, Nairobi and Kisumu were among its key filming locations. Jodie Turner-Smith, one of the show's stars, told interviewers that Kenya was one of the most outstanding locations, praising the people and the weather.

The CIA spy thriller starring Michael Fassbender, produced by George Clooney, is now streaming globally. Kenya's skyline is in it. Kenya's streets are in it. Kenya's people are in it.

Kenya's name is not in the credits as a co-producer. Kenya's industry did not retain the intellectual property. Kenya's filmmakers did not negotiate the distribution rights. What Kenya received was location fees, some hospitality spend, and, in the government's framing, brand visibility.

This is the central tension of the creative economy moment Kenya finds itself in: a country that has become genuinely desirable as a backdrop while remaining structurally marginal as an author.

The Policy Momentum

To be fair to the government, it has moved. On May 2, 2026, at the Kalasha International Film and TV Awards, President Ruto called on Parliament to accelerate the passage of the Creative Economy Bill 2026, and urged lawmakers to strengthen copyright laws to protect artists' rights and ensure fair compensation.

The President also announced an increase in government funding for the creative industry to Sh1 billion. He asked the National Treasury to fast-track film incentives, and committed to channelling 30 per cent of state advertising through creative platforms.

These are not trivial commitments. A billion shillings in sector funding, a dedicated State Department, a legislative framework for copyright, on paper, this is the infrastructure of a serious creative economy.

The Creative Economy Bill proposes to establish the Kenya Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission, create a Kenya School of Film and Creative Arts, and set up a Creative Industry Development Fund to provide financial support.

But the same bill that promises protection also introduces significant state power over the industry it claims to be liberating.

Section 26(2)(e)(iv) would empower the Kenya Audio-Visual Regulatory Authority to issue takedown orders for content deemed unclassified, prohibited, or in contravention of any law, a provision whose scope for abuse concerns legal observers.

A creative economy framework that can mute the voices it funds is a contradictory proposition.

The IP Problem

The deeper issue predates the current administration. Kenya's film and television industry generated approximately Sh8.2 billion in 2023, yet industry stakeholders estimate that producers capture less than 30 per cent of the potential revenue their content generates across its lifecycle.

The problem is not a shortage of Kenyan talent: Country Queen on Netflix and Sincerely Daisy on Showmax have demonstrated global competitiveness.

The problem is structural: poorly negotiated contracts, undefined exploitation rights, and an industry culture that has historically prioritised production over ownership.

When a foreign production arrives in Kenya, brings its own IP framework, shoots on Kenyan soil, casts Kenyan faces in supporting roles, and then distributes globally with all rights retained, the economic equation is clear. Kenya gets the fee. The network gets the catalogue.

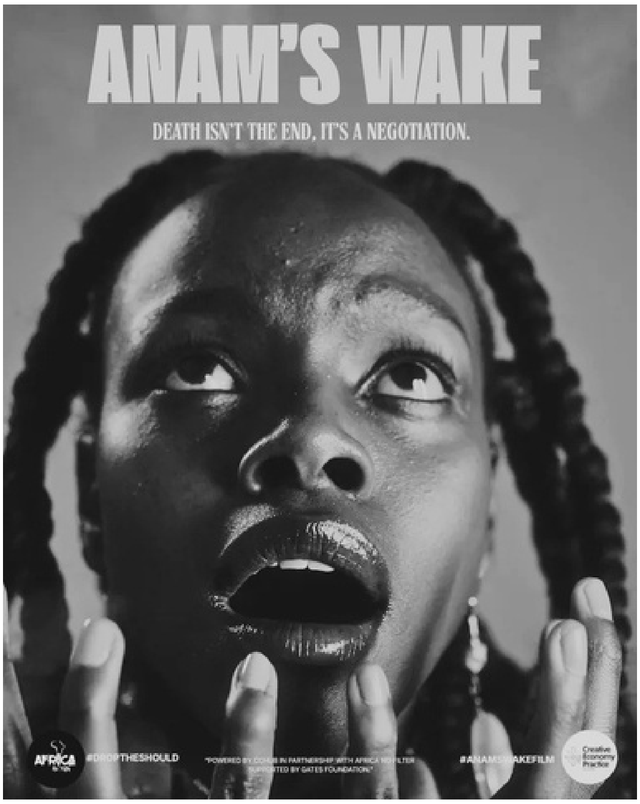
This is not exploitation in any dramatic sense; it is simply what happens when one party has an IP strategy, and the other does not.

What Anam's Wake Represents

Which is why the film premiering at Prestige Cinema on July 31 matters beyond its running time. Anam's Wake, written and directed by Likarion Wainaina, is a psychological thriller set against the backdrop of African mourning rituals and traditions.

It follows Anam, a professional mourner trained to summon death and negotiate the passage of souls, who remains emotionally numb after her own mother's death sixteen years earlier.

When tasked with her first solo ritual at the influential Ebale family home, what begins as a solemn wake spirals into a chilling ordeal as long-buried family secrets surface and Anam discovers the ritual was never truly about the deceased patriarch.



The significance extends past the story.

Anam's Wake is a Kenyan IP story. Conceived, written, directed, produced, and cast in Kenya, by Kenyans, drawing on specifically Kenyan cultural material: mourning rituals, the weight of unacknowledged grief, the particular texture of family obligation in this part of the world.

Its cast includes Marima Wanjiru, Sam Omondi, Peter Kawa, Vanessa Okeyo, Ruth Apondi and Gathoni Mutua; names that Kenyan audiences are building relationships with, not visiting stars brought in to give a foreign production continental credibility.

The distinction sounds abstract. It has direct economic consequences. When a Kenyan film retains its IP, the distribution deal is a negotiation rather than a surrender.

The sequel, the merchandise, the international sale, the streaming licence, all of these accrue to the people who made it. The film becomes a long-term asset rather than a one-time transaction.

The Terms of Integration

Kenya's integration into the global creative economy is proceeding on two parallel tracks that rarely intersect. On one track: foreign productions attracted by the landscape, the labour costs, and the access to the East African terrain.

On the other: a domestic industry slowly building the infrastructure, the legal frameworks, and the cultural confidence to tell its own stories on its own terms.

The government's instinct has been to pursue both simultaneously, attract the foreign dollar while funding the local filmmaker, without fully reckoning with the tension between them.

Tax incentives that attract Hollywood without requiring co-production clauses, IP-sharing requirements, or training levies do not build a domestic industry.

They build a location service industry, which is a different and more precarious thing.

Kenya has the stories. The question the Creative Economy Bill, the Kalasha commitments, and every foreign production deal should be forced to answer is the same one Anam's Wake implicitly poses: who gets to own them?

Chronicle WEEKLY

Fighting for AI to speak African languages

Language is the ultimate gatekeeper of culture, but technology is rapidly changing the rules around who gets to pass through.

Duka Labs is developing the foundational AI infrastructure that could make such inclusion the norm.

For too long, African users have been forced into a 'translator' mindset, where they speak in their native language but wait for the AI to convert it to English before the system can understand them. Duka Labs is reversing this.

Bridging the Language Gap

Their goal is to provide native access to information, education and economic opportunities. This means that an aspiring entrepreneur can write a business proposal in Hausa, Kiswahili, or Kinyarwanda and use an AI assistant to help them structure it, without ever leaving their linguistic comfort zone.

It means a university student can query a research database in their own language and receive synthesised complex data back in a familiar dialect. This suggests that your native language is not a barrier to entry into the digital economy, but rather your greatest asset.

Innovative Technical Approaches

By developing specialised Large Language Models (LLMs) and speech systems, Duka Labs is creating AI that understands African languages. They have optimised their inference to operate in under 100 milliseconds. That's faster than a heartbeat, ensuring conversations with digital assistants feel natural and not clunky.

Their speech recognition system remains undaunted by heavy accents or tonal shifts, which most LLM from the global North struggle with.

Imagine a farmer in rural Kenya using a voice assistant to check market prices in their own language, even without a stable internet connection. This is possible thanks to Duka Labs' focus on low-bandwidth and offline processing, which ensures their technology works where it is needed most.

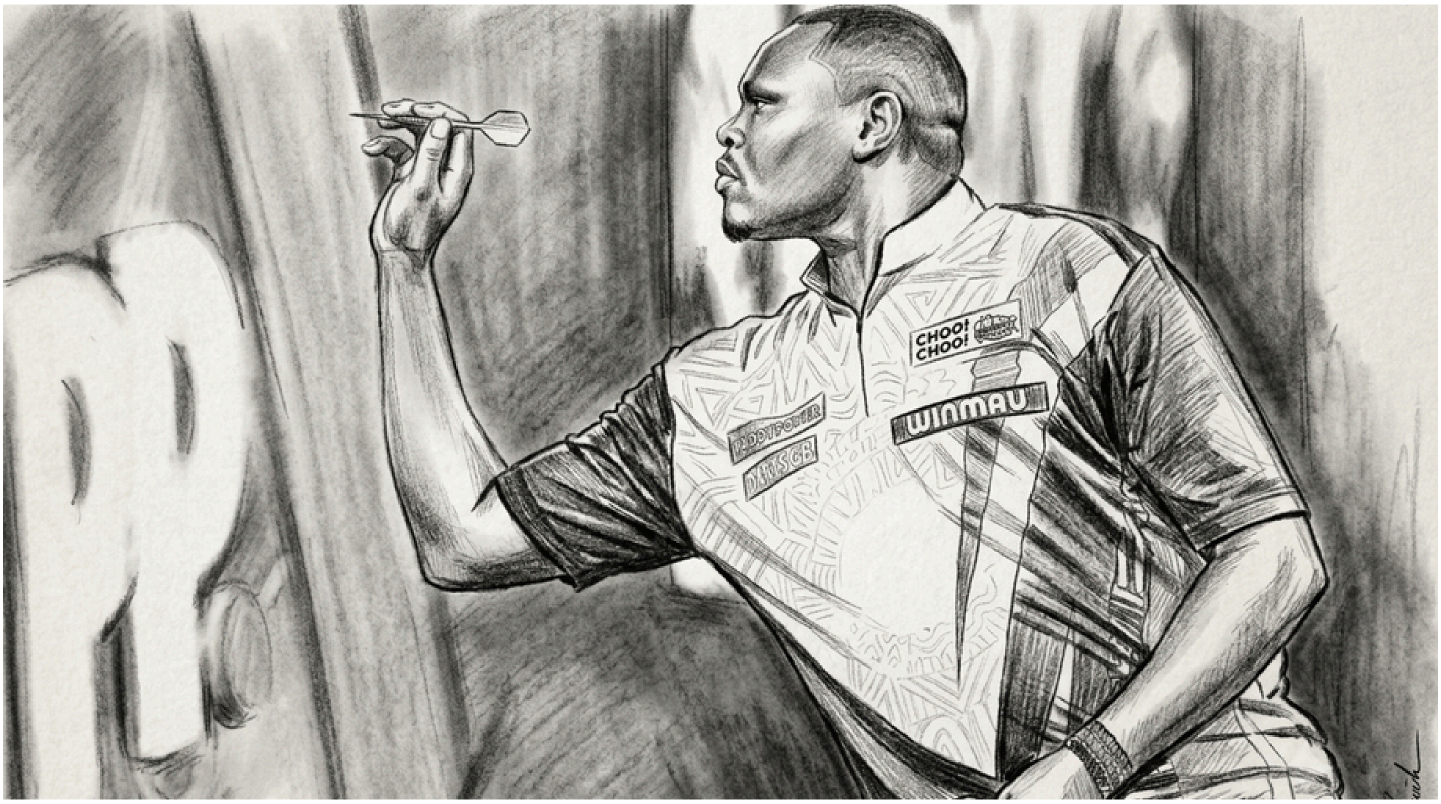
It's the digital equivalent of a seasoned interpreter who understands not just the words, but also the context. Adding to this is TV5MONDE, which already provides subtitles for its programmes in 12 languages, but Kiswahili had never been included. BIVARIANT, a French-Beninese company, built its own translation models from scratch. They trained these models using specifically collected, digitised data processed through artificial intelligence designed to understand the nuances of Kiswahili.

Now, hundreds of films, series, documentaries and entertainment programmes are available completely free of charge to more than 200 million Kiswahili speakers across East Africa and beyond. Viewers no longer have to navigate foreign languages to access the world's cultural riches.

This is a significant step forward for linguistic equity, actively challenging English dominance by integrating African languages into global digital databases.

This moment will be formally recognised on July 6, 2026, when TV5MONDE presents the innovation at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris as part of the official World Kiswahili Language Day celebrations.

A community that never stopped throwing is bringing darts back



Sometime in the 1980s, in a bar anywhere in Nairobi, a Kenya Breweries employee lined up a dart, released it, and hit the bullseye. Nobody thought much of it.

The Tusker Festival of Darts was a regular fixture in Kenya Breweries' annual sporting calendar, alongside festivals of golf, horse racing, and fishing, and darts was woven into the company's culture so deeply that, as one chronicle of the era records, only the armed services produced more international sports stars than Breweries through that period.

Across East Africa, the Tusker Export Cup drew players from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania into a regional competition that gave the sport a genuine competitive structure and a corporate face.
That structure did not survive the 1990s intact.

As Kenya Breweries restructured, corporate sports sponsorship thinned, and without the financial scaffolding that brewery money had provided, darts retreated from the tournament hall back to the pub wall.

The sport did not die; it is almost impossible to kill a game that requires nothing more than a board, three arrows, and a wall, but it lost its competitive architecture, its prize money, its visibility, and a generation of potential players who simply had nowhere to go.

The Man Who Restarted the Clock

David Munyua, who hails from Murang'a, only took up darts three years ago and needed the help of sponsors to play at the tournament and travel outside Africa for the first time.

That fact, three years from first dart to Alexandra Palace, is less a measure of Munyua's exceptional talent than of the depth of the Kenyan darts pool he emerged from.

He did not develop in isolation. He developed in a competitive domestic circuit that, though invisible to most Kenyan sports coverage, has been operating continuously since the Tusker era ended.

On December 18, 2025, Munyua created history by becoming the first Kenyan to win at the PDC World Darts Championship, stunning Mike De Decker, the reigning World Grand Prix champion, in a 3-2 comeback victory after trailing 2-0. He took out a 135 checkout on the bull in the deciding set to seal his place in Alexandra Palace folklore.

"This is a really big moment for the sport itself and for Africa," he said from the stage.

The institutional consequence arrived faster than the congratulations.

The PDC announced it was expanding Africa's allocation, South Africa guaranteed a berth, and a second African nation to qualify through a separate continental qualifier, a direct response to Munyua's performances.

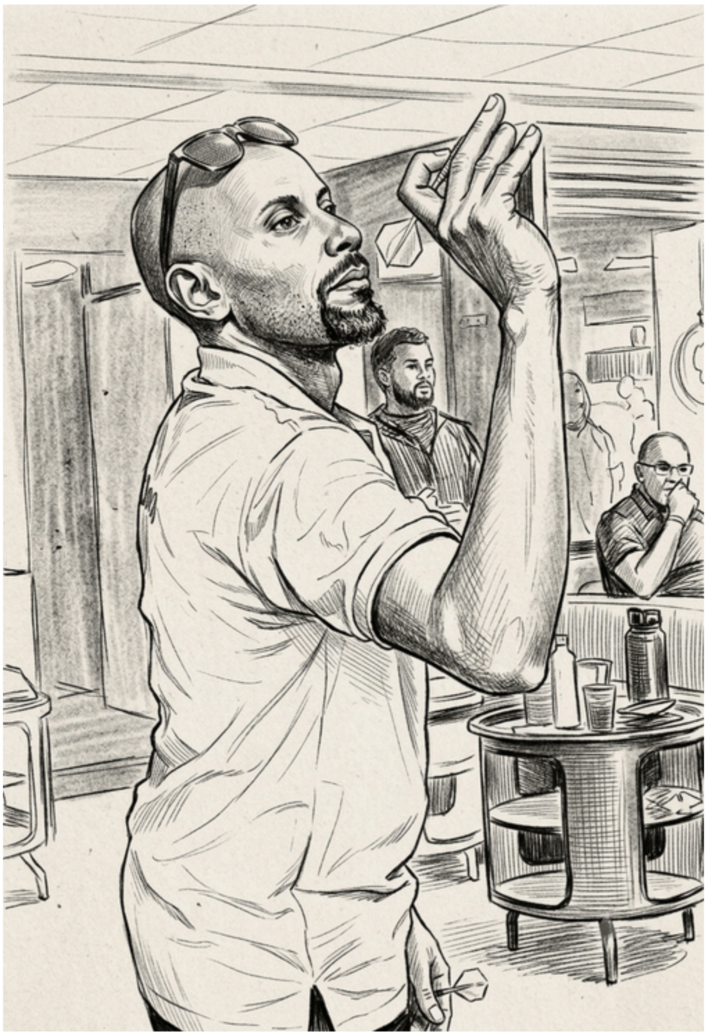
One win, in one first-round match, produced a structural change to how the world's most prestigious darts organisation allocates global representation. The sport had been waiting for a moment to leverage. Munyua gave it one.

The Infrastructure Behind the Individual

The mistake the national celebration of Munyua made was treating him as an isolated phenomenon.

Kenya has hosted high-level competitions, including PDC World Championship Qualifiers, staged outside South Africa for the first time, as well as the African Continental Tour, the first professional darts competition ever held in the country, drawing elite players from across the continent.

These are not footnotes to Munyua's story. They are the conditions that made his story possible.



Sirua Darts Group, which now has over 500 registered players in Kenya, launched the inaugural Nairobi Darts Masters in December 2025 at Broadwalk Mall in Westlands, the first high-level darts championship ever held in the country, featuring 96 players across four categories with a total prize pool of $10,000.

These are not symbolic figures. They are the signal to a young Kenyan that darts can pay, which is a different and more durable incentive than national pride alone.

Sirua Darts aims to monetise the sport and provide opportunities for players to succeed, noting that the competition is designed to attract future players to know they can turn darts into a professional pursuit and to create pathways for future tournaments at the East African stage.

These milestones have been achieved without direct government funding, relying instead on the commitment of the darts community and support from darts manufacturer Winmau.

Nodor, the dartboard manufacturer based at the Athi River Export Processing Zone, produces 80 per cent of the world's dartboards and employs over 1,000 people, making Kenya, improbably, the global capital of dartboard manufacturing.

The country has been making the world's darts equipment for decades. It has been doing so while its own competitive darts scene atrophied for want of the kind of corporate backing that Tusker once provided, and no one replaced.

The Players Nobody Knows About

Munyua is the name Kenya knows. The names Kenya should also know tell the fuller story.

Peter Wachiuri, a former carpenter and driver from Ngong, became the first Kenyan to play at the Modus Super Series in February 2025, making history by reaching that week's final before losing 4-1 to Scotland's Scott Campbell.

He credits the Stima Darts Club in Ngong with giving him the exposure he needed, taking him to competitions in Tanzania and Uganda before he stood on his own.

Benson Ngari, 45, doubles as a boda boda operator and trains for between three and five hours a day. He discovered darts in a forest in Garissa in 2012 during a camping trip when a friend produced a board.

He is currently ranked 1,345 worldwide, higher than both Munyua and Wachiuri, and on May 2, 2026, he overcame Wachiuri in the Africa Darts Group Challenge Cup final to qualify for the Modus Super Series in July.

Then there is 14-year-old Aryan Khalsa, "The Protégé", who reached the quarterfinals of the World Darts Federation World Masters in Budapest and is preparing for the International Darts School League Championships in Portsmouth.

A 14-year-old Kenyan in a WDF World Masters quarterfinal is not an accident of nature.

It is the product of a junior structure that Sirua Darts and KDA have been quietly building while national sports coverage looked the other way.

The Question the Tweet Didn't Ask

President Ruto posted congratulations on X after Munyua's win. The gesture was genuine and the recognition merited.

What the congratulations did not address was the funding gap that preceded the historic moment: Munyua needed the help of sponsors, specifically Winmau, to play at the tournament and travel outside Africa for the first time.

The Sports Fund, which exists to support athletes competing at major international events, was not mobilised.

The amount required was reportedly in the range of Sh500,000, a fraction of what a government delegation to a regional summit costs before the first handshake.

The Kenya Darts Association has called for increased financial backing, while acknowledging the government support it has received on issues like visa applications for international competitions.

The ask is not extravagant. It is: treat darts the way you treat athletics. Send the qualifier properly equipped. Fund the domestic tournament circuit that produces the qualifiers.

Build the East African league that Sirua Darts is currently financing out of community commitment rather than state support.

The Tusker Export Cup built a regional darts ecosystem by doing exactly that, putting money, structure, and visibility behind a sport that was already being played.

When the money left, the structure collapsed. The community survived, underground, in bars and Stima clubs and forests in Garissa, and it has now produced three players inside the global top 1,500, a world championship win, a PDC rule change, and a 14-year-old in a Budapest quarterfinal.

What it has not yet produced is the corporate or institutional partner willing to do what Tusker once did.

Until it does, Kenya's darts revival will continue to punch above its weight and continue to fund its own way there.

President William Ruto chairs a Cabinet meeting on June 30, 2026 at State House, Nairobi.

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