



Without a trace: Puzzle of missing academic writer, IT consultant and MCAs husband

Steve Otieno / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

When Martin Mungai left his house in Roysambu on June 30 to meet a friend in Ruiru, his family did not know that they would soon be looking for him as a missing person.

The 29-year-old, who made a living from online academic writing, had informed his people, including his mother, about the meeting, and that he would be back in the evening.

However, when his friend called his mother a few hours later asking about Mungai, his mother, Mary Mungai, knew something was wrong.

I told her that Mungai had left Roysambu much earlier and it was puzzling that he had not arrived in Ruiru. When I tried calling him, his phone was off. I sensed something wasn't right. However, I told myself that his phone's battery might have died and calmed myself, Ms Mungai said.

When Mungai failed to show up that night, his mother reported the matter to Kasarani Police Station. The family is yet to get any feedback from police.

Read: Families ask courts to help find abducted relatives

Mungai's phone has never been switched on, its silence adding to the suffering of his family, which has been looking for him since.

How can my son just disappear and no one, not even the police, have been able to find any clue as to his whereabouts? Ms Mungai posed adding, This feeling of helplessness is tormenting me.

Mungai's mysterious disappearance is similar to that of Vincent Owino, 35, an IT consultant who went missing last Tuesday. His family believes he was abducted.

Security guards at his office block in Milimani said five people—two women in hijab and three men—arrived in a white Prado and picked him up last week. The strangers identified themselves as police officers.

They handcuffed Owino, bundled him into their car, and sped off along Rose Avenue. The matter was reported to Kilimani Police Station. His wife, Lisper Murugi, said she can't imagine anyone wanting to harm her husband.

Read: Puzzle as six men vanish without trace

I just want my husband and father of my two children back. How can the police not have anything to tell us when all roads in Milimani have CCTV cameras? she asked. The children are under three.

Mr Owino's sister, Mercy Owuor, said: Our mother fell ill after being told that Vincent is missing. Her condition worsens with every passing day, she said.

James Muthee's family is also in tears. Their son, husband to recently elected Mlango Kubwa Ward Rep Susan Makungu, vanished on July 14.

Witnesses say Muthee was arrested at Kamakis area by six people who identified themselves as police after blocking his car. They bundled him into one of their two vehicles and sped off with him. One of the abductors drove away in Muthee's car.

Read: Families visit mortuaries in search of missing kin

His father, John Mwangi, could not hide his grief as he appealed to the state to intervene.

John is my first child, my first son. I do not know if they have killed him. I don't want to imagine that. All I want is to be told where my son is, he said. His sister, Agnes Mwangi, wondered why police investigations have not yielded new information.

The family has sought the assistance of human rights pressure group Haki Africa. The lobby's Executive Director Hussein Khaleed expressed concern at the lacklustre performance of the police in tracing people who have disappeared.

We call on the new regime, led by President William Ruto, to treat this matter of enforced abductions and disappearances with the urgency it deserves, he said.

End of Without a trace: Puzzle of missing academic writer, IT consultant and MCAs husband



Ali Robas UDM files lawsuit to leave Raila Odinga's Azimio coalition

Justus Ochieng' / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

The United Democratic Movement (UDM) party has filed a lawsuit whose outcome could settle the supremacy battle between President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza Alliance and Mr Raila Odinga's Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition Party in Parliament once and for all.

UDM, which is led by Mandera Senator Ali Roba and has eight MPs, is furious at the advisory by the Registrar of Political Parties lumping it among Azimio member parties yet it has allied itself with the ruling coalition.

A dispute over which coalition has the most MPs to be designated the majority side in the National Assembly is raging, with both sides laying claim to the majority leaders post, for which Kenya Kwanza has named Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichungwah (United Democratic Alliance) while Azimio has picked Ugunja MP Opiyo Wandayi (Orange Democratic Movement).

The leader of the majority party is the second in rank in the National Assembly after the Speaker, with the leader of the minority party the third in the pecking order.

Coerced to sign

UDM, a party the former Mandera governor leads, and which was the first to switch to President Ruto's camp after the elections, does not want to be associated with Azimio, claiming it was coerced to sign a pre-election coalition deal in the run-up to last month's poll in which Mr Odinga backed by then President Uhuru Kenyatta faced off with the then Deputy President Ruto.

Following the outcome of the August 9 General Election, and in compliance with pre-election coalition agreements filed with the Registrar of Political Parties, Azimio has a majority 173 MPs over Kenya Kwanza's 164 members in the National Assembly. The other 12 MPs in the 349-member House are independents who are not considered for the purposes of assigning the majority side.

Read: Ruto goes for regional kingpins in strategy to weaken Azimio

But, as it stands and following Ruto's poaching of members from parties that want to flee Mr Odinga's coalition, Kenya Kwanza has a majority of 175 MPs against Azimio's 162, which means a decision on UDM membership will settle the dispute.

UDM insists it has signed a post-election coalition deal with Kenya Kwanza, citing its constitutional right to free association, which it says supersedes the deal with Azimio that was secured through blackmail.

But the advisory by Registrar of Political Parties Anne Nderitu informing Parliament of UDM's statutory connection to Azimio has compelled the party to seek the courts' interpretation, given that the law bars a party from being a member of more than one coalition.

Read: UDM legislators protest Registrar's move linking them to Azimio

The registrar issued Azimio, which comprised 26 fully registered political parties, according to its coalition agreement, with a certificate of full registration on April 21.

The only recourse to sever ties with Azimio is through the exit clause stipulated in the agreement, which, however, will require UDM to wait for three months after the elections to trigger, which would see Azimio recognised as the majority side.

UDM, through Lunga Lunga MP Mr Mangale Chiforomodo, has moved to court to challenge this restrictive timeline. According to court papers seen by the Nation, the petitioner is aggrieved that a provision of the Azimio agreement that a constituent political party may not withdraw from the coalition within three months after the General Election is incompatible with the Constitution.

Kiraitu, Roba were forced to stay in Azimio - Ruto

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Article 22 of the Azimio coalition agreement states that a party may withdraw from the agreement upon giving 90 days notice to the Azimio Council of its decision to withdraw from the coalition.

It adds that no party may withdraw from the coalition six months before the August 9, 2022 General Election or within three months after the date of the poll.



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It violates my constitutional rights and the people I represent as guaranteed under Articles 36 and 38 as read with Article 24 of the Constitution, states the petitioner. Article 36 of the Constitution is on freedom of association, Article 38 stipulates political rights while Article 24 spells out limitation of rights and fundamental freedoms.

The battle for majority is crucial for the two coalitions since the majority side essentially takes control of the House.

The membership of each committee reflects the relative majorities of the seats held by each of the parliamentary parties in the National Assembly.

National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula will be called upon to arbitrate the dispute.

The 11 UDM legislators, among them eight members of the National Assembly and three senators, have protested their association with Azimio, urging the Speaker to recognise them as Kenya Kwanza members.

They insist that they belong to President Ruto's Kenya Kwanza Alliance pursuant to a post-election agreement signed between UDM and the President's coalition.

Read: You will lose your seat, Jubilee warns MPs eyeing shift to Ruto camp

It is, indeed, baffling that, despite the post-election coalition agreement that was signed between our party and the Kenya Kwanza coalition under the Political Parties Act, 2011, the Registrar of Political Parties knowingly disregarded the law and has unlawfully associated ourselves and indeed our party with a non-existent coalition agreement with the Azimio Coalition, they said in the letter dated September 16.

The legislators are Mr Roba, Senators Mohamed Abbas (Wajir) and Mariam Omar as well as National Assembly members Bashir Abdullahi (Mandera North), Hassan Maalim (Banisa), Haro Abdul (Mandera South), and Mangale Chiforomodo (Lungalunga). The others are Yusuf Haji (Mandera West), Joseph Lekuton (Laisamis), Umulkheir Kassim (Mandera County) and Sulekha Harun (nominated).

Read: MP risks it all by leaving Azimio for Ruto alliance

The legislators noted that Article 38 of the Constitution recognises political rights including the freedom to make political choices.

They also pointed out that the Constitution guarantees freedom of association under Article 36.

Misrepresentation

These two fundamental rights cannot be negated by the alleged misrepresentation of facts and law by the Registrar of Political Parties, which seeks to place us in a coalition agreement that we are not party to.

We therefore protest against such actions and note that Article 10 of the Constitution, which outlines the national values and principles of governance, behoves upon you, honourable Speaker, in making any decision affecting the members of the House in particular the members of the UDM party, to make such decisions in a manner that promotes and advances the rule of law, good governance and human rights.

The legislators insisted that any continued association with Azimio is not only contrary to the Political Parties Act, 2011 but also Articles 10, 36 and 38 of the constitution.

Read: Cracks emerge in Azimio over House leadership

Yesterday, impeccable sources at the registrar's office told the Nation that, as per their records, UDM still remains a bona fide member of the Azimio coalition.

They have not triggered any exit clauses of the Azimio coalition and, therefore, according to our records, they are still members of the coalition, the source revealed.

We go with what is in the records and, until now, they have not been able to conclude this matter, the source added.

But UDM Secretary-General David Ohito insisted that the office of the registrar was aware of the move by the party to exit Azimio.

We have done so and she has copies of our letters. We haven't even seen the Azimio documents whose last page they gave us to sign. So we don't know what we are exiting from, Mr Ohito said.

We disown that relationship and coalition in the strongest terms possible and regret having associated with them in the past, he added.



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He said the party through Mr Chiforomodo had already filed a constitutional petition before Mombasa High court, dissociating with Azimio coalition.

But Azimio Secretary-General Junet Mohamed maintained that UDM is still part of the coalition pursuant to their signing of the pre-election agreement which is still binding.

Read: Kenya Kwanza picks Kimani Ichung'wah, Aaron Cheruiyot for top House leadership posts

We also communicated to the registrar, who informed us that, according to her records, UDM is still a member of Azimio coalition, Mr Junet told the Nation.

President Ruto picked Mr Ichungwah as the National Assembly Majority Leader with Kilifi Norths Owen Baya as deputy.

South Mugirango MP Sylvanus Osoro is designated Majority Whip and will be deputised by Marsabit Woman representative Naomi Waqo.

In the Senate, the President rewarded his close ally and Kericho Senator Aaron Cheruiyot by naming him as the Senate Majority Leader. Ms Tabitha Karanja (Nakuru) will be his deputy.

Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale was picked as the Senate Majority Whip, with Samburu Senator Steve Lelegwe deputising him. The President handed all the House leadership positions to members of his UDA.

Majority Leader

Azimio, on the other hand, named Mr Wandayi Majority Leader in the National Assembly, with Kathiani MP Robert Mbui (Wiper) as his deputy.

Mr Mohammed was named Chief Whip and nominated MP Sabina Chege (Jubilee) the deputy whip.

In the Senate, Azimio picked Kilifi Senator Stewart Madzayo (ODM) as the Minority Leader with Kitui Senator Enoch Wambua (Wiper) as the deputy.

Isiolo Senator Fatuma Dhulo (Jubilee) has been picked as the Senate Minority Whip and will be deputised by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna (ODM).

End of Ali Robas UDM files lawsuit to leave Raila Odinga's Azimio coalition



MPs seek to be paid more than Court of Appeal judges, want sitting allowance back

David Mwere / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

MPs will be paid more than a judge of the Court of Appeal if the parliamentary leadership manages to push the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) to reinstate the plenary sitting allowance.

The 416 MPs in the two Houses of Parliament National Assembly (349) and Senate (67) in the 11th and 12th Parliament had been pocketing Sh5,000 in plenary sitting allowance.

However, on July 28, SRC Chairperson Lyn Mengich published a gazette notice abolishing the allowance even as she introduced Sh150,000 in house allowance, setting their monthly pay at Sh710,000 and upgraded their job group. The notice came into force on August 9.

Other than the house allowance, the monthly remuneration for the lawmakers includes Sh426,000 in basic salary and Sh134,000 in salary market adjustment. The monthly pay does not include the allowances they pocket when attending House committee meetings.

Read: Changes that await the new MPs in Parliament

The scrapping of the plenary sitting allowance was so that the MPs monthly pay does not exceed that of Court of Appeal judges, who are superior in the pay grade. But this has not gone down well with the newly inaugurated MPs who are yet to start discharging their mandate.

Yesterday, National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula gave the clearest indication that the abolished sitting allowance will be restored. While addressing lawmakers during their induction at a city hotel, Mr Wetangula assured the MPs that they have no reason to worry as he has already initiated talks with SRC.

We live incrementally and not by reduction, Mr Wetangula told the MPs just hours after a meeting with SRC. The Speaker of the National Assembly chairs the Parliamentary Service Commission, which is in charge of the welfare of MPs and parliamentary staff.

We must have an equitable approach where MPs are clearly facilitated to do their work... Comparisons between Parliament and other departments of government have been made and distinctions drawn. I am sure that there will be no scandal, the Speaker said.

Last month, Ms Mengich said that the decision to abolish the Sh5,000 plenary sitting allowance for MPs and Sh3,000 for MCAs will save the taxpayer Sh8.2 billion over five years.

Read: SRC keeps President salary at Sh1.4m, DP Sh1.2m as MPs lose sitting allowances

We looked at the pay of the state officers from an equity and fairness perspective, which is equal pay for work of equal value. It is what we used to evaluate all the jobs and determine relative job worth for all the state officers in the executive and legislature at the national and county levels, the SRC chairperson said.

An MP at the national and county level discharges their role through plenary sittings. If you then are paid an allowance for plenary sitting and you are still getting a full time pay it amounts to double compensation, the SRC boss added.

But yesterday, Mr Wetangula said: Our engagement with the SRC is to remind them that as they go about their constitutional mandate, they should be alive to the fact that issues that are available to members like perks that they have been enjoying in the last parliaments should not be unnecessarily or unreasonably interfered with.

Earlier, the MPs had booed National Assembly Acting Clerk Serah Kioko after she mentioned the SRC chairperson as among those scheduled to make presentations to the MPs during the five-day induction.

The National Assembly has four sittings a week when in session Tuesday afternoon, whole day Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. The Senate sits on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

Before the plenary sitting allowance was abolished, an MP would pocket about Sh80,000 assuming that they attended all the plenary sittings in a month. On the other hand, senators would get Sh60,000 in plenary sitting allowance per month if they attended all the sessions in a month.

In the July 28 gazette notice, SRC also capped the committee sitting allowance. The committee chairperson is now entitled to Sh15,000 per sitting up to a maximum of Sh240,000 per month, vice-chairperson Sh12,000 per sitting up to a maximum of Sh192,000 per month and members Sh7,500 per sitting up to a maximum of Sh120,000 per month after tax.



News

MPs seek to be paid more than Court of Appeal judges, want sitting allowance back

David Mwere / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Should the MPs have their way in the push for the return of the plenary sitting allowance, they will earn more than Sh1.2 million per month inclusive of mileage claims in the case of a member who does not chair a House committee, which is more than the Court of Appeal judge. The mileage claim is only enjoyed by members of the National Assembly.

In December 2021, SRC reviewed the salaries of Court of Appeal judges to Sh1,156,108 up from Sh1,122,759.

Mr Wetangula further faulted SRC for limiting the engine capacity of cars the MPs are required to use.

Setting the engine capacity for MPs at no more than 3000cc is not right. You cannot constrain a member in the manner he serves his people who live hundreds of kilometres apart, he said.

End of MPs seek to be paid more than Court of Appeal judges, want sitting allowance back



How Uhuru, Ruto spent Sh579 million on travel three months to August elections

John Mutua / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

President William Ruto and his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta more than doubled the spending on local travel to Sh579 million in the three months to June as campaigns for the August elections picked up momentum.

Although Dr Ruto was the incumbent Deputy President, Mr Kenyatta had thrown his weight behind opposition leader Raila Odinga, triggering a vicious campaign for the top job.

The heightened travel saw spending on trips by the Presidency Dr Ruto and Mr Kenyatta's office-- jump 191.3 percent from Sh198.79 million they spent in the three months to June 2021, the Controller of Budget report shows.

The Sh579 million is equivalent to 66.2 percent of the Sh873.90 million the Presidency spent on trips in the year to June, reflecting the increased travel by the two protagonists as Kenya approached the August 9 General Election.

Read: State saves Sh9.4 billion from scrapped fuel subsidy

The Supreme Court unanimously upheld the election of Dr Ruto as President, rejecting a petition lodged by Mr Odinga and his running mate, Martha Karua, to have the result overturned.

The seven-judge bench said the petitioners failed to prove claims that the vote had been rigged.

Last month, the chairman of the electoral commission, Wafula Chebukati, said Dr Ruto won 50.5 per cent of the vote, while Mr Odinga secured 48.8 per cent. But four out of seven electoral commissioners disowned the results, throwing Dr Ruto's victory into doubt.

The increased travel spending came amid an austerity plan by the Treasury to free up cash for development and essential services such as health and education in a country grappling with high poverty levels.

The budget office data show that the national government splashed Sh20.17 billion on local and foreign travel in the year to June, reflecting a 41.9 percent jump from Sh14.21 billion spent a year earlier.

Government employees are entitled to per diems and other allowances whenever they travel locally on official assignments that include training and seminars.

The data shows that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tasked with spearheading Kenya's diplomatic ties more than doubled its expenditure on travel to Sh2.44 billion, a 73.2 percent jump from Sh1.402 billion.

Other big spenders were the PSC at Sh2.29 billion, a 42.5 percent jump from Sh1.6 billion, and the Office of the President at Sh957.4 million, a 37.7 percent jump from Sh695 million spent a year earlier.

ALSO READ: Bumpy economic ride for Ruto's first 100 days

Members of Parliament and Senators spent Sh5.73 billion on foreign and local trips in the year under review.

Taxpayers have over the years spent billions of shillings on air tickets and per diems for State officials, especially on trips to expensive destinations in the US and expensive European cities like London, Paris, and Geneva.

Controller of Budget Margaret Nyakango attributed the surge in spending on travel to the lifting of restrictions on social gatherings and local flights, setting the stage for high spending.

Spending on local travel slowed down in 2020 after Kenya banned social gatherings and suspended domestic flights after reporting the first positive case of coronavirus in March of the same year.

The bans had led to a suspension of local training and domestic travel for State officers. The travel restrictions led to a work-from-home shift, denying the top officials the perks.

But the officials have since late last year embarked on increased travel locally, mainly for training. MPs also embarked on early campaigns for the August 9 elections after the easing of the restrictions in July last year.

Read: Ruto's top woes as he takes oath

The spending craze highlights the struggles by the Treasury to cut non-essential travel locally and abroad to free up cash for development.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani has since 2018 maintained that all non-core expenditure will be reviewed to ensure the government can make savings and fund its programmes without relying too much on debt.

End of How Uhuru, Ruto spent Sh579 million on travel three months to August elections



News

Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II | Nation

Unknown Author / UnKnown Date

The State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II takes place today Monday 19th September at Westminster Abbey. Prior to the State Funeral, The Queen Laid-in-State in Westminster Hall for four days, to allow the public to pay their respects.

President William Ruto flew out to attend the state burial, leaving behind his second in command Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua in charge of the country in his absence.

This will be the Presidents first official visit, which comes barely a week after his inauguration as Head of State.

Also read;

Rigathi now in charge as Ruto leaves for the Queens funeral in UK

The white, lost magic of monarchy as Queen Elizabeth II is laid to rest

Five things to know about the queen's coffin procession

British citizens in Kenya hold requiem mass for the Queen at All Saints Cathedral

Ruto flies out in maiden trip as Head of State

National mourning highlights Queens personal popularity

Queen leaves UK still divided by class and with Kenyan blood on its hands

Special memorial service held in Nyeri church where Queen Elizabeth II worshipped

A monarch of contradictions, but above all an impressive woman

Queen Elizabeth must be smiling up yonder due to Safaris success

King Charles III faces a home-front reshuffle

Its because of Queen Elizabeth that the iconic Safari Rally exists

End of Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II | Nation



Blogs-opinion

Learn to eat well, but not our money

Macharia Gaitho / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

It is, indeed, great that President William Ruto recognises the dire need for lessons in etiquette around his dinner table. We do recall that in the early years of Independence, Jeans School, in Kabete, the present-day Kenya School of Government, developed such a programme for wives of the emerging African elite.

After nearly 60 years, we have a whole crop of leaders, and not just their spouses, who still need to be trained on how to handle a fork and knife.

That viral video of Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua stuffing cake into his mouth on Inauguration Day obviously was an eye-opener for President Ruto. The DP and other rustic elected leaders aside, we also boast that hustlers and Mama Mboga will be an integral part of the government. Those of wanting social skills will not be admitted to the high table before undergoing a crash course on how to conduct themselves like the hated dynasties.

We have to hope, however, that the curriculum at Kabete will not be limited to table manners, which knife, fork, spoon and glass to use with each course, and how not to drink from the finger bowl or pile the dessert on top of the main dish.

Overflowing plates

The training programme must also encompass gluttony. The Kenya Kwanza leaders around President Ruto must learn not to fill their plates to overflowing levels. Beyond that, they must also learn that grabbing public resources is a criminal offence.

Even before the Cabinet is appointed, we are seeing fellows openly casting covetous glances at the public purse.

The energy parastatals seem to be a particular target for those eyeing lucrative tenders, as is the giant transport, public works and infrastructure sector, which denizens around former President Uhuru Kenyatta had converted into personal piggy banks.

Fellows in the new regime are making all the right noises about dealing decisively with State Capture and the crony capitalism that was the hallmark of the Jubilee government. However, it is all too evident that, for many of them, it is not about ending corruption, but about it being their turn to eat. Again.

All that noise about the blatant corruption all too evident around the family and close confidants of the former president is driven by self-interest. Were not seeing genuine moral outrage about grand corruption at the heart of government but outrage that they were kept off the feeding trough that was the exclusive preserve of a few.

Campaign rhetoric

Those fellows claiming that they were targeted for investigations and prosecution are not saying that they did not steal, but that others who also stole were left untouched.

From campaign rhetoric that now seems to be government policy, we have a genuine fear that a whole crop of politicians under investigation or already indicted for corruption, assault, murder and other serious criminal offences will employ political muscle to have the charges dropped.

We heard just the other day Mr Gachagua warn the police against harassing governors and other elected leaders who were being investigated for corruption.

Director of Criminal Investigations George Kinoti may, indeed, have gone overboard with his theatrics and seeming over-enthusiasm on some investigations. But that cannot provide justification for any policy that makes one law for elected leaders and another for ordinary citizens.

Kenya Kwanza sycophants

Mr Kinoti, an object of hate for Kenya Kwanza sycophants, will presumably be one of the first public officers to be ejected by the new regime. But his successor will be a total and abject failure if they accept that their brief is to turn a blind eye to crime by those who claim that they are close to the President.

One of President Ruto's first executive orders was to grant financial autonomy to the Inspector-General of the National Police Service. Mr Hilary Mutyambai is now the accounting officer rather than some principal secretary in the Office of the President.

That looks like a well-meaning order on the principle that financial autonomy also translates to operational autonomy. The police service is now empowered to operate independently and properly insulated from directions by any other



Blogs-opinion

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power or authority.

That other power or authority that the Constitution and laws bar from interfering with the police starts from the President downwards.

It, therefore, makes it nonsense for President Ruto to grant the police autonomy but, before the ink is dry on the executive order, Deputy President Gachagua is countermanding it with irregular roadside decrees purporting to place elected leaders above the law.

It must be made clear that leaders don't have a licence to eat public resources.

; www.gaitho.co.ke. @MachariaGaitho

End of Learn to eat well, but not our money



Africa

Equatorial Guinea abolishes death penalty

AFP / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Equatorial Guinea, one of the world's most authoritarian countries, has abolished the death penalty, state television announced on Monday citing a new law signed by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo.

Capital punishment was "totally abolished" in the oil-rich central African nation after the president signed a new penal code, shared on Twitter by the vice president.

The last official execution in the small country was carried out in 2014, according to Amnesty International, but international NGOs and the United Nations regularly accuse the regime of forced disappearances, arbitrary detention and torture.

The death penalty remains legal in more than 30 African countries, although only around half have executed people in recent years.

"I am writing in capitals to seal this unique moment: 'EQUATORIAL GUINEA HAS ABOLISHED THE DEATH PENALTY'," tweeted Vice President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, one of the head of state's sons and viewed as his likely successor.

A journalist on state television called the event "historic for our country" in a brief announcement at the end of a news programme.

The measure will come into force in the 90 days following its publication in the official state journal and was approved in advance by parliament, where all but one of the 100 MPs represent the ruling party.

President Obiang, 80, has spent more than 43 years in power, a world record when excluding monarchies.

Equatorial Guinea possesses significant oil and gas resources, but the vast majority of its 1.3 million inhabitants live below the poverty line, according to the World Bank.

End of Equatorial Guinea abolishes death penalty



Sports

Amwari banking on Mozzart Bet support to tackle Mombasa Rally

Abdul Sidi / Tuesday, September 20, 2022

With Mozzart Bet Kenya on board as his main sponsors, Issa Amwari is looking for a good result in next months Mombasa Rally.

Im encouraged with the support I am getting from Mozzart Bet Kenya to help me and my team compete in the KNRC events. Im thankful and looking forward to the Mombasa Rally, Amwari told Nation Sport.

The Mombasa Motor Club round of the 2022 Kenya Breweries Limited-sponsored Kenya National Rally Championship will take place on October 15 and 16.

Amwari, whose best result so far is fourth place in the Eldoret Rally, has a new navigator after Job Njiru retired from the competition recently.

The Mitsubishi Lancer Evo10 driver is now co-driven by Edward Njoroge. Amwari won the 2019 Division Two Championship title in one of his major recent achievements.

* * * *

The remaining events of the 2022 Kenya National Rally Championship calendar are: Mombasa Motor Club (October 16-16), Rally Sports Club (November 5-6) and Sikh Union Club (November 26-27).

The remaining African Rally Championship rounds are: Rwanda Rally (September 24-25), Zambia Rally (October 22-23) and Rally of South Africa (November 19-20).

Other calendar events include the National Autocross Championship: Rallye Sports Club (November 5-6), Sikh Union Club (November 26-27), Mombasa Motor Club (October 15-16) and Nanyuki Rally Group (September 10-11).

The Kenya National Karting Championship rounds are: Rift Valley Motor Sports Club (October 1-2 and November 12-13) and Kenya Motor Sports Club (October 29-30).

The Kenya Rally Raid Championship events are: Vintage Classic Car of Kenya (September 10-11) and Rift Valley Motor Sports (October 29-30).

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Safety is paramount in the sport of rallying. Mid-Point Monitors (MPMs) physically monitor the passage of cars at their allocated points and keep a record of each passing car.

In the event that the electronic tracking system goes on the blink the MPMs are the headquarters eyes and ears on the stage.

At rally speeds, a car will pass an MPM point every five to seven minutes, meaning the Clerk of Course and the Safety Officer can respond appropriately to a situation within minutes of a report of a missing competitor.

Getting all the correct resources in place means planning and the use of a competent Stage Commander.

* * * *

Did you know that...

As a Kenya Motor Sports Federation license holder, one is liable to a massive fine or suspension for going against the Rules on Competitor Conduct or using media for negative publicity?

End of Amwari banking on Mozzart Bet support to tackle Mombasa Rally



New IFC podcast promotes women in Africas renewable energy sector

Unknown Author / UnKnown Date

With renewable energy forecast to play a growing role in Africa's energy future, IFC has launched a new podcast series to promote the role of women in the sector as senior executives, engineers and thought leaders.

In the She Powers Africa podcast, host Terryanne Chebet, an entrepreneur and media specialist, speaks with leading women in Africa's renewable energy space to light the path for the next generation of African women leaders into the dynamic sector.

The first three episodes feature Jennifer Boca, Head of Environmental, Social and Governance at Lekela Power; Olaedo Osoka, CEO of Daystar Power in West Africa; and Carol Koech, the Country President for Schneider East Africa.

This engaging podcast is ideal for women interested in working in the renewable energy sector and also for anyone concerned about climate change in Africa and curious about the practical solutions. Renewable energy is Africa's energy future and ensuring more women are part of that future will enhance the sectors success," said Anne Kabugi, IFC's Regional Gender Lead for Africa.

By 2040, renewable energy could account for more than 60 percent of new electricity generation in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, according to the Africa Energy Outlook 2019 from the International Energy Agency.

But, despite the sector's importance, women lag behind men in leadership and technical jobs in the renewable energy sector and represent just one third of the renewable energy workforce in Africa, according to research conducted by IFC on womens participation in Africa.s renewable energy sector.

The podcast is produced by IFC's Energy2Equal programme and its Women in Renewable Energy in Africa Network (W-REA), which both aim to enhance women's participation in the renewable energy sector.

Listen in.

End of New IFC podcast promotes women in Africas renewable energy sector



EMTECH to pilot a US CBDC in The Digital Dollar Project Sandbox Programme

Unknown Author / UnKnown Date

EMTECH, a first-of-its-kind central banking infrastructure provider, has announced it will take part in the recently introduced Technical Sandbox Programme by The Digital Dollar Project to explore the new possibilities of a US Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) the digital dollar.

As one of the four announced technical vendors, EMTECH will bring its unique API-First and Energy Efficient CBDC Platform to test various use cases for cross-border payments.

The firm is joining a high-profile group of former US regulators and financial services experts. This initiative marks the next step in our effort to convene the private and public sector in a symbiotic exploration of a central bank digital currency in the US, said Jennifer Lassiter, executive director of The Digital Dollar Project.

EMTECH's Founder and CEO, Carmelle Cadet, is a former Global Business and Finance Leader at IBM. In 2021, she was invited by the US Congressional Financial Services Committee to testify on whether the US dollar should be digital. A market leader in central banking infrastructure, EMTECH's mission is to leverage technology to enable access to inclusive and resilient financial ecosystems. It's exciting to be part of the Digital Dollar Project Sandbox, and we are looking forward to collaborating with the federal government, policymakers, and private sector organisations to pilot CBDC options that encompass retail or wholesale models for cross-border payment use cases, said Mrs Cadet.

In her testimony, she highlighted the firm's vision and focus on helping central banks to build modern digital cash infrastructure using blockchain and distributed ledger technology (DLT). A consistent recommendation to the White House and the Congressional Committee is the use of a regulatory sandbox to enable faster and safer innovation from and with the private sector.

The current ecosystem for cross-border payments is a complex nightmare for financial service providers to navigate. EMTECH's CBDC Platform, with its API-First approach and high-performance DLT, is a more modern design that we're excited to bring to the Technical Sandbox Programme, said Tabor Wells, Chief Technology Officer at EMTECH.

Earlier this year, the firm announced its partnership with Hedera Hashgraph to build an energy-efficient CBDC to support its newly announced GREEN CBDC Framework, which is designed to help central banks unlock unprecedented value in deploying a CBDC. A key pillar of the framework is reducing the carbon footprint of financial services, while also limiting energy demand from fragile power structures. You can learn more about the GREEN CBDC Framework at greencbdc.com and emtech.com.

Read more about the technical sandbox in DDP's Press Release.

About EMTECH

EMTECH is building the next generation of central banking Infrastructure to drive inclusive and resilient financial markets. The company provides software solutions and services to connect central banks, other regulators, and financial services providers, in a user and developer-friendly way.

EMTECH's API-First platforms power regulatory data exchange, currency issuance, and currency movement in financial markets. It is a diverse global firm that makes financial ecosystems inclusive and resilient by design. For more information, visit www.emtech.com.

End of EMTECH to pilot a US CBDC in The Digital Dollar Project Sandbox Programme

Unknown Author / UnKnown Date

By Evans Ongwae

Kenya performed well in cushioning its citizens against Covid-19 economic shocks, but could have done better. This is the overall scorecard by UN Women, following a study. In particular, the report stresses the importance of ensuring that adopted economic stimulus and recovery packages are gender responsive and address the gender equity gaps.

Titled, *Engendering Fiscal Stimulus Packages and Recovery Efforts Adopted in Response to the Covid-19 Health and Economic Crises*, the report states: Compared to African countries, efforts by Kenya to cushion and promote recovery of citizens and businesses during Covid-19 through Economic Stimulus packages are commendable. However, UN Women points out that the country could have achieved more had it made those fiscal and monetary measures more gender-responsive.

The study is a gender-responsive assessment of the fiscal and economic stimulus package adopted in response to Covid-19 in Kenya. It provides vital recommendations for engendering government measures in response to crises as well as for economic recovery now and in the future. It pinpoints where the governments stimulus packages fell short, and offers suggestions on how to make economic stimulus packages more responsive to the needs of women, men, boys, and girls.

Engendering economic stimulus packages means taking into account the experiences and specific needs of women, men, girls, and boys, as well as the underlying causes of vulnerabilities, including gender gaps or inequalities, gender relationships, power structures, social norms, and leadership. These should count in both the design and implementation of the stimulus measures, the report states.

During the launch of the report last month jointly with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Public Service and Gender, Prof Margaret Kobia, the UN Women Kenya Representative Anna Mutavati, reiterated the importance of gender data in ensuring women and girls were not left behind in the development agenda.

We know that gender equality and womens empowerment are prerequisites for strong institutions, stable communities, and economies. Evidence from all around the world shows that investing in womens economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, inclusive economic growth, and wealth creation.

The UN Women study compared Kenyas response with what South Africa and Nigeria did. It recommends some lessons for Kenya to pick from the responses of the two Sub-Saharan African nations.

Consideration of the needs of women, men, boys, and girls in the design and implementation of the economic stimulus packages enhances economic and social inclusion and prospects of achievement of outcomes of cushioning against the shocks as well as recovery from the Covid-19 pandemics, the report offers.

The study is anchored on UN Womens commitment to supporting government efforts that contribute to womens livelihoods and their access to social protection, healthcare, infrastructure, food, and housing, among other sectors that the government has prioritised.

The analysis focused on economic stimulus packages implemented during the financial year 2020/2021. These include cash transfers to vulnerable families; National Hygiene Programme or the Youth Employment Programme; support to the educational sector; support to small and medium-sized enterprises liquidity; support to the construction sector; support to the health sector; support to the agricultural sector; support to the tourism sector; support to the environment; and support to the manufacturing sector.

An important underlying factor in response to and adaptability to changes in times of pandemics and crises is the feminisation of poverty, the UN Women analysis notes.

The study found that women, more than men, were deprived of social economic participation, information, and nutrition, and were generally multi-dimensionally poor. This is a key salient pathway in which gender contributes to disproportionately negative impacts of Covid-19. Women are also, more than men, involved with caregiving activities, including caring for the children, the sick, the elderly, and persons with severe disabilities.

Gender inequalities cause women and men to respond and adjust to pandemics and crises differently. Disasters and pandemics such as Covid-19 disproportionately and negatively affect women and girls when compared to men and boys, because of gender segregation in most economic activities, which is further reinforced by gender inequalities.



Unknown Author / UnKnown Date

Moreover, there has been an increase in gender-based violence, more specifically violence against women and girls.

Following the study, UN Women suggests that in times of crises, such as those comparable to the Covid-19 pandemic, Kenya could:

Consider expanding the sector coverage (of its stimulus package) for better economic recovery outcomes. This includes extending support to sectors such as housing, energy, and transport infrastructure. Temporarily expand social protection coverage during pandemics, through special programmes to reach previously uncovered beneficiaries. Consider extending social protection to practitioners in early childhood development, small-scale farmers and teachers, as well as those in creative, cultural, and sports sectors. Increase the amounts of cash transfers per recipient, for all the existing beneficiaries. Consider establishing a social relief from distress grant for caregivers, aimed at reducing increased unpaid care work during pandemics. Consider targeting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in all sectors of the economy, and not only in certain selected sectors. Consider implementing an unemployment insurance fund and compensation fund for health practitioners, and provide a temporary employee relief scheme for domestic workers. Consider enforcing the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) provisions, or even increasing the proportion reserved for women businesses. Implement special support to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and also, in partnership with civil society, establish a mechanism for linking them to shelter houses. This would address some of the challenges related to increased GBV during pandemics.

Overall, the analysis showed that the size of Kenyas provisions regarding various fiscal measures is small, measured by the size of the issues the specific measures target.

End of UN Women to Kenya: You did well in cushioning citizens against Covid-19 economic shocks, but