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ATTACK ON BOLOETSE PUTS SPOTLIGHT BACK ON SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS, RIGHTS DEFENDERS

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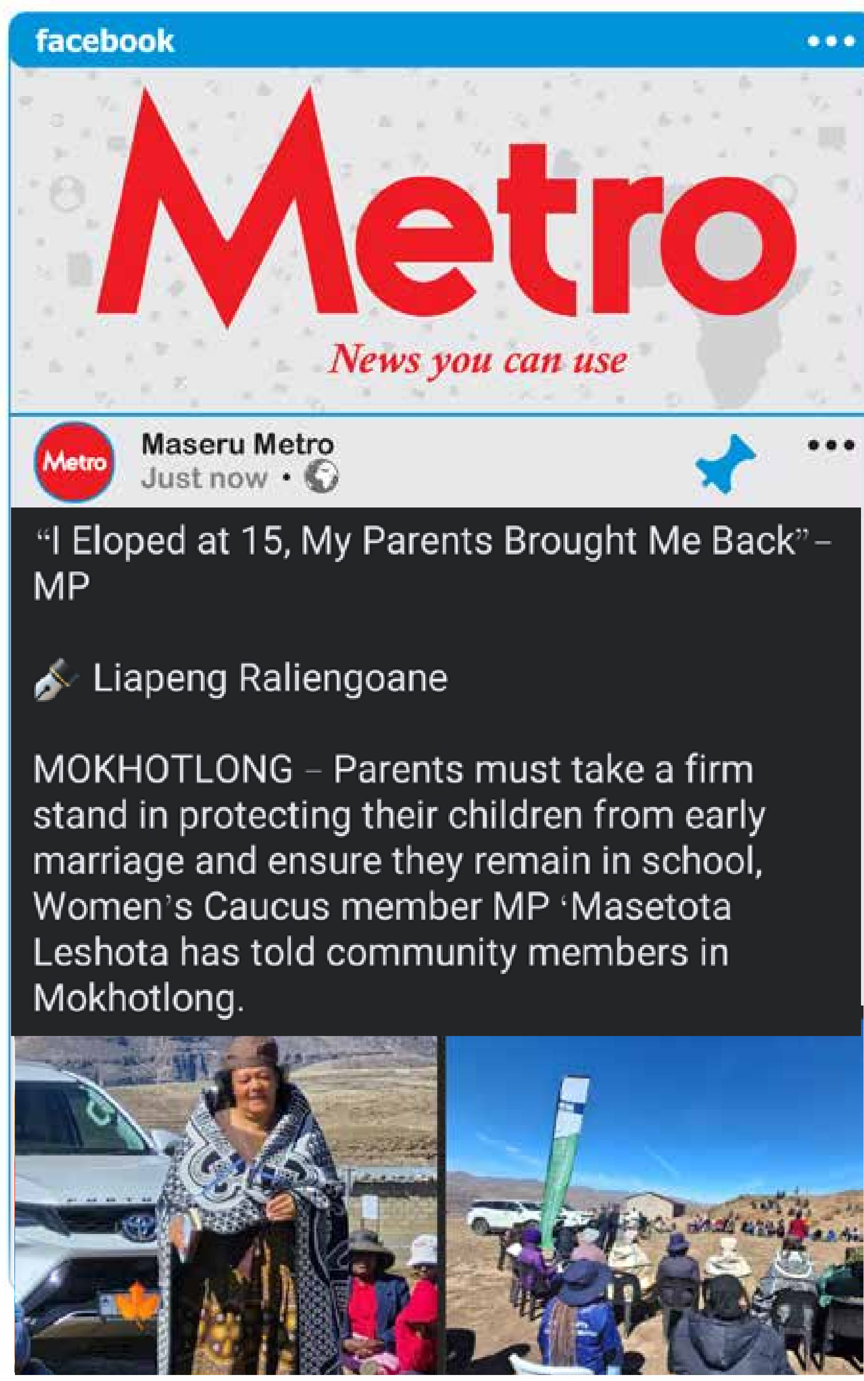
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Attack on Boloetse puts spotlight back on safety of journalists, rights defenders

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU – The safety of journalists and human rights defenders in the country is under scrutiny after Kananelo Boloetse a practicing journalist was abducted from his home and subjected to a brutal assault before being abandoned near the Phuthiatsana River at Thaba Bosiu, according to separate statements issued by his legal representative and the civic organisation he leads.

The statements, issued days apart earlier this month, have renewed concern about the safety of journalists and human rights defenders in the Kingdom, with Boloetse's lawyer describing the incident as an attempted murder and both statements calling for an urgent police investigation.

THE ABDUCTION AND ASSAULT

According to a statement issued by the Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution (SECTION 2), Boloetse was "...attacked and abducted from his home" in Katlehong "before being subjected to severe physical violence and torture." He was "subsequently abandoned near the Phuthiatsana River at Thaba Bosiu, having sustained serious injuries," the organisation said.

SECTION 2 said it regarded the incident as "a grave and deeply disturbing attack" not only on Boloetse personally but on "the fundamental principles of constitutional democracy, the rule of law, human rights and freedom of expression."

Boloetse's legal representative, Advocate Fusi Sehapi of Goldman Mustard Inc., a Maseru-based litigation and consulting firm, went further, describing his client in a statement dated September 11 as "a victim of attempted murder committed by men operating under the diabolic veil of darkness."

Sehapi said Boloetse was abducted and assaulted immediately ahead of a scheduled court hearing he was due to attend, and that the attack prevented him from appearing before the court that day.

WHO IS KANANELO BOLOETSE

Boloetse is both a practising journalist and the President of SECTION 2, a civic organisation that describes its mandate as promoting and defending the supremacy of the Lesotho Constitution and advocating for the fundamental rights and freedoms of Basotho. SECTION 2 said his work as a journalist "involves informing the public, scrutinising institutions and raising matters of public interest."

Over recent years, Boloetse has been a party or deponent in a string of constitutional and public interest cases, according to Sehapi's statement, ranging from disputes over the extension of Parliament's term to challenges against electricity tariff increases and the treatment of learners unable to pay school fees.

LAWYER NAMES SECURITY AGENCIES AS "FIRST SUSPECTS"

In his statement, Sehapi named the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) and the National Security Service (NSS) as what he called the "first suspects" in the abduction and assault, arguing that the manner of the attack pointed to "highly trained members of security agencies" rather than "a private person or a mere civilian."

Sehapi tied his claim to a long-running dispute over political control of the security agencies, which he said Basotho had sought to end through the ongoing constitutional reform process.

He argued that "for as long as the politician remains adamant to tie the security agencies on his waist," those agencies would "remain first suspects" whenever such attacks occurred, "even in circumstances where they may be innocent."

He also raised, as further possible suspects, what he termed an "old age state-sponsored" grouping he referred to by the term "Koeeoko," which he said could include "public-private-persons" or "blinded political fanatics" aligned to political parties, as well as unnamed individuals he described as driven by "illicit political campaign" motives. Sehapi said the identity of those responsible remained to be established and that "there are already neighbours who witnessed the suspicious registered vehicle and/or its assailants."

Sehapi cited two earlier cases he said formed part of a "recurring history" of attacks in Lesotho: the alleged attempted murder of Lesotho Times editor Lloyd Mutungamiri, which he attributed to LDF members, and the death of Police Constable Mokalekale Khetheng, whom he said was last seen at police headquarters.

SECTION 2: NO CONCLUSIONS YET, BUT "CONCERNING CONTEXT"

SECTION 2's statement was notably more cautious than that of Boloetse's lawyer. The organisation said that "at this stage," it did "not seek to pre-empt the outcome of any criminal investigation, nor does it assign responsibility for the attack to any particular person, institution or organisation without evidence."

It nonetheless said it was "particularly concerned about the timing and circumstances surrounding this incident," pointing to a series of public interest positions the organisation has recently taken.

These include ongoing Court of Appeal litigation challenging an electricity tariff increase involving the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) and the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC); its position that the Road Transport Board must act strictly within its statutory powers when setting public transport fares; concerns raised over the administration of scholarships by the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS); and its engagement with the Ministry of Education and Training over learners barred from writing examinations because their parents could not pay outstanding fees.

"It is therefore deeply concerning that the President of an organisation engaged in such constitutional and public-interest advocacy should allegedly be subjected to such a violent attack," the statement said.

SECTION 2 called on the LMPS and "all relevant law-enforcement authorities" to conduct "a prompt, impartial, professional and comprehensive investigation," and set out six specific questions it wants answered, including the identity of those responsible, the circumstances of the abduction, the motive behind the attack, whether it was connected to Boloetse's work as a journalist or as SECTION 2 President, whether any person or organisation "unlawfully commissioned, facilitated or encouraged the attack," and whether there are "broader threats to persons involved in constitutional advocacy, journalism or public-interest activism."

A PATTERN OF LITIGATION

According to Sehapi's statement, Boloetse's public interest litigation stretches back several years and includes two cases – cited as Boloetse I and Boloetse II – that successfully challenged attempts to pass constitutional reform bills outside the life of the Parliament that had considered them. A further matter, cited as Boloetse III and described as still pending, challenges the constitutionality of the process that produced the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution of Lesotho, Act No. 2 of 2025.

Sehapi's statement also lists Boloetse's involvement in the Court of Appeal challenge to the LEC and LEWA electricity tariff increase; a constitutional case seeking to have Sheriffs separated from the judiciary to strengthen oversight of home repossessions; and an outstanding letter of demand to the Ministry of Education and Training and the Examinations Council of Lesotho over learners barred from sitting examinations due to unpaid fees.

Sehapi's statement further links Boloetse to a related matter cited as Naka La Mohlomi and Others v SADC and Others, filed at the regional bloc and said to be pending alongside Boloetse III, as well as a separate constitutional case styled Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution v The Judiciary and Others. Sehapi said he had acted as Boloetse's advisor or legal representative in all these matters and was involved in more than twenty other human rights and public interest cases in which Boloetse was not a party.

BROADER CONCERNS FOR PRESS FREEDOM

The attack has drawn attention beyond the immediate circumstances of the case, feeding into wider concern about the environment in which journalists and civil society activists operate in Lesotho.

SECTION 2 said an attack carried out "because of his or her lawful advocacy, journalism or criticism of public institutions would constitute a serious threat to democratic society," adding that journalists "must be able to perform their professional duties without intimidation" and that public institutions "must be subjected to legitimate scrutiny without such scrutiny becoming a justification for retaliation."

Sehapi, in his own statement, argued that the case illustrated a broader vulnerability facing lawyers and activists who represent clients pursuing human rights litigation against the state, saying the attack on his client had left him reflecting on his own safety "having worked almost all human rights cases representing him in the selfless Public interest."

CALLS FOR CALM AND JUSTICE

Both statements ended with calls for accountability. Sehapi said he trusted that investigators would be guided to expose those responsible "under the sun where the whole world may know and witness them."

SECTION 2, for its part, appealed to "government institutions, political leaders, civil society organisations, the media, traditional leaders and ordinary citizens" to reject political and civic violence "in all its forms," while urging Basotho to "remain calm but vigilant."

"No act of violence should be allowed to silence constitutional advocacy, journalism or the legitimate voice of the people," SECTION 2 said, adding that it would continue to pursue its work "through lawful and peaceful means."

Sehapi's statement was copied to Amnesty International, the Parliament of Lesotho, the Prime Minister of Lesotho, the United Kingdom Prime Minister, the President of the United States, the United Nations Development Programme, the Southern African Development Community, media houses inside and outside Lesotho, and the Law Society of Lesotho.

Persons with disabilities to get better access to justice

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU - Persons with disabilities are set to have improved access to justice following a partnership between the Persons with Disability Advisory Council (PWDAC) and the Law Society of Lesotho (LSL).

The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Maseru on Monday, paving the way for the Law Society to represent persons with disabilities in disability-related cases referred through PWDAC.

The Law Society of Lesotho Deputy President Advocate Mokhoro Makara said the agreement would allow the Society to use its legal mandate to represent persons with disabilities.

"As LSL, the law allows us to appear before the courts of law, so through this MOU we will represent people with disabilities" Makara said.

He said the Law Society was proud of the initiative, describing the agreement as an important step towards supporting persons with disabilities.

PWDAC Director General Advocate Nkhasi Sefuthi said the agreement was more than an administrative arrangement between the two institutions, describing it as a practical commitment to ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others.

He said meaningful access to justice was central to the protection of human rights because rights had little meaning if people were unable to enforce them, seek remedies when their rights were violated or participate effectively in justice processes.

"Access to justice is at the heart of human rights," Adv. Sefuthi said. According to Adv. Sefuthi, persons with disabilities have historically faced various barriers when seeking justice, including physical barriers within courts and other justice institutions, communication barriers, inaccessible information and procedures, as well as negative attitudes and stereotypes.

He also pointed to situations where appropriate accommodations are not available to enable persons with disabilities to participate effectively in the justice system.

Adv. Sefuthi said the Persons with Disability Equity Act recognises these challenges, with Section 32 specifically providing for access to justice for persons with disabilities.

PWDAC Human Rights Manager Advocate Lerato Ramoholi said the purpose of the event was to formalise the MOU between PWDAC and the Lesotho Law Society.

She said the agreement would facilitate the handling of disability-related cases referred to the Law Society through PWDAC.

She said the partnership seeks to strengthen the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities by improving their access to legal services and enabling them to participate meaningfully in the justice system.

The Persons with Disability Advisory Council (PWDAC) is an autonomous statutory body in Lesotho established to advise the government on disability rights, monitor compliance and promote inclusion. It was formally introduced to stakeholders on 21 August 2025 by the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, marking its operationalization under the Persons with Disability Equity Act, 2021.

The Law Society of Lesotho is a regulatory body established as a corporate body and is a non-profit organization. It was established in 1967 through an act of Parliament.

Farmers gain practical skills at Farmers Pitso

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU – Farmers who attended the Farmers Pitso Agriculture Week 2026 say the gathering equipped them with practical knowledge that could improve their farming activities.

Held under the theme "Celebrating Excellence. Advancing Agriculture. Transforming Lives," the Farmers Pitso brought together farmers and other agricultural stakeholders at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre to share knowledge and discuss challenges facing the sector.

Crop farmer 'Masekata Molibeli said she attended specifically to learn about livestock farming.

She said she gained knowledge on livestock management, including feeding animals, caring for them and using medication appropriately.

"I came to learn about livestock farming and I learned how to take care of livestock, how to feed them and how to take care of them with medication," Molibeli said.

Molapo Shakhane, who works with livestock farmers, said the gathering also highlighted the importance of proper record keeping in farming.

He said he learned about the importance of bookkeeping and how it can contribute to better farm management and production. Shakhane described the session as beneficial and said he did not regret attending.

While delivering his speech, Acting Director Livestock Services Mabusetsa Makau called for stronger support and investment in Lesotho's agricultural sector.

He said Lesotho continues to face food insecurity, climate variability, declining soil health, pressure on rangelands, limited access to finance and markets, and continued dependence on imported food.

Makau said farmers need more than encouragement, highlighting the need for reliable extension services, quality inputs, appropriate technologies, affordable finance, effective insurance and better access to markets.

"These challenges cannot be addressed by Government alone," Mabusetsa said, urging farmers, researchers, development partners, businesses, financial institutions, the media and communities to work together across the agricultural value chain.

He also called on stakeholders to move beyond repeatedly describing the challenges facing agriculture and focus on practical solutions.

"Let us identify what can be done, who must do it and how progress will be measured after this gathering," he said.

Makau said agriculture should be understood as more than subsistence, describing it as a source of livelihoods, nutrition, employment, enterprise and national resilience.

He said a properly supported agricultural sector could create opportunities for women, young people and rural communities while reducing Lesotho's vulnerability to food and economic shocks.

The acting director also called on development and private-sector partners to view agriculture as an area worthy of serious investment and long-term partnerships.

He commended Seahlolo Newspaper, under Newsday Media, for bringing farmers, experts, policymakers and agricultural institutions together through the Farmers Pitso Agriculture Week.

African leaders to gather in Accra for Elevate Africa 2026

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU - African Heads of State, policymakers, investors, creatives and members of the diaspora are expected to converge in Accra, Ghana, next month for the Elevate Africa 2026 Convening, which will focus on turning continental ambitions into practical economic opportunities.

According to a press release issued by Elevate Africa on September 14, the two-day gathering will take place on October 28 and 29 at the Movenpick Ambassador Hotel under the theme "Africa: Defining Her Future." The convening comes at a time when African countries are seeking to move the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) beyond an agreement and towards functioning markets, regional production networks and increased opportunities for African businesses.

The organisers say discussions will take place against the backdrop of growing efforts to deepen regional economic cooperation, including a World Bank call for a shift from trade links towards regional production hubs and the AfCFTA Secretariat's announcement of a $5.17 billion Digital Trade Corridor aimed at strengthening digital infrastructure for intra-

The four main areas of discussion will be Trade Governance and Economic Integration; Governance, Policy and Advocacy; Youth and the Creative Economy; and the Diaspora.

Under trade and economic integration, participants will examine AfCFTA implementation, intra-African investment, digital trade, trade finance and resource governance.

The organisers say intra-African trade exceeded US$220 billion in 2024, with discussions expected to explore ways of strengthening regional value chains and retaining more of the value generated from Africa's resources, production and markets within the continent.

Governance discussions will focus on democratic resilience, accountability, youth representation and the relationship between traditional and elected political leadership.

The youth and creative economy pillar will examine the economic potential of industries such as film, music, fashion, gaming and digital content, including challenges around financing, intellectual property, infrastructure and access to international markets.

The gathering will also feature Threads of Africa, an Elevate Africa initiative incorporating fashion film awards and seeking to showcase the cultural and economic value of African textiles, fashion, film and storytelling.

The diaspora discussions will consider how Africa can tap into the capital, expertise, networks and cultural influence of Africans living abroad, beyond the traditional focus on remittances.

Elevate Africa Convening Project Lead Joy Godwin said the continent was entering a new phase where the focus was shifting from what Africa could become to building systems and partnerships capable of delivering that future.

"The conversation is increasingly shifting from what the continent could become to how we build the systems, institutions and partnerships that will make that future possible," Godwin said.

The convening is expected to produce the Accra Declaration, as well as strategic partnerships, investment commitments and cross-sector collaborations.

Between 600 and 900 delegates are expected to participate physically and virtually, with the organisers seeking to position Accra as a meeting point for discussions on moving African integration from aspiration to economic reality.

Government Revokes Passports of Six Individuals on Security Grounds

KEVIN KABWE

Government has revoked the passports of six individuals, among them former Ambassador to Ethiopia Emmanuel Mwamba, on security grounds.

Home Affairs and Internal Security Permanent Secretary Dickson Matembo has confirmed the development to ZNBC News.

According to Government Gazette Notice Number 1421 of 2026, the passports have been revoked for security reasons.

Others affected are former Petauke Member of Parliament Emmanuel Jay Banda, former Nkana Member of Parliament Binwell Mpundu and former Special Assistant to the President for Politics in the Patriotic Front administration, Kaiser Zulu.

The other two are academician Sishuwa Sishuwa and social media vlogger Lillian Mutambo.

The individuals have been directed to immediately surrender the passports to the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship, Immigration or the Zambia Police Service.

The Gazette further states that the revoked passports are no longer valid for identification, travel or any official purpose.

It warns that any use of the cancelled documents may constitute an offence.

EXPLAINER | Passports cancelled. **What happens to Mwamba and five others now?**

Zambia's cancellation of passports belonging to Emmanuel Mwamba, Emmanuel Jay Banda, Binwell Mpundu, Peter Kaiser Zulu, Sishuwa Sishuwa and Lillian Mutambo is more consequential than simply withdrawing six travel documents. All six are outside Zambia, and Gazette Notice No. 1421 of 2026 says their passports were cancelled "for security reasons in the interest of national security."

The documents can no longer be used for identification, travel or official purposes, while public institutions, financial institutions, border authorities and law-enforcement agencies have been directed not to recognise them.

What the Gazette does not disclose is the specific security information behind each decision.

Zambia's Passports Act No. 28 of 2016 provides the immediate legal framework. Section 5 establishes that a Zambian passport remains Government property, while Sections 11 and 12 provide grounds and procedures for confiscation and cancellation. Section 12 requires the holder to be informed of the cancellation and reasons within 14 days and requires surrender of the cancelled passport within 21 days.

Section 18 provides an appeal first to the responsible Minister and subsequently to the High Court, while Section 19 prohibits using a cancelled passport for identification or international travel. The affected individuals therefore have legal avenues to challenge the State's decision.

What Government has cancelled is the passport, not Zambian citizenship. The two are legally different. Nothing in the Gazette says any of the six has been stripped of nationality, and deprivation of citizenship is governed separately by the Constitution.

Because they are abroad, cancellation also does not automatically mean deportation. Their continued residence will depend on their status and the laws of their respective host countries. But losing the validity of the passport can complicate travel, immigration procedures and other transactions requiring a recognised national document.

There is, however, an obvious political context which cannot be ignored. The six are associated, in different ways and to different degrees, with opposition politics or sustained criticism of the Hichilema administration from abroad.

Several have repeatedly circulated disputed or unverified claims about the August election, the military and the legitimacy of the Government. Parts of this diaspora discourse have also moved into inflammatory regional and ethnic rhetoric.

Even opposition leader Harry Kalaba, while appearing on Emmanuel Mwamba's programme this week, said that if he were President he would call Mwamba and ask him to "tone down."

These are observable facts surrounding the political environment. They do not, by themselves, establish the legal reason Government invoked national security.

There is another possibility which responsible reporting cannot either assert or dismiss: Zambia is already conducting a wider national-security investigation involving senior opposition figures. Brian Mundubile, Makebi Zulu and others have been charged with treason following allegations involving weapons, illegal military activity and foreign links. Those allegations remain unproved and are for the courts to determine. There is presently no publicly established evidence linking the six passport cancellations to that investigation.

It would therefore be wrong to connect them as fact. But it would be equally premature to assume the Gazette arose solely from social-media speech when Government has deliberately invoked national security without publicly revealing the underlying intelligence or evidence.

If the State eventually alleges something more serious, the international consequences could change substantially. Zambia could investigate, charge suspects, obtain warrants and seek mutual legal assistance, preservation of electronic evidence or extradition where the law permits. A foreign government would not surrender someone simply because Zambia describes him or her as a security threat.

It would examine the alleged offence, supporting evidence, its own law, applicable extradition arrangements and human-rights considerations. Nor should terms such as terrorism or insurrection be attached to these six without evidence and charges.

If Government believes their activities reach such thresholds, it must establish that through law.

International law also protects robust political criticism. Criticising Hichilema, questioning ECZ or accusing the military of wrongdoing does not become criminal merely because Government considers the allegation false.

But freedom of expression is not unlimited. Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires prohibition by law of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

Zambia therefore has both responsibilities: to protect political speech and to act lawfully where evidence establishes incitement, criminal coordination or genuine threats to national security. The dividing line is evidence.

Citizens should therefore watch what Government does next rather than speculate ahead of the investigation. The immediate facts are clear: six passports have been invalidated on national-security grounds; citizenship has not been cancelled; deportation or extradition does not follow automatically; and the affected individuals can challenge the decisions.

What remains unknown is more important: what information persuaded the State to invoke national security, whether criminal proceedings will follow, and whether Zambia will seek cooperation from governments abroad. The Gazette has revealed the action. It has not yet revealed the case behind it.

- LUSAKA TIMES AND ZAMBIAN OBSERVER

Will Ruto's Foreign Trader Gamble Be the Final Nail on EAC Integration Coffin?

MUHAMADI MATOVU

Kenya's decision to tighten the screws on foreign traders may win President William Ruto political points at home, but it risks turning one country's attempt to protect small businesses into a much larger test of East Africa's economic integration.

What began with Ruto's September 2 directive targeting foreigners operating small-scale businesses has quickly become bigger than a dispute over work permits and trading licences.

It is now raising questions about Kenya's economy, the pressure on its political leadership ahead of the 2027 election, the frustrations of young Kenyans searching for opportunities, the treatment of East African traders and, ultimately, whether the region's Common Market can survive when national economic interests collide with regional commitments.

Kenyan authorities insist the measures are not intended to expel foreigners but to enforce existing immigration, labour and business regulations. Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Abraham Korir Sing'oei and Trade Cabinet Secretary Lee Kinyanjui have maintained that foreigners remain free to live and work in Kenya provided they comply with the law.

Uganda's Minister for East African Community Affairs, Rebecca Kadaga, has adopted a similar interpretation.

"I don't want this matter to be understood as an expulsion of non-Kenyans. It's a directive to regularize, to register and regularize their stay," Kadaga said.

That distinction is important. Kenya has a sovereign right to regulate employment and business activity within its territory.

The bigger question is why the enforcement has become such a politically charged issue.

Kenya is not an economy in recession. Its real GDP grew by 4.6% in 2025, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. But beneath that growth is a serious employment problem.

The country created more than 800,000 jobs in 2025, yet the overwhelming majority were in the informal sector. About 87% of new jobs were informal, while roughly 18 million Kenyans work in the informal economy.

This is particularly important in a country where young people constitute a large proportion of the population and where formal employment opportunities remain limited.

Ruto therefore faces a politically sensitive combination of rising economic expectations, high youth unemployment, pressure from small businesses and a presidential election due in 2027.

The crackdown gives his administration a simple political message: protect Kenyan traders from foreign competition and reserve low-capital businesses for Kenyans.

Foreign policy analyst Mathias Ssemanda, however, said the approach risked allowing politicians to blame foreigners for problems that governments have struggled to solve.

"Political actors are finding the easiest way to persuade their populations by pointing out challenges that are far away from governments to solve," Ssemanda said.

His argument does not mean the grievances of Kenyan traders are imaginary.

Kenyan small businesses face taxation, licensing costs, limited access to capital and stiff competition. For a young Kenyan unable to find formal employment, seeing a foreigner operating a small shop, hawking merchandise or running another low-capital business can easily become a symbol of economic exclusion.

But removing foreign competitors does not necessarily create new jobs.

It may simply transfer existing customers from a Ugandan, Tanzanian, Rwandan or Burundian trader to a Kenyan.

That may benefit some Kenyan businesses, but it does not solve the deeper problem of an economy generating too few productive and formal jobs.

Foreign traders also participate in Kenya's economy. They pay rent, purchase goods, use transport and financial services and, where properly registered, contribute to government revenue.

The Federation for Small and Medium Enterprises executive director, John Walugembe, said the crackdown was contrary to the spirit of regional integration.

"What is happening in Kenya is most unfortunate. It goes against the spirit of regional integration," Walugembe said.

Walugembe nevertheless acknowledged the legitimate concern that some foreigners may be operating illegally.

The question, therefore, is not whether Kenya should enforce its laws. It is how those laws are enforced.

A foreigner without a work permit or business licence can legitimately be required to regularise their status or stop operating.

The danger arises when enforcement begins to be understood as hostility towards foreigners generally.

That fear is already evident.

Ugandan traders crossing through Busia have reportedly spoken of threats against their lives and businesses, while citizens of Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo have also expressed anxiety.

Reports that hundreds of Burundians sought assistance at their embassy in Nairobi illustrate how quickly a regulatory exercise can become a diplomatic and security issue.

This is where comparisons with South Africa become relevant, although Kenya should not be equated with South Africa's history of xenophobic violence.

The concern is that economic frustration, political rhetoric and resentment towards foreign traders can reinforce one another. Once nationality becomes associated with economic hardship, individual enforcement cases can easily become collective hostility.

Kenya is also not the first EAC country to restrict foreigners from certain low-level businesses.

Rwanda has regulated foreign participation in particular economic activities, while Tanzania has restricted non-citizens from several small-scale businesses. Uganda also imposes conditions on foreign traders and limits foreign participation in some micro-enterprises.

The difference is that Kenya's current episode has attracted unusual attention because of the scale of the political rhetoric, the initial directive to close businesses and the fears among foreign communities.

It also raises questions about the EAC Common Market Protocol.

The protocol seeks to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, services, labour and capital among member states, including the rights of establishment and residence.

But regional integration does not abolish national sovereignty.

Kadaga captured this tension when she said:

"We are not yet a federation, so we still have a sovereign obligation and sovereign rights."

Kenya can therefore enforce its laws. But the EAC's credibility depends on those laws being applied in a manner consistent with regional commitments and without discrimination against citizens of partner states.

The bigger danger would arise if other countries retaliated.

Uganda could restrict Kenyan traders. Tanzania could impose similar measures. Rwanda and other EAC members could follow.

Such retaliation would not necessarily begin as a formal trade war. It could happen through licensing restrictions, work-permit requirements and protection of small businesses for nationals.

The result would be a gradual erosion of the cross-border economic networks that the EAC has spent decades building.

Kenya could also lose from such a process.

The country's position as East Africa's commercial hub depends partly on its large consumer market and its links to neighbouring economies. Foreign traders bring capital, create demand for goods and services and connect Kenyan businesses to regional markets.

Ruto therefore faces a difficult calculation.

Politically, protecting Kenyan traders is an attractive message, particularly ahead of an election in which jobs and the cost of living are likely to remain major issues.

Economically, some Kenyan traders will benefit if foreign competitors leave.

Regulatorily, forcing undocumented foreigners to obtain the correct permits and licences is defensible.

But the gains could be undermined if the policy discourages investment, disrupts supply chains, raises prices or triggers reciprocal restrictions across the region.

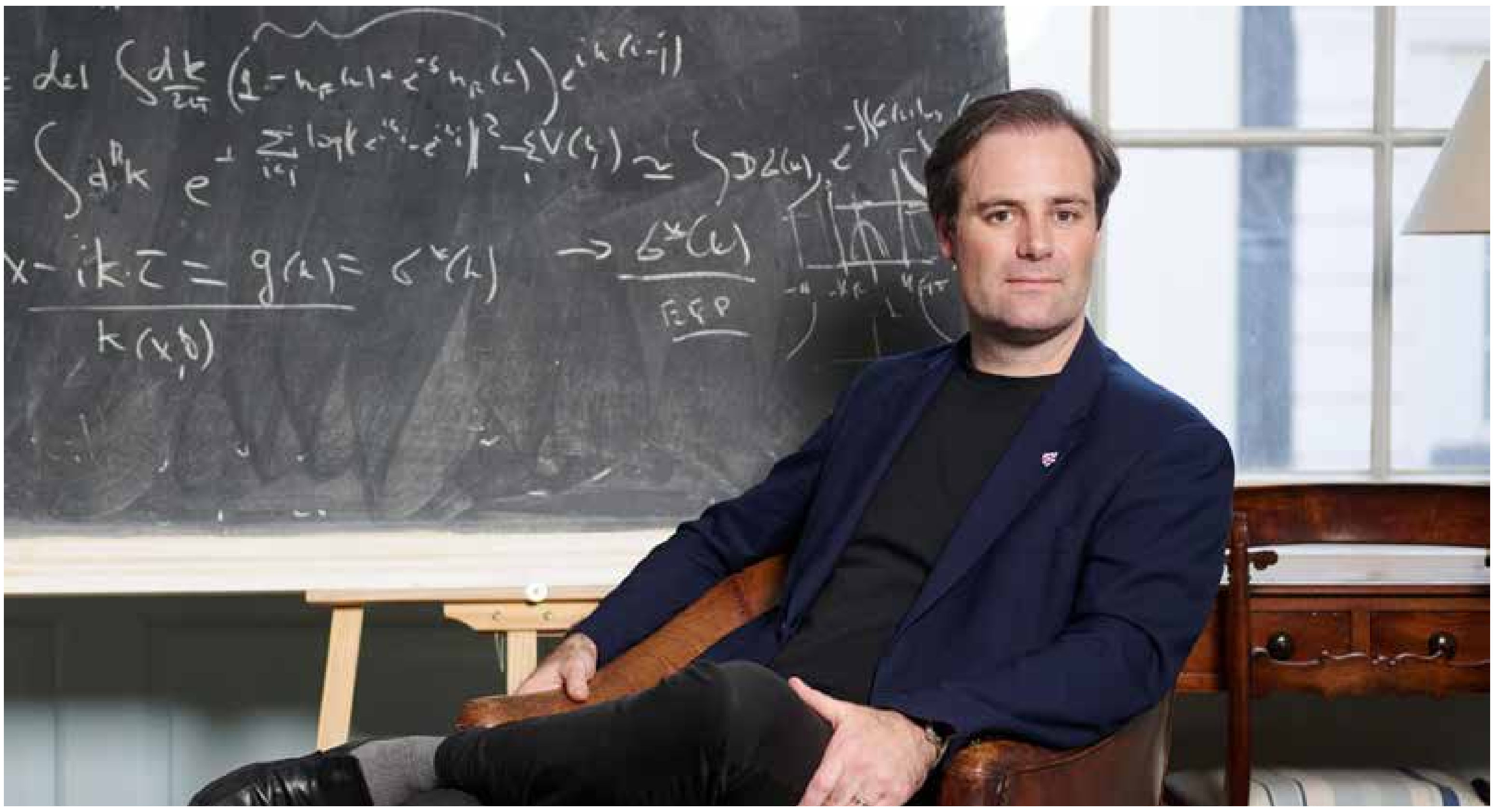
Walugembe warned that Kenya's experience should also be viewed against historical examples of the economic damage that can accompany exclusion of foreign business communities, including Uganda's 1972 expulsion of Asians and xenophobic experiences in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

- NILE POST

Reform UK given record £36m donation by British crypto billionaire

Ben Delo was convicted in US for failing to implement adequate anti-money laundering controls but pardoned by Trump

ROWENA MASON



Reform UK has been given a record £36m donation by Ben Delo, a British cryptocurrency billionaire convicted in the US for failing to implement adequate anti-money laundering controls.

The businessman, who has moved back to the UK from Hong Kong, is now the biggest UK political donor by far, dwarfing the £15m contribution to Reform UK from Thailand-based Christopher Harborne.

The huge donation will be a boost for party leader Nigel Farage at a time when he is facing a police investigation into overseas funding for Reform, plus a standards inquiry into a £5m undeclared personal gift from Harborne.

It had been thought Delo could be caught by the overseas cap requiring donors to have been resident in the UK for 12 months before giving more than £100,000 but Reform insisted earlier this month that they were confident Delo would not have to take back any cash.

Delo was convicted in the US in 2022 for failing to implement adequate anti-money laundering controls in his trillion-dollar cryptocurrency business BitMEX, before being pardoned by Donald Trump. He has previously given Reform £8m since the start of the year.

His gifts show the rise of Reform's mega-donors, which Labour has been considering clamping down on.

Keir Starmer shied away from the idea of a cap on all donations and Andy Burnham also recently backed away from supporting a cap. However, more recently the government said it was looking at ways of dealing with mega-donations to make sure a few figures are not having an excessive influence in politics.

On Friday night, Stella Creasy, the Labour MP pushing for a cap, said: "The government has admitted UK mega-donors are a problem – donations like this show why we must act and the good news is it's not too late to do something about them.

"We can still stop these people from distorting the next election by confirming what the cap should be on UK donations in the representation of the people bill in the Lords.

"This donation tonight – more for Reform on one day than the entire amount spent by Labour in the general election – shows that cannot come too soon to protect British democracy."

Many more Labour MPs were also horrified by the prospect of such a huge cash injection for Reform ahead of the next election.

Delo's donation was revealed in the Telegraph, which was given the information by Reform after the party was approached by the Sunday Times earlier on Friday.

Farage said: "I am honoured and humbled that Ben Delo has shown such confidence in Reform. Ben knows that we are the only party that can turn the country around and reverse Britain's decline."

In a Telegraph article in April, Delo explained his motivation for turning to Reform, saying England was his home and that "the biggest obstacle to national recovery is the entrenched self-deception of our elites".

"Their regime of nonsense now poses such a grave threat to the UK that, for the first time in my life, I've become politically active," he wrote.

He said that as a person on the autism spectrum, he did not like it that "the official culture of government now forces everyone to be chronically dishonest", citing expression of views on transgender people.

In his Telegraph article, he wrote: "I helped build one of the world's first major crypto trading platforms, fell foul of US regulators, accepted a plea bargain and a civil fine for a regulatory failing that isn't even a crime in the UK, but then ended up being pardoned by Donald Trump, the US president, anyway."

Delo, an Oxford graduate who describes himself as a champion of free speech, supports more than 50 organisations across the political spectrum and public life, as well as non-affiliated groups and individuals, from a political base near Westminster Abbey.

A Guardian investigation into Delo's political base found he had given support in kind to Rupert Lowe, the anti-migration MP challenging Farage from the right, while also connecting with more mainstream figures including the Conservative leader, Kemi Badenoch, and the former Tory cabinet minister Michael Gove.

Delo's lawyers previously told the Guardian that he provided space for those with diverse views to express them, and financial support to a broad range of organisations, many of which had conflicting views. This did not mean he endorsed the opinions of each, they said.

- THE GUARDIAN

QMMH's rot runs deeper than a payroll scandal

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

The Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital has moved well past questions of mismanagement into territory that looks a great deal like corruption, and it is time the institution's executives were treated accordingly.

For years, Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital was sold to Basotho as proof that a poor country could still build a modern referral facility if it borrowed the right partner and the right model. The 425-bed hospital, delivered in 2011 through a public-private partnership with the Tšepong Consortium led by South Africa's Netcare, was praised internationally, cut mortality rates sharply, and became one of the few hospitals in this part of the continent to earn international accreditation.

It was, by any honest measure, one of the better things this country built in the last two decades. That is precisely why what is now unfolding before Parliament's Public Accounts Committee is so painful to watch.

Since government took over the hospital from Tšepong five years ago, promising Basotho stronger public control and better healthcare, QMMH has instead become a case study in how a public institution rots quietly while everyone assumes someone else is watching.

The PAC's inquiry into the hospital's governance and financial management, chaired through the committee's ongoing sittings, has peeled back one bandage after another.

What it has found underneath is not a single scandal but a whole architecture of dysfunction: a hospital roughly M79 million in debt, a salary structure that even the officials running it cannot explain, and an organisational identity so unsettled that nobody before the committee has been able to say cleanly whether QMMH is a government department, a parastatal, or something else entirely.

Start with the money, because that is where accountability always has to start. Finance Manager Tšele Sehlabo told the committee he spent close to M8 million from the hospital's patient revenue account without written authorisation, and when pressed for documentation, said plainly that his line of work does not generate a written instruction every time money moves.

That is not an answer the National Assembly of a country with a Public Financial Management and Accountability Act should accept from anyone entrusted with public money, let alone a hospital that is simultaneously pleading poverty.

The committee has also heard that funds meant for the National Drug Services Organisation and for patient referrals were diverted to cover staff salaries, and, more troubling still, that staff pension contributions destined for LNIG Hollard were instead redirected to pay hospital suppliers. Employees who spent years contributing to a retirement fund now have no certainty that the money was ever where it was supposed to be.

QMMH staff, through their representative 'Malebohang Tsolele, have already said they have lost confidence in management and want the Ministry of Health to install an entirely new team. When the people who work inside an institution stop believing its finance office, Parliament has no business believing it either.

Then there is procurement, which by now should surprise nobody who has followed how public money disappears in this country. Procurement Manager 'Masekoati Motsetsero admitted before the committee that procedures were sometimes bypassed altogether, and that members of QMMH's Executive Management interfered directly, in some instances instructing her department on which companies should win tenders.

She also revealed something almost administratively absurd for an institution of this size: QMMH has no procurement policy at all, and she has reported over the years to whichever official happened to be convenient, including, at different points, the Managing Director and a former Ministry of Health Principal Secretary, 'Maneo Ntene, rather than the Chief Accounting Officer as the Public Procurement Act of 2023 requires.

PAC member Dr Tšeliso Moroke was right to question whether the unit's structure leaves it permanently exposed to political interference. A procurement department with no policy, no fixed reporting line, and an admitted pattern of favouritism is not a broken system. It is a system built, whether by design or by neglect, to be exploited.

The human resources failures are, if anything, more disturbing because they touch patient safety directly. The committee heard that QMMH employee 'Mantsane Likotsi admitted she had never sat for the nursing licensure examination required before registration as a practising nurse, a revelation that should alarm every Mosotho who has ever been wheeled into that hospital's wards trusting that the person holding the drip line was qualified to do so.

Layered on top of that is the now well-documented ghost worker scandal, in which the hospital continued paying salaries and allowances to people who no longer report for duty, and the case of payroll manager Patlo Khoalenyane, who allegedly kept drawing a salary for more than a year without working, and whose prepared dismissal letter was, according to testimony before the committee, deliberately withheld so that he could be quietly advised to resign and keep his benefits instead. That letter, the committee was told, still sits in the QMMH human resources office. If true, that is not administrative sloppiness. That is a decision, taken by someone, to protect an individual at the expense of public funds, and Managing Director Dr 'Makhoase Ranyali, to whom Khoalenyane reported directly, owes Parliament and the public a direct answer on who made that call and why.

It is worth naming plainly what Dr Ranyali and her deputy, Thenjiwe Dlangamandla, have chosen to do in response to all of this: they went to the Constitutional Court to try to stop the PAC inquiry altogether, lost when Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane, with Justices Fumane Khabo and Moneuoa Kopo concurring, dismissed their urgent application on June 10, 2026, and have now taken the fight to the Court of Appeal rather than simply sitting before the people's representatives and answering the questions.

Executives who spend more energy litigating against oversight than submitting to it are telling the public something important about what they expect that oversight to find. The PAC's own recommendation of disciplinary action against QMMH's Executive Management, made after the executives initially declined to appear at all, deserves to be taken seriously rather than allowed to gather dust once the news cycle moves on, as so many parliamentary recommendations in this country tend to do.

None of this happened in a vacuum, and it would be dishonest to pretend the government bears no responsibility. Five years after taking QMMH back from Tšepong, the state still cannot say with clarity what kind of entity the hospital legally is, a question with real consequences for who is accountable for its debts, its procurement, and its staff. The Ministry of Health cannot keep appearing before the PAC alongside QMMH officials as a co-defendant of sorts while also being the body responsible for supervising the hospital in the first place. The PAC was right to warn that it will block any further midterm budget allocation to QMMH until its governance and salary structures are overhauled. That warning should hold. Rewarding an unreformed institution with fresh money before it accounts for the last tranche is how this country ends up relearning the same lesson every few years.

What should happen now is not complicated, even if it will be politically uncomfortable. Parliament should insist that the Court of Appeal matter be resolved quickly and that, whatever the outcome, Dr Ranyali and Dlangamandla answer the substantive questions on the record rather than continuing to treat the PAC as an adversary to be litigated out of existence.

The Ministry of Health should finally settle QMMH's legal and institutional status in law, not in the vague administrative language officials have offered so far. The Khoalenyane dismissal letter should be served, and whoever ordered it withheld should be named and held to account, not left to hide behind the passive voice of 'the committee heard.'

The diverted LNIG Hollard pension contributions should be traced, restored, and reported back to affected staff with dates and figures, not reassurances. And the Ministry, not QMMH's own management, should commission an independent audit of every position on the hospital's payroll to end the ghost worker problem once and for all, with the results published rather than filed away.

Basotho did not lose a functioning flagship hospital overnight, and they will not get one back overnight either. But the PAC has done something valuable simply by refusing to let QMMH's management manage the narrative. The next test is whether that scrutiny produces consequences, or whether, once the headlines fade, the hospital's executives quietly outlast the committee the way so many other implicated officials in this country have learned to do. Basotho deserve better than a referral hospital run on ghost salaries, diverted pensions, and litigation against the very oversight meant to protect them.

Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."
– Napoleon Hill, author

Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength." –
Sigmund Freud, neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis

Govt. seeks permanent market access into US market

NEO SENOKO

MASERU- Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD) is engaging with the United States towards seeking deeper trade integration and permanent market access for Lesotho's exports into the lip-smacking American market.

This has been revealed by the ministry in its recent update regarding the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) which has been extended by two years to 31 December 2028.

The extension of AGOA provides continued market access for exports of Lesotho origin to enter the United States duty free.

"The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development is pleased to notify the Lesotho Business Community and the nation at large that the United States has extended the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by two years to 31 December 2028. The HR 6500 bill containing AGOA was signed into law on 2nd September 2026 by the United States president, this gives effect to the two-years extension of AGOA to December 2028," the Ministry of Trade has said in a statement last week.

The development in the United States market brings reprieve on tariffs that were charged on Lesotho's exports in the past months. The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) has reported recently in its Monetary Policy Statement (MPC) that the extension has resulted in the much anticipated recovery in textile exports and the improved performance in financial services.

As a result, government is seeking deeper trade integration and permanent market access for Lesotho's exports in to the US markets.

"The government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development continues to engage with the United States directly and under the SACU mechanisms towards seeking deeper trade integration and permanent market access for Lesotho's exports and will update on development in due course."

"The Ministry therefore encourages the Private Sector in Lesotho to take advantage of this market dispensation and opportunity to diversify exports products into this market," the Ministry of Trade added.

Lesotho currently enjoys duty-free access the US under AGOA eligible products. The AGOA dispensation gives duty free treatment for goods originating from Lesotho and other eligible African countries.

Erykah Badu and the Alchemist Want You To Live in the Moment 'Before the World Blows'

Their long-promised collaboration, which is also Badu's first proper album in 16 years, plays to both of their strengths and delivers exactly what fans have been waiting for

WILL DUKES

Erykah Badu albums are like fanciful piñatas. The draw is that you never know what you're going to get. It's a given that Erykah's offbeat treats will be healthy and spirit-saving. Her inability to stay in one place, artistically speaking, all but ensures that each new project will give you life in new and emphatic ways.

The Texan artist's last proper album, 2010's incredible New Amerykah Part Two (Return of the Ankh), flaunted the subversive single "Window Seat," a respect-my-space sound-off that felt like self-care. Her only major release since then was a mixtape: 2015's delirious But You Caint Use My Phone, which brimmed with affirmative heaters that wonderfully interrogated screen-staring.

In her long interim between releases, Erykah's guest spots furthered that provocative tradition, adding some earthy energetics (and an aside about veganism) to Teyana Taylor's 2020 slow-burner "Lowkey," and an enticing hook championing humanism on South Korean rapper RM's inventive 2022 hit "Yun."

Unsurprisingly, fans were ecstatic about the prospect of a new Erykah Badu album that she co-produced with the underground savant the Alchemist. When the L.A.-based boom-bap emissary posted Instagram pictures of himself with Erykah in the studio in December 2024, his comments were flooded with a litany of fire-emoji salutes.

A few months after that, in March 2025, anticipatory headlines circulated when the 55-year-old singer told Billboard that a new album was in the works.

That summer, she and the Alchemist embarked on a North American tour, performing new songs to dumbstruck fans who had to deposit their phones in locked Yondr pouches as if it were a tricked-out Dave Chappelle special.

Now, more than a year later, Before the World Blows: The Abi & Alan Experiment is finally here. And it's definitely worth the delay. These 16 slaps are lucid and adventurous, featuring random Jay Electronica warblings, DJ Quik rhythms, and a couple of surprisingly appropriate Westside Gunn vignettes. This is Erykah's best full-length since 2008's capacious New Amerykah Part One (4th World War), showcasing the Alchemist's strongest productions since his 2022 collabo with Roc Marciano, The Elephant Man's Bones. Alluringly, Before the World Blows is a jolt of pure sprezzatura from two of the game's most consummate analog devotees. It's a surly trip that's all about enjoying the messy moments of life before everything goes to shit.

Anyone could guess going into this album that Erykah's sticking points are groupthink, conformity, and phone obsession. But far from being a joy-killer, she's guided by inventiveness and levity.

While A.I. is an exasperating boogeyman, the video for the stellar single "Next 2 U" features A.I.-enhanced art. That artistic gambit feels playfully tongue-in-cheek when tons of folks would rather use A.I. to find out how to store cut carrots in the fridge. If anything, Erykah's project is relatably of the moment.

That her art is grounded in an all-too-human space has been clear since her insightful 1997 debut, Baduizm, which alerted the mainstream to the epochal, incense-and-headwrap preferences she'd developed years earlier amid Brooklyn's grassroots, open-mic milieu. And it wouldn't be surprising if the healing-centered lyrics to Before the World Blows' buoyant single "Witch Doctor" inherit their piquancy from Erykah's real-life practices as a chakra reader. In any case, her confident claim that "I know how to break that curse," over the Alchemist's booming, lo-fi canvas, feels like a mighty soul cleanse, while making it clear that the media's 24/7 barrage of skullduggery is essentially witchcraft.

But the life-comes-at-you-fast aspect of having your nose wide open also registers here. The Steve Lacy-assisted "To the Moon (Plan C)" finds Erykah cooing, "Fly with me beyond the ocean/That is what I'm hoping, hoping, hoping, hoping." Her voice is full of eager glee, and the panting, easy way in which she repeats "hoping" over the Alchemist's floor-cracking snares feels like infatuation amplified by breezy uncertainty.

The courtship-to-wake-up-call dynamic hits later in the first verse, when Erykah croons, "Now I think my period's late," before declaring that "What I say is what I create," suggesting that her head-over-heels chatter invoked a straight-up grown-folks situation. It's a whip-smart take on Adulting 101, and one of the best songs on the album.

Other gems include the crystalline "They Ain't You," with its smoky refrains recalling peak Badu anthems like "Orange Moon" and "Next Lifetime," and the unquenchable "Crossfade." The latter's folky, DJ Quik-enhanced palette somehow invokes both Outkast and Pink Moon-era Nick Drake, making way for her diffident Chaka moans and squirmy vulnerability.

"Breezy" — all spiffy pianos and Liverpool charm — is decidedly different from anything in Erykah's or the Alchemist's oeuvres. And "No I.D.," named after the Chicago producer behind Jay-Z's 4:44 and more, is a trenchant ode to boom-bap, wherein Erykah spazzes out and puts her bid in for funky new beats: "If Alchemist don't come through for me/I'ma get a beat from No I.D."

It's refreshing not only to hear Erykah Badu revive that velvet, Billie Holiday-inspired affectation here, but also pop all manner of cash shit over a ready barrage of Westside Gunn ad-libs — all while acknowledging the reverent aesthetic that's instrumental to her choicest songs.

While "Black Box," a croon-less jeremiad against smartphones, feels like a letdown, the moving "I Know That Man" is a bona fide heart-puller. Here, Badu follows a canny Earl Sweatshirt verse with a soul-soothing proclamation that "I wanna be seen as good/In the eyes of that which created us," immediately inspiring goosebumps. Before the World Blows provides the kind of ambitious surprises you can savor for a plethora of lifetimes.

- ROLLING STONE

FREE
Metro SPORT
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

How OoSokhethabahle lifted Chippa United before Sundowns draw

MIHLALI BALEKA

Chippa United's decision to move some of their home games to Buffalo City Municipality Stadium hasn't been widely received. However, deep in the home dressing room recently, there was a rare source of inspiration – the OoSokhethabahle Traditional Group.

OoSokhethabahle were allowed into the Chilli Boys' dressing room as the team prepared for their warm-ups against Milford FC and Mamelodi Sundowns in their last two home matches in KuGompo.

They brought an incredible energy into the room through igwijo songs, dance, and instruments. That clearly paid dividends as the animated players took to the pitch high on confidence, holding both the high-flying Milford and Sundowns to draws.

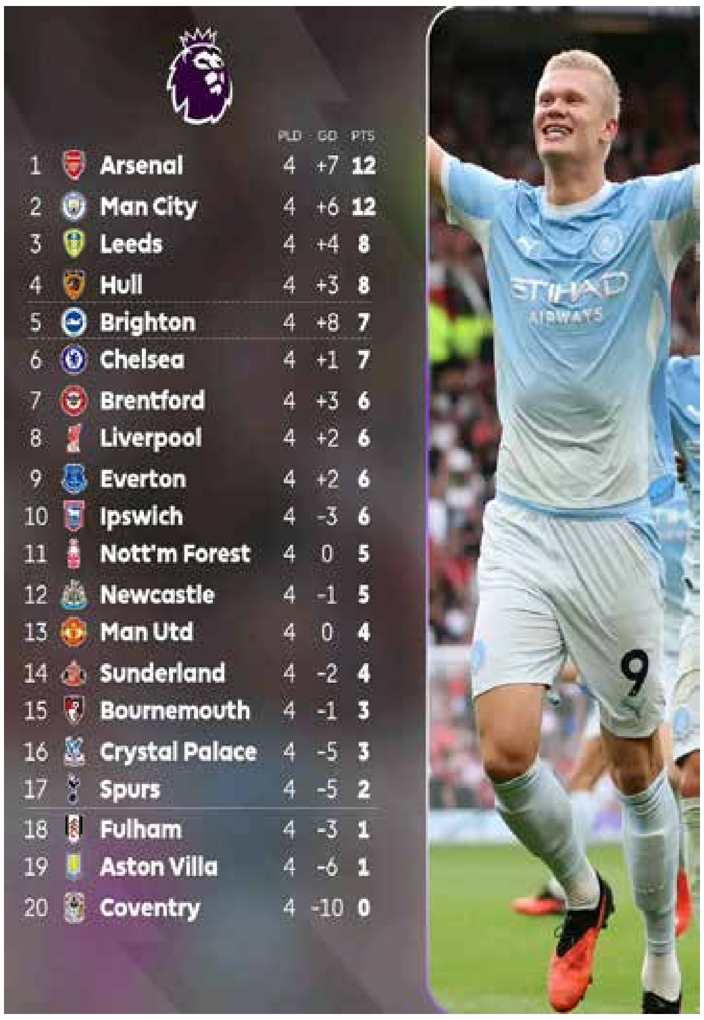
The draw against African giants Mamelodi Sundowns on Saturday felt like a loss. Chippa had given their all, taking the lead through Sirgio Kimmies with 12 minutes of regulation time remaining. However, a lapse in concentration on the final kick of stoppage time allowed the visitors to snatch an equaliser through Antonio van Wyk, forcing both sides to settle for a point.

Chippa knows it was two points dropped. Their supporters, traveling from all over the Eastern Cape, braved the rainy weather to rally behind the team, while OoSokhethabahle entertained the crowd throughout the match in the best way they know how.

Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso, meanwhile, was a frustrated man after the final whistle. He lamented the muddy pitch for limiting the fluidity of the game, adding that the compact field hindered their ability to retain and rotate possession.

Cardoso was already unhappy that Chippa chose the venue while the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium undergoes renovations, questioning why the hosts didn't take the match to Kings Park instead. The Sundowns mentor seemingly forgot that Chippa previously hosted Orlando Pirates in Durban only because both of their local stadiums were awaiting PSL approval.

Chippa are set to host Kruger United in October, Sekhukhune United and Kaizer Chiefs in November at BCM Stadium. If the influence of the OoSokhethabahle Traditional Group is anything to go by, the Chilli Boys are well-positioned to put in more strong performances and gather crucial results.



		PLD	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	4	+7	12
2	Man City	4	+6	12
3	Leeds	4	+4	8
4	Hull	4	+3	8
5	Brighton	4	+8	7
6	Chelsea	4	+1	7
7	Brentford	4	+3	6
8	Liverpool	4	+2	6
9	Everton	4	+2	6
10	Ipswich	4	-3	6
11	Nott'm Forest	4	0	5
12	Newcastle	4	-1	5
13	Man Utd	4	0	4
14	Sunderland	4	-2	4
15	Bournemouth	4	-1	3
16	Crystal Palace	4	-5	3
17	Spurs	4	-5	2
18	Fulham	4	-3	1
19	Aston Villa	4	-6	1
20	Coventry	4	-10	0

RESULTS
WEEK 4

TUESDAY, 15 SEP 2026			PLAYGROUNDS
MAOHOKHA FC	0-5	LIOLI FC	BAMBATHA
LIJABATHO FC	V	MATLAMA FC	POSTPONED
MAJANTJA FC	2-3	LINARE FC	S.RUSSELL
LMPS FC	0-1	BANTU FC	PTC GROUND
MANONYANE FC	2-2	LU FC	BAMBATHA
MZAMANE FC	0-2	LCS FC	S.THEJANE
LDF FC	1-0	VILLA FC	RATJOMOSE
MEMBERS FC	0-2	LIFOFANE FC	RATJOMOSE

Why Kaizer Chiefs' problem is bigger than Brandon Petersen

SMISO MSOMI

Brandon Petersen's latest mistake has once again put the Kaizer Chiefs goalkeeper under the microscope. But if the Glamour Boys are seriously considering a change between the posts, they need to ask a much bigger question than whether Petersen should be dropped.

Who replaces him — and what happens to a defence that has yet to find any real consistency in front of him?

Petersen has started all seven of Chiefs' matches across all competitions this season, with the team conceding eight goals during that run.

His latest error came against Polokwane City, when a corner slipped through his hands, bumped his chest into the net, and allowed the hosts to equalise in a 1-1 draw.

It was an unfortunate moment for the 31-year-old, but it has inevitably renewed the debate around his position.

Chiefs goalkeeping stocks

Petersen is not simply Chiefs' goalkeeper. He is also the club captain. That makes any decision to remove him from the starting XI considerably more complicated. - *iol*