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WEEKLY NEWS · OPINION 30 OCT - 1 NOV 2026

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Eastleigh Building Collapse: More Survivors Rescued as Missing-Person Reports Rise



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BY ANNA FARAJA · 25 OCT 2026

Rescue teams in Nairobi's Eastleigh neighbourhood have pulled additional survivors from the rubble of a collapsed multi-storey building, offering fresh hope to families waiting for news while authorities work to establish how many people may still be missing.

The building collapsed on Friday, October 23, along 9th Street in the busy commercial district. By Saturday evening, Kenya's rescue operation had recorded further breakthroughs, with The Star reporting that rescuers had rescued a second person, a woman, and taken her to Kenyatta National Hospital. The Eastleigh Voice later reported that a third survivor had been pulled out alive, though the precise rescue count should be confirmed against the latest official update before publication.

The new rescues mark a change from the early reports on Friday, when police said one person had been brought out and emergency teams were still trying to reach others believed to be trapped beneath the debris. Rescue workers have continued to remove rubble while using specialised teams and equipment to search for signs of life.

The number of people still unaccounted for, however, remains unsettled. Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen said about seven people believed to have been inside shops on the building's lower levels were missing. The Kenya Red Cross later reported receiving 31 missing-person cases, saying it was contacting families to verify the reports and determine how many people might actually remain beneath the collapsed structure.

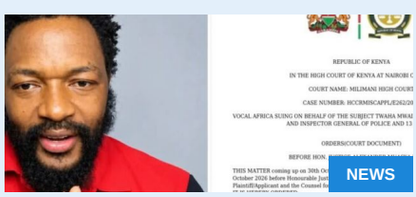
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The number of people still unaccounted for, however, remains unsettled. Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen said about seven people believed to have been inside shops on the building's lower levels were missing. The Kenya Red Cross later reported receiving 31 missing-person cases, saying it was contacting families to verify the reports and determine how many people might actually remain beneath the collapsed structure.

The two figures describe different stages of the accounting process and should not be read as proof that 31 people are trapped. Red Cross disaster officer Benson Ochieng said some people initially reported missing had since been located, including workers who had left the site before or after the collapse. The organization said two people had been reunited with their families, while its tracing teams continued contacting relatives to establish who was still unaccounted for.

The distinction matters because the building was both a construction site and a place where businesses were operating. Authorities said all 67 construction workers recorded at the site had been accounted for, with 66 escaping without injury and one sustaining injuries. Investigators and rescuers are therefore also trying to establish whether traders, customers or other people were inside the ground-floor and basement premises when the building came down.

The Kenya Red Cross has urged families searching for missing relatives to visit its tracing desk at the scene or call its toll-free number, 1199. The organisation is working with other emergency agencies as the search continues. The Ministry of Health has also established a 24-hour response desk near the site to coordinate medical support and assist affected families.

The rescue operation has been complicated by the scale of the debris and concerns about the safety of people who may still be alive underneath it. Authorities have said teams must remove material carefully to avoid shifting unstable sections of the building or making conditions worse for anyone trapped inside. Heavy machinery, emergency responders and technical personnel have been deployed, while police have urged the public to stay away from the immediate area so rescue teams can work without obstruction.

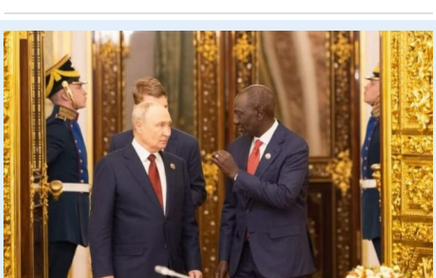
Alongside the search, the collapse has raised questions about how the building was approved and why parts of it were occupied before construction was completed. Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja said a review of county records showed that an application for a proposed building of more than 15 floors with a basement had been submitted but was never approved. He also said the structure did not have an occupation certificate.

Those findings have put the building's approval history and regulatory oversight at the centre of the investigation. Construction approval, inspections and permission to occupy a building are separate matters, and investigators will need to establish which documents were issued, what work was carried out and whether any breaches contributed to the collapse.

The National Construction Authority has identified the developer, contractor and professionals listed in its records for the project. Their identification does not, by itself, establish individual responsibility for the collapse. Authorities have said a wider investigation involving police, construction regulators, county inspectors and technical experts will examine the circumstances before conclusions are reached.

For families waiting near the scene, however, the immediate question is more urgent than the investigation: whether anyone else can be reached alive. The additional rescues have provided reasons to hope, but the reported missing-person cases are still being checked and there is no final, independently verified account of everyone who was inside or around the building when it collapsed.

As the operation continues, authorities face two parallel tasks: reaching anyone still trapped and giving the public a reliable account of the casualties. Until the missing reports are reconciled and officials issue a clear update, the number of people still unaccounted for remains uncertain.



Ruto Says Russia Will Stop Recruiting Kenyans Into Its Military After Putin Talks

BY ANNA FARAJA · 31 OCT 2026

Kenyan President William Ruto says Russia has agreed to stop recruiting Kenyan citizens into its military, following talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin in Moscow, as Nairobi moves to secure the return of nationals who travelled to Russia for military-related purposes.

In a statement published on Friday, October 30, after the meeting, Ruto said Putin had confirmed that Kenya would be categorised as a

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non-source country for recruitment into the Russian military. The announcement is intended to close a channel through which Kenyan citizens have been enlisted into Russia's armed forces amid the ongoing war against Ukraine.

Ruto also announced the appointment of a Defence Attaché at the Kenyan Embassy in Moscow. The official will work directly with Russia's Ministry of Defence to facilitate the return of Kenyans who travelled to Russia for military purposes, while also helping to process compensation for those affected.

The appointment comes as families in Kenya continue to seek information about relatives who travelled to Russia after reportedly being offered employment opportunities, only to find themselves involved in military operations. Some Kenyans have been reported killed, injured or missing, while others have been taken prisoner by Ukrainian forces.

The Kenyan government has been under growing pressure to establish how its citizens were recruited, identify those still in Russia and secure the return of those who want to come home. The new diplomatic arrangement could provide a channel for dealing with these cases directly between the two governments, although Ruto did not announce a specific timetable for the repatriation process or explain how compensation claims would be assessed.

The announcement also follows earlier diplomatic engagement between Nairobi and Moscow. In March 2026, Kenya's Prime Cabinet Secretary and Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi travelled to Russia for discussions with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, after which Kenya announced an understanding that its citizens would no longer be enlisted through Russia's Ministry of Defence.

In October, Mudavadi told Kenyan senators that the government had documented 354 nationals connected to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The figure included people reported to be on the front lines, in military camps, hospitalised, missing, killed, held as prisoners of war or already returned to Kenya. At the time, 62 had been repatriated, according to the figures presented to lawmakers.

The scale of the recruitment problem was also highlighted in an investigation by Kenyan human rights organisation Journalists for Justice, published on October 29. The investigation identified 841 Kenyans recruited into Russia's armed forces between May 2025 and February 2026, making Kenya the country with the highest documented number of recruits among the African countries examined. It also reported that at least 76 Kenyans had been confirmed dead by the end of June 2026.

The findings have raised questions about recruitment networks and intermediaries who allegedly used promises of civilian employment to attract jobseekers before they became involved in military service. The circumstances of individual cases differ, and the reported figures do not necessarily represent every Kenyan who may have travelled to Russia or become involved in the conflict.

Beyond the military recruitment issue, Ruto and Putin discussed expanding educational opportunities for Kenyan students. Ruto said the two countries would work to increase the number of Russian scholarships available to Kenyans from the current 70 to 300, covering areas including health, artificial intelligence, technology, aviation and cybersecurity.

The two leaders also agreed that their governments would negotiate a bilateral labour agreement intended to allow Kenyans to live and work in Russia. The proposed arrangement is significant because it could establish a formal framework for employment and labour cooperation between the countries. Its eventual terms, however, will matter, particularly given the concerns raised by the recruitment cases.

Ruto further said Putin had committed to supporting the expansion of the United Nations Office in Nairobi, which hosts major UN operations and serves as the organisation's principal headquarters in Africa. The two leaders also discussed cooperation between their governments in international affairs.

During the Russia-Africa Summit, Kenya and Russia signed five cooperation instruments covering economic cooperation, labour inspection and employment promotion, transport, diplomatic training, and visa-free travel for holders of diplomatic and service passports.

One of the instruments provides for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Russia-Kenya Commission on Economic Cooperation, which is expected to provide a framework for coordinating bilateral economic relations and following up on areas of cooperation.

The agreements come as Kenya seeks to widen its economic relationship with Russia beyond existing trade, while Moscow is pursuing stronger commercial and diplomatic relations with African countries. Ruto has previously acknowledged the imbalance in trade between the two countries and expressed interest in expanding Kenyan exports, including tea and flowers, to the Russian market.

The meeting took place after the Third Russia-Africa Summit in Moscow, where Putin sought to strengthen Russia's relations with African governments through cooperation in trade, agriculture, energy, education, technology and security. The summit brought together representatives from nearly 50 African countries, including more than 20 heads of state, according to international reporting.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KENYA AT NAI

COURT NAME: MILIMANI HIGH

CASE NUMBER: HCCRMISCAPPLI/E

VOCAL AFRICA SUING ON BEHALF OF THE SUBJECT TWAHA AND INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE A

ORDERS/COURT DOCUMEN

BEFORE HON. JUSTICE ALEXANDER MU

THIS MATTER coming up on 30th October 2026 for directions o October 2026 before Honourable Justice Alexander M. Muteti U Plaintiff/Applicant and the Counsel for the Defendant/Responden IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:
1. THAT the Chamber Summons application dated 27th October urgent.
2. THAT the 1st,2nd and 3rd respondents are hereby ordered eit

Kenya High Court Orders Police to Get Missing Tanzanian Activist Twaha Mwaipaya 'Dead or Alive'

BY SWT NEWS DESK · 30 OCT 2026

Kenya's High Court has ordered senior police officials to produce missing Tanzanian opposition activist Twaha Mwaipaya before the court, either alive or dead, as it seeks answers over his disappearance and the circumstances surrounding his reported arrest.

The order was issued on Friday, October 30, by Justice Alexander Muasya Muteti at the Milimani High Court in Nairobi, following an urgent application filed by human rights organisation Vocal Africa on Mwaipaya's behalf.

The court directed the Inspector General of Police, the Director of Criminal Investigations (DCI) and the Officer Commanding Ruai Police Station to produce Mwaipaya before it on Monday, November 2, at 11:00 a.m. They must also present the original warrant authorising his detention and explain why he should not be immediately released from custody.

In its order, the court directed the three respondents, either personally or through officers duly appointed by them, to produce "the person or body of Twaha Mwaipaya live or dead" before the court.

Justice Muteti also summoned the fifth and sixth respondents, requiring them to appear either personally or through their advocates and explain the circumstances surrounding Mwaipaya's arrest and detention, including why he should not be released immediately.

The application, dated October 27, was certified as urgent. The court further directed the respondents and interested parties to be served with the application and the orders before the close of business on Friday. They were required to file and serve any responses by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, ahead of the scheduled court mention at 11:00 a.m.

The case follows the reported disappearance of Mwaipaya on Sunday, October 25, in the Kamulu area on the outskirts of Nairobi. According to information presented by Vocal Africa in its court application, the Tanzanian activist was travelling in a taxi when armed men allegedly intercepted the vehicle and took him away.

The organisation's account states that the incident happened at Kanisani stage in Kamulu, where the men were allegedly travelling in a black double-cabin pickup. A friend who was reportedly accompanying Mwaipaya is said to have escaped and later provided an account of what happened.

Vocal Africa's chief executive, Hussein Khalid, said efforts to establish Mwaipaya's whereabouts had not yielded answers. The organisation told the court that a missing-person report had been filed at Ruai Police Station under Occurrence Book number 47/25/10/2026, but that subsequent attempts to trace him through police stations had been unsuccessful.

According to the application, neither Mwaipaya's family nor his lawyers had been informed of the reasons for his alleged arrest, the agency responsible for holding him or the place where he was being detained.

The organisation therefore sought the court's intervention through a habeas corpus application, a legal procedure that allows a person's detention to be brought before a court for examination. It is intended to prevent unlawful detention by requiring the authorities to account for a person's whereabouts and the legal basis for holding them.

Vocal Africa and other human rights advocates have expressed concern that Mwaipaya could face torture, detention without communication or other human rights violations. The organization also raised the possibility that he could be forcibly transferred to Tanzania, where it alleges he may face further risks because of his political activities and criticism of the government. These concerns form part of the applicants' case and have not been established as findings by the court.

Mwaipaya is a Tanzanian opposition activist

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associated with CHADEMA and has been described in reports as a youth organizer and mobilization figure. His disappearance in Kenya has drawn attention to the safety of political activists operating across national borders, particularly where allegations of abduction and undisclosed detention are involved.

The case has also attracted attention because it places the responsibility on Kenyan security authorities to clarify whether Mwaipaya is in their custody and, if so, to produce the legal documentation authorising his detention. If he is not being held by the named authorities, the court's order places them under pressure to account for what they know about his whereabouts.

The High Court has not, through the order, determined who took Mwaipaya or established that the police were responsible for his disappearance. Instead, it has directed the relevant officials to appear, produce him and provide an explanation, allowing the court to examine the circumstances of the case.

The matter is scheduled to return to the Milimani High Court on Monday, November 2, at 11:00 a.m., when the court is expected to consider the responses and issue further directions.



Namibia's President Nandi-Ndaitwah Meets Putin as Windhoek Seeks Stronger Economic Ties With Russia

BY SWT NEWS DESK · 30 OCT 2026

Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has held bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, using the sidelines of the Third Russia-Africa Summit to discuss ways of strengthening relations between the two countries and expanding areas of cooperation.

The Namibian Presidency announced the meeting on October 29, saying the discussions focused on strengthening the cordial relationship between Namibia and the Russian Federation and exploring new areas of cooperation for the mutual benefit of their people.

The announcement did not disclose specific agreements reached or provide details of any commitments made during the talks. However, the meeting comes as Namibia seeks to translate its longstanding diplomatic relationship with Russia into greater trade, investment and industrial development.

Before travelling to Moscow, Nandi-Ndaitwah said Namibia intended to use the summit to pursue partnerships that could support job creation, industrialisation, technology transfer and economic diversification. The country is particularly interested in expanding cooperation in mining, energy, agriculture, education, science and technology.

Her visit also comes at a time when Namibia is seeking to gain more value from its natural resources instead of relying primarily on the export of unprocessed minerals. Mineral beneficiation, which involves processing raw materials before they are exported, is among the priorities identified by the Namibian government as it looks to expand domestic industries and create employment.

The meeting with Putin therefore provides an opportunity for Windhoek to explore how Russian investment, technical expertise and industrial partnerships could support those ambitions. Russia has experience in sectors including mining, energy, nuclear technology and heavy industry, although the extent to which that expertise can translate into projects in Namibia will depend on the terms of future cooperation.

Nandi-Ndaitwah also addressed the wider Russia-Africa partnership during the summit, calling on both sides to move beyond declarations of intent and focus on practical outcomes that improve people's livelihoods.

Speaking at the gathering on October 29, she said cooperation should produce tangible results through trade, technology transfer, skills development and stronger economic links. Her message reflected Namibia's stated position that international partnerships should be assessed by the opportunities they create for its citizens and their contribution to national development.

The Third Russia-Africa Summit, held in Moscow on October 28 and 29 under the theme "For Peace, Security and Development," brought together representatives from 48 African countries, including more than 20 heads of state, according to reports from the gathering. Discussions covered trade, investment, energy, agriculture, food security, security cooperation, technology and infrastructure.

For Russia, the summit is part of a broader effort to strengthen its political and economic relationships across Africa. Moscow has sought to expand cooperation with African governments in areas ranging from agricultural supplies and energy to military partnerships, education and infrastructure, while presenting itself as an alternative partner to Western countries.

Putin has repeatedly emphasised the importance of closer relations with African states, pointing to the Soviet Union's historical support for liberation movements across the continent. During the summit, he called for stronger economic cooperation and greater African representation in international institutions.

Namibia's relationship with Russia is rooted partly in that shared history. The Soviet Union supported the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) during Namibia's struggle for independence from South African rule, providing political, diplomatic and military assistance to the liberation movement.

Namibia became independent on March 21, 1990, and established diplomatic relations with Russia on the same day. Since then, the two countries have maintained cooperation across several sectors, including mining, energy, agriculture, education, healthcare, science and technology.

That history continues to shape their diplomatic relationship, but Namibia's current priorities are increasingly economic. The government wants international partnerships to contribute to industrialisation, employment and a more diversified economy.

The Namibia-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation remains one of the main mechanisms for advancing those objectives. Its 11th session was held in Windhoek in March 2026, where officials explored opportunities to expand trade, investment and development cooperation.

The latest meeting between Nandi-Ndaitwah and Putin provides another high-level opportunity to advance that work. However, the Presidency's announcement has so far offered no indication of specific investment projects, financial commitments or agreements emerging from the bilateral talks.

That distinction matters as African governments increasingly face pressure to demonstrate that international summits produce more than diplomatic statements and ceremonial meetings. For Namibia, the measure of progress will be whether discussions with Russia lead to investment that supports local industries, creates jobs, develops skills and allows more of the country's mineral wealth to be processed domestically.

The summit has also highlighted the wider competition among global powers for stronger relationships with African countries. Russia, China, the United States and European governments have all sought deeper economic and political engagement with the continent, offering different forms of trade, investment, security and development cooperation.



Ramaphosa Says Cornubia Housing Project Must Create Jobs, Not Just Homes

BY ANNA FARAJA · 30 OCT 2026

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for a broader approach to housing delivery, saying government developments should do more than provide families with roofs over their heads by creating jobs, supporting local businesses and bringing communities closer to essential services and economic opportunities.

Speaking on Thursday, October 29, during the Cornubia Integrated Human Settlement milestone celebration in eThekwini, KwaZulu-Natal, Ramaphosa said the development reflected a shift in how South Africa plans and delivers housing. He described human settlements as catalysts for economic activity, arguing that communities should benefit from construction, maintenance, retail and other opportunities created around housing projects.

"Cornubia is part of a broader shift in the way we provide housing as a nation," he said. "We recognise human settlements as catalysts for economic development, creating opportunities for local businesses, job creation and community growth."

The President said the government intended to ensure that the development continued to support local participation and expand economic

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opportunities, so that residents could benefit from the project beyond receiving permanent homes.

His remarks came as the government marked progress at Cornubia, a large-scale development designed to combine housing with schools, health facilities, shops, recreational spaces and transport infrastructure. The project is also part of efforts to address the spatial inequalities inherited from apartheid-era urban planning, which left many black communities living far from employment centres and essential services.

Ramaphosa said South Africa needed to move away from an approach that concentrated on building houses without adequately considering where people would live in relation to work, education, healthcare and public transport.

He argued that integrated human settlements should bring these facilities together, reducing the time and money residents spend travelling while allowing people from different income groups to live in the same neighbourhoods.

The Cornubia development covers more than 1,300 hectares and is expected to accommodate more than 110,000 people over the next 10 to 15 years. Its plans include schools, clinics, early childhood development centres, libraries, sports facilities, community halls, places of worship and police stations.

The first phase has delivered more than 2,600 houses, while further phases are under construction. The wider project is expected to provide 12,593 housing units through different programmes, including fully subsidised homes, social housing and financing support for households in the so-called missing middle.

One immediate priority is providing permanent accommodation for families displaced by the devastating floods that struck KwaZulu-Natal in 2022. Many affected households initially moved into emergency shelters and temporary accommodation after losing their homes.

During Thursday's event, houses were handed over to families affected by the floods. Ramaphosa said another 145 homes were under construction in Phase 2 and that the government expected a total of 460 permanent homes to have been completed by mid-2027.

He acknowledged that the relocation process had taken years and that families who remained in temporary accommodation continued to face difficult living conditions. Some had struggled with cramped accommodation, limited access to public transport and long journeys to school for children.

“Emergency accommodation must never become a permanent way of life,” he said, stressing that the ultimate objective must be permanent housing that restores dignity and provides families with a stable foundation.

The President also recognised that the government could not celebrate completed houses without addressing the people who were still waiting. He said delays in construction, beneficiary lists and the issuing of title deeds needed to be resolved, with clear timelines communicated to affected communities.

“Where families have received permanent homes, we celebrate that progress. But for the families still waiting, the wait carries a real cost in lost opportunity,” Ramaphosa said.

He called for greater transparency in the allocation of houses, saying residents should receive clear information about eligibility, construction progress and relocation dates rather than depending on rumours. He also warned against fraud, queue-jumping, unlawful occupation and interference with beneficiary lists.

Beyond the provision of housing, the economic potential of Cornubia is becoming increasingly important to the project. The Cornubia Business Park, which is being developed alongside the residential areas, has already created approximately 300 jobs during construction. The wider development is expected to generate more than 2,000 jobs.

Ramaphosa said investment in eThekwini could create further opportunities for residents, but argued that people needed affordable housing close to employment centres to benefit from that growth. High transport costs, he noted, place additional pressure on households already dealing with the rising cost of living.

The government is also seeking to change its wider housing model. Ramaphosa said it was expanding affordable housing, working to revitalise commuter rail, releasing well-located public land and introducing subsidy arrangements to help people build, buy or rent homes in suitable areas.

He said the government wanted to move beyond simply constructing houses for beneficiaries towards supporting people to secure housing through different options, while also unblocking stalled projects.

The scale of the national challenge remains considerable. According to figures cited by Ramaphosa, more than five million housing opportunities have been delivered since the beginning of democratic government in 1994. The proportion of households living in formal dwellings increased from 65 per cent in 1996 to more than 88 per cent in 2022.

However, rapid urbanisation and population growth have continued to increase demand. Nearly four million people remain on the national housing needs register, according to the President, highlighting the gap between the progress already made and the number of people still seeking adequate housing.

Cornubia is intended to demonstrate how housing and urban development can be planned together rather than treating homes as isolated projects. Its schools, retail facilities, clinic, sports infrastructure and planned business activities are meant to support a functioning community as the population grows.

But maintaining the development will be as important as completing it. Ramaphosa said the government would not allow the project to fall into disrepair, calling for cooperation between national and provincial authorities, the eThekwini Municipality, implementing agencies, community leaders and residents.

He also warned against corruption, extortion and patronage in the delivery of the project, insisting that opportunities created through construction and local participation must be handled transparently.

The Cornubia milestone therefore comes with two parallel responsibilities for the government: completing the homes and infrastructure promised to residents, while ensuring that the development becomes an economically active and properly maintained community.

For families displaced by the 2022 floods, the immediate priority remains receiving permanent homes after years of uncertainty. For the wider population expected to live in Cornubia, the longer-term question is whether the development will deliver the jobs, transport links, public services and local businesses needed to support everyday life.

Ramaphosa said the government needed to finish what it had started and ensure that no family was left waiting. His message was that the success of Cornubia should ultimately be measured not only by the number of houses built, but also by the opportunities and quality of life created for the people who live there.



Angola and Tanzania Set to Sign Cooperation Agreements During Lourenço’s Visit

BY NYAMBITA MAGOMA · 29 OCT 2026

Angolan President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço is in Tanzania for a state visit expected to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, with trade, investment, infrastructure, energy and other economic sectors among the areas under discussion.

Lourenço arrived in Dar es Salaam on October 28 at the invitation of President Samia Suluhu Hassan. The official programme includes talks between the two leaders, the signing of cooperation agreements and a visit to Dodoma, where Lourenço is expected to join Samia for the inauguration of the Government City at Mtumba on October 30. The visit follows an announcement by Tanzania’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs describing the engagement as an opportunity to expand bilateral relations and reaffirm commitments to regional peace, security and integration.

The meeting allows the two governments to assess how their long-standing diplomatic relationship can translate into more practical economic cooperation. Tanzania has access to the Indian Ocean and serves as an important transport gateway for several landlocked countries, while Angola is a major oil producer on Africa’s Atlantic coast. Both countries have reasons to explore new partnerships in transport, energy, agriculture and trade as African governments seek to expand commercial links within the continent.

According to the Tanzanian government’s announcement, the talks are expected to cover a broad range of sectors, including oil and gas, minerals, transport, agriculture, health, education, tourism, technology and digital communications. The two sides are also expected to explore opportunities for trade and investment, although the precise commitments will depend on the agreements signed and how they are implemented.

Angolan state media have likewise reported that the visit is intended to deepen political, diplomatic and economic relations. Angola’s official news agency said the programme includes the signing of new cooperation instruments, while other Angolan reporting has highlighted the potential for the two countries to explore strategic logistics projects, including the Lobito Corridor.

The corridor is an important part of Angola's plans to improve the movement of goods from its Atlantic coast towards mineral-producing areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. Tanzania, meanwhile, has its own strategic transport links through the Port of Dar es Salaam and the Central Corridor, which connects the coast with inland markets. The corridors serve different routes, but discussions about logistics and regional trade could create opportunities for cooperation on transport services, investment and connections between African markets.

Whether those possibilities produce new commercial projects will depend on the details of any agreements and the ability of businesses and public institutions to carry them out. Announcements of cooperation can establish a framework, but sustained trade growth requires reliable infrastructure, clear regulations, financing and regular commercial exchanges.

Energy is another potential area of common interest. Angola has a well-established petroleum industry and significant experience in oil production, while Tanzania has been developing its natural gas sector and pursuing plans intended to expand the role of gas in its economy. The two countries have different energy profiles, but technical cooperation, investment links and the exchange of industry expertise could feature in wider discussions about their economic relationship.

Agriculture, tourism and digital services also offer possibilities for cooperation. Tanzania has a substantial tourism industry and agricultural production base, while Angola has been working to diversify its economy beyond oil. Partnerships in these sectors could support private businesses and create opportunities for companies seeking to expand into other African markets. The scale of any benefits, however, will depend on whether the governments and private sector identify specific projects rather than relying solely on broad commitments.

The visit also carries historical significance. Tanzania and Angola developed close ties during the liberation struggles in southern Africa, when Tanzania under founding president Julius Nyerere supported African movements fighting colonial and minority-rule governments. Angola's independence struggle was led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA, under António Agostinho Neto, who became the country's first president after independence in 1975.

The two countries' shared history has helped maintain diplomatic ties across successive governments. The Tanzanian government described Lourenço's visit as the first state visit by an Angolan president to Tanzania since 1979, framing the occasion as a continuation of a relationship rooted in solidarity during the liberation era.

That historical relationship now faces a different test. While political solidarity helped establish close ties decades ago, the current priority is to identify areas where cooperation can generate measurable economic results. The visit provides a platform for both governments to discuss those priorities and establish formal mechanisms for future work.

Lourenço's programme also includes the inauguration of the Government City at Mtumba, in Dodoma. The complex is intended to consolidate government institutions in Tanzania's political capital, improve coordination between ministries and support public-service delivery. The project forms part of Tanzania's longer-term shift of government operations to Dodoma, a process that has been under way for years.

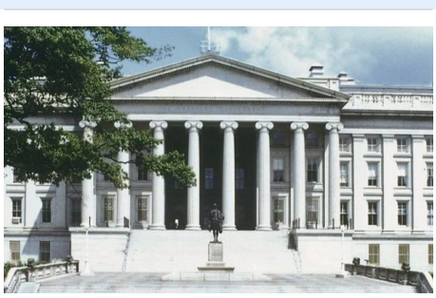
The Government City project represents a major investment in public infrastructure. The Citizen reported that the government has invested approximately 700 billion Tanzanian shillings in the complex, which includes ministry offices, supporting infrastructure and digital communication systems. The planned inauguration on October 30 follows the postponement of an earlier ceremony.

For Tanzania, the event is an opportunity to showcase a major national development to a visiting head of state and to underline Dodoma's role as the country's administrative centre. For Angola, the visit provides a chance to see the project and discuss broader questions of public infrastructure and institutional development within the framework of bilateral relations.

The two presidents' talks are also taking place within a wider African effort to increase trade between countries on the continent. The African Continental Free Trade Area aims to reduce barriers to trade and create a larger market for African goods and services. But differences in infrastructure, production capacity and trade rules continue to limit the movement of goods between many African economies.

Stronger bilateral agreements can help address some of those obstacles, particularly when they lead to practical arrangements for businesses, transport operators and investors. For Tanzania and Angola, the immediate measure of progress will be whether the visit produces concrete agreements, follow-up mechanisms and projects that move beyond diplomatic declarations.

The visit is scheduled to conclude on October 30, when Lourenço is expected to attend the Government City inauguration in Dodoma before returning to Angola. The outcome of the official talks and the details of any agreements signed will provide a clearer indication of the direction the two governments intend to take.



DRC Praises U.S. Sanctions on Rwanda, Calls for M23 Support to End

BY ANNA FARAJA · 29 OCT 2026

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has publicly thanked United States Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent after the United States imposed sanctions on Rwanda's Ministry of Defence and a Rwandan financial institution accused of helping facilitate support for the M23 armed group operating in eastern Congo.

In a statement shared on social media on October 28, the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the United States welcomed the measures, describing them as a sign that violations of the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity must carry consequences. The embassy called for Rwanda to end its support for M23 and withdraw its troops from Congolese territory.

The diplomatic response followed an announcement by the US Department of the Treasury that its Office of Foreign Assets Control had designated Rwanda's Ministry of Defence and Zigama Credit and Savings Society under US sanctions rules. Bessent said the measures were intended to hold Rwanda accountable for commitments made under the peace agreement signed by the Congolese and Rwandan presidents in Washington in December 2025.

"Rwanda must halt its support for M23 and withdraw its troops from eastern DRC," Bessent said in announcing the decision.

The sanctions mark another step in Washington's effort to pressure Kigali over the conflict in eastern Congo, where M23 and its political-military alliance have seized territory and maintained control over important population centres and mineral-producing areas. Fighting has continued despite diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.

The Treasury Department accused Rwanda's Ministry of Defence of directing the deployment of thousands of Rwanda Defence Force troops in North and South Kivu provinces, where they allegedly operated alongside M23 fighters and provided military equipment, supplies, logistical assistance and training. The department also said Rwandan forces had introduced surface-to-air missile systems and electronic jamming equipment into the conflict zone, creating potential risks for civilian aviation.

Rwanda has repeatedly denied supporting M23. Kigali has also argued that its security concerns, particularly the presence of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, known as the FDLR, must be addressed as part of efforts to resolve the conflict. The allegations underlying the latest sanctions are Washington's official findings and should be distinguished from claims independently established through a judicial process.

The second target, Zigama Credit and Savings Society, is a Rwandan financial institution serving members of the country's security services. According to the US Treasury, the institution facilitated payments for weapons, ammunition and other military equipment intended for the Rwanda Defence Force. Washington also alleged that it enabled the movement of gold from territory controlled by M23 in eastern Congo to Kigali and handled financial transactions connected to M23 and the Congo River Alliance, the group's political-military wing.

The US designation blocks property and financial interests belonging to the sanctioned entities that are within the United States or under the possession or control of US persons. It also generally prohibits US persons from conducting transactions involving the designated parties unless an applicable exemption or licence allows them. The restrictions may affect financial institutions and other businesses that conduct transactions with the sanctioned entities.

For Kinshasa, the announcement provides a fresh diplomatic development in its effort to secure international pressure on Rwanda over the conflict. The Congolese government has repeatedly accused its neighbour of backing M23 and violating the country's sovereignty. By publicly thanking Bessent and the Treasury Department, the Congolese embassy signalled its support for Washington's latest action and

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reinforced its demand that the commitments made under the peace agreement be implemented.

The Washington Accords were signed on December 4, 2025, by Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame, with US President Donald Trump participating in the diplomatic initiative. The agreement was intended to support an end to the conflict while expanding economic cooperation, trade and investment across the Great Lakes region.

However, the agreement has not stopped the fighting. M23 has continued to hold substantial territory in eastern Congo, including areas around the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu, which it captured during its major advance in early 2025. The continuing violence has contributed to displacement and insecurity in communities across North and South Kivu.

The United States had already imposed sanctions on the Rwanda Defence Force and four senior Rwandan military officials in March 2026, accusing them of supporting M23. Washington has also targeted individuals and networks it says contribute to the armed group's operations and the movement of minerals from conflict-affected areas.

The latest measures therefore extend an existing sanctions campaign rather than represent the first US action against Rwanda's military establishment. By targeting the Ministry of Defence itself and a financial institution, Washington is seeking to restrict alleged institutional and financial channels supporting the military and the armed group.

The conflict also has an economic dimension. Eastern Congo contains substantial deposits of minerals used in electronics and other industries, including coltan and gold. Control over mining areas and the routes used to transport minerals has become an important part of the wider dispute. The US Treasury has alleged that minerals from areas controlled by M23 enter supply chains through Rwanda, an accusation Kigali disputes.

These concerns have complicated efforts to combine security arrangements with regional economic integration. The Washington Accords envisaged greater trade and investment across the region, but continued fighting and competing accusations have raised questions about whether the security commitments needed to support that economic framework are being fulfilled.

The Congolese embassy's statement adds to the diplomatic pressure on Rwanda, but sanctions alone do not guarantee an end to hostilities. Their effect will depend partly on how effectively financial restrictions are enforced, whether they alter the behaviour of the parties involved and whether diplomatic efforts can secure verifiable changes on the ground.

The next challenge for Washington and regional mediators will be to translate the new measures into progress towards a lasting ceasefire, the withdrawal of forces where required under the agreements, and protection for civilians living in conflict-affected areas. The DRC has made clear that it wants the latest action to be followed by full compliance with the Washington Accords.

For now, the public exchange illustrates the divide between Kinshasa and Kigali over the conflict and the United States' continued role in trying to resolve it. The DRC has welcomed the sanctions as a step towards accountability, while Rwanda's longstanding denial of support for M23 remains central to the dispute. Whether the measures lead to a change in military activity or renewed diplomatic progress will be a key test of the latest US intervention.



Harry Kane's Bayern Munich to Open Kenya's New National Stadium in Nairobi

BY JOSEPHS QUARTZY · 29 OCT 2026

Kenya will open the doors of its new national stadium with a high-profile European football meeting after German giants Bayern Munich confirmed they will face Dutch side Ajax Amsterdam in Nairobi on January 5, 2027.

The match will inaugurate the Raila Odinga International Stadium at Talanta Sports City, a new 60,000-seat facility built as part of Kenya's preparations to co-host the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) alongside Tanzania and Uganda. Both clubs have confirmed their participation, turning the stadium's opening into an international football event months before the continental tournament begins.

Bayern announced the fixture on Tuesday, describing the Nairobi trip as a special way to begin the new year. Ajax also confirmed that it had accepted the invitation to play the opening match, with the Amsterdam club describing the occasion as an honour.

The meeting brings together two of European football's most recognisable clubs. Bayern have won the European Cup or UEFA Champions League six times, while Ajax have lifted the trophy four times. Their combined record of 10 titles gives the occasion considerable pedigree, even though the January fixture is expected to be a friendly rather than a competitive European match.

For Kenyan supporters, the game will offer an opportunity to watch two established European sides in person without travelling abroad. It will also give international audiences a first major football occasion at a stadium that Kenya hopes will become one of the centrepieces of its sporting infrastructure.

The fixture carries particular significance for Bayern, who are scheduled to visit Kenya for the first time. The club has a large following across Africa and said the trip would allow supporters to experience the team first-hand while strengthening its relationship with the continent.

Bayern board member for marketing and sales Rouven Kasper said the club saw the event as a chance to build closer ties with African supporters and raise the profile of German football. The club has traditionally organised international tours in regions including North America and Asia, and the Nairobi match offers another opportunity to expand its reach.

The choice of Ajax also gives the occasion a strong football identity. The Dutch club is known internationally for its youth development system and history of producing players who have gone on to play for major teams across Europe. Ajax said the match would also form part of its preparations for the second half of the season.

The clubs last met in the UEFA Champions League group stage in December 2018, when they played out a dramatic 3–3 draw. The teams have a relatively balanced record in their competitive meetings, making the Nairobi encounter an interesting reunion for supporters familiar with their European history. However, the match will be played in a different setting, with the stadium opening and Kenya's preparations for AFCON providing the main occasion.

The venue itself is central to the event. The Raila Odinga International Stadium is part of Talanta Sports City in Nairobi and has been developed to provide Kenya with a modern facility capable of hosting major international football. The stadium is planned to serve as one of the venues for AFCON 2027, which will be the first edition of the tournament hosted jointly by three countries.

The stadium's name honours Raila Odinga, Kenya's former prime minister and a prominent figure in the country's political history. The naming also gives the opening an additional national dimension, linking a major new sporting facility to one of Kenya's most influential public figures.

President William Ruto has presented the Bayern-Ajax fixture as a statement of Kenya's ambition to host major international sporting events. The government has said the opening will be supported through corporate partnerships and a commercial model intended to help the facility generate revenue and attract investment.

That ambition will be judged on more than the attendance at one football match. A stadium of this size requires effective management, regular events, reliable transport arrangements and the ability to generate income after the opening ceremony. Hosting two internationally recognised clubs provides a high-profile start, but the longer-term test will be whether the facility can sustain activity and contribute to Kenyan sport.

The timing is also important for East Africa. AFCON 2027 will be co-hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda under the regional Pamoja initiative. The tournament is expected to bring national teams, officials, media and supporters from across Africa, while creating opportunities for tourism, hospitality, transport and other businesses. It will also test whether the three countries can coordinate the facilities and services needed for a major continental competition.

For Tanzania and Uganda, the Nairobi match is a reminder that preparations for AFCON are becoming increasingly visible across the region. The tournament is a shared undertaking, and the quality of stadiums, transport links, accommodation and event management in each host country will contribute to the overall experience for visiting teams and fans.

Kenya, meanwhile, will have an early opportunity to test its ability to stage a major football occasion before AFCON begins. The Bayern-Ajax match is not a substitute for the demands of a full tournament, but it can provide practical experience in crowd management, media operations, security and stadium logistics. The event will also place Nairobi before an international audience at a time when the

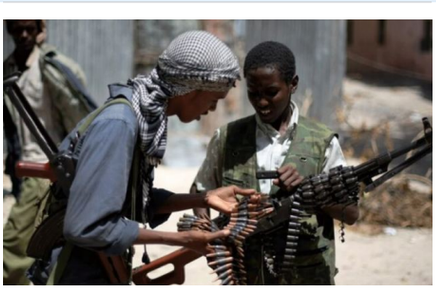
country is seeking to demonstrate its readiness to welcome football supporters from around the world.

Interest in the match is likely to extend beyond Kenya, given Bayern's substantial international fan base and Ajax's long-standing reputation. The fixture could attract visitors from neighbouring countries, including Tanzania and Uganda, although the eventual number of travelling supporters will depend on ticket availability, travel costs and other arrangements.

Tickets are scheduled to go on sale on November 5 through the official Talanta Sports City website. Further information about ticket categories, prices and match-day arrangements is expected to be released by the organisers. Supporters should check the official platform for confirmed details before making travel plans.

The January 5 meeting will therefore serve two purposes: it will bring two major European clubs to Nairobi and provide a public test of Kenya's new stadium ahead of AFCON 2027. Its importance will ultimately depend not only on the teams taking the field, but also on whether the event helps establish the facility as a lasting home for football and other major sporting occasions in the region.

For East African football, the match offers a rare chance to see Bayern Munich and Ajax in the region while attention turns towards a continental tournament that Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda will host together. The stadium's opening will be one day; the bigger challenge will be turning that attention into lasting investment, stronger football infrastructure and a successful AFCON in 2027.



Somalia Says 75 Al-Shabaab Fighters Killed as Reports Emerge of Heavy Army Losses

BY ANNA FARAJA · 27 OCT 2026

Somalia's Ministry of Defence says government forces killed approximately 75 Al-Shabaab fighters and wounded another 56 during several hours of fighting in the Jameeca area of Buurhakaba district, in the country's Bay region. But the government's account has been accompanied by reports of heavy casualties among Somali troops, leaving the full cost of the battle unclear.

The Somali National Armed Forces launched the assault on October 26 as part of Operation Banooda, a military campaign targeting Al-Shabaab positions in southern Somalia. In a statement released on Tuesday, October 27, the Ministry of Defence said the fighting took place across several locations and formed part of continuing efforts to weaken the militant group, destroy its positions and prevent it from regrouping.

The ministry said Al-Shabaab fighters used vehicles loaded with explosives to attack Somali military vehicles during the engagement, damaging some of them. It did not disclose how many government soldiers had been killed or wounded, nor did it provide a detailed breakdown of the military equipment damaged.

A report by Reuters on Tuesday cited two Somali soldiers who said dozens of government troops had died in the battle. One soldier, identified as Ahmed, told the news agency that he had helped transport 40 dead soldiers and more than 100 wounded personnel to hospitals in Mogadishu. Another soldier, Farah, said vehicle-borne explosives had destroyed five military vehicles and estimated that dozens of troops had been killed in the blasts.

The accounts from the soldiers have not established a definitive casualty total, and the figures could not be independently verified. However, they raise serious questions about the scale of the government's losses in an engagement that the Defence Ministry described primarily in terms of casualties inflicted on Al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab also claimed that its fighters had inflicted heavy losses on government forces. The group's claims have not been independently confirmed. As with the government's figures, the conflicting accounts should be treated cautiously while further information about the battle remains unavailable.

The discrepancy is significant because the Ministry of Defence's statement gave precise figures for the number of militants killed and wounded while omitting losses among the government forces involved. Without independently verified figures from both sides, the overall military outcome cannot be fully assessed from the official statement alone.

The battle took place in a strategically important part of southern Somalia, where government forces have been conducting operations along routes linking the capital, Mogadishu, with Baidoa and other communities in the southwest. The wider Bay region has experienced prolonged insecurity, with Al-Shabaab maintaining a presence in rural areas and repeatedly clashing with Somali forces.

Operation Banooda began with reported fighting near Leego on October 24. The Ministry of Defence said government troops, including Danab special forces, killed seven Al-Shabaab fighters in that initial engagement and seized weapons. Those claims, too, could not be independently verified. The campaign has since moved into a broader confrontation around the route towards Buurhakaba.

Buurhakaba is important because of its position along the Mogadishu–Baidoa corridor, a route used for the movement of people, goods and security forces. Insecurity along the road has repeatedly complicated government operations and exposed military convoys to ambushes and explosive attacks. Fighting in the area therefore carries implications beyond the immediate positions targeted by either side.

The latest battle is unfolding amid wider political and security tensions in Somalia's South West State. Regional forces aligned with former South West State president Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen have been involved in a separate confrontation with federal-aligned forces over control of territory and political authority. Garowe Online reported that federal troops advanced toward Buurhakaba amid that dispute, although the precise relationship between the political confrontation and individual military decisions remains contested.

The overlapping pressures create a difficult environment for Somalia's security forces. While the federal government continues to pursue Al-Shabaab, it must also contend with political divisions and armed confrontations involving forces opposed to the authorities in Mogadishu. Such divisions risk complicating military planning and diverting resources from the long-running campaign against the militant group.

Al-Shabaab has fought the Somali government for nearly two decades and continues to carry out attacks against security forces and civilians. The group seeks to overthrow the federal government and impose its own strict interpretation of Islamic law. Somali forces, supported at different times by international partners and African Union missions, have made territorial gains against the group, but maintaining control over contested areas has remained a persistent challenge.

Military operations are only one part of that challenge. Even where government forces remove fighters from a position, lasting security depends on whether authorities can maintain a presence, protect roads and settlements, and prevent militants from returning. Communities affected by repeated fighting also face risks of displacement and disruption to trade and access to essential services.

The Ministry of Defence said Operation Banooda would continue despite attacks by Al-Shabaab and warned that the campaign would also target those providing the group with support or shelter. The ministry and the army command praised the troops involved and said the wider objective was to reduce the group's military capabilities and improve security across Somalia.

The government's stated losses inflicted on Al-Shabaab would represent a significant blow if independently confirmed. But the reported deaths among Somali troops underline the cost of the fighting and the uncertainty surrounding the latest engagement. Until more reliable casualty figures and details of the battle become available, the government's announcement should be understood as its account of the operation rather than a complete, independently verified assessment of the outcome.

For Somalia, the immediate question is not only how many fighters were killed in Jameeca, but whether Operation Banooda can achieve its stated objectives without further heavy losses and whether any gains can be held after the fighting ends. The latest battle demonstrates that the campaign in the Bay region remains dangerous, with both the government's military objectives and the human cost still unfolding.

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Harry Kane Wins 2026 Ballon d'Or as Mbappé's Wait Continues and Yamal Makes History

BY JOSEPHS QUARTZY · 27 OCT 2026

Harry Kane has won the 2026 Ballon d'Or after a remarkable season for Bayern Munich and England, finally receiving football's most prestigious individual award after years of extraordinary goalscoring without a major senior team trophy. His victory carries a particularly powerful message: a player can spend much of his career collecting personal records without winning silverware, then find the missing piece at an age when many footballers are already approaching the end of their best years.

The England captain scored 61 goals in 51 appearances for Bayern across all competitions during the 2025/26 season, helping the German club win the Bundesliga and the DFB-Pokal. He also scored six goals for England at the 2026 World Cup as the national team reached the semi-finals. Those achievements helped him finish ahead of leading contenders including Kylian Mbappé and Barcelona teenager Lamine Yamal.

Kane's triumph is the first time an Englishman has won the Ballon d'Or since Michael Owen in 2001. But the most compelling part of his story is not simply that he has become the latest name on the award's distinguished list. It is how long he had to wait for the kind of team success that many footballers experience much earlier in their careers.

When Kane left Tottenham Hotspur for Bayern Munich in August 2023, he was already one of the most accomplished strikers in world football. He had become Tottenham's all-time leading scorer with 280 goals in all competitions and had established himself as England's record goalscorer, surpassing Wayne Rooney's international tally in March 2023.

Yet his trophy cabinet did not reflect his individual achievements. Kane had finished as a Premier League top scorer three times, reached the Champions League final with Tottenham in 2019 and played in European Championship finals with England in 2021 and 2024. Each time, however, the ultimate team prize slipped away. Tottenham lost the Champions League final to Liverpool, while England were beaten by Italy and Spain in the European Championship finals.

For a striker whose career was defined by goals, records and consistent performances at the highest level, the absence of a major senior team trophy became an increasingly prominent part of his story. Kane was widely recognised as one of the best forwards of his generation, but he had not yet experienced the feeling of finishing a season as a major trophy winner.

His move to Bayern Munich was therefore about more than changing clubs or leagues. At 30, Kane left the Premier League, where he had spent almost his entire senior career, to join a club accustomed to winning domestic titles and competing deep into the Champions League. It was a major decision for a player who had already established himself as a legend at his former club but wanted the team honours that had eluded him.

The first season did not deliver the expected breakthrough. Bayern finished third in the Bundesliga in 2023/24, ending an extraordinary run of 11 consecutive league titles. Kane nevertheless scored 36 league goals, winning the Bundesliga scoring title and the European Golden Shoe. His individual numbers were exceptional, but the season ended with the same uncomfortable contrast that had followed him at Tottenham: personal success without a major team trophy.

The breakthrough finally arrived in 2025. Kane was 31 when Bayern secured the 2024/25 Bundesliga title, giving him the first major senior team trophy of his career after years of near misses and individual accolades. The moment mattered because it was not simply another medal added to a long list. It removed the one major criticism that had followed an otherwise outstanding career.

For many players, reaching their early thirties brings questions about declining speed, recovery and how many peak seasons remain. Kane instead entered a new phase of his career, continuing to score at an extraordinary rate and adding more honours. Bayern's domestic success in 2025 gave him a foundation; the 2025/26 campaign elevated him further, with the Bundesliga and German Cup double followed by his first Ballon d'Or.

There is an important distinction between saying Kane had achieved nothing before Bayern and recognising what he had accomplished. He had already broken records for club and country, won individual scoring awards and represented England at major international tournaments. What he lacked was a major senior team trophy. His story shows how a player can be regarded as elite for years while still being judged against a team achievement that depends on far more than his own performance.

That distinction also makes Kane's Ballon d'Or victory an interesting contrast with the careers of other football greats. Several players have won multiple league titles, domestic cups and Champions League trophies without ever receiving the Ballon d'Or. Andrés Iniesta, for example, won the World Cup, European Championships and numerous titles with Barcelona, yet never won the award. Xavi Hernández, another central figure in Barcelona and Spain's trophy-laden era, also finished his career without claiming it.

Kane's case demonstrates that team trophies and individual awards do not always arrive together. Winning a league title can depend on a squad's consistency over an entire season, while the Ballon d'Or asks voters to decide which individual player has made the strongest overall case. Some players collect medals without winning the individual prize; others dominate individually for years before the right combination of performances, trophies and timing brings both within reach.

Kane's 2026 season offered that combination. His 61 goals for Bayern across all competitions made him one of the most productive players in Europe, while the club's domestic double gave those numbers greater weight. At the World Cup, he scored six times for England as the team reached the semi-finals. His contribution was not limited to club football, and his performances on the international stage strengthened his case in a year when the tournament carried enormous importance in the award debate.

Mbappé, meanwhile, experienced another Ballon d'Or disappointment despite a prolific campaign. The Real Madrid forward scored 58 goals for club and country during the season and finished as the leading scorer in La Liga and the Champions League. He also claimed the World Cup Golden Boot with 10 goals. Those numbers would have made him a serious contender in almost any year, but Kane's combination of goals and team achievements ultimately proved decisive.

It would be wrong to describe Mbappé as a player who has never won anything. He was part of France's 2018 World Cup-winning team, has won domestic league titles and cups, and has already established himself among the most successful forwards of his generation. The award that remains missing from his collection is the Ballon d'Or itself.

At 27, Mbappé still has time to win it. But the competition for future editions is becoming more demanding. Yamal is already a major figure at Barcelona, while Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, Arda Güler and other emerging talents are building careers that could bring them into the conversation. Individual awards are difficult to predict years in advance, but the field of potential contenders is unlikely to become less competitive.

Yamal left the ceremony with a historic achievement of his own, winning the Young Talent of the Year award for the third consecutive year. At just 19, the Barcelona winger has made the prize his own across three editions, having won it in 2024 and 2025 as well. His latest recognition followed another influential season in which he helped Barcelona win La Liga and the Spanish Super Cup.

Yamal's acceptance speech was notable for his decision to recognise a teammate rather than focus entirely on his own success. He said he believed Barcelona and Spain colleague Pau Cubarsí deserved the young-player award because of his performances for club and country. The comment drew attention to the contribution of a defender whose work can be less visible than the goals and assists that attract headlines.

Cubarsí played a significant role in Spain's 2026 World Cup campaign and received FIFA's Young Player Award at the tournament. His performances highlighted the importance of defensive organisation and composure in a team that reached the top of international football. Yamal's praise was a reminder that the development of Barcelona and Spain's next generation is not being driven by attacking talent alone.

The two teenagers represent different forms of influence. Yamal can change a game with dribbling, chance creation and finishing; Cubarsí can help determine a match by reading danger, organising the defence and building attacks from the back. Their recognition suggests that the next era of Spanish football may be shaped by a generation of players who are already contributing at the highest level.

Yamal's third consecutive young-player award is particularly striking because he remains eligible for future editions. However, his next challenge will be to sustain his performances

and turn his individual promise into continued success with Barcelona and Spain. The main Ballon d'Or is a different challenge, one that typically requires not only outstanding individual displays but also a season that stands above those of his rivals.

For Kane, the achievement is the culmination of a long journey rather than the beginning of one. He spent years being measured by his scoring records while the lack of a major trophy followed him from Tottenham into international football. At Bayern, the long-awaited breakthrough arrived at 31, and two seasons of domestic success have now been followed by the Ballon d'Or.

His career offers a useful reminder that football does not always reward players in a straight line. Some win major honours early, others spend years coming close, and a select few finally find the right combination of club, teammates and opportunity later in their careers. Kane's story is not that age stopped mattering; it is that reaching 30 did not mean his most important achievements were behind him.

Mbappé's continued wait for the Ballon d'Or, Yamal's record third young-player award and Cubarsí's World Cup recognition all tell different success stories. One is still pursuing a missing individual honour, another is building a record before reaching his twenties, and a third is earning recognition for work that can be overlooked when attention focuses on goals.

Kane now joins the Ballon d'Or winners after a season that delivered both individual excellence and major team honours. For a striker who once had almost every personal record he could want but no major senior trophy, the 2025 Bundesliga title changed the story. The 2026 Ballon d'Or has now taken it to another level.



Nine for Simba, Eight for Yanga: Tanzania's Giants Make Light Work of CAF Qualifiers

BY JOSEPHS QUARTZY · 26 OCT 2026

Tanzania's two biggest football clubs have delivered the kind of continental performance their supporters will want to see more often. Simba Sports Club and Young Africans Sports Club, popularly known as Yanga, have both qualified for the group stage of the 2026/27 CAF Champions League after overwhelming their opponents across two-legged preliminary-round ties, scoring 17 goals between them and confirming Tanzania's presence among Africa's leading club sides.

Simba completed their qualification on Sunday, October 25, with a 3-0 victory over Equatorial Guinea's 15 de Agosto, taking the tie 9-1 on aggregate. Yanga had secured their place four days earlier, defeating Madagascar's CFFA 4-1 in the return match to complete an 8-1 aggregate victory. The results mean Tanzania will have two representatives in the 16-team group stage of Africa's premier club competition.

The scores were impressive, but the manner in which both clubs handled their ties also deserves attention. Neither side left qualification hanging on a late goal or a narrow aggregate advantage. They established control early, scored freely and returned for their second legs with enough room to manage the ties without allowing their opponents a realistic route back into contention.

Yanga were first to book their place. Their campaign against CFFA began with a 4-0 victory in the opening leg on October 17. Cheikh Touré, Albert Kangwanda, Mudathir Yahya and Maxi Nzengeli scored as Yanga built a commanding lead. Both matches were played in Dar es Salaam after the clubs agreed to stage the two fixtures there, meaning the first match was not played in Madagascar.

That agreement did not change the job Yanga had to complete, and the Tanzanian side returned to the Azam Complex on October 21 determined to finish it. Ibrahim Kazimoto opened the scoring in the 27th minute, giving Yanga a five-goal aggregate advantage before half-time. Selemani Mwalimu then struck twice in quick succession after the break, scoring in the 49th and 53rd minutes to put the home side 3-0 ahead on the night.

CFFA managed to score in the 75th minute, briefly interrupting Yanga's clean sheet in the tie, but the visitors remained far behind on aggregate. Juma Issa Abushiri scored Yanga's fourth goal in the 82nd minute to complete the 4-1 win and an 8-1 overall triumph.

The performance was notable for the range of players who contributed across the two matches. Four different players scored in the first leg, while Kazimoto, Mwalimu and Abushiri found the net in the second. That spread of goals offers encouragement to a team preparing for opponents who will be considerably more difficult to break down in the group stage.

Simba followed with an equally emphatic display, although their route to qualification featured a different challenge. They had already put themselves in a strong position during the first preliminary round, eliminating Malawi's Mighty Wanderers 7-1 on aggregate. Their second-round tie against 15 de Agosto then produced another commanding result.

In the first leg on October 21, Simba won 6-1. Nathaniel Chilambo opened the scoring late in the first half before Elie Mpanzu, Ibrahim Doumbia, Keletso Makgalwa and Anicet Oura helped turn the match into a heavy defeat for the Equatorial Guinea side. Doumbia scored twice, including late in the match, while 15 de Agosto managed only a stoppage-time consolation.

The five-goal advantage left Simba in a comfortable position ahead of Sunday's return match in Dar es Salaam. The second leg was goalless at half-time, but Simba found their rhythm after the break. Oura opened the scoring in the 57th minute, Mpanzu added another in the 69th, and Makgalwa completed the 3-0 victory in the 78th minute.

Simba's 9-1 aggregate result was the product of sustained attacking output across both legs rather than one exceptional afternoon. Their goals came from several players, and the return leg showed they could remain patient when the breakthrough did not arrive immediately. For head coach Steve Barker, the next task is to preserve that attacking threat while ensuring the team is prepared for the different demands of the group stage.

For both clubs, these results carry meaning beyond the rivalry that dominates Tanzanian domestic football. Simba and Yanga have enormous support bases, and their continental performances attract attention from fans across Tanzania and beyond. When either side does well in Africa, the result becomes part of a wider conversation about the standard of the country's football, the strength of its league and its ability to compete against clubs with long histories in continental competition.

Having both teams in the Champions League group stage also gives Tanzania two opportunities to collect important results against some of the continent's strongest sides. It means more exposure for Tanzanian players, more chances to demonstrate the quality of the domestic game and a bigger platform for the clubs to attract supporters and commercial interest. Strong performances can also help raise expectations among young players who want to compete at the highest level of African club football.

The significance extends to East Africa, where clubs from the region have long sought to turn strong local support into sustained success on the continental stage. Simba and Yanga's qualification gives the region two prominent teams to follow in the Champions League, and their performances can help challenge the assumption that East African clubs are merely participants when they reach this level.

However, two heavy aggregate victories do not automatically make either club a contender for the trophy. Preliminary rounds can reveal attacking confidence and squad depth, but the group stage brings a different level of pressure. The opponents are more experienced, the margins are smaller, and a team that dominates an early qualifying tie may find itself punished for defensive mistakes against a stronger attack.

For Simba, maintaining the balance between forward play and defensive organisation will be crucial. Scoring nine goals in two matches is an excellent return, but the one goal conceded against 15 de Agosto is also a reminder that even comfortable ties require concentration. Yanga will face the same challenge: their eight goals against CFFA demonstrate attacking quality, but they will need to remain disciplined when they meet teams capable of creating more sustained pressure.

Consistency will matter as much as individual brilliance. The clubs must manage injuries, maintain the fitness of key players and use their squads effectively while continuing to compete in domestic football. Their supporters will naturally hope that the group-stage campaign brings more than qualification alone. After reaching this stage, the next measure of progress will be how well each side performs against the continent's established names.

Tanzania's wider continental campaign has also received a boost from Azam FC, who qualified for the CAF Confederation Cup group stage after eliminating Egypt's ZED FC 2-1 on aggregate. That gives the country another club competing in a major African competition and adds to the positive picture created by Simba and Yanga. The challenge now is to turn these qualification results into consistent performances once the group matches begin.

For now, Simba and Yanga have given Tanzanian football a strong reason to celebrate. One club finished its tie with a 9-1 aggregate victory; the other secured an 8-1 win. Both advanced without needing a dramatic comeback,

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and both will enter the next phase with confidence built on goals, results and the contribution of several players.

The rivalry between Simba and Yanga will continue to shape football conversations at home, but in the Champions League group stage they will also share a responsibility: representing Tanzania against the best clubs on the continent. Their qualifying performances have opened the door. What they do once the group-stage competition begins will show whether this scoring form can become a deeper and more lasting achievement for Tanzanian and East African football.



Abiy's Message of Mutual Benefit Meets Scepticism Over Ethiopia's Sea Access Plans

BY SWT NEWS DESK · 25 OCT 2026

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has renewed his argument that access to the sea is essential to his country's future, promising to pursue reliable maritime routes through dialogue and mutual benefit. But reactions to his latest remarks show that the issue remains deeply contested, with some critics questioning whether Ethiopia's stated need for access could eventually become a challenge to the sovereignty of neighbouring coastal states.

Speaking at the 12th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa in Bahir Dar on October 23, Abiy said Ethiopia's population of more than 130 million made access to the sea an existential concern. He argued that a country whose international trade must pass through other states faces long-term questions about security, sovereignty and the opportunities available to future generations.

"Imagine planning for generations ahead, when every road to the world must pass through other countries," he said, according to the Ethiopian News Agency. Abiy added that his government would continue to persuade through dialogue and mutual benefit, describing reliable transport corridors as an issue shared by countries across Africa.

The prime minister also connected maritime access to wider regional economic cooperation, arguing that efficient corridors could link producers to markets, help small traders enter the formal economy and support trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area. His message presented the issue as more than a national ambition: Ethiopia, he suggested, needs dependable routes to international markets, while neighbouring countries could benefit from the trade and infrastructure associated with those routes.

Yet the reaction to the speech on social media was far from uniformly supportive. In the comments shared on X, several users challenged the distinction between obtaining commercial access to a port and seeking sovereign control over coastal territory. Others argued that Ethiopia's population and economic needs could not, by themselves, justify demands that would compromise another country's territorial integrity.

One user, Nora, argued that commercial access was not the same as sovereign ownership and warned against demands for sovereign access or naval bases on another nation's territory. Another account, Had elibi, challenged Abiy to explain in English what the user claimed he was telling Amharic-speaking audiences about acquiring another country's coastline by force. These were individual social media comments, not independently verified accounts of what Abiy has said in other speeches, but they illustrate the distrust surrounding the issue.

Other commenters invoked international law, arguing that Ethiopia's landlocked status does not give it a right to take territory from a coastal neighbour. Some also questioned why a country seeking economic security should pursue a strategy that risks worsening relations across the Horn of Africa.

The dispute is not simply about whether Ethiopia should have access to international shipping. Ethiopia lost its coastline when Eritrea became independent in 1993 and has since relied heavily on neighbouring countries, particularly Djibouti, for maritime trade. Dependence on routes passing through another state creates practical concerns involving transport costs, infrastructure, border procedures and the stability of commercial arrangements.

For Ethiopia, securing reliable access is therefore a genuine economic and strategic concern. The challenge is how to achieve it without turning a need for trade connectivity into a dispute over borders, military access or political control.

International law recognises the position of landlocked countries. Part X of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides for access to and from the sea and freedom of transit through other states. However, Article 125 says the terms and arrangements must be agreed between landlocked and transit states. It also makes clear that transit states retain sovereignty over their territory and may protect their legitimate interests.

That distinction lies at the centre of the current debate. Ethiopia can negotiate commercial port access, transport corridors, logistics facilities and other arrangements that improve its access to global markets. Those arrangements do not automatically give it sovereignty over a port, coastline or naval facility located in another country. Any such rights would depend on an agreement with the state concerned and the terms of that agreement.

The regional atmosphere makes those distinctions particularly important. On October 4, Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan issued a joint declaration emphasising the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and asserting that governance of the Red Sea is the responsibility of the countries bordering it. The statement came amid renewed regional concern over Ethiopia's push for a maritime outlet.

The four countries' position does not erase Ethiopia's economic interests, but it demonstrates that coastal states view the question through their own security concerns. For Eritrea and Somalia in particular, any suggestion that access might extend to sovereign control or a military presence on their territory is likely to be a sensitive issue.

Abiy has repeatedly presented his government's approach as one based on negotiation rather than war. In his latest speech, he again referred to dialogue and mutual benefit. That is an important part of Ethiopia's stated position, although regional concerns have not disappeared simply because the government says it prefers a negotiated solution.

The comments shared online also reveal a communication problem. While Ethiopia frames sea access as a question of national survival, critics hear language that they fear could be used to justify pressure on neighbouring countries. Neither a social media post nor a speech alone establishes that military action is planned, but the lack of trust means that even statements about national necessity can be interpreted through the region's wider security tensions.

For Ethiopia, the task is to turn its maritime ambitions into concrete arrangements that can withstand scrutiny from its neighbours. That means making clear what kind of access it seeks, where the route would run, what legal arrangements would govern it and how the sovereignty of the coastal state would be protected. Transparent negotiations and mutually agreed commercial terms would give neighbouring governments more reason to view the proposal as an economic partnership rather than a territorial threat.

For coastal states, the challenge is to protect their sovereignty while recognising the economic value of trade corridors that connect landlocked economies to ports. A workable arrangement could bring business and infrastructure investment to both sides. A confrontation over territory, however, could undermine the regional trade and stability that all the countries say they need.

Abiy's speech has therefore not settled the argument over Ethiopia's sea access. It has restated the country's position, but the response from critics shows that the central concern remains unresolved: whether Ethiopia's search for a reliable maritime route can be achieved through agreements that satisfy its economic needs while leaving the sovereignty of its neighbours unquestioned.



Laftagareen Accuses Türkiye of Airstrikes Against Civilians in New Somalia Appeal

BY ANNA FARAJA · 24 OCT 2026

Former Southwest State president Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen has accused Türkiye of carrying out air operations against civilians in southwestern Somalia, calling on the United Nations, African Union and other international partners to press for an end to the alleged attacks and an independent investigation.

In an open letter dated October 24, Laftagareen's office said civilians had been

killed and injured and homes, livestock and farmland destroyed in areas including Wajid and Baidoa, in the Bay and Bakool regions. The letter alleges that Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones and F-16 fighter aircraft were involved in the attacks, but the claims have not been independently verified.

The statement, issued in the name of the Office of the President of Southwest State of Somalia, was addressed to the international community and the Somali people. It accuses Türkiye and Somalia's federal leadership of responsibility for the alleged operations and calls for those responsible to be held accountable under international law.

Laftagareen's office argues that the attacks cannot be justified as counterterrorism operations against al-Shabaab, the al-Qaeda-linked militant group fighting Somalia's federal government. Instead, it alleges that civilian communities and farms have been targeted amid the wider political confrontation between Laftagareen's camp and the government in Mogadishu.

The letter calls on the Turkish government to immediately halt all air operations against civilians in Southwest State and respect Somalia's sovereignty. It also urges the United Nations, African Union, European Union, United States and other international partners to use diplomatic pressure to secure compliance, while asking human rights organisations and local and international media to document the alleged attacks.

The accusations place Türkiye's expanding security partnership with Somalia under renewed scrutiny. Ankara has become one of Mogadishu's most important international partners, providing military training and other security assistance as Somalia continues its campaign against al-Shabaab. Türkiye also maintains broader economic and strategic interests in the country.

However, the allegations in Laftagareen's letter remain disputed and should not be treated as established findings. Shabelle Media Network reported on October 24 that the claims concerning the latest alleged air operations could not be independently verified. Previous reporting by Hiiraan Online also found no independently verified evidence establishing that Turkish F-16 aircraft were used in attacks against Laftagareen-aligned forces.

A separate incident in Doolow, in Somalia's Gedo region, has become part of the dispute. Laftagareen's camp previously accused Türkiye and Somalia's federal government of involvement in an attack on General Mahad Abdirahman Aden, commonly known as General Shub. Somalia's federal government denied carrying out an airstrike and said preliminary information indicated that explosives being handled inside the compound caused the blast. The government announced that the incident would be investigated, but the competing accounts have not established who was responsible.

The latest letter also links the alleged air operations to a broader argument over Somalia's political direction and control of its resources. Laftagareen criticised agreements between Mogadishu and Ankara concerning fishing and potential oil and gas resources, accusing the Turkish government of pursuing its own interests. The letter did not provide independent evidence to substantiate its wider allegations about the agreements.

The dispute has developed from a prolonged confrontation over leadership, elections and constitutional changes in Southwest State. Federal forces took control of Baidoa, the regional capital, on March 30, 2026, after a political dispute between Laftagareen and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's government. Laftagareen subsequently resigned, but forces aligned with him have continued to challenge the authorities backed by Mogadishu.

The confrontation has involved repeated clashes and competing accusations over the role of al-Shabaab. The federal government has previously accused Laftagareen-aligned forces of links to the militant group, while Laftagareen and his allies have rejected such allegations and accused Mogadishu of using counterterrorism operations to weaken political opponents. These claims reflect the sharply divided accounts offered by the rival sides and require independent verification.

The consequences extend beyond the political leadership. Baidoa and the surrounding region are important centres for people displaced by Somalia's conflict and drought. Fighting that affects residential areas, roads and farmland risks disrupting access to essential services and livelihoods in communities already facing serious humanitarian pressures.

Laftagareen's October 24 appeal asks international actors to move beyond statements of concern and use diplomatic influence to stop what he describes as attacks on civilians. It also demands an independent investigation and accountability for those responsible. The letter does not announce a new investigation by an international body, nor does it establish that the alleged use of Turkish aircraft has been confirmed.

The latest appeal adds another dimension to Somalia's political crisis by directly challenging the role of one of the federal government's closest international partners. Whether it prompts a response from Ankara, Mogadishu or international organisations remains unclear. For now, the central allegations about the aircraft, the circumstances of the reported civilian deaths and the responsibility for the attacks remain unresolved.



Eastleigh Building Collapse: Rescue Efforts Face New Challenge as Questions Mount Over Safety

BY ANNA FARAJA · 23 OCT 2026

Rescue teams in Nairobi faced a difficult operation on Friday after a multi-storey building collapsed in the busy Eastleigh neighbourhood, with people feared trapped beneath the rubble and fresh questions emerging about how the structure was being used before construction was complete.

The building came down at about 1 p.m. on October 23 along Yusuf Haji Avenue, near 9th Street, in an area crowded with traders, workers, shoppers and residents. The collapse left a large mass of concrete and twisted steel, while emergency responders worked to determine whether anyone remained alive inside the wreckage.

One injured woman had been rescued and taken to hospital, according to police and local media reports. Police chief Issa Mohamud also said another person who had been heard calling for help later fell silent, raising concern among those involved in the search. Authorities had not established the full number of people trapped, injured or killed by the time of the latest reports.

The operation encountered a new difficulty later in the day. An update published by Kenyans.co.ke at around 6 p.m. said debris removal had been temporarily suspended after people believed to be trapped reportedly warned that the work was affecting their oxygen supply. Responders halted excavator operations while they considered how to continue without further endangering anyone who might still be alive beneath the collapsed structure.

The warning added urgency to an already complicated search. Heavy machinery is needed to move large sections of concrete, but rescuers must also avoid shifting debris in a way that could crush survivors or close the small spaces in which they may be breathing. Emergency teams, including specialised responders and sniffer dogs, were deployed as authorities tried to reach possible survivors.

A construction worker who escaped moments before the collapse told The Associated Press that he heard people screaming and saw colleagues rushing out after warnings that the building was coming down. The worker, Joseph Kaula, a plasterer who had been working on the fifth floor, said he feared some of his colleagues could be trapped in the basement.

The building's lower floors were reportedly being used for businesses, including an electronics shop, a butchery and a grocery, even as construction continued above them. That detail has become central to questions about the danger faced not only by construction workers but also by people who may have been shopping or working inside the premises when the structure collapsed.

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja said the building had received approval for construction from the county but did not have an occupation certificate. He said the ground-floor businesses had no authorisation to operate there while the building remained incomplete. Construction approval and permission to occupy a building are separate requirements; the existence of the former does not automatically mean a structure is ready for people to use.

Sakaja also criticised what he described as weak enforcement of building regulations, arguing that the penalties available for some violations were too small to deter developers. He cited a fine of 5,000 Kenyan shillings and said the county had sought stronger powers to handle cases involving breaches of construction rules.

The governor raised another concern about professional supervision, saying some developers allegedly dismiss architects, engineers or quantity surveyors after securing approval and then continue construction without the same level of oversight. He said the county had contacted professional bodies over the need to notify authorities when their members are removed from projects.

Those allegations have not yet established

what caused the Eastleigh building to collapse. Investigators will need to determine whether the structure was built according to its approved design, whether the materials and workmanship met the required standards, whether qualified professionals supervised the work and whether inspections were carried out properly. The building's construction records and approval documents are also likely to be important in establishing responsibility.

Police said action would be taken against anyone found responsible, including those involved in authorising or carrying out the construction. Authorities were also seeking the building's owner, who had reportedly not presented himself to police. The investigation is expected to examine both the circumstances of the collapse and the decisions that allowed parts of the unfinished structure to be occupied.

The number of people who may have been inside the building remained uncertain. A casual labourer told reporters that more than 70 people, including workers and people providing services at the site, might have been in the basement. That figure has not been independently verified and should not be treated as an official count of missing people.

The emergency response brought together several agencies, including the Kenya Defence Forces, police, the National Youth Service, the Kenya Red Cross and Nairobi County emergency teams. Police also urged members of the public to keep away from the scene so that rescuers could reach the rubble. Earlier, officers used tear gas to disperse crowds after onlookers obstructed access routes, complicating efforts to manage the area.

The collapse has renewed concern over construction safety in Nairobi, where rapid development has placed pressure on planning, inspection and enforcement systems. It also follows another building incident in the city earlier in October, when a structure formerly housing Club Avenida on Moi Avenue collapsed during planned demolition work, injuring four workers.

The two incidents involved different circumstances, and there is no evidence that they share the same cause. But the Eastleigh disaster raises a wider question for the authorities: whether the rules designed to keep buildings safe are being followed throughout construction, rather than simply at the point when a project receives approval.

For now, the immediate priority remains finding anyone who may still be trapped and establishing the extent of the loss. The cause of the collapse has not been confirmed, and the final number of casualties remains unknown. The answers will depend on the rescue operation, the investigation into the building's construction and the release of verified information by the authorities.



OPINION

Russia Wants a Bigger Place in Africa. What Is the Continent Getting in Return?

BY JOSEPHS QUARTZY · 31 OCT 2026

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When nearly 50 African countries send representatives to meet one of the world's most powerful leaders, the gathering deserves attention. When 22 African heads of state and government attend, alongside ministers, diplomats and business representatives, it becomes even more difficult to dismiss as an ordinary diplomatic event.

That was the scale of the Third Russia–Africa Summit, held in Moscow on October 28 and 29, where Russian President Vladimir Putin and African Union Chairperson Évariste Ndayishimiye, who is also Burundi's president, co-chaired discussions on the future of relations between Russia and the African continent.

The summit covered almost every major area in which African countries are seeking international cooperation: trade, investment, energy, agriculture, security, education, healthcare, technology, infrastructure and political representation. Participants adopted a 101-point joint declaration, a separate declaration on cooperation in the civilian use of artificial intelligence, and a Russia–Africa Partnership Forum Action Plan covering 2027–2029.

On paper, the agenda was ambitious. Russia presented itself as a partner willing to support African development, challenge what it describes as an unfair international order and build relationships outside the traditional Western-led system. African governments, meanwhile, came with their own priorities, including access to investment, technology, markets, energy and opportunities to develop industries at home.

But there is a question that deserves to remain at the centre of the conversation long after the photographs from the Kremlin have disappeared from social media: after three Russia–Africa summits, what has actually changed for African countries?

The first summit was held in Sochi in 2019, followed by the second in St Petersburg in 2023. Both gatherings produced declarations and promises of stronger cooperation. The Moscow meeting was another opportunity to move that relationship forward, but the continent should not measure its success by the number of leaders who attended, the language used in speeches or the length of the final declaration.

Diplomatic attendance demonstrates political interest. It does not, by itself, demonstrate economic progress.

Russia has a genuine place in Africa's international relationships. Its historical connections with liberation movements, its diplomatic engagement with African governments, its agricultural exports and its involvement in energy and security cooperation have helped Moscow maintain a presence on the continent. For countries seeking to diversify their international relationships, Russia is one of several potential partners.

However, the economic figures reveal a considerable gap between the political attention Moscow gives Africa and the scale of commercial relations between them.

Russia–Africa trade was estimated at approximately $27 billion in 2025. That figure represents a significant relationship, but it remains below the $40 billion trade target Putin announced in 2019. It is also much smaller than Africa's recorded trade with other major partners. Chatham House, in an assessment published shortly before the summit, put EU–Africa trade at approximately $395 billion and China–Africa trade at $348 billion in 2025.

The comparison does not mean African countries should abandon Russia or that trade

> *Both gatherings produced declarations and promises of stronger cooperation.*

with Europe and China automatically produces better outcomes. The figures do, however, show that Russia remains a relatively smaller economic partner for the continent despite its growing political and security engagement.

This is where the promises made in Moscow need to be examined more carefully. Russia has spoken about supporting industrialisation, developing infrastructure, expanding agricultural cooperation, investing in energy and helping African countries process their own mineral resources. These are priorities that African governments have been raising for years.

But the continent does not simply need more buyers for its raw materials or more suppliers of imported products. It needs partners willing to support the development of local industries, manufacturing capacity, research institutions, technology and skilled employment.

For example, an agreement to cooperate in mineral extraction is not necessarily a development breakthrough. The more important question is whether the country producing those minerals will also develop the capacity to process them, manufacture products from them and retain a greater share of the economic value.

The same applies to agriculture. Expanding trade in fertiliser, wheat and other agricultural products may help address immediate needs, but African countries also need investment in

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agricultural processing, storage, machinery, research and distribution. A partnership that helps a country produce more and depend less on imported finished goods would have a much longer-lasting impact than one measured only by the value of goods exchanged.

The final declaration adopted in Moscow recognised some of these priorities. It called for the removal of trade barriers, increased exports of value-added African products, investment in local production and the processing of mineral resources in the countries where they are extracted. It also addressed cooperation in energy, healthcare, education, environmental protection and the consequences of colonialism.

These are important commitments. Yet the difficulty with international declarations is rarely the absence of attractive objectives. It is the distance between agreeing on those objectives and putting them into practice.

The summit's 2027–2029 action plan, reportedly containing 236 measures, now provides a framework against which both sides can be judged. African governments should be asking which projects will be funded, which companies will participate, where production will take place, how many jobs will be created and when the public can expect results.

There is also a political dimension to the relationship that should not be overlooked.

Putin has repeatedly presented Russia as a partner that respects national sovereignty and does not impose the same political conditions that African governments sometimes associate with Western relationships. His message has found an audience among governments that want greater freedom in choosing their international partners and are dissatisfied with the existing global order.

There is a legitimate argument for African countries to resist being forced into choosing between global powers. The continent has its own interests and should be able to cooperate with Russia, China, the United States, Europe, India, Turkey and others without being treated as an extension of another country's foreign policy.

However, replacing one form of dependence with another would not amount to genuine independence. African governments must judge every partner by the terms of the relationship and the benefits delivered to their citizens, rather than by the political language used to describe it.

This is particularly important in security cooperation. Russia has expanded its military and security relationships in parts of Africa, especially in the Sahel, where governments have turned to Moscow after relations with traditional Western partners deteriorated. Yet the results of Russia's security involvement have been contested, and violence in the region has remained severe.

The recruitment of African citizens into the Russian military for the war against Ukraine has created another uncomfortable issue. Investigations have documented thousands of African nationals recruited into Russian forces, with reports that some were attracted by promises of civilian employment before finding themselves involved in military service.

Kenya's President William Ruto raised the matter directly with Putin during a meeting at the Kremlin following the summit. Ruto said the Russian president had confirmed that Kenya would be designated a non-source country for military recruitment. He also announced the appointment of a Defence Attaché in Moscow to help coordinate the return of Kenyans who had travelled to Russia for military purposes and to pursue compensation for affected citizens.

The Kenyan case demonstrates why security and diplomatic agreements cannot be evaluated only through government-to-government relations. The safety of ordinary citizens must also be part of the assessment. African governments should be able to explain what protections their citizens receive when they enter employment, training or military-related arrangements involving foreign countries.

The question is not whether Russia should cooperate with African countries in security matters. It is whether those arrangements provide measurable improvements in security while protecting the people affected by them.

For Tanzania, the Moscow summit was also an opportunity to place national development priorities within the wider Russia–Africa relationship. Prime Minister Mwigulu Nchemba represented President Samia Suluhu Hassan at the gathering, where he delivered a speech that brought attention to issues that are particularly relevant to the continent's future.

He called on African leaders to give greater priority to clean cooking energy, arguing that the issue is not merely environmental but also concerns public health, the time women spend collecting and using traditional fuels, and the protection of forests. The appeal reflected President Samia's wider campaign to advance clean cooking energy across Africa.

Nchemba also raised the future of African young people, calling for cooperation that can turn the continent's large youth population into an economic advantage. He argued that collaboration in artificial intelligence and digital technologies should develop African engineering skills and ensure that African data remains under African control.

These issues deserve more attention than they received in the general coverage of the summit. Africa's development will not be determined only by the amount of foreign investment it attracts, but also by whether its people acquire the skills, technology and productive capacity needed to participate in the industries being built.

Tanzania's private sector also had a presence in Moscow. Representatives of the Tanzania Private Sector Federation and businesspeople from different sectors held discussions with Russian investors on opportunities involving energy, agriculture, mining, construction and infrastructure. The participation offered a chance to establish business connections, although the reported discussions should not be mistaken for completed investment agreements.

The wider relationship between Tanzania and Russia has its own economic questions. During President Samia's June 2026 visit to Russia, the two countries discussed expanding cooperation in trade, tourism, investment, energy, and mineral development. Tanzania wants to attract investment and diversify its economic relationships, while Russia has identified energy, agriculture, mining, and transport as opportunities for deeper cooperation.

For Tanzania, the challenge is to turn those discussions into projects that support local production and employment. Investment in fertiliser manufacturing, mineral processing, pharmaceuticals, technology and vocational education would be more meaningful if it created skills and industrial capacity within the country rather than simply expanding the volume of imports.

That is also why the question of what African countries gain from Russia cannot be answered through one summit or one bilateral meeting. The relationship must be assessed country by country, project by project and over time.

The colonial question raised in Moscow offers another example of the need to examine commitments beyond their political appeal. The summit declaration supported efforts to establish legal mechanisms to assess and seek compensation for damage caused to African countries during the colonial period. It also backed the return of cultural objects removed from the continent during colonial rule.

For African countries, these demands are significant. The extraction of resources, destruction of local economies and removal of cultural heritage during colonial rule remain subjects of legitimate historical and political concern. But any effort to pursue compensation will require more than expressions of support. It will need clear legal processes, evidence, agreement on responsibility and a strategy developed by African countries themselves.

Russia's support may give the issue additional diplomatic attention, but African governments should retain ownership of the demands and ensure that historical justice does not become merely another instrument in competition between global powers.

Ultimately, Moscow's interest in Africa is not without its own strategic calculations. Russia wants stronger diplomatic support, greater access to markets and resources, expanded security relationships and a larger role in shaping international institutions. African governments also have their own calculations, seeking investment, technology, trade opportunities and greater influence in global decision-making.

There is nothing unusual about countries pursuing their national interests. The responsibility of African governments is to ensure that those interests are negotiated in a way that produces benefits for their populations.

The continent does not need to reject Russia to prove its independence, just as it does not need to defend every Russian proposal to demonstrate that it is no longer aligned with Western powers. Africa should be free to engage with all partners, but it must also become more demanding about the terms of those engagements.

That requires stronger regional coordination, more capable negotiating institutions, transparent agreements and a willingness to measure projects by their actual outcomes. It also means African governments must be prepared to walk away from arrangements that offer political visibility without meaningful economic value.

The Third Russia–Africa Summit has now concluded. Its declarations have been adopted, its photographs have been taken and its leaders have returned home. The real work begins after the cameras leave Moscow.

OPINION

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For the people of Africa, the most important question is not how many leaders met Putin or how many pages were included in the final declaration. It is whether these partnerships will create jobs, improve energy access, strengthen healthcare, develop industries, expand education and make African economies more capable of determining their own futures.