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Digital Pulse: Realignment, violence and trust in the vote ahead of 2027



This snapshot offers an overview of electoral-related narratives in Kenya's digital ecosystem, identifying emerging narratives, key actors, and tactics used in social media conversations. This edition covers July to early October 2026 and is organised around the project's aim of a peaceful 2027 election: it starts with the threats most directly linked to violence, then turns to trust in the electoral process and the public institutions that will run and police the election, and the misinformation around them, and ends with the political contest that drew most of the online conversation. The overview is part of a planned series of social media analytical reports by zKe and its local partners that seek to support an integrated online/offline approach to peacebuilding and conflict prevention ahead of the 2027 elections.

1. Executive Summary

The following are the main findings of zKe's social media analysis of sixteen narratives as they emerged in Kenya's online and offline environment. They are ordered by how directly they bear on a peaceful 2027 election:

Hate speech and incitement

Key Finding 1: **One in twelve comments was harmful, and one in seven posts were about Homa Bay, with the most serious content driving ethnic division.** A random sample of 2,690 of the 210,000 comments collected put the share of harmful comments at 8.4%, most of them insults aimed at politicians, with Facebook threads far more hostile than TikTok. A screen for severe content found 191 comments of ethnic hate speech, 77 of them circumcision slurs against Luo people, and 104 comments that threatened or called for violence, many of them after the Homa Bay violence. Almost all came from accounts that appeared only once, and counter-speech appeared in the same threads.

Key Finding 2: President Ruto's directive on foreign traders was followed by harassment, looting and displacement of Burundians; a 'fake voters' conspiracy attached itself to the crackdown, and many Kenyans pushed back against the xenophobia. After the 2 September directive gave foreign-owned small businesses without permits until 7 September to close, panic among Burundians was followed by confirmed attacks, looting and displacement in Eastleigh, Githurai, Nairobi's CBD and Likoni, and a man who had threatened Burundians with 24 hours to leave was arrested and charged with hate speech. A claim that Burundians were being registered to vote for Ruto circulated in contradictory versions, while public figures, institutions and bystanders rejected the xenophobia.

Key Finding 3: A lecturer's warning that students from Mount Kenya and Western should not return to the University of Eldoret if President Ruto lost was read as ethnic exclusion. In a classroom video that circulated from 24 September, a lecturer told students that if Ruto served only one term, those from Mount Kenya should go to Dedan Kimathi University and those from Western to Masinde Muliro. Posts read the remark in ethnic terms and asked whether the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) would act; the data shows no action by the commission. The university's response was reported three ways: that he had been sacked, that it had taken disciplinary action against a part-time lecturer, and that he was not on its staff records.

Political violence

Key Finding 4: **Each side blamed the other for the violence in Homa Bay on 16 August, and death tolls far above the reported figures circulated widely.** Posts blaming Governor Gladys Wanga, MP Peter Kaluma and their government allies outnumbered posts blaming Linda Mwananchi leaders or former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua by about three to one (178 against 62). KTN named a gang, the 'Hammer Boys', and its alleged leader, who was arrested on 8 October. Early reports spoke of at least two deaths; the most-liked casualty claim, with 5,381 likes, spoke of 'over 60 dead bodies'. No post offered evidence for the higher figures.

Key Finding 5: **The violence was turned into a verdict on the Luo community, and calls followed to keep Luo leaders out of Western Kenya.** Former Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya's open letter to 'perpetrators of violence among the Luo community' drew 1,934 comments, many rejecting advice addressed to one community. A clip warning Governor Wanga not to 'set foot in Western' drew 40,900 likes, and an X user called for revenge before she visited Kakamega in October; no violence was reported in the posts. In a random sample of 200 comments under posts about the Homa Bay violence, 28 (14%) were judged harmful, the highest rate of any narrative sampled.

Key Finding 6: **Four weeks after Homa Bay, a meeting led by Deputy President Kindiki in Embu ended in teargas, burning vehicles and at least one reported death, after a month of warning signs at the same grounds.** On 12 September a meeting of the ruling United Democratic Alliance (UDA) at Nembure grounds broke up in teargas, with reports of gunfire; six vehicles were torched, among them one belonging to journalists, and one person was reported killed. Two weeks earlier a Kindiki meeting at the same grounds had nearly ended in chaos, and the local MP had accused the county governor of ethnic profiling of the Kikuyu. Casualty reports conflicted, police arrested three suspects, and police officers deployed at the home of the opposition MP whom UDA leaders blamed.

Trust in the electoral process and public institutions

Key Finding 7: **Each side accused the other of padding the voter register: with foreigners from Uganda, or with 'fake Kikuyu voters'.** After KTN aired claims in late September about voter registration along the Uganda border, opposition leaders including Nyoro said foreigners were being registered to vote for Ruto. Government ally, Peter Kaluma demanded the removal of 'fake Kikuyu voters', arguing that no county could have more adults than children. Senator Okiya Omtatah's call to audit 7 million records lacking photographs drew the most likes. The electoral commission's denial drew mostly hostile replies.

Key Finding 8: **Disputes over election technology and the national tallying centre were argued as rigging plans before the rules were settled.** In August, former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua alleged that the electoral commission's technology tender had been tailored for a South Korean firm, Miru Systems; the commission called his statement 'unsubstantiated and false', and the procurement review board later ordered the tender reviewed. A coalition led by former Chief Justice David Maraga sought to scrap the national tallying centre; the High Court ruled on 22 September that it stays. About one post in four in the narrative alleges past or planned rigging.

Key Finding 9: **A post claiming the electoral commission would not stream 2027 results live drew more comments than all the posts carrying the commission's denial.** On 29 July, an X commentary account posted 'IEBC: No Live Streaming of 2027 Election Results', which drew 1,576 comments. The next day the commission said that media reports had misrepresented a bill before Parliament. Its statement and the posts reporting it, 13 in all, drew 945 comments between them, and the replies under it were largely disbelieving. More than a third of the posts collected for this narrative were unrelated spam.

Key Finding 10: The registrar of political parties was overruled by a tribunal on the Linda Mwananchi name, and its silence when sign-ups to Sifuna's party failed left claims of state interference unanswered. From August, Sifuna's supporters said the registrar was obstructing the Linda Mwananchi movement, after it declined to register the name. At the end of September the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal ruled that the registrar had acted unlawfully. When the phone code for joining Sifuna's new party failed in early October, supporters accused the registrar of acting for the government. No statement from the registrar on the failure appears in the data. The code was working again within two days, and posts then reported that the registrar was processing the party's changes.

Key Finding 11: The NCIC was criticised for its silence before the Homa Bay violence and derided after its determination, and none of the politicians it summoned faced charges in the posts collected. Before the Homa Bay rally, users asked why the NCIC was silent about MP Peter Kaluma's warnings, and one said that complaints sent to it had not been acknowledged. After the violence the commission summoned Kaluma, Busia Governor Paul Otuoma and Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku. On 1 October it published a determination on Kaluma and Otuoma as a link to a document folder; all 18 replies collected under its Facebook post were critical. None of the politicians it summoned faced charges in the posts collected. The only hate-speech prosecution in the data concerned a private individual.

Key Finding 12: Police responses to political violence were judged by whose side they appeared to favour, and the police's own account is absent from the data. After Homa Bay, opposition supporters said the police had watched as gangs attacked, and pointed to the Interior Cabinet Secretary's silence. The alleged gang leader was arrested seven weeks later. After the violence at the Deputy President's meeting in Embu, three suspects were arrested within two days and officers surrounded an opposition MP's home. Critics read the contrast as partisanship, and turned a remark attributed to the Interior Cabinet Secretary against the government. No post from the National Police Service or the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) appears in the data.

Key Finding 13: Courts and tribunals were where criticism of institutions was tested, and each ruling was claimed by the side it favoured. Courts and tribunals ruled on several of the disputes: the tribunal found that the registrar had acted unlawfully, the procurement review board ordered the electoral commission to review its technology tender, and the High Court upheld the national tallying centre and ruled twice on Uhuru Kenyatta's place in politics. Each side welcomed the rulings that went its way and appealed or dismissed the others. One ruling was used to circulate old figures about the voter register as new. Direct attacks on the courts themselves were rare.

Misinformation trends

Key Finding 14: **Rumours that ODM leader Oburu Oginga had died spread fastest when official information was thinnest, and some greeted them with jokes.** Oburu Oginga, who has led the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) since his brother Raila Odinga's death, was admitted to hospital at the end of August and again in early October. On 6 and 7 October, 37 posts discussed claims that he had died, among them 'I'm currently in the Nairobi Hospital Oburu Odinga is no more' (9,226 likes). ODM leaders denied the claims without showing him, and many posts tied the rumours to the anniversary of Raila's death on 15 October. One sampled comment in eight was harmful, many of them premature condolences or jokes about his death.

Key Finding 15: Kenya's first Ebola case was met within hours by claims that it was invented, imported for money or meant to postpone the 2027 election, and these claims drew far more engagement than news of the case itself. On 6 October Kenya confirmed its first Ebola case. That day, 15 posts said the case was invented, brought into the country for donor money, or planted to distract from Sifuna's new party, and others said it would be used to postpone the 2027 election. In all, 21 posts made such claims, drawing about 9,200 likes. The two news reports of the case in the data drew 274 likes, and only two posts pushed back.

Key Finding 16: A UDA official's reported remark about dead voters was taken as proof of a rigging plan, and old audit figures presented as new outperformed the electoral commission's explanation. On 11 September UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar was reported to have suggested that dead voters' fingerprints could help re-elect Ruto. The government disowned the remark, the electoral commission summoned him, and on 14 September the commission explained why dead voters' data could not be used to rig. Five days later a TikTok account presented as new findings a set of figures that included the dead-voter count from a 2022 audit. Its two posts drew more than 2,600 likes, against about 130 for the commission's explanation, and commenters added the figures up as '1m votes'. Claims about rigged servers and past elections came without evidence.

The opposition realignment

Key Finding 17: **Ndindi Nyoro's new party was received as a loyalty test, and the 'mole' accusation became its defining frame.** Nyoro's launch of the People's Party of Kenya (PPK) on 17 August was read less as a new opposition vehicle than as a challenge to former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's hold on Mount Kenya. Within a day, opposition accounts claimed he had been 'deployed' by the government, and by September Gachagua was quoted alleging that Nyoro had been paid Sh200 million to split the region's vote. The contest with Gachagua is the most common theme in the narrative.

Key Finding 18: **Two competing portraits of Nyoro, a persecuted reformer and a compromised insider, were both reinforced by events offline.** To counter the mole narrative, his supporters pointed to police interrupting his events, a confrontation with a rival MP at a church in Kinangop and his five-day suspension from Parliament on 7 October, which produced the most-liked and most-commented post about him since July. Critics, however, pointed to his past votes on the Finance Bill 2024 and his shares in Kenya Power and Lighting Company. Supporters and critics alike increasingly argued in terms of regional and ethnic voting blocs.

Key Finding 19: **A burst of 385 near-identical posts on X promoted a Matiang'i and Nyoro ticket 'backed by Uhuru Kenyatta', in a pattern that looks coordinated.** On 27 September, 47 X accounts published 90 posts and 295 replies, 385 items in all, in under four hours, repeating the phrase 'Opposition Chosen Candidates Fred Matiang'i And Ndindi Nyoro' with the hashtag #KenyaDecides. Together they drew 70 likes. By 13 October, posts from 15 of these accounts were no longer available. The attribution of this activity remains undetermined by this analysis.

Key Finding 20: **Nyoro answered the 'mole' charge by attacking President Ruto, and the attacks drew more than twice the engagement of the charge, but his audiences stayed unconvinced.** In the narrative that tracks Nyoro and the President, about one post in five carries the claim that Nyoro is a government plant sent to split the Mount Kenya region vote. Posts of Nyoro attacking Ruto over debt, the Dangote oil refinery project and 'sending Ruto home' drew 357,000 likes, against 152,000 for the accusation. Figures in former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) went further, saying he was being lined up as Ruto's running mate and recalling 1992, when a divided opposition vote returned President Moi to power. In the comments, distrust of Nyoro outweighed support.

Key Finding 21: **'One million members in ten hours': unverifiable membership numbers became the main measure of Sifuna's new party, and the party registrar became a target.** After Sifuna launched The Equitable Party (TEP) on 4 October, figures circulated by supporters claimed that party membership rose from one million members in ten hours to six million within a week, until Sifuna himself denied the higher claims. Critics countered with figures as low as 58,000. Supporters accused the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) of deliberately blocking sign-ups to the party.

Key Finding 22: **Opponents attacked TEP's legitimacy through 'Mr Empty' mockery, calls for a by-election and contradictory stories about who really owns the party.** ODM figures demanded that Sifuna resign his Senate seat and seek re-election under TEP, and Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi said the party could not win a seat. At least three incompatible versions of the party's origin circulated: that it belonged to President Ruto's allies, that Uhuru Kenyatta had acquired it, and that a 'Bukusu Sacco' had bought it.

Key Finding 23: **TEP's launch exposed a fragmented Linda Mwananchi movement and an ethnic map of the opposition, while former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's endorsement drew more comments than any other post studied.** Gachagua's 'My cousin' congratulation to Sifuna on the TEP launch drew over 7,000 comments on Facebook, the most of any post in this report. At the same time, Linda Mwananchi leaders were launching separate parties, and posts linked each party to a county or community, for example Sifuna's TEP to Bungoma and Babu Owino's The Mwananchi Party (TMP) to Nairobi, Homa Bay and Migori. Sifuna's supporters organised through a self-styled 'Sifuna Online Defence Forces' WhatsApp group and daily registration drives.

Key Finding 24: **Babu Owino's new party was read as a betrayal of Sifuna, and his opponents in ODM attacked his Luo identity.** While Sifuna's camp was still trying to register 'Linda Mwananchi', Babu Owino took over the Muungano Party and renamed it The Mwananchi Party (TMP). Sifuna's supporters accused him of taking the name behind Sifuna's back; Babu said the movement's leaders had agreed to it and, on 18 September, endorsed Sifuna for president. His bid for the Nairobi governorship drew ODM loyalists who dismissed him as 'Muhindi' (Indian) or 'Patel', a jibe found in 177 comments.

Uhuru Kenyatta's role

Key Finding 25: **'The sponsor': the claim that Uhuru Kenyatta funds and controls Sifuna was pushed from the top, by President Ruto and his allies, with large but unverified sums.** About one in three posts in this narrative makes a funding or control claim. President Ruto repeatedly called Sifuna Uhuru's puppet and, on 1 October, accused him of being sent by Uhuru to 'extort' the Dangote oil refinery investors. MP Peter Kaluma claimed Uhuru gave Sh100 million for one rally and Sh150 million for another. No evidence was offered for any of the figures.

Key Finding 26: **Denials reached far fewer people than the claim, and the claim itself circulated in contradictory versions.** Sifuna and Uhuru both rejected the 'sponsor' label, but posts making the claim outnumbered posts carrying a denial by about sixteen to one. Uhuru's 'I don't want to be called a sponsor' remark in Kitale was itself shared as an endorsement. Other versions held that Ruto and Uhuru were funding the movement together, or that Uhuru had dropped Sifuna for Matiang'i.

Key Finding 27: **Senior politicians recast the 'sponsor' claim as an ethnic plot, and it came with threats.** National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula and MP Peter Kaluma presented Sifuna as Uhuru Kenyatta's tool to divide Luhya and Luo voters, and MP Oscar Sudi warned Uhuru that 'we will come for you'. Ethnic framing is more common in this narrative than in those about Nyoro or Sifuna's party.

Key Finding 28: **Uhuru Kenyatta turned the 'sponyo' label into a joke, and his replies drew more engagement than the attacks on him.** At a funeral in Kiharu on 18 September, Uhuru ended his condolence message with 'Ni hayo machache kutoka sponyo' (that is all from the sponsor). Posts carrying this and his later replies drew 115,000 likes, more than three times the likes on posts reporting Ruto's attacks on him. The argument then moved to whether a retired president may take part in politics at all. After two High Court rulings in September he handed over the Jubilee leadership and stepped down as chair of the Azimio coalition council, while staying in politics.

2. Background and context

Kenya's next general election is set for 10 August 2027, and its elections have often been accompanied by violence, most severely after the 2007 election. This report focuses on the early signs that the 2027 contest could follow the same path. In the period covered, those signs included violence at political meetings, ethnic hate speech and threats online, attacks on foreigners, and doubts about the voter register and the institutions that will oversee the election.

Two sides are observed in this analysis. The first is in the Mount Kenya region. After his impeachment as Deputy President in October 2024, Rigathi Gachagua built the Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) into the region's main opposition vehicle, campaigning under the slogan 'Wantam' (one term for President William Ruto). Ndindi Nyoro, a former chair of the National Assembly's Budget Committee elected on President Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) ticket, was reported to have left UDA in early July. On 17 August he unveiled the People's Party of Kenya (PPK) as his vehicle, announcing that he had joined the opposition and would be on the presidential ballot.

The second split is in the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). After the death of Raila Odinga in October 2025, part of the party's leadership joined President Ruto's 'broad-based' government, while Sifuna, then ODM Secretary General, together with Embakasi East MP Babu Owino led a breakaway movement called Linda Mwananchi ('Protect the Citizen'). According to media reports, Sifuna was removed as ODM Secretary General, and the movement was unable to register a party under its own name. In September Babu Owino took over former Makueni Governor Kivutha Kibwana's Muungano Party, renamed The Mwananchi Party (TMP). On 4 October Sifuna launched The Equitable Party (TEP) at the Stanley Hotel in Nairobi, with a plan to rename it the Linda Mwananchi Movement.



Post by Narok Senator Ledama Olekina listing the parties formed by former ODM figures (link) (Source: X)

Throughout this period, President Ruto and his allies described the emerging opposition as the work of former President Uhuru Kenyatta, who had backed Raila Odinga against Ruto in the 2022 election. Violence at a Linda Mwananchi rally in Homa Bay on 16 August, and at a UDA meeting led by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki in Embu on 12 September, sharpened these exchanges, with each side blaming the other. The narratives overlap: Sifuna's new party is where the 'sponsor' claim was tested, Nyoro's party is where the opposition's fear of government 'moles' was focused, and the violence fed directly into arguments about whether the 2027 election can be free and fair.

Preparations for the election ran alongside. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) was registering new voters, projecting a register of about 28.5 million against 22.1 million in 2022, and buying new election technology. A coalition led by former Chief Justice David Maraga campaigned for electoral reforms, including scrapping the national tallying centre at Bomas of Kenya.

Separately, the courts heard petitions on the tallying of results and on the political role of retired presidents. In ODM, the party's leader since Raila Odinga's death, his elder brother Senator Oburu Oginga, was in and out of hospital from late August, as the first anniversary of Raila's death on 15 October approached.

In early September, a government directive barring foreigners from small-scale trade was followed by harassment of Burundian traders and a protest from Burundi's government. That narrative has been extensively discussed in a separate report and is summarised in Finding 2.

3. Methodology

This analysis uses social media listening tools to review emerging trends and narratives in the Kenyan information environment. The report focuses on content primarily published in English, Kiswahili and Sheng, with some posts in Gikuyu, Dholuo, Luhyia, Kamba and other local languages, between 01 July and 13 October 2026. Posts were collected up to 13 October 2026.

The analysis team used **Phoenix**, Build Up's social media monitoring tool, which tracks and maps mentions of specific keywords and individuals across various social media platforms. For this report it provided data from Facebook, TikTok, X and YouTube.

The analysis used specific Boolean[1] search terms to gather relevant data for monitoring and analysis. These search terms were carefully selected to capture content relevant to each narrative. The full list of keywords used for the data collection is set out in the project's narratives lexicon.

In total, the twelve narratives discussed in this report are based on an analysis of 9,034 posts, which had drawn about 7 million likes and ~424,000 comments when they were collected. About 210,000 of those comments were also reviewed: ~105,600 from Facebook, ~64,000 from TikTok, ~36,200 from YouTube and ~3,800 replies and quotes from X.

Harmful comments were measured in two ways, because there are too many to read them all. A random sample of comments was reviewed, 300 each for the three narratives analysed first (Ndindi Nyoro and the PPK, Sifuna's new party, and 'Sifuna funded by Uhuru Kenyatta'), and 200 each for the other nine, which gives the share of harmful comments with a margin of error. Separately, a keyword-based review in English, Kiswahili and Sheng picked out 1,894 comments likely to contain violence, threats, ethnic slurs or dehumanising language. Comments were classified as hate speech, incitement to violence, threats, harassment, gendered abuse or containing mis/disinformation.

It is important to note that the general query is used only for an initial search. Based on the results, it is then customised to conduct more specific searches. Although we aim to capture a broad range of relevant content, there is always the possibility of missing posts that do not explicitly match the selected search terms. Additionally, the effectiveness of the Boolean search terms may be influenced by factors such as variations in language use, slang, or evolving terminology. Therefore, the data gathered for this analysis may have certain limitations. These include:

1 *See Glossary section for definition*

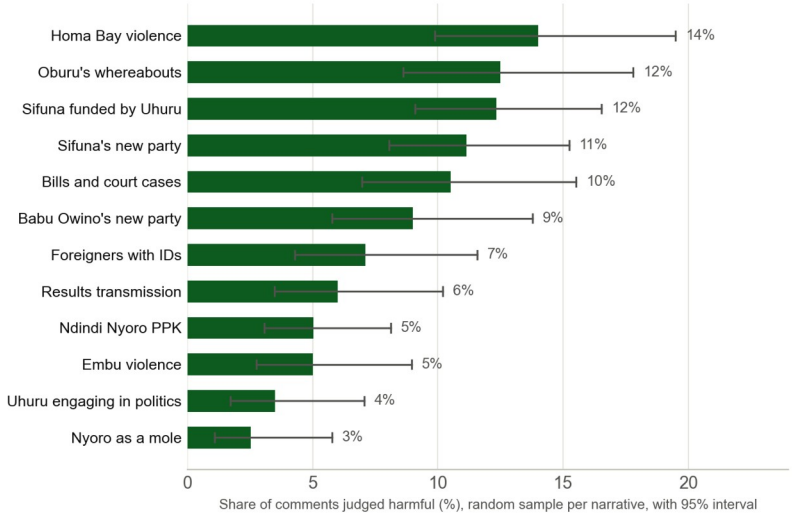
1. The reliance on publicly available information on social media platforms.
2. The possibility of missing data from private accounts or restricted platforms, including WhatsApp groups, where much campaign content circulates.
3. The inaccuracy of certain information even if shown on profiles, such as location, gender, or identity in general.
4. Comment collection is partial: about half of the comments reported on these posts were collected, and they are concentrated on the most-discussed posts. Reactions described in this report are those of people who comment publicly, who are likely to be younger, more urban and more politically engaged than voters as a whole.
5. All data were collected in several gathers in October 2026. Older posts are less likely to be retrieved, so differences in volume between months should not be read as trends. Engagement figures are those at collection and may differ from the counts visible in the screenshots.
6. Keyword screening misses harmful content that is coded or euphemistic, and comments in Gikuyu, Dholuo and Luhya languages are harder to classify, so the severe-content figures are a floor rather than a total. The share of harmful comments comes from a sample and carries a margin of error, given in Finding 1.

4. Key findings

Part 1: Hate speech and incitement to violence

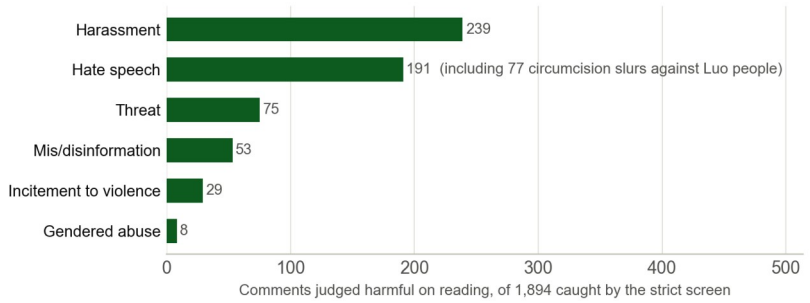
Finding 1: **About one sampled comment in twelve was harmful overall, and one in seven under posts about the Homa Bay violence; the most serious content set communities against each other.** Hand-reading a random sample of 2,690 of the 210,000 comments collected put the share of harmful comments at 8.4%, most of them insults aimed at politicians, with Facebook threads far more hostile than TikTok. A screen for severe content found 191 comments of ethnic hate speech, 77 of them circumcision slurs against Luo people, and 104 comments that threatened or called for violence, many of them after the Homa Bay violence. Almost all came from accounts that appeared only once, and counter-speech appeared in the same threads.

The analysis reviewed ~210,000 comments collected across the twelve narratives tracked throughout the review period: ~105,600 from Facebook, ~64,000 from TikTok, ~36,200 from YouTube and ~3,800 from X. It leaves out the 295 templated replies described in Finding 19 and 282 scam messages offering cheap data bundles through M-Pesa till numbers, which were posted on political threads by many different accounts. A random sample of between 200 and 300 comments was reviewed for each narrative, showing that across platforms, 10.6% of the sampled Facebook comments were harmful, against 3.6% on TikTok.



Share of comments judged harmful in a random sample per narrative (300 comments for the Nyoro PPK, Sifuna's new party and 'Sifuna funded by Uhuru' narratives; 200 for the others), with 95% intervals (Source: Phoenix)

Most of the harm was determined to be harassment, insults aimed at politicians, such as 'mlevi' (drunkard) for Uhuru, 'Mr Empty' for Sifuna, 'mole' and 'hyena' for Nyoro, 'Muhindi' for Babu Owino, 'Gladys Panga' for Governor Wanga and 'Kasongo' for the President, and at other commenters. More serious content identified included 1,894 comments categorised as advocating for violence, threats, some containing ethnic slurs and dehumanising language.



Comments caught by the strict screen and judged harmful on reading, by category (Source: Phoenix)

- **Hate speech:** These included comments containing circumcision slurs against Luo people, a long-standing ethnic taunt in Kenyan politics that accompanied forced circumcisions of Luo men during the violence after the 2007 election. In the narratives about Sifuna they clustered on Facebook under posts by or about Luo politicians who attacked him, a Bukusu from a community that circumcises: Peter Kaluma's own posts, an ODM youth leader's call for Sifuna to resign, and TV47's report of Kaluma's demand. They returned under Kaluma's 'fake Kikuyu voters' post and after the Homa Bay violence; the most-liked hateful comment found, on TikTok, joked that Luos would blame former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua even for their lack of circumcision (839 likes). Other comments generalised about whole communities: Kikuyu as 'hyenas' or as wanting *"other tribes to remain their slaves"*; Luos as violent (*"When police are not killing the Luos, the Luos are busy killing themselves"*) or as pigs; a Somali Kenyan MP told to *"go back to somalia"*; and Babu Owino told to go back to India.

- **Threats and incitement to violence:** These include threats of forced circumcision (*"tutakata hiyo foreskin... na panga"*, we will cut that foreskin with a machete; *"As long as am working as a mortuary attendant no Luo Man will be buried uncircumcised"*, posted again under Peter Munya's letter), death threats against MP Peter Kaluma under his own posts and *"your days are numbered"* to Kaluma and Governor Wanga after Homa Bay, threats against electoral officials (*"Kenyans will come for you"*), a call to *"tuwachome hawo MP, wao na nyumba zao"* (burn those MPs, them and their houses), a question whether *"any sniper in Kenya"* could take out a politician, a call for armed goons to be *"shot on sight"*, and *"Wacha wapigwe"* (let them be beaten) in reference to those at the Embu meeting. Sixty-four of the 104 were on Facebook, and 46 were under posts about Homa Bay.

- **Mis/disinformation:** Claims that President Ruto *"killed"* Raila Odinga, that he had killed *"around 3000 people"*, that Speaker Moses Wetang'ula had said he could kill 5,000 young protesters a day, that the electoral commission had been *"caught red handed registering Somalians and Ugandans"*, that an Ebola quarantine centre was a plan *"to finish kikuyus"*, and premature reports that Oburu Oginga had died, none of which came with evidence. Among X comments there was also an unverified figure of 63 deaths at Homa Bay, while early reports cited at least two deaths, and ODM said Oburu was recovering in hospital.

- **Gendered abuse:** Most came after Homa Bay and were aimed at Governor Gladys Wanga, the most senior woman among the figures in this report: she was called *"a disgrace and embarrassment to motherhood, womanhood, sisterhood"* and 'Jezebel', and commenters asked whether she had children.

The harmful content wasn't due to coordination. The 595 harmful comments found came from 572 different accounts, and 96% of those accounts appear only once. The content most likely to shape behaviour offline came instead from politicians' own posts and from posts that turned events into verdicts on whole communities: the threat attributed to MP Oscar Sudi, MP Peter Kaluma's ethnic histories, unverified sums of money and 'fake Kikuyu voters', the Speaker's claim about the Luhya vote, the open letter to the Luo community after Homa Bay, and inflated death tolls. The circumcision slurs show how quickly an argument between politicians becomes an argument between communities.

The same threads also carried counter-speech. Replying to a post that said Mount Kenya would not vote for *"another outsider"*, one user wrote: *"No Kenyan is an outsider"*. Others wrote *"Stop dividing Kenyans on tribal lines"*, and, against the claim that a hug from Uhuru was a *"political death wish"*: *"In Kenya even a funeral hug now needs IEBC clearance. Let's debate policies, not people's hugs."* In a thread about Nyoro, a commenter who said he had studied and worked in the Mount Kenya region wrote of the Kikuyu: *"They are not the devils that people talk [about]."* Luo commenters answered the circumcision taunts directly, asking why they were being insulted over something many of them no longer lack. After Homa Bay, readers of a blog that questioned KTN's covered witness defended the protection of witnesses in about one reply in six, and under the rumours about Oburu Oginga a widely liked reply told others to *"stop rumour mongering about people's health"*.

Xenophobia towards Burundians

Finding 2: President Ruto's directive on foreign traders was followed by harassment, looting and displacement of Burundians; a 'fake voters' conspiracy attached itself to the crackdown, and many Kenyans pushed back against the xenophobia.
After the 2 September directive gave foreign-owned small businesses without permits until 7 September to close, panic among Burundians was followed by confirmed attacks, looting and displacement in Eastleigh, Githurai, Nairobi's CBD and Likoni, and a man who had given Burundians 24 hours to leave was arrested and charged with hate speech. A claim that Burundians were being registered to vote for Ruto circulated in contradictory versions, while public figures, institutions and bystanders rejected the xenophobia. In the comments, hostility was rare but spread to Somalis and to the Kenyan communities blamed for the attacks.

The analysis also identified xenophobic sentiment towards Burundians living in Kenya: 152 posts that had drawn ~114,000 likes and ~11,000 comments. The narrative grew in early September, after a directive by President Ruto gave foreigners until 7 September to stop hawking and small-scale retail trade (post). Posts showed Burundians queuing at their embassy in Nairobi for travel documents, reports of harassment and looting in Nairobi and Mombasa, and a warning from Burundi's foreign minister who warned that *"if this hate speech against Burundi continues things will certainty change"*. Many Kenyans pushed back: a video of residents of Juja stopping a man from attacking Burundian traders drew 6,675 likes (post). The narrative connects to Narrative 3, in which foreigners were cast as illegitimate voters. It is analysed in full in a separate report on xenophobia towards Burundians.

A University of Eldoret lecturer's warning to students

Eighteen posts in our dataset, about the case, almost all on X, drew about 18,200 likes and 1,450 comments between 24 and 29 September.

Finding 3: A lecturer's warning that students from Mount Kenya and Western should not return to the University of Eldoret if President Ruto lost was read as ethnic exclusion.
In a classroom video that circulated from 24 September, a lecturer told students that if Ruto served only one term, those from Mount Kenya should go to Dedan Kimathi University and those from Western to Masinde Muliro. Posts read the remark in ethnic terms and asked whether the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) would act; the data shows no action by the commission. The university's response was reported three ways: that he had been sacked, that it had taken disciplinary action against a part-time lecturer, and that he was not on its staff records.

In the video the lecturer says: *"Mimi kama Lecturer ninawaambia Ruto ni Tutam mpende msipende… Mkimfanya Wantam, msijaribu kukuja hii University"* (as a lecturer I am telling you, Ruto is two terms whether you like it or not… if you make him one term, do not try to come to this university), and *"Kama uko Western, enda usome Masinde Muliro; kama uko Mount Kenya, enda Dedan Kimathi"* (if you are from Western, go and study at Masinde Muliro; if you are from Mount Kenya, go to Dedan Kimathi). Eldoret is in the North Rift, the President's home region, and posts read the remark in ethnic terms: one said he was *"claiming it is for kalenjins"*. Pauline Njoroge, a former Jubilee strategist, asked: *"Will NCIC summon this one or according to them he is preaching the gospel?"*. On 26 September posts said the university had sacked him; on 27 September The Star reported that it had taken disciplinary action against a part-time lecturer; and on 29 September a post described him as *"not in their records of employment"*. Comments collected, showed varied responses: *"This is pure ethnic incitement"* against *"it's was a joke I was in the class"*.

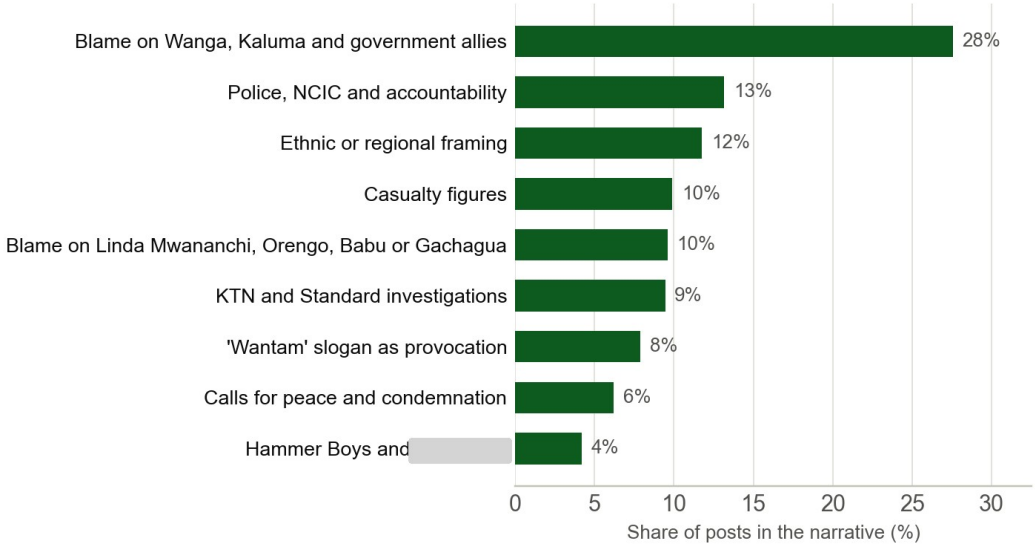
The lecturer's warning echoed a threat made a month earlier. On 30 August a post on X said that UDA nominated MP Joseph Iraya Wainaina was *"not APOLOGETIC for saying Kikuyus should leave Eldoret if they'll not elect Ruto"*, and YouTube channels reported Ndindi Nyoro condemning MP Wainaina's threats to chase Kikuyus who would vote 'Wantam' out of the Rift Valley and Uasin Gishu (post). The MP was later summoned by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC).



Part 2: Political violence

Narrative 1: The violence in Homa Bay on 16 August

The narrative contains 646 posts that had drawn ~632,000 likes and ~42,800 comments as at August 2026. The majority of the posts covered the violence itself; the rest follow the politics of Governor Gladys Wanga and MP Peter Kaluma more broadly.



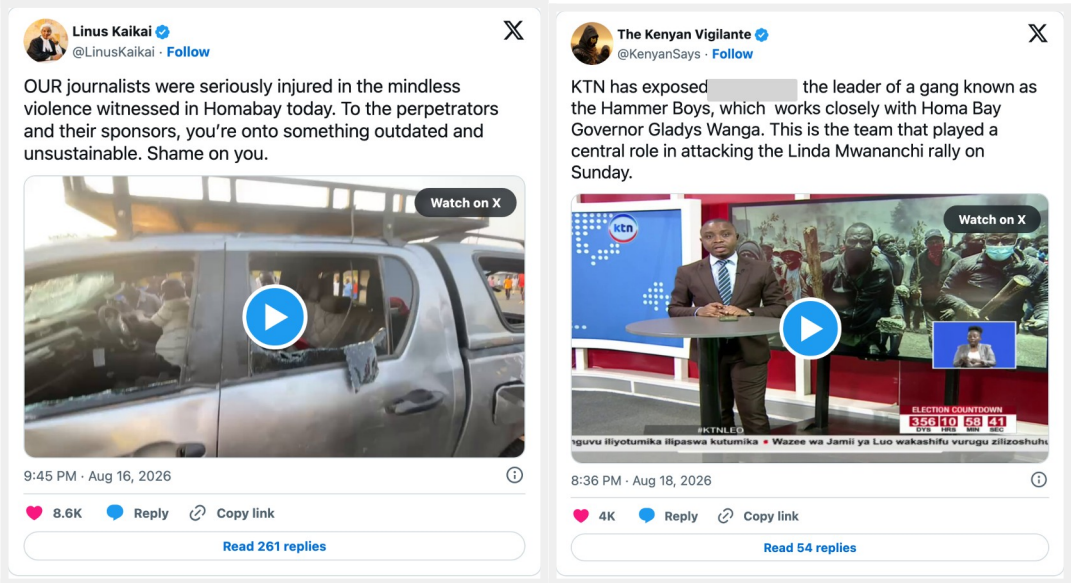
What the Homa Bay violence narrative was about: share of posts mentioning each theme. Themes are assigned by keyword and a post can carry several (Source: Phoenix)

Finding 4: **Each side blamed the other for the violence in Homa Bay on 16 August, and death tolls far above the reported figures circulated widely.**
Posts blaming Governor Gladys Wanga, MP Peter Kaluma and their government allies outnumbered posts blaming Linda Mwananchi leaders or former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua by about three to one (178 against 62). KTN named a gang, the 'Hammer Boys', and its alleged leader, who was arrested on 8 October. Early reports spoke of at least two deaths; the most-liked casualty claim, with 5,381 likes, spoke of 'over 60 dead bodies'. No post offered evidence for the higher figures.

The violence was forecast before it happened. On 8 August, a widely shared clip reported that Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma had warned Linda Mwananchi leaders never to shout 'one term' in Homa Bay because *"that will provoke people"*; the most-liked reply was *"Democracy my friend.....sing your song we sing ours too"*. On 12 August Siaya Governor James Orengo called a press briefing on *"Planned Violence Against Linda Mwanainchi Homabay Rally"*. On the morning of the rally, posts showed roads barricaded around Homa Bay town. By evening, journalists were seen having been injured, the car of a former Bungoma governor had been stoned, and a hotel and church offices had been damaged, according to a gubernatorial aspirant's statement. Early reports spoke of *"at least two people dead"*, including a police driver.

Responsibility was argued along the political divide. Posts blaming Governor Wanga, MP Kaluma, Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo or the government outnumbered posts blaming Linda Mwananchi leaders, Orengo, Babu Owino or Gachagua, and Wanga acquired the nickname 'Gladys

Panga' (*a panga is a machete*). On 18 August KTN named the 'Hammer Boys' gang and its alleged leader as central to the attack, and on 6 September it aired a fuller investigation. The government side told the opposite story. Kaluma said that a bodyguard of Gachagua's had directed the violence and that Uhuru Kenyatta had sent Sh100 million *"to Orengo in suitcases"*, and a supporter wrote that *"Linda Sponsor goons"* had arrived *"armed to the core"*. Wanga complained to the Media Council of Kenya that KTN and The Standard had *"reported falsehoods"*. In the letter, visible in a screenshot shared by a critic, she said the machete-wielding man on The Standard's front page was an employee of Siaya County, which Orengo governs.



Posts on the injury of journalists on the day of the rally, and on KTN's report naming the alleged leader of the 'Hammer Boys' (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The death toll became a contest of its own. A post citing The Standard's report put it at four; one account claimed that mortuaries had been *"receiving over 60 dead bodies from the rally"* (5,381 likes); another post said that *"more than 500 people wamekatwa katwa"* (had been cut with machetes), and another compared the events to the Wagalla massacre of 1984. None of these figures came with evidence. No police, government or independent count of the dead appears in the posts collected; two days after the rally one user noted that the Interior Cabinet Secretary had still not commented. The government side offered its own version of the deaths: posts reported MP Kaluma as saying the Linda Mwananchi convoy had run over and killed a woman, while early reports said a woman had been run over during the chaos and that police had arrested 37 suspected gang members.

Posts also reported sexual violence. The day after the rally, one account wrote that women in a Linda Mwananchi entourage had *"reportedly"* been sexually assaulted, and said Wanga and Kaluma should *"face the same wrath"* (1,617 likes); two days later a post relayed that Hon. Millie Mabona had said women *"were targeted for rape and assault"* (946 likes). No victim's account or official confirmation appears in the posts collected. The NCIC summoned Kaluma after the violence (Finding 11), and the alleged gang leader was arrested at the Homa Bay bus stage on the night of 8 October (3,097 likes).



A post claiming 'over 60 dead bodies', quoting Governor Wanga's complaint against KTN and The Standard, and a post reporting MP Kaluma's claim that Gachagua's bodyguard was in Homa Bay (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

Finding 5: **The violence was turned into a verdict on the Luo community, and calls followed to keep Luo leaders out of Western Kenya.**
Former Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya's open letter to 'perpetrators of violence among the Luo community' drew 1,934 comments, many rejecting advice addressed to one community. A clip warning Governor Wanga not to 'set foot in Western' drew 40,900 likes, and an X user called for revenge before she visited Kakamega in October; no violence was reported in the posts. In a random sample of 200 comments under posts about the Homa Bay violence, 28 (14%) were judged harmful, the highest rate of any narrative sampled.

Former Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya, a politician from Meru County, framed the violence as a problem of one community. His Facebook post, *"An open letter to perpetrators of violence among the Luo community"*, listed attacks on opposition figures in Luo Nyanza and urged the *"Brothers and Sisters of the Luo Community"* to choose peace (1,934 comments). Among the 1,150 comments collected, the most-liked replies rejected advice addressed to one community: *"Luos can take advises from all communities in Kenya exept one community"* (94 likes) and *"Start by advising your tribal Wamunyoro"*, a reference to former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua. One reader put the objection plainly: *"When similar incidents happen in places like Nakuru or Ol Kalou, the focus is often on the individual goons involved. But when violence occurs in Luoland, the entire community is sometimes blamed"*. The same thread carried a threat of forced circumcision: *"no Luo Man will buried uncircumcised"* (58 likes).

In the wider conversation, the violence was turned into a verdict on Luo voters and leaders. Commenters linked Luos with violence or folly in 155 comments, often in the form 'Luos killing Luos', and contrasted what other regions were said to receive from the government with what Homa Bay received. Babu Owino said that people in Ol Kalou were given gas cylinders and shoes, while *"hapa Homabay mnapewa panga na rungu"* (here in Homa Bay you are given machetes and clubs). In Western Kenya, where Sifuna has his base, the anger turned outward. A TikTok clip of the activist Nuru Okanga, captioned *"Wanga Usijaribu Kukanyaga Western!!"* (Wanga, do not try to set foot in Western), drew 40,900 likes; the most-liked reply was *"aki Ruto anatumia wajaluo vibaya Sana"* (Ruto is badly misusing Luos) (639 likes), and

the second *"people are taking lightly what Nuru Okanga is saying. its very serious"* (362 likes). On 8 October, the day before Wanga was due in Kakamega, an X user wrote *"we must revenge what they did to sifuna in homabay"* (1,825 likes). The visit went ahead, and no violence was reported in the posts.

The same threads carried pleas for restraint, some of them from the government side. Migori Senator Eddy Oketch, a Ruto ally, posted *"We must conduct peaceful campaigns. Violence will only hurt our candidate the President"* (5,898 likes, 1,315 comments); his readers welcomed it but asked him to *"forward this message to your chairperson Wanga and Kaluma"* (47 likes). Homa Bay residents pushed back against the image of their county: *"We are not synonymous with violence, we are known with the amazing and beautiful dishes"*. But the comment sections under Homa Bay posts carried the highest rate of harmful comments in this report, about one in seven in the sample, and the largest share of the threats and calls for violence found by the severe-content screen (Finding 1).

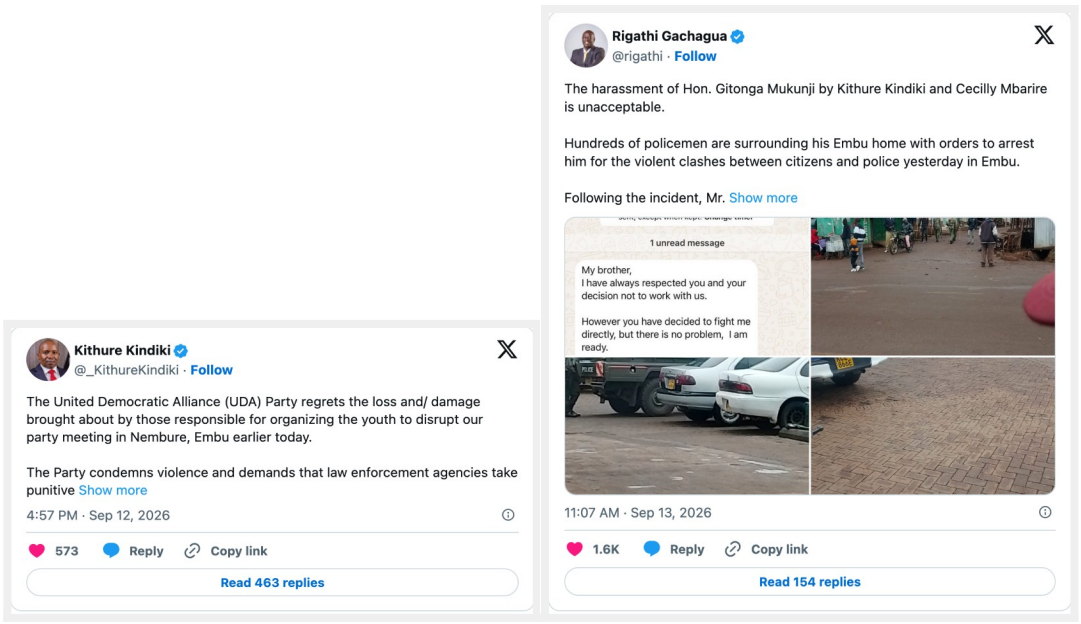
Narrative 2: The violence at Deputy President Kindiki's meeting in Embu

The narrative contains 111 posts that had drawn about 32,000 likes and 3,500 comments; about 1,600 of the comments were collected, spread across YouTube, TikTok and Facebook. Most of the engagement came in the week of the violence, when 78 posts drew about 26,500 likes; the rest of the narrative covers the month before, when the Deputy President's meetings in Embu met growing hostility.

Finding 6: **Four weeks after Homa Bay, a meeting led by Deputy President Kindiki in Embu ended in teargas, burning vehicles and at least one reported death, after a month of warning signs at the same grounds.**
On 12 September a meeting of the ruling United Democratic Alliance (UDA) at Nembure grounds broke up in teargas, with reports of gunfire; six vehicles were torched, among them one belonging to journalists, and one person was reported killed. Two weeks earlier a Kindiki meeting at the same grounds had nearly ended in chaos, and the local MP had accused the county governor of ethnic profiling of the Kikuyu. Casualty reports conflicted, police arrested three suspects, and police officers deployed at the home of the opposition MP whom UDA leaders blamed.

The violence followed a month of warning signs at the same grounds. On 15 August the local MP, Gitonga Mukunji, an ally of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, said a Kindiki meeting in his constituency was part of a plan *"to divide the Mountain"*. On 28 August, as Kindiki met what The Star described as more than 30,000 grassroots leaders at Nembure, a video showed the meeting *"almost ends chaotically"* after a woman abused Mukunji, and a YouTube channel reported the crowd chanting for former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, DCP and Mukunji. On 8 and 9 September Mukunji accused Governor Cecily Mbarire of ethnic profiling of the Kikuyu in Embu, warning that her *"Pasua Mlima"* (split the mountain) plan could trigger ethnic violence. On 11 September posts announced that Kindiki and Mbarire would hold a *"Pasua Mlima Rally"* at Nembure the next day.

On 12 September, a UDA delegates' meeting at Nembure grounds in Embu, led by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki and Governor Cecily Mbarire, broke up in teargas and burning vehicles, among them a car belonging to Royal Media journalists. Posts described *"teargas, gunfire, burning vehicles"*. Kindiki's party condemned *"those responsible for organizing the youth to disrupt our party meeting"*, and Mbarire blamed former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and DCP.



Deputy President Kindiki's statement on the Nembure meeting, and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's response to the police action against MP Gitonga Mukunji (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The casualty reports never settled. Citizen TV first reported *"Two feared dead"*, and later one person killed, several injured and six vehicles torched. YouTube channels spoke of *"several feared dead"* and, in one case, *"7 shot dead"*, and a TikTok post said two people had been cut with machetes. NTV's report that *"conflicting reports emerge on casualties"* was the most-liked post in the narrative (5,328 likes). Two days later, an NTV headline reported that an Embu MP disputed the official death toll, but neither that post nor any other in the data gives the official figure or names a victim.

The police acted quickly. Police in Embu arrested two suspects the next day and a third on 14 September 2026. On 13 September hundreds of police and DCI officers were deployed outside Mukunji's home, with posts saying they had orders not to leave until they had arrested him; former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua called it *"harassment"*. The same day the MP announced he would run for governor of Embu on a DCP ticket. Some posts set the response against Homa Bay: *"Where was this exact same state energy, swift condemnation, and moral outrage during the deadly Homa Bay attack?"*. Others asked how the Deputy President's own security and intelligence services had not foreseen the attack.

Opposition supporters said the violence had been staged for sympathy: DCP TV wrote that *"Government sponsored-Goons dressed in UDA regalia"* had been ferried in, and about 95 of the 1,582 comments collected called it staged or *"stage managed"*. No post in the data offered evidence for either side's account.

In the comments, some Embu residents insisted that *"the mountain is one"*, while others wrote that *"Embu Sio wakikuyu"* (Embu people are not Kikuyus), and one warned that they would never again let *"wakikuyu watufanye watumwa"* (the Kikuyu make us slaves). The share of harmful comments in the sample (5%) was lower than for Homa Bay, but the pattern was the same: each side condemned violence against its own and explained away violence attributed to its allies. The most-liked comment endorsing violence, under a YouTube video claiming that President Ruto had sent police to teargas Kindiki, read *"Wacha wapigwe. Sisi tuko na Gachagua na Sifuna"* (let them be beaten; we are with Gachagua and Sifuna).

Other incidents: intimidation and police force

Outside Homa Bay and Embu, the most widely shared incident involved no injuries. On 20 September Ndindi Nyoro attended a service at St Paul's Engineer ACK Church in Kinangop, where the local MP, Kwenya Thuku, also arrived; videos showed the two men *"almost fight"*, and Nyoro read out messages in which, according to posts, Thuku had warned him not to set foot in Kinangop or face dire consequences. The church's pastor said he had not invited Thuku, and Thuku later dismissed Nyoro as *"a small wheelbarrow"* and Ruto's project. Some 50 posts on the confrontation drew about 74,000 likes and 1.4 million TikTok plays, more than the violence in Embu. Finding 18 describes it as part of Nyoro's public image; it is also a case of a sitting MP warning a rival away from his constituency.

Police use of teargas became an argument about fairness. Posts reported teargas at the Homa Bay rally, where The Standard's investigation alleged that police had supplied it to the youths sent against the convoy; at a Linda Mwananchi gathering in Makutano, Meru, on 30 August, where *"Sifuna was teargasses today Methu was teargassed too"* and NTV's report drew 392 comments on X; and on 12 September at the Deputy President's own meeting in Embu, which one account called *"Same playbook they use on the opposition"*. Nyoro turned it against the government: *"You have used tear gas on the opposition, and now you are even using it on your own deputy"*, while his rivals turned it against him: *"Why is Ndindi Nyoro never teargassed?"*.

Two other incidents drew little engagement. In July an NTV investigation into violence at the Ol Kalou by-election named an alleged organiser, a former Communications Authority chairman who, posts said, would run against Nyoro in Kiharu. On 30 August one post reported that Orengo's car had been torched in Awendo, Migori; no other post in the data confirmed it.

Part 3: Trust in the electoral process and public institutions

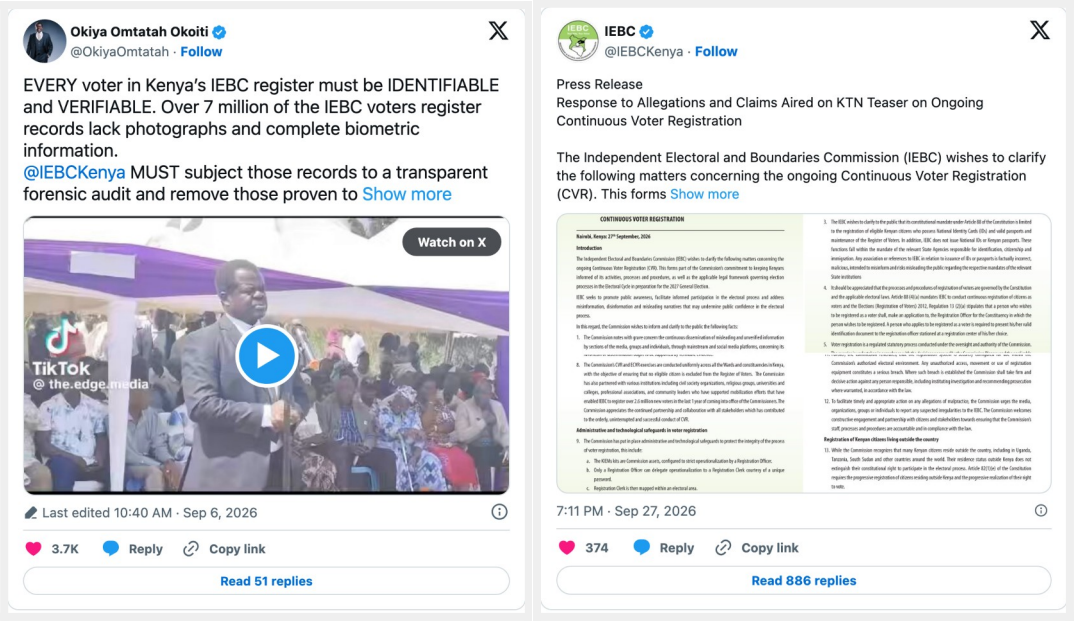
This part looks first at the electoral commission, through three narratives about the voter register, election technology and the transmission of results. It then turns to four other public bodies whose conduct bears on the 2027 election: the registrar of political parties and the tribunal that hears appeals against it, the NCIC, the police, and the courts. For each, it sets out the criticism made of the institution, what the institution did as far as the posts show, and how its response was received.

Narrative 3: 'Foreigners with Kenyan IDs and voter cards'

The narrative contains 154 posts that had drawn about 53,000 likes and 6,400 comments; about 3,200 of the comments were collected, mostly from Facebook. Because one search term was simply 'voter register Kenya', many posts are voter registration drives by politicians of all parties; about a third (52) concern who is, or should not be, on the register.

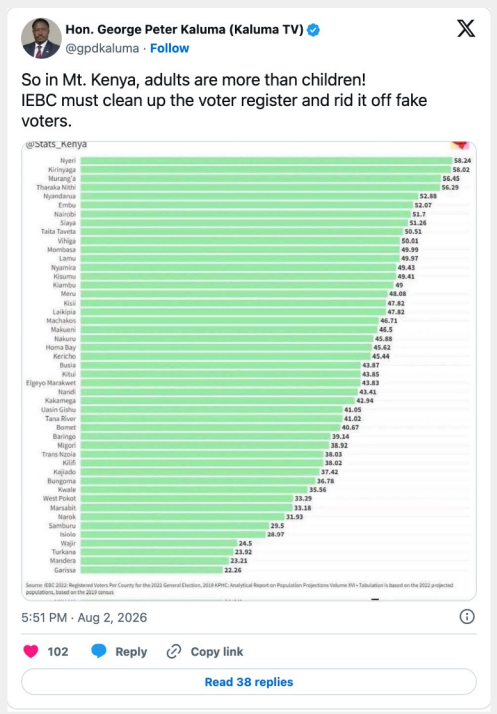
Finding 7: **Each side accused the other of padding the voter register: with foreigners from Uganda, or with 'fake Kikuyu voters'.**
After KTN aired claims in late September about voter registration along the Uganda border, opposition leaders including Nyoro said foreigners were being registered to vote for Ruto. Government ally Peter Kaluma demanded the removal of 'fake Kikuyu voters', arguing that no county could have more adults than children. Senator Okiya Omtatah's call to audit 7 million records lacking photographs drew the most likes. The electoral commission's denial drew mostly hostile replies.

The register was questioned before the claim about foreigners took hold. On 6 September Senator Okiya Omtatah wrote that *"Over 7 million of the IEBC voters register records lack photographs and complete biometric information"* and demanded a forensic audit (3,736 likes); a TikTok version asked whether Ruto was *"starting the 2027 race with 7 million+ votes"* (11,000 likes). In late September KTN aired a teaser for an investigation into voter registration along the Uganda border, and the electoral commission responded on 27 September, warning against *"misleading and unverified information"* (1,049 comments). An X post then claimed that Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen and two MPs had visited Amanang, across the border in Uganda, and told residents *"You are home"*, and on 1 October Nyoro told a rally in Nyeri County that foreigners, including Ugandans, were being registered to vote.



Senator Okiya Omtatah's call for an audit of the voter register, and the electoral commission's response to KTN on 27 September (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The government side answered with a mirror claim about the opposition's heartland. MP Peter Kaluma wrote on 6 October: *"IEBC should clean up and publish the voter register. No County in Kenya has more adults than children. Remove the fake Kikuyu voters from the register"* (474 comments). The most-liked reply was a circumcision taunt, *"where i came from men dont argue with boys (uncircumcised)"* (81 likes), and much of the thread argued over the size of each community's vote. Both claims named a group of people who should not be counted, foreigners in one case and Kikuyu in the other, and neither came with evidence. The commission's statement drew a hostile reception: the most-liked replies under it on X were *"This commission thinks we are stupid"* (532 likes) and *"IEBC will definitely try to help Ruto rig the elections. You will fail. Msitujaribu"* (do not test us) (263 likes) (link), and another warned foreigners *"USIDHUBUTU KWA USALAMA WAKO"* (do not dare, for your own safety).



MP Peter Kaluma's earlier post on the Mount Kenya register, 2 August 2026 (link) (Source: X)

Narrative 4: Bills and court cases touching on the election

The narrative contains 166 posts that had drawn about 30,000 likes and 2,800 comments; about 1,400 of the comments were collected, nearly all from Facebook. Most posts (87%) concern Kenya's electoral laws, technology and court cases.

Finding 8: **Disputes over election technology and the national tallying centre were argued as rigging plans before the rules were settled.**
In August, former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua alleged that the electoral commission's technology tender had been tailored for a South Korean firm, Miru Systems; the commission called his statement 'unsubstantiated and false', and the procurement review board later ordered the tender reviewed. A coalition led by former Chief Justice David Maraga sought to scrap the national tallying centre; the High Court ruled on 22 September that it stays. About one post in four in the narrative alleges past or planned rigging.

Election technology was the main subject: three posts in five mention it. The commission opened tenders for voter identification kits, ballot papers and the voter register in August. Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka warned that the opposition would oppose any attempt to bring back Smartmatic, which had supplied technology for earlier elections (890 likes), and at a press briefing on 26 August Gachagua alleged that the tender had been tailored for a South Korean firm, Miru Systems. One post amplified the claim by calling the firm *"a South Korean company with a dirty history of rigging elections across the world"* (1,368 likes). The commission called Gachagua's statement *"unsubstantiated and false"* (656 comments), and on 4 September the procurement review board ordered it to review the tender after finding deficiencies in its evaluation criteria and technical requirements. In October Gachagua went further, linking the technology to the late Zimbabwean businessman Wicknell Chivayo (1,658 likes).



Kalonzo Musyoka's warning on election technology, and former Chief Justice David Maraga on the People's Coalition on Electoral Reforms (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

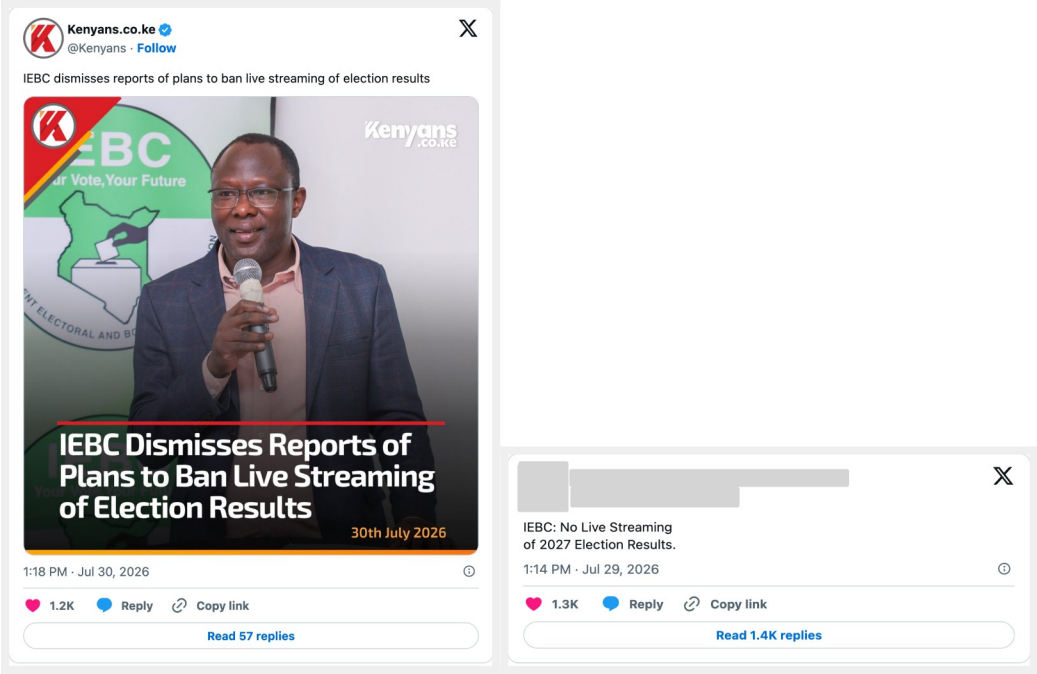
The second dispute concerned where the presidential result would be decided. The People's Coalition on Electoral Reforms, led by Maraga, argued on 15 September that *"Elections must begin and end at Polling Stations"* and that the national tallying centre at Bomas is *"used to Alter Results"*. Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale rejected the proposal, and on 22 September the High Court dismissed a petition by Senator Omtatah against the tallying centre; the coalition said it would appeal. Maraga's later verdict, *"Going into 2027 without electoral reforms isn't an election. It's a coronation with extra paperwork"* (link), matched the tone of the narrative: about one post in four alleged rigging, either in 2022 (*"HOW RUTO RIGGED THE 2022 ELECTIONS"*, 281 comments) (link) or in the elections Uhuru Kenyatta won, after posts reported that former Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria had said he helped alter the servers. Some comments threatened the commission's officials, sometimes by invoking the late former chairman Wafula Chebukati: *"mtakufa vibaya Kaa akna chebukati"* (you will die badly, like Chebukati and others).

Narrative 5: Who has the right to transmit election results

The narrative contains 38 posts that had drawn about 5,700 likes and 3,000 comments; about 900 of the comments were collected from Facebook and YouTube. It is one of the smallest narratives in this report, and 14 of its posts are unrelated engagement spam from accounts outside Kenya, picked up because they carry long lists of trending keywords. The rest concern how results will be transmitted and announced.

Finding 9: **A post claiming the electoral commission would not stream 2027 results live drew more comments than all the posts carrying the commission's denial.**
On 29 July, an X commentary account posted 'IEBC: No Live Streaming of 2027 Election Results', which drew 1,576 comments. The next day the commission said that media reports had misrepresented a bill before Parliament. Its statement and the posts reporting it, 13 in all, drew 945 comments between them, and the replies under it were largely disbelieving. More than a third of the posts collected for this narrative were unrelated spam.

On 29 July an X commentary account posted *"IEBC: No Live Streaming of 2027 Election Results"* (1,357 likes, 1,576 comments). Other accounts linked it to a bill in the Senate: *"the regime is using Aoron Cheruiyot to propose a bill that seeks to stop IEBC from streaming live election results from the polling stations"*. The next day the commission said that media reports had misrepresented the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which did not amend the section of the law on its integrated election management system, and its chairman said that *"the IEBC has not made any proposals to stop the live streaming of the 2027 election results"*. The denial was widely reported, but the 13 posts carrying it drew 945 comments between them, fewer than the original claim on its own.



The post announcing 'No Live Streaming of 2027 Election Results', and Kenyans.co.ke's report of the commission's denial the next day (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The denial did not settle the matter for its audience. Among the 511 comments collected under the commission's Facebook statement, the most-liked replies were *"This time round you won't compromise the will of the people. It will be voting and securing the votes"*, *"We shall have an alternative transmitter system. Elections ends at the polling station whether you love it or not"* and *"We know there is a bill in senate with that proposal on live broadcast and you are here ignoring that sensitive piece of amendment"*. Several demanded that any change to election law go to a referendum. The idea that elections end at the polling station runs through this narrative and the previous one, and with it the expectation that voters themselves will record and share results: *"Tutakua live from the polling station so don't joke with live streaming"* (we will be live from the polling station). One comment in forty in the sample threatened the commission's officials, among them *"Bwana @Ethekom we will come for your head, I swear"*.

The registrar of political parties and the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal

The registrar or the tribunal is named in 132 posts, which drew about 102,000 likes and 5,200 comments. Of these, 92 were published from 4 October, when Sifuna launched his party, many of them instructions for joining it through the registrar's system.

Finding 10: The Registrar of Political Parties was overruled by a tribunal on the Linda Mwananchi name. When the Registrar went silent after sign-ups to Sifuna's party failed, many claimed that it was state interference through the Registrar.
From August, Sifuna's supporters said the registrar was obstructing the Linda Mwananchi movement, after it declined to register the name. At the end of September, the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal ruled that the registrar had acted unlawfully. When the phone code for joining Sifuna's new party failed in early October, supporters accused the registrar of acting for the government. No statement from the registrar on the failure appears in the data. The code was working again within two days, and posts then reported that the registrar was processing the party's changes.

The dispute began over a name. Supporters read the registrar's refusal as political from the start: *"Linda Mwananchi wanted to register a party but they have been always frustrated by the registrar, Ndindi Nyoro's People's party of Kenya took seconds to register"* (link, 6,554 likes, 17 August). A post on 4 September explained the background: the registrar had declined the name 'Linda Mwananchi Party of Kenya', citing similarities with names already reserved, including Linda Mkenya and Boresha Kenya, and on 25 August the tribunal had restrained the registrar from registering 'Linda Mwananchi' or a similar name for anyone else while Sifuna's side appealed (7,086 likes). At the end of September the tribunal ruled that the registrar had acted unlawfully in rejecting 'Linda Mwananchi Movement', and ordered it to reserve the name. Not everyone in the opposition accepted the ruling. A supporter of Babu Owino's rival party wrote that *"The ruling of PPDT does not mean anything"* (124 likes). The registrar's own account appears only once: in a letter on the timeline of The Mwananchi Party's change of name, which Babu Owino released on 24 September.

The launch of Sifuna's party on 4 October made the registrar a target again. At the launch, Sifuna accused it of facilitating political fraud (351 likes). When the *509# phone code for joining the party failed, supporters said the failure was deliberate (Finding 21), threatened to 'occupy' the registrar's offices and spread the hashtag #ReformORPP. A post on 4 October said the party was listed in the registrar's membership system and that members could register through official channels (2 likes), but no explanation from the registrar appears in the data. By 6 October supporters reported that the code was working again. On 7 October a post said the change of the party's name was *"ongoing SMOOTHLY"*, adding *"lets wait & see if they will receive a call from ABOVE to frustrate us"* (386 likes), and on 8 October another said the registrar had approved changes to the names of the party's officials (819 likes).

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission

The commission is named in 20 posts, which drew about 6,500 likes, more than two-thirds of them on a single post about the Eldoret lecturer (Finding 3). It is also named in 31 comments. Its own two posts drew 26 likes.

Finding 11: The NCIC was criticised for its silence before the Homa Bay violence and derided after its determination, and none of the politicians it summoned faced charges in the posts collected.
Before the Homa Bay rally, users asked why the NCIC was silent about MP Peter Kaluma's warnings, and one said that complaints sent to it had not been acknowledged. After the violence the commission summoned Kaluma, Busia Governor Paul Otuoma and Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku. On 1 October it published a determination on Kaluma and Otuoma as a link to a document folder; all 18 replies collected under its Facebook post were critical. None of the politicians it summoned faced charges in the posts collected. The only hate-speech prosecution in the data concerned a private individual.

Calls for the commission to act began before the violence. Under a clip of Kaluma warning Linda Mwananchi leaders not to shout 'one term' in Homa Bay (Finding 4), a commenter asked *"NCIC wako wapi? Ama huyu ni wa chama chao?"* (where is the NCIC? Or is he from their party?). On 15 August an X user asked the commission and the police to investigate reports that Kaluma was telling people to target Linda Mwananchi supporters. On the day of the rally, another wrote that the commission was *"completely to blame for what Kaluma said & today's Homabay violence"*, because *"we sent them more than four formal complaints against him, with full evidence. Not even an acknowledgement"*. A reply put the suspicion more broadly: *"ncic exists to protect politicians from remarks by other politicians. No institution in Kenya exists to serve mwananchi"*.

The commission acted after the violence. On 18 August posts reported that it had summoned Kaluma. According to one post, he called a press conference instead, to blame his opponents for the violence. On 1 September a member of the commission wrote that it had heard Kaluma and Otuoma the day before, and Ruku that day. He said the commission was *"committed especially at this period ahead of the General Elections to leaving no stone unturned in ensuring there is responsible political leadership"*. Doubts persisted: one commenter wrote that Ruku, summoned by *"that toothless NCIC"*, had left *"boasting that he has been cleared and sanitized"*. After the Eldoret lecturer's remarks, Pauline Njoroge asked whether the commission would summon him (Finding 3). No action on the lecturer appears in the data. Finding 3 also notes that the commission later summoned MP Joseph Iraya Wainaina.

On 1 October the commission announced on Facebook and X that it had *"rendered its determination"* on Kaluma and Otuoma. The determination itself was available only through a link to a document folder. All 18 replies collected under the Facebook post were critical, among them *"Useless commission. Should be disbanded"*, *"NCIC lost credibility a long time ago. It is part of the Broad based Govt"* and *"how many people were to die or how many businesses had to go to dogs for you to find any fault in Homa Bay town mp Peter Kaluma?"*. Days later, when Kaluma demanded the removal of 'fake Kikuyu voters' from the register (Finding 7), a commenter asked *"kwani NCIC ilienda wapi"* (where did the NCIC go?). None of the politicians the commission summoned faced charges in the posts collected.

The police

Finding 12: Police responses to political violence were judged by whose side they appeared to favour, and the police's own account is absent from the data.
After Homa Bay, opposition supporters said the police had watched as gangs attacked, and pointed to the Interior Cabinet Secretary's silence. The alleged gang leader was arrested seven weeks later. After the violence at the Deputy President's meeting in Embu, three suspects were arrested within two days and officers surrounded an opposition MP's home. Critics read the contrast as partisanship, and turned a remark attributed to the Interior Cabinet Secretary against the government. No post from the National Police Service or the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) appears in the data.

In Homa Bay the complaint was inaction. A statement posted for Linda Mwananchi the day after the rally said that *"The police officers have been complacent as goons brandish crude weapons"*. Under a clip of Governor Wanga blaming Orengo's side for the violence, one reply asked *"Then why were the police officers watching without action madam"*. A YouTube commenter wrote: *"It is only in this regime in independent Kenya I have seen the goons walking side by side with the police and the police are doing nothing"* . Two days after the rally, Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen had still not commented (Finding 4). When he did, a post quoted him as saying the country was *"safer than it was during the regimes of Uhuru, Mwai Kibaki, and Moi"* (link). Nyoro then called for his resignation (link, 284 likes).

Early reports said police had arrested 37 suspected gang members (Finding 4). The alleged leader of the 'Hammer Boys' was hunted after he failed to honour a DCI summons (1,273 likes), but he was arrested only on 8 October. The next day an account claimed that Wanga and Kaluma were pressuring police to release him (400 likes); no post offered evidence for the claim. Others called the delay *"Selective justice"*, saying Kaluma and Wanga were *"still walking free"* (103 likes).

In Embu four weeks later the response was quicker, and it was read the same way. Police arrested three suspects within two days and deployed officers outside the home of the opposition MP whom UDA leaders blamed (Finding 6). Opposition supporters threw back a line they attributed to Murkomen, that people should not go where they know there are goons: *"Waiting for Kipchumba Murkomen to say that if Kindiki knew goons were in Embu, why did he host a rally"* (link, 262 likes). A TikTok comment, *"Why go where there is Goons says Murkomen"*, drew 229 likes (link). One user wrote that teargas *"is made for us opposition supporters - children of a lesser god"* (link, 38 likes), echoing complaints about teargas at opposition gatherings (Part 2). What the police did was known only through the media and politicians on both sides.

The courts and tribunals

Finding 13: Courts and tribunals were where criticism of institutions was tested, and each ruling was claimed by the side it favoured.
Courts and tribunals ruled on several of the disputes: the tribunal found that the registrar had acted unlawfully, the procurement review board ordered the electoral commission to review its technology tender, and the High Court upheld the national tallying centre and ruled twice on Uhuru Kenyatta's place in politics. Each side welcomed the rulings that went its way and appealed or dismissed the others. One ruling was used to circulate old figures about the voter register as new. Direct attacks on the courts themselves were rare.

In two cases the rulings went the critics' way: the tribunal's ruling against the registrar (Finding 10), and the procurement review board's order that the electoral commission review its technology tender (Finding 8). The High Court went the other way on the national tallying centre, and the reform coalition led by Maraga said it would appeal (137 likes). In September the High Court also ruled twice on whether a retired president may take part in politics (Finding 28). Each side claimed the ruling that suited it. President Ruto welcomed the first (533 likes). Uhuru's supporters celebrated the second: *"UHURU KENYATTA 'WINS' BIG AS JUSTICE MWAMUYE SAID HE CAN DO POLITICS, AND SHOULD GET ALL HIS RETIREMENT BENEFITS!"* (1,479 likes). Rulings that went the wrong way were dismissed, as with the post saying the tribunal's ruling *"does not mean anything"* (Finding 10).

One ruling became a vehicle for misleading figures. On 19 September a TikTok account presented figures on double IDs and dead voters as having 'emerged' after the High Court allowed parties and observers to examine election records, without saying who had produced them (Finding 16). A column on 5 October pointed out that the count of dead voters matched a preliminary KPMG audit the commission had announced in June 2022: *"a historical finding, not a verified count of deceased voters remaining today"*. Direct attacks on the courts were rare. One of the few widely liked ones said that in *"a properly functioning lawful nation we would by now have Ruto and his government, Uhuru and his government and most judges in jail"* (539 likes).

Oversight and rights bodies

Bodies whose mandate covers police conduct and human rights were almost absent. The Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) is not mentioned in connection with police conduct at Homa Bay, at Embu, or at the opposition gatherings dispersed with teargas. It appears in only a handful of comments, one of which blamed it: *"IPOA and human right activities spoiled this country long time ago siku hizi polisi nikama walimu funza na uende nyumban ungoje mshahara"* (… these days the police are like teachers: teach, go home and wait for your salary). The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) appears in one post, NTV's report on 20 September that it was warning about *"political violence in Embu, and inflammatory rhetoric ahead of the 2027 General Election"* (4 likes); under a video of attacks on Burundians, a commenter asked *"Where is the Human Rights Commission?"*. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions appears once, announcing the charge over threats against Burundians (Finding 2) (8 likes), and no charge arising from the violence in Homa Bay or Embu appears in the posts collected. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Auditor-General and the Controller of Budget do not appear in connection with the election.

Part 4: Misinformation trends

This part looks at claims that circulated as fact in the narratives in this report. A claim is described as false when other posts in the data contradict it with first-hand or official information, and as unverified

when it was presented as fact without evidence. Claims by politicians are treated the same way: the report does not judge whether they are true, only whether evidence was offered. Where one event drew a flood of such claims, the report calls it a misinformation cluster; where competing claims left no reliable account at all, as with the death tolls after the Homa Bay violence, the result was information disorder. The data shows when posts appeared and whether a correction followed. It cannot show how quickly views built up, because likes and plays were counted once, when the posts were collected, and claims made only in images are not captured.

Misinformation clustered in six areas:

Politicians' health. Rumours that ODM leader Oburu Oginga had died, the clearest misinformation cluster in the data, which his party denied (Finding 14).

Public health. Claims that Kenya's first Ebola case was invented, brought in for donor money, or would be used to postpone the 2027 election (Finding 15).

The electoral process. That the commission would stop streaming results, which it denied (Finding 9); that dead voters would be used to re-elect Ruto, supported by old audit figures presented as new (Findings 13 and 16); and that past elections were rigged by altering servers (Findings 8 and 16).

Party money and membership. Sums Uhuru Kenyatta was said to have paid Sifuna's camp, for which no evidence was offered (Finding 25); membership counts for new parties that could not be checked (Findings 21 and 24); and polls whose figures could not be right, such as an *"October 2026 Nairobi Governor poll"*, naming no pollster, whose figures add up to 181% (204 likes).

Violence. Death tolls far above the reported figures after Homa Bay and Embu, and blame pinned on named people without evidence (Findings 4 and 6). On 18 August, seven posts carrying MP Peter Kaluma's claim that former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's bodyguard had led the Homa Bay violence appeared within four hours (link, 10,200 likes).

Fabricated news and documents. Announcements that were false when made or soon contradicted: that *"the Linda Mwananchi Party will not be registered"*, posted word for word by three accounts on 8 September, three weeks before the tribunal ordered the name reserved (Finding 10); that *"Edwin Sifuna is the new party leader of Jubilee"* (link, 207 likes), five days before Nyoro congratulated Fred Matiang'i as Jubilee's leader; and a doctored gazette notice for Babu Owino's party, which an ordinary user caught on 11 September.

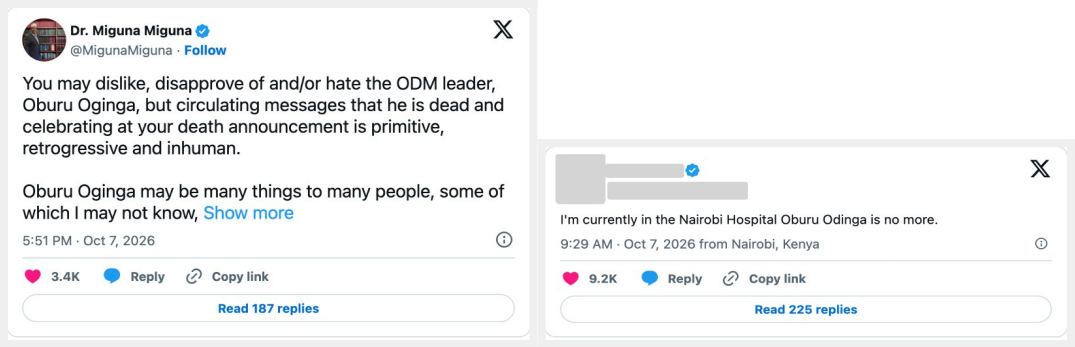
Narrative 6: The whereabouts of Oburu Oginga

The narrative contains 265 posts that had drawn about 205,000 likes and 8,000 comments; about 2,900 of the comments were collected, mostly from Facebook and TikTok. Three posts in five are on X, but TikTok carried most of the likes. Almost all the posts were published from the end of August onwards, 165 of them between 3 and 12 October.

Finding 14: **Rumours that ODM leader Oburu Oginga had died spread fastest when official information was thinnest, and some greeted them with jokes.**
Oburu Oginga, who has led the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) since his brother Raila Odinga's death, was admitted to hospital at the end of August and again in early October. On 6 and 7 October, 37 posts discussed claims that he had died, among them 'I'm currently in the Nairobi Hospital Oburu Odinga is no more' (9,226 likes). ODM leaders denied the claims without showing him, and many posts tied the rumours to the anniversary of Raila's death on 15 October. One sampled comment in eight was harmful, many of them premature condolences or jokes about his death.

The late Raila Odinga's elder brother and ODM's leader, Oburu Oginga, was admitted to Nairobi Hospital at the end of August. On 1 September he said he had only had a check-up and was *"very well"*, and shared photographs of himself at a meal; a Facebook page supporting Sifuna answered that his party had *"took OBURU out of hospital and forced him to take a photo"*. After treatment in the United Kingdom he returned on 25 September and was admitted again on 3 October.

With no image or statement from him, claims of his death followed. On 5 October an X post joked *"Pilau delayed is not Pilau denied"*, in reference to the pilau rice served at funerals (link, 9,840 likes). On 6 October posts reported an activist's claim that he had died (link, 3,471 likes), and on 7 October an account wrote *"I'm currently in the Nairobi Hospital Oburu Odinga is no more"* (link, 9,226 likes). Others added details that could not be checked: *"Heavy military presence has been reported at Lee Funeral Home"* (link, 3,284 likes), and a claim that Ida Odinga had asked doctors not to disconnect his oxygen *"until 16th October"*, after the anniversary of Raila's death (link, 1,307 likes). One post claimed that the intelligence service had sent the activist to spread the rumour (link, 2,272 likes).



A post claiming on 7 October that Oburu Oginga had died, and lawyer Miguna Miguna's rebuke of those circulating and celebrating such claims (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The official answers came late and without proof. ODM chair Gladys Wanga said on 6 October that he was *"recovering steadily and in high spirits"* (link), and at the handover of Raila Odinga's mausoleum in Bondo on 7 October, President Ruto said *"He is currently attending to a few hospital matters, but I want to assure you that he is with us"* (link, 1,831 likes). Posts demanding proof followed: *"Why can't he record a video to reassure Kenyans that he is alright?"* (link, 4,998 likes). More than a quarter of the posts recalled Raila's death abroad a year earlier: *"We are approaching 15th October and, given what happened on the same date last year, Kenyans are already looking at the calendar twice"* (link). Others turned to succession, claiming that his son was being prepared for his Senate seat.

Ebola and the election

Thirty-eight posts across the narratives mentioned Ebola, drawing about 12,600 likes and 79,000 TikTok plays. Thirty-five of them were published between 6 and 8 October, after Kenya confirmed its first case.

Finding 15: Kenya's first Ebola case was met within hours by claims that it was invented, imported for money or meant to postpone the 2027 election, and these claims drew far more engagement than news of the case itself.
On 6 October Kenya confirmed its first Ebola case. That day, 15 posts said the case was invented, brought into the country for donor money, or planted to distract from Sifuna's new party, and others said it would be used to postpone the 2027 election. In all, 21 posts made such claims, drawing about 9,200 likes. The two news reports of the case in the data drew 274 likes, and only two posts pushed back.

News of the case arrived in the opposition's busiest week. A news summary posted on 6 October reported that a Kenyan man who had been living in the Democratic Republic of Congo had travelled through Kampala to Nairobi and died in hospital, and that health authorities had identified 28 close contacts. Within hours one of the most-liked posts of the day declared: *"There's no ebola… you must know Kasongo is cooking. Either they're consolidating campaign funds or are planning to postpone elections"* (2,273 likes). Another said the intelligence service was feeding an activist both stories, first an Ebola patient at Nairobi Hospital and then Oburu Oginga's death: *"NIS is NIS"* (2,272 likes). Others called the case a ploy *"to drive you away from the topic of Sifuna,TEP, Dangote deal,ORPP"* (1,174 likes), and a TikTok post told viewers *"Wakenya Hakuna Ebola Kenya Ruto Anataka Kuongeza Tarehe Ya Election"* (Kenyans, there is no Ebola in Kenya; Ruto wants to push back the election date).

A remark by Ndindi Nyoro became the most-shared version of the money claim. K24 reported that he had accused the government of failing to prioritise Kenyans' safety, and had questioned whether it accepted US funding linked to an Ebola quarantine facility in Nanyuki (271 likes). Posts quoting him went further: *"Ruto ameleta Ebola Kenya ndio akule pesa za Ebola zenye alipewa na USA Government"* (Ruto has brought Ebola to Kenya so that he can eat the Ebola money the US government gave him) (1,987 likes, 209 comments). Another claimed the money would go to *"bankrolling Ruto's 2027 election campaign"*. Several posts said the outbreak would be used to ban rallies and *"postpone elections in the name of Ebola"* (289 likes), and one recalled that the Democratic Republic of Congo had postponed elections because of Ebola in 2018. Only two posts pushed back, among them *"Ebola is nothing to Joke around with!"* (33 likes). None of the 94 comments collected under these posts offered health advice. One, blaming opponents of the quarantine facility, said *"nataka Ebola ichape watu wengi sana"* (I want Ebola to strike very many people).

Claims about rigging, results and the voter register

Between July and October the narrative on dead voters contains 23 posts that had drawn about 8,500 likes and 48,000 TikTok plays; about 150 of the comments were collected. Claims of rigging also run through the narratives on bills and court cases and on the transmission of results (Findings 8 and 9).

Finding 16: A UDA official's reported remark about dead voters was taken as proof of a rigging plan, and old audit figures presented as new outperformed the electoral commission's explanation.
On 11 September UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar was reported to have suggested that dead voters' fingerprints could help re-elect Ruto. The government disowned the remark, the electoral commission summoned him, and on 14 September the commission explained why dead voters' data could not be used to rig. Five days later a TikTok account presented as new findings a set of figures that included the dead-voter count from a 2022 audit. Its two posts drew more than 2,600 likes, against about 130 for the commission's explanation, and commenters added the figures up as '1m votes'. Claims about rigged servers and past elections came without evidence.

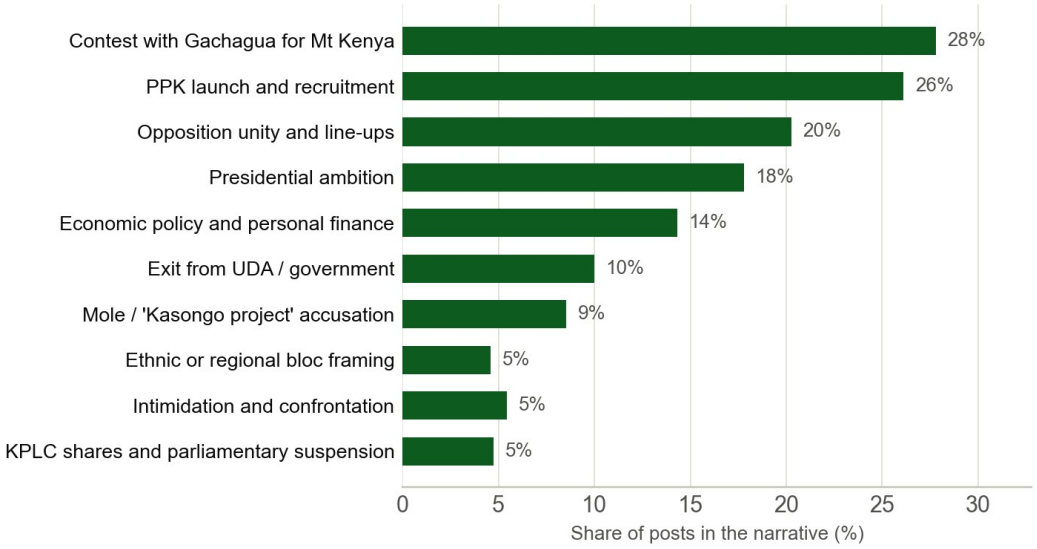
Omar's remark was reported on 11 September as alleging that *"ballots from dead voters will secure Ruto's win"*. Citizen TV's headline put it as a suggestion to use *"dead voters' fingerprints for Ruto re-election"*. Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua condemned the remark and asked the commission to act. The government disowned it, and the commission summoned Omar and explained why dead voters' data could not be used to rig an election. Opposition audiences treated the remark as a confession. Sifuna's reply, *"Even if dead voters vote for Ruto, he will still go home in 2027"*, drew the most likes in the narrative (4,310 likes), and Professor Peter Kagwanja said Omar *"knows only dead voters can save President William Ruto"* (430 likes).

The figures came next. On 19 September a TikTok account wrote that *"it has emerged IEBC register has 481,711 voters with double IDs, 164,269 voters with IDs not in the Kenyan registrar of persons and 246,465 dead voters"* (2,255 likes, 37,200 plays), and posted a second version the same evening (410 likes). The dead-voter count came from a 2022 audit (Finding 13), but commenters read it as current and tied it to Omar: *"that's 1m votes hivo tu"* (that's 1m votes, just like that) (69 likes) and *"that's almost 1m votes. the ones UDA SG was talking about"*. The commission's explanation, posted five days earlier, had drawn about 130 likes. Older rigging claims followed the same pattern. An August post set out *"HOW RUTO RIGGED THE 2022 ELECTIONS"* through the results transmission system (281 comments); a Facebook page headlined a *"Gachagua & JB Muturi Report"* that it said uncovered *"Ruto & IEBC Secret Servers In Statehouse For 2027"*, though the text beneath described only Gachagua's allegations about the technology tender; and a YouTube channel attributed to Uhuru the words *"Ruto RIGGED Himself In"* (407 likes). None offered evidence.

Part 5: The opposition realignment

Narrative 7: Ndindi Nyoro and the People's Party of Kenya (PPK)

The narrative contains 3,178 posts that had drawn about 3.2 million likes and ~144,000 comments, mostly from TikTok, Facebook and YouTube. TikTok carried most of the engagement (2.6 million likes), largely short clips of Nyoro's speeches, while X carried the argument (1,403 posts). Since the PPK launch, the conversation has been dominated by Nyoro's contest with Gachagua for leadership of the Mount Kenya region, with smaller strands on his presidential ambitions, opposition line-ups and economic policy.

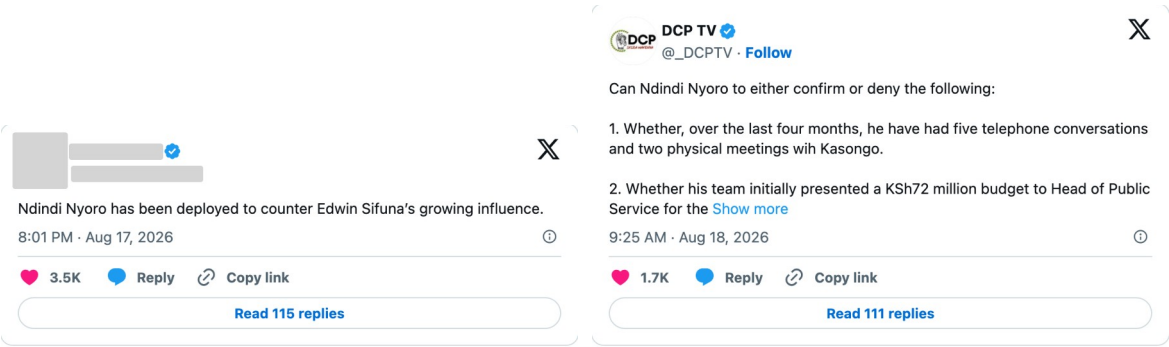


What the Ndindi Nyoro narrative was about: share of posts mentioning each theme. Themes are assigned by keyword and a post can carry several (Source: Phoenix)

Finding 17: **Ndindi Nyoro's new party was received as a loyalty test, and the 'mole' accusation became its defining frame.**
Nyoro's launch of the People's Party of Kenya (PPK) on 17 August was read less as a new opposition vehicle than as a challenge to former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's hold on Mount Kenya. Within a day, opposition accounts claimed he had been 'deployed' by the government, and by September Gachagua was quoted alleging that Nyoro had been paid Sh200 million to split the region's vote. The contest with Gachagua is the most common theme in the narrative.

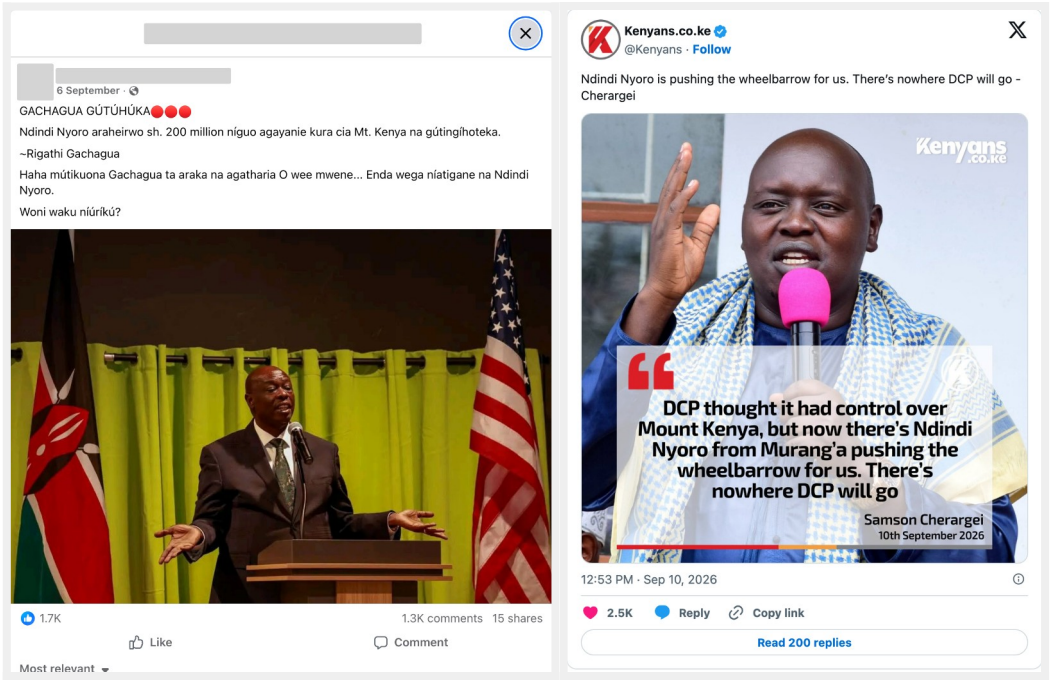
Nyoro announced the move on 17 August. In the most-liked clip of the launch, shared by NTV Kenya (26,700 likes), he says: *"We left the government a long time ago... Kutoka leo nimeingia chama cha People's Party of Kenya [from today I have joined the People's Party of Kenya]. I have sat down with Rigathi Gachagua, James Orengo, Martha Karua, Kalonzo Musyoka, Matiang'i... Sifuna is my brother."* Former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i was the only major opposition figure to congratulate him publicly, according to social media posts at the time.

The reaction from Gachagua's camp came within hours and set the frame that followed. On launch day an X account posted that *"Ndindi Nyoro has been deployed to counter Edwin Sifuna's growing influence"* (3,574 likes). The next day the DCP-aligned account DCP TV demanded that Nyoro *"confirm or deny"* that he had held five telephone conversations and two meetings with 'Kasongo' (the nickname critics use for President Ruto). On 6 September a Gikuyu-language Facebook page quoted Gachagua: *"Ndindi Nyoro araheirwo sh. 200 million níguo agayanie kura cia Mt. Kenya"* (Ndindi Nyoro was given Sh200 million to split the Mount Kenya vote). The post drew 1,275 comments.



Posts on the day of and the day after the PPK launch casting Nyoro as a government plant (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

Statements by government allies fed the accusation. Nandi Senator Samson Cherargei said that *"Ndindi Nyoro is pushing the wheelbarrow for us. There's nowhere DCP will go"*, the wheelbarrow being UDA's symbol (2,594 likes), and Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah reportedly warned that anyone attacking Nyoro would face consequences. Each statement was recirculated by DCP supporters as proof. One post quoting Gachagua concluded: *"The guilty are always afraid and the mole has exposed himself"*.



Gikuyu-language post quoting Gachagua's Sh200 million allegation, and Senator Cherargei's remark that Nyoro was 'pushing the wheelbarrow' for UDA (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: Facebook, X)

The audiences of these posts largely took the accusation at face value. Among the 907 comments collected under that post, the most-liked replies accepted the bribery claim without asking for evidence. They called Nyoro Ruto's "project" or a "wheelbarrow", the symbol of Ruto's party, and said Gachagua "has never told a lie" (97 likes). Defenders were few and drew fewer likes: *"Ndindi Nyoro is very genuine and he's ready to work with the opposition"* (27 likes). In one of the Gikuyu-language Facebook pages, the most-liked reply to someone asking why DCP leaders were attacking Nyoro was: *"He is being fought because he is Ruto's mole just like we fight moles when they come into our farms"*.

Nyoro's answer was to turn the test back on his accusers. In a Gikuyu-language interview reported on Inooro TV, he said he had refused to vote for Gachagua's impeachment, had funded Gachagua's Ol Kalou

by-election campaign, and that the UDA leaders who congratulated him were part of a strategy to portray him as a mole. He told UDA defectors: *"Kama ulitusi Gachagua usijaribu kusongea People's Party"* (if you insulted Gachagua, do not try to come near the People's Party) (12,500 likes), and asked: *"All these opposition leaders wanted me in their parties before I joined the People's Party. You wanted me in your parties yet you think I am a mole?"*. Some DCP figures broke ranks: Kirinyaga governor hopeful Wangui Ngirici dismissed the mole claims, and former Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria wrote that a *"well oiled cabal"* was out to destroy Nyoro, adding *"over my dead body"*.

The accusation did not fade; it widened. On 11 October DCP Secretary General and Nyandarua Senator John Methu repeated it on television, and posts quoted him extending it to Nyoro's ally: *"If I say Ndindi Nyoro is a mole, and Matiang'i is his best friend, what does that make Matiang'i?"*. Matiang'i's supporters responded that his camp might *"chart its own political path"* with a Matiang'i and Nyoro ticket. The mole accusation appears in 271 posts in this narrative (8.5%), and 162 of them also discuss the contest with Gachagua. The separate narrative '*Ndindi Nyoro as a mole for the government*' (Narrative 8) holds a further 1,221 posts, so these figures are a floor.

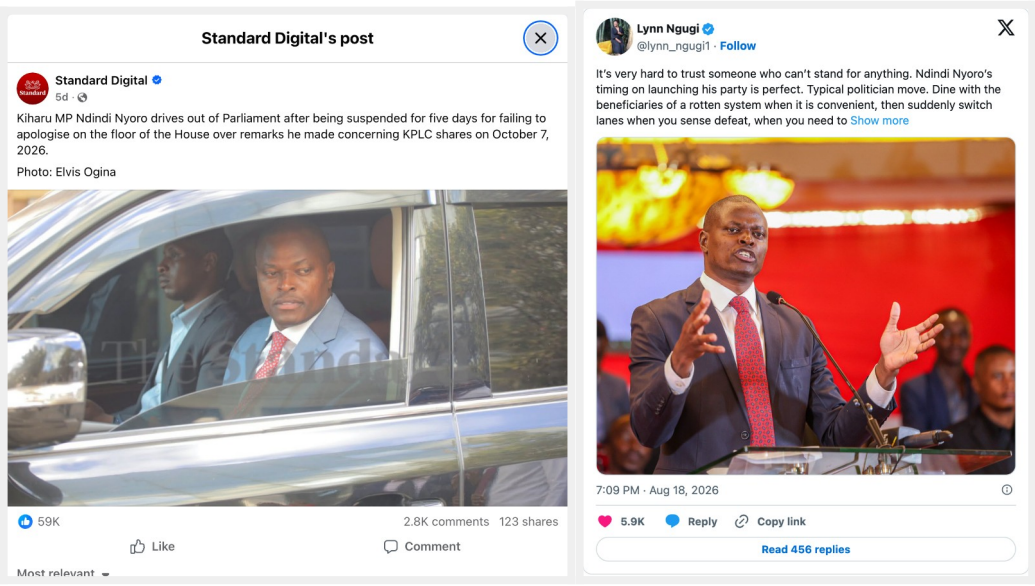
Finding 18: **Two competing portraits of Nyoro, a persecuted reformer and a compromised insider, were both reinforced by events offline.**
To counter the mole narrative, his supporters pointed to police interrupting his events, a confrontation with a rival MP at a church in Kinangop and his five-day suspension from Parliament on 7 October, which produced the most-liked and most-commented post about him since July. Critics, however, pointed to his past votes on the Finance Bill 2024 and his shares in Kenya Power and Lighting Company. Supporters and critics alike increasingly argued in terms of regional and ethnic voting blocs.

The most-liked and most-commented post about Nyoro since July is a photograph by Standard Digital of him driving out of Parliament on 7 October, after Speaker Moses Wetang'ula suspended him for five days for refusing to apologise for remarks about government agencies buying shares (48,032 likes and 2,438 comments at collection). The three most-liked posts about him since July all come from that day, including a clip of the Speaker telling him *"Ndindi Nyoro, I will deal with you, kiburi haitakusaidia"* (arrogance will not help you) (31,900 likes). The audience did not simply cheer him, however. Among the 1,858 comments collected under the Standard's photograph, the most-liked replies mocked the idea of Nyoro as a hero: *"He thinks he is a hero"* (373 likes), *"Drives out or driven out?"* (170 likes) and *"There is a difference between political rhetorics and facts on the floor"* (110 likes). Fewer defended him, asking whether anyone should *"be forced to apologize in the floor of the August house over remarks made outside Parliament"* (51 likes).

Earlier episodes had built the same picture of a politician under pressure. In March, a clip of Nyoro *"breathing fire after police interrupted his project during launching"* in Kahuro drew 50,500 likes. On 20 September, videos showed a confrontation at a church in Kinangop, where the local MP, Kwenya Thuku, *"stormed a church service and allegedly threatened him"* (clip 1, clip 2); Nyoro then handed his phone to a resident to read out the threatening messages at a rally. Supporters cast these incidents as proof that Nyoro was a genuine opponent of the government.

Critics drew the opposite portrait from the same record. A Facebook post that drew 2,364 comments asked why Nyoro had not spoken this loudly *"when we were being killed"* during the Finance Bill protests, accusing him of *"making deals and selling electricity poles to KPLC"*. Its comment section agreed: the most-liked reply was *"We shall stand with those who stood with us when we needed them!"* (536 likes), followed by *"When we needed his voice alinyamaza jiii"* (he went completely silent) (332

likes). MP Wanjiku Muhia argued that he could not fight an oppressive system *"while benefiting from the very system"* as a shareholder in Kenya Power and Lighting Company. Journalist Lynn Ngugi wrote that it was *"very hard to trust someone who can't stand for anything"* (5,947 likes), and others reminded readers that he *"voted YES on the Finance Bill 2024, then conveniently absconded the 2026 Finance Bill vote"*.



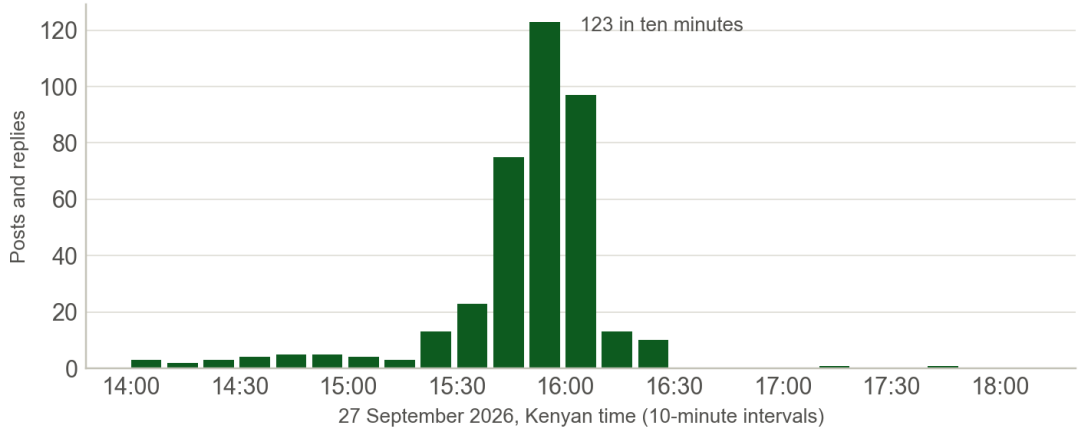
The Standard's photograph of Nyoro leaving Parliament after his suspension, and a critical post by journalist Lynn Ngugi after the PPK launch (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: Facebook, X)

Underneath both portraits, the argument was increasingly conducted in terms of voting blocs. Supporters framed PPK as freedom from Nyeri's dominance of Mount Kenya politics: *"Why should Murang'a always be expected to bow to Nyeri?"*, or as a better choice for Kikuyu living among Kalenjin neighbours (link). A TikTok post with 14,700 likes put it in openly ethnic terms: *"Sisi Wajaluo hatutapangwa. Saa hii Wakikuyu wamejipanga na Ndindi Nyoro for President 2032, hata sisi tumejipanga na Babu Owino"* (We Luos will not be arranged by others. The Kikuyu have lined up behind Ndindi Nyoro for 2032; we have lined up behind Babu Owino). Ethnic or regional bloc language appears in 146 posts (4.6%).

Finding 19: **A burst of 385 near-identical posts on X promoted a Matiang'i and Nyoro ticket 'backed by Uhuru Kenyatta', in a pattern that looks coordinated.**
On 27 September, 47 X accounts published 90 posts and 295 replies, 385 items in all, in under four hours, repeating the phrase 'Opposition Chosen Candidates Fred Matiang'i And Ndindi Nyoro' with the hashtag #KenyaDecides. Together they drew 70 likes. By 13 October, posts from 15 of these accounts were no longer available. The attribution of this activity remains undetermined by this analysis.

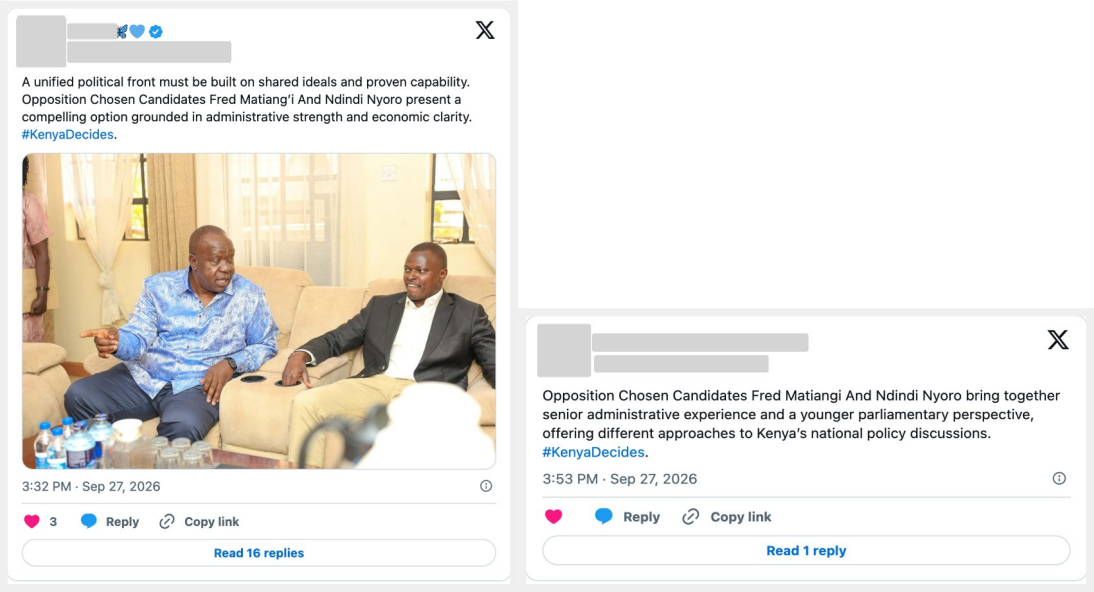
Between 14:03 and 17:41 EAT on 27 September, 47 X accounts published 90 posts and 295 replies that repeat the same set of phrases: *"Opposition Chosen Candidates Fred Matiang'i And Ndindi Nyoro"*, *"both are results oriented and workaholics"* and the hashtag #KenyaDecides. Activity peaked at 123 items in ten minutes. Every one of the 295 replies was posted under one of the group's own templated posts, and 39 items repeated the same misspelling, *'Oppostion Chosen Candidates'*. One hundred items claimed that the pair is *"backed by Uhuru Kenyatta"*. The burst came nine days after Uhuru Kenyatta met

Matiang'i and Nyoro at a funeral in Kiharu on 18 September, which posts that day read as *"Uhuru's preferred opposition lineup for 2027"*, and five days after YouTube channels began announcing that Uhuru had *"endorsed"* Matiang'i.



Posts and replies carrying the 'Opposition Chosen Candidates' template or #KenyaDecides on 27 September 2026, in ten-minute intervals (Source: Phoenix)

Several features set the burst apart from organic support. The 385 items drew 70 likes between them, with a median of zero. Several of the accounts that took part carry names unrelated to Kenyan politics, such as a Singapore ticket reseller and a technology tips page. When one original post from each of the 46 accounts that posted was checked on 13 October, the posts from 15 of these accounts were no longer available. Because the replies were collected along with the posts, the burst also accounts for 295 of the 995 X comments collected in this narrative, about three in ten. No similar templated activity was found among the Facebook, TikTok or YouTube comments, and the burst is excluded from the comment analysis in Finding 1.



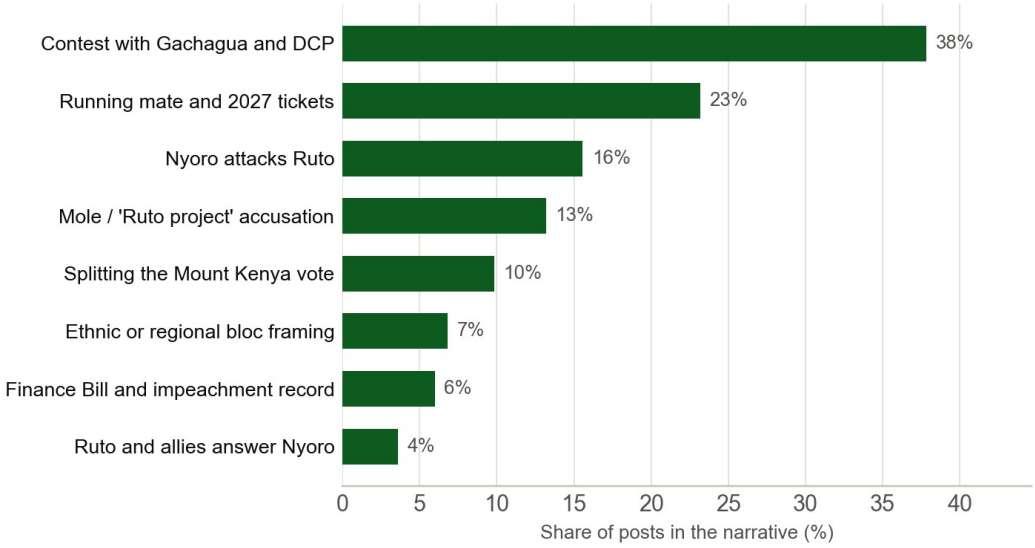
Two of the 90 templated posts published on 27 September, including one from an account named after a Singapore ticket reseller (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

These are the marks of coordinated amplification: identical wording, a tight time window, accounts replying to one another, and engagement close to zero. The data does not show who organised it or whether it was paid for. What it shows is that, within six weeks of the PPK launch, someone invested in making a Matiang'i and Nyoro ticket '*backed by Uhuru Kenyatta*' look like a popular demand, the same *Uhuru-as-kingmaker* idea that sits at the centre of Narrative 11.

What is coordinated amplification?
Coordinated amplification means many accounts posting the same or very similar content at the same time to make a message look more popular than it is. The signs, all present in the #KenyaDecides burst, are identical wording, a tight time window, accounts replying to one another, and engagement close to zero. They show that posting was coordinated, but not who organised it or whether it was paid for.

Narrative 8: 'Ndindi Nyoro as a mole for the government'

The narrative contains 1,221 posts that had drawn about 909,000 likes and 58,000 comments, of which about 34,000 comments were collected, mostly from Facebook and TikTok. Nine posts in ten were published after July. Because the search pairs Nyoro's name with President Ruto's, the narrative is wider than its title: about one post in five (243) carries the mole or vote-splitting claim, while the rest follow the exchanges between the two men and Nyoro's place in the opposition line-ups.



What the 'Ndindi Nyoro as a mole for the government' narrative was about: share of posts mentioning each theme. Themes are assigned by keyword and a post can carry several (Source: Phoenix)

Finding 20: **Nyoro answered the 'mole' charge by attacking President Ruto, and the attacks drew more than twice the engagement of the charge, but his audiences stayed unconvinced.**
In the narrative that tracks Nyoro and the President, about one post in five carries the claim that Nyoro is a government plant sent to split the Mount Kenya region vote. Posts of Nyoro attacking Ruto over debt, the Dangote oil refinery project and 'sending Ruto home' drew 357,000 likes, against 152,000 for the accusation. Figures in former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) went further, saying he was being lined up as Ruto's running mate and recalling 1992, when a divided opposition vote returned President Moi to power. In the comments, distrust of Nyoro outweighed support.

The accusation was built from Nyoro's record. The most-commented post in the narrative, a Facebook essay (4,836 comments), argued that he had worked against Gachagua before the impeachment and *"didn't even resign in protest when his 'brother' was impeached"*; the most-liked reply teased the author for suddenly agreeing with DCP: *"Ala, This page must have been hacked!!!"* (239 likes). Kiambu Senator Karungo wa Thang'wa called Nyoro *"kiumbe wa Serikali"* (a creature of the government) and said he was being lined up as President Ruto's running mate, a claim carried by 53 posts. On 11 October DCP Secretary General John Methu said Nyoro had promised to join DCP *"so that we would not split the Mt. Kenya votes"* before forming his own party (18,100 likes). Others reached for history: *"Kasongo is replaying the 1992 Moi script"* (link, 6,086 likes), a reference to the election in which the opposition vote split between Kenneth Matiba and Mwai Kibaki and President Moi was re-elected.



One of a series of 'confirm or deny' challenges to Nyoro, and a post likening the PPK to President Moi's tactics in 1992 (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

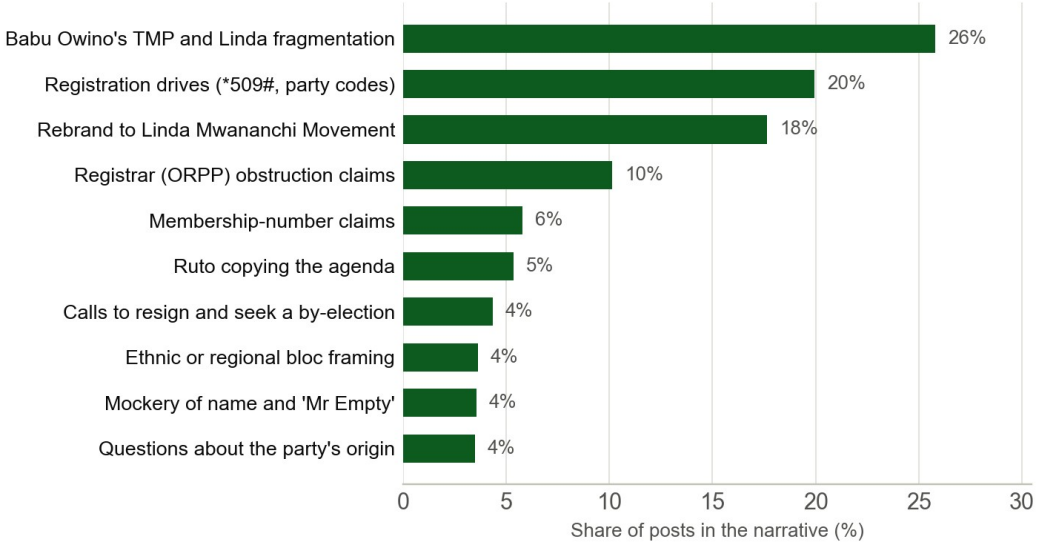
Nyoro's answer was to attack the President more loudly than anyone. NTV's Facebook post of his pledge *"I will send Ruto home if I get the opposition presidential ticket"* drew 18,542 likes. He said Ruto had left *"misumari kwa kiti ya Rais"* (nails on the president's chair) through the debts he had taken (16,100 likes), gave him *"14 days"* to publish the agreement with the Dangote oil refinery project (13,700 likes), and turned on Gachagua too: *"Wewe Gachagua, nilikusaidia ukawa Deputy President, nikaweka signature yangu. Sasa unatuma watu wanitusi"* (Gachagua, I helped you become Deputy President, I put down my signature. Now you send people to insult me) (27,600 likes). Posts of Nyoro attacking Ruto drew 357,000 likes, more than twice the 152,000 on posts carrying the accusation. Some of the attacks went beyond the record: on 6 October he was quoted as saying *"Ruto ameleta Ebola Kenya ndio akule pesa za Ebola"* (Ruto brought Ebola to Kenya so that he can eat the Ebola money) (1,987 likes), a claim offered without evidence. The President answered in kind: *"Ndindi Nyoro, hauwezitutapeli siku zote, hakuna shares za Dangote utapata wewe"* (you cannot con us forever; you will get no Dangote shares) (11,500 likes).

His audiences were not persuaded. Under the clip of him confronting Gachagua, the most-liked reply asked *"Mbona unapigia Gachagua kelele kuliko Ruto"* (why are you shouting at Gachagua more than at Ruto?) (494 likes). Under a radio clip replaying his old praise for the President, the top replies were *"I say Ndindi ni project wa kasongo"* (478 likes) and *"This man is not honest!! He here to play spoiler!!"*

(379 likes). Under NTV's post, a reply said only Sifuna could send Ruto home (461 likes), and another that *"Kenya si Kiharu"* (Kenya is not Kiharu) (421 likes). A recurring argument was that his events were never disrupted: *"How come there are NO TEARGAS in his meetings.....or GOONS, for that matter?"* (link). Defenders were fewer, though some came from the opposition's own leadership: Martha Karua reminded Gachagua that the opposition had opened the door to him when he left the government, and *"ukifunguliwa mlango wacha kuzuia wengine wasiingie"* (once the door has been opened for you, do not block others from coming in) (4,779 likes). Harmful comments were rarer here than in any other narrative, at 2.5% of the sample.

Narrative 9: Sifuna's new party, The Equitable Party (TEP)

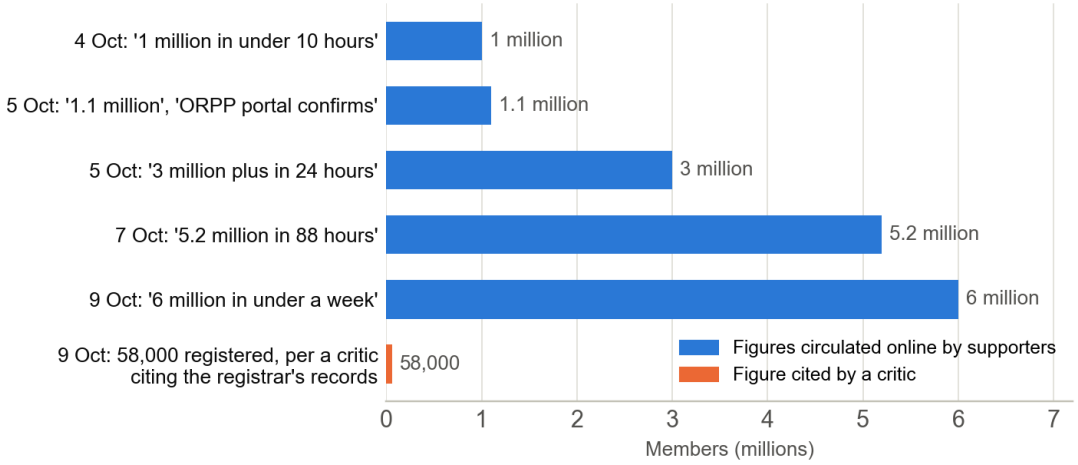
The narrative contains 1,399 posts that had drawn about 817,000 likes and 64,000 comments, most of them published in the days after the launch on 4 October. Engagement was spread evenly across Facebook, TikTok and X. Much of the conversation is practical: how to register with the party, why it would be renamed, and what it meant for Babu Owino's rival party, TMP.



What the 'Sifuna's new party' narrative was about: share of posts mentioning each theme. Themes are assigned by keyword and a post can carry several (Source: Phoenix)

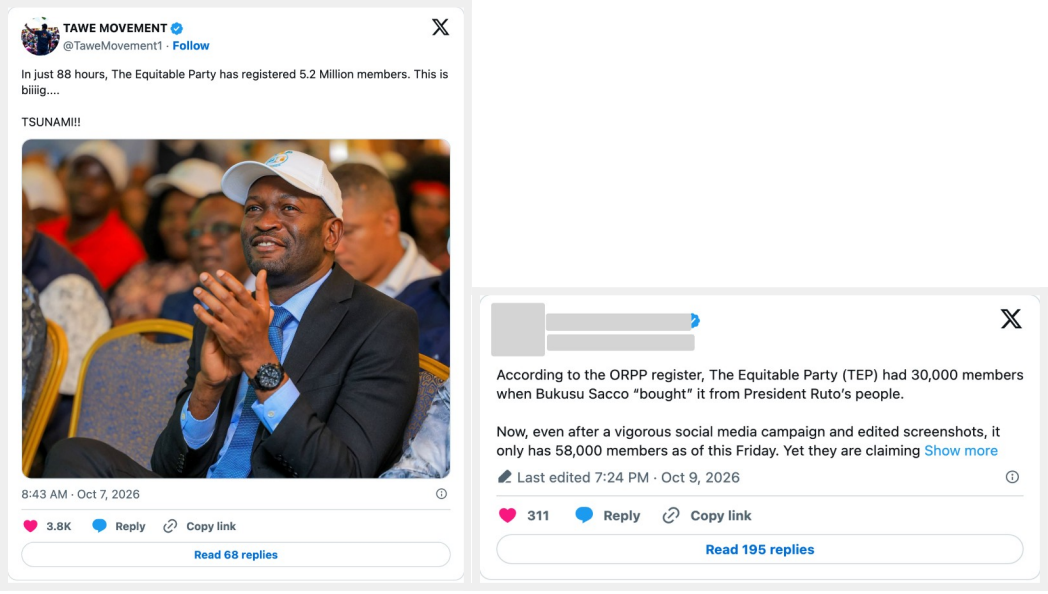
Finding 21: **'One million members in ten hours': unverifiable membership numbers became the main measure of Sifuna's new party, and the party registrar became a target.**
After Sifuna launched The Equitable Party (TEP) on 4 October, figures circulated by supporters claimed that party membership rose from one million members in ten hours to six million within a week, until Sifuna himself denied the higher claims. Critics countered with figures as low as 58,000. Supporters accused the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) of deliberately blocking sign-ups to the party.

Within hours of the launch, membership figures became the main way the party's success was argued. Sauti TV reported that TEP had registered *"over 1.1 million members in less than 10 hours"*, adding that *"data from the ORPP Portal confirms the massive surge"* (41,400 likes). The figures then escalated: *"3 million plus in 24hrs"* (link), *"5.2 Million members"* in 88 hours (link) and *"6 million members registered in less than a week"* (link). On 9 October Sifuna himself denied the five million claim.



Membership figures for TEP circulated online between 4 and 9 October 2026. None could be verified for this report (Source: Phoenix)

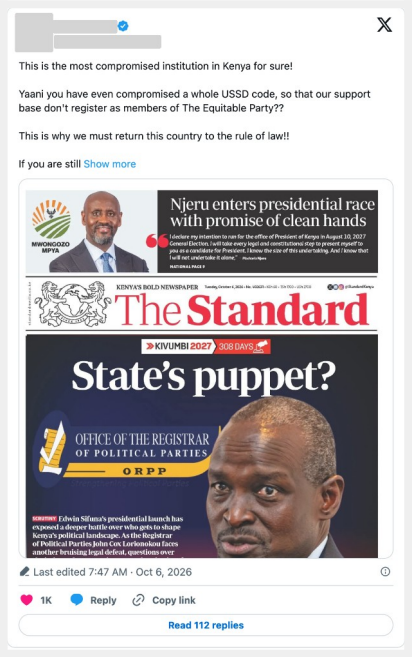
Opponents answered with numbers of their own. One X user, citing the registrar's records, said the party had 30,000 members when it was taken over and *"only has 58,000 members as of this Friday"*, accusing supporters of *"edited screenshots"*. Pro-government digital strategist Dennis Itumbi pointed out that TEP's own website already claimed more than three million members (1,632 comments). Babu Owino's TMP had run the same contest two weeks earlier, announcing 660,008 members in six days and later 1.4 million. None of these figures could be checked against an official source, and the only authority able to settle them, the registrar of political parties, was under attack. Readers were sceptical of Itumbi rather than of the figures: the most-liked reply to his post told him *"The fact that you took your time to write all these chronicles, it means its giving you headache"* (304 likes). Further down, one reader suggested that the registration numbers being shared were totals *"aggregated for all parties"*, not TEP's alone, a point neither side took up.



A claim of 5.2 million members, and a reply citing the registrar's figure of 58,000 (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

Supporters blamed the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) when registration through the *509# phone code failed. A Sifuna supporter called it *"the most compromised institution in Kenya"*,

alleging that it had *"compromised a whole USSD code, so that our support base don't register"*, alongside a newspaper front page asking whether the registrar was the *"State's puppet?"*. The following day she warned the registrar: *"We will occupy you if this thing lags again!"*. Another widely liked post concluded that TEP *"would have the highest number of members in Kenyan History but ORPP failed us"* (2,840 likes). Claims that the registrar was obstructing the party appear in 142 posts (10.2%). Distrust of the registrar matters beyond this dispute: it is an election-management body, and the same accusations are easily transferred to the electoral commission in 2027.



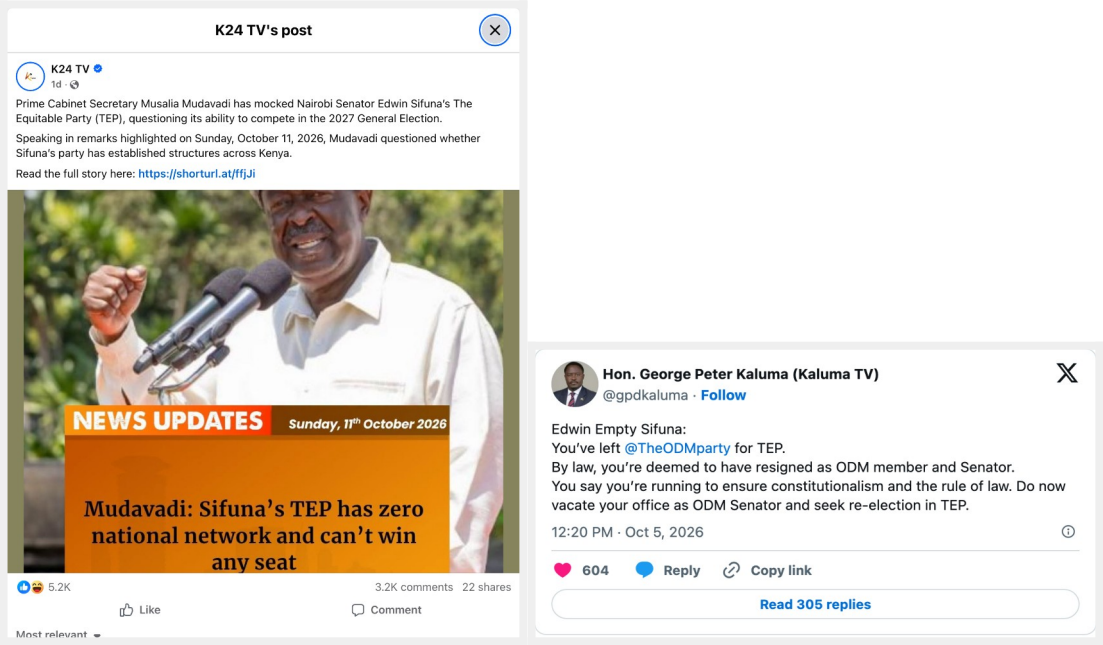
Post accusing the registrar of blocking sign-ups to TEP, with a newspaper front page asking 'State's puppet?' (link) (Source: X)

Finding 22: **Opponents attacked TEP's legitimacy through 'Mr Empty' mockery, calls for a by-election and contradictory stories about who really owns the party.**
ODM figures demanded that Sifuna resign his Senate seat and seek re-election under TEP, and Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi said the party could not win a seat. At least three incompatible versions of the party's origin circulated: that it belonged to President Ruto's allies, that Uhuru Kenyatta had acquired it, and that a 'Bukusu Sacco' had bought it.

The most sustained attack came from Sifuna's former ODM colleagues. Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma addressed him as *"Edwin Empty Sifuna"* and argued that, having left ODM, he was *"deemed to have resigned as ODM member and Senator"* and should seek re-election under TEP; TV47's post of the same demand drew 2,705 comments. ODM youth leader Roseline Alionya repeated it, saying Sifuna was *"full of empty threats like his empty party"*. The 'Mr Empty' label, used by President Ruto for Sifuna, became 'The Empty Party'. Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi added that TEP lacked national structures; K24's post of his remarks, headlined *"Sifuna's TEP has zero national network and can't win any seat"*, drew 3,134 comments, the second-highest in the narrative.

In the comment sections, these attacks mostly backfired. Under Mudavadi's remarks the most-liked replies turned on him for having folded his own party, ANC, into UDA: *"party less ghost worker is advising how parties are working"* (164 likes) and *"You had your own party; How many Mps did you*

garner all over the country?" (141 likes). Under TV47's post of Kaluma's demand, the top reply was *"Did Ruto resign from jubilee when forming uda?"* (326 likes). The 'Empty' label, however, found its audience elsewhere, for instance when K24 TV reported that Sifuna would keep his manifesto under wraps. Here the most-liked replies came from his opponents, who scoffed at the decision, arguing that the manifesto was empty and that Sifuna's fear of Ruto copying it made no sense because the party was empty (582 likes).



MP Peter Kaluma's call for Sifuna to resign, and K24's post on Musalia Mudavadi's remarks (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X, Facebook)

The party's name became a target in its own right. Professor Makau Mutua asked *"What the hell is The Equitable Party?"*, calling it *"the pitiable work of a greenhorn"* and adding that *"Uhuru Kenyatta is so cheap he couldn't even pay for a good brand creative"*, a line that tied the launch directly to the 'sponsor' narrative. In the replies, supporters explained the reasoning: the party had been taken over to meet what they described as the electoral commission's 15 October deadline for party submissions, and would be renamed afterwards, and on 10 October TEP gave public notice of a change of name to Linda Mwananchi Movement.

Questions about where the party came from produced at least three incompatible stories:

- **Version A: TEP belongs to President Ruto's allies.** One post said the party was registered in March 2022, won no seat, and *"pledged to support William Ruto"* after the election; another called it *"Ruto's property"*; a third noted that the party's X account *"still has tweets from the previous owner"*.

- **Version B: Uhuru Kenyatta acquired it for Sifuna.** A post with 486 comments said the party was registered in October 2025 as *"The Economic Pillars Alliance (TEPA)"* and acquired *"with the help of former President Uhuru Kenyatta"*; another said Uhuru had chosen it over Governor Natembeya's party.

- **Version C: a 'Bukusu Sacco' bought it.** The same user who cited the 58,000 figure described TEP as the party *"Bukusu Sacco 'bought' from President Ruto's people"*, a phrase that reduces the party to Sifuna's sub-community.

The versions disagree even on when the party was registered, and none of the claims about who was behind it came with evidence. A reel of the party's existing office in Cheptulu, Vihiga County, which supporters said predated Sifuna's takeover, was presented as a building *"with the same party name and logo painted long ago"* (9,942 likes); posts citing the registrar's records dated the party's registration to March 2022. The arguments over origin and over membership did the same work: both put the party's legitimacy in question without engaging with its programme.

Finding 23: **TEP's launch exposed a fragmented Linda Mwananchi movement and an ethnic map of the opposition, while former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's endorsement drew more comments than any other post studied.**
Gachagua's 'My cousin' congratulation to Sifuna on the TEP launch drew over 7,000 comments on Facebook, the most of any post in this report. At the same time, Linda Mwananchi leaders were launching separate parties, and posts linked each party to a county or community, for example Sifuna's TEP to Bungoma and Babu Owino's The Mwananchi Party (TMP) to Nairobi, Homa Bay and Migori. Sifuna's supporters organised through a self-styled 'Sifuna Online Defence Forces' WhatsApp group and daily registration drives.

The single most-commented post in this report is Gachagua's message on launch day: *"My cousin, Senator Edwin Sifuna, congratulations are in order on the launch of your political party today... To those who thought they could stop an idea whose time had come, we are sorry. Your time is up!"* On Facebook it drew 83,599 likes and 7,041 comments; on X, 14,574 likes (link). The most-liked replies read the alliance in terms of numbers from Gachagua's region: *"make sure you gather for him 8 million votes from Murima"*. A later remark attributed to Gachagua, that Sifuna *"should popularize his party (TEP) in Western. Mt Kenya we have our party which is DCP"*, was shared as a sign of the limits of that alliance. Commenters also noticed the contrast with Narrative 7. Among the 4,599 comments collected under Gachagua's Facebook post, replies such as *"You could have said this to Ndindi Nyoro too"* (link, 249 likes) and *"when Ndindi nyoro forms his ... he's a Mole? Okey"* (159 likes) pointed out that the same leader who welcomed Sifuna's new party had called Nyoro's a government plot.



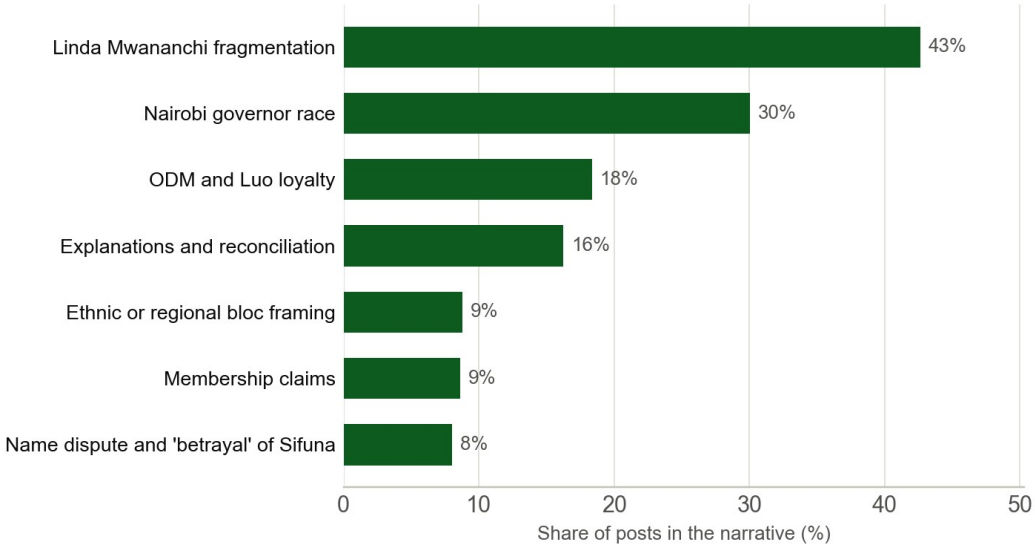
Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's congratulation to Sifuna on the TEP launch, and a call to join the 'Sifuna Online Defence Forces' WhatsApp group (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

At the same moment, Linda Mwananchi's leaders were in separate parties. Babu Owino pledged *"Nitasimama na wewe"* (I will stand with you) at the launch (25,289 likes), but he led his own TMP, Siaya Governor James Orengo was linked to another party, and MP Caleb Amisi to a third. One user asked why *"they could not sit down and agree to have one party"*. Posts mapped the parties onto counties and communities: one listed *"Babu's TMP, Nairobi, Homa Bay and Migori; Orengo's LDP, Siaya; Sifuna's TEP, Bungoma"*. Opponents used the same map to belittle the party as *"a Bukusu party"* led by a *"Luhya boy"* (link) or 'Bungoma FC'. Supporters answered with roll-calls of their own: *"Can I see Onyangos, Akinyis, Odhiambos... who support Linda Mwananchi and Sifuna's candidature?"* (link, 3,089 likes).

Even so, explicit ethnic framing was less common here (3.6% of posts) than in the other party narratives. Most of the conversation was about mobilisation. Supporters ran daily registration drives built around the phone code and party number, asking new members to post screenshots of their registration, and organising a self-styled *"Sifuna Online Defence Forces (SODF)"* WhatsApp group for those who had joined. Registration drives appear in one in five posts. One critic described the SODF as *"cool kids"* who were *"constricting the democratic space"* within the party. When UDA unveiled the slogan 'Usawa ni sawa' days later, supporters accused President Ruto of copying TEP's 'Tusawazishe' ('let us equalise') (2,862 likes).

Narrative 10: Babu Owino's new party, The Mwananchi Party (TMP)

The narrative contains 523 posts that had drawn about 133,000 likes and 16,600 comments, almost all of which were published in September and October; about 6,500 of the comments were collected (two thirds of them) from Facebook. More than two thirds of the posts were on X. Unlike most narratives in this report, nearly all the posts (93%) are about the subject in the title: the party, its leadership and Babu Owino's bid for the Nairobi governorship.

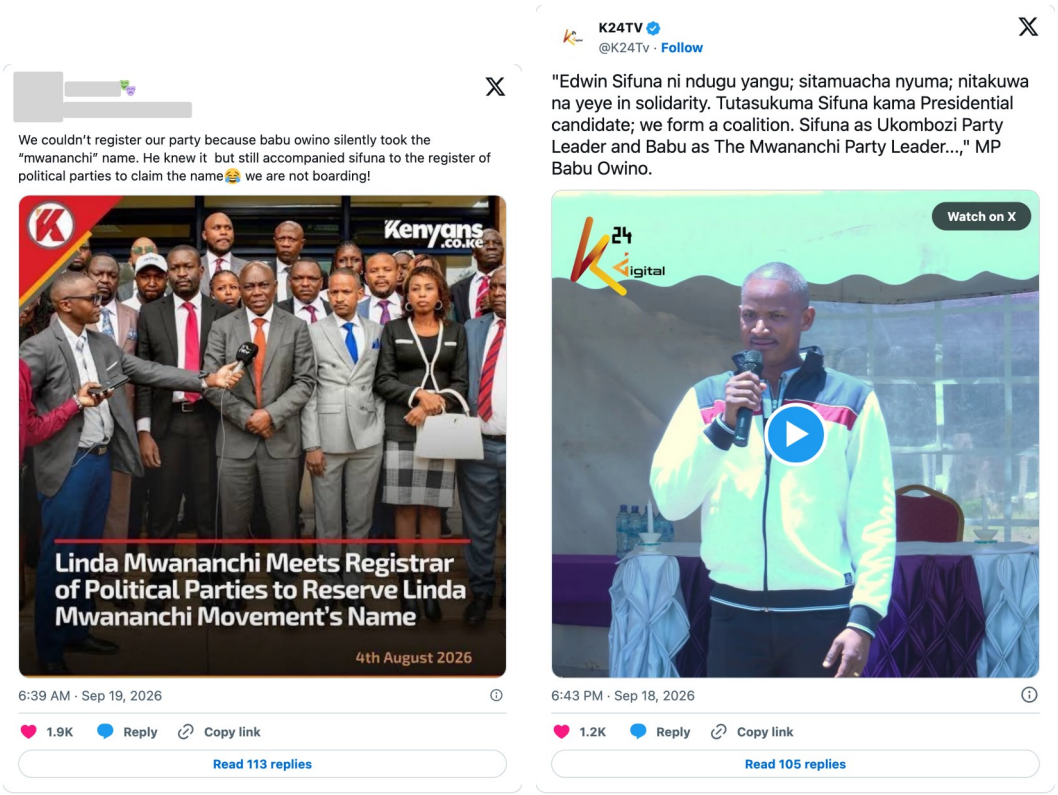


What the 'Babu Owino's new party' narrative was about: share of posts mentioning each theme. Themes are assigned by keyword and a post can carry several (Source: Phoenix)

Finding 24: **Babu Owino's new party was read as a betrayal of Sifuna, and his opponents in ODM attacked his Luo identity.**
While Sifuna's camp was still trying to register 'Linda Mwananchi', Babu Owino took over the Muungano Party and renamed it The Mwananchi Party (TMP). Sifuna's supporters accused him of taking the name behind Sifuna's back; Babu said the movement's leaders had agreed to it and, on 18 September, endorsed Sifuna for president. His bid for the Nairobi governorship drew ODM loyalists who dismissed him as 'Muhindi' (Indian) or 'Patel', a jibe found in 177 comments.

The party grew out of Linda Mwananchi's failure to register its own name. At the end of August, former Makueni Governor Kivutha Kibwana's Muungano Party moved to rename itself The Mwananchi Party, and early reports said it would be handed to Sifuna (7,086 likes). Instead it emerged as Babu's. On 15 September he announced *"I will not be attending Linda Mwananchi rallies. My focus is now on Nairobi!"* (5,670 likes). Sifuna's supporters read it as a betrayal: *"We couldn't register our party because babu owino silently took the 'mwananchi' name. He knew it but still accompanied sifuna to the register of political parties to claim the name"* (1,918 likes). In the comments he was called *"a snake"* and *"a betrayer"*, and one viewer wrote that *"Sifuna has been betrayed and no one will convince me otherwise"*.

Babu's camp told a different story. Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka said the movement's leaders had asked Babu to register the name (6,727 likes), and on 18 September Babu endorsed Sifuna: *"Edwin Sifuna ni ndugu yangu; sitamuacha nyuma"* (Edwin Sifuna is my brother; I will not leave him behind), proposing a coalition in which each would lead his own party (1,284 likes). Viewers of Onyonka's clip were unconvinced; the most-liked replies were *"it's Gakuya for governor and sifuna for president"* (151 likes), backing DCP's candidate for Nairobi against Babu, and *"Babu said he registered the party in 2024. Atutaki unafik"* (we do not want hypocrisy) (108 likes). TMP then ran the same membership contest as TEP, announcing 660,008 members in six days, a figure one user on X questioned after examining the spreadsheet offered as proof.



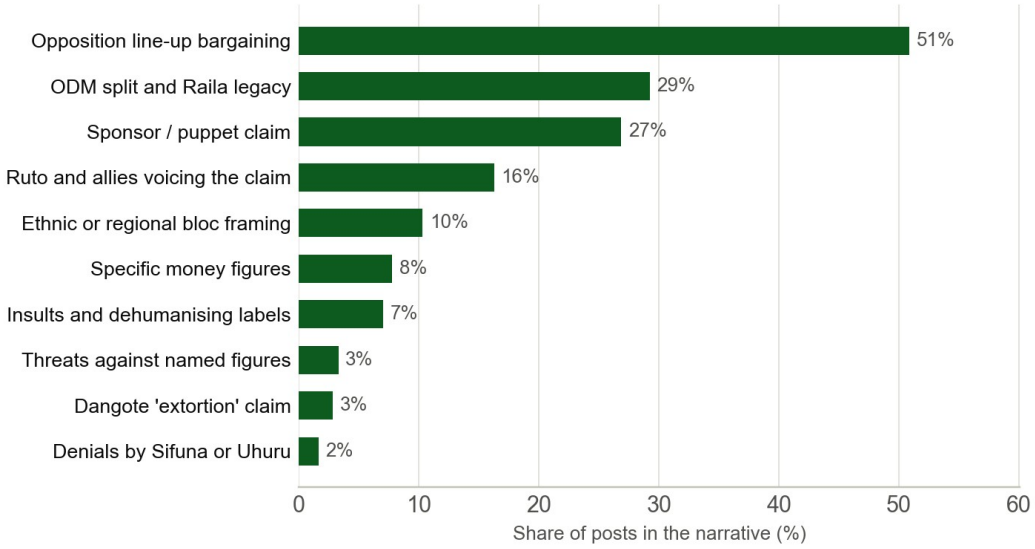
A Sifuna supporter accuses Babu Owino of taking the 'mwananchi' name, and K24's post of Babu endorsing Sifuna on 18 September (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The bid for Nairobi put Babu at odds with ODM, and the argument turned on who counts as a Luo. When a Facebook user urged ODM not to field a candidate against *"our own son, Babu Owino"* (825 comments), the top replies reminded him that Babu had declared ODM dead, and said they would vote for Governor Sakaja instead, to show that the party was still strong (109 likes). Others questioned his identity, a line of attack found in 177 comments: *"Moreso he is Amuhindi dressed in a luo attire"* (moreover, he is an Indian dressed in Luo clothing) (link), or *"Nairobi itele kod ja Kenya ok wuod punjap"* (Nairobi should be led by a Kenyan, not a son of Punjab). DCP-leaning accounts saw an opening in the split and offered ethnic arithmetic: *"Luos Always vote as a bloc. Luhyas vote in clans. This means a DCP & TMP Alliance can beat Ruto more easily"*. Babu, for his part, promised to unseat the leaders blamed for the violence in Homa Bay: *"People like Kaluma, Gladys Wanga must go home… I want to deal with them one man"* (1,223 likes).

Part 6: Uhuru Kenyatta's role

Narrative 11: 'Sifuna funded by Uhuru Kenyatta'

The narrative contains 1,095 posts that had drawn about 731,000 likes and 64,000 comments, most of them published between July and October; about 26,000 of the comments were collected, mostly from Facebook and TikTok. Two thirds of the posts are on X, but TikTok carried most of the engagement. About one in three posts (374) makes a funding, control or 'use' claim.

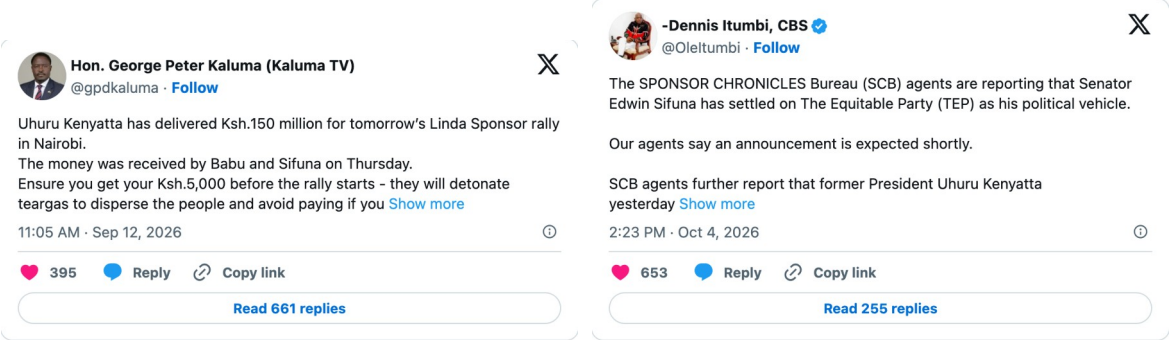


What the 'Sifuna funded by Uhuru Kenyatta' narrative was about: share of posts mentioning each theme. Themes are assigned by keyword and a post can carry several (Source: Phoenix)

Finding 25: **'The sponsor': the claim that Uhuru Kenyatta funds and controls Sifuna was pushed from the top, by President Ruto and his allies, with large but unverified sums.**
About one in three posts in this narrative makes a funding or control claim. President Ruto repeatedly called Sifuna Uhuru's puppet and, on 1 October, accused him of being sent by Uhuru to 'extort' the Dangote oil refinery investors. MP Peter Kaluma claimed Uhuru gave Sh100 million for one rally and Sh150 million for another. No evidence was offered for any of the figures.

The claim was voiced most prominently by the President. In September, President Ruto was reported *"ridiculing them as clueless puppets of retired President Uhuru Kenyatta"*. In Homa Bay on 17 September he said: *"Stop using Sifuna to sabotage and undermine my administration"*. On 1 October in Mombasa, after Sifuna asked for the Dangote refinery agreement to be made public, the President accused him of being *"sent by Uhuru to extort Dangote"* (10,400 likes), claiming that Uhuru was using Sifuna to disturb him because he was developing the country. On 11 October he said: 'I will deal with both Uhuru and Sifuna'.

On 18 August MP Peter Kaluma claimed that Uhuru *"gave KSh100 million to fund the Linda Mwananchi rally in Homa Bay"*, the rally that ended in violence; others recirculated the claim that the money *"was taken to Orengo in suitcases"*. On 12 September he wrote that *"Uhuru Kenyatta has delivered Ksh.150 million for tomorrow's Linda Sponsor rally in Nairobi"*, telling attendees to collect *"your Ksh.5,000 before the rally starts"* because organisers would *"detonate teargas to disperse the people and avoid paying"* (699 comments). Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah told Uhuru to *"stop sponsoring Sifuna to destabilize the Government"*, and on 11 October Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga said that after Raila Odinga's death *"Uhuru alihonga Sifuna mamilioni kutaka kusambaratisha ODM"* (Uhuru bribed Sifuna with millions to break up ODM). No evidence was offered for any of these sums.



MP Peter Kaluma's Sh150 million claim, and an instalment of Dennis Itumbi's 'Sponsor Chronicles' series (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

Online, the claim was packaged as a running series. Dennis Itumbi's 'Sponsor Chronicles Bureau' (SCB) posts, signed off *"IT IS SO CHRONICLED!"*, reported what *"SCB agents"* had learned about Uhuru's role, including that Uhuru had *"agreed with Senator Sifuna on the need to unveil the party"* the day before the launch; the Facebook version drew 1,788 comments. Kaluma's 'Linda Sponsor' and the slang 'sponyo' turned the claim into a nickname. The evidence offered was circumstantial: Sifuna's helicopter travel, the presence of Pauline Njoroge (a former Jubilee strategist) beside him, described as *"Uhuru's secret agent"*, and his public fundraising, described as a *"decoy"*.

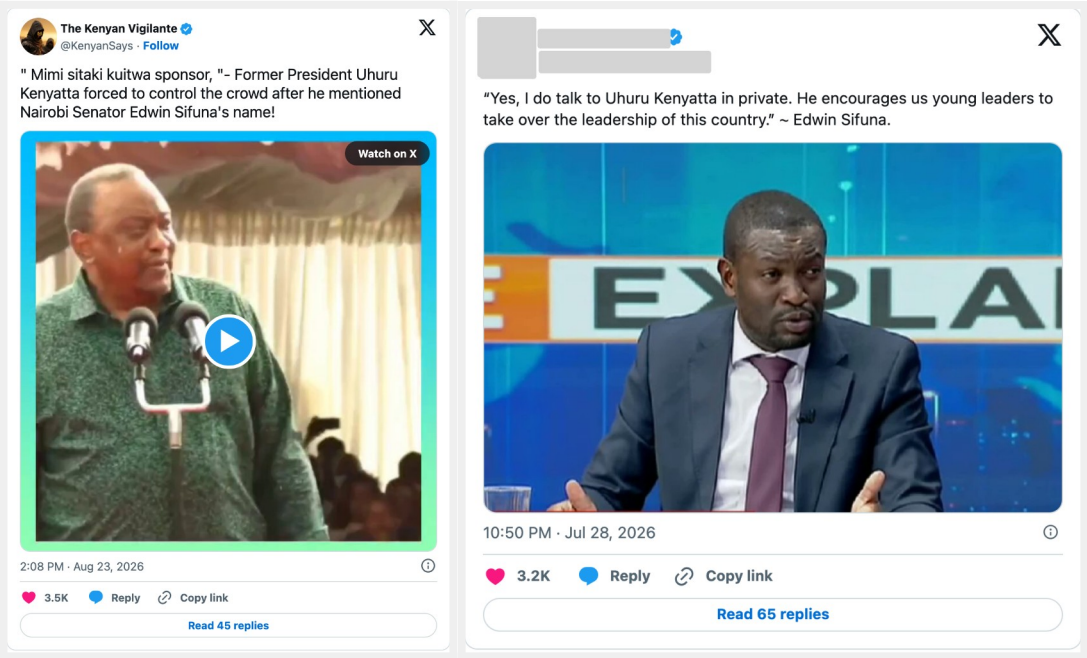


Clip of President Ruto saying Uhuru Kenyatta is using Sifuna against him, 11 October 2026 (link) (Source: X)

Finding 26: **Denials reached far fewer people than the claim, and the claim itself circulated in contradictory versions.**
Sifuna and Uhuru both rejected the 'sponsor' label, but posts making the claim outnumbered posts carrying a denial by about sixteen to one. Uhuru's 'I don't want to be called a sponsor' remark in Kitale was itself shared as an endorsement. Other versions held that Ruto and Uhuru were funding the movement together, or that Uhuru had dropped Sifuna for Matiang'i.

Both men rejected the label. In April Sifuna refuted being funded by Uhuru; in July he acknowledged contact but not control: *"Yes, I do talk to Uhuru Kenyatta in private. He encourages us young leaders to*

take over the leadership of this country" (3,290 likes); and in October he said *"Uhuru Kenyatta does not sponsor me"*. In Kitale on 23 August, Uhuru told a crowd: *"Kama ni kuomba kura, tuombe kwa amani... wakisema wanataka Sifuna ni Sifuna. Jameni, chungeni, mimi sitaki kuitwa sponsor"* (If we are asking for votes, let us ask in peace... if they say they want Sifuna, it is Sifuna. Please, be careful, I do not want to be called a sponsor).



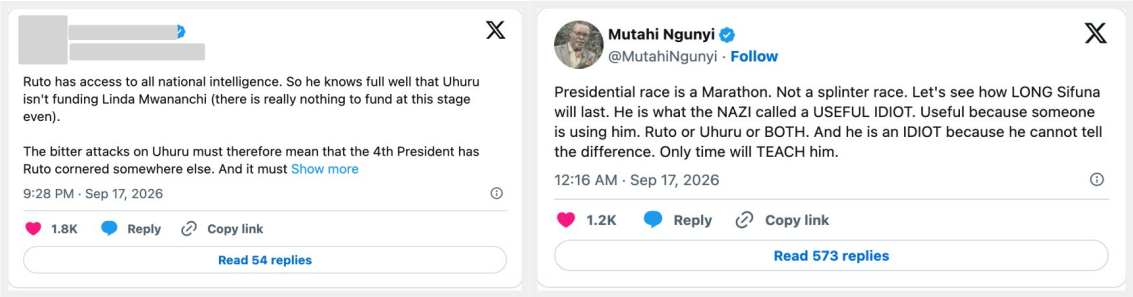
Uhuru Kenyatta's 'I don't want to be called a sponsor' remark in Kitale, and Sifuna on his contacts with Uhuru (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

The denials travelled far less than the claim, and were often turned into evidence for it. Posts making the funding or control claim outnumber posts carrying a denial by about sixteen to one (294 against 18). Uhuru's Kitale remark was shared as Uhuru being *"forced to mention Edwin Sifuna as his preferred presidential candidate"* (2,733 likes) and summarised as *"If the people say they want Sifuna, then it's Sifuna"* (5,053 likes). Sifuna's supporters, for their part, took the label over: a TikTok clip captioned *"Sponyo unaniona vizuri? Mimi ndio Sifuna!"* (Sponsor, can you see me clearly? I am Sifuna!) drew 24,400 likes.

The claim also circulated in versions that contradict one another, much as the TEP origin stories did:

- **Uhuru funds Sifuna against Ruto**, the dominant version above.
- **Ruto and Uhuru fund the movement together**, to divide the opposition: *"Ruto na Uhuru are the one who have been funding Linda Mwananchi through Caroli Omondi to confuse united opposition"*; *"Uhuru and Ruto are together"*. Political analyst Mutahi Ngunyi called Sifuna a *"useful idiot... Useful because someone is using him. Ruto or Uhuru or both"*.
- **Uhuru has dropped Sifuna** for a Matiang'i and Nyoro ticket, a version that gained ground after Uhuru met the two men at a funeral in Kiharu on 18 September and YouTube channels announced that he had *"endorsed"* Matiang'i, or is using him only to make Kalonzo Musyoka the candidate: former Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria said Sifuna was *"being fattened for slaughter"* because *"the decided candidate for Gachagua and Uhuru is Kalonzo"* (52,100 likes).

Scepticism was voiced in the same spaces. One widely liked post argued that *"Ruto has access to all national intelligence. So he knows full well that Uhuru isn't funding Linda Mwananchi"* (1,805 likes); another claimed that *"these people are working day and night to make Kenyans believe that Sifuna is funded by Uhuru"* (2,540 likes). When Itumbi's 4 October post named TEP as Sifuna's party, the top reply on X pointed out that his "inside sources" had said it would be UDP only nine days earlier.



A sceptical response to the funding claim, and analyst Mutahi Ngunyi's 'Ruto or Uhuru or both' version (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

Finding 27: **Senior politicians recast the 'sponsor' claim as an ethnic plot, and it came with threats.**
National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula and MP Peter Kaluma presented Sifuna as Uhuru Kenyatta's tool to divide Luhya and Luo voters, and MP Oscar Sudi warned Uhuru that 'we will come for you'. Ethnic framing is more common in this narrative than in those about Nyoro or Sifuna's party.

In July, National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula said: *"Sifuna ni mtoto wetu lakini anatumiwa vibaya na Uhuru Kenyatta kugawa kura za jamii ya mulembe"* (Sifuna is our child, but he is being misused by Uhuru Kenyatta to split the votes of the Luhya community) (889 comments). The idea that Sifuna is a Kikuyu instrument for dividing other communities ran through the narrative. A Facebook post with 322 comments told Luhya readers: *"Waluhya mkae macho na huyu Sifuna. Yeye ni project ya Wakikuyu"* (Luhyas, be alert about this Sifuna. He is a project of the Kikuyu), and an X user wrote that Sifuna was *"sponsored by Mt. Kenya via Uhuru Kenyatta... Luos and Luhyas therefore reject Edwin Sifuna"*.

MP Peter Kaluma went furthest. In two long Facebook posts, the third and fourth most-commented in the narrative (1,779 and 1,771 comments), he wrote that *"the 1969 Agikuyu oath that Luos shall never lead Kenya remains"* and recounted a history in which Jomo Kenyatta *"got his people to take the Wamera oath in 1969 never to support us"*. On X he told Babu Owino that Sifuna was a *"Gachagua/Uhuru project with their Kikuyu supremacists to destroy you... The Kikuyus will not vote for you. The gullible Bukusus will not vote for you"*. These posts present a whole community as conspirators against another, which is the core of ethnic hate speech, and they were shared by a sitting MP. Separately, the day before the Homa Bay violence, he was recorded telling supporters to 'deal with' anyone backing the 'one-term' campaign and saying that hotels hosting opposition supporters would be inspected. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) later summoned him over these remarks (Finding 11).



Speaker Moses Wetang'ula's remark on Sifuna and the Luhya vote, and MP Peter Kaluma's post invoking the '1969 oath' (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: Facebook)

The most-commented post in the narrative carries a threat. In a clip from February shared on TikTok (2,225 comments), Kapseret MP Oscar Sudi is captioned as saying: *"Uhuru Kenyatta leave us alone, you had your time to rule the government, it's our turn to rule, if you continue sponsoring Sifuna's and the group to destroy our government we will come for you"*. The language of turns ('you had your time... it's our turn') treats the presidency as something held by one community at a time. Supporters of Sifuna used a version of the same arithmetic, arguing that *"Kikuyu + Luhya = Definite Win"*. Ethnic or regional bloc language appears in 113 posts in this narrative (10.3%), more than in the narratives about Nyoro or Sifuna's party, and its comment sections have a higher rate of harmful comments than theirs (Finding 1).



MP Peter Kaluma's post describing Sifuna as a project of 'Kikuyu supremacists' (link) (Source: X)

These claims came from senior figures, but in the comment sections examined, their audiences largely rejected them. Among the 1,907 comments collected under the Sudi clip, the most-liked reply was *"sudi, Kenya NI ya kila mtu, if sifuna is sponsored, then sponsor your own person"* (520 likes), and others added that *"Uhuru is also a Kenyan and has a right to support whoever he wants"*. Under Kaluma's 'oath' post the top reply was *"in this century, you can't cage Luos and use them as your own political tool"* (119 likes), and under Wetang'ula's remark readers turned the charge back at him: *"Na ww ni baba wetu na pia ww unatumiwa vibaya"* (you are our father, and you too are being misused). On TikTok, commenters who identified themselves as Kikuyu were among Sifuna's most-liked supporters: *"AM FROM MURIMA*

AND SIFUNA IS WHAT KENYA NEEDS" (link, 744 likes). The contrast with Narrative 7 is instructive: the 'mole' claim against Nyoro was largely accepted by the DCP audiences it was aimed at, while the 'sponsor' claim, voiced by the government side, was largely rejected by the audiences it was aimed at.

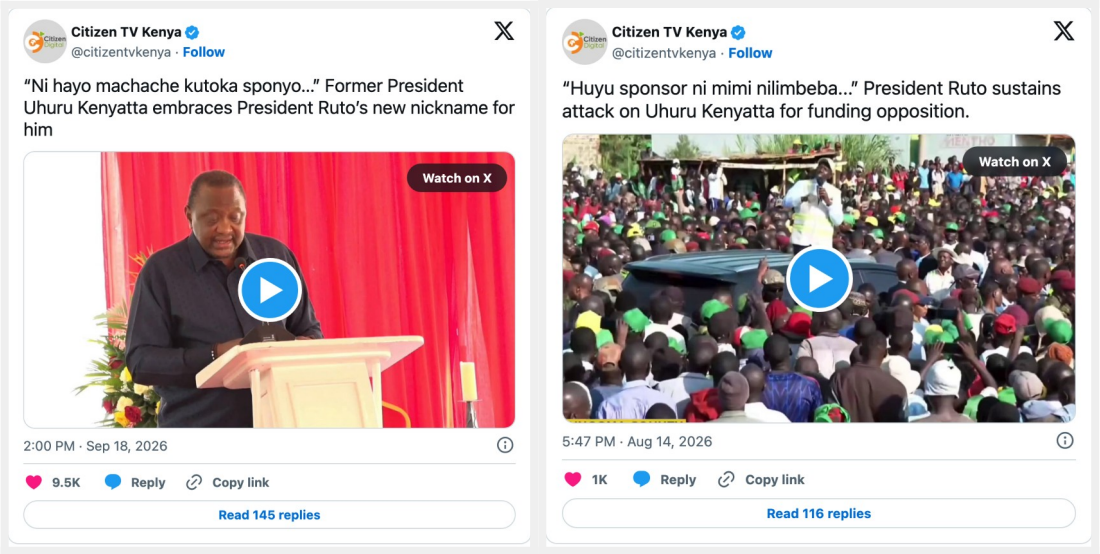
Narrative 12: 'Uhuru engaging in politics'

The narrative contains 238 posts that had drawn about 301,000 likes and 11,400 comments; about 5,400 of the comments were collected, mostly from Facebook and TikTok. TikTok carried four fifths of the likes, largely through clips of Uhuru Kenyatta's own speeches. Most of the posts (83%) concern his present role in opposition politics; a minority recall his presidency or his past alliance with Ruto.

Finding 28: **Uhuru Kenyatta turned the 'sponyo' label into a joke, and his replies drew more engagement than the attacks on him.**
At a funeral in Kiharu on 18 September, Uhuru ended his condolence message with 'Ni hayo machache kutoka sponyo' (that is all from the sponsor). Posts carrying this and his later replies drew 115,000 likes, more than three times the likes on posts reporting Ruto's attacks on him. The argument then moved to whether a retired president may take part in politics at all. After two High Court rulings in September he handed over the Jubilee leadership and stepped down as chair of the Azimio coalition council, while staying in politics.

President Ruto's attacks set the terms. In August, in reference to Uhuru he said, *"Huyu sponsor ni mimi nilimbeba"* (this sponsor, I am the one who carried him) (1,072 likes); in September, he added *"Orengo awache mambo ya Linda Sponyo, kama Uhuru hakunishinda akiwa Rais atanishinda sahi kweli?"* (Orengo should drop this 'Linda Sponyo' business; if Uhuru did not beat me when he was President, will he beat me now?) (781 likes); and in Nandi in October he accused Uhuru of having *"ukanitapeli, ukanikimbia"* (conned me and ran away from me) in 2022. Western leaders threatened to push for the withdrawal of Uhuru's pension, and the Speaker told him to retire from politics.

Uhuru answered with a joke. Reading a condolence message at a funeral in Kiharu on 18 September, he closed with *"Ni hayo machache kutoka sponyo"* (that is all from the sponsor) and laughed (9,529 likes); a TikTok clip captioned *"Wananiita sponyo mm nimekubali sina maneno"* (they call me sponsor; I have accepted it, I have no problem) drew 52,600 likes. Four days later: *"Ruto sikia, hata ukiniita sponyo siendi mahali; mimi bado ni mwanaJubilee"* (Ruto, listen: even if you call me sponsor I am not going anywhere; I am still a Jubilee man). Posts carrying Uhuru's replies drew 115,000 likes, more than three times the 33,000 on posts reporting Ruto's attacks. Opposition politicians made the label a running joke: at Martha Karua's father's burial on 3 October, DCP Secretary General John Methu told Uhuru that since he was already called a sponsor he might as well *"utujenge kakitu ndio uitwe sponyo ukuwe guilty"* (build us something, so that you are called sponsor and are actually guilty) (44,900 likes).



Citizen TV's posts of Uhuru Kenyatta embracing the 'sponyo' label, and of President Ruto's 'Huyu sponsor ni mimi nilimbeba' remark (Link 1, Link 2) (Source: X)

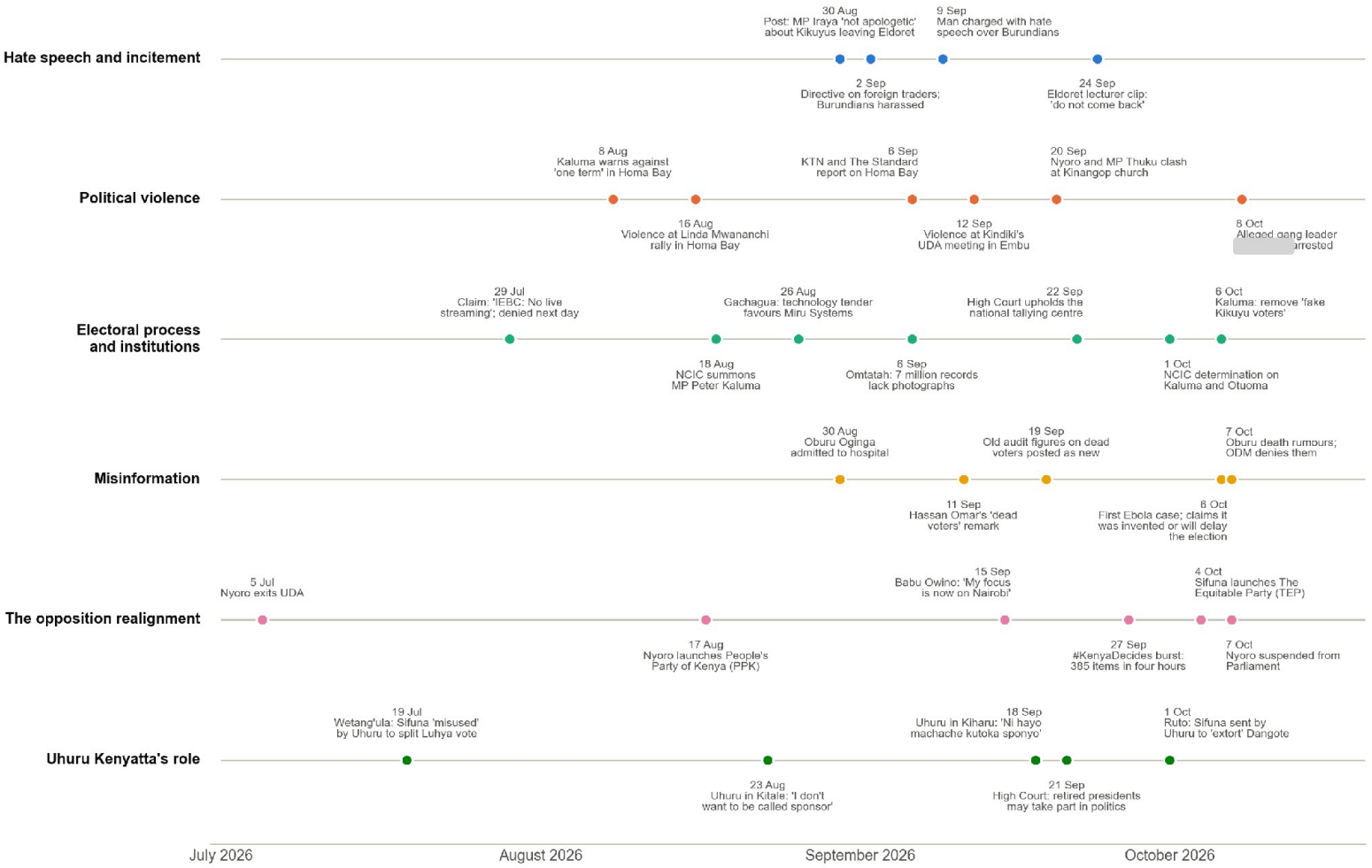
The audiences enjoyed the exchange more than they took sides in it. The most-liked replies to the TikTok clip were *"uhuru is just unbothered"* (1,368 likes) and *"apa kuna game....they are all in govt"* (there is a game here; they are all in government) (657 likes), a suspicion that Uhuru and Ruto were secretly working together which recurs across the narrative. Ruto's supporters answered in kind: under the clip of Uhuru's 'siendi mahali' remark the top reply was *"for 4 years amefanya kazi ulishindwa kwa 10 years"* (in four years he has done the work you failed to do in ten) (443 likes). The argument then moved to the courts. In mid-September the High Court ruled that a retired president may not hold party office, and Uhuru handed over the Jubilee leadership, which passed to Fred Matiang'i; on 21 September a further ruling declared unconstitutional the provisions that would have barred retired presidents from politics altogether. On 5 October Uhuru stepped down as chair of the Azimio coalition council, which has since been renamed The Ukombozi Alliance.

5. Glossary

- **Azimio, Ukombozi Alliance**: Azimio la Umoja, the opposition coalition formed for the 2022 election, renamed The Ukombozi Alliance in 2026.
- **Bomas**: Bomas of Kenya in Nairobi, the site of the national tallying centre for presidential results.
- **Boolean search**: A search that combines keywords using operators such as AND, OR and NOT.
- **Broad-based government**: The arrangement under which part of ODM's leadership joined President Ruto's government after Raila Odinga's death.
- **Coordinated amplification**: Many accounts posting the same or very similar content at the same time to make a message look more popular than it is.
- **DCI**: Directorate of Criminal Investigations, the police unit that investigates serious crime.
- **DCP**: Democracy for the Citizens Party, led by former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.
- **Gladys Panga, Wamapanga**: Nicknames for Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga after the violence of 16 August 2026; a panga is a machete.
- **Hammer Boys**: A gang in Homa Bay accused of attacking the Linda Mwananchi rally on 16 August 2026.
- **IEBC**: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, which runs Kenya's elections.
- **Information disorder**: A situation in which competing claims leave no reliable account of events, as with the death tolls after the Homa Bay violence.
- **IPOA**: Independent Policing Oversight Authority, which oversees police conduct.
- **Kasongo**: A nickname used by critics for President William Ruto.
- **KIEMS**: Kenya Integrated Elections Management System: the kits used to identify voters and transmit results.
- **KNCHR**: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.
- **Linda Mwananchi**: 'Protect the Citizen', the movement led by Edwin Sifuna and Babu Owino after their break with ODM's leadership.
- **Misinformation cluster**: A single event flooded with unfounded claims that support one false narrative, as with the rumours of Oburu Oginga's death.
- **Mole**: A politician accused of secretly working for the government while presenting as opposition.
- **Muhindi, Patel**: 'Indian'; jibes used against Babu Owino that imply he is not fully Luo.
- **Mulembe**: The Luhya community, from the Luhya greeting.
- **Murima, Mlima, 'the mountain'**: The Mount Kenya region, often used to mean its largely Kikuyu electorate.
- **NCIC**: National Cohesion and Integration Commission, which deals with hate speech and ethnic incitement.
- **ODM**: Orange Democratic Movement, the party led by Raila Odinga until his death in October 2025 and since then by Oburu Oginga.
- **ORPP**: Office of the Registrar of Political Parties.
- **Pasua Mlima**: 'Split the mountain': the idea of dividing Mount Kenya politics into eastern and western blocs.
- **PPDT**: Political Parties Disputes Tribunal, which hears appeals against decisions of the registrar of political parties.
- **PPK**: People's Party of Kenya, led by Ndindi Nyoro.
- **Sheng**: A Kiswahili–English slang widely spoken by young Kenyans, especially in Nairobi.

- **Sponsor, 'sponyo'**: Label used for Uhuru Kenyatta by those who say he funds and controls Sifuna's movement.
- **TEP**: The Equitable Party, launched by Edwin Sifuna on 4 October 2026, with plans to rename it the Linda Mwananchi Movement.
- **TMP**: The Mwananchi Party, led by Babu Owino.
- **UDA**: United Democratic Alliance, President Ruto's party; its symbol is a wheelbarrow.
- **Unverified claim**: A claim presented as fact without evidence.
- **Wantam, Tutam**: 'One term' and 'two terms': slogans against and for President Ruto's re-election.

6. Full timeline



Key events, July to early October 2026, as reported in posts collected for this analysis (Source: Phoenix)