

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Kenya Monthly Briefing February 2026

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#### Kenya Summary 18 February 2026

*Opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) National Executive Committee (NEC) removes Edwin Sifuna as secretary general, sending a message of enforcing internal party discipline but also widening division over the party's position towards President William Ruto's (2022-present) Broad Based Government. United States (US) deputy secretary of state Christopher Landau meets Ruto, aligning bilateral talks with trade, security, and critical-minerals logistics. The launch of the \$71m Manda Bay runway and airfield upgrade highlights Kenya's role as a key coastal logistics and contingency hub and underscores US messaging that security cooperation is essential for investor confidence. Government proposes to allocate up to KSh 100m (\$770,000) to contract social media influencers to amplify state messaging as Ruto seeks to manage a high-scrutiny online environment.*

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#### Oburu Odinga ousts Edwin Sifuna as ODM secretary general

The opposition **Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) National Executive Committee (NEC)**, chaired by party leader **Oburu Odinga** on 11 February, [removed](#) Nairobi senator **Edwin Sifuna** as the opposition party's secretary general (SG) and appointed **Busia** representative **Catherine Omanyo** in his place. Odinga [defended](#) the move as a means of enforcing internal party discipline and to communicate control amid early positioning for the 2027 general elections. However, following former ODM chair **Raila Odinga's** death in October 2025, there has been a widening divide over ODM's political direction.

Oburu Odinga and the NEC majority are [pushing](#) a pro-Broad Based Government line that prioritises structured engagement with President **William Ruto's** (2022-present) administration to preserve influence and bargaining leverage; on the other side, Sifuna wants to [position](#) ODM as a clear opposition vehicle that should organise against Ruto's governance record and resist internal moves towards cooperation or an eventual re-election accommodation.

In an [interview](#) with **Citizen TV** on 6 February, Oburu Odinga said Sifuna had in recent months struggled to “*distinguish between his personal opinions and official Party policy... [which] has... created confusion among members and supporters*”. Oburu Odinga added that no individual is above the collective decisions of the party, already indicating tensions. After the NEC decision, Oburu [clarified](#) that Sifuna was not exiled from ODM, just the role. The **Political Parties Disputes Tribunal (PPDT)** issued interim [orders](#) on 12 February staying implementation and gazettment of the NEC resolution removing Sifuna until 26 February, pending further proceedings.

Sifuna and allied figures presented the ouster attempt as part of a pro-Ruto realignment being forced through ODM. In a press briefing on 12 February, Sifuna [blamed](#) his removal on individuals “*answering to instructions from elsewhere*” [stating](#):

*“My only crime is that I have refused and opposed any plans and schemes within the party to support President William Ruto's re-election.”*

On 15 February Sifuna led a rally in **Kitengela (Kajiado County)**, where police [fired](#) teargas to disperse the crowd and disrupt speeches by Sifuna and allied leaders. One person was killed during the rally, with Sifuna's camp [accusing](#) Ruto's administration of being behind the violence. Notably, Sifuna's mobilisation has drawn prominent youth participation, tapping into the same Gen-Z-led, social media driven anti-government street protests that forced the government to shelve proposed

tax hikes in [June 2024](#). With ODM's **National Delegates Convention** [scheduled](#) for 27 March in Nairobi, which is expected to ratify key organisational decisions and set the party strategy for 2027, increased politicking and the potential for protest mobilisation is likely to continue.

Ruto would [benefit](#) from a pre-election deal with an Oburu Odinga-led, broad based government leaning ODM, but Sifuna's "*one-term*" push, [echoed](#) by other anti-Ruto figures such as former deputy president **Rigathi Gachagua**, opposition **Wiper** leader **Kalonzo Musyoka** and opposition **Democratic Action Party of Kenya (DAP K)** leader **Eugene Wamalwa**, makes it harder to envision an uncomplicated path to a second term.

### Ruto-Landau talks elevate trade and critical minerals diplomacy

Ruto [hosted](#) **United States (US)** deputy secretary of state **Christopher Landau** at **State House** on 29 January for talks spanning trade, health cooperation, and regional security. The visit coincided with the **US-Kenya Critical Supply Chains Conference** convened by the **American Chamber of Commerce Kenya (AmCham Kenya)** and the US Embassy in Kenya on 30 January, alongside the launch of a major runway expansion at **Manda Bay Base (Lamu County)**. These collective events indicate a US approach to Kenya focused on trade and investment diplomacy through sectors such as critical minerals logistics alongside a clear security underpinning.

During talks, Ruto [highlighted](#) the **Kenya-US Health Cooperation Framework**, a [novel](#) five-year agreement signed on 4 December 2025 worth \$2.5 billion which seeks to support HIV, TB, malaria and other infectious-disease priorities while strengthening greater self-reliance for Kenya's health system. Ruto [described](#) the framework as "*a signature example of the excellent ties between our two countries and governments.*" However, implementation is on hold after the high court [suspended](#) the deal on 19 December 2025 amid petitions raising data privacy and health-data transfer concerns. Ruto additionally welcomed the [extension](#) of the **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)** to 31 December 2026 and noted ongoing work towards a comprehensive trade agreement covering tariffs and digital commerce. On trade, Ruto [cited](#) bilateral flows of \$737m in Kenyan exports and \$771m in US exports in 2024, framing the relationship as relatively balanced and private-sector enabling.

The subsequent supply chains [conference](#) on 30 January provided a venue to link policy intent with investment opportunities. AmCham Kenya [described](#) the conference as an opportunity to reinforce commitments on "*resilient critical supply chains*" and expand trade and sustainable investment. In 2025, Kenya formally [designated](#) 14 minerals as strategic and critical, including cobalt, copper, lithium, niobium, coltan, tantalum, nickel, graphite, chromite, thorium and uranium, as well as other rare earths to [support](#) the global green-energy transition, attract high-value investment. The aim is to lift mining's GDP contribution from roughly 1% to 10% by 2030. These discussions sit within a wider US [push](#) to secure critical minerals supply chains and reduce dependence on **China**.

Speaking at the conference, mining, blue economy, and maritime affairs cabinet secretary (CS) **Hassan Ali Joho** [stated](#) that the government has put into place the right policies to support mining investment and [emphasised](#) the importance of the sector to local beneficiation. The government is advertising a [package](#) of fiscal incentives and streamlined licensing/access to geological data.

### US officials underscore security as foundation for investment

In addition to focusing on developing investment, US-Kenya security ties remained in the spotlight during Landau's visit with the groundbreaking ceremony at the **Kenya Defence Forces' (KDF) Manda Bay Air Base** for a \$71m runway and airfield [upgrade](#). Manda Bay is [strategically](#) important as a coastal hub for counterterrorism and maritime security operations in the **Horn of Africa** - it is located near Kenya's northern border with **Somalia** and adjacent to **Lamu Port**, an anchor project for the **Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET)** corridor making it also relevant for protecting an important logistics and trade node on the coast. Prime CS **Musalia Mudavadi** [described](#) the runway expansion as "*a critical investment anchored on security, reliability and long-term stability.*" **US Africa Command (AFRICOM)** commander general **Dagvin Anderson** [said](#) the build "*directly*

*strengthens how our militaries work together” to counter threats like **al-Shabaab** and represents “the confluence of economics and security.”*

This recent investment comes amid a persistent al-Shabaab [threat](#), with the Somalia-based **al-Qaeda** affiliate carrying out cross-border raids and IED attacks in Kenya’s border counties. The **United Nations (UN)** [estimated](#) that the group averaged around six attacks per month in Kenya in 2025. Recent [incidents](#) include the 26 [January](#) attack in **Hulugho** that killed a local chief and a teacher, alongside earlier high-casualty attacks such as the [March](#) 2025 assault on a police camp in **Garissa** (six officers killed) and an [April](#) 2025 ambush in **Mandera** (five quarry workers killed).

The Ruto-Landau talks, the AmCham conference, and the Manda Bay expansion indicate a US approach that couples investment facilitation with hardened security cooperation and positions Kenya as both a commercial corridor state and a forward logistics hub for the Horn of Africa. Landau explicitly linked security and investment, warning that investors are unlikely to commit where security is uncertain, recalling the 1998 Nairobi embassy bombing as “*matters that affect life and death for Kenyans and for Americans*”. For Nairobi, this posture is likely to increase diplomatic leverage with multiple partners, building on Kenya’s formal designation as a [Major Non-NATO Ally](#) in 2024.

### Kenya considers paying social media influencers to promote government agenda

Local media outlets reported on 18 and 19 January on the government’s proposal to allocate up to KSh 100m (\$770,000) to contract social media influencers to amplify state messaging and raise awareness of government programmes, as set out in the [draft National Communication Strategy 2024/25-2026/27](#). The proposal reflects President **William Ruto**’s (2022–present) broader [push](#) to shape narratives in a high-scrutiny online environment after repeated bouts of protest mobilisation over economic and governance grievances (*see ARC Briefing Kenya Aug 2024*).

Under the framework, the government would [contract](#) ten ‘macro-influencers’ (100,000+ followers) for KSh100,000 (\$770) per quarter, and 20 ‘micro-influencers’ (10,000 to 100,000 followers) for KSh 50,000 (\$385) per quarter. Participants would be expected to develop hashtags and publish content aligning with official communication priorities and promoting national initiatives. Head of presidential special projects and the creative economy **Dennis Itumbi** has previously [said](#) that the government has already shifted advertising spend towards digital channels and is willing to fund creator content linked to priority programmes.

The initiative targets a growing commercial ecosystem; brands spent an [estimated](#) KSh 645m (\$5m) on influencer marketing in 2025, while **InvestKenya** puts the wider creative economy at [5%](#) of GDP with an estimated \$3.8 billion market size. However, politically, the initiative is sensitive and could be interpreted as using public funds to manage perception rather than improve delivery.

The timing also coincides with intensifying friction over content governance in Kenya. **United States (US)**-headquartered **Google** [rejected](#) 61.9% of the Kenyan government requests to remove content in the six months to June 2025. [Requests](#), often channelled via the **Communications Authority of Kenya**, largely targeted Google-owned **YouTube** and **Google Search** and were predominately related to security or politics. Google’s transparency report cited an [incident](#) in which they received a court order to delete an “*allegedly defamatory article written by a notable social media activist*” and subsequently delisted the content on google.co.ke. Requests to delete content are assessed against both local law and company policies.

Monetisation is emerging as a second point of friction between creators and platforms. **Chinese** short-form video platform **TikTok** [launched](#) **TikTok for Business in Kenya** in January 2025 with local partners including **Aleph Holdings** (ad sales/operations support) and **Wowzi** (creator management). However, TikTok’s direct creator reward programmes, which provides content creators with a more predictable income stream, is [not available](#) in **Sub-Saharan Africa**. As a result, most creators must rely on brand deals and intermediated partnerships rather than these consistent, platform-funded

payouts which are [available](#) in only a limited set of markets including the US and **United Kingdom (UK)**.

Kenyan policy development has also not yet matched the pace of the market. Although the **Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024** includes [provisions](#) to incorporate digital operators into the tax framework, enforceable standards for platform payout access, appeal mechanisms for demonetisation, ad transparency, and fair contracting between creators, agencies, and brands is still evolving. In 2022, the **Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)** [noted](#) the absence of a comprehensive framework for social media content monetisation but legislative [efforts](#) such as the **Creative Economy Support Bill, 2024** signal government's awareness and intent to formalise support structures across the creative sector.

Ahead of the 2027 general elections, the proposed influencer programme would [formalise](#) state use of creators in a politically volatile online arena. Although the payment amount is fiscally small, implementation is likely to intensify scrutiny of the government's spending on communications and raises the risk that official [narrative](#) is merged with partisan campaigning.

For companies operating in Kenya's digital space, the proposal shows that platforms and creators are likely to become more politically sensitive which will raise reputational and compliance risks for firms that employ influencers. The debate also strengthens the case for clearer, creator-centred rules that support fair monetisation while safeguarding legitimate speech.

## Planner

24 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** World Financial Innovation Series (WFIS) Kenya 2026  
 25 Mar 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** Kenya International Investment Conference (KIICO 2026)  
 27-29 Apr 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026  
 11-12 May 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** Africa-France Summit 2026  
 8-10 Jul 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** MINEXPO Kenya 2026  
 29-31 Jul 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** Power & Energy Africa – Kenya 2026  
 10 Aug 2027 **(Kenya)** General election

## Chronology

17 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Standard*. President **William Ruto** directs interior cabinet secretary (CS) **Kipchumba Murkomen** to prepare and present a framework within 60 days for a dedicated **Nairobi Metropolitan Police Unit** to boost security in the capital;

17 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. Kenyan airport workers' strike is called off after the **Kenya Aviation Workers Union (KAWU)** reached an agreement with the transport ministry;

17 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Standard*. National government and **Nairobi County** sign cooperation deal on four pillars including transport, water, waste, and environment, to be overseen by office of prime cabinet secretary (CS) **Musalia Mudavadi**;

17 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Insider*. President **William Ruto** convenes an emergency summit of the **East African Community (EAC)** over an \$89.37m funding gap, placing its institutions under severe strain and raising fresh questions about the future of regional integration;

16 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *APA News*. During high-level talks in **Nairobi** between **Egypt's** foreign minister **Badr Abdelatty**, water resources minister **Hani Sewilam**, and prime minister **Musalia Mudavadi**, Egypt proposes a \$100m financing mechanism to build dams and water infrastructure in Kenya;

16 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (Epra)** states that the field development plan (FDP) submitted by **Gulf Energy** for the **Turkana** oil project will be deeply scrutinised as moved the authority moves in to lock in commercial gains from the long-delayed project;

16 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Kenya Aviation Authority*. **Kenya Airport Authority** issues a press release informing the public of delays affecting departing flights at Nairobi's **Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA)** due to ongoing labour dispute between **Kenya Aviation Workers Union** and **Kenya Civil Authority**;

15 Feb 2026 **Kitengela (Kenya)** *The Standard*. Police allegedly throw teargas canisters to disrupt a **Kitengela** rally attended by the **Edwin Sifuna-led Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)** faction;

15 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE)** records its largest one-week gain ever, with stocks rising KSh 220 billion (\$1.7 billion);

14 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Kenya Times*. **Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA)** reports that maximum pump prices have fallen by KSh 4.24 (\$0.032) per litre for super petrol, KSh 3.93 (\$0.03) for diesel, and KSh 1.00 (\$0.007) for kerosene;

14 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *KBC*. **Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC)** launches investigations into the alleged misuse of public funds following claims that Ksh 5m (\$38,488) was spent on a housewarming party at the **Vihiga County** speaker's residence;

13 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Standard*. President **William Ruto** departs for **Addis Ababa, (Ethiopia)** to attend the **Africa Union (AU)** summit, chair the inaugural **African Continental Free Trade Area** committee meeting, and hold talks on trade and security;

12 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)** reports Kenya's food import bill rose to KSh 288.1 billion (\$1.99 billion) in 2025, up from Sh283.3 billion (\$1.95 billion) in 2024, reflecting renewed pressure on supply chains after a weak short rains season disrupted crop production;

12 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *BBC*. President **William Ruto** announces intentions to reopen two border crossings from Kenya into **Somalia** in April, after 15 years of closure due to security concerns;

10 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Kenya News Agency*. Cabinet approves the release of KSh 4.1 billion (\$31.6m) in funding for drought response measures, as government agencies scale up preparedness and mitigation;

10 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Transparency International*. Kenya's score in **Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI)** drops from 32 (2024) to 30 out of 100, ranking Kenya 130<sup>th</sup> out of 181 countries globally, indicative of the continued entrenchment of corruption;

10 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *France 24*. Foreign affairs cabinet secretary (CS) **Musalia Mudavadi** says he will visit **Russia** in March to engage in halting the recruitment of Kenyans into the **Russia-Ukraine** war;

10 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. **Central Bank of Kenya** cuts its benchmark lending rate for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive time to 8.75% from 9% to stimulate private sector lending and support economic growth, despite calls from the bankers' association to hold the rate;

10 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. Aviation workers issue a strike notice, warning of potential disruption at Kenya's major airports unless outstanding labour demands are addressed;

- 9 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Star*. **Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)** condemns alleged extrajudicial tactics during Operation Maliza Uhalifu in the **North Rift**, including reported livestock killings, while urging human-rights compliance amid disarmament operations;
- 8 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *APA News*. Media reports indicate police are authorised to use lethal force against armed robbers amid a spike in violent robberies, as security agencies signal a tougher enforcement posture;
- 6 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. Kenya's meteorological service warns the country risks drought conditions in coming months following forecasts of below-average rainfall, raising concerns for food security and the wider economy;
- 5 Feb 2026 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Monitor*. **Kenya Power** is seeking a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) to secure 100 MW of hydropower from Uganda, strengthening regional energy cooperation and supply reliability, with **Kenya's** importation of 254.7 GWh of electricity from Uganda in the 11 months to November making it a key market for Uganda's surplus power;
- 4 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. A survey shows Kenya's private sector activity continued to expand in January but at a slower pace, reflecting weaker output and new business growth in parts of the economy;
- 4 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Star*. High court extends interim orders freezing bank accounts linked to **Kiambu** governor **Kimani Wamatangi** and other respondents in an **Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC)** asset recovery suit tied to alleged proceeds of corruption;
- 3 Feb 2026 **Mombasa (Kenya)** *The Star*. Two **Turkish** nationals are formally charged in **Mombasa** over alleged terrorism-linked offences, illegal firearm possession, and assault in connection with a high-profile coastal security incident;
- 3 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Daily*. Real-estate developers reportedly pause or slow new projects for 2026, citing political uncertainty, weaker demand expectations, and rising construction costs;
- 2 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Gold prices at the **Nairobi Securities Exchange** fall after comments and policy signals from **United States (US)** President **Donald Trump** strengthen the US dollar and dampen demand for safe-haven assets;
- 2 Feb 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *People Daily*. The **National Police Service** reports recovering additional illegal firearms and ammunition in ongoing operations in **Baringo** and **Turkana** counties amid an intensified disarmament campaign;
- 29 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Africa Center*. President **William Ruto** proposes inclusive peace talks bringing together **South Sudan's** government and opposition groups to break the political deadlock and stabilise the country;
- 29 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *People Daily*. National Treasury officials indicate Kenya is preparing to resume talks with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in February 2026 as it seeks a new funding arrangement after the collapse of an earlier programme;
- 28 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Kenya Defence Forces*. Kenya and the **Czech Republic** sign a **Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA)** which includes provisions for collaboration in military education and training, peace keeping operations, intelligence and information sharing, maritime security, and cybersecurity;

28 Jan 2026 **Laikipia (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Local authorities and residents report heightened insecurity in parts of **Laikipia North**, alleging armed bandits have established camps and mounted raids on conservancies and surrounding communities;

27 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Kenya raises KSh 194 billion (\$1.28 billion) through a new **Eurobond** sale, boosting government financing for national projects and debt management;

27 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Kenyan Wall Street*. Kenya launches a KSh 454m (\$3.49m) **European Union (EU)** funded cybersecurity programme amid rising cyberattacks that have exposed vulnerabilities in government digital systems and inflicted billions of shillings in economic losses;

26 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Daily*. **Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)** detectives identify 392,162 firms and individuals that owe KSh 759.7 billion (\$5.84 billion) as part of a major crackdown following an audit of the withholding tax registry, which revealed that many taxpayers declared significantly lower income despite third-party data showing substantial earnings;

26 Jan 2026 **Mombasa (Kenya)** *Kenyans*. The Kenya Navy commences a four-day multinational maritime exercise in Mombasa alongside forces from the **United States (US)**, the **United Kingdom (UK)**, **France**, and **Australia** under **Operation Southern Readiness 2026**;

26 Jan 2026 **Mandera (Kenya)** *Reuters*. **Al-Shabaab** militants kill a local chief and a teacher in northeastern Kenya near the **Somalia** border, as authorities report continued cross-border insecurity;

25 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *BBC*. Former deputy president **Rigathi Gachagua** alleges an assassination attempt on him during a Sunday church service;

24 Jan 2026 **Nakuru (Kenya)** *Parliament of Kenya*. National Assembly announces a five-day 2026 Legislative Retreat in **Nakuru County** to review legislative performance and set the agenda for the Fifth Session of the 13th Parliament;

21 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. State-owned **Kenya Power** says it is awaiting **Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA)** approval to implement cheaper electricity tariffs secured through new power supply arrangements;

21 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Citizen TV*. A global security risk assessment cited by local media ranks political instability and civil unrest as Kenya's top security risks for 2026, with businesses factoring in potential aftershocks from the 2025 protest cycle;

21 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Capital FM*. High court upholds a KSh145,000 (\$1,116) judgment arising from an agreement that was never written, signed or stamped, affirming that contracts formed through phone calls and **WhatsApp** messages can be legally binding if key elements of a contract are proven;

20 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. State-owned utility **Kenya Power** delays 16,588 electricity connection projects, leaving thousands of consumers without access and undermining the country's universal electrification goals;

19 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Authorities halt quarry operations run by a **Chinese** contractor after local villager's lodge complaints over the project's impact;

16 Jan 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *KTN News*. The High Court freezes bank accounts belonging to **Kiambu** Governor **Kimani Wamatangi**, his wife, children, and other associates in relation to an **EACC** investigation into alleged KSh 813m (\$6.26m) corruption and unexplained wealth;

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