

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Kenya Summary 15 September 2026

Nairobi senator Edwin Sifuna's ability to mobilise large crowds is increasing his influence within Kenya's fragmented opposition ahead of the 2027 election. However, violence in Homa Bay and uncertainty over Sifuna's access to a registered political vehicle increases security concerns. President William Ruto's (2022-present) decision to expel India-headquartered Tata Chemicals Magadi signals a shift towards resource nationalism and greater domestic value creation from foreign investment. However, the government's continued support for United States (US) investment indicates that foreign capital remains welcome if it can demonstrate clear economic benefits for Kenya. A ruling requiring the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to revise its election-technology tender highlights weaknesses in procurement and contractor oversight as Kenya rapidly expands digital government services.

Edwin Sifuna mobilisations raise early election-security risks

Nairobi senator Edwin Sifuna on 10 September [held](#) separate meetings with Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka and a group of opposition leaders, including Jubilee presidential hopeful Fred Matiang'i, Siaya governor James Orengo, and Embakasi East member of parliament (MP) Babu Owino, as he sought to prevent opposition rivalry over the 2027 presidential ticket. These meetings [reinforced](#) Sifuna's transition from an Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) dissident into an organiser and potential broker across the wider opposition. The meetings coincided on the same day that the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal officially [upheld](#) Sifuna's removal as ODM secretary-general, severing ties to the opposition party and cementing him in the Linda Mwananchi movement.

Sifuna's growing political influence is increasingly visible in the size of his rallies. On 13 September thousands of Linda Mwananchi supporters [followed](#) Sifuna, Orengo and Owino through Nairobi towards Jacaranda Grounds despite police restrictions on political activity in the central business district. Police introduced checkpoints and stepped up patrols after Nairobi Regional Police Commander Issa Mohamud [warned](#) that rival youths could be mobilised, but the procession remained largely peaceful. This event contrasted sharply with Linda Mwananchi events in Homa Bay on 16 August where United States (US)-headquartered Human Rights Watch [reported](#) that hundreds armed with machetes, firearms and sticks attacked Linda Mwananchi politicians and supporters, killing at least three people. The crowd also assaulted journalists, attacked or burnt vehicles and police struggled to contain the violence. Further disruptions in Migori and Meru suggest Homa Bay was not an isolated incident. The comparison shows that Sifuna can mobilise large crowds peacefully, but that his political activity now requires substantial security planning and police resources.

However, a greater security risk could arise if Sifuna's expanding popular support is met with perceived institutional exclusion. Linda Mwananchi is not yet an officially registered political party and has faced months of [disputes](#) over its name and legal identity. The Political Parties Disputes Tribunal (PPDT) on 25 August [gave](#) Sifuna's faction partial relief by allowing it to reserve the name, The Mwananchi Party, but this does not amount to registration as a political party. This leaves little time before the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) deadline of 15 October, when parties intending to contest the 2027 election must submit their authorised officials and specimen signatures.

[Registering](#) a new party involves more than securing its name: after name reservation, a party must obtain provisional registration and then demonstrate at least 1,000 registered-voter members in at least 24 counties, branch offices in more than half the counties, compliant national governing structures, and the required membership and identification records before receiving full registration. A provisionally registered party cannot participate in an election.

As such, forming a new and official Linda Mwananchi party by 15 October appears extremely difficult unless the preparatory work has already been completed outside public view. A more plausible route could be that Sifuna adopts and rebrands an existing registered party either through a formal alliance or negotiated transfer. He has repeatedly [told](#) supporters that he is “*ahead of the game*,” making his recent discussions with Musyoka, Matiang’i and other opposition leaders significantly more strategic.

However, the key issue is not whether Linda Mwananchi can secure an official party vehicle but whether the 2027 opposition candidate is selected through a visibly competitive and procedurally credible method. Given Sifuna’s popularity and demonstrated ability to mobilise large crowds, the security risk would be significantly higher if supporters believed he had been unfairly prevented from running than if he loses a credible political contest.

Kenya emphasises domestic value creation in foreign investment

President **William Ruto** (2022-present) on 3 September [directed](#) **Tata Chemicals Magadi Limited**, part of **India**-based conglomerate **Tata Group**, to leave its **Lake Magadi** soda-ash operation in **Kajiado County**, [arguing](#) that despite decades of extraction the company had generated too little manufacturing, employment, and local economic benefit and was therefore “*exploitative*.” Tata is the sole domestic producer of soda ash, which is used by water utilities, including the firm that serves Nairobi, to regulate the acidity and alkalinity of drinking water. Kenya is the world’s [fourth](#)-largest producer of natural soda ash, accounting for around 1% of global production.

Speaking at the 1 September inauguration of **Zambia**’s President **Hakainde Hichilema** (2021-present), Ruto [argued](#) that Africa’s problem was “*not absence of resources*” and called for greater domestic manufacturing and processing rather than exporting commodities and subsequently importing higher-value finished products. During a 6 September speech in **South Horr (Samburu County)**, Ruto made Kenya’s expectations explicit by [declaring](#) “*we will no longer export raw materials*”, highlighting that minerals such as gold, limestone, iron ore, graphite, titanium, and soda ash should instead be processed domestically.

Although Tata already converts trona from Lake Magadi into soda ash before export, the government’s complaint appears to be more about insufficient downstream industry, such as glass and chemicals manufacturing from the soda-ash, than the export of an entirely raw mineral. Tata [maintains](#) that it has met regulatory requirements: the operation employs about 500 employees and roughly 30,000 people in the Magadi community [rely](#) directly or indirectly on the company’s water, healthcare, and/or education support programmes. Mining cabinet secretary (CS) **Hassan Joho** [agreed](#) with Tata executives on 8 September to establish a joint technical committee which suggests that discussions may still lead to renegotiated operating terms rather than a clean expulsion.

This coincides with Ruto’s recent push to reserve more economic activity and employment for Kenyans. In early September he [ordered](#) action against foreign nationals operating in small-scale retail and [highlighted](#) the **Local Content Bill 2025** which is currently before Parliament. The bill proposes that foreign companies employ Kenyans as at least 80% of their workforce and source at least 60% of specified goods and services locally, while manufacturers using agricultural produce would be required to source it entirely from Kenyan farmers. Taken together, these measures point towards a shift towards resource nationalism and local industrialisation.

However, while hosting investors at the 9-10 September **American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Business Summit**, Ruto presented Kenya as open to capital, technology and skills and signalled that Kenya is open to foreign investment. Critical minerals were a dedicated theme at the summit and US and Kenyan officials [discussed](#) local processing, infrastructure and beneficiation. Ruto

stated that since the 2025 summit, US firms had committed more than \$600m in new projects. US officials said on 9 September US would support Kenya in developing critical-mineral processing, including around the rare-earth and niobium potential at **Mrima Hill**. The emerging signal is therefore not that Kenya is turning against foreign investment, but that the government increasingly expects it to produce demonstrable domestic value.

The 11 September [approval](#) of Japan's **Asahi Group Holdings'** \$2.3 billion acquisition of **Diageo's** 65% stake in **East African Breweries Limited (EABL)** provides further evidence that the government is broadly open to foreign ownership. Despite being tied up in [litigation](#) since the deal was agreed in December 2025, the **Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK)** cleared the transaction but required the merged group to reserve at least 20% of refrigeration space it supplies to many retailers for rival products, and retain sufficient funds for outstanding liabilities and continuity of supplies and small-business activity. The approval reinforces Ruto's broader message that Kenya remains open to foreign capital but that the government is increasingly willing to impose conditions on investment and ownership structures to ensure identifiable domestic economic benefits.

Election tender ruling exposes Kenya's digital-governance risks

The **Public Procurement Administrative Review Board (PPARB)** on 4 September [ordered](#) the **Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)** to republish its tender for a new **Integrated Elections Management System (IEMS)**, citing unclear technical and evaluation requirements. The board found that parts of the tender (including rules for foreign bidders, ownership of the technology, and how bids would be assessed) were not clear enough to guarantee a fair and open competition. The intervention highlights a weakness in Kenya's push to rapidly digitalise government services; although doing so can reduce corruption and improve efficiency, the process depends on clear procurement rules, strong oversight, and proper control of private contractors.

The ruling follows Ruto's 27 August [presentation](#) of digitalisation as a central anti-corruption measure, stating that consolidating government payments onto digital platforms had reduced cash transactions vulnerable to corruption. He further claimed that electronic government procurement could generate savings of up to 10%. This direction broadly aligns with **World Bank** backed reforms - a \$750m **Development Policy Operation** supports electronic procurement, stronger conflict-of-interest rules and more transparent public-finance management.

However, the integrity of the contractors operating these systems is becoming increasingly spotlighted. On 8 June, the World Bank [sanctioned](#) **Webmasters Kenya Limited** and founder **James Ayugi** for a minimum of five years after [finding](#) fraudulent and obstructive practices in a World Bank-financed project in **Somalia**. Webmasters Kenya developed, and continues to run, Kenya's **eCitizen** platform, through which citizens and businesses pay for most government services. Although the World Bank did not find misconduct in Kenya, the fact that a major public-sector technology supplier has been debarred for alleged fraudulent and obstructive practices raises legitimate questions about how Kenya conducts supplier due diligence, manages contractor dependence, and protects its critical digital infrastructure.

The auditor general's 2025 [findings](#) that the government did not have full operational control of eCitizen and remained heavily dependent on its vendor, which creating a potential "*single point of failure*", reinforces these concerns. Media investigations and parliamentary hearings have raised further questions over eCitizen, including the [reported](#) diversion of KSh6.3 billion (\$48.4m) through an unapproved account, [payments](#) to firms outside the original contract, and limited transparency over some companies operating the platform.

These issues are especially important for election technology where procurement disputes could quickly evolve into disputes over electoral legitimacy. This risk is also increased by an existing trust deficit around the IEBC whereby opposition politicians have already [challenged](#) the transparency and

timing of election-technology procurement and recent voter-registration [disputes](#) have generated allegations of manipulation.

An additional concern is cybersecurity; Kenya [recorded](#) over 2.3 billion cyber-threat events, including 17.4 million web-application attacks between April and June 2026. The government launched a new **National Cybersecurity Agency** in May 2026, and as of 11 September, the government [said](#) it was moving to make it fully operational, with a director-general appointed and recruitment under way. As more public services and election processes move online, outages and cyberattacks could disrupt government operations and essential services. However, ahead of the August 2027 presidential election the greater political risk is that unexplained outages, data problems or suspected cyber interference could be used to challenge election results, [further](#) undermine confidence in the IEBC, and fuel wider public distrust of the government.

Planner

17-18 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** East Africa CEO & Investment Forum;
 22-28 Sep 2026 **New York (United States)** President **William Ruto** scheduled to attend the 81st **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**;
 30 Sep 2026 **Lamu (Kenya)** Expected launch of **Dangote Lamu** oil refinery project;
 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission to **Nairobi**;
 14-16 Oct 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** Fintech Festival Kenya;
 20 Oct 2026 **(Kenya)** Mashujaa Day (national holiday)
 21-23 Oct 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** Inaugural **Global Trust Summit**;
 19 Jun – 17 Jul 2027 **(Kenya)** Kenya to co-host **Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)** alongside Tanzania and Uganda;
 10 Aug 2027 **(Kenya)** General election.

Chronology

15 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. The **Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA)** keeps **Nairobi** petrol, diesel and kerosene prices unchanged at KSh214.03 (\$1.64), KSh217.86 (\$1.67), and KSh191.38 (\$1.47) per litre respectively;
 14 Sep 2026 **Mombasa (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Heavy rainfall causes flooding along parts of the coast, including Mombasa and **Kwale**, providing an early test of infrastructure resilience ahead of a potentially strong **El Niño** season that could disrupt agriculture, roads, and regional logistics;
 13 Sep 2026 **Mombasa (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Somali** pirates release the **MV Sward**, carrying fertiliser bound for Mombasa, after an estimated \$1.7m ransom following more than four months in captivity;
 10 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. Kenya is expected to gain access to approximately \$400m in **World Bank** emergency financing within six weeks to respond to risks from high energy prices, **El Niño** and regional **Ebola** outbreaks;
 10 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. High court suspends **Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's (IEBC)** procurement of ballot papers and other election materials after the local company **Oilmax Ventures** challenged the requirements including KSh6 billion (\$46.4m) average annual turnover, access to KSh10 billion (\$77.3m) in working capital, and previous experience printing at least 150 million ballots;
 10 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Kenya is courting **United States (US)** companies seeking access to landlocked markets in **East** and **Central Africa** to use **Lamu Port**, with the

government promoting the Lamu corridor as an alternative trade route and access point to a larger regional market;

9 Sep 2026 **Lamu (Kenya)** *Reuters*. **Nigeria's Dangote Industries'** proposed 700,000-barrel-per-day **Lamu** refinery, estimated to cost \$15-16 billion, faces substantial financing, crude-supply, and infrastructure constraints despite plans to break ground by the end of September;

8 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Star*. President **William Ruto** signs amendments to the **Public Finance Management Act** that shorten the deadline for public entities to submit annual financial statements from three months to two and make failure to implement specified audit and parliamentary recommendations an offence;

8 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Controller of Budget, Margaret Nyakang'o**, raises concerns over KSh 364 billion (\$2.82 billion) in spending classified as “*crisis*” expenditure, highlighting questions around the government’s budget management and use of emergency funds;

8 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Associated Press*. The government gives foreign business operators 90 days to regularise work permits and other documentation after President **William Ruto's** proposal to crackdown on foreign participation in small-scale trade prompts anxiety among immigrant communities;

7 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. Government offers temporary amnesty to undocumented **East African** nationals after hundreds of **Burundians** flock to their embassy in Nairobi seeking travel documents, fearing a crackdown on small-scale traders from abroad;

1 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. President **William Ruto's** plan to deploy 100,000km of fibre-optic cable is significantly behind schedule, with only 37% completed and 63,000km still outstanding just months before the government’s target deadline;

1 Sep 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. **Kenya Aviation Workers Union (KAWU)** ends a two-day strike that disrupted flights at **Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA)** and other airports after reaching a return-to-work agreement with aviation authorities;

30 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. President **William Ruto** accuses former president **Uhuru Kenyatta** of financing opposition groups to undermine his administration;

27 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)** notes that Kenya faces a growing risk of electricity cuts as its power reserve margin has fallen to just 3.3%, leaving the grid increasingly vulnerable to disruptions and spikes in demand;

26 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. **Kenya Airways** chairman **Kiprono Kittony** states that the airline expects to disclose potential new investors in coming weeks after receiving interest from parties in the **United States, China, South Africa, and Singapore**;

25 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The East African*. High court suspends the implementation of the government’s requirement that foreign visitors staying in Kenya for less than 12 months hold travel health insurance with at least \$50,000 citing a lack of sufficient public participation, created data-protection concerns, and improperly assigned verification functions to immigration authorities;

25 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. National carrier **Kenya Airways** reports its net loss for the six months to June increased 31.9% to KSh 16 billion (\$123.59m) after costs grew significantly due to the **Middle East** conflict;

24 Aug 2026 **Amboseli (Kenya)** *Reuters*. Kenyan authorities arrest four individuals during an investigation into the alleged poisoning of 18 elephants in **Amboseli** between 24 June and 24 July;

22 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The Standard*. Prime cabinet secretary (CS) and foreign affairs CS **Musalia Mudavadi** says Kenya will not support calls for the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** to intervene over recent political violence in **Homa Bay** and argues that domestic security and judicial institutions can investigate intimidation and criminality ahead of the 2027 election;

20 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Daily*. Treasury plans indicate Kenya hopes to secure up to KSh151.2 billion (\$1.16 billion) from **World Bank** facilities the 2026/27 financial year, including approximately KSh94.2 billion (\$723.6m) in Development Policy Operations, KSh52 billion (\$399m) through a Rapid Response Option and KSh5 billion (\$38.4m) through programme-for-results financing;

19 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *The East African*. The **Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Climate Prediction and Applications Centre** forecasts above-normal rainfall across much of Kenya during October–December 2026, driven by strengthening **El Niño** conditions and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole;

19 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Opposition leaders set 9 October for a **People's Forum** bringing together political, religious and civil society groups to promote a peaceful and credible 2027 election;

19 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. **Kenya Airways** acting CEO **George Kamal** states that the **Middle East** conflict has increased the company's fuel costs by 72% in the first half of 2026, accounting for half of the airline's total cost, while also delaying spare-parts deliveries and aircraft maintenance;

18 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. A Kenyan court blocks **Kenya Power** from disconnecting electricity to essential public facilities over unpaid bills, limiting the utility's ability to recover outstanding debts through power cuts;

17 Aug 2026 **Mombasa (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. **Greek** multinational **Amaco Energy Group** announces they are seeking government approval for a \$1.5 billion AI data centre in **Mombasa** that would use an independently powered offshore liquefied-natural-gas system rather than rely on the national grid;

17 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Daily*. **Public Procurement Regulatory Authority** data shows that ten companies secured KSh131.67 billion (\$1.011 billion) of KSh217.45 billion (\$1.67 billion) in reported state tenders during the year to June 2025, equivalent to 60.5% of total disclosed contract value, but that 57% of the 25,994 reported contracts lacked beneficial-ownership information;

17 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Daily*. Treasury cabinet secretary (CS) **John Mbadi** says that the government is looking for additional financing to subsidise petroleum products after heavy use largely depleted the **Petroleum Development Levy** fund;

17 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Reuters*. The **Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK)** proposes that **East African Breweries Limited (EABL)** set aside up to KSh15 billion (\$115m) to cover potential liabilities and third-party claims linked to EABL before approving **Diageo's** sale of its 65% stake in EABL to **Japan's Asahi Group Holdings**, a proposal Diageo has rejected;

16 Aug 2026 **Nairobi (Kenya)** *Business Daily*. Treasury's draft 2026 **Budget Review and Outlook Paper** signals plans to review Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) tax bands, while projecting lower income-tax receipts and raising its import-duty target;

16 Aug 2026 **Homa Bay (Kenya)** *Daily Nation*. Opposition-linked groups and rival political factions clash in Homa Bay during the **Linda Mwananchi** campaign, amid heightened political tensions in the area as rival groups mobilise supporters ahead of the 2027 general elections;

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