



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM SAMOEI
RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES, DURING THE KENYA DEFENCE FORCES DAY
CELEBRATIONS**

OCTOBER 14, 2025

MOI BARRACKS, ELDORET

**Cabinet Secretaries present,
Chief of the Defence Forces,
Retired Chiefs of Defence Forces,
Service Commanders
General Officers,
Retired General Officers and Service Personnel,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It gives me great pride and honour to join you today here at Moi Barracks, Eldoret, as we mark the Kenya Defence Forces Day.
2. This occasion is a moment of deep national pride, a day when we pause as a nation to honour our gallant men and women in uniform, officers whose enduring courage and steadfast devotion to duty have safeguarded our sovereignty, upheld our security, and advanced our stability and prosperity.
3. Today's celebrations, guided by the theme *'Enhancing a Soldier-Centric Approach Towards Mission Readiness for National Security and Development'*, come at a defining moment, capturing both the spirit of our times and the enduring call to place the soldier at the heart of our national security and development agenda.
4. We are reminded that the true heart of our national defence lies not only in our weapons or technology - vital though they are - but in the courage, welfare, and unwavering readiness of the Kenyan soldier. It is the soldier who stands as the living shield of our sovereignty, the steadfast pillar upon which our security, progress, and national destiny are built.



5. At the core of our celebrations, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the recognition of the immense sacrifices made by our soldiers. Every soldier who dons the Kenyan uniform carries the hopes, safety, and dignity of millions of our citizens. They operate in punishing terrains, endure long separations from their families, and face danger with extraordinary courage.
6. We cannot forget our brave heroes who have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty, defending our borders, securing our communities from the threat of terrorism, and serving in peace support operations beyond our borders.
7. Their memory is forever etched in the conscience of our Republic. We owe an unending debt of gratitude to them and to their families, whose sacrifice continues to inspire our nation's resolve. As Commander-in-Chief, I solemnly reaffirm the government's resolute commitment to honouring their service through devoted care and support for their dependants.
8. Ladies and Gentlemen, mission readiness is measured by the strength of the men and women in uniform - their physical fitness, psychological resilience, moral grounding, and social support. That is why, as a government, we have set out four clear priorities to strengthen the foundation of our Defence Forces.



9. First, the welfare of the soldier and their families. We have expanded healthcare in military facilities, accelerated housing projects across Services, bases, and barracks, and enhanced family support programmes. When a soldier has the comfort of knowing that family is safe and supported, they serve with sharper focus, greater courage, and unshakable resolve.
10. Second, we are investing heavily in training and professional development. We have upgraded training facilities, integrated advanced simulation technologies, and deepened professional military education. Through collaboration with allied nations, our troops now train alongside the best, mastering both conventional and modern forms of warfare.
11. Third, we are modernising our equipment and technology. Bravery alone does not win battles; preparedness does. The government has fast-tracked the acquisition and modernisation of defence systems, improved mobility platforms, and strengthened cyber and intelligence capabilities. The battlefield is changing rapidly, and Kenya must always remain a step ahead of emerging threats.
12. Fourth, we are reinforcing psychological and spiritual support. Mission readiness demands inner strength as much as physical endurance. We are scaling up programmes to address post-traumatic stress, build resilience, and provide moral guidance, recognising that the mind and spirit of a soldier are as vital as their skill and strength.



13. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Kenya Defence Forces now stand at a pivotal crossroads in history. The world around us is transforming - from cyber warfare and terrorism to violent extremism, climate-driven security risks, and transnational organised crime. Closer home, we continue to guard our borders, protect our seas, and confront threats to our peace and stability.
14. In all these, the Kenya Defence Forces have shown exemplary mission readiness. Through operations such as Linda Nchi, contributions to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, and humanitarian assistance across our counties during natural disasters, our officers have demonstrated that readiness is not confined to the battlefield. It also extends to every sphere where the safety and dignity of Kenyans are at stake.
15. Our approach must therefore remain dynamic by strengthening intelligence gathering, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and investing in rapid deployment capabilities.
16. Distinguished guests, security and development are two sides of the same coin. Without security, there can be no sustainable development; without development, insecurity finds fertile ground. The KDF, through their discipline and professionalism, continues to contribute immensely to our national development agenda.



17. Fellow citizens, the story of KDF is the story of what is possible when Kenyans choose excellence over the average, service over selfishness, and courage over comfort. The transformation of our nation depends on this very spirit - the willingness to think big, to believe in our own potential, and to reject the limits of the ordinary. I have said it before, and I repeat it today, that we must reject mediocrity in all its forms. We must aim higher, work harder, and serve better. We must settle for nothing less than the very best.
18. The Kenya Defence Forces are our heroes and patriots, who continue to serve our beloved country with unmatched efficiency, discipline, and commitment. The KDF has remained a shining symbol of professionalism and integrity not only in protecting our sovereignty, but also in driving the very transformation of our nation.
19. Across Kenya, the fingerprints of the KDF are everywhere. You have built roads that connect communities and open new frontiers of opportunity. You have supported the construction of hospitals and schools that give life and hope to our people.
20. You have played a vital role in iconic infrastructure projects like the Talanta Stadium, embodying our belief in talent, excellence, and national pride. In the North Rift, your courage and discipline have restored peace and order, allowing families and businesses to thrive once again.



21. Our soldiers have also been instrumental in disaster response, medical outreaches, and environmental conservation efforts such as tree planting - all of which strengthen our national resilience and defence.
22. We shall continue to harness the skills and expertise of the Kenya Defence Forces in nation-building projects, whether in housing, manufacturing, innovation, or national infrastructure.
23. We shall also continue to deepen defence cooperation with regional and international partners, strengthen interoperability, and enhance intelligence sharing. These partnerships not only improve our mission readiness but also elevate Kenya's role as a responsible and respected member of the international community.
24. As President and Commander-in-Chief, I am proud of what you have achieved not only because you serve with honour, but also because your work gives life to the Government's vision of a transformed and prosperous Kenya. You are builders of the Kenya we dream of, a Kenya that is modern, united, secure, and full of possibility.
25. To the men and women of the Kenya Defence Forces, your patriotism, discipline, and professionalism inspire this great Republic. You remind us that Kenya's destiny will not be achieved by half-measures, but by total dedication to duty and to one another. As your Commander-in-Chief, I thank you for standing tall for Kenya - for building, protecting, and transforming our nation with excellence and pride.



26. Ladies and gentlemen, the soldier's mission is not theirs alone; it is ours collectively as a nation. Every citizen has a role in safeguarding peace and stability. Communities must work with our security agencies to identify and report threats. Civil institutions must complement military efforts through dialogue, education, and economic empowerment. Political leaders must guard against divisive rhetoric and instead strengthen national unity.
27. Today, I call upon every Kenyan to stand firmly behind the Kenya Defence Forces. Let us accord them the respect, cooperation, and gratitude they so richly deserve.
28. As we celebrate this year's KDF Day, let us remember that at the centre of our national defence stands the soldier - courageous, resilient, and devoted. Our collective commitment, as government and citizens, is to ensure that every soldier is trained, equipped, supported, and honoured.
29. To every member of the Kenya Defence Forces, I say this: You are the shield and sword of our Republic. You carry the hopes of generations, the pride of our people, and the dignity of our flag.
30. To the families of our distinguished soldiers, receive our deepest gratitude for supporting these brave warriors throughout their journey of service to the nation and to humanity.

I thank you.

###

