# Two Lawyers Came to Political Power in Africa Today – Duma Boko in Botswana and Prof Kithure Kindiki in Kenya: A Brief Reflection

**By:**

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Today, November 1, 2024 two lawyers came to political power in Africa. In Botswana, Duma Boko President of the Umbrella for Democratic Change which includes his Botswana National Front swept to victory putting ending the 58 year-old hold on power of the independence ruling party the Botswana Democratic Party. So sweeping was Advocate Duma Boko victory that the ruling party is trailing fourth in the polls. To his credit, President Mokgweetsi Masisi conceded defeat even before the final results were announced and promised a peaceful transfer of power. Botswana therefore joins a few African countries like Ghana where there has been a peaceful transfer of power when an incumbent

party loses to an opposition party.

President-Elect Duma Boko has promised a new economic path for one of Africa's most stable democracies that has in experienced economic turmoil under the watch of the outgoing Botswana Democratic Party. Among Duma Boko's promises is the creation of 450,000 to 500,000 jobs in the next five years to address. Indeed, the fall in diamond prices calls upon the President Elect to diversify the economy – diamonds are after all not forever! Beyond his agenda of building a deep economy of opportunity for all, President-Elect Duma has also promised reforms for democracy, governance and security, as well as for land, housing, climate change and plans for becoming a leader in green energy as well as in education, research and human resource development.

In Kenya, Profesor Kithure Kindiki, was sworn into office as the Deputy President. This time, not after an arduous campaign, but rather following a fast paced impeachment process that kicked out the former Deputy President. Professor Kithure Kindiki was until yesterday Kenya's Cabinet Secretary of the Interior, a position he held since October 2022. Professor Kindiki is an accomplished academic and while he holds a Master of Law degree like Duma Boko, Profesor Kindiki holds a PhD from the University of Pretoria. When I first met Professor Kindiki, he was I believe the first Associate Dean at the School of Law at the University of Nairobi. This was in the last part of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the same period, he helped to set up the international trade programme at the Trade Policy Training Institute in Africa (Trapca) based in Arusha, Tanzania and attracted a world class faculty.

Under Professor Kithure's watch as Cabinet Secretary of the Interior, there have been several reports of abductions, killings, incommunicado detentions and tracking of government critics using mobile signals. Yet after the Gen-Z Revolution of June 2025 protesting the 2024 Finance Bill and austerity, Kenya witnessed a heavy-handed militarized response that Professor Kithure defended . The abductions of government critics is eerily similar to the days of authoritarian one-party rule and the era of President Uhuru Kenyatta that President William Ruto promised never to return to.

While we await Kenyan courts to determine the legality and constitutionality of the impeachment that preceded the rise of Professor Kithure Kindiki to Kenya's

Deputy President, it suffices to note that he arrives within a Presidency that has consolidated its power and authority. The official opposition in Kenya is now part of a Broad-Based Government which means that Kenyan President Dr. William Ruto can whip both houses of parliament to do his will with almost no checks. One would hope that Professor Kindiki as a lawyer first and foremost will keep his oath to protect and defend the rule of law and Kenya's 2010 Constitution and in so doing prevent a return to the authoritarianism of one-party rule.

In Botswana, the Harvard Law School graduate, Duma Boko becomes one of the youngest African leaders at 54 years of age. I know Duma Boko as a brilliant legal mind, and hope that he brings his many talents and love of his country and Africa to consolidate democracy and the rule of law in his home country as he has promised in his manifesto. This is particularly so given the many restrictions that outgoing President Masisi's administration put in the way of Duma Boko led opposition campaign. Finally, it would be great to see his social democratic vision radiating in Botswana's policy towards making the African Union serve African interests first and foremost.

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