

Religion Desperate Kenyans losing millions to ‘pastors’

# Sacred swindle: The gospel of greed on Kenya’s airwaves

TV stations’ presenters use emotional manipulation, invoking sickness, school fees and faith to trap viewers

BY STEVE OTIENO

Inside Kenya’s booming digital TV revolution with over 359 stations—a quarter of which are religious-based—broadcasting into homes daily, deception festers.

Among the stations is Yahweh’s Media Services Limited, a Nairobi-based religious broadcaster allegedly masterminding one of the most audacious frauds in Kenya’s media landscape.

From its headquarters at K-Mall, just a hundred metres off Kangundo Road, “prophet” David Maina, whose aliases include Karuru and Kagechu, presides over an empire of faith and fraud.

Through stations such as Jawa-bu TV, Madhabahu TV, Yahweh’s TV and Shahada TV, Mr Maina’s media group blends gospel with gambling, promising viewers instant cash rewards in exchange for mobile money transfers.

What looks like divine intervention is, in fact, a well-orchestrated

con job with thousands of unsuspecting viewers as victims.

An investigation by the *Nation* has unearthed what insiders are calling a well-oiled con game. At the heart of it: televised games of chance disguised as religious charity.

Whistleblowers from within Mr Maina’s own camp, including employees, describe an operation that preys on Kenya’s poorest and desperate. The masterminds use emotional manipulation, technical deceit and religious influence to drain money from households across the country.

Programmes are interrupted by presenters whose identities are concealed. They invite viewers to “win blessings” by sending small amounts of money. Unknown to the viewers, the draw is rigged.

“Nobody wins. It’s just a scam. We manufacture fake winners, and the real money is withdrawn immediately,” one whistleblower said.

In secret recordings of the oper-

ations of these religious stations obtained by the *Nation*, presenters mock their victims while off-air.

One laughs, calling it “wizi ninakufunza” (I’m teaching you theft). Another one then boasts, “these are the hours we make money”, an admission that these presenters are well aware of the pain they inflict. Their confidence is bolstered by years of impunity and a regulatory vacuum.

Once victims send their initial bets of between Sh10 and Sh50, they are baited to send more to outbid imaginary competitors, with names of supposed winners fabricated.

Viewers are pushed into an endless loop of hope and loss. The more they send, the more they are encouraged to send, based on the false promise that they are “so close to winning”.

Ms Ruth Wanjiku, a grandmother from Kikuyu, is one such victim. Sick at home and drawn in by the promise of winning Sh10,000



after sending Sh10, she lost over Sh6,000 in less than an hour.

“They called my name out and told me to send more to win. I kept playing. I was the only one playing,” she recalled.

Her story is echoed by many others.

Joseph Ng’ang’a, a widower, gambled away his children’s school fees. He had set aside some money to send his children back to school but it ended up lining the pockets of scammers using the holy writs as their shield.

“I just wanted to win Sh40,000 but I ended up with nothing,” he said.

These outcomes, whistleblowers said, are by design, curated with the heinous intentions.

“The company has no intention of awarding real prizes. Even employees are used as fake winners. No one gets anything,” one source confessed, describing how they were made to act as participants and winners during live broadcasts.

The TV presenters operate with chilling precision. Their targets: vulnerable, low-income viewers with limited access to streaming platforms. The strategy is simple—hook them with dubbed action movies and insert gambling breaks promising fast money. The presenters use emotional manipulation, invoking sickness, school fees and faith to trap viewers.


“If you have a sick child, just send Sh50 and you will win

Sh50,000,” one presenter was recorded saying.

Such lines are scripted to hit where it hurts most. In a society grappling with high unemployment, rising inflation and economic desperation, these messages find fertile ground.

Regulatory bodies, including the Betting Control and Licensing Board (BCLB) and the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), have been slow to act.

BCLB boss Peter Mbugi admitted that Yahweh’s Media Services does not hold a gambling licence and is therefore not permitted to conduct any form of gambling. However, its ever-changing tricks to avoid the law have frustrated the board.



Terre des hommes

Helping children worldwide.

INVITATION TO BID USED VEHICLES FOR SALE

Reference Number:	KEN/CFEOI/2025/01
Deadline for Submission	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 by 4.00pm
Tender Subject	Used Vehicles for sale (“as-is-where-is basis”)

Invitation:

**Terres des hommes- Foundation**, an International Humanitarian Organization based in Kenya, invites expression of interests to interested persons or entities to purchase used Vehicles for TDH-Kenya on “as-is-where-is basis” subject to terms and conditions set out in instructions below.

**Invitation to Bid instructions:**

- Interested entities and/or individuals can view the vehicles at our offices as detailed below

Brand/Type	Model	Chassis N°	Engine N°	Year of Manufacture	Plate N°	Location	Viewing Address
Toyota-4x4	Landcruiser	JTERB71J - 600062659	1HZ-0680121	2011	KBW 015D	Garissa	Off to Kismayu Road, next to CDF office
Toyota-4x4	Landcruiser	JTERB71J - 400066306	1HZ-0705339	2012	KBS 755W		
Toyota-4x4	Landcruiser	JTERB71J 300056995	1HZ -0642365	2010	KBM 537B	Nairobi	Riverside and West, Off Riverside Drive (First blue gate on the right)

Viewing Dates **Tuesdays and Fridays every week from 11.00am - 2.00pm**

Financial offers can be submitted through TDH email : [ken.tenders@tdh.org](mailto:ken.tenders@tdh.org) with subject line “**KEN/CFEO/2025/01- Used Vehicles for sale (“as-is-where-is basis”)**”.

- Last day of submitting the financial offer is **June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 4.00 pm.**
- The vehicle will be sold on an **as-is-where-is basis** to the highest bidder. The organization gives no warranties and shall conduct due diligence before final awarding.
- Payment will be done by direct transfer or EFT within 2 days of decision by the tender committee.
- Vehicle hand over will be done within 4 days after bidder notification and proof of payment.
- Terres des hommes- Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject as an organization final decision.
- Bids received after submission deadline above, will not be accepted.
- Successful bidders shall be notified through email with sale agreement outlining terms and conditions of sale.

**Bids submitted in any other manner than listed will be rejected. Any kind of Canvassing is prohibited and shall lead to disqualification.**



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC

BID NOTICE

The International Rescue Committee, Inc. (IRC) is a private international, nonsectarian, voluntary organization providing relief, protection and resettlement services for refugees and victims of oppression or violent conflict.

In partnership with various Donors, the IRC has a requirement for the following.

REFERENCE NO.	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TITLE/ DESCRIPTION	BID SUBMISSION
Ref No. IRC-KELOD-MPA-2025-01	Supply of General Supplies- Lodwar field office	Online
Ref No. IRC-KELOD-MSA-2025-02	Vehicle Hire Services -Lodwar field office	
Ref No. IRC-KELOD-MSA-2025-03	Supply of Fuel: -Diesel, Petroleum, Gas and Lubricants- Lodwar field office	
Ref No. IRC-KELOD-MSA-2025-04	Provision of Hotel Conference and Accommodation Services- Lodwar field office	

Interested and suitably qualified suppliers may download complete tender information and RFP documents (specifications) from the IRC Website: <http://www.rescue.org/about/procurement>

Bidders’ proposal shall be submitted Online in compressed zipped folder (PDF files) as per the tender instructions.

The bidder’s proposal shall comprise of technical proposal and financial proposal together with all the required documents as per clause 7 in the Request for Proposal.

**Bid documents shall be submitted Online through below email: [Procurement.Nairobi@rescue.org](mailto:Procurement.Nairobi@rescue.org) On or before 9th June 2025- 5.00pm EAT**

Bids submitted after this deadline shall not be accepted.

Please note that IRC shall not be bound to accept the lowest priced tender or bid or any tender or bid submitted, and any form of canvassing will lead to automatic disqualification.



TETU WATER AND SANITATION PLC

P.O. BOX 1089-10100, NYERI, TEL: 0796-976-937

Email: [teawasco@gmail.com](mailto:teawasco@gmail.com) website: [www.teawasco.co.ke](http://www.teawasco.co.ke)

TENDER AND REGISTRATION OF SUPPLIERS NOTICE

Tetu Water and Sanitation PLC referred to as “TEWASCO” invites applications for our Open Tender and Registration of Suppliers from interested & eligible bidders for the Supply of various goods, works and services for the Financial Years **2025/2026** and **2025/2027** for Registration of Suppliers

Tender documents are available and can be downloaded free of charge on the company website: [www.teawasco.co.ke](http://www.teawasco.co.ke) &The Public Procurement Information portal: [www.tenders.go.ke](http://www.tenders.go.ke)

Complete serialized tender and Registration of Supplier’s documents should be submitted in a plain sealed envelope and bearing no indication of the applicant’s name but clearly indicating the **Tender Number** and **Category Description** being applied for and should be deposited in the Tender Box located at our **Headquarter Offices–Nyeri, (within District Water Offices – Kamakwa)**, so as to be received on or before **WEDNESDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025 AT 11:00AM** and should be addressed to:-

**MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
TETU WATER AND SANITATION PLC,  
P.O. BOX 1089-10100,  
NYERI.**

**The Tender Documents shall be opened soon thereafter in the presence of tenderers or their representatives who wish to attend at Tetu Water and Sanitation PLC offices.**