

**KENYA MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, PHARMACISTS & DENTISTS UNION  
(KMPDU)**

# **Keynote Address: Institutional Resilience, National Standardization, and Facing the Devolution Crisis**

**Speaker:** Dr. Davji Bhimji Atallah, National Secretary General

**Event:** Central Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025

**Date:** Saturday, 29th March 2025

**Venue:** Abai Lodges and Spa, Kirinyaga, Kenya

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## **Colleagues, Branch Leaders, and Mighty Comrades,**

I am deeply honored to stand before the KMPDU Central Branch today here in Kirinyaga. Looking out at this room, I see the undeniable spirit of solidarity that makes our union an impenetrable wall against oppression. I must congratulate this branch for its immense growth; seeing Kirinyaga fully back in the house and welcoming Mwai Kibaki Hospital into our folder is a clear testament that our structural baseline is expanding across this region.

But Comrades, as we gather to review our administrative logs, we must confront the cold, hard reality of the medical fraternity in Kenya today. We are fighting a coordinated, systemic war against our livelihoods, our career progression, and our professional dignity.

For years, we have signed hard-won national Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) in good faith. Yet, when we look at the individual counties, we see a malicious, deliberate pattern of stalling. County administrations are actively playing games with your lives—delaying your promotions, ignoring your study leaves, withholding your locum pay, and compromising your medical insurance. They wait until the very final minute when we demand our rights, and then they run to a judge to bypass the law and lock us out.

**"Let me tell you why we are facing this endless crisis: healthcare devolution in its current state has failed the Kenyan doctor. This structural disparity exists because we have allowed individual counties to act as independent feudal lords over our healthcare workforce."**

We have first-time governors who bury their heads deeply in systemic dysfunction, focusing on recouping the massive personal fortunes they squandered to fund their political campaigns rather than equipping our hospitals and paying our medics. They treat doctors like cheap, seasonal contract labor. It is an insult to our entire profession that a highly qualified medical officer, who has served dedicatedly across multiple facilities for years, can be trapped down in Job Group N or P simply because they made the "mistake" of moving between different counties.

Meanwhile, the state attempts to pass laws allowing under-qualified technicians to squat on your lines of training, offering poor medicine to poor people.

There is only one structural correction that will permanently solve this nightmare: the establishment of a centralized **Health Service Commission (HSC)**. Healthcare is a national standard. Same country, same taxes, same medical training—therefore, we must have centralized human resource standardization. We need a commission that handles our staffing, our uniform curricula, our promotions, and our welfare centrally, taking our career progression completely out of the hands of local politicians. Until the Health Service Commission is established, we will continue to meet them on the streets, because we have no business issuing hollow bluffs.

I know that standing up to face a county executive can be terrifying. I know the anxiety that creeps in when the county politicians threaten salary rollbacks, disciplinary show-cause letters, or structural intimidation. But I urge you today to shed your fear!

Remember this fundamental truth: it is entirely out of silence and fear that every corrupt administrator and every political dictator succeeds. When you look at these politicians face-to-face, you realize they are deeply weak and fundamentally terrified. They have immense fortunes to protect, and they live by misappropriating public resources. When we confront them not as isolated individuals, but as one unyielding, collective, parallel power structure and say, "We are tired, and the right things must be done," they will capitulate every single time.

To our comrades from Kiambu, from Murang'a, from Nyeri, and across the South Rift—stand firm! Do not isolate your grievances. An attack on a single doctor in a sub-county facility is a declaration of war against the national union executive.

We will continue to demand financial autonomy over our medical funds. We will continue to outmaneuver their legal machinery in court. Your leadership is legally ahead of them, we are remaining ahead, and we will not step back down until every promotion is delivered, every comprehensive cover is restored, and professional dignity is permanently secured.

Shed your fear, protect your institutions, hold the line, and let us win this war together.

**Dr. Davji Bhimji Atallah**

National Secretary General, KMPDU

**VIVA KMPDU! VIVA!**