Twitter Thread by MT



MT
@MarigaThoithi



Anyang's Nyongo's flippancy about health workers is interesting considering he is public about his battle with cancer, which he has gotten treatment for abroad.

Back in 2012,Kenya's two health ministers-Nyong'o and Beth Mugo both went public about their cancer diagnosis....

In 2010, Prof Anyang' Nyong'o, Minister for Medical Services was diagnosed with prostrate cancer. Beth Mugo, Minister for Public Health and Sanitation was diagnosed with breast cancer.

They both received their diagnosis upon going for 'regular check-ups, which most Kenyans can't afford these

They both sought treatment in the US.

Two health ministers, in charge of Kenyan healthcare, preferred treatment abroad

When questioned by journalists on why a health minister would choose treatment abroad, this is what Beth Mugo had to say

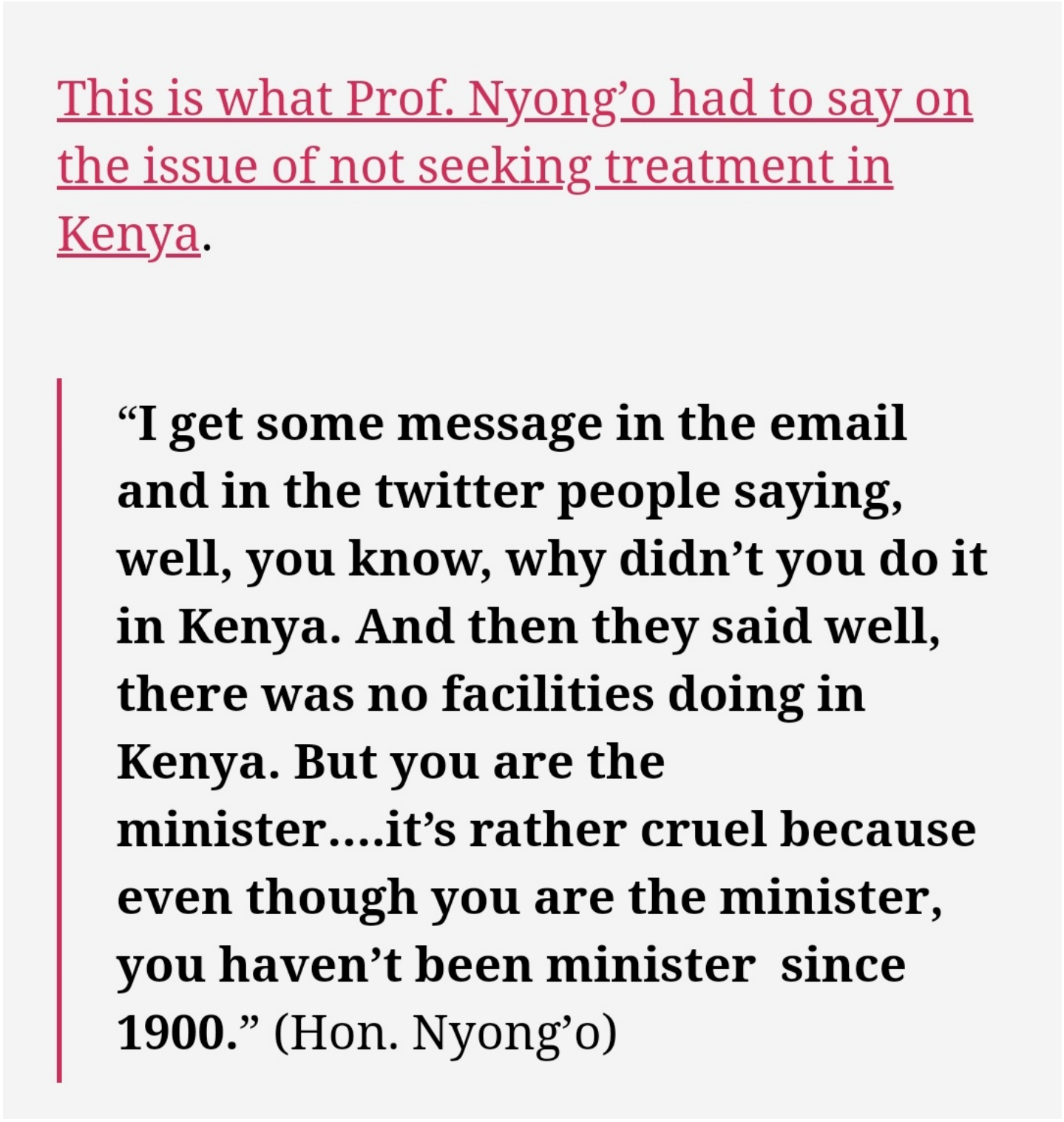
"...I think I also did a good deed by leaving that space and our oncologists and that bed and everything to support another patient."

nanjira.com/2012/01/yes-n 58

Question(journo): '**Why did you go to the US and not here?**' (for treatment of course)

Response(Hon. Mugo): "**No,I think when you have a choice to go...and I think we have also excellent doctors...uh..here, and who do a very good job, but again, it's a personal thing and if you have opportunity, then you choose ..uh... where you want this to happen, but is not that I do not...uh...I do not... uh...I think that they are not ...uh... good doctors, we have good programs here...and also why should I take the space of somebody else who might not even be able then to go where I went because we only have facilities for so many patients I think I also did a good deed by leaving that space and our oncologists and that bed and everything to support another patient.**"

When questioned by journalists on why a health minister would choose treatment abroad, this is what Anyang' Nyong'o had to say



In the same interview he said that the one thing cancer had given him was renewed strength to champion for the provision of affordable health services to the country's poorest https://t.co/2EsouZGolG

All of this was documented really well by @NiNanjira including the tone of media coverage focused on empathy at the ministers' diagnosis and way less on holding them accountable on the state of the public healthcare system

https://t.co/pIP3qa5SiF

This was Anyang' Nyong'o's response to striking doctors when they were asking for humane working conditions.

https://t.co/rOZ9tGxhee

> Remember when Doctors had a strike and among their demands was paid study leave alafu baba lupita scolded them for wanting " sweets"
>
> — Plesdent Kinyarra's Burner Account (@AL_Pseudo) December 8, 2020

When interviewed by Harvard School of Public Health, where he's a Brundtland Senior Leadership Fellow, Anyang' Nyongo had this to say about his work in public health, he had quite a bit to say-I'll highlight a few excerpts in subsequent tweets.

https://t.co/xMKuiOqKzg

" Health is a very difficult ministry to run, as Professor Julio Frenk here will tell you. It is a very difficult ministry to run. One, because although health issues are important, government does not necessarily usually take health to be one of the front-line ministries."

"Health is not like education..in education if you make a policy, you'll see kids .. in uniform in the morning, and.. applauding what you are doing. In health, you don't necessarily-- you cannot easily parade patients in hospitals, you know. So it's not as sexy as education."

"So although I was very passionate about issues in health, it did not follow that government, as a whole, could rally behind you immediately on those issues. You really need a president who is concerned about health to make your life easier as a minster for health.

"But then when you go in government,achievement is not as easy to come by. Because hold election,re-elected-the moment you get in government all these people abusing you and holding placards and calling you names. Sometimes I wonder,what the hell are you doing with these fellows?

"And secondly, when you come to universal health coverage-- let me you an example. In the year 2010 July, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My wife, Dorothy, is here. And then we suddenly realized that there were no facilities that could help me in Kenya."

"We didn't have a single hospital with radiation treatment except KNH which was, by all intents and purposes, not very advanced. So I had to go and get treatment at the University of California, the Helen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center, which is a very good facility."

"But then when we came back, we got very concerned about this, and had discussions with the private hospitals...So since 2010, there's been a tremendous development of all kinds of facilities in Kenya, particularly in the private sector.

"Why am I saying this? Look, in the event that a Kenyan needs cancer treatment, you're much more likely to get better treatment in the private sector than in the government sector."

"What is the barrier?Cost.If govt puts in place UHC,which means that you open access,then somebody can have access to health care in the private sector as well as the private sector because there's a financial mechanism to access the good facilities in the private sector

"In the Constitution, it says that Kenyans have a right of access to affordable and quality health care. It doesn't tell you where. What I'm saying is that the where could easily be in the private sector. "

"I've learned that, really, if you are in government and you are going to go-- you're going to do something-- do it in the first month. Don't wait. And don't be too worried about the laws, and the regulations, and so on. Because if you are, you get nowhere."

"This was against the law by the way because two weeks later the head of public service wrote for my PS,and telling him, tell your minister that he had done an illegal thing. But the thing was popular,so legality was swept aside by popularity. So we did it,and streamlined KEMSA."

"Sometimes I blame it on too many noisy stakeholders which do not have focused program but want to be on the stage and be heard ..Not that I'm against civil society, I'm a product of civil society. But civil society too must be focused in its own options and in its own proposals"

"So I think that statement by Mboya that this freedom we are prepared to defend it all our life, it's something that I think we should make alive in our constitutions, in our practices, and so on."

Nyong'o isn't ignorant about our plight or about healthcare. He has just judged our lives as Kenyans to be dispensable against the gains he would make politically through the #BBI and he's just decided that healthcare workers and Kenyans be damned.

This interview has a whole lot to unpack including the push for a private solution to healthcare by a Governor and his clear admission to understanding the problems in the system and his dedication to go against the solutions he is clearly aware of

https://t.co/xMKuiOqKzg

Nyong'o has had his hand in the cookie jar at KEMSA, NHIF, the Ministry of Health, in his current role as Governor and all other spaces he's occupied.

He doesn't care about you and I and that didn't start yesterday