



August 26, 2026

### **A Statement of Support for Swahili Village and Kevin Onyona**

Few things are more important to the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington (RAMW) than supporting the success, growth, and resilience of the restaurants and hospitality professionals who make our region one of the most vibrant culinary destinations in the country.

For years, **Swahili Village** has been an important part of that story.

Under the leadership of **Kevin Onyona**, Swahili Village has introduced countless residents, visitors, business leaders, elected officials, and members of the diplomatic community to the rich culinary traditions and hospitality of East Africa. The restaurant has become much more than a place to dine; it has served as a cultural gathering place, helping to build understanding, celebrate diversity, and showcase a cuisine and culture that has not always received the recognition it deserves in our region.

Like many businesses, Swahili Village has also faced significant challenges. The legal matters that became public over the past several years were serious and understandably raised concerns. To my knowledge, those matters have now been resolved through the legal process, and it is our understanding that Kevin and his team have taken meaningful steps to strengthen internal operations, improve compliance, and move the business forward with a renewed commitment to responsible management.

At RAMW, we believe accountability matters. We also believe that when a business acknowledges difficult circumstances, addresses them, and demonstrates a genuine commitment to improvement, there should be an opportunity to move forward.

The restaurant industry is built on resilience. Restaurant owners face extraordinary challenges every day, and the strongest businesses are often those that learn from adversity and emerge with stronger systems, better leadership, and an even greater commitment to serving their employees, customers, and communities.

Swahili Village remains an active member of the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington and an important contributor to the cultural and culinary fabric of the Washington metropolitan region. We recognize the role the restaurant has played in elevating African cuisine, creating jobs, supporting entrepreneurs, and welcoming guests from around the world.

As Kevin and his team continue this next chapter, RAMW supports their efforts to rebuild, strengthen their business, and continue serving the community. We look forward to seeing Swahili Village continue to grow and contribute to the region's thriving restaurant industry.

Our Association remains committed to supporting all of our members who are working in good faith to operate successful, responsible businesses and to contribute positively to the hospitality community.

We wish Kevin, his employees, and the entire Swahili Village team continued success as they move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Townsend', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shawn Townsend  
President & CEO  
Metropolitan Washington Restaurant Association