



20th OCTOBER 2021

PRESS STATEMENT

BASIC MINIMUM TO GUARANTEE SAFE AND SECURE ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2022

We, the Police Reforms Working Group - Kenya, comprising of human rights organizations, legal entities, social justice centers, women organizations, security sector reforms associations, pressure groups as well as youth entities, having met in Mombasa from Sunday 17th to Wednesday 20th October, 2021, to consider the state of security vis a vis the upcoming 2022 general elections, do hereby issue the following statement in consideration of what was discussed and agreed:

The bleak and dire security situation in the country requires urgent action to inspire public confidence in security and elections management.

As we approach the general elections, we are deeply concerned by the disturbing trend of increased extra judicial killings and enforced disappearances reported in various parts of the country;

The elections management and outcomes in Kenya continue to pose security and safety challenges which the country needs to address in order to achieve free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections;

So far, there are inadequate linkages and accountability mechanisms within the criminal justice system with respect to security and electoral justice

Public order management remains a key challenge so far which if not well managed could lead serious disharmony in the upcoming general elections;

That there is need to pay keen attention to the issues of Sexual and Gender Based Violence since this has become an issue of great concern factors related to elections and electioneering process;

Despite a lot of efforts channeled towards police reforms recent occurrence point to the fact that attainment of police accountability still remains a challenge that requires to be addressed collectively by all stakeholders;

That the principles and values of elections security management need to be adhered to and upheld by all concerned parties particularly the police and the political parties;

We note that there is weak supervision by the command structure of the national police service thereby leaving a loophole for junior officers to abuse and misuse their powers;

In consideration of the above, as the police reforms working group, we make the following recommendations;

1. That there must be deliberate efforts by Kenyans to encourage partnership and collaboration among elections security agencies and other key stakeholders;
2. That the police uphold and respect the rule of law and human rights including the right to picket and assemble as articulated in the constitution and relevant laws;
3. That the Elections Security Arrangement Program (ESAP) is opened up to broader stakeholder participation to include civil society;
4. ESAP ensure that the elections security management plans are Gender responsive;
5. That there is need for ESAP to ensure there is centralized, non-threatening, non-divisive, timely and unambiguous communication in relation to elections security management;
6. That there is coordinated multi agency approaches within a structured partnership and collaboration framework to enhance transparency and accountability in elections management;
7. That there is need for depoliticization of elections management organs including shielding of IEBC and NPS from the influence of the Executive, legislature and other political actors;
8. That IEBC ensures there is fairness and impartiality immediately, before, during and after the elections;
9. While we recognize the efforts made by the Inspector General of Police to prepare elections management guidelines for public order management and use of force and firearms, we call on the Inspector General of Police to immediately gazette and operationalize these guidelines.

This statement was signed on 20th October 2021 by members of the Police Reforms Working Group-Kenya, an alliance of national and grassroots organisations committed to professional and rule of law policing. They include:

1. *Amnesty International Kenya*
2. *Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO)*
3. *Defenders Coalition*
4. *HAKI Africa*
5. *Independent Medical-Legal Unit (IMLU)*
6. *International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ-Kenya)*
7. *International Justice Mission (IJM-K)*
8. *Katiba Institute*
9. *Kariobangi Paralegal Network*
10. *Kenya's for Peace, Truth and Justice (KPTJ)*
11. *Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)*
12. *Peace Brigades International (PBI)*
13. *Shield For Justice (SJF)*
14. *Social Welfare Development Program (SOWED)*
15. *The Kenyan Section of International Commission of Jurists (ICJ Kenya)*
16. *Transparency International Kenya (TI-Kenya)*
17. *Usalama Reforms Forum*
18. *Wangu Kanja Foundation*
19. *Women Empowerment Link (WEL)*
20. *Social Justice Centre Working Group*
21. *Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya)*