



## PRESS STATEMENT

### Immediate Release of #OccupyParliament Protestors and Condemnation of Police Brutality 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

Twenty-one human rights and governance organizations under the Police Reforms Working Group Kenya (PRWG-Kenya) are deeply alarmed and outraged by the mass arrests of 210 peaceful protestors, journalists and our own staff observing the #OccupyParliament protest this morning. The use of excessive force, intimidation of civilians, violation of privacy through physical searches and arbitrary arrests is an outright infringement of the constitutional rights of the people of Kenya.

The right to peaceful assembly and protest is enshrined under Article 37 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and is a fundamental pillar of any democratic society. The right to speak on public affairs is vital for any democratic and accountable society. However, once again, the National Police Service has acted in blatant disregard for these rights to silence dissent through force and intimidation.

We demand the immediate and unconditional release of all arrested protestors and observers. We call on the National Police Service to uphold their duty to protect and respect the rights of Kenyan citizens to assemble peacefully. The use of excessive force and intimidation must cease immediately.

Furthermore, we urge the National Police Service to facilitate and safeguard the right to protest. This includes ensuring that protestors can express their views without fear of arrest or violence. The actions witnessed today are not only a violation of human rights but also a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle for justice and freedom in Kenya.

We stand in solidarity with all those who bravely exercised their right to protest and call on all Kenyans to join us in demanding accountability and respect for our constitutional rights. We reiterate our commitment to upholding the rights and freedoms of all Kenyans. The Police Reforms Working Group is documenting the situation closely, providing direct support to those affected and already exploring legal action for redress.

This statement is signed by members of the Police Reforms Working Group-Kenya, an alliance of national and grassroots organisations committed to professional, accountable and human rights-compliant policing. They include:

**Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU), Kariobangi Paralegal Network, Defenders Coalition, Katiba Institute, Social Justice Centres Working Group (SJCW), The Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ Kenya), International Justice Mission (IJM-K), HAKI Africa, Amnesty International Kenya, Women Empowerment Link, Social Welfare Development Program (SOWED), Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA- Kenya), International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ - Kenya), Social Justice Centres Working Group (SJCW), Transparency International Kenya, Shield For justice, Wangu Kanja Foundation, Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO), Kenyans for Peace, Truth and Justice (KPTJ), Peace Brigades International Kenya. (PBI Kenya).**

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