



PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT ON ABDUCTIONS OF CITIZENS SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN #REJECTFINANCEBILL2024 PROTESTS.

Nairobi, 25th June 2024.

The Police Reforms Working Group Kenya (PRWG-K) unequivocally condemns the recent wave of abductions of citizens suspected of involvement in the #RejectFinanceBill2024 protests. These 12 abductions, which occurred over the last five days and intensified last night, are a gross violation of human rights and amount to arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearance as prohibited under Article 29 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

Enforced disappearance, as defined by Article 29 of the Constitution, involves the arrest, detention, or abduction of an individual by state agents or persons acting with state authorization, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the person's fate or whereabouts. Such practices are a grave violation of human rights and international law. It is unacceptable that individuals exercising their democratic rights to peaceful assembly and expression are being forcibly disappeared. These actions not only undermine the rule of law but also instill fear and uncertainty among the populace. We urge the government to immediately cease these unlawful practices and release all individuals who have been arbitrarily detained.

We strongly call on President William Samoei Ruto to uphold the oath he took during his swearing-in ceremony: "I, William Samoei Ruto, in full realization of the high calling I assume as President of Kenya, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Republic of Kenya, that I will obey, preserve, and protect this Constitution of Kenya." It is imperative that the government honors its promise to protect the rights of its citizens and ensures that such violations are not repeated.

PRWG-K reaffirms its commitment to advocating for justice and accountability. We stand ready to support the victims of these abductions and their families through legal assistance, medical care, and psychological support. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and document any further human rights abuses.

We remind the government that the Constitution of Kenya guarantees the right to liberty and security, and prohibits any form of arbitrary arrest and detention. It is the duty of the state to protect these rights and ensure that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

For further assistance, or to report human rights violations, please call our helplines at IMLU at 0800-721-401, Defenders Coalition 0716-200-100, Amnesty International Kenya 0759-463-346, Wangu Kanja Foundation 1519, International Justice Mission (IJM) 0717-723-004 and Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) 0722-264-497.

This statement is signed by the Police Reforms Working Group-Kenya, an alliance of national and grassroots organizations 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), 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), 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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