



## **POLICE REFORMS WORKING GROUP STATEMENT ON YESTERDAY'S ANARCHY IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF NAIROBI**

**Nairobi, Wednesday, June 18, 2025:** The Police Reforms Working Group strongly condemns the deliberate infiltration of peaceful protests by hundreds violent agitators who attacked protesters and caused mayhem in the County of Nairobi. The violence has resulted in the shooting of at least one unarmed bystander. Twenty-five people had also been hospitalised, five with gunshot wounds by 9pm last night. Apart from serious injuries to individuals, there was uncalculated damage to private businesses and public property across the capital.

The Police Reforms Working Group reiterates its public safety advisory, issued on June 17, for the National Police Service on lawful policing of protesting ahead of the demonstrations that took place across four counties, namely Nairobi, Mombasa, Kilifi and Kwale. The seven principles clearly called for de-escalation and proportionality on any use of force, protection of protesters, bystanders, emergency health-workers, journalists and police and cooperation with the Independent Policing Oversight Authority and Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

Under the Constitution of Kenya and international human rights law, the use of force is a serious responsibility entrusted solely to the National Police Service. This authority must be strictly exercised to protect the rights, safety, and dignity of all individuals. It can only be used in accordance with the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability. This responsibility to protect was completely abdicated yesterday.

Our monitoring and preliminary analysis confirms widespread fears that the National Police Service failed to stop hundreds of masked agitators who were mobilized, transported and deployed to patrol several streets and attack Government critics with tyre whips, large wooden batons and knives

More worryingly, protest observation in the streets and mass media analysis reveals that the police at times intentionally accompanied, supported and directed their operations for more than six hours of mayhem yesterday. We monitored police officers in consultations with goons, at Moi Avenue, Railways Club and Kenyatta Avenue. Several of the groups were filmed publicly expressing their appreciation for the Nairobi Governor for the support they had received, and elsewhere elected Members of the County Assembly praised them for their unlawful actions.

Despite the Police Spokesperson statement “taking note of the goons” and “investigations have commenced”, post-violence visits to Central Police Station and Kamukunji Police Station revealed that no protest related arrests had been carried out by 8 pm last night.

The National Police Service Inspector General must clearly address police conduct as witnessed yesterday in the streets of Nairobi while clearly addressing police conduct including clear consensus between police and violent agitators, the names, badge numbers and ranks of officers who are captured using excessive force against protesters, including lethal force, the commanding officers and the nature of instructions issued to the Police yesterday and the status of investigations as alleged in their statement authorisation or with the acquiescence of police officers and commanders.

The Inspector General of Police must swiftly investigate and arrest officers and violent agitators who blatantly violated the Constitution by using excessive force against protesters and the public. We call on the office of the IG to submit the deployment schedule, weapons, ballistics and other forensic evidence used in yesterday's operation to the Independent Policing Oversight Authority. The officer involved in the shooting and killing of businessman Boniface Kariuki must be charged and prosecuted in a court of law and subjected to a fair trial.

The Governor of Nairobi, Members of the County Assembly and other politicians must refrain from interfering in operational policing decisions and from otherwise exerting political pressure on the policing of demonstrations through speech or other actions. We also call on them to publicly disassociate themselves from the violence and call for the arrest and prosecution of those who wreaked violence and mayhem in Nairobi's Central Business District.

We call upon the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and National Administration to act immediately to address police misconduct during public protest and assembly. Urgent action is required to restore accountability. Kenya faces a deepening crisis of public and investor confidence in law enforcement and the rule of law. Continued violence threatens Kenya's lives, democratic stability and economic resilience.

Lastly, we commend the medical personnel, legal advocates, journalists, protest observers, and members of the public who upheld non-violence, cared for the injured, documented abuses, and called for an end to the anarchic chaos witnessed yesterday.

God bless Kenya.

#### **Police Reforms Working Group -Kenya Coalition Members**

This statement is signed by the Police Reforms Working Group, 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, Katiba Institute, Defenders Coalition, 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) and Peace Brigades International Kenya (PBI Kenya).