



**Press statement  
Government of Kenya urged to scale up prevention and response to electoral-related GBV**

**Kisumu county, 31 March, 2022**

**Samuel – Hope Beyond**

Ladies and gentlemen of the press.

We wish to register our concerns with the inflammatory political remarks that are being witnessed in Kenya, as the country readies itself for the General Election. This rhetoric not only sets the country on a dangerous path, but also puts women and girls at risk of repeat cycles of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) associated with the elections. Further, we have noted with concern rising cases of sexual harassment targeting women who are vying for various electoral posts. These concerning trends lock women out of the campaign trail and contravene the country’s desire for gender equality.

**Syriana – Sauti**

As women rights’ defenders we urge the government to take immediate preventive steps to break the cycle of electoral violence including patterns of GBV against women and girls by honoring the 12 bold commitments it made during the Generation Equality Forum in June 2021. These commitments were made to end GBV by 2026 with a view to realizing the rights of women and girls by ensuring:

1. Full implementation of anti GBV laws and policies including investigation and prosecution of GBV perpetrators in all contexts including electoral period;
2. Proper financing of GBV prevention and response including establishing programmes for the public to embrace gender equality;
3. Development of a GBV management and information system to ensure collection of up to date disaggregated data regarding GBV offenses;
4. Integration of GBV services into the Universal Health Coverage package;
5. Scaling up of the national police service integrated response to GBV; and
6. Establishment of GBV recovery centers and shelters in all the counties by 2026.

**Debbie – KMET**

While these commitments are profound, critical and welcome, we fear that they will remain aspirations if the Government does not begin to implement them immediately.

Therefore, we are calling on the national government to guarantee the rights of Kenyan women by:



1. Investigating and prosecuting all perpetrators of violence against women and violence in general, using the relevant agencies including the police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions during the political primaries season, and during and after the elections;
2. Widely conducting voter education by disseminating information and creating public awareness through use of the media and key government structures such as the National Government Administration Officers (NGAO) and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) regarding electoral conduct including the punitive measures in response to electoral violence against women to serve as a deterrent to potential perpetrators and eliminate ignorance as a justification for illegal conduct;
3. Clearly condemn and abhor violence from the highest office in the land, before and if it happens in the electoral context despite political party affiliation to avoid legitimization and exacerbation of violence against women along partisan lines;
4. Ensuring there is a clear reporting and referral pathway for all electoral-related GBV cases comprising medico-legal and psychosocial aspects;
5. Ensuring full compliance with:
  - The Constitution of Kenya, 2010;
  - The Sexual Offences Act (2006);
  - The Elections Act, 2011;
  - Elections Offences Act, 2016;
  - The Political Parties Act, 2011;
  - The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act, 2011;
  - The Elections Campaign Financing Act, 2013; and
  - The Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012.
6. Setting up structures such Gender Based Violence Recovery Centers, Safe Shelters and emergency access lines in all the 47 counties that would ensure women and girls are protected during and after the polls and that stern action is taken against perpetrators;
7. That county governments support full implementation of anti GBV laws by adopting and implementing county specific SGBV policies; and
8. The facilitation of multi-sectoral structures tasked with the responsibility of addressing GBV including the Gender Sector Working Groups and Court Users Committees.

**Joyce - MAPACA**

We also call on the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties to:

1. Ensure compliance in gender proportional representation in political party lists to ensure that the two-thirds gender rule and the Constitution as a whole is complied with; and



2. To mete out relevant disciplinary punitive measures including deregistration of political parties that condone, encourage or otherwise foster party cultures that lead to violence including against women.

**Naomi – YWCA**

And finally, to the political parties, we urge them to:

1. Ensure equitable participation and opportunity for women to vie for political posts based on the fact that party primaries are the main vehicle to increase female representation in the national and county legislatures with a view to achieving the two-thirds gender rule.
2. Ensure that they commit within their manifestos to a zero-tolerance policy to GBV in their political party and their candidates as a whole; and
3. Ensure that they take up the 12 commitments made within the Generation Equality Framework within their manifestos to ensure that the fight against GBV continues beyond the election as a commitment of their intention.

We the undersigned:

1. Centre For Community Mobilization and Empowerment (CECOME), Kisii
2. Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA-Kenya)
3. Hope Beyond Foundation
4. Il'laramatak Community Concerns
5. Inua Mama Mjane
6. Kenya SGBV Alliance (Inuka Success, MILSCO, Young Turks, Plan International, STADA Kenya, Boka Haven)
7. Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET)
8. Mobilisation Agency for Paralegal Communities in Africa (MAPACA)
9. Msichana Empowerment Kuria
10. Rural Education and Economic Enhancement Programme (REEP)
11. Sauti ya Wanawake Pwani
12. Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative
13. Equality Now
14. Young Women's Christian Association of Kenya (YWCA Kenya)
15. YWCA Kisii
16. YWCA Meru
17. Equality Now
18. Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy and Accountability (YW4A Programme)

**- ENDS -**



**Editor’s notes:**

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