

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN OF KENYA.

A SAFE KENYA IS GOOD FOR ALL.

Preamble. This statement is issued by and on behalf of Kenyan women under the auspices of:

- I. Echo Network Africa Foundation (ENAF);
- II. African Women Leadership Network (AWN-Kenya) Chapter; and,
- III. The Democracy Trust Fund (DTF).

APPRECIATING that women continue to make invaluable contributions to the national development of our beloved country, Kenya, and

CONCERNED about the increased incidences of violence in general and gender based violence (GBV) in particular, and

RECOGNIZING that girls and women of Kenya continue to struggle and suffer disproportionately compared to our male counterparts, we therefore state as follows:

THE ISSUES

First, we wish to join the rest of the country in decrying the worsening state of security in our country and condemn in the strongest terms possible those who are perpetrating this violence. We wish to remind the people of Kenya that when violence erupts, it is mainly the children, women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups who suffer the most.

A case in point is the teargassing and firing of bullets at worshippers in a church, reviving memories of yesteryears when innocent women and children were burnt in a Church. Kenyans cannot afford to go back to the 2007/2008 days. Places of worship are sacred and must be respected at all times.

Furthermore, places of worship are regarded as safe spaces. Women, children, and persons with disabilities, among other populations, find solace in such places. Attacking a place of worship has to be a sign of the deepest breakdown of every sense of decorum and disregard for civility. Kenyans are angry, and so are the women.

While we note and appreciate the quick condemnation of these violent actions by sections of society including the Church, Civil Society Organizations among others, we nonetheless demand more vigilance and sincerity from duty bearers, including law enforcement Officers, the NCIC, ODPP, and other State agencies, in tackling violence, including arresting and prosecuting perpetrators in strict adherence to the rule of law.

Further, women of Kenya and indeed all Kenyans are equally appalled by the recent outburst of verbal violence by a section of legislators directed at the Education Cabinet Secretary (CS) Ogamba and his Permanent Secretary (PS), Bitok. We remind leaders that they must foster a culture of open communication and respectful dialogue among themselves. Bickering and shouting at each other is not only a case of ill manners but also a bad example to our children. As women, we insist that dialogue must not just be a way but the only way.

We remind Kenyans that none of us is safe until every single one of us is safe. A peaceful country is good for all. On the contrary, violence begets violence. Kenyans cannot afford a breakdown of law and order.

Second, like other Kenyans of goodwill, the women of Kenya are deeply concerned and even angry about the mishandling of the **Competence-Based Education (CBE)**. Specifically, Kenyans are deeply concerned about the crisis surrounding such critical issues as: low transition rates from Junior school to Senior School; Chaotic placement processes of pupils from Grade 9 to Grade 10; the high cost of education, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient teaching and learning materials, among others. In short, education is increasingly becoming inaccessible to the majority of Kenyans, thereby worsening social inequalities. This is unacceptable.

In this regard, the women of Kenya insist that the education of our children is way too important to experiment with and urge the Government to act with speed and address the challenges facing our education system.

Specifically, we urge that all bursaries be consolidated into one basket to address the financial and infrastructural crisis currently facing the education sector. We remind Kenyans that the right to education is anchored in the Constitution. All children must therefore have access to education regardless of their backgrounds.

Furthermore, the women of Kenya recommend that urgent and targeted action be taken to address implementation bottlenecks related to CBC. Some key actions to

include, but not limited to: accelerating teacher retraining, bridging infrastructural gaps, and reducing the financial burden of school uniforms on parents.

On a positive note, the women of Kenya highly appreciate and commend the incredible efforts by the women from Kiboi Market in Kisii, County, who voluntarily collected over Ksh 80,000 to take an orphan girl, Frida, to school. This goes on to dismantle the popular myth that 'women are their own enemies.' Nothing could be further from the truth. We urge other women to emulate the actions of the women from Kiboi market. A similar act of kindness was demonstrated by Police Officers from a Station in Nandi County - again clearly demonstrating the resilience of the Kenyan people amidst the challenges.

The women of Kenya commend H.E. the President for directing that all pupils must transition from Jnr School Year 9 to Senior School, Year 10, regardless of their socio-economic status. Unfortunately, this directive is yet to be fully complied with. Many children, especially those from extremely poor backgrounds are yet to report to Grade 10. Clearly, a lot more needs to be done to mop up all children and boost the numbers without leaving any child behind.

We appreciate that no one entity can singularly tackle the challenges facing our education sector. We call on Civil Society, the Private sector, Religious leaders, Education actors, and all Kenyans to emulate the example given by the Mama Mboga in Kisii and the Police Officers in Nandi. We call upon friends of Kenya, including Development Partners, to step in and support the education sector to position the country for global competitiveness. We remind Kenyans that our country was built on the 'Harambee' Spirit – That is what we need to surmount the current challenges. It has worked for us in the past. It will still serve us just as well.

Finally, the women of Kenya welcome the Report and recommendations of the Presidential Technical Working Group on Gender Based Violence (GBV), including Femicide led by Dr Nancy Baraza. Specifically, we support the recommendation that H.E. The President urgently proclaim GBV as a national disaster. We recognize and appreciate that this is the first time a President is prioritizing GBV and appointing a special Team to research and make recommendations as they now have.

Granted that the Nancy Baraza Team has finalized their task and officially submitted their Report with concrete recommendations, we urge H.E. the President to lead the war against GBV and personally champion for a safe country for all Kenyans, and especially for girls and women. The women of Kenya will stand

solidly behind H.E. the President in the war against GBV until all Kenyans, especially girls and women, are safe.

Conclusion. On our part, the women of Kenya remain committed to:

- I. Support national efforts aimed at safeguarding the safety and security of all, especially girls and women, and to make our country a safe space;
- II. Create safe spaces for intergenerational conversations to enhance national cohesion and mentorship.
- III. Support full implementation of the recommendations by the Nancy Baraza Technical Working Group on GBV, including femicide and Technology – Facilitated Violence.

We conclude by reiterating that a safe and growing Kenya is good for all. As aforementioned, all Kenyans have a role to play in keeping the country together and providing solutions to the myriad challenges facing our Nation. There is absolutely no room for scapegoating. As women, we shall continue to play our roles. We urge others to do the same.

However, it remains true that ultimately, the greatest responsibility lies with the leadership and especially H.E. the President. In the words of Harry Truman, the 33rd President of the United States of America, that is where 'The Buck stops.' We couldn't agree more!

May God bless Kenya!

Issued on this 30th Day of January 2026 by:

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