

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE COAST CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK

DETERIORATING STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

Sunday 13th August 2017

Preamble

We, the Coast civil society organisations comprising of non governmental organisations, trusts, pressure groups, women organisations, faith based institutions, grassroot groups, youth movements, community based organisations and associations of persons with disabilities, are very disturbed by the continued deteriorating state of human rights in different parts of the country as reported thus far since polling day on 8th August 2017. This situation is a betrayal of the peace Kenyans maintained and enjoyed on polling day.

Context

We are perturbed by the on going killings noted in various reports including a statement issued yesterday by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) indicating that at least 24 persons have been killed in various parts of the country as a direct result of excessive use of force by the Kenya Police since election day. Here at the Coast, various communities were meted with violence in various tallying centres. In Msambweni (Kinondo Ward) for example, the GSU descended on people who were celebrating the victory of their MCA elect. 35 youths were arrested and taken to Diani police station. Several others were followed into their homes and seriously beaten up. At least eleven were seriously injured and have been assisted by IPOA to file complaints at Diani Police Station.

We, the Coast Civil Society Network are utterly concerned about Kenyans' feelings of not being a unified nation and country but rather regions and tribes, unequally bonded together by a map.

Demands

This situation cannot be allowed to persist. We caution that in this politically charged environment with emotions running high on the outcome of the elections, such police action could easily provoke violence in many other parts of the country. To this end, we the Coast Civil Society Network make the following demands:

1. Immediate cease of the use of excessive force by police including withdrawal of live bullets in dealing with concerned communities. Further police should stop the forceful breaking and entering into homes. Kenyans demand a police service not a police force;
2. Immediate arrest of police officers involved in the killing of the 24 mentioned in the KNCHR statement pending impartial investigations by the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) to ascertain the individual officers' role in the killings;
3. Full respect by the police of the people's right to peacefully protest and demonstrate as provided for by Article 37 of the Constitution of Kenya and as reiterated by the Acting Interior Minister Dr Fred Matiang'i in his press conference yesterday 12th August 2017;
4. Police to exercise restraint in their handling of communities and ensure they bridge the gap between them and enhance partnership. While we appreciate use of force in protecting life, protecting property, under any circumstances, is no justification to kill. No property is worth even a single human life;
5. Media to be allowed to practice their profession without fear or intimidation from the state. Kenyans have a right to know what is happening across the country. The intimidation and arrest of journalists

must stop immediately as it contravenes Article 34 of the Constitution on the independence of the media;

6. Communities aggrieved by any decision, electoral or otherwise, should be allowed to use the laid down legal procedures to peacefully protest/demonstrate/picket and or challenge any decision in court.
7. Kenyans must be responsible in their use of social media and stop engaging in hate speech. Relevant authorities including NCIC to monitor misuse of social media and ensure arrest of culprits;
8. Human rights matters related to elections be fully and convincingly investigated to the logical conclusion including the mysterious death of IEBC ICT Director Chris Msando;
9. Leaders from different political divides to desist from provoking communities to violence but rather preach cohesion, understanding, credibility, patriotism and inclusivity. Further communities to stop provoking each other and the police; and
10. All Kenyans to remain tolerant and enhance good neighborliness

In Conclusion

As the Coast Civil Society Network, we remain vigilant to defend human rights across the Coast and Kenya. We call for calm as the country and political leaders find ways to put a closure to the 2017 general elections. Above all, we demand that the sanctity of the right to life be respected by the police and all Kenyans.

Signed

1. Centre for Development and Peace (CDP)
2. Coast Women in Development (CWID)
3. HAKI Africa
4. Haki Centre
5. HAKI Yetu
6. Independent Medico Leagl Unit (IMLU)
7. Institute for Land, Governance and Human Rights
8. Juhudi Community Support Centre
9. Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE)
10. Kituo Cha Sheria
11. Mombasa Youth Assembly
12. Manyatta Youth Entertainment CBO
13. Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI)
14. Pamoja Trust
15. Sisters for Justice (S4J)
16. Stretchers Youth Organisation
17. Trace Kenya
18. Ujamaa Centre
19. World Grace