



PRESS STATEMENT

CONDEMNING THE ARREST OF ELECTION OBSERVERS ON 10 AUGUST 2017

The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders – Kenya (NCHRD-K) and the Elections Observations Group (ELOG) strongly condemns the the arrest of two domestic elections Observers, affiliated to Kenya Election Monitoring agency, ELOG on 10 August 2017 in Kitale, Uasin Gishu County.

Ms. Susan Kiveu, ELOG Regional Coordinator for Trans Nzoia, Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu and Edward Shibanda the Constituency Supervisor were arrested on 10 August 2017 at about 1pm. The two were seated at local hotel in Kitale to compare notes and to collect the monitoring reports from their colleagues in the Constituency when they were arrested and taken to Kitale Police Station.

Ms. Kiveu and Mr. Shibanda were later presented before court and charged with the offence of being in possession of documents purporting to be Form 34B. The magistrate imposed Bond of Ksh 400,000 (USD 2000) each for their release pre-trial. Unable to raise the bond, they were detained.

“It is unacceptable how election monitors are being targeted for carrying out their monitoring obligations in accordance with the law. Election observers play a key role in strengthening the integrity of the electoral process, at the same time promoting public confidence in the election by contributing, providing an accurate account in the assessment of whether the elections were free, fair and credible.” Stated Mr. Mulle Musau Coordinator, Elections Observations Group.

In its April-June election monitoring report, the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders – Kenya raised concern over an increased pattern of harassment and intimidation towards human rights defenders and journalists that documented electoral malpractices and human rights violations during electioneering period. The report further observed that the election season was a volatile period for human rights defenders to operate and called on the government and non-state actors to enhance the safety of human rights defenders in Kenya.

“The use of arbitrary arrest, malicious prosecution and punitive bail and bond terms are some of the measures that are being increasingly used to target human rights defenders that provide alternative voice, document violations, demand accountability and respond to human rights concerns” stated Mr. Ngugi, Executive Director of the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders – Kenya who called on authorities to unconditionally release the election monitors.



The NCHRD-K and ELOG calls for:

1. The review of the punitive bond terms imposed on Ms. Kiveu and Mr Shibanda and their unconditional release
2. The respect for human rights and election monitors during this critical time to enable them carry out their monitoring role in ensuring credible elections.
3. Respect for human rights monitors and domestic election observation groups to operate without hindrance.

ENDS

10 AUGUST 2017

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