



Press Statement: Attack on Press Conference at Kenya Human Rights Commission Office.

Nairobi, Kenya July 6, 2025: The Law Society of Kenya and the Police Reforms Working Group (PRWG) condemn the violent attack by armed goons on a press conference by Kenyan mothers hosted by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) office today, ahead of the Saba Saba protests. This brazen act of intimidating and targeting of journalists, human rights defenders and vulnerable women and children, represents a grave assault on Kenya's constitutional freedoms and democratic principles.

The gathering of nearly 100 individuals, including mothers and children of the fallen and disappeared, human rights defenders was holding a press conference at the KHRC office with members of the local and international press attending. The purpose of this gathering was to call for accountability and justice for those who have died, disappeared and injured. The presser was to also call for the de-escalation of violence witnessed across the country.

Shockingly, this exercise of democratic expression was violently disrupted by at least 50 masked individuals, armed with rungs and pickaxes. These goons invaded the premises, issuing threats that forced the immediate dispersal of the gathering to prevent further violence and potential harm.

This attack follows a concerning pattern of targeting the Kenya Human Rights Commission, exemplified by the deportation on July 5th of their Program Advisor, Ugandan national Martin Mavunjina. Such actions indicate a deliberate effort to intimidate and cripple human rights organizations.

The targeting and intimidation of journalists at the press conference is an unacceptable attack on the freedom of the press. Journalists must be allowed to report freely and safely without fear of reprisal or violence. Human Rights Defenders play a crucial role in holding power accountable and advocating for justice. The deliberate targeting of HRDs, especially those working on sensitive issues like police accountability and extrajudicial killings, creates a chilling effect and undermines the critical space for civil society. Lastly, the presence of mothers and children, many of whom are already traumatized by the loss or abduction of their loved ones, makes this attack particularly heinous.

The LSK, Police Reforms Working Group demands an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into this incident. We call upon the Inspector General of Police and all relevant security agencies to:

- Condemn, identify and apprehend the perpetrators of this violent invasion and ensure they are brought to justice without delay, regardless of their affiliations.
- Guarantee the safety and security of journalists, human rights defenders, women, and all citizens exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

The Law Society of Kenya and PRWG stands in solidarity with the Kenya Human Rights Commission, the brave mothers, human rights defenders, and journalists who were subjected to this horrific ordeal. We reiterate our commitment to advocating for a police service that respects, protects, and upholds human rights for all Kenyans.