



## Kenya: End Killings and Torture of Protesters, Ensure Freedom of Assembly

Ahead of renewed mass protests in Kenya, the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC) expresses its grave concern over clear and convincing evidence of the systematic torture and ill-treatment, extra judicial killings and enforced disappearances of protesters by Kenyan security forces. We call on the Government of Kenya to issue an immediate order to police and the army to end all illegal use of force.

Since protests against proposed tax rises amid a cost of living crisis broke out on 18 June, the Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) has documented at least 60 deaths amid an increasingly violent crackdown by Kenya's National Police Service (NPS) and the Kenya Defence Forces. In its latest update on the first month of the protests, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has also documented at least 59 enforced disappearances and 682 arbitrary arrests.

IMLU is a torture documentation and rehabilitation centre that has worked in Kenya for over 30 years and is a partner of the UATC. IMLU has called on the Government to uphold Kenyans' constitutional right to freedom from torture and the right to peaceful assembly, and is supporting dozens of mainly youth protesters who have suffered serious injuries.

"We call for an end to police brutality, but it is a very scary time for Kenyans. We've seen police brutality of an unprecedented manner with snipers on top of buildings who opened fire on protesters," said Wangechi Grace Kahuria, IMLU's Executive Director. "The President has deployed military police onto the streets which creates a huge fear and intimidation for the Kenyan public. We see blatant abuse in police conduct, and impunity."

Last month, Japhet Koome, the former inspector general of police, resigned over his handling of the crackdown. The Independent Policing Oversight Authority said it had forwarded four out of ten cases of police brutality to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) with recommendations.

The UATC urges the Kenyan authorities to immediately undertake prompt, independent and effective investigations into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment, as it is obligated to under its ratification of the UN Convention Against Torture. Investigations should be carried out using the internationally agreed standards set out in the Istanbul Protocol.

Despite the thorough documentation by IMLU of at least 67 deaths from 296 cases of torture and other ill-treatment by police during a similarly violent crackdown on protests last year, the DPP has yet to open a single case of criminal liability against any member of Kenya's security forces. Furthermore, although the NPS asserts its commitment to police reforms, members of Kenya's security forces continue to manifestly abuse their powers, criminalising protests despite court orders to the contrary, concealing the identity of officers, threatening protest organisers, profiling and intimidating non-governmental organisations and their staff and injuring and arresting journalists.

The UATC calls the Government of Kenya to investigate all deaths, torture and ill-treatment allegations and enforced disappearances during the 2023 and 2024 protests in accordance with international law and standards, including the UN Convention Against Torture, the Minnesota Protocol, and the Istanbul Protocol, and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of all persons from Enforced Disappearance. The Government must put an immediate end to the excessive use of force, amounting to torture and ill-treatment, against protesters, uphold the right to freedom of assembly and ensure unimpeded access to journalists and human rights defenders.

*UATC is an EU-funded project that pools the strengths and expertise of six international anti-torture organisations, in partnership with over 200 civil society organisations and other partners in 100+ countries, to strengthen and expand torture prevention, protection, rehabilitation and strategic litigation.*

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