

Press statement: Political Intolerance Erodes Development

We the undersigned organizations under the leadership of SDG Kenya Forum, an inclusive membership national platform and a convener of Agenda 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that provides space for structured and coordinated civil society organization (CSOs) engagement with national and subnational governments, citizens, the private sector, media, academia and development partners.

We are concerned about and condemn the new instances of political intolerance reported by CSOs and the media. Political parties should strive to follow the rule of law and be tolerant of opposing viewpoints. Nonetheless, we urge political candidates to use appropriate language that does not polarize or create animosity among Kenyans, putting development structures and achievements at risk.

Evidence: Kenya has had one general election in 2017 since the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda began in January 2016, and this year will be the second general election during the implementation period of Agenda 2030. Our anxiety about the 2022 general election is similar to what we had in 2017 general elections. Political intolerance on the part of both political parties, aspirants, and supporters. Clearly, this evidence explains what is going on:

- Migori County: Where rival supporters clash, campaign posters destroyed¹
- Nairobi County: Jacaranda Grounds standoff in Embakasi after the venue was booked for a meeting by two political groups.²
- Kirinyaga County: A nominated MCA in Kirinyaga was attacked, roughed up and ejected from Kamiigua Polytechnic grounds.³
- Marsabit County: Police were forced to use teargas after chaos erupted during a Political Rally in Moyale.⁴
- Machakos County: Chaos broke out in Athi River town after goons attacked a Mavoko parliamentary seat candidate in broad daylight.

¹ <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/western/2022-07-11-migori-rival-supporters-clash-campaign-posters-destroyed/>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-sLm4BwmnI>

³ <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/central/2022-06-23-four-summoned-by-police-over-kirinyaga-mca-attack/>

⁴ <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-06-23-police-teargas-protesting-youth-at-raila-rally-in-moyale/>

- Trans Nzoia County: Residents set ablaze MP's campaign car after road crash.⁵
- Nairobi County: Aspirant 'attacked' by goons in Kibra campaigns.⁶

These instances are just a few amongst many more that have been documented by Media, CSOs and the Police around the 47 counties.⁷ The key notable incident being the National and Integration⁸ commission⁹ which released a report in May mapping out possible hotspot counties during this election. Further, Mozilla Foundation issued a finding report titled "*Disinformation on TikTok Gaslights Political Tensions Ahead of Kenya's 2022 Elections*"¹⁰ **which gives evidence** of what is happening glaringly within our social media spaces, specifically on widespread disinformation stoking violent, ethnic discriminatory narratives which outrightly is against Agenda 2030 and Vision 2030.

Furthermore, **data evidence** presented by CSOs, namely the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Kenya Human Rights Commission, on sexual violence committed during the 2017 elections revealed a high prevalence of rape, attempted rape, gang rape, and sexual assault, which is a stumbling block in achieving SDG 5, which is a common denominator in achieving all 17 goals.

Change are we advocating: We need to learn from our past. These systemic violence and intolerance may set us back citing Kenya is still recovering from a major set back of COVID-19 and electoral injustices. We urge Political Parties and their supporters to adhere to the Global commitments and instruments that Kenya has ratified and is signatory to. We recommend political parties and their supporter to:

- Leverage their positions of influence to reduce all forms of violence and politically related violence.
- Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all political players before, during and after election.
- Shun away from corruption and voter bribery in all their forms.

⁵ <https://www.pulselive.co.ke/news/local/residents-set-ablaze-kiminini-mp-chris-wamalwa-car-after-road-crash-video/e3fny9d>

⁶ <https://nairobi.news.nation.africa/watch-mariga-attacked-by-goons-in-kibra-campaigns-vows-to-soldier-on/>

⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/25/kenya-elections-kenyatta-odinga-ruto/>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7fM2lr5Wx8>

⁹ <https://cohesion.or.ke/index.php/media-center/latest-news/411-ncic-conducts-external-validation-of-conflict-hotspot-mapping-report>

¹⁰ <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/blog/new-research-disinformation-on-tiktok-gaslights-political-tensions-ahead-of-kenyas-2022-elections/>

- Have effective, accountable and transparent structures within their political management.
- Ensure equal participation of women and men at all decision-making spaces.
- The National Police Service to be vigilant and bring to book all perpetrators of violence and ensure seamless attainment of justice on such atrocities.

We have worked, demonstrated the intention and willingness to continue working with all 89 Political Parties, National and Sub-National Stakeholders before, during and after election in order to address issues that are aforementioned in this statement.¹¹ Our most recent one includes a series of technical engagements with all 89 registered political parties via the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, the stewardship of the Kenya Vision 2030 Delivery Secretariat (VDS), with support from the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) and the partnership of Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD)

We urge Key actors, including representatives from the Independent Elections Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ), the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), National Police Service and the Civil Society Organizations to continue pursuing the greater good for our communities as well as for our Nation.

Signed by: *SDG Kenya Forum, Akili Dada, Action AID, Kenya Land Alliance, GROOTS-Kenya, Healthwise Foundation, Art Affair for Development Goals, CREAM, Development Initiatives, Box Girls Kenya, FEMNET, Polycom Development Project, Resource Conflict Institute, Women's Empowerment Link (WEL), Usawa Agenda, VSO, Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Resource Conflict Institute and Kenyatta University*

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¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/sdgskenyaforum/videos/533790311834808/>