

BACKGROUND TO THE 25 JUNE EXTENDED PRESS RELEASE

In June 2024, after having a series of online campaigns and organization, Kenyans staged protests, popularly known as Gen-Z protesters. According to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights press statement issued on 1 July, in the aftermath of these protests, at least 39 people were killed, including six protesters who were shot and killed outside parliament premises; at least 361 were injured while 39 others were abducted.

Order of Events

Week leading to 18 May - This was the week before the Finance Bill was read in parliament for the first time. Kenyans organized protests, dubbed #OccupyParliament. Protesters camped in Nairobi but were prevented by police officers and canons from accessing the Parliament Buildings.

Protests were organized sporadically and concurrently across the country with no apparent leader. Massive organisation and public discussion fora were held on various online platforms. Later, at least 39 activists who had been active on the said online fora unlawfully disappeared and abducted.

18 June 2024- A set of protests was held in major towns across the country including Eldoret, Nakuru, Kitengela, Kisumu and Kisii.

Protests were peaceful, with protesters gathering in town to organise and march across Nairobi's Central Business District. At least 405 people, including six journalists, were arrested in Nairobi and across the country, while hundreds of others were injured, sustaining gunshot injuries, soft tissue and bruises believed to have been caused by sustained exposure to teargas canisters on this day.

20 June 2024 at least 22 people were arrested, and at least 100 sustained injuries, including one international journalist suffered injuries. Between 24- and 28 June. At least 86 injuries, 17 deaths, 23 abductions and 53 arrests. Statistics were collected using toll-free numbers, consortium collaborations and joint statistics. Including one journalist and one doctor in Nairobi

25 June 2024, Kenyans abroad (United States of America, Germany and the UK London) staged protests, expressing displeasure with the 2024 Finance Bill in their respective countries to pressure members of the parliament to reject the 2024 Finance Bill.

1 pm, protesters started moving towards parliament, which was now under the protection of the National Police Service Commission, using barricades and Teargas to cordon off protesters from accessing parliament. Protesters were prevented from accessing parliament until around 4.00 pm when they gained access to the Parliamentary premises. At least four people were shot outside parliament as they tried to access parliament premises.

When citizens accessed parliament, the parliamentary session had just been concluded, and most members of parliament were still within parliamentary precincts. 196 Members of Parliament voted in support of the 2024 Financial Bill, while 106 voted against the said Bill.

Kenyans were against passing the Finance Bill because it, among other issues, increased tax obligations, including imposing an eco-levy on imported sanitary products, including pads and pampers, increasing Value Added Tax bread and transportation of sugar, increased financial services & forex transactions, Motor Vehicle Tax and a provision allowing the Kenya Revenue Authority to access taxpayers' data on money platforms including Mpesa. UN condemns killings in Nairobi

02 July 2024 Police dispersed peaceful protesters in various parts of the country, including Nairobi, Mombasa, Eldoret, and Machakos.

During this protest period, police conduct included heavy concealment of identity, which was marked by the widespread use of balaclavas, masks, and unmarked vehicles in what was seen as an effort to evade identification and accountability.

Despite the high court prohibiting the use of teargas on peaceful protesters in *Constitutional Petition No. E009 OF 2024*, police deployed heavy use of teargas. Specific targeting of medical centres, which had been set in and around the central district, was also noted.

Government Response to Protests

The government deployed heavy police in towns or areas where protests took place. In Nairobi, for instance, police were heavily deployed throughout the protest period.

Protesters chanted slogans as they marched across various towns. The slogans included “You can’t kill all of us”, “we have lost the fear”, the Kenya National anthem, and “wasaliti wasaliti”.

25 June, media reports confirmed that police concealed their identities, used vehicles with blacked-out number plates, and combat were shooting tear gas before protesters even began. Order of events: Shooting into the crowd, setting the tone of violence before actual protests began at 9 a.m. A section of parliament was then on fire. At parliament caught fire, the finance bill had already sailed through the third reading, and MPs were still in parliament.

At around 7 pm, the Cabinet Secretary for Defence, Adan Duale, published a Gazette notice requiring that The Arm join in maintaining Peace in the country. The notice was published before 9.00 pm, way beyond official working hours. At 9.00 pm, the president held a press conference backing up the Cabinet Secretaries' decision to deploy the military to maintain law and order. According to his statement, the Gen-Z protests were infiltrated by people funded to cause havoc and plunge the country into civil strife. The decision was made despite clear constitutional provisions stating that the army can only intervene in cases of emergency and disaster. The permitted military intervention must be approved by Parliament beforehand.

At around 12.30 pm on 26 June 2024, Parliament approved the deployment of the military, an act that was done after it was supposed to have been legally forbidden. At around 1 p.m.

26 June 2024, the president declined to sign the Finance Bill into law despite being passed by the National Assembly and referred it back to Parliament. The president called on all stakeholders' engagement in developing the country's future, including the country's debt situation. Called on the government's expenditure reduction beginning with the office of president. They called on other arms of government, the legislature and the judiciary, to undertake budget cuts. Called on institutions to deal firmly with corruption.

At 4 p.m the president held another press conference. He stated that the government was motivated by developmental concerns when developing the 2024 Finance Bill and highlighted that Parliament and the President had made concessions and reduced the budget by 140 billion. He conceded and refused to sign the bill, saying he had pushed/deferred most developmental projects to the next financial year.

President acknowledged the death of 6 people but said that people who were not extrajudicially executed admitted to abductions but claimed that they were all found in the custody of the police.

Despite promises made by the government, the state is yet to take accountability for violations which occurred during this period, including the killings necessitating this press release to demand justice and accountability from the government of Kenya.