



Brutal Policing

2024 Annual Report

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Cover photos caption

(Photo 1): NAIROBI, KENYA – JUNE 25: Kenyan police officers intervene in people during a protest against the tax hikes in planned 'Finance Bill 2024' as they march to the parliament building in Nairobi, Kenya on June 25, 2024. (Photo by Gerald Anderson/ Anadolu via Getty Images)

(Photo 2): Activists and relatives of protesters killed by police in the ongoing anti-govt protests march to parliament with wooden crosses bearing the names of the victims and a coffin to commemorate the 1st month anniversary of the June 25 shootings during demonstrations against govt proposed tax hikes in Nairobi on July 25, 2024. (Photo by PATRICK MEINHARDT/AFP via Getty Images)

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIK	Amnesty International Kenya
CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DC	Defenders Coalition
DCI	Directorate of Criminal Investigation
ED	Enforced Disappearances
EK	Extrajudicial Killings
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAKE	Humanity Activism Knowledge and Activism in Africa
HB	Heinrich Böll Foundation
CAT	Convention against Torture
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPCR	International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights
ICPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IJM	International Justice Mission Kenya
IMLU	Independent Medical Legal Unit
JOTRH	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital
IPOA	Independent Policing Oversight Authority
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
LSK	Law Society of Kenya
MSJC	Mathare Social Justice Centre
MUHURI	Muslims for Human Rights
MVC	Missing Voices Coalition
NCSA	National Coroners Service Act
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NPS	National Police Services
ODPP	Office of the Director of Public Prosecution
PBI	Peace Brigades International
PIK	Protection International Kenya
PRWG-K	Police Reforms Working Group Kenya
SJCWG	Social Justice Centres Working Group
UNSA	University of Nairobi Student Association
UNWGEID	United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

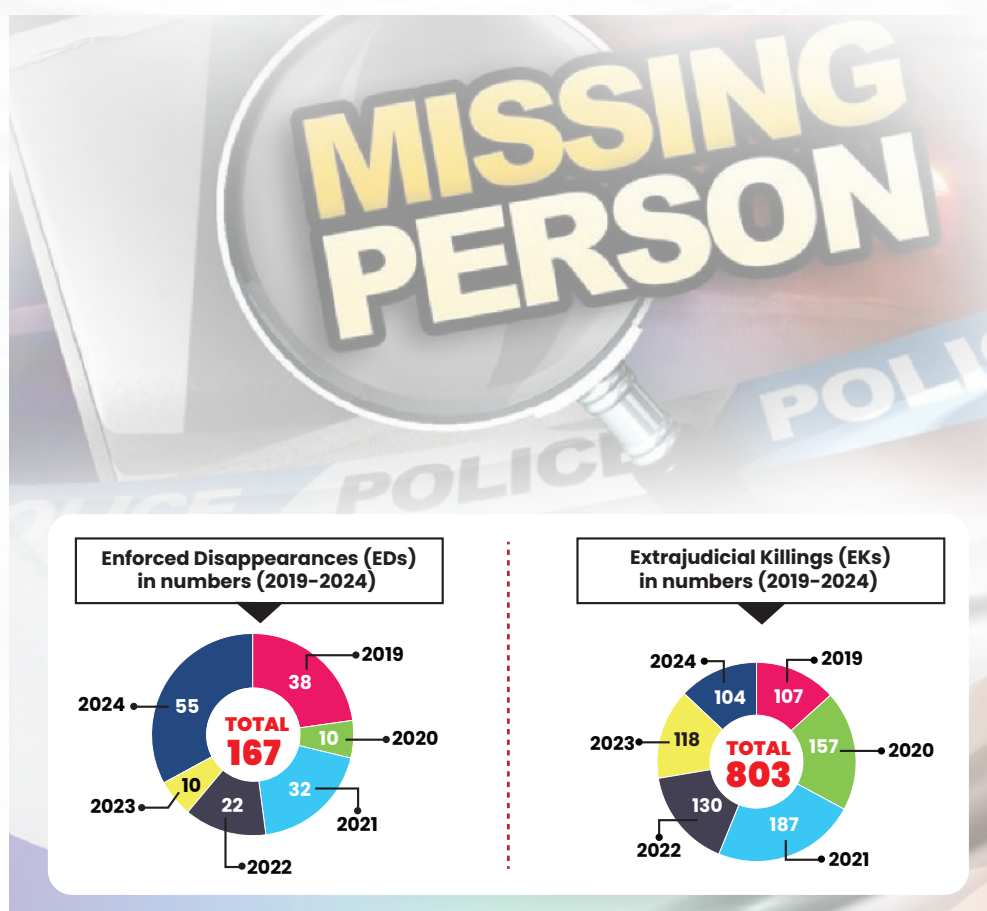
Introduction

Missing Voices is a coalition of human rights organizations whose mission is to end enforced disappearances (EDs) and extrajudicial killings (EKs) in Kenya. The coalition envisions a society that enjoys human rights and fundamental freedoms. Missing Voices has documented and verified data on police related killings and enforced disappearances since its formation in August 2018.

Since the release of the first report in 2019, Missing Voices has documented 970 incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings over the last 6 years. These include 167 incidents of enforced disappearances and 803 incidents of extrajudicial killings as shown in table 1 below:

Year	EDs	% Increase/ (Decrease)	EKs	% Increase/ (Decrease)	Total EDs and EKs	% Increase/ (Decrease)
2019	38	-	107	-	145	-
2020	10	(74%)	157	47%	167	15%
2021	32	220%	187	19%	219	31%
2022	22	(31%)	130	(30%)	152	(31%)
2023	10	(55%)	118	(9%)	128	(16%)
2024	55	450%	104	12%	159	24%
Total	167		803		970	

Table 1: Incidents of Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings, 2019-2024



970

Number of incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings over the last 6 years

The 2024 enforced disappearance statistics exclude 36 members of Uganda's Forum for Democratic Change who were abducted in Kisumu on 23rd July 2024. They were repatriated back to Uganda where they were charged with terrorism related charges. There has been a trend of cross boundary enforced disappearances in Kenya. A clear indicator that Kenya has no respect for international human rights treaties where Kenya is a signatory and has committed to protecting those seeking asylum or those in Kenya legally. Dr. Kizza Besigye and Hajj Lutale incidents where the two politicians were seized from a local hotel by suspected Kenyan and Ugandan security agents and repatriated back to Uganda for prosecution have been included as part of the 55 incidents since there were no known diplomatic processes in the exercise of their capture to ensure legal patriation. They were deported against their will and the Ugandan security officers may not claim to have made the arrests.

The 104 incidents of extrajudicial killings exclude 50 bullet riddled unclaimed bodies in the City Mortuary which the media reported were booked on 25th July 2024. While these bodies were booked during the protests and Missing Voices could not independently pinpoint police actions in these deaths, we made a considered decision to

mention them in the report due to their magnitude just like the organization did during documentation of River Yala bodies in the 2022 report, since the manner of killings were suspicious. Missing Voices decided to highlight the 50 cases even though they are not part of our verified totals. There are two people whom the police said had committed suicide. They have been documented as death while in police custody.

Missing Voices has also undertaken several campaigns to disseminate its research findings and to empower individual and group human rights defenders to incidents of police brutality and extrajudicial killings. The coalition has trained journalists on reporting police accountability, gaps in policing, how to cover the disappeared and sensitive interviewing of survivors of police violence. These activities are done with stakeholders across the country to get justice for victims and survivors while promoting transparency and accountability among the country's security and intelligence agencies.

These incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings were documented by Missing Voices Data Officer who liaises with members of the coalition to ensure that data collected by the organizations forms part of the annual report.

The Missing Voices members and partners during the year included: *Amnesty International Kenya (AIK), Defenders Coalition (DC), HAKI Africa, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), Justice Truth Dignity (ICTJ), International Justice Mission Kenya (IJM Kenya), Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Kituo Cha Sheria (Legal Advice Centre), Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Peace Brigade International (PBI Kenya), Protection International Kenya (PI), Social Justice Centres Working Group (SJCWG), Independent Medical Legal Unit (IMLU) and Katiba Institute.*

Foreword

Article 238 of the Constitution of Kenya provides that national security is the protection against internal and external threats to Kenya's territorial integrity and sovereignty, its people, their rights, freedoms, property, peace, stability and prosperity. The Article also provides that national security shall be subject to the authority of the Constitution and Parliament and be pursued with utmost respect to the rule of law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Events of 2024 where Kenya witnessed rapid escalations in incidents of enforced disappearances, kidnappings, extrajudicial executions, femicide, torture, false arrests, malicious prosecutions and police executions, demonstrated that no one in government has read the Article 238 or has deliberately chosen to ignore it. In particular, Article 238(2) (b) decrees that national security shall be pursued in compliance with the law and with utmost respect for the rule of law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and several Civil Society Organizations documented several incidents of these enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Article 37 of the Constitution



decrees that
every person
has the **right,**
peaceably
and
unarmed, to
assemble, to
demonstrate,
to picket, and
to **present**
petitions
to **public**
authorities.

Personally, I demonstrated in solidarity with several human rights defenders who were arrested and/or arraigned in Court for participating in lawful demonstrations against the Finance Bill 2024. Article 37 of the Constitution decrees that every person has the right, peaceably and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket, and to present petitions to public authorities. It is unfortunate that though the government is expected by law to respect human rights, its actions led to arrests, injury, disappearances and deaths of a section of Kenyans who were seeking the redressing of rising cost of living, corruption, resource wastage and denial of people's right to participate in matters affecting their lives.

The uprising of Gen Z and Millennials Movement was the greatest achievement in the year. The uprising raised political demands anchored in Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Constitution. This uprising is a refreshing and continuing addition to Kenya's journey towards social transformation, democratization and social justice organizing. These brave human rights defenders are the present and the future of our social organizing and needs to be supported and engaged as active participants in the CSO space. Their social media creativity needs to be tapped as an effective tool for real time documentation of human rights violation in their communities. The Missing Voices needs to find modalities of engaging with this resourceful generation of our lifetime. One critical area of engagement going forward is the discussion of the agenda the Gen Z and Millennials have for the country. This is important because the alternative political leadership in Kenya will clearly come from these two generations, with the great support by other generations.

As I congratulate the Missing Voices for its continued commitment to documenting incidents of enforced disappearances and police related killings, I urge you to continue conversations around the next steps after documentation. I urge you to bear in mind that these conversations are fundamentally political. Families of the victims of enforced disappearances and police related killings are seeking justice. They cannot achieve this justice if we end up at merely documenting and producing these human rights reports. We need to collectively, as civic space actors, accompany these families towards seeking justice. What are we going to do about the incidents that the Missing Voices and other human rights actors have documented? This is particularly more urgent considering that we continue to witness incidents of enforced disappearances this year and quite a number of them are being found dead. The government, as usual, is not taking responsibility for any of these disappearances and killings.

The Gen Z and the Millennials are not going away soon. I urge you to be proactive and engage in their next mass action and rebellion. It does not take rocket science to know that these generations will celebrate June 2024 uprising. I guess the date to be immortalized and celebrated each year will be either June 18 or June 25.

Dr. Willy Mutunga,
Chief Justice, Kenya (2011–2016), Adjunct Professor of Public Law, Kabarak Law School.

Methodology and Data Collection

Primary Data Collection

Missing Voices relies on monitors spread across the country to document incidents of police related killings and enforced disappearances and collect witness statements and further evidence. These reports are submitted to a central depository where the integrity of evidence is verified to ensure that they are accurate and hence reliable. Where necessary, further follow-ups are done. The Coalition members are also a key source for collecting and/or verifying primary data. This primary data collected and analysed throughout the year is used for development of these annual reports.

Secondary Data Collection

To complement primary data collection, Missing Voices undertakes further literature review from open sources and other published reports including those from constitutional offices, media outlets and human rights groups. During the year, at the climax of Gen Zs demonstrations, the social media especially Tiktok and X (formerly Twitter) emerged as significant sources of audio-visual data as incidents of police instigated enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings were broadcasted live through these social media outlets. CCTV footages have also become important sources of secondary data. The Missing Voices ensures that data generated from these secondary sources are thoroughly cross-checked with witness statements, police reports and other internally approved verification process. While police reports are considered as a source for secondary data, their accuracy maybe compromised through state actions. Cases which have been verified beyond reasonable doubt are the ones which are used for the development of this report alongside other Missing Voices reports.

Reflections and Testimonies

To enrich the report as a tool for information dissemination and promotion of human rights accountability, reflections by respected human rights defenders including the leadership of the coalition are included in the report. Furthermore, testimonies from victims or families of victims of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings are also presented.

Evidence Documentation

Selected links to evidence of various incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings have been provided in this report.

Report Generation

This report has been generated from enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings data which the Missing Voices has compiled from its field reports. Further interviews have been done with a section of the victims and their families. Reflections from Missing Voices members and human rights leaders have been included in the report. Additional interviews have been done with the public to get their views on enforced disappearances and police related killings.





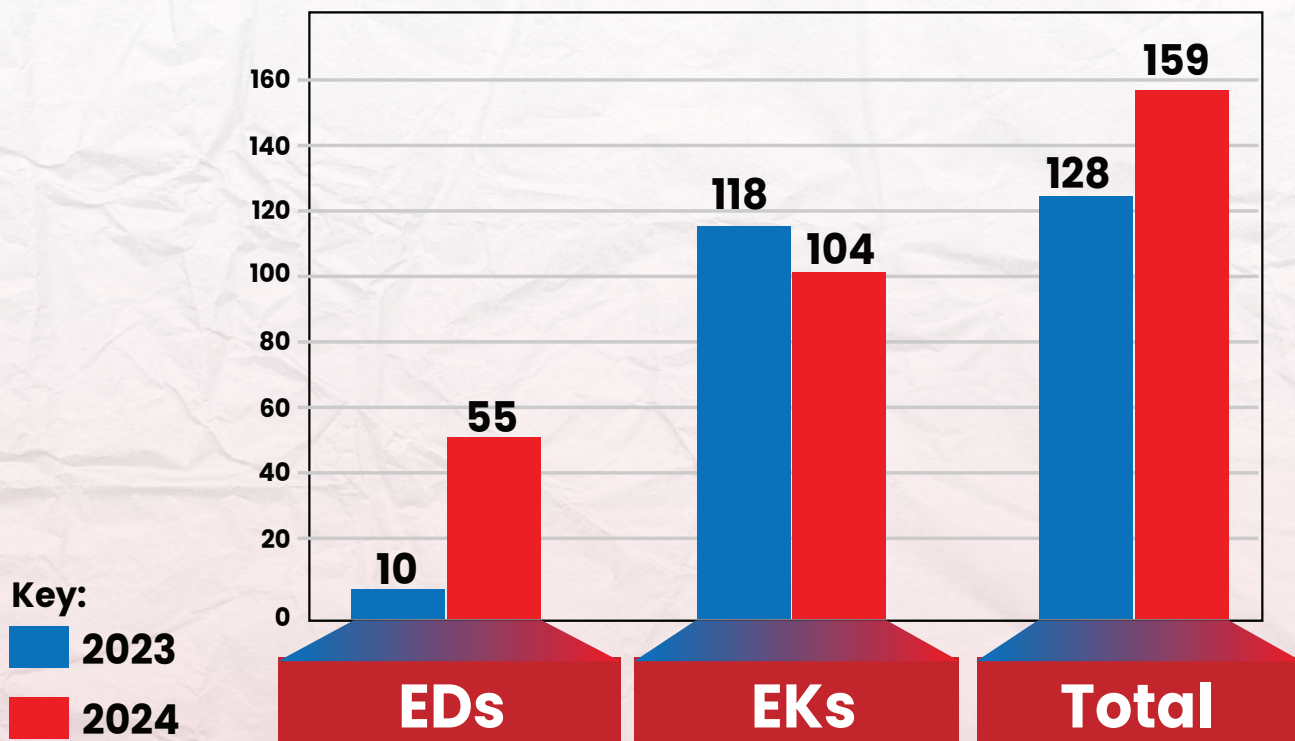
State of Police related killings and Enforced Disappearances

Missing Voices documented a total of 159 cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances in 2024. Out of the 159 cases, 104 (65%) were incidents of police related killings while 55 (35%) were those of enforced disappearances. 2024 marked the year that the coalition recorded the highest number of cases of enforced disappearances, before then, 2019 had the

highest cases of enforced disappearances at 38.

The year 2024 had an increase of 24% of cases of enforced disappearances and policing killings compared to 2023. However, cases of police related killings saw a drop of 12% percent from 118 in 2023 to 104 in 2024. Enforced disappearances on the other hand increased by 450% from 10 cases in 2023 to 55 in 2024 as shown below.

Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial killings in 2023 and 2024



Data on Enforced Disappearances

Enforced Disappearances by Months

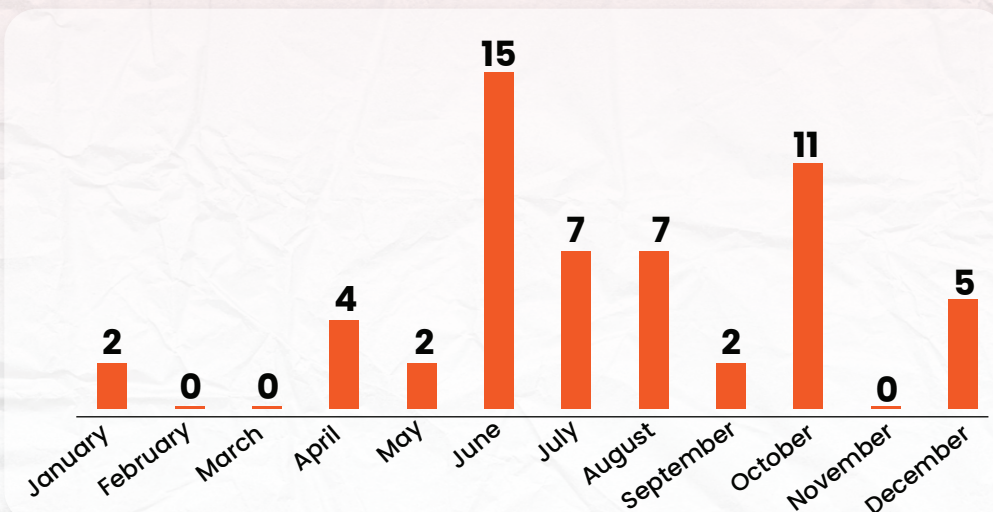
Missing Voices documented 55 incidents of enforced disappearance between January–December 2024 compared to 10 which were documented in 2023, representing an increase of 450%. The largest number of 15 was reported in June at the height of Gen. Zs and Millennials protests over the Finance Bill 2024. This was followed by 11 incidents in October, 7 incidents in each case were reported in July and August while 5 incidents were reported in December.

April had 4 incidents while January, May and September each reported 2 incidents. Missing Voices did not document any incident of enforced disappearance in February, March and November 2024. Further, Missing Voices recognizes that there are other institutions that documented incidents of Eds and EKs during the year. Amnesty International reported 89 incidents of enforced disappearances and 65 extrajudicial killings between in 2024. Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) documented 2000 cases of police injuries, 89 incidents of enforced disappearances and 63 cases of extrajudicial killings during the year. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) documented 60 incidents of Finance Bill 2024 related extrajudicial killings and 74 enforced disappearances between June–November 2024. However, the 55 incidents of Enforced disappearances reported here refer to those which Missing Voices documented and verified.

In 2023, Missing Voices documents 10 incidents of enforced disappearances. These included 1 each for February, July, October, November and December. August had 2 incidents while the month with the highest incidents in 2023 was September with 3 incidents.

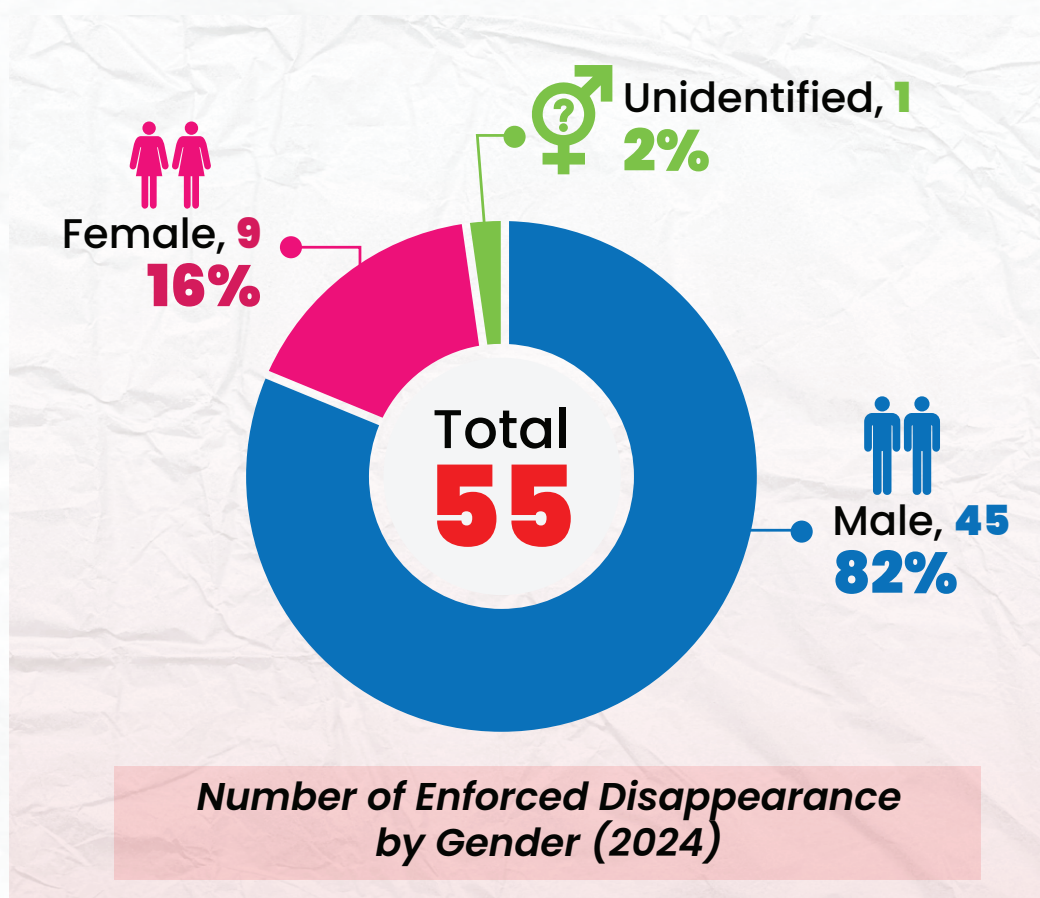
This comparison indicates that the government's appetite for using enforced disappearance as a tool for suppressing dissent increased by almost 5 times in 2024.

Number of Enforced Disappearance (2024)



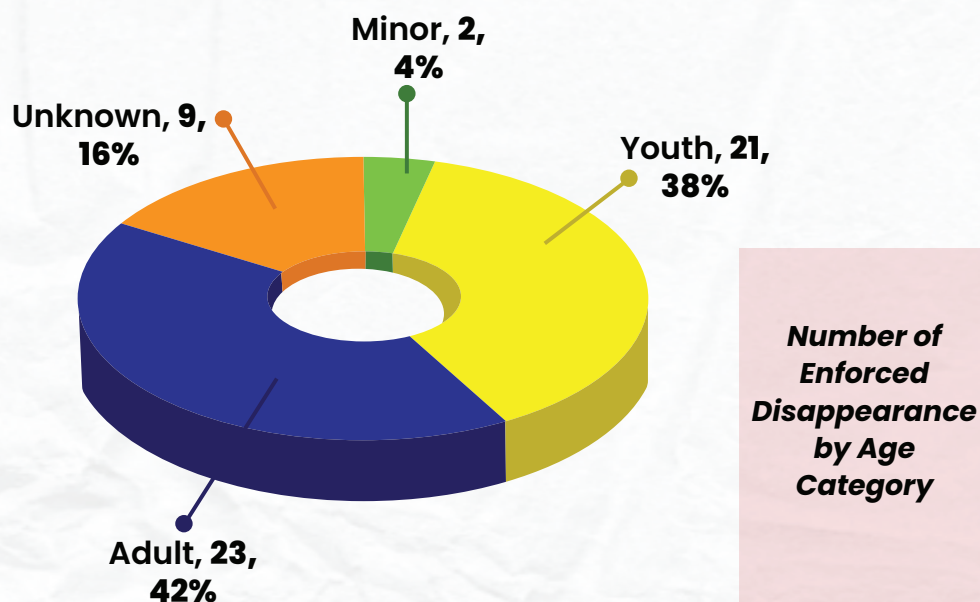
Enforced Disappearances by Gender

45 of the incidents of enforced disappearance reported during the year were male, 9 were female while gender of 1 was not indicated. During 2023, all incidents of enforced disappearances were men. This implies that even though men continue to be more vulnerable to be victims of enforced disappearance, women too face a resurging danger of being victimized. This could have resulted from the fact that the Gen Zs and Millennials protests which were the main victims of enforced disappearance during the year, saw unusually very high number of young women exercise their constitutional rights to picket and protest.



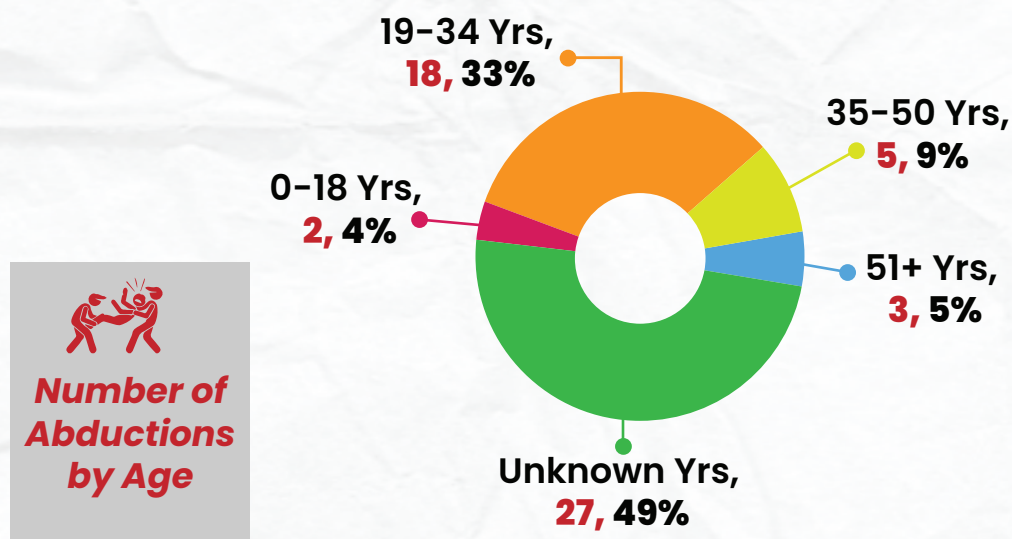
Enforced Disappearances by Age Category

23 of the documented victims of enforced disappearances during the year were adults, 21 were youth while 2 were minors. Details of 9 victims were not available to classify them by age. These figures indicate that youths and adults were the most affected by incidents of enforced disappearance during the year though minors were not completely free from danger.



Enforced Disappearances by Age Group

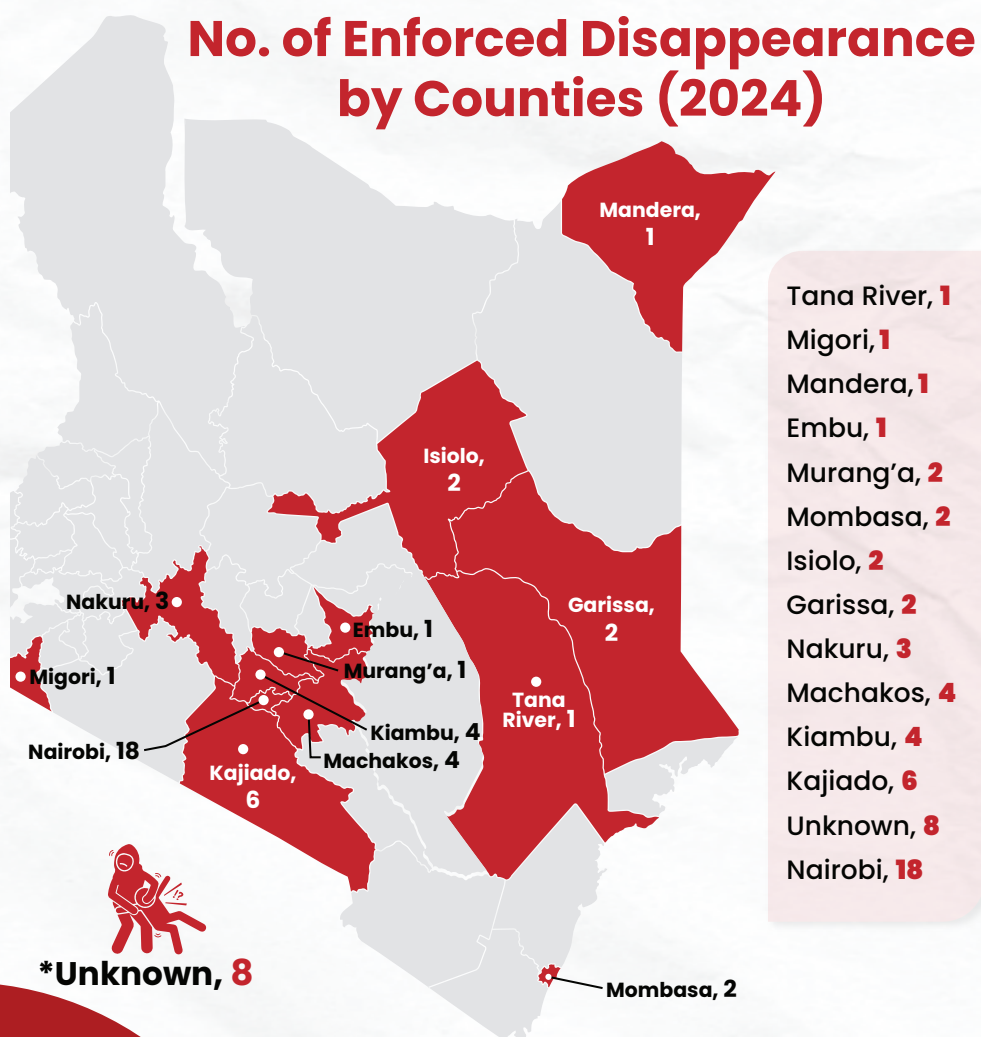
18 of documented victims of enforced disappearances during the year were youths between the ages of 19-34 compared to 5 in 2023, 5 were adults of 35-50 years old while 3 were above 50 years. There were 2 victims who were of the ages 0-18 years old compared to 1 in 2023. Details of ages of 27 victims of enforced disappearances compared to 4 in 2023 could not be classified by age as these details were not available for documentation during data collection.



Enforced Disappearances by Counties

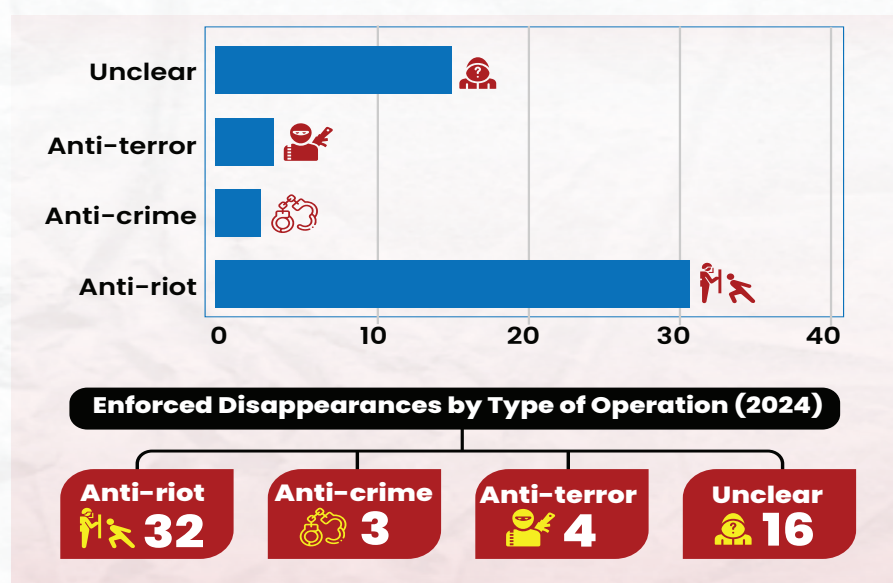
Nairobi County experienced the highest number of enforced disappearances at 18 incidents. This was followed by Kajiado County which reported 8 cases, while Kiambu and Machakos Counties had 4 incidents each. Nakuru had 3 incidents. Muranga, Mombasa, Isiolo and Garissa reported 2 incidents each. Tana River, Migori, Mandera and Embu reported 1 incident each. 8 of the reported incidents were not classified by counties since these details were missing. These figures highlight the widespread nature of enforced disappearances during the protests, with Nairobi being the most affected region.

No. of Enforced Disappearance by Counties (2024)



Enforced Disappearances by Type of Operation

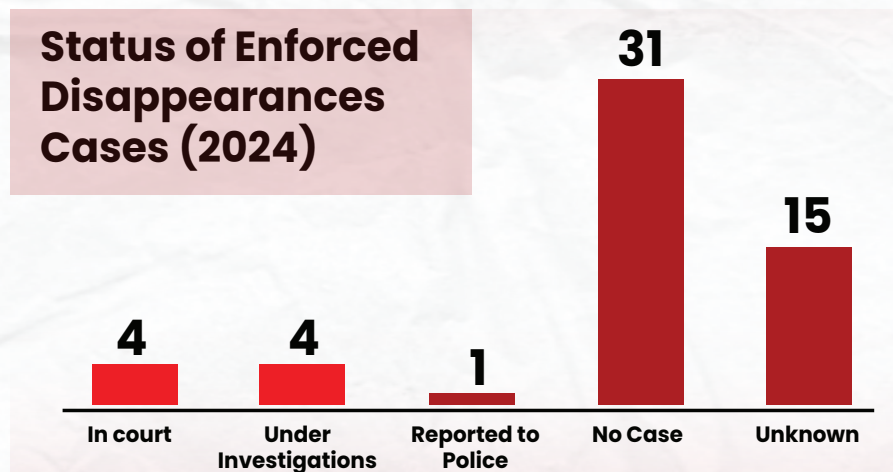
32 of incidents of enforced disappearance documented in the year were due to anti-riot responses mainly by people believed to be security agents responding to the anti-Finance Bill protests by a section of Gen Zs. This is compared to 1 case documented in 2023. Habeas corpus applications to have the accused presented in court alive or dead were generally ignored. 4 incidents were related to anti-terror responses compared to 5 in 2023, 3 cases resulted from anti-crime operations while 2 were through unknown operations compared to 3 in 2023. These statistics indicate that the government and its security agents seemed to have adopted enforced disappearances as a preferred way of dealing with political dissent and infringing on the rights of Kenyans. It is worth noting that all the reported incidents of enforced disappearances involved some form of abduction even for other operations which were not directly linked to anti-government protests.



Status of Enforced Disappearances Incidents

There are no on-going investigations or court processes for 31 of the documented incidents of enforced disappearances. 4 cases in each case are under investigations and in court respectively. 1 of the cases was reported to the police. The fate of status of 15 cases is unknown, perhaps implying that both the security agencies and victims of enforced disappearances could be reluctant to pursue the cases further.

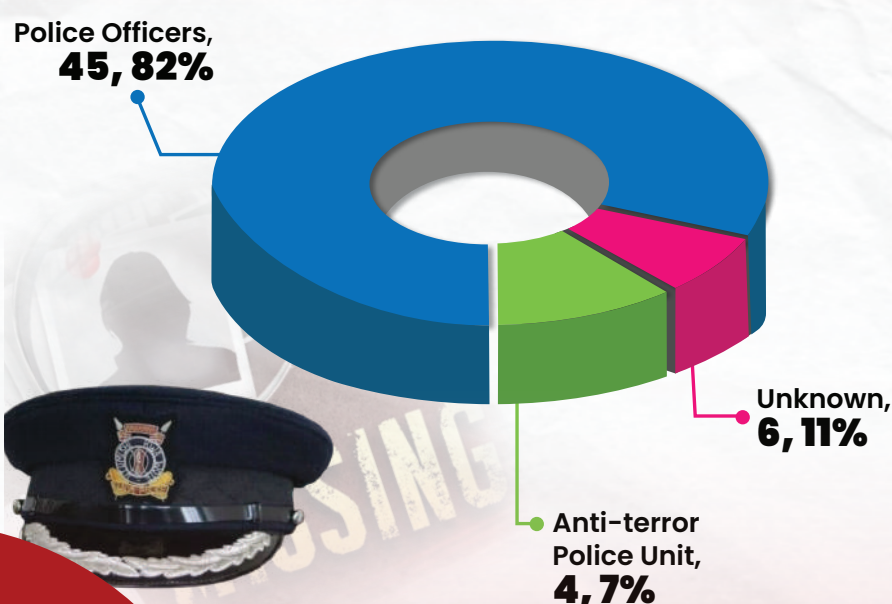
Status of Enforced Disappearances Cases (2024)



Security Officers Suspected of Enforced Disappearances Incidents

45 of the incidents of enforced disappearance were suspected to have been perpetrated by police officers against 4 from the Anti-Terror Police Unit. 6 of the incidents couldn't be attributed to any specific security arm. It is concerning that most of these incidents of enforced disappearances were done in the full glare of the public including media, by hooded men in plain clothes. Some of the vehicles did not have local number plates. This makes it difficult to determine with absolute accuracy the identify of the security officers responsible for series of enforced disappearances in the country. Questions have been raised by a section of the citizens on whether all the hooded ununiformed men were security officers from the National Police Service, other specialized illegal security organs or criminals who infiltrated the protests. In 2023, 5 police officers and 5 ATPU officers were linked to incidents of enforced disappearances.

Security Officers Suspected of Enforced Disappearances (2024)



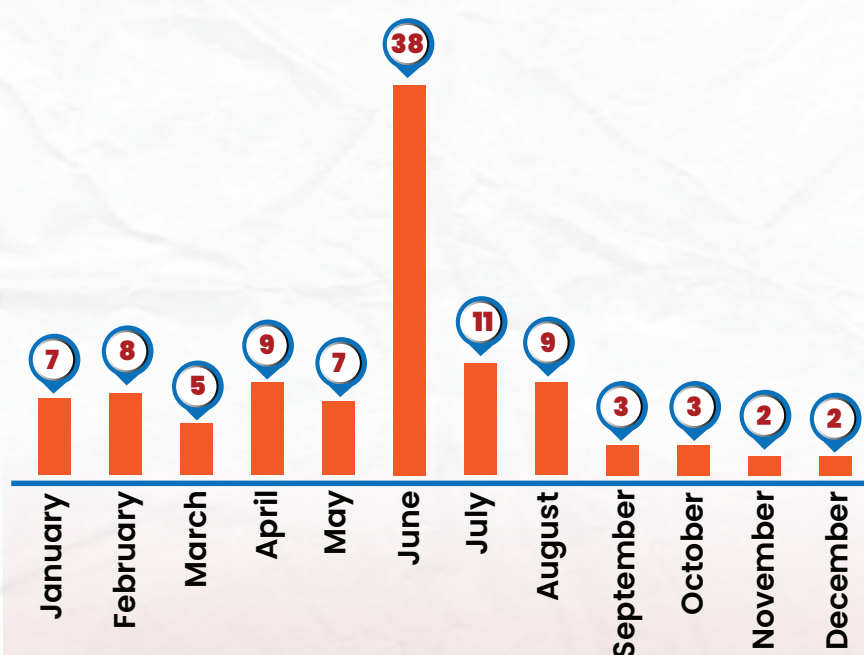
Data On Extrajudicial Killings

Extrajudicial killings by Months

Missing Voices documented 104 incidents of extrajudicial killings between January–December 2024 compared to 118 which were documented in 2023 representing a 12% decrease. The largest number of incidents which was 38 was reported in June which was the climax of Gen. Zs and Millennials protests over the Finance Bill 2024. This was followed by 11 incidents reported in July. 9 incidents were reported in April and September respectively. 8 incidents were reported in February compared to 7 which were reported in January and May respectively. March had 5 incidents while September and October had 3 incidents each. November and December reported 2 incidents each.

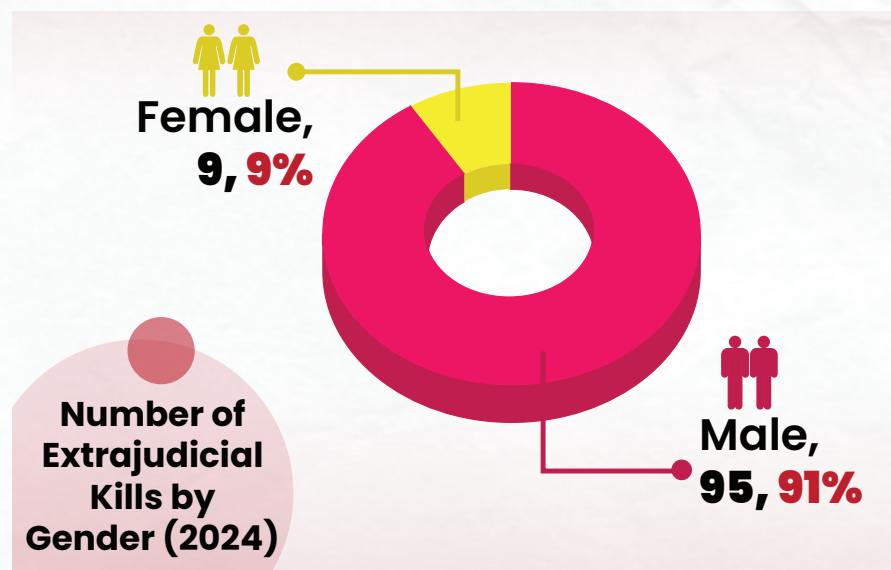
In 2023, 32 incidents were reported in July which was the highest for the year. This was followed by 13 in January, 12 in May, 11 in August, 10 in March and December respectively, 7 each in June and November, 6 in September, 5 in February, 3 in April and 2 in October. While most of the extrajudicial killings in 2024 were related to the anti-Finance Bill protests by the Gen Zs, the 2023 cases were majorly due to government response to opposition-led protests over the high cost of living. Incidents of extrajudicial killings were reported in each month of 2023 and 2024. This indicates an attempt by security agencies to institutionalize extrajudicial killings as a model for dealing with protests.

Number of Extrajudicial Killings (2024)



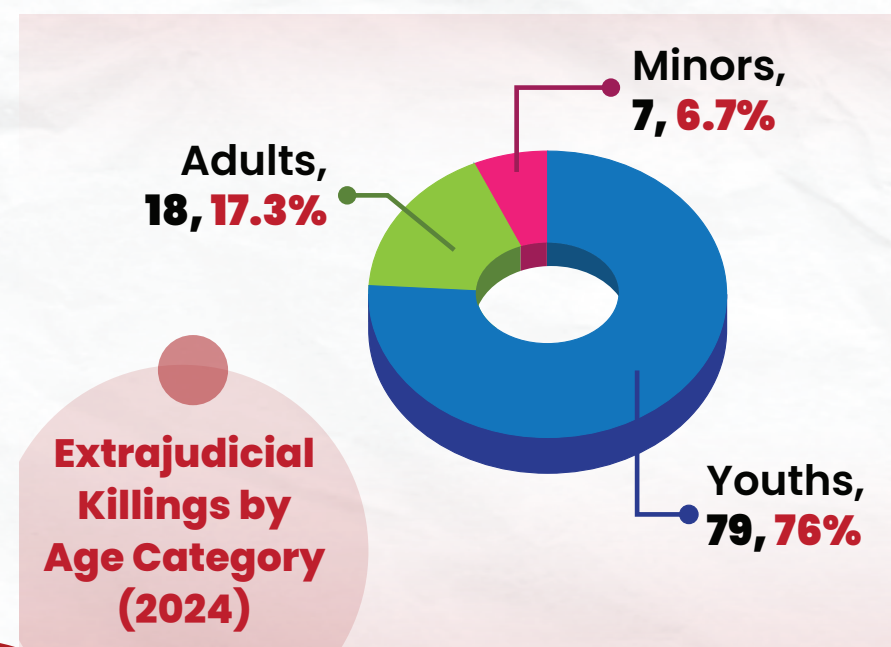
Extrajudicial Killings by Gender

95 of the victims of extrajudicial killings were men compared to 9 who were female. This is compared to 111 males in 2023 and 7 females in 2023.



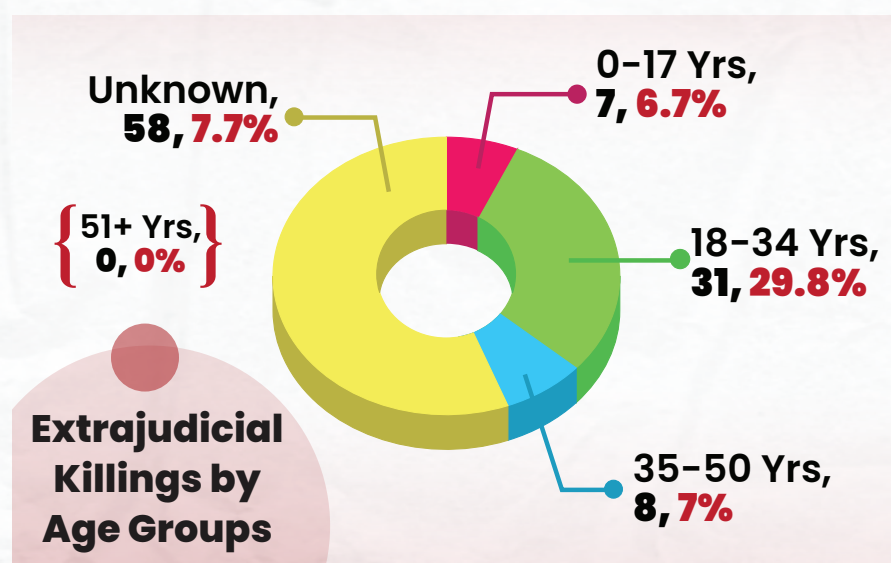
Extrajudicial Killings by Age Category

A majority of those killed were youth at 79, followed by adults at 18 and minors at 7.



Extrajudicial Killings by Age Groups

Most victims of extrajudicial killings were youth between 18–34 years old. Missing Voices documented 31 incidents of youth under this age group. While exact ages of other 58 victims could not be established, the data available classified them as youths. Minors of 0–17 years were 7 while adults of 35–50 years were 8.



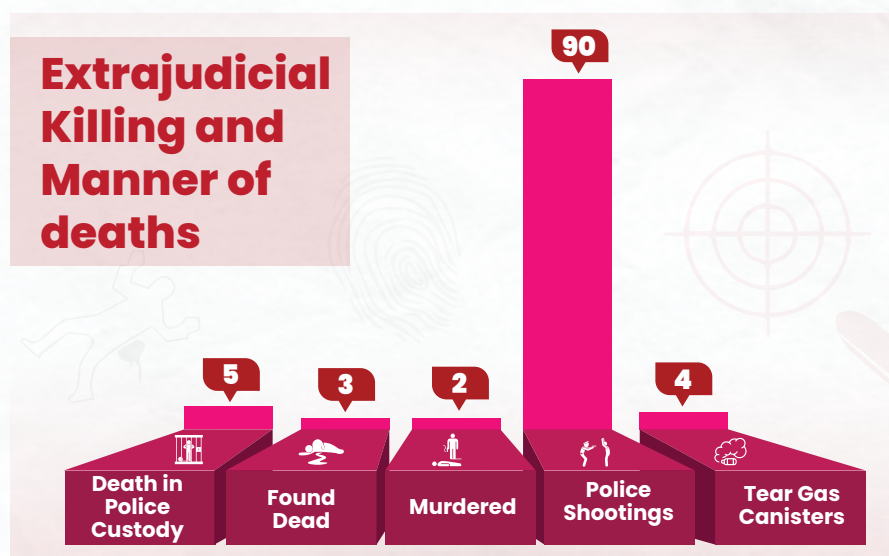
Extrajudicial Killings by Counties

Nairobi reported the highest number of extrajudicial killings at 38, followed by Kiambu with 9, Kajiado and Migori with 6, Kakamega and Nakuru with 5 each, Makueni and Uasin Gishu had 4 cases each, Mombasa, Trans Nzoia and Turkana with 3 incidents each, Bomet, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kirinyaga, Kisumu and Machakos reported 2 incidents each while Homa Bay, Kilifi, Kitui, Laikipia, Narok, Nyeri, Siaya and West Pokot had 1 case each.

No.	County	No. of Extrajudicial killings	No.	County	No. of Extrajudicial killings
1.	Bomet	2	13.	Makueni	4
2.	Elgeyo Marakwet	2	14.	Migori	6
3.	Homabay	1	15.	Mombasa	3
4.	Kajiado	6	16.	Nairobi	38
5.	Kakamega	5	17.	Nakuru	5
6.	Kiambu	9	18.	Narok	1
7.	Kilifi	1	19.	Nyeri	1
8.	Kirinyaga	2	20.	Siaya	1
9.	Kisumu	2	21.	Transzoia	3
10.	Kitui	1	22.	Turkana	3
11.	Laikipia	1	23.	Uashin Gishu	4
12.	Machakos	2	24.	West Pokot	1
	Total				104

Extrajudicial Killing and Manner of deaths

The number of extrajudicial killings in 2024 reduced from 118 in 2023 to 104, a 12% decrease. 90 victims of extrajudicial killings were through police shootings compared to 113 in 2023, a 23% decrease. Death in police custody increased from 2 in 2023 to 5 in 2024 representing a 150% increase. 4 victims died from tear gas canisters related injuries. 3 people were found dead while 2 were murdered.



Extrajudicial Killings by Type of Operation

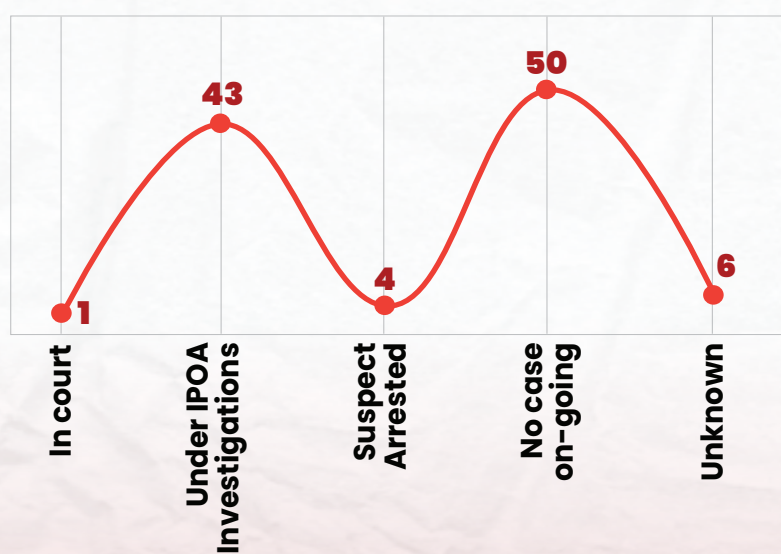
51 of extrajudicial killings happened as a result of anti-crime operations, 35 by anti-riot operations, 5 by altercation with the police and 1 suspected gender-based violence case. 12 victims died under unclear circumstances from police responses to crime and protests.



Status of Extrajudicial Killings Cases

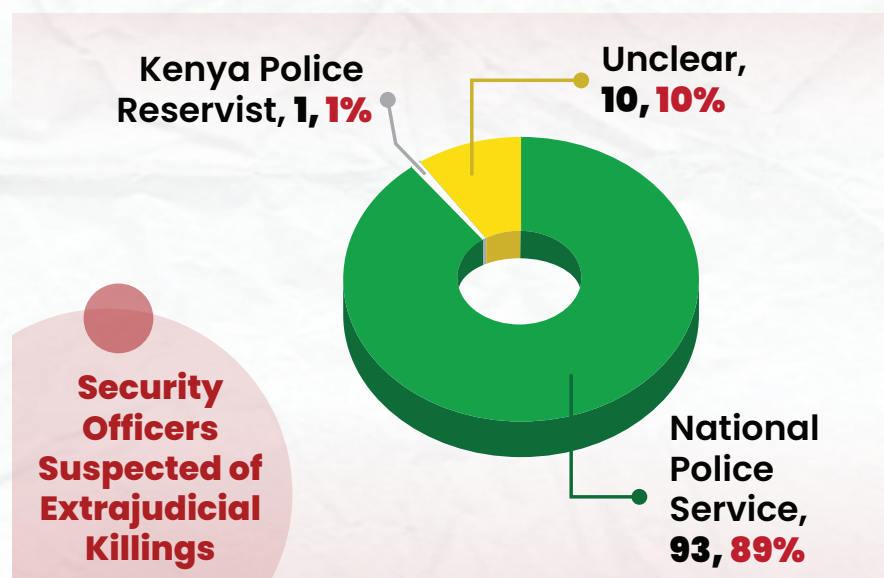
43 cases of extrajudicial killings are under Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) investigations, 4 suspects have been arrested, 1 police officer has been arraigned in court while no cases are on-going for 50 other incidents. The status of 6 other cases is unknown.

Status of Extrajudicial Killings (2024)



Security Officers Suspected of Extrajudicial Killings

Police officers were the most notorious for extrajudicial killings at 93 of all Missing Voices documented deaths and 1 Kenya Police Reservist. The security unit alleged response for other 10 incidents of extrajudicial killings was not clear.



Directors' Statements



Amnesty International



Protect the Protest: Policing Strategies Urgently Needed in 2025

There were 1,800 public protests or 4 protests every day of 2024. The protests were convened to resist Government of Kenya economic policies, misgovernance and human rights violations. The consistent demonstrations placed the security services under their greatest test possibly since the rejection of the 2007 General Elections and the organised demand for multi-partyism and democracy in 1990.

With over 65 verified unlawful police killings, 89 abductions and thousands of arbitrary arrests, the Kenya Kwanza manifesto promise to bring the history of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances to an end lies in tatters. It is Amnesty's belief that freedom from state violence is not only possible but desirable. We join other members of the Missing Voices Alliance to call for new approaches to protest policing.

We recommend the need to require police commanders to manage protests with protest organisers and protect health-workers, journalists and protest marshals; train officers in emotional awareness, active listening and conflict management skills; hold both police commanders and officers individually responsible for crimes committed under them; disband all units operating outside of the National Police Act and actively collaborate with IPOA and KNCHR while investigating officers suspected of committing rights abuses.

The government should also address economic distress and low trust levels in public institutions felt by most Kenyans. The critical challenge the Government faces is not only better law enforcement but how to initiate governance policy reform on all the areas that many Kenyans have expressed themselves. Let us not, as Law Society Kenya President Faith Odhiambo urges "mistake calmness for peace. Kenya needs steadfast leadership now more than ever"

Irungu Houghton
*Section Director, Amnesty
International Kenya*

Defenders Coalition



The Kenya Constitution 2010 promises everyone the necessities of life, human dignity, social justice and a legal framework for the protection of everyone's rights. It further provides the framework for governance and accountability. Despite legal protection, the sad reality is that state actors have consistently undermined the implementation of the Constitution or violated its aspirations with impunity.

Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings are concerning issues that remain deeply entrenched within the state security sector. Worse still, advocacy against this vice has become a dangerous endeavour as human rights defenders are targets for reprisals when they call on the state to remedy their concerns.

The 2024 public outcry over bad governance, corruption, high cost of living, and massive human rights violations, that was spearheaded by the youth cohort of Kenya popularly known as GenZ created an opportunity for the state to address

the declining state of the nation. Instead, the state deployed brute force that resulted in an unprecedented number of kidnappings, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. This is tragic irony where the government whose duty is to protect its citizens turned around and deployed batons, boots and bullets.

Defenders Coalition believes that human rights-based approaches in policing cannot be wished away in any democracy that professes its commitment to the rule of law. By joining the United Nations Human Rights Council, Kenya must denounce any forms of violations, especially police excesses.

As an organization committed to defending human rights, the Defenders Coalition remains committed to taking initiatives to ensure accountability by advocating for the rights of the victims and survivors to ensure that justice is not a distant ideal but an attainable reality for all Kenyans.

Kamau Ngugi,
Executive Director, Defenders
Coalition.



HAKI Africa

The Generation Z movement, which spearheaded the rejection of the Finance Bill and played a key role in the dismissal of cabinet ministers, is on a halftime. The referee has not yet blown the final whistle, and the fight for a better Kenya is far from over. This is not a moment to retreat but to regroup, strategize, and push forward in ensuring that the country moves in the right direction. The calls for reforms, good governance, and accountability are echoing across the nation, and they cannot be ignored.

Leaders must recognize that Kenya is a nation of immense potential, rich in human capital, and a beacon of democracy in the region. However, this promise can only be realized when fundamental human rights are respected, and justice prevails. It is imperative to put an end to abductions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and intimidation of those who dare to speak out. The suppression of dissenting voices is a direct assault on democracy, and it threatens the progress that Kenyans have fought so hard to achieve.

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The true essence of human rights is to create an environment where people can enjoy their freedoms without fear.

The right to protest, freedom of expression, and civic engagement must be safeguarded as pillars of a just society. Every Kenyan, regardless of their background or political stance, deserves to live in a country where their voice matters and their rights are protected. The true essence of human rights is to create an environment where people can enjoy their freedoms without fear. It is our collective duty to ensure that these rights are not just theoretical promises but lived realities for all. The struggle continues, and the movement for justice and accountability must press on with unwavering determination.

HAKI Africa as one of the pillars of Missing Voices shall continue to play its role alongside other progressive forces committed to documenting and redressing human rights violations especially those related to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

SC. Yusuf M. Aboubakar
Executive Director-HAKI Africa



Heinrich Böll Foundation

Enforced disappearances and police brutality fundamentally contradict international human rights standards because they systematically violate essential protections such as the right to life, freedom from torture, and due process. These violations not only harm individuals but also erode public trust in law enforcement and undermine the rule of law. International legal frameworks, including the United Nations mechanisms, emphasize that all states have a duty to prevent, investigate, and provide remedies for these violations to ensure justice and uphold human dignity.

Particularly at a time when global governance structures are being tested, the fight against all forms of human rights violations is imperative. Upholding accountability, transparency, and justice is essential to reinforce a rules-based order that prioritizes human dignity over vested interests.

In this climate of uncertainty, reaffirming a collective stance against these abuses is crucial to maintaining peace, security for all, and a just order for all.

Joachim Paul
*Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation,
Nairobi*



International Commission of Jurists Kenya (ICJ Kenya)

The increased number of unexplained deaths, coupled with the discovery of more unidentified bodies while law enforcement agencies continue to claim innocence and feign ignorance, should be the more reason why clamoring for security governance reforms sits as a priority agenda in all civil society spaces and boardrooms for lovers and promoters of human rights. We have no morality if we dismiss, assume, or play down the impact of the painful, coarse, and tired voices of wailing mothers, siblings, fathers, and friends.

The country's leadership cannot act so impervious, insensitive, and unresponsive! Security governance reforms must be matched with political goodwill, even if it means reminding the president of the many promises he has made, most notably the reference to his party's manifesto, which committed to eradicating the ghosts of the

past, where police brutality, impunity, and unaccountability thrived the pains of time.

We must consistently push the state to desist from enforcing disappearances and gloating over extrajudicial killings as if their delegated instruments of power are too blunt to cut into and stop the culture of blatant disregard for the rule of law. Similarly, we must resist constitutionally all forms of suppression and oppression, whose outcome is the insufficiency of human rights in the country. The social and legal fabric that leads to justice and realization of inherent human dignity, particularly the safety of people in the country, must never crumble. Every voice counts, and so does every life!

Eric Mukoya
Executive Director, ICJ Kenya



International Justice Mission

In the year 2024 there was surge in enforced disappearances and police killings, particularly during the Gen Z protests. The findings in this report reveal a startling 450% increase in cases of enforced disappearances, a grim statistic that is corroborated by other available data, including figures tabled by the police in Parliament. According to the Inspector General's statement in January 2025, out of the 57 Kenyans abducted in 2024, 22 have since been returned, while 29 remain unaccounted for.

Despite the glaring evidence, security agencies continue to deny any involvement, and little progress has been made towards ensuring justice for the victims and their families. The Missing Voices report highlights that, of the 55 cases documented and verified by the coalition, none has been prosecuted and a verdict delivered.

The data further exposes a disturbing trend of police killings during protests, with 38 Kenyans—most of them young people—losing their lives at the height of the protests in June 2024. These acts of violence not only robbed families of their loved ones but also deepened the culture of impunity, leaving behind devastated and traumatized communities without closure.

IJM Kenya stands in solidarity with the families of the victims and survivors. We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring accountability and strengthening the capacity of institutions to

investigate and prosecute these grave human rights violations. Justice must be delivered through:

1. **Centering the victims** – Survivors and affected families must be at the heart of all justice processes, including reparations and truth-seeking mechanisms.
2. **Accountability for perpetrators** – Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings must be investigated and prosecuted in a timely fashion.
3. **Legislative action** – The absence of an appropriate legal framework obstructs justice in cases of enforced disappearances. We call for the immediate ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICCPED) and the enactment of domestic laws to criminalize enforced disappearances in Kenya.

IJM Kenya, alongside the Missing Voices coalition, remains resolute in its pursuit of justice. We will not relent until every disappeared person is accounted for, every victim's family receives justice, and every perpetrator is held to account. The time for action is now. Until All Are Free

Vincent Chahale
Country Director, International
Justice Mission Kenya



Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU)

Across Kenya, families continue to search for justice, their lives shattered by the enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions of their loved ones. Let us remember that these are not just numbers; they are sons, daughters, parents, and friends whose absence leaves an enduring void.

In 2024, the scale of police brutality escalated, particularly during the Gen Z-led protests, where security forces responded with excessive force. IMLU's monitoring and reporting efforts documented 63 extrajudicial executions, 89 enforced disappearances, and over 2,000 injuries. Behind each statistic is a story of pain, families left in limbo, searching for answers, and communities living in fear. Through forensic investigations, legal aid, and psychosocial support, IMLU has worked to bring closure to these families while continuing to demand justice.

Despite these efforts, major barriers hinder progress in addressing police abuse. Entrenched impunity remains a significant challenge, with officers rarely held accountable despite overwhelming evidence. The militarization of protests set a dangerous precedent in 2024, normalizing the use of force against civilians. Additionally, legal and policy rollbacks, such as the Assemblies and Demonstrations Bill 2024, threaten to erode civic space further, silencing dissent and undermining democratic rights. However, the resilience of survivors, families, and human rights defenders is unwavering. They

continue to demand justice, refusing to let the names of the disappeared and executed fade into silence. As we progress, it is imperative to strengthen the Missing Voices Coalition and its role in monitoring, documenting, and exposing these violations.

Policy and legal reforms remain critical, and we will continue to advocate for the full implementation of the National Coroners Service Act, (NCSA) which would provide an independent and credible mechanism to investigate deaths linked to security forces.

We also recognize the power of public awareness and engagement in shifting narratives around police and state accountability. By amplifying survivors' stories and increasing legal rights education, we can rally communities to demand justice and systemic reforms. At the same time, we must prioritize survivor-centered justice by expanding access to legal aid, psychosocial rehabilitation, and direct support for families seeking redress.

The road to justice is long, but we cannot afford to look away. Every life lost must be accounted for, and every disappearance must be answered. IMLU reaffirms its dedication to the Missing Voices mission and calls upon all stakeholders, the government, judiciary, civil society, and the public, to stand against impunity. Justice for one is justice for all.

Wangechi Grace Kahuria,
Executive Director, IMLU

Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)

The true measure of a nation's commitment to democracy, good governance, and the rule of law lies in its unwavering respect for human rights and the protection of its citizens. What, then, can be said of a country where those entrusted with upholding these principles become the very perpetrators of the injustices they are meant to prevent?

Kenya Kwanza, in its manifesto, pledged to end police brutality, impunity, and unaccountability. Yet, nearly halfway through President William Ruto's term, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and police brutality continue at alarming and unprecedented levels, as evidenced by recent reports.

In 2024, as Kenyans exercised their constitutionally guaranteed right to peaceful protest in response to the country's deteriorating socio-economic conditions, the state met them with brute force. Instead of seizing the opportunity to foster public participation and accountability, the government responded with the only tactic it seemed to know—repression. Enforced disappearances, abductions, and unlawful arrests became tools of intimidation, silencing dissent and suppressing the people's voices. This raises a critical question: while the Constitution of Kenya



guarantees fundamental rights—including the right to life and freedom of expression—do citizens truly enjoy these rights in practice? As one user on X (formerly Twitter) aptly put it, "Freedom of speech exists, but what happens after you speak cannot be guaranteed."

The Missing Voices Coalition has played a crucial role in documenting and exposing these human rights violations, shedding light on the extent of the crisis. However, what the families of victims seek is not just awareness—it is justice. Kenya has signed, but not ratified, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED). Without ratification, there is no binding legal framework to address enforced disappearances, despite this being a grave crime under

international human rights and criminal law. While Kenya's Penal Code covers offenses such as kidnapping and abduction, it fails to specifically recognize or criminalize enforced disappearances.

This legal vacuum has emboldened state actors to operate with impunity, violating human rights without consequence. The ICPPED, which came into force in 2010, provides a clear mechanism for accountability, yet President Ruto's administration has failed to fulfil its promise to ratify it. The time for empty commitments has passed. The only path to true accountability and good governance is for Kenya to ratify the Convention and domesticate it into national law. This requires amending the Penal Code to explicitly criminalize enforced disappearances, with strict penalties for perpetrators.

By taking these steps, Kenya can begin rebuilding public trust in law enforcement and reaffirm its commitment to the rule of law. Failure to act will only drag the country back to the pre-2010 era—an era marked by impunity and unchecked abuse of power, which the 2010 Constitution sought to eradicate. It is time for action, not rhetoric.

Davis Malombe
Executive Director- KHRC



Missing Voices Coalition

Even with enormous challenges, Missing Voices Coalition remains steadfast in the fight against enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. In 2024, we amplified the voices of victims, documented cases with precision, and held authorities to account. Our resolve remains unshaken through collective action, solidarity, and resilience, we continue to push for a Kenya where justice is not a privilege but a fundamental right, and every life is valued.

Javan Ofula
Interim Coordinator, Missing Voices Coalition



Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI)

Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) is a non-governmental organization established in 1997, based in Kenya's coastal region, with a mission to promote and protect human rights across the country. MUHURI's work focuses on monitoring, investigating, and reporting human rights violations, as well as conducting research and advocacy to uphold justice and the rule of law.

MUHURI acknowledges and appreciates the Missing Voices Network organizations for their dedication in documenting abductions, extrajudicial killings, and advocating for justice. In 2024, MUHURI intensified its efforts to address insecurity, scrutinize state agencies' conduct, and assess the role of non-state actors in the ongoing wave of violence in the country.

We have consistently emphasized that the state bears the primary responsibility of protecting its citizens. However, we have found extensive evidence of excessive and lethal force used by security agencies, including the Administration Police, Regular

Police, and the General Service Unit, particularly in counterterrorism operations in the coastal and northern regions of Kenya.

One of the unfortunate consequences of our investigations into extrajudicial killings has been the intimidation and threats faced by human rights defenders. We extend our gratitude to Kenyans, Missing Voices, and development partners for their unwavering support in the fight for justice. MUHURI remains committed to defending the rights of all Kenyans and holding state actors accountable.

Finally, I sincerely thank the public for entrusting us with critical information that has enabled us to compile comprehensive human rights reports, including publications exposing extrajudicial killings by the Kenyan police. Our resolve remains firm, we will continue to stand at the frontline in the pursuit of justice and human rights for all.

Wallid Kassim Said
Executive Director, MUHURI



Katiba Institute

It has been a privilege for Katiba Institute to support the Missing Voices Coalition through litigation to prevent and strengthen accountable policing in Kenya. The government is obligated to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to life, which is enshrined in the Constitution. A key concern for us is the lack of commitment to passing the National Coroners Service Act (NCSA), which is one of the most critical laws intended to provide for effective investigations of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances by the State.

The failure to operationalize the Act, the lack of a Coroner General to investigate cases of reportable deaths, and the lack of an effective investigation mechanism to ascertain when agents of the state deliberately take a person's life or

are involved in violations of human rights is an indictment of the government's lack of commitment to ending this scourge. The right to life and the duty to investigate are intertwined, and it is the duty of the Kenyan government to ensure non-recurrence and institutional reform to ensure accountability. Effective investigation mechanisms must be prompt, transparent, independent and impartial to restore public confidence and trust in the state.

The MVC partners should join efforts on this issue in 2025, as one of the ways to gain the lost momentum on ending enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in Kenya.

Nora Mbagathi
Executive Director, Katiba Institute

A photograph of Alberto Fait, a bald man with a friendly expression, wearing a dark brown textured blazer over a light blue collared shirt. He is holding a silver microphone to his mouth and appears to be speaking. The background is a vibrant green with vertical folds, suggesting a curtain. The lighting is bright, casting a soft shadow of his head and shoulders onto the green background.

Peace Brigades International Kenya

As Peace Brigades International Kenya, we stand in solidarity with the families and communities devastated by enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. The attacks on youth during the Gen Z demonstrations, who dared to demand accountability and justice, point to a deeply entrenched culture of impunity within Kenya's Police Service.

As a member of Missing Voices, we reaffirm our commitment to amplifying the voices of victims and human rights defenders, demanding truth and accountability, and ensuring that justice is not just an ideal, but a reality for all.

Alberto Fait
*Country Coordinator, Peace Brigades
International Kenya*

Protection **International Africa**

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Together, we
are building
a powerful
movement
that cannot be
ignored.”



As we reflect on the past year, we reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with all those who continue to fight for an end to extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. Missing Voices remains steadfast in its commitment to amplifying the voices of the marginalized, the silenced, and the resilient human rights defenders who work tirelessly to challenge oppression and forge pathways toward lasting change.

Protection International Africa honors the courage of women, youth, and activists who, despite immense challenges and escalating reprisals, continue to push boundaries and demand accountability. Your bravery and determination are the lifeblood of our collective struggle for a just and equitable world.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our partners, allies, and supporters whose solidarity has been a source of strength and hope. Together, we are building a powerful movement that cannot be ignored.

To duty bearers and those entrusted with power: We call upon you to uphold your obligations to protect and promote human rights. It is your responsibility to ensure justice, equality, and safety for all. The voices of the oppressed will not be silenced, and your commitment to justice will be measured by your actions.

In the face of adversity, Protection International Africa pledges to continue fighting alongside the silenced to keep listening, advocating, and amplifying their voices. Our commitment to justice remains resolute, and our solidarity with you, unbreakable.

Phanice Odhacha
Africa Regional Director, Protection International



Social Justice Movement of Kenya

As the Social Justice Movement of Kenya, we remain deeply committed to dismantling systemic injustices, amplifying the voices of victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. The 2024 Missing Voices Coalition Report comes at a critical moment when Kenya has witnessed unprecedented police brutality, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings, particularly in the wake of the Gen Z protests.

Throughout the year, we have stood in solidarity with victims' families, documented human rights violations, and mobilized communities to demand justice, truth, and accountability. However, the state's increasing hostility towards dissent and its disregard for human rights remains a major concern.

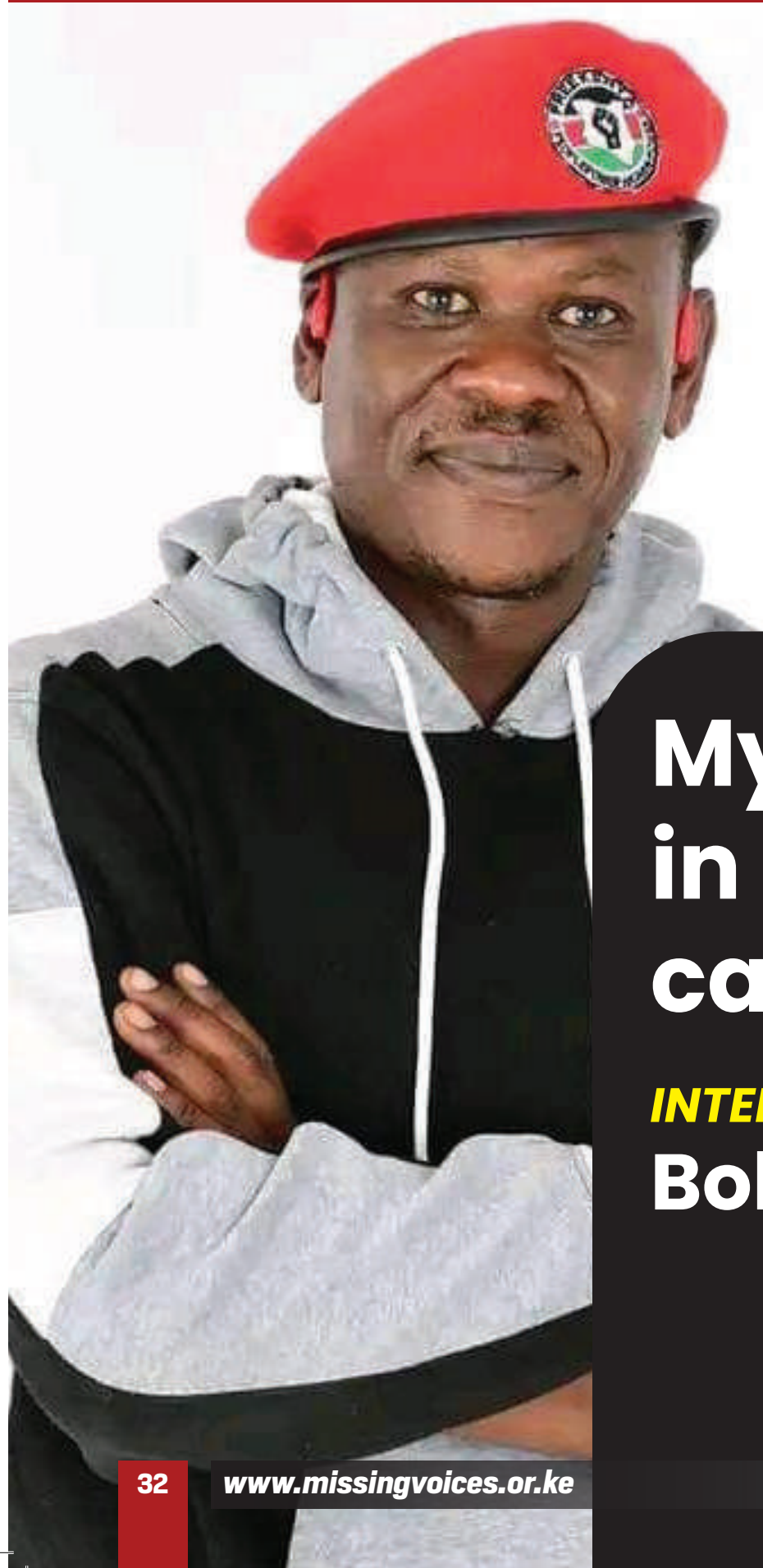
This report serves as both a record of resistance and a call to action.

It highlights the resilience of communities, the courage of young activists, and the urgency for structural reforms within Kenya's security and justice systems. As part of the Missing Voices Coalition, we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that every case of police violence is documented, every disappearance is accounted for, and every life lost is not forgotten.

We call upon the government, civil society, and international human rights bodies to join us in this fight because justice delayed is justice denied.

Happy Olal
Convener, Social Justice Movement
of Kenya

Our Stories



My 32 days in dreadful captivity

INTERVIEW WITH
Bob Njagi

Bob Njagi carries a quiet harmless personality. His words are measured, deliberate, yet each one lands with the force of conviction. He has unwavering sense of purpose in every word he utters. He is intent with a calm demeanour which invites trust of his guests. However, when he speaks, his voice is firm and he oozes sharp ideas, the nature of which, is required to reshape Kenya. He is not loud yet his very presence and articulation of issues command attention. It is these rare qualities that Bob Njagi presents which he applies in his leadership of the Free Kenya Movement, an activist movement advocating for freedom, democracy, and social justice in Kenya.

On 19th August 2024, Njagi was travelling to his home in Kitengela, Kajiado county, after a long day's work at the Free Kenya Movement when he was abducted and held in solitary confinement for 32 days by individuals believed to be government operatives. On the fateful day, four masked men entered a matatu he was travelling by, approached where he was sitting and forcibly frog marched him from the vehicle, demanding from him to produce a firearm they had accused him of carrying. Njagi who said that he has never owned a firearm, informed the Missing Voices interviewer that his abductors transported him to an undisclosed location after several manoeuvres to prevent him from understanding his whereabouts. He finally found himself in a small, dark room, where he was sure of. He wasn't given any food or bathing water for two days. His captors would only offer him some water directly into his mouth without allowing him to hold the glass.

"I was headed home in the night of 19th of August from Kamkunji Police Station where I had an engagement with Safina Party leader, Mr. Maina Wanjigi. At around 10.30pm-11.00pm, I was in a matatu heading home. When we reached Mlolongo, which is halfway between Nairobi to Kitengela where I stay, masked and hooded men got into the matatu. They came straight towards me and told the other passengers that I had a firearm. I tried to find out what was happening. On the same day, two of my colleagues had been abducted around midday. I was already aware that I was being followed. When they came for me, I was not surprised but alarmed because I wasn't sure what would happen to me", Bob narrated his experience.

Njagi's enforced disappearance, coincided with the disappearance of brothers Aslam Longton and Jamil Longton, following their participation

in anti-government protests which made the media to refer to them as 'Kitengela 3.' Their disappearances prompted public outcry and legal action.

During his captivity, he endured physical abuse, inadequate food, and was denied basic human contact. "I lost 12kg in 32 days. I was surviving on a plate of ugali, rice and beans. I survived on very little food. I suffered from hunger pangs. I had to get into a fasting mood to survive", he shared his experience. His daughter was born when he was in captivity and he couldn't see her for about 2 weeks after her birth since he was undergoing medication, and he was not in the right mental shape to meet the baby. The ordeal at the hands of his captors has made him live in fear. He depends on professional therapy, sharing his stories and physical exercises as his major coping mechanisms. Bob said that his release coincided with the swearing in of the new Inspector General of Police Mr. Douglas Kanja while his predecessor Mr. Gilbert Maseng'eli was being charged for contempt of Court for failing to produce the three in Court under a habeas corpus application by the Law Society of Kenya and other human rights organizations.

Bob was beaten up and taken into a vehicle which had been packed near the Matatu he was travelling by. He was driven around for about an hour while being tortured inside the car. "I couldn't know where I was heading to until we reached some place. We made a stopover, and I realized that there was another vehicle which was waiting at where we stopped. There were some men who were conversing with my captors. This is when I was told to alight from the vehicle. I was blind-folded, handcuffed at the back and whisked inside another vehicle. I was driven for about 30 minutes until we got to a destination which is where I was held". He narrated his ordeal at the hands of his captors.

When he was in the vehicle being transported to his 'abduction camp', he was interrogated and asked several questions related to the Gen Z and Millennials demonstrations. Some of his captors told him that he would be dead by 2.00am of the same night he was captured and that his body would be found at River Yala. "I couldn't ask any questions. I submitted myself to the will of God", Bob said.

Those who had forcefully disappeared Bob had not identified themselves even though they behaved like police. They had handcuffs, walkie talkies and spoke like police officers. "I was taken into a building and

ushered into a small room. Though I was blind-folded, I could guess the size of the room. I was told to sit down with my hands still handcuffed at the back. This is where I stayed for two days without any food. Occasionally, a man would walk into the room and administer some water to me orally. After two days in the room, my abductors walked in, changed the handcuffs from the back to the front. They transferred me to another room where I stayed for the remaining 30 days before my release", Bob told the interview team.

The thought of his family especially the newly born kept Bob's hope alive despite the inadequate food rations that he was being given. He prayed for another chance to reconnect with his family. "I prayed a lot. Many Kenyans also prayed for me. I also do a lot of physical exercises a", Bob said of his ability to cope with the post-enforced disappearance trauma, explaining why he believes that state agencies were involved in his enforced disappearance. "The day we were released by our abductors is the day that the Inspector General of Police was to present himself to court. This made me believe that the government was involved. If the state didn't abduct me, why haven't they asked me to record a statement? Isn't the state interested in knowing who abducted me and my colleagues who have also not been asked to record any statements?"

Bob is very grateful to Kenyans who came out to fight for their freedom. He acknowledged that it is pressure from Kenyans that led to their release including the Law Society of Kenya which took the Inspector General to Court under a habeas corpus application and other human rights organizations who didn't tire from calling for their release. "I learnt a big lesson that freedom is very important. You may not have any money, but you have the freedom to interact with your people. We take it for granted", Bob said. He noted that tribalism is not the cause of the problems we are facing in Kenya. He has also forgiven his abductors. "Our captors were following orders from their seniors. They were getting orders from somewhere. They are probably employed to earn a living, but they should not do this by violating citizens' rights", he told the Missing Voices team.

He was abandoned at Thogoto in Kiambu county on the day of his release which was 20th September 2024 where he had to find his way home. The Longton brothers were abandoned at Gachie, Kiambu county the same day.



**When
we lose
our fear,
they
lose
their
power**

Interview With **Wanjira Wanjiru**

Wanjira's Activism Journey

Wanjira's journey into activism began approximately six years ago with the formation of Mathare Social Justice Centre (MSJC). Her involvement was deeply personal, stemming from the tragic loss of her elder brother, Damason Irungu, who was executed by officers from the Pangani police station. This personal tragedy motivated her to challenge the normalization of extrajudicial killings in communities like Mathare. Together with community members, she co-founded MSJC to document human rights violations and advocate against the systemic

violence perpetrated by law enforcement agencies. In addition to her activism, Wanjira is pursuing higher education. She is a third-year student at the University of Nairobi, studying international relations and diplomacy, while also exploring entrepreneurial ventures.

Under her leadership, MSJC has initiated various campaigns to address interconnected social justice issues. One significant initiative is the formation of the Mothers' of Victims and Survivors Network, a support group for families who have lost loved ones to police violence. This network provides a platform for collective action and advocacy, aiming to challenge and change the

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What started as an exercise of our sovereignty ended up as a serious violation of human rights. Several young people were killed and injured for simply saying that Finance Bill must fall, and that impunity must end

narratives surrounding police brutality in Kenya. Wanjira's dedication to social justice and human rights has been recognized on multiple platforms. She continues to be a vocal advocate for the marginalized, striving for a society where justice and equality prevail.

In 2024, Kenya witnessed significant protests led by Generation Z, primarily in response to the proposed Finance Bill, which aimed to increase taxes and other levies amidst an already challenging economic climate. These demonstrations were notable for their decentralized nature and the prominent role of young activists, with Wanjira Wanjiru emerging as one of the key faces of the struggle. Missing Voices interviewed her for this report and the following are extracts from the interview:

Joining Gen Z Protests

I did not join Gen Z protests. I have been protesting before the Gen Z revolution. The Gen Zs joined us in the protests. The Finance Bill 2024 was a trigger for bad governance that has been taking place in Kenya, corruption and the high cost of living. Finance Bill intended to make life more difficult for Kenyans. I therefore joined the protests to condemn bad governance and high cost of living. I was one of the people planning the protests together with Bonface Mwangi and rallying Kenyans to come out for the protests in large numbers. We planned the protests such that by the time Parliament was getting to pass the Finance Bill, Kenyans had clearly stated their position. Before the Gen Z protest took shape, we had already been talking on social media on how the country was being managed, the high cost of living and run-away corruption. The Gen Z revolution brought to us an opportunity to come together for today and tomorrow.

The Genesis of Gen Z Protests

What started as an exercise of our sovereignty ended up as a serious violation of human rights. Several young people were killed and injured for simply saying that Finance Bill must fall, and that impunity must end. Police responded to the protests with untold brutality. During the protests, even those who were siding with the police, were able to see that the police service is a force of oppression. This is what we have been saying over the years in the social justice movement especially from informal settlements. We have seen people being forcefully disappeared, people being killed through extrajudicial means and impunity of the police first hand. Finance Bill protests brought these issues to the national discussion table because Kenyans across the country could see how the police was treating the youth. The president himself referred to the protesting youths as criminals.

Effects of the Gen Z Protests

There were days I would just cry on seeing what was happening. There were days I just wanted to be left alone. The protests made me feel depressed. I never at any time contemplated leaving the protests but I thought of taking a break. There were moments I sought comradeship of my fellow comrades. I cherished that togetherness to ensure my sanity because what we witnessed was very unfortunate, unnecessary, uncalled for, inhumane and unpatriotic. It should never happen again. We lost our brothers and sisters for simply saying that we should reject the Finance Bill.

Were Protests Infiltrated?

The only people who made the protests unsafe were the police. The Nairobi Business Community members were protecting their businesses from people who had been sponsored to infiltrate the protests and even those people were dealt with by the protesters. They were clearly labelled; they had different messages and not those calling for rejection of Finance Bill. They came to the Central Business District (CBD) by motorcycles and their messages endorsed support for the government. We could clearly tell them from the rest of the protesters. The protesters confronted them and defeated them. They went back home. It was dangerous for them to remain within the precincts of the CBD because the protesters were too many. We always knew where the attacks could be coming from. Kenyans were united in these protests. The business community was rightfully so, protecting their businesses. We did not clash at anytime with the business community. We understood why they were doing what they had to do. They understood why we were doing what we had to do.

If We Lose Our Fear, they Lose their Power

I didn't plan to say it. I didn't plan to be arrested. I felt it unravel right before my eyes and I felt it important to say it because it is a fact, it is a historical fact. The people have always triumphed against any form of tyranny and dictatorship. We just must lose our fear because fear is one thing that pulls people back. The other side lies freedom. Young people have lost their fear. The corruption, the enforced disappearances, the extrajudicial killings, the impunity and the injustices. We cannot afford fear. It is too expensive. We know for a fact that we are the majority as youths, we know for a fact that we are following the rule of law and the constitution, we have nothing to fear.

Role of the Police

Constitutionally, the role of the police is to protect the citizens. They were there to protect us, but

they were used as tools for violence. However, don't forget that the police are also poor people. Everything that we were fighting for, was also for their benefit as well. We were fighting for better governance, healthcare and education.

Every police officer has a child or a relative who is an ordinary citizen like us. They were working against their own good. It is very possible that there were some police officers who were in support of what the Gen Zs were doing. There are some of the police who may have been with us in spirit but constrained in action.

What the Police Should Do

The police need to act within the law. Noone is going to fire you for being a law-abiding police officer. Killer cop Ahmed Rashid was probably acting on an order from someone else but who is in court today? It is him as an individual because he is the one who violated the law. It is not his superior who may have given him orders who is in court. President Ruto for instance may also argue that he didn't personally kill a single young person. It is the police officers who killed the protesters who broke the law. Think about the police who lost his arms due a teargas canister explosion. Unfortunately, as it is, he is the one who has lost his arms as an individual. It is not his superior who lost his/her arms. These orders are colonial constructs. Police officers need to put them



down and enhance professionalism in their work. If they need to be re-trained on their roles as police officers, there is no problem. They need to be re-skilled on how to handle protests in post-2010 constitutional dispensation. The Inspector General of Police Mr. Douglas Kanja should ensure that the police service is run professionally so that it can get back public trust. Where we are now, civilians can go to war with the police any time. We are hungry at what they have done to us, the injustices they have perpetuated to so many Kenyans who have lost their loved ones to police violence. The irony is that the police officers are supposed to protect Kenyans.

Cop Shakur

Jackson Kuria Kihara alias Cop Shakur is a patriot. Being a prison officer who was suspended for joining the anti-Finance Bill protests in June 2024 and arrested in January 2025 for publishing false information under section 23 of the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crime Act No. 5 of 2018, I salute him. I salute him for his personal conviction and standing out for his country. Other security officers should emulate him because being a security officer, you are first a Kenyan citizen.

Any Direct Threats to Your Life?

Yes, during the protests, those masked men pointed at me suggestively, “wewe tukikupata” (if we get you!) and I also returned back the threats, “na nyinyi pia nikiwapata!” (If I get you too!). I have also been subliminally threatened. My mother who lives in Mathare for instance has been stoned by unknown people. I suspect that some of these people could be supporters of the government.



Betrayal of the Gen Zs

I don't want to narrow it down to an individual. Political alliances which are not what the Gen Zs were asking for. We were asking for good governance for the country. Forming a broad-based government was a complete disregard of the concerns of young people. It is also a blessing in disguise because now can clamp all the political elite on one side and the rest of us on the other side.

Divisions among Gen Zs

I don't think that there are any divisions among the Gen Zs. Kasmuel MacOure is just one individual. He is not Gen Zs.

Next Steps for Gen Zs

Political leadership. This is what we are headed to. This is how we shall honour our fallen brothers and sisters. We are going to be a generation that honours its martyrs. Their deaths will not disappear in vain. We must achieve what we had planned out from the beginning. We have the power because we are the majority, we are very well informed and organized. I don't think there is anything that's going to stand on our way. It is in the public domain that I shall consider contesting for a political office in future. These protests went beyond the Finance Bill. They marked the beginning of a battle for our nation's soul

“
We just must
lose our fear
because fear
is one thing
that pulls
people back.”

WANJIRA WANJIRU



How police officers I train on Human Rights tormented me

STORY TOLD BY
Boniface Ogutu Akatch

My name is Boniface Ogutu Akatch, I'm a human rights activist with the Kisumu Peace and Justice Centre. As an advocate for non-violence during protests, I was on the frontline in planning, participating in and monitoring the protests to ensure everything runs smoothly. In this journey, I have come face-to-face with the wrath of the Kenya's National Police Service officers and survived

persecution by different state agencies. Among other duties, I composed, signed and sent letters to the police to notify

them of our intentions. For that, I became a marked man. The first incident was the break-in into our offices in Nyamasaria, where computers, laptops and Central Processing Units were stolen. This did not dampen our spirits. We soldiered on with our protests.

On July 17, 2024, armed police officers in a Land Cruiser pulled to a halt where I was standing near the Kenya Commercial Bank roundabout on Oginga Odinga Street. One of them shot at me with a rubber bullet. It hit me. I fell. The pain was unbearable. Colleagues rushed me to the Kisumu County Referral Hospital, where I was treated and later discharged.

The highlight of police brutality was when I was arrested while protesting peacefully and unarmed. I was dumped into the cells for an hour. Moments later, police officers unknown to me came and abducted me. They drove me to Vihiga County. I tried to raise public attention by screaming. It didn't work. Luckily, the word had gone round that I was missing. My abductors took me to Mbale Hospital – cuffed on the hand and the leg – following pressure for my release on social media.

It pains me that some of my persecutors are officers I have hosted and trained on human rights protection and access to justice. Because the police lie freely and operate with impunity, my relationship with them has changed.

“This year will, forever, be etched in my memory for the bad reason that it put my activism at loggerheads with the police. The bad side of the police peaked in June and July when they violently abducted, arrested and intimidated innocent protesters, some with whom they had engaged during the day.”

His wife cries every day

“



I have never thought of being a human rights activist, but this incident has initiated me into the world of human rights. I have witnessed how human rights organizations support families of people like us who call on their doorsteps for help

INTERVIEW WITH Duncan Kyalo Musyimi

I am afraid it will end badly. These were the words of Duncan Kyalo Musyimi, brother to the late Justus Mutumwa Musyimi, one of the Mlolongo 3 when I interviewed him for this report on the 23rd of January 2024. Justus was one of the four friends who included Steve Kavingo, Martin Nzyuko and Kalama Muema who had disappeared mysteriously in Mlolongo, Machakos County. Several weeks later, Musyimi and his friend Martin were found dead.

Kyalo says his brother and one of his friends were abducted violently on 16th December while the last one was picked one day later. He reported the disappearances at Athi River and Mlolongo Police stations. Later, as he desperately searched for the three, he visited most of the police stations, hospitals and mortuaries in Machakos and Nairobi counties. He wasn't successful, noting that he received very minimal cooperation from security agencies.

Kyalo further revealed that his brother was a hawker, selling items in Machakos county though he was occasionally involved in sale of land. He says that he doesn't know why the three were abducted but suspects that the police may have been involved. "His wife

cries everyday. It pains me to wake up everyday and see her crying. I have never thought of being a human rights activist, but this incident has initiated me into the world of human rights. I have witnessed how human rights organizations support families of people like us who

call on their doorsteps for help. The government doesn't help us much. Human rights people check on us and help us the best they can. I fear that it will not end well for my brother, but I continue searching for Justus on behalf of my family", Musyimi told Missing Voices.



Justus Mutumwa

Did my son deserve death from nine Police bullets?

Story Told by Penina Mueni

I am Penina Mueni, mother of Benson Mbithi Ouma, popularly known as Scott by his friends. I could easily pass for the saddest mother on earth. To date, I am pained, hurt and troubled over the killing of my only son, Scott. My son 29, was a tout at the main Kisumu Bus Terminus and had, as usual, left home for work on June 25, 2024. There were protests, and like a mother does, I prayed for him to be safe out there. However, a phone call would later come in at 9:00 pm, telling me that my son had been shot and was fighting for his life at the intensive care unit of the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital (JOTRH).

My daughter, Faith, was uneasy. She left early the following morning to check on her brother, only to find out that he had died after being shot nine times. When I heard this, I almost went mad. I marched on my knees. I rolled on the floor, crawled under the table and wailed in my compound. I wanted to hang myself but was stopped by church members who consoled me. I never imagined that my son could die in such a cruel manner. He was buried on July 26 at 8.37 pm – according to our Islamic traditions – here in Arombo, Nyando Sub-County, where I bought land and settled with my four children.

Scott was hardworking. His father died in 2012. He had even constructed his house and was about to complete it. Now, the 35 bags of cement are lying inside the house, which he had hoped he would officially move into in December 2024. My 29-year-old Scott left a widow and a five-year-old daughter. Every time I come across a police officer, I cover my face and walk past them fast. I still cannot take it from my mind that they pumped nine bullets into Scott's body. What wrong did my son do to the police to warrant such a cruel death?

“

Every time I come across a police officer, I cover my face and walk past them fast. I still cannot take it from my mind that they pumped nine bullets into Scott's body. What wrong did my son do to the police to warrant such a cruel death?

My son disappeared with no trace, but I won't stop the search

Story told by Alice Wambui

My name is Alice Wambui. I sit in my small, dimly lit house, clutching an old photograph of my son, Peter Macharia. He's 27, and his smile in this picture feels like a lifetime. My tired eyes, swollen from sleepless nights, are fixed on the front door, hoping against hope that he'll walk through it any moment. But all I have is silence—crushing, deafening silence. I was told Peter was taken to Kenyatta National Hospital with a gunshot wound. They said he was later discharged. Since then, I don't know where my boy is. I tried to stay calm when he didn't come home on June 25, 2024. Peter had his struggles. Depression sometimes made him withdraw for days. So, I thought maybe he just needed his personal space. But my worry grew into dread when night fell, and the next day came without any word from him. I sat up all night, staring at the door, praying to hear him say, "Mom, I'm okay." Unbearable silence set in.

The following day, I couldn't wait any longer. With the help of friends, neighbours, and relatives, we started searching everywhere. We found nothing. No one had seen Peter. Two days later, we went to the mortuary. I prayed as we walked in, hoping he wasn't there. My legs felt like they'd give out. My heart was racing. But he wasn't there. He was nowhere.

**Every time
I hear footsteps outside
the house, my heart leaps,
thinking it's my Peter.
But the door never opens.
I'm terrified I'll never see
my boy again. How does
a mother live without
knowing where her
child is?**

Alice Wambui

Since then, my days have been a blur of hospitals, police stations, and endless waiting. Each lead feels like another cruel dead end. I'm exhausted, worn down by the weight of it all. But it's the uncertainty that's slowly breaking me.

My heart leaps whenever I hear footsteps outside the house, thinking it's my Peter. But the door never opens. I'm terrified. I'll never see my boy again. How does a mother live without knowing where her child is? I won't stop looking. As long as Peter is missing, I'll keep fighting. I have to. For him. For me. I hope that one day, I'll hear his voice again.



Conversations with the citizens

The Gen Z-led protests in Kenya during 2024 marked a significant shift in the nation's socio-political landscape. The withdrawal of the 2024 Finance Bill, mobilization of young activists through various social media platforms especially on TikTok, X and Facebook, largely youthful protesters who were coming out to the streets for the first time, transcending ethnic, class and political divides and inspiration of regional movements and conversations across the content were some of the outstanding achievements of the protests. However, the protests were marked with heavy-handed government response which led to extrajudicial killings and injuries of several other young people, enforced disappearance and intimidation of protesters exercising their constitutional rights.

Missing Voices team went to the streets in 6 towns in 3 counties to hear their voices regarding the protests. It is evident from these conversations across the country that the citizens understand and appreciate the role of police officers in maintaining public security, law and order. However, the need the police to stop arbitrary arrests, harassment of

citizens as well as extrajudicial killings. They urge for due process of law where those who commit crimes are arrested and taken through the criminal justice system. They also recognize that there are more good police officers than bad ones. They affirm police officers who break the law should be prosecuted the same way criminals are. Good police officers should be encouraged and rewarded.

While appreciating that police officers are Kenyans and humans for that matter as the rest of us, they should always operate within the law and engage with the public in activities which build trust between the people and their security organs. Ultimately, they desire that no innocent citizen should be made to suffer from unlawful activities of the police who should always embrace human rights approaches to policing. According to those who participated in this vox pop, the government should employ more police officers and ensure that their terms of service are improved. They should also have access to psychosocial support. The interviews were held in Kibera and Karen (Nairobi County), Thika and Kenyatta University (Kiambu County), Ngong and Kitengela (Kajiado County).

Missing Voices 1: When you hear the word or see a police officer, what immediately comes to your mind?

Vox Pop 1: I used to fear police officers long before the protests. The fear has escalated after the protests. They have instilled a lot of fear on me. I don't feel that I can trust a police officer.

Vox Pop 2: When the police officers hear that someone has said anything against the government, we are arrested and harassed. They have sold us fear.

Vox Pop 3: I don't have any problem with police officers. They are human beings like me. They can only arrest or harass me when I do something wrong. I have no reason to fear the police when I haven't done anything wrong.

Vox Pop 4: When I see a police officer, it's like I have seen an enemy. The police are not protecting us. Culprits are being let free while innocent people are being arrested and jailed.

Vox Pop 5: I don't fear the police. They should be well taken care of and paid well by the government. Additional police officers should be employed for all Kenyans to get adequate security.

Vox Pop 6: We live in fear every time we see a police officer. They harass us.

Vox Pop 7: Sometimes the police kill people in the public glare as we witness.

Vox Pop 8: As a boda boda rider, sometimes the police harass us, sometimes we just work well together without any interference.

Vox Pop 9: We don't like the police especially when they are driving in the Subaru vehicles. You never really know who is in the Subaru.

Vox Pop 10: I only fear the police if I have done something wrong. If I have not done anything wrong, I have not done anything, I see the police like fellow human beings.

Vox Pop 11: Most of the police officers are good. Very few of them are bad.

Missing Voices 2: What is your opinion on how the police handled the recent Gen Z and Millennials protests?

Vox Pop 12: The police mishandled Kenyan citizens during the Gen Zs protests.

Vox Pop 13: I trekked to Kenyatta National Hospital during the protests. On arrival at the hospital, a friend told me that the police were using live bullets on the protesting citizens.

Vox Pop 14: During the last Gen Z protests, I was a witness to the police brutality. I almost got killed. I had taken my baby to the hospital. I was carrying the one who was sick on my back and holding the hands of the second one. Though I was not protesting, I almost got shot while the police did not do anything to those who were protesting.

Vox Pop 15: The Gen Zs were fighting for their rights. The Police Officers misunderstood what they were trying to do and treated them as if they had done something wrong. They were innocent.

Vox Pop 16: The police are killing young people. It is really very bad.

Vox Pop 17: Some police officers are very brutal. Some are very cruel. Other are just fine.

Vox Pop 18: I wasn't happy with the way the police killed many people.

Vox Pop 19: The Police used excessive force. They beat and killed Gen Zs who were exercising their democratic rights.

Vox Pop 20: The police are also stressed. Sometimes some of them have underlying issues which get triggered by the activities of the young people.

Vox Pop 21: The police would like to obey orders to keep their jobs even if it means killing the youth. They don't want to be accused of not doing their work by being asked what they were doing when the youths were demonstrating and invading places.

Vox Pop 22: If we are free as a country, why are Kenyans being abducted in their own country? I can therefore confidently say that we are neither free nor safe in Kenya.

Vox Pop 23: The police do not have a problem. I have a brother who is a police officer, and we share the same views on several issues.

Missing Voices 3: What reforms would you like to see in the police service in general?

Vox Pop 24: There should be an independent system running the affairs of the police and not the corrupt government.

Vox Pop 25: There is a hidden power somewhere using the police to harass Kenyans. The people who are sending them should not use the Kenyan police to harass Kenyans.

Vox Pop 26: There should be sensitization programmes that bring together the police and the youth together so that they can demonstrate that the police are not the enemies of the youth. Let them sit together and have a dialogue since they both share a lot of things in common. There are more issues which unite the youth and the police than those which they disagree on. We are all Kenyans, and we are all suffering. We all need to have conversations around solutions to the problems we have. We need to suggest to the government ways of improving life.

Vox Pop 27: Good police officers should be encouraged to continue doing their work and abide by the law in performing their duties. Kazi ni kazi (work is work).

Vox Pop 28: Even if I have committed a crime, arrest me and lock me up. You shouldn't beat me and injure me.

Vox Pop 29: Let the police who act arbitrarily face the law.

Missing Voices 4: What do you suggest should be done in terms of how the police should conduct themselves during protests?

Vox Pop 30: The role of the police is to maintain law and order. In doing this, they must be sensitive to different situations and shouldn't be too quick in using force. It is true that there are people who take advantage of the protests to commit crime. They shouldn't be killed but arrested and taken through the due process of law.

Vox Pop 31: Police are human beings like us. They are people with children like the rest of us. They wouldn't appreciate it if someone injured or killed their children.

Vox Pop 32: The police bosses should change and stop misusing junior police officers under their commands.

Vox Pop 33: Police officers should not just obey unlawful orders but be sensitive to public security. They should put themselves into the shoes of the citizens. They do have a mandate to ensure our security and safety.

Vox Pop 34: The Police should allow us to do our jobs to feed our families. We have our rights as citizens. They would like their children to have rights too.

Vox Pop 35: I consider all police officers to be good. Some of the police officers are bad though. If you are a police officer and you accept to be manipulated, it means that we can't trust you with our security as citizens.

Vox Pop 36: The police should be human. They need to respect human rights.

Vox Pop 37: The police are doing a good job, but they shouldn't interfere with those who are hustling to earn a living and are not committing any crimes such as stealing from people or selling drugs. Unfortunately, the police arrest innocent people and accuse them of selling drugs such as bang.

Vox Pop 38: The police should stop shooting and killing people. The youth are the future generation. Let's live in peace and harmony.

Vox Pop 39: Both the police and Gen Zs are people too. The police are employed to ensure public security and not to kill citizens.

Vox Pop 40: The citizens are supposed to be free. They are supposed to enjoy the freedom to express themselves freely because the government is ours. Kenya is also ours. We don't have another country to go to.

Vox Pop 41: I believe everyone deserves a second chance no matter the mistakes they have made in life. They can rectify it and make us feel safe when around them. The police are the ones guarding us and we should feel safe in their company whether they are operating along the borderlines, in the water bodies or in the air. We should always feel safe around them.

Vox Pop 42: The police should change the way they treat the citizens. They should not harm the citizens but should rather cooperate with them.

Mama Victor: A champion for Human Rights



to provide solace and support to other mothers facing similar tragedies.

Benna is remembered for her remarkable dedication, compassion, and courage. She exemplified the qualities of a true human rights defender, showing commitment to justice, empathy towards others, and an indomitable spirit in the face of adversity. She was vocal and spoke out courageously and boldly against injustice, inspiring more survivors to come out and speak.

We acknowledge the immense gap she left in the human rights movement. Her legacy inspires us to persevere in our mission to promote and protect human rights, even in the most challenging circumstances.

Mama Victor, Continue Resting in Power.

We honour and celebrate the life and legacy of Benna Buluma, affectionately known as Mama Victor. A courageous human rights defender, she left an indelible mark on our hearts and the human rights movement. While in her house in the Mathare community, Benna was swept away by floods caused by heavy rains. Her body was found on 24th April 2024 by Human Rights Defenders led by the Social Justice Movement leaders who were searching for her body and those of other activists. She died alongside two of her grandchildren.

Living in Mathare, Benna faced unimaginable challenges, having tragically lost her two sons to extrajudicial killings. She channelled her grief into action, founding the Mothers of Victims and Survivors Network



Benna Buluma embodied the spirit of resilience and fearlessness in her tireless efforts to advocate for justice and human rights, particularly in the face of extrajudicial killings and police brutality. Her commitment to seeking accountability and support for victims and survivors of such atrocities was admirable.



United Nation Special Procedures Express Concerns Over Alleged Violent Policing of Protests in 2024

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention together with seven other Special Rapporteurs and independent experts, have addressed the Kenyan government over information received about incidents of enforced disappearances in Kenya following the June, July and August 2024 protests in the country. The protesters were demonstrating against the Finance Bill 2024/2025 whose proposals would further increase the cost of living to most Kenyans who were already facing serious economic hardships.

The letter, sent on 1 October 2024, expressed concern to the President of Kenya, Dr. William Ruto over allegations of abductions, enforced disappearances and detention of individuals, including protestors, activists, lawyers, medical professionals and human rights defenders in relation to the protests that occurred in June, July and August 2024, calling for the repeal of the proposed Finance

Bill 2024/2025, and accountability from the Government.

The Working Groups, Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts, who have United Nations mandates to report and advise on human rights, referenced information received that a special team from the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) were reportedly put into action to monitor social media to identify the supposed leaders of the protests and other persons with large online following. "Allegedly, once an individual was identified as a person of interest, physical surveillance followed to curb dissent. Reports indicate that many of those followed online were deprived of their liberty, out of which some had subsequently forcibly disappeared. These persons were taken to unofficial detention facilities for interrogation and would later appear at police stations. Many were released in unknown locations, far from the places where they were forcibly disappeared and had limited ways to contact others or receive any aid. In addition, the police crackdown on protesters led to

"Allegedly, once an individual was identified as a person of interest, physical surveillance followed to curb dissent. Reports indicate that many of those followed online were deprived of their liberty, out of which some had subsequently forcibly disappeared. These persons were taken to unofficial detention facilities for interrogation and would later appear at police stations".

the letter said in part

a wide number of arrests, injuries and death of protesters”, the letter said in part.

The Special Procedures further noted information received that the refusal by the government to engage in dialogue with the protesters escalated the protests to several counties in Kenya through the “The 7 Days of Rage” campaign. Following the storming of Parliament on 25th June 2024, the experts received reports that 5 people were killed, 21 were abducted, 13 sustained live bullets while 4 others sustained rubber bullet wounds.

The Independent Human Rights Experts expressed their serious concern at the alleged abductions, enforced disappearances, detention and excessive use of force against activists, lawyers, medical professionals and human rights defenders, notably in apparent retribution for exercising their human rights, including to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. “If confirmed, these allegations would constitute prima facie violations of fundamental human rights, including the right to not be arbitrarily deprived of liberty, and the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment under the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Kenya on 1 May 1972”, the letter said in part.

The communication further held that the state handling of the protests in Kenya led into violation of several international human rights instruments, some of which the country had previously ratified. These, they said, included ICCPR, and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), to which Kenya became a State party on 21 February 1997. The letter drew the Government of Kenya’s attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances and the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms also known as the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The authors also expressed concern, that the allegations they received would mean a roll back by Kenya’s Government on its pledge made during the Human Rights 75 initiative and to implement recommendations made by treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review

process considering the on-going national efforts to criminalize enforced disappearances through the Multiagency Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Multi-agency Committee on National Coroners Service Act. They were also concerned about inadequate or non-existing access to lawyers, the reported breaches of the right to legal counsel of one’s choosing of those arrested, and their right to confer with a lawyer.

The UN Special Procedures asked the Kenyan Government to provide information or comments on the allegations received, on the factual and legal basis for the arrest and detention of protestors, what measures were taken to ensure activists, lawyers and human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate work and exercise their rights, and what measures the government had taken to investigate the alleged use of excessive force and enforced disappearances. They also asked what mechanisms the government has in place to consult and include citizens in the decision making of public affairs, They have not yet received a reply.

The statement was signed by Gabriella Citroni Chair, Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Ganna Yudkivska Vice-Chair on communications of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Attiya Waris, Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Cecilia M. Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity and Alice Jill Edwards, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The full statement can be accessed at.
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunication-File?gld=29360>

Major events in 2024

International Human Rights Day 2024

The Missing Voices in partnership with The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and several other Civil Society and Human Rights organizations converged at the National Museum on 10th December 2024 to celebrate International Human Rights Day. The event took place on the same day that police violently dispersed demonstrations against femicide in Nairobi, further showcasing the government's ruthlessness in dealing with any form of citizen's expression of their fundamental freedoms.

The celebrations, which brought about 500 participants, was marked with victims and/or families of victims of enforced disappearances sharing their experiences at the hands of the police. Some of the participants were overwhelmed with emotions and had to seek help from a team of professional counsellors who had attended the event to provide psychosocial support. During the events, participants called

upon the citizens to be united in fighting for the rights and freedoms of Kenyans and condemned government hostility towards public participation in governance. Different CSOs exhibited their work while artists used their craft to present the ugly face of Kenya, urging the citizens not to tire in holding the president and his government accountable. Representatives from the international and diplomatic community who were present promised to address the Kenyan government in relation to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Organized under the theme, "Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now", the event launched a new, multi-year campaign highlighting the critical role human rights play as a preventative, protective and transformative force for people and societies. The festival expressed concern that today's state actions on human rights may affect future generations and urged Kenya to respect human rights.



During the event, participants celebrated heroes and heroines of the Gen Z and Millennials Protests





Media Training on Police Accountability

Training the media fosters better collaboration between rights organizations, government agencies, and communities, enhancing the flow of accurate information to the public. For the fifth consecutive year, Missing Voices partners hosted a media training aimed at empowering journalists with the essential skills needed to report accurately on policing issues.

The training, held from September 1 to 5 at Sarova Maiyan, engaged 30 journalists from the Mount Kenya region, including participants from Nyeri, Murang'a, Embu, Kirinyaga, Isiolo, Meru, Tharaka Nithi, Marsabit, and Laikipia.

The training was conducted by IJM in partnership with Amnesty International-Kenya Heinrich Boll Foundation and Article 19. Key topics covered included journalist safety, public order management, data governance, crime scene forensics, and the roles of government agencies within the criminal justice system (CJS). This initiative sought to demystify challenges in journalism and equip reporters with the knowledge and contacts necessary to enhance the quality and safety of their reporting.

The training also aimed to rebuild relationships between the police and the media, facilitating dialogue between Missing Voices directors and key leaders in the CJS. This training builds on previous initiatives by Missing Voices, which have significantly enhanced journalistic capacity in covering policing issues.



ODPP's Hassan Abdi gives a speech to journalists drawn from Central and Isiolo regions during a media training on professional policing at Maiyan Hotel in Nanyuki. In the background is NPSC CEO Peter Leley and IJM Kenya Country Director Vincent Chahale.

NOTABLE PAST TRAININGS

- 2019** Training for 37 journalists in Nairobi on the IPOA mandate, focusing on accountability for extrajudicial killings, which increased interest and accuracy in policing topics.
- 2021** A session in Mombasa for 60 court and crime journalists covering crime scene management and victim-centered storytelling.
- 2022** Training for 67 journalists across the Rift, Western, and Nyanza regions on election security and police abuse of power.
- 2023** Similar training for journalists in the Coastal region.



Head of Communication at ODPP Carole Muema hands over a certificate to one of the participants.



Participants during a media training.



Ammesty International Executive Director Irūngū Houghton address attendees during Day of Delayed Justice



Day of Delayed Justice

A section of victims of delayed justice shared their experiences during the Day of Delayed Justice which the Missing Voices Coalition held at Stanley hotel in Nairobi on 21st June 2024. Jacinta Irungu was wrongfully accused of violent robbery and faced this accusation for seven years. As an impoverished single mother of two, she was unable to afford the bail/bond of Kenya Shillings One million (Kshs.1,000,000). Fortunately, the International Justice Mission (IJM) stepped in and paid her bond. She told the inaugural meeting that she spent seven years in prison for a crime she did not commit, having been wrongfully accused. She noted that major challenges in the justice process included missing police files and the transfer of police officers. "Within the judiciary, frequent changes or transfers of judges necessitate case restarts, causing significant delays, delayed hearings and case adjournments", she noted. She recommended that thorough investigations need to be conducted before charging individuals to ensure that charging decisions are properly made.

Collins Ouma on his part, recounted that after being in Nairobi for just three days, he was arrested by a police officer, taken to Central Police Station, and wrongfully accused of violent robbery, including stealing handcuffs, guns, and a walkie-talkie from the police. The court set his bond at Ksh. 2,000,000. He was then remanded for two years. He noted that the police officers failed to conduct a parade identification, which impeded fair investigations and affected quality of evidence used to sustain the charges. Ouma informed the meeting that had he realized that had proper police investigations been conducted initially, this would have prevented him from being remanded. He also criticized the lengthy duration of court cases, which occur even when there is no evidence to support the charges. He stressed that delayed justice is a denial of justice. He

further emphasized the lack of proper investigations as a leading factor in wrongful accusations and false charges. He is unable to get any employment due to these criminal charges.

The Day of Delayed Justice seeks to highlight the plight of victims of delayed justice, demonstrate the lasting impacts of police abuse of power on individuals, their families and society, identify opportunities for collaboration among criminal justice actors, engage in multisectoral policy discourse to identify and amplify areas for policy or legislative reform and enlighten the public on the ongoing challenges hampering the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Kenya. The event brought together survivors of police abuse of power, government law enforcement agencies, human rights organizations, grassroots community organizations, justice centers, human rights activists and defenders, legal professionals, international development organizations, faith-based organizations, university student associations and the Diplomatic Community.

During the meeting, Missing Voices called on criminal justice agencies and law enforcement agencies to interact with communities, listen to their experiences regarding delayed justice and act on the issues which emerge from such community forums. "Non-implementation of existing laws remains a major hurdle in ensuring speedy access to justice", the Coalition said in a statement released during the event.

Missing Coalition further noted that people living in poverty and vulnerable communities in Kenya lack adequate awareness to advocate for their rights hence they are more vulnerable to delayed justice.

International Day of the victims of Enforced Disappearances

The Missing Voices Coalition joined the world in marking the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances in an event held at Nakuru's Nyayo Gardens on 30th August 2024. The day was set aside by the UN General Assembly in 2011 through resolution 65/209 which also adopted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. During the event, Missing Voices, in a statement read on its behalf by Phanice Ogolla from Protection International, expressed concern over continued spate of enforced disappearances. At the time of the event, three human rights defenders Bob Njagi, Longton Jamil and his brother Aslam Longton were abducted and forcefully disappeared by the police. The trio was last seen on 19 August 2024 and disappeared in different areas but in similar circumstances. Their captors released them after 32 days in captivity after subjecting them to tremendous physical and mental torture.

Christine Mbone and Stellamaris Nthenya, Mothers of Victims of Enforced Disappearance/ Extrajudicial Killings and members of Kenya Champions for Justice, a group of survivors of police violence called on the government to ensure that they get justice following extrajudicial killings of their sons. Christine Mbone who hails from Nairobi County told the event that her son was arrested by the police in Kawangware area in Nairobi County. They alleged that he was a criminal. The police shot him dead and then planted a firearm next to his body as evidence of his involvement in crime. "At the morgue, the Police recorded his death as that of an unknown



Busia Senator Okiya Omtata Addressing the Event

person whose death was as a result of being beaten by a mob on suspicion of being a thief. The Government pathologist carried out an autopsy and concluded that he had died from gunshot wounds. He had been shot nine times", Mbone said. It has been 10 years since Mbone's son was killed and justice continues to be elusive. "On behalf of other families facing similar injustices, I want to ask officers of the court to expedite the matter since all we seek is closure of these unfortunate chapters in our lives. Finally, I want to ask the Police to act within the laws of the land and the laws of humanity while carrying out their duties", Mbone appealed.

During the event, Nthenya shared how she was going about her business on 16th of April 2016

when she received a call that her son, then aged 17 years and in Form 3 at the time, had been arrested together with 7 other boys of similar age and later shot to death by the Police in Mukuru who accused them of being thieves. Eight years later, they are still pursuing justice for their sons. "Today we have laws that need to be followed. Even if the boys had stolen as alleged, we have a justice system where they ought to have been taken through, tried and sentenced by a competent court of law like everyone else. The senseless killings by the Police show contempt for human life and I stand here today to raise my voice against such kind of impunity and hopefully no other family has to undergo what my family went through at the hands of the Police", she told the gathering.

Busia Senator Okiya Omtata, who was the chief guest, warned that if Kenyans continue to elect bad leaders, incidents of enforced disappearances will not end. Elizabeth Juma, Chief Magistrate at Nakuru Law Court, Emmanuel Lagat, Director of Prosecution at Independent Policing Authority (IPOA) and Michael Muia from the Department of Criminal Investigations (DCI) also attended the event. Missing Voices member organizations were present too



MVC Acting Coordinator with Guest Artis Willie Oeba and Brian Silwe



Enforced Disappearances and the role of United Nations

A lecture by MS. AUA BALDÉ

The issue of enforced disappearances in Kenya remains a pressing human rights concern, particularly following the Gen Z protests. Many families whose loved ones have gone missing are losing hope, especially given the reluctance of security agencies to take action. The fear of retaliation has also prevented many from reporting cases to the police. However, all is not lost.

During a lecture hosted by Missing Voices Coalition (MVC) and the University of Nairobi Student Association (UNSA), Ms. Aua Baldé, Chairperson of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID), reaffirmed that families still have avenues to seek justice for their loved ones. The event, which attracted over 130 participants from various sectors, was powerful and eye-

opening, shedding light on the reality of enforced disappearances in Kenya and equipping attendees with knowledge on how to document cases and engage the UNWGEID for assistance in locating the disappeared.

During the event, MVC raised concerns about the troubling trend of short-term enforced disappearances that emerged in Kenya, particularly during the Gen Z protests, where suspected organizers were abducted in broad daylight by masked individuals. Despite court orders obtained by the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) to stop these abductions, they persisted. This is according to a report by the Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNHRC).

Enforced disappearance is a complex and unique crime that lasts from the moment an individual

disappears until their fate is established. It constitutes a continuous violation of multiple fundamental human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Article 2 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICCPED) defines enforced disappearance as the arrest, detention, abduction, or any other form of deprivation of liberty by State agents or individuals acting with the State's authorization, support, or acquiescence, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the act or disclose the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, placing them outside the protection of the law.

Ms. Baldé urged Kenyans to call enforced disappearances as such as opposed to calling those cases abductions. From the definition of Eds, abductions form a part of the larger definition of enforced disappearances.

Kenya signed ICCPED in 2007 but has yet to ratify the convention, but despite this, UNWGEID can still take action. The working group has a humanitarian mandate to assist families in determining the fate and whereabouts of their forcibly disappeared loved ones. Anyone including human rights defenders, victims, and lawyers can submit a case to UNWGEID if the family consents. Urgent cases, filed within three months of disappearance, are prioritized, increasing the chances of finding the victim alive.

Missing Voices coalition has for years been pushing for ratification of ICCPED through a petition that pushed for criminalization of enforced disappearances that have so far collected over 4,000 signatures. During the 2023 Human Rights Day the then Attorney General Justin Muturi pledged that Kenya will soon ratify the convention which was part of Kenya Kwanza manifesto.

During the August 30th event held in Nakuru, MVC, alongside Police Reforms Working Group Kenya (PRWG-K) and other key partners,



Missing Voices member Contributing During the Lecture

reaffirmed its commitment to documenting cases, amplifying victims' voices, and pushing for justice. Through strengthened collaboration with UNWGEID, civil society, and international bodies, MVC will continue to advocate for accountability and systemic reforms to ensure that no disappearance goes unnoticed, and no victim is forgotten.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Documentation of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings require that the Missing Voices takes strategic steps towards enhancing timely reporting of incidents, enhancing accuracy, improving details of victims which are being captured during documentation and creating a trustful environment for partners, communities and other partners to share information.

Recommendations

Government

1. Ensure that all incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings are fully investigated and culprits prosecuted.
2. Compensate all victims of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings
3. Reform the criminal justice systems including Judiciary, National Police Services (NPS), Independent Policing Authority (IPOA), Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP) and other organs to fully embrace human rights violations.
4. Ensure that IPOA is provided with particulars of security agents undertaking operations such as crowd control. This will make it easy to identify police officers involved in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. It will further ensure smooth and speedy prosecution of culpable officers by narrowing down the right suspects.
5. Ratify all human rights conventions and frameworks including those relating to human rights, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings. These conventions and frameworks should be domesticated through enactment and/or full implementation of relevant legislations and provided with adequate budgetary allocations. These include ratification of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances, full implementation of Prevention of Torture Act (No. 12 of 2017) and operationalization of the National Coroner Services Act (No. 1 of 2017).
6. Build a memorial museum in honour of all the victims of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

1. Share timely, verifiable and regularly updated data on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings
2. Provide technical and financial support to Missing Voices to enable it effectively to investigate, document and verify human rights violations relating to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. The Missing Voices for example requires rapid response support to enable it to undertake its functions more effectively.
3. Patronize the Missing Voices as a one-stop depository for enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings knowledge bank.
4. Build partnerships with Missing Voices in all parts of the country to enable it collect real time data on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings as well as support follow-ups of on-going cases to enable Missing Voices to update its Eds and EKs data base regularly.
5. Train community human rights defenders and social justice centres in documentation of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings cases.

Development Partners

1. Support resource mobilization towards documenting and ending incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.
2. Facilitate national, regional, and global exchange programmes to share best practices on documenting and redressing enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings incidents.

3. Directly call on governments to end enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, including supporting mobilization of international solidarities and institutions such as The Hague Based International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Court of Justice (ICJ) to compel governments to address incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Missing Voices

1. Strengthen human rights documentation mechanisms which include localized community-based incidents reporting platforms which enable victims and human rights defenders to effortlessly report violations. These platforms should be available in different formats including online, physical, multi-lingual, print and audio-visual. People with Disabilities should be enabled to use the platforms through disability friendly apps. Relevant safe and easy to access reporting hotlines should be established. System for anonymous but verifiable reporting should be prioritized.
2. Establish a centralized data management and accessibility centre where data on EDs and EKs can be securely stored. The data management system should ensure that data is well desegregated for ease of access and analysis.
3. Train community human rights documenting volunteers should be done to ensure that individual and local-based human rights defenders are empowered to document human rights violations in their communities and timely transmit them to a centralized data centre. Social justice centres and community-based organizations which have massive countrywide presence should be empowered as data collectors and be enabled to collect evidence in different forms such as photographs, videos, testimonies and physical evidence.
4. Enhance partnerships with local, national, regional and international human rights organizations with the capacity to support documentation and verification of human rights violations. The partners should also support response to these violations so that the role of Missing Voices doesn't end at documentation but rather extends to solution-seeking. Collaboration with continental and international human rights bodies can be essential in building pressure on the Kenyan government to address human rights violations.
5. The Missing Voices should be able to enhance legal support of victims of human rights violations by presenting its data as evidence in court processes in support of public interest litigations.
6. The Missing Voices should take advantage of technology and the social media to enhance its evidence gathering and human rights violation documentations. Online data storage should be encouraged so that it is not lost due to theft and raids by government agents. Use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping technology could be helpful in tracking and visualizing human rights violations countrywide.
7. The Missing Voices should improve its public engagement activities to build public support around its activities to enhance public information sharing with the Coalition. The framing of the reporting templates should also factor local knowledge and cultural practices so that the community can relate with the data collection tools. Public awareness campaigns on the importance of timely documentation of human rights violations should be done.
8. Create early warning and monitoring systems to determine trends which could lead to human rights violations to enable Missing Voices to document violations proactively.
9. Establish a fully-fledged rapid response and incidents follow-up mechanism to enable Missing Voices to make field visits to locations of reported incidents, make follow-ups on documented cases and continuously update the database of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings with missing details and incidents progress. Currently for example, it's difficult to determine accurately the details of those still missing.

Communities

1. Undertake trainings on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings documentation to build local skills which can support Missing Voices work
2. Be the voice of Missing Voices at grassroots level and support in documenting incidents of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings
3. Liaise with Missing Voices regularly to share information on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings incidents, including supporting on-going case follow-ups.
4. Organize community-level activities towards redressing enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings using indigenous and placed-based knowledge and experiences.

The Team in 2024



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