



Statement condemning the arrest, abduction and killing of civilians protesting the Finance Bill in Kenya

The Commonwealth Lawyers' Association (CLA) has been monitoring the nationwide protests in Kenya following the tabling of the Finance Bill. Civilians, mostly youth, assembled en masse to demonstrate their displeasure at the Bill in largely peaceful processions. The CLA is alarmed at reports from several credible sources, including the Law Society of Kenya and Amnesty International, that some protesters have been arrested, abducted, and killed in exercising their constitutional right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly under the Kenyan constitution. We are further alarmed at the deployment of the military to quell the protests with rounds of live ammunition being fired at the protesters. We have received further reports that there has been a partial internet shutdown in Kenya to stop the flow of information. We are equally dismayed by statements by President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency William Ruto, that the acts of the demonstrators will be treated as treasonous.

We therefore urgently call upon the Kenyan government to:

1. Respect the right of Kenyan citizens to peacefully assemble and express themselves.
2. Ensure all communication lines, including the internet remain open for access to information, including through the media.
3. Desist from using live ammunition against the protestors
4. Release the protestors who were demonstrating peacefully
5. Search for and release those protestors who have been abducted
6. Engage the people of Kenya on their grievances around the proposed Finance Bill.
7. Recognise and respect the will of the Kenyan people.

Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)

26th June 2024

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