

08 MARCH, 2018

Press Release on the killing of Evans Njoroge alias 'Kidero'

The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Kenya (NCHRD-K) condemns the killing of the Meru University Student's Council Secretary General Evans Njoroge, a fourth-year student pursuing a degree in Mathematics and Computer Science. Evans was shot dead by a suspected anti-riot police officer from Nchiru Police Station. His death comes just six months after violence and torture was meted on 60 University of Nairobi students at their halls of residence on 29th September 2017.

Background: On Tuesday 27th February 2018, Evans led the students in a demonstration to compel the University Management to explain extraordinary increment in tuition and other fees. Students complained of poor service delivery by the university administration which denied students audience to air their grievances. Prior to the protest, Evans had on several occasions clashed with the management over students' rights and had received threats because of his activism. A two-year study launched by the Chancellor on the slow growth of the institution had revealed that the Vice Chancellor had never had a one on one with students or their leaders.

Eye witnesses' reports indicate that Evans was shot dead by an officer who pursued the protesting students outside the campus. **Autopsy results** reveal that Evans was shot at a close range. The shooter had the gun pressed against the head of the deceased body before firing.

The killing of the student leader Evans adds to the spiraling list of victims of extrajudicial killings by the police across the country and concerning extreme use of force to contain constitutionally guaranteed right to peaceful protest.

The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders is concerned with ongoing criminalization of the act of promotion and protection of human rights by individuals and civil society organizations; a role that is guaranteed by the Kenyan constitution and international human rights law - including the UN Declaration for Human Rights Defenders. Championing the rights of students through peaceful protest, is legitimate human rights work which is protected by the constitution, national and international human rights laws. What is more, the right to life must be safeguarded at all times more so by law enforcement officers.


It is unfortunate that state bodies obligated to guarantee the right to life would so casually put an end to a young man with a promising career and shatter the hopes of the parents and society, said Kamau Ngugi, Executive Director, NCHRD-K.

NCHRD-K calls on:

1. Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA), and other relevant investigative bodies conduct thorough, impartial investigations, to ensure the culprit (s) is (are) brought to book and face the full force of law.

2. The Minister for Interior to assure Kenyans of the commitment to uphold the rule of law by ensuring thorough impartial investigations are conducted in all cases of extra judicial killings to ensure justice for victims and to hold those culpable to account.
3. Top police command review its crowd management strategy especially when engaging peaceful protesters to desist from use of excessive and lethal force.
4. The Ministry of Education to be seized with grievances by the student body at Meru University and other universities with the aim to seek lasting but workable solution
5. The government must ensure there is a safe and enabling environment for student community, human rights defenders, Civil Society Organizations and journalists in Kenya to operate without threats, persecution and intimidation.

Signed:



Kamau Ngugi,

Executive Director, National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Kenya

The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Kenya (NCHRD-K) is the only national organization that has been in the forefront to ensure a conducive working environment for human rights defenders in Kenya for the last 10 years.