



**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nairobi, Kenya | 13 July 2026**

**GRAVE CONCERNS OVER CONTINUED INTIMIDATION, HARASSMENT,  
AND ATTACKS AGAINST THE CIVIC SPACE IN KENYA**

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, human rights defenders, citizens, grassroots movements and champions of accountability, strongly condemn the escalating, coordinated, and lawless campaign of intimidation leveled against The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA), its Executive Director, the entire team and other Okoa Uchumi Campaign members.

Increasingly, we are witnessing a chilling regression towards dark-era police-state tactics specifically targeting defenders of public finance integrity and civic space. TISA is the latest defender of democracy to come under attack - an attack we believe has been instigated by this government. This state-sanctioned assault seems to grow bolder by the day, as illustrated by the alarming incidents documented below:

❖ The All Saints Cathedral Church attack where state-hired goons targeted a meeting of civil society actors working on public finance management within a sanctuary of prayer. The goons publicly confessed to having been sent by some powerful government officials to carry out the heinous attack. Notably, TISA was one of the co-conveners of the event that was disrupted by goons on June 12, 2026 alongside Okoa Uchumi partners.

❖ Surveillance and Road Harassment: Since early June 2026, TISA's Executive Director, Diana Gichengo, has been subjected to a continued pattern of intrusive surveillance and road harassment by tinted Subaru and Prado vehicles, including repeated tailing along routes she regularly uses to and from work. This came shortly after she was informed that individuals close to a well-known government official had been making inquiries about her, on the basis of TISA's public finance management accountability work.

❖ On Thursday, July 2, 2026, at least 13 suspected state security officers in four Subarus attempted to gain entry into the TISA offices. Operating entirely outside of legal procedures, the men aggressively demanded the identification and surrender of “the lawyer” who works at TISA.

❖ This pattern of state-led attacks and intimidation of vocal human rights defenders is clearly visible. The regime has previously unlawfully rendered KHRC staff member Martin Mavenjina to Uganda, and continues to refuse his return to be reunited with his family. This intimidation

escalated further a year ago, when suspected state-hired goons attacked a press conference organized by KHRC and Inuka Kenya at KHRC's office, injuring one of their board members. The press conference had brought together mothers of victims of police killings and enforced disappearances, alongside journalists, to call on the regime to end the killing and disappearance of their children, an appeal the goons were evidently sent to silence.

❖ Additionally, the state denied Brian Kagoro of the Open Society Foundation entry into Kenya and unlawfully returned him to South Africa, despite his having legally resided and worked in the country for decades.

❖ It did not stop there. During the June 25 commemoration, police arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared seven human rights defenders, who were later found abandoned and tortured in different parts of Nairobi. The seven were Fredrick Ojoro, Collins Otieno, Muteti Mulinge, Elisha Alam, Michael Ngugi, Christine Lubanga, and Davis Luchuma. Abdulaziz Duba Molu, Michael Oloo Osura, and Macmillan Kiarie Mugo are still forcibly disappeared even though their unlawful arrest happened before the June 25 commemoration.

This is not law enforcement; it is organized state-enabled terror against citizens exercising their constitutional rights. The continued deployment of armed, masked, plain-clothes and unidentified security personnel operating alongside or in protection of state-sponsored goons has become a defining feature of the assault on Kenya's civic space. These actors routinely operate outside the law, conceal their identities, use unmarked vehicles, carry out unlawful arrests, enforced disappearances, assaults and intimidation, while enjoying apparent protection from accountability. This coordinated architecture of repression must be dismantled immediately, and those responsible, whether they planned, commanded, facilitated or protected these operations, must be investigated and prosecuted.

The actions of the security agencies and their proxies fly directly in the face of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. We remind the state and the National Police Service (NPS) of the explicit constitutional boundaries and obligations contained in articles 10, 29, 33, 36 and 244 of the Constitution of Kenya in the ongoing harassment and intimidation of civic actors.

Through strategic litigation initiatives, mostly led by actors here today, Kenya's Judiciary has repeatedly drawn a line in the sand against rogue police tactics and the closing of civic space. We draw strength from and cite the following landmark judgments:

In *Kanchory v Service & 3 others* [2025] KEHC 13792 (KLR) at para 62, the High Court soundly condemned the deployment of plainclothes officers in unmarked vehicles to disappear or intimidate citizens, ruling that:

“Given their mandate to serve all, why would police officers conceal their faces and identity and bundle people in unmarked vehicles? It is only criminals engaged in criminal activities who wear hoods and masks to conceal their identity and move in vehicles without registration plates or with false plates to avoid identification and accountability.”

While our courts continue to affirm the state's obligations to protect women, the reality on the ground tells a different story: women leaders are still routinely targeted with intimidation and violence, including sexual violence.

We note that the police's failure to stop the goons at All Saints Cathedral Church, KHRC's office and other reported community meetings, as well as their active harassment of civic leaders, including those from TISA, renders them personally liable for constitutional violations. With credible allegations that security agencies have coordinated with, facilitated, or protected such actors while simultaneously deploying masked, armed and plain-clothes officers to intimidate citizens, these actions and omissions amount to serious constitutional violations and demand urgent, independent criminal investigations into operational commanders and those exercising political authority over these operations.

## **OUR DEMANDS**

We refuse to be cowed into silence and demand the following:

1. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) and the Inspector General of Police must immediately halt the illegal tracking, surveillance, and office raids directed at TISA's Executive Director and staff.
2. The National Police Service must officially account for the fleet of Subaru vehicles used on July 2, identify the officers in black suits, and state the legal basis for targeting a civil society lawyer. Furthermore, the unmarked Subaru used for the illegal apprehension of human rights defenders on July 7 in CBD must also be immediately investigated. Any officers found to have participated in unlawful operations must be subjected to criminal and disciplinary proceedings.
3. IPOA Investigation: The Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), together with other competent investigative authorities, must immediately investigate not only the July 2 attempted raid on TISA but also the broader pattern of coordinated attacks involving state-sponsored goons, masked and plain-clothes security officers, unmarked vehicles, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture, assaults on civic meetings and the protection afforded to perpetrators. The investigations must identify those who planned, commanded, supervised and executed these operations and recommend criminal prosecutions where appropriate.
4. The state must guarantee the safety of TISA staff, all civil society organizations, and human rights defenders demanding accountability from the political class at all levels. At the same time, there must be immediate investigations into the grave violations that have already occurred, including assaults, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture, illegal surveillance, office raids and attacks perpetrated by state-sponsored goons and security personnel. Those who ordered, commanded, facilitated or failed to prevent these violations despite having a constitutional duty to do so must be held individually accountable. Any further violations committed against civic actors will constitute additional evidence of command responsibility on the part of the leadership of the National Police Service and other responsible state agencies.

5. Should any harm, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, or extrajudicial action befall any member of TISA or the civil society at large, the leadership of the Inspector General of the National Police Service will be held personally and criminally responsible.

6. The Departmental Committee on Administration and Internal Security in the National Assembly must convene urgent hearings to investigate the July 2 raid and broader intimidation of civil society. The Inspector General of Police, Cabinet Secretary for Interior, and IPOA should be compelled to testify under oath, provide full disclosure of operations involving Subarus and other unmarked and irregularly registered vehicles, and outline measures to protect civic actors.

We stand in unyielding solidarity with TISA and the civic actors, citizenry and human rights defenders whose safety and security is being undermined by the escalating deployment and impunity of state-sponsored and protected goons. The Constitution protects our right to speak truth to power, and no amount of black suits, unmarked cars, or state-hired goons will roll back the democratic gains won by the blood and sweat of the Kenyan people. We invite the diplomatic community and development partners to monitor the unfolding situation closely and to publicly report on the ongoing attacks within the Kenyan civic space.

**SIGNED:**

**Supported by Co-signing Civil Society Organizations**

1. #EndFemicideAfrica
2. #EndFemicideKe
3. ActionAid International Kenya
4. Activista Isiolo Chapter
5. Activista Makueni Chapter
6. Africa Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG)
7. African Centre for Environment Rights and Development (ACERD)
8. African Initiative for Women Human Rights Defenders
9. African Social Development Focus (ASDEF)
10. Africans Rising
11. Alliance CBO-Bondo Siaya County
12. AMKA Space for Women's Creativity
13. Amnesty International Kenya
14. Angaza Jamii CBO
15. Arid Areas Paralegals Networks
16. Article 19
17. Association of Grassroot Journalists Kenya
18. Badili Africa
19. Bajeti Hub
20. Beatrice Kayesi David - Right to Food Ambassador
21. Brenda Kiprop
22. Bunge Mashinani Initiative
23. Bungoma Civil Society Forum(BCSF)

24. Bungoma Governance and Peace Advocates
25. Bungoma Youth Bunge forum
26. Celine Odipo - Sustainable Action CBO
27. Center for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG)
28. Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW)
29. Christine Kyalo-Rise and Serve Women Network
30. Chyulu Development Foundation
31. Civic Freedoms Forum
32. Civic Voices
33. Civil Society Reference Group
34. Coalition for Grassroots Human Rights Defenders Kenya- (Pussy Power)
35. Collins Yogo Odhiambo
36. Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust (CRAWN Trust)
37. Community Transformative Initiatives CBO
38. Community-Led Solutions CBO
39. County Youth and Adolescent Network (CYAN Kenya)
40. Defenders Coalition
41. Diana Kageha - Right to Food Ambassador
42. Domitila Okemo - Right to Food Ambassador
43. East Africa Law Society
44. Edith Alysa - Right to Food Ambassador
45. Eimu Bora Working Group
46. Election Observation Group (ELOG)
47. Elevate Livelihoods, Peace and Advocacy (ELPA)
48. Elizabeth Angeyo - Right to Food Ambassador
49. Eustine Iminza - Right to Food Ambassador
50. Ezekiel Odeoh-Mwalie Health CBO
51. Faith Odhiambo
52. Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA Kenya)
53. Fight Inequality Alliance Kenya
54. Frontier Hope
55. George Bush O-LSK-Kisumu
56. Getrude Kamonya - Right to Food Ambassador
57. Girl Concern CBO
58. Global Afrikanas Konnection - G.A.Ks
59. Good Health Community Programmes Kakamega
60. Grassroot's Voices
61. Green Aid Org
62. Haki Nawiri Afrika
63. Haki Yetu Organisation
64. Happy Life For Development CBO
65. Henrica Bahati - Right to Food Ambassador
66. Hope in the Desert
67. Hudson Mulonga - Right to Food Ambassador

68. Ignatius Nyukuri- Alliance for Persons with Disabilities
69. Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU)
70. InformAction (IFA)
71. Initiative for Equality and Non Discrimination(INEND)
72. Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA Kenya)
73. Institute of Public Finance (IPF)
74. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
75. Inua Mama Mjane CBO
76. Inuka Community Developers Network
77. Inuka Kenya Ni Sisi!
78. Irene Ojwang-Nyarongi Women Network
79. Isiolo Gender Watch
80. Jackline Munanga - RTF Ambassador
81. James Nyabera - Tambua Social Justice Center/Right to Food Ambassador
82. Japheth Ojijo - Integrated Development Facility-IDF
83. Jecinta Ogando -SRHR champion
84. Jijenge Youth Organization
85. Jikaze Foundation CBO
86. Joseph W. Muyela-Khwisero Social Justice Centre
87. Josline Chemitai Rotich
88. Josphine Apwoka - Right to Food Ambassador
89. Kakamega Voices Community Based Organization
90. Kaketumaso CBO
91. Kathelwa Disabled Self Help Group
92. Katiba Institute
93. KELIN Kenya
94. Kelvin Tsiyeli - Right To Food Ambassador (RTF)
95. Kenya Devolution CSO Working Group
96. Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
97. Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists, and Dentists Union (KMPDU)
98. Kenya National Interface Team (KNIT)
99. Kenya Peasant League
100. Kiambu Social Accountability Network (KISANET)
101. Kiambu Solidarity Network
102. Kiambu Youth Bunge
103. Kiengu Women Challenged to Challenge
104. Kimumu Youth for Change
105. Kisumu County Accountability Alliance (KISCAA)
106. Kitise Kithuki Professionals CBO
107. Kituo Cha Sheria
108. Kwale Civil Society Consortium
109. Lakeshore For Community Transformation ( LACOT)
110. Law Society of Kenya (LSK)
111. Likuyani Community Empowerment Organisation

112. Lucky Summer Social Justice Center
113. LuminousSafe-space Organization
114. Magharibi CBO
115. Makueni Civil Society Network (MACSON)
116. Makueni Convoy of Hope
117. Makueni University Students Association
118. Makueni Youth WASH Parliament
119. Manyatta B Social Justice Centre
120. Mathare Social Justice Centre
121. Mercy Mamboleo - Right to Food Ambassador
122. Mildred Asibiko – Right to Food Ambassador
123. Moureen Onyango – Right to Food Ambassador
124. Mukuru Community Justice Centre
125. Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI)
126. Muungano Rural Empowerment Centre
127. Mzalendo Trust
128. Nahashon Nyahera – Sturdy Sharp Kenya /Right to Food Ambassador
129. Namvic CBO
130. Naomi Wairimu
131. National Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
132. National Integrity Alliance
133. National Students Caucus (NSC)
134. Nelly Jegogo Kipketer - Right to Food Ambassador
135. Network for Research & Governance
136. Nitasema Foundation
137. Nubian Rights Forum
138. Ojwang Philip-North Karachuonyo Ward Social Accountability Network
139. Okoa Uchumi Campaign
140. OneToAll Initiative CBO
141. Pan African Solidarity Network
142. Pan-African Grassroots Women's Liberation
143. Partnership for Transformational Development -Kenya (PTD- Kenya)
144. Partnerships 4 Empowerment & Networking in Kenya
145. Pascal Wambua
146. Paul Kuya - Right to Food Ambassador
147. PAWA254
148. Police Reforms Working Group
149. Provident Community Initiative (PCI)
150. Reproductive Health Accountability and Response Kenya-RHARK CBO
151. Riabai Youths CBO
152. Rita Elaki - Hamisi PAG Disabled Group
153. Ruth Anyona – Right to Food Ambassador
154. SAGE CBO
155. Selly O. Manyala-Homabay County Peace Network CBO

156. Shinyalu Policy Lab Kakamega
157. Siasa Place
158. Smatkkey CBO
159. Solidarity and Capacity for Opportunity, Defenders in Action (SCODA)
160. Spark Bridge Initiative CBO
161. Stepping Stone HIV/Aids Positive Women CBO
162. Tambua Social Justice Center
163. Tembea Youth Centre for Sustainable Development
164. The Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO)
165. The East African Civil Society Organizations Forum (EACSOFF)
166. The East African Tax and Governance Network (EATGN)
167. The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA)
168. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ KENYA)
169. The Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU)
170. The Social Justice Centers Working Group
171. Thuranira Salesio Mutuma (HRD-Meru County)
172. Transparency International Kenya (TI-Kenya)
173. Tribless Youth
174. Tunaenda Deaf Empowerment CBO (Homabay)
175. Uasin Gishu County Civil Society Network
176. Uchaguzi Platform
177. United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UPDK)
178. United Green Movement (UGM)
179. University Students' Leaders Association (USLA)
180. Uplift Mentorship and Talent Development Centre (UMTAD)
181. Utu Bora Social Justice Center
182. Utu Wetu Trust
183. Uzalendo Social Justice Center
184. Victor Olenja - Right to Food Ambassador
185. Vitalis Marcel-Ndhiwa Social Accountability Network CBO
186. VOCAL Africa
187. Wajir county civil society consortium
188. Wangu Kanja Foundation
189. We Believe Community Organization
190. Winam Community Social Justice Centre
191. Women Collective Kenya
192. Women In Justice Centers - Western Chapter
193. Youth Agenda
194. Youth and Women Advocacy Network (YWAN-KENYA)

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