



**Press Statement
For Immediate Release
7 April 2021**

**Blaming and Shaming Survivors of
Gender Based Violence in the Media Must End!**

One week ago, the public were shocked by the disdainful comments made by former Homeboyz Radio Station presenters during a breakfast show aired on 25th of March, 2021. The comments condoned gender-based violence and placed the survivor at fault.

When a woman, or indeed, any other person survives gender-based violence, they expect empathy and justice and not blame, shame and stigma meant to further re-traumatize and stifle their voices into silence. Public broadcasting stations must not be used as a platform to victim shame. We call on Home Boyz and all broadcasting stations to take note of the Constitutional provision that requires the media to be responsible in their coverage of matters that touch on the safety, security and wellbeing of women and girls.

In the wake of the Home Boyz experience, we demand that all media houses adopt gender and zero violence tolerance policies that categorically provide for redress of violations, address gender biases and provide for balanced news reportage and media content.

Homeboyz situation is not an isolated case. In recent times sexism and misogynistic conversations have openly supported, made jokes, or sensationalized violence against women and girls, often diverting public attention from the perpetrators of such acts or not holding them accountable for their actions. Such actions only serve to perpetuate misogyny and discourages many victims from reporting cases of violence out of fear that they might be blamed for the harm meted on them or further victimized.

Any actions that promote or justify sexual violence do not stem sexual harassment and violence nationally. The mass media must play its role in eradicating the silent pandemic. During the corona pandemic, GBV cases have increased by 42 per cent. In this country, 47 per cent of women compared to three per cent men experience some form of Gender Based Violence. This violence also costs Kenya at Ksh 29 billion annually.

While supporting the rapid actions taken by the East African Breweries, Radio Africa Group management and the Communication Authority of Kenya, we urge the mass media industry to take up their critical and powerful role of promoting and protecting human rights.

Further, we call upon the media industry to:

1. Put in place clear policies and guidelines for reporting sexual, gender and human rights violations. Where these are already in place, they should be implemented, and all members of staff made aware that they exist;
2. Put in place accountability frameworks that address perpetrators and protect victims.
3. Institutionalize strong reporting mechanisms devoid of victimization;
4. Allocate sufficient resources to train/orient media employees on gender sensitive reporting, human rights and on the implications of GBV;



We stand ready to work with media houses in Kenya to boost their responsibility in reporting on human rights violations and sensitize presenters/hosts on gender responsive broadcasting. We note that the issues surrounding the incident are layered and will require numerous actors to address and this, therefore, offers an impetus for accelerated efforts on the same.

This statement has been issued by four human rights organizations namely Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Amnesty International Kenya, Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) and the Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) COVAW is an organization that focuses on influencing sustained engagement on violations conducted against women and girls in Kenya, with a focus on Gender Based Violence. Amnesty International Kenya is an organization dedicated to securing human rights all over the world. Amnesty International Kenya works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth, and dignity are denied. AMWIK is a non-profit membership organization for women journalists and communicators in Kenya. AMWIK is committed to enhancing the status of women in Kenya and Africa. AMWIK seeks to use the media to promote an informed and gender responsive society through a professional and transformative media in Kenya and Africa. CREAW is a duly registered, national feminist women's rights non-governmental organization whose vision is a just society where women and girls enjoy full rights and live in dignity.

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