



## **Press Statement**

### **For Immediate Release**

**17th January 2024**

### **Behind Bars, Not Behind Doors!**

The recent, horrifying killing of Starlet Wahu, 26 year old and an unidentified 24-year-old woman who was found murdered in Roysambu is a clear reminder of the femicide crisis plaguing Kenya, where women are not safe.

Chilling statistics from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reveal that over 81,000 women were internationally killed in 2021, with a staggering 56% murdered by intimate partners or family members. In Kenya, the situation is no less alarming. According to the National Crime Research Centre, a woman loses her life to an intimate partner or family member every 48 hours. The KDHS 2022 report shows that 28% of women aged 15-49 who have ever had a husband or intimate partner have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence. This data echoes the Kenyan reality, where the majority of femicides are often fueled by a mix of harmful gender norms, unequal power dynamics, and impunity for perpetrators.

"These figures are not mere statistics, they are young and vibrant lives extinguished most intimately and brutally," states Fridah Wawira, Acting Executive Director, Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW). Femicide has become an endemic problem and the laxity surrounding this must be shattered. Starlet Wahu's story is just one of the many

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femicides occurring in the country; it is a call to action for all of us. We cannot let her death, and the countless others lost to femicide go unaccounted for.

There is an urgent need to address the systematic gender inequality and the society tolerance of violence against women evidenced by the continued victim blaming across the social media platforms in. We urge the government to enhance awareness on Protection Orders works as provided for under the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act of 2011. Protection Orders can provide protection and deter potential harm in situations where femicide might be a risk. There is also a need to roll out emergency protection orders and empower the police to issue the same to protect survivors of intimate partner violence.

The Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) is a national women's rights organization that exists to champion the rights of women and girls to be free from all forms of violence.

Reach out to us through our toll-free GBV HELPLINE 0800720553 for legal and psychosocial support.

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