



FACT SHEET

BETWEEN DISSENT AND SUPPRESSION

**TRENDS OF VIOLENT PROTEST AND PUBLIC
DISSENT IN KENYA (2024-25)**

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This fact sheet documents key episodes of violence in Kenya from 2024 to date, analyses their underlying causes, and maps out the most affected populations. It further provides targeted recommendations for state and non-state actors to restore trust, enhance accountability, and promote a coordinated approach to peacebuilding, violence prevention, and conflict transformation. As Kenya stands at a critical juncture, addressing these issues with urgency and sincerity is essential to prevent further escalation and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and inclusive governance.

RECENT INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE IN KENYA

Finance Bill Protests (June 2024)

Following the aftermath of the Finance Bill 2024 youth protests held across 19 counties, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) reported that 105 individuals were arbitrarily arrested, while approximately 200 others sustained injuries in Nairobi and Kisumu. The injuries ranging from fractures, bullet wounds, and soft tissue damage to complications from tear gas inhalation were attributed to the disproportionate use of force by security operatives. (Mule, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, 2025)

Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings

Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC, 2025) reported that enforced disappearances increased by 450% in 2024 majority of whom were youth male (79%) from Nairobi and surrounding counties.

Violent Protests (June 2025)

The protests, largely led by young Kenyans, began peacefully but turned violent as police used tear gas and live bullets, leaving at least 16 people dead and over 400 injured, mostly in Nairobi and Kisumu. The violence highlighted deep concerns over police brutality, with cases like the killing of schoolteacher Albert Ojwang and other enforced disappearances fueling public outrage. (Elias, 2025)

Femicide

According to International IDEA (2025), Kenya experienced an unprecedented surge in femicide with at least 170 women killed the highest annual toll on record. Between 2023 and 2024, cases of gender-based violence in Kenya rose sharply, with femicides increasing by 79% from 95 in 2023 to 170 in 2024, including 97 cases reported between September and November alone which activists link to systemic misogyny and weak legal protections.

Saba Saba Protests (July 7, 2025)

Nationwide anti-government demonstrations marking the 35th anniversary of the historical Saba-Saba movement (fight for against oppression) led to between 11 and 31 deaths. Scores of protesters and police were injured, with tear gas, water cannons, and live ammunition reportedly used by security forces. (Mule, 2025)

THE UNDERLYING CAUSES

Heavy-handed policing.

Widespread use of live ammunition, tear gas, arbitrary arrests, and abductions, notably during protests.

Accountability issues.

Less than 2% of extrajudicial killings prosecuted; most enforced disappearances are never resolved; abuse of command-level responsibility.

Economic and political grievances.

Rising cost of living, tax burdens, perceptions of corruption, weak governance and anti-corruption systems; fueling protest cycles.

VICTIMS AND AFFECTED GROUPS

Primarily youth (18–34), especially male protesters, though minors also affected. Activists, bloggers, human rights defenders subjected to abductions, disappearances, and torture

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

STAKEHOLDER	KEY ACTION
The Kenya National Police Service	<p>The police should enhance community policing to bridge the trust gap between the public and security agencies.</p> <p>Should undertake intense radical reforms that will ensure non re-occurrence of violent policing seen in 2024 & 2025.</p> <p>End excessive use of force and ban live rounds in crowd control.</p>
The Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP)	<p>Should urgently act on cases touching on command responsibility to address deaths during protests.</p>
The Executive	<p>The state should fulfill its commitment to ratify the International Convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearances that Kenya signed in 2007, and for parliament to enact legislation to specifically criminalize enforced disappearances under domestic law. The Executive needs to implement the National Coroner's Service Act and establish the National Coroners Service to support independent investigations into all deaths.</p>
Parliament	<p>Parliament should allocate funds to the Victim Protection Fund to adequately cater for reparations for all victims and families of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.</p>
Civil Society Organisations and Communities	<p>Strengthen community policing and run youth-led dialogues to reduce mistrust.</p> <p>Conduct civic education and educational campaigns;</p> <p>Support survivors of torture and extra judicial killings.</p>
Media and Academia	<p>Monitor violence; ensure inclusive gender-sensitive coverage. Research root causes of violence and solutions. Media coverage on positive policing to enhance trust.</p>
Judiciary	<p>Fast-track pending cases and utilise technology in dispensing justice (e.g. metadata, forensics), Protect witnesses, Increase transparency.</p>