



Pillars of Transformation:

The State of
Women Human Rights Defenders in Kenya

Report Preparation

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Note to Readers

This report centres the voices and experiences of WHRDs themselves. Direct quotes throughout represent authentic testimonies from defenders who graciously shared their stories to inform advocacy, policy, and movement-building efforts.

For More Information

Complete survey reports, county assessments, and methodological appendices are available upon request from the WHRD Hub Kenya. Partner organisations contributed significantly to project ideation, data collection, validation, and programmatic insights, which are reflected throughout this report.

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Executive Summary

Between January 2016 and December 2023, over 500 Kenyan women were brutally murdered at least 100 between September 2023 and January 2024 alone. This violence sits atop a foundation of systemic failures and impunity: 72% of survivors in some counties face financial barriers to accessing support to GBV services, 67% experience delays in accessing justice, and corruption remains the primary obstacle for 32% seeking help in Nairobi County.

The tragic murder of a world-renowned Olympic marathon runner, Rebecca Cheptegei¹, in September 2024, despite her reports of ongoing abuse, exemplifies these devastating protection gaps. Yet, within this crisis, extraordinary courage exists. Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)² across Kenya serve as primary responders, advocates, and change agents. This often comes at a tremendous personal cost. They continue to face financial burdens in seeking administration of justice, police brutality during protests, arbitrary arrests under the Computer Misuse Act 2025 in Kenya, gang violence in Mombasa, and exclusion in pastoralist communities. As one defender stated:

***“Sometimes, we are the police,
counsellor, and lawyer all in one day.”-
WHRD Kisumu County.***

In amplifying community voices and frontline experiences, the Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) Hub presents insights drawn from direct engagement with our networks and focal persons, alongside verified incident reports, many of which were previously undocumented and have only gained national attention.

This report reflects the work undertaken in Kenya, with a specific focus on eight counties: Nairobi, Kisumu, Bomet, Mombasa, Nakuru, Meru, Kitui, and Marsabit. We acknowledge that this coverage is not exhaustive but reflects our current institutional reach and operational capacity. Across these regions, individual defenders and WHRD-led community groups are achieving tangible policy shifts through gender-sensitive policing dialogues, the use of technology to facilitate public participation, county disaster management laws, and safer campus policies. These achievements illustrate a virtuous cycle: when women defenders are protected and visible, they gain access to resources and solidarity that translate into lasting policy reforms and stronger movements.

This report framework captures the reality, resilience, and transformation of Kenya’s WHRD movement through the four interconnected pillars. Each pillar identifies specific signals that categorize incidents and highlight corresponding redress efforts, collectively mapping the pathways from protection to power.

1 <https://nation.africa/kenya/sports/athletics/rebecca-cheptPreventiveegei-s-death-why-danger-lurks-for-athletes-4753632>

2 WHRD brochure September 2014 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/WHRD/OnePagerWHRD.pdf>

Prepared by: Women’s Rights and Gender Section, OHCHR Research and Right to Development Division Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch, contact: wrgs@ohchr.org

PILLAR 01 SAFE

Protection, Justice & Security Preventive and Responsive Strategies

Signals documenting physical and digital security threats, legal protection gaps, and institutional accountability failures from femicide marches in Kenya, Finance Bill protests in Nairobi, to non-operational shelters in Meru County.

Visibility, Voice & Narrative Power (Amplification and contribution to the socio-economic fabric of society.) Signals amplifying grassroots voices from Korogocho's informal settlements to Muslim women defenders in coastal regions, breaking decades of silence through storytelling and data-driven advocacy.

PILLAR 02 SEEN

PILLAR 03 SUPPORTED

Wellbeing, Livelihoods & Collective Care (Prioritisation of wellbeing and self-care within their work.)

Signals addressing the 93% of WHRDs reporting mental distress after the 2024 floods, the 92% who lost livelihoods, and the systemic burnout among defenders who "forget to heal themselves."

Leadership, Movement Building & Policy Change (Femtorship through building alternative women leadership for the activism movement in Kenya)

Signals building sustainable networks, disability-inclusive advocacy platforms, and policy interventions that transform cultural norms and institutional responses.

PILLAR 04 STRENGTHENED

Evidence of Collective Efforts and Impact with The Hub.

The Hub's work demonstrates measurable change, including institution building within the team and partners, the creation of County Rapid Response Frameworks in Mombasa, police-civil society dialogue forums following the Finance Bill protests, intergenerational femtorship programs that bridge knowledge gaps, and disability-inclusive advocacy models in Meru. Baseline surveys across Nairobi, Kisumu, and Meru now provide insights for targeted interventions.

We also appreciate the longstanding efforts to expand legal protections to categorize and advocate for WHRDs from the African Union to the county level. In renewed efforts this February 2025, the African Union adopted the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG), which now categorically defines Women and Girls Human Rights Defenders. The expansion of legal protections and normative standards for WHRDs' efforts in Kenya and across Africa is a significant development.

The Path Forward.

This report transforms fragmented case studies into a coherent narrative of systemic change. It positions WHRDs as strategic actors requiring resources, protection, and recognition. As one defender reminded us:

**"I live in fear, but I continue because
silence is not an option."
WHRD Marsabit**

Kenya's women human rights defenders (WHRDs) sustained the country's most visible civic mobilisations in 2024–2025, from #RejectFinanceBill protests to #EndFemicideKE, while absorbing disproportionate risks: physical assault, arbitrary arrests and abductions, digital surveillance and doxxing, psychosocial burnout, and economic retaliation. Evidence from eight counties reveals persistent gaps between Kenya's robust legal frameworks and the actual protection, service coordination, and accountability provided to women and the public. At the same time, individual and WHRD-led coalitions are part of creating innovation and winning policy shifts (gender-sensitive policing dialogues; county disaster laws; safer campus policies) while strengthening intersectional networks.

Going forward, with your support, we will continue to shape history and feature the courageous testimonies of women human rights defenders.

We appreciate you all for walking this courageous journey with us always!

**Executive Director at WHRD Hub,
Salome Nduta.**

Introduction

Pillars of Transformation is the status report on the situation, well-being, security, and leadership of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Kenya. It provides a picture and evidence-based highlight of wins, emerging trends, systemic challenges, and the shifts required to strengthen the enabling environment for WHRDs even in its limited capacity. This report attempts to document the state of WHRDs. It outlines the strategic foundations- 'pillars' that drive long-term transformation in Kenya through coordinated efforts by women human rights defenders in their communities.

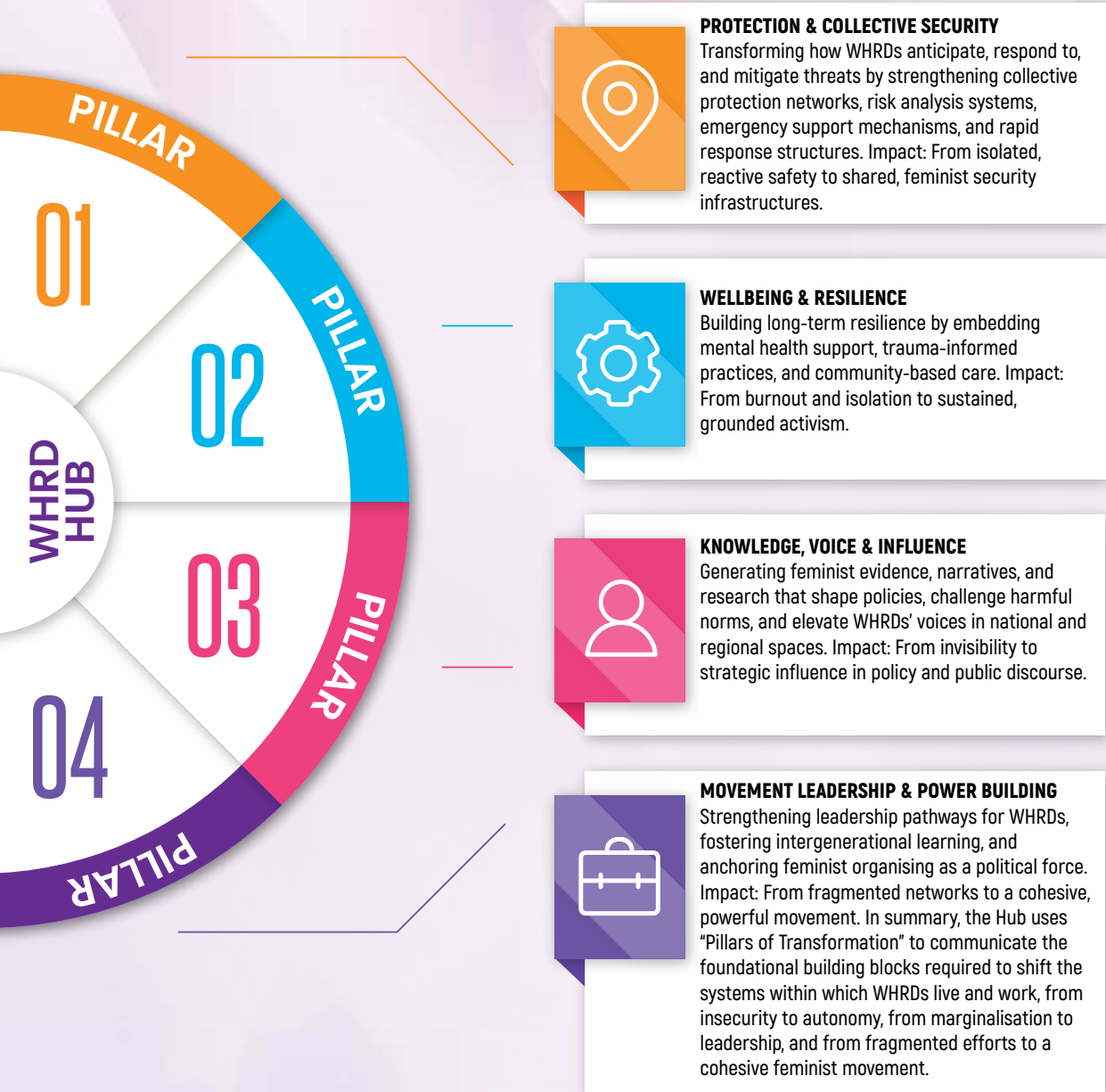
“Pillars of Transformation” refers to the core areas of work that systematically shift the conditions in which Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) operate, moving from survival and crisis response towards long-term structural change.

For the Hub, these pillars represent the foundations required to transform the landscape for WHRDs in Kenya and the region, ensuring they are part of documented history, survive threats, and thrive as leaders.

Why “Pillars of Transformation”?

1. Transformation is intentional, not accidental: The Hub isn't reacting to crises; it is deliberately shaping a different future for WHRDs, one where safety, wellbeing, autonomy, and feminist leadership are normalized.
2. The work requires multiple reinforcing dimensions: Protection alone doesn't change the culture around WHRDs. Well-being alone doesn't change the political environment. Research alone doesn't shift impunity. The pillars therefore illustrate that all elements must work in synergy to create structural change.
3. It frames WHRDs as agents of change, not victims: The Hub's approach centers WHRDs as powerful drivers of social transformation. Naming “pillars” reinforces that the work focuses on building their power, not rescuing them from threats.

How this report aligns with the Hub’s mandate



Methodology & Sources for the Report

This report draws on multiple sources, including media reviews, research initiatives, baseline surveys, needs assessments, and programmatic interventions conducted by the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub Kenya and partner organisations between 2023, 2024 and 2025. It represents the collective voices, experiences, and data from hundreds of WHRDs across Kenya's diverse diasporic, geographic and cultural contexts.

Methodological Approach at the Hub

1. Framework Co-Creation and Development

The four-pillar framework (SAFE, SEEN, SUPPORTED, STRENGTHENED) was developed through participatory consultation with WHRDs, staff, and partners, emerging from an analysis of recurring themes, systemic gaps, and defender-identified priorities across all data sources, aligned with the Hub's strategic pillars and response. It is not exhaustive and may change over time in response to WHRDs' transformations, changes, and events.

2. Methodology at WHRD Hub.

The insights span 2024–2025, triangulating quantitative snapshots with defender experiences. We continue to use mixed methods combining information and news from our networks, focal persons and county assessments, WHRD Hub baselines (GBV services; Women's Entrepreneurship Development Assessment; floods impact), protest incident tracking, partner reports (Muslim Women Advancement of Rights and Protection (MWARP), Missing Voices, Hivos), and summit proceedings (Mombasa WHRD Summit).

3. The Hub Considerations

Every experience shared in this report involves both bravery and risk. The WHRD Hub is firmly committed to honouring that trust and safeguarding those who enable this work through shared ethical considerations.

- Informed consent: All testimonies were shared voluntarily, with the defender's or survivor's complete and informed agreement.
- Confidentiality: Names are disclosed only with explicit permission; otherwise, identities are protected using pseudonyms or anonymisation.
- Do no harm: Safety is our priority. Each case was carefully selected and framed to prevent further exposure or retaliation against the defenders.
- Survivor-centred storytelling: Every GBV survivor's account is presented with dignity, ensuring control remains with those who experienced it.
- Collective validation: Before publication, findings were shared with WHRD networks for review, allowing communities to verify, correct, and reclaim their narratives.

4. Limitations

This report serves both as a record and a reminder of what remains beyond the Hub's current ability to address.

- Regional gaps: Certain counties are underrepresented due to resource limitations and restricted access to resources.

- Timeframe: Most verified information covers the period from 2023 to 2024 and 2025, suggesting that emerging patterns may become more evident in the future, as well as in media reports, which were also heavily relied on.
- Self-reported data: Testimonies reflect the lived experiences and perceptions shared through phone calls to The Hub and trusted focal persons, as well as via meetings, WhatsApp and Social Media engagement, which may not encompass every detail.
- Language barriers: Translation across Kenya's diverse linguistic landscape can occasionally alter meaning or tone.
- Safety constraints: In regions with heightened insecurity, data collection was limited to protect participants and field teams.

5. Interpretation

As our first national WHRD Annual Report, this work introduces a signals-based framework that categorises incidents by thematic indicators such as 1.1 Physical Security or 2.3 Intergenerational Femicide. This approach allows us to:

- Connect struggles and efforts across different pillars, demonstrating how WHRDs remain engaged to ensure safety, visibility, care, and leadership reinforce one another.
- Identify patterns across regions, expose systemic failures, and highlight sparks of transformation driven by defenders on the ground.

This report highlights resistance, resilience, and renewal within Kenya's WHRD movement. We welcome all support and information that promotes inclusive governance and the victory of WHRDs.

The Hub's Scope

The Hub focuses on rural counties and informal settlements. As part of its five-year [strategic plan 2024-2028](#), it has prioritised operations in eight counties: Nairobi, Kitui, Meru, Kisumu, Nakuru, Bomet, Mombasa, and Marsabit, with its primary operations based in Nairobi. Additionally, the Hub has carried out project activities in Kwale County.

The Framework: Four Pillars of Transformation at WHRD Hub.

This framework reimagines the annual WHRD situation report as an interactive experience that transforms passive reading into active engagement, enabling individuals to understand their role and governance in Kenya. It is inspired by several approaches we use in our activism and in our leveraging technology to advance civic engagement. It is an interactive report that uses reported cases, insightful visualisations, personal quotes, and participatory elements, conveyed through signals, to make WHRD protection issues accessible, compelling, and actionable for diverse audiences. Across these pillars, the Hub tracks Signals as practical indicators of whether something is improving or deteriorating in Kenya's WHRDs' ecosystem.

Four Pillars Structure

The report is organised around four fundamental pillars of WHRD protection, the blocks approach:



Operating Environment

The Hub operated within a dynamic and challenging environment shaped by socio-economic, environmental, and legal developments. Several factors significantly influenced programming and strategy during the reporting period.

Why The Four Pillar Framework

The framework aligns and projects an approach based on key everyday issues that we are advancing as a network in our [strategy](#). We recognise it is a living framework that can be adjusted to meet the annual Kenyan contexts and needs based on the issues and solutions addressed.

Your Role In WHRD Protection In Kenya

The interactive report concludes with personalised pathways for different audiences to take action.

Choose Your Path

You can understand your role and tailored action options:

Audience	Key Actions Available
Citizen	Sign up for alerts, attend events, challenge misinformation, support defenders financially, and learn about local WHRDs
Media Professional	Download media toolkit, attend briefings, commit to ethical coverage, and join the media partners network
Government Official	Review policy recommendations, schedule consultations, request training, and champion WHRD-friendly policies
Donor/Funder	Assess portfolio, join learning circle, consider flexible multi-year funding, fund emergency mechanism
Private Sector	Commitment to community support and social responsibility that promotes holistic safety and wellness for women in the communities to create livable societies
Fellow WHRD	Join a solidarity network, access security resources, share experience, and connect with support groups. URGENT SUPPORT: Click here for emergency contacts
Legal Professional	Join a pro bono network, attend legal clinic training, take on a case, share expertise via webinars
Tech Professional	Help build a documentation platform, provide security training, and develop safety tools.
Researcher/Academic	Cite report, collaborate on research, integrate into curricula, and join community engagement advisory panels.

PILLAR 1: SAFE Protection, Justice & Security for WHRDs

A defender must feel secure enough to act.

Pillar Overview

The SAFE pillar examines the conditions under which WHRDs can exist and act without fear of violence, retaliation, or economic collapse. The period under review reveals a dangerous pattern: as WHRDs increasingly shape public debates in Kenya, from protests against inaction by the state to campaigns against femicide, using police force, hired ‘goons’, the state and other powerful actors have escalated both physical and digital repression. At the same time, local protection and social services (for example, GBV shelters, rapid response, legal aid) remain few and under-resourced, especially outside Nairobi.

We explore this pillar under the following signals:

1.1 Physical Security – threats, attacks, killings, sexual and gender-based violence.

1.2 Digital Security – surveillance, online harassment, device seizures, legal tech-related persecution.

1.3 Legal Protection – laws, judicial conduct, and access to justice.

1.4 Institutional Accountability & Coordination – how state and duty bearers respond to violations.

A. Heightened and Coordinated Gendered Insecurity Against WHRDs, Women and Girls During Protests by the State and Citizens.

Location: Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu + other counties

Source: National Femicide March January 2024, County Femicide Marches, Finance Bill Protests, 2024, Say Her Name December 2024 (Femicide March), WHRD Hub Annual Report, 2024

Signals: 1.1 Physical Security | 1.2 Digital Security | 1.3 Legal Protection | 1.4 Institutional Accountability and Coordination

1. Femicide in Kenya: A Civic Response to a National Security Threat

Between 2016 and 2023, over 500 women were brutally murdered in Kenya, most by intimate partners or family members. At least 100 women were killed between September 2023 and January 2024 alone. The scale of this violence forced the Kenyan government to declare femicide the country’s leading security threat. WHRDs, survivors, and families responded with urgent, coordinated actions nationally and at county levels:

The #endfemicidecampaign volunteers and coordinators used baseline surveys, police reports and secondary data to establish a credible count of killings of women and girls as part of increasing awareness on the difference between murder and femicide. This led to Nationwide protests and marches in more than ten counties, with women mobilising under banners like “SAY THEIR NAMES” and “END FEMICIDE NOW!” There have been deliberate efforts to ensure case documentation and testimonies from survivors and families to humanise statistics and demand justice by organisations such as [Femicide Count Kenya](#), who is keeping a database through counting, naming, and putting human stories to women and girls whose lives have been ended through violence.

However, even these peaceful, legally organised protests were met with repression. Ironically, on International Human Rights Day (10th December 2024), a march highlighting femicide and GBV, whose organisers had complied with all legal requirements, was violently dispersed by police using tear gas and force. Ten people, including the Executive Director of Amnesty International Kenya, were arbitrarily detained and later released unconditionally after being charged with “unlawful assembly.”

WHRD- joined and led campaigns such as #ACTtoEndViolence and #EndFemicide, 2024 16 days of activism on enforcing the Maputo Protocol and Kenyan legal frameworks to date, demand:

- Stronger enforcement of existing laws
- Targeted investigations and prosecutions of femicide cases
- Recognition of femicide as a distinct, punishable crime

This collective, data-driven advocacy seeks to continue pushing and compelling the state to acknowledge femicide as a crisis, creating a political opening for ongoing monitoring and law reform against gendered harms.



16 days of activism in Kwale County

The 2024 Finance Bill protests, mainly driven by young people resisting steep tax hikes amid economic hardship, quickly became a bellwether for Kenya's shrinking civic space. On 25 June 2024, protesters stormed Parliament; at least 22 people were killed and many more were injured. WHRDs and women activists were not only present, they were visible, vocal, and targeted. Across protest hotspots like Nairobi, Nakuru, and Kisumu, WHRDs reported to us:

- A journalist, Catherine Wanjeri, was shot while covering protests in Nakuru, underscoring the lethal risks faced by women documenting state violence.

In 2025, beyond street violence, WHRDs experienced a surge in digital repression. The violence escalated on 6 July 2025, a day before Sabasaba commemorations. Mothers who had gathered at the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) to plan peaceful solidarity actions were brutally attacked by goons inside KHRC premises. WHRDs, journalists, and mothers were beaten, and their phones and computers were stolen. To date, none of the perpetrators have been held accountable.

Source BBC : [Rose Njeri: Kenyan software developer's detention sparks outrage](#)

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Such illegal searches threaten to expose confidential survivor and beneficiary data of those exercising their right to public participation in government bills and legislative processes without proper procedures. In most cases, sensitive WHRD networks and sources who have volunteered to support their communities through coordinated approaches to public participation have been targeted, limiting their and the community's engagement. This has further interfered with evidence documentation of continued state abuses and coordinated attacks, leading to poor investigation and redress for the WHRDs. Unfortunately, the harms lead to more damage in our efforts for WHRDs working with survivors and critically exposed groups. These acts erode trust, compromise safety, and create ripples of fear among family members, colleagues, and the broader community.

The wider political context of the 2024–2025 Gen Z protests intensified this insecurity. The government publicly named and targeted organisations, key WHRDs, and funders allegedly backing the demonstrations as an intimidation tactic aimed at drying up support and discrediting the movement. Despite adherence to proper procedures and legal frameworks, misinformation campaigns and attacks persist, causing further harm and undermining civic engagement with civil society actors and women human rights defenders (WHRDs). These incidents have led to destabilisation and a reassessment of the missions of many actors, in an effort to maintain active public participation in Kenyan civic discourse.

3. International Alignment, Local Retaliation: SOGIE Defender Safety Concerns.

Despite Kenya's landmark decision during the [United Nations Human Rights Council's 59th session](#) in July 2025, where Kenya cast a pivotal vote in favour of renewing the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression ([SOGIE](#)). This marked a significant and welcome moment in the nation's interaction and alignment with international human rights frameworks. However, it is not without local misalignment, as to date, many WHRDs advocating for SOGIE rights continue to face additional risks.

Earlier in the year, in May 2025, a documentary circulated on social media by a group calling itself Kenya Christian Voice, listing organisations, funders, and individuals supporting SOGIE work. This outing of networks heightened direct mob physical attacks and online hate campaigns. In some confirmed reports, there were incidents of arbitrary detention and interference with operations and duties on the same grounds. Despite the international landmark progress at the UN, there has been an increased crisis related to sharing non-consensual intimate images (NCII), which has been used as a form of legal harassment linked to morality under the Kenya Penal Code provisions.

B. Repugnant Practices: Protection Gaps and Safety Challenges.

Location: Meru County, Mombasa County, Kisumu County

Source: WHRD Hub Turning Barriers into Bridges Baseline: Enhancing Access to Service Delivery for GBV Survivors, Mombasa WHRD Summit Report, 2023, Media, The Kenya National Police Service,

Signals: 1.1 Physical Security | 1.3 Legal Protection

Cross-links: 3.1 Institutional Support | 3.3 Mental Health

Our engagement with the county focal persons in the counties has shown a silent and harmful trend of practices that are targeted at women and girls that are still rife. The Kenya National Police Service, Meru County Command, reported Gender-Based Violence statistics for January 2024–May 15, 2025 (unpublished police data, as cited in the dailies) found that violence is pervasive, with Meru county leading in GBV reports: defilement, wife beating, child marriage, FGM, teenage pregnancies, and direct threats to WHRDs themselves. As part of heightened support from the Judiciary Service Commission, there has been evidence on how cultural practices, weak social service institutions, and broken infrastructure converge to endanger women and defenders alike. WHRDs’ direct engagement in Meru County reveals that survivors face a stark reality: non-existent or non-operational shelters in Tigania and Igembe. To date, there are no social services directed at survivors with disabilities. The ongoing closure of youth-friendly centres is fuelling mental health crises and drug abuse among young people, which in turn drives sexual and physical violence. In our work in May 2025, we identified, as in the Turning Barriers into Bridges Baseline: Enhancing Access to Service Delivery for GBV Survivors, that WHRDs often serve as first responders when formal systems are inadequate. Results showed that over 60% of survivors in informal settlements had only limited awareness of the available GBV services. In Meru County, concerns about impunity were widespread, with at least 72% of GBV-related services requiring some form of payment, creating significant barriers for survivors.

***“Even when you escape, where do you go?
Shelters are closed, and sometimes your
own family sends you back.” – WHRD, Meru***

Furthermore, 44% of respondents reported the lack of formal referral mechanisms. In Kisumu and Meru, more than 70% of survivors faced considerable delays in accessing services. In Nairobi, only 56% of survivors were fully aware of the support options available to them. WHRDs describe their roles as impossibly stretched:

***“Sometimes, we are the police, counsellor,
and lawyer all in one day.”
– WHRD, Kisumu***

Engagement with Mombasa County WHRDs reveals that the situation in Mombasa County mirrors what was reported in the Mombasa WHRD Summit Report, 2023. Indicate little to no progress, where WHRDs operate in a volatile environment characterised by politically motivated juvenile gangs, proliferation of small arms, and increasing sexual exploitation. The defenders highlight numerous concerning issues, including arbitrary detention and direct threats during their efforts to document abuses.

***“We’ve learned to hide in plain sight while
fighting for justice.” – WHRD, Mvita.***

Corruption, stigma, and complex reporting procedures further deter survivors from seeking help. The tragic femicide of Olympic marathon runner Rebecca Cheptegei in September 2024, murdered by her ex-partner despite earlier reports of abuse, exposes the fatal consequences of institutional failure.

Across these cases, three patterns emerge:

1. Criminalisation and Surveillance of Dissent

WHRDs are increasingly targeted not only for what they do but also for who they are: young, feminist, queer, Muslim, rural, or disabled. The overreach of security laws into digital spaces heightens risk.

2. Infrastructural and Geographical Inequalities

Counties like Meru, Kitui, Kwale, and parts of Mombasa lack safe houses, functional shelters, or coherent referral systems. Survivors rely heavily on WHRDs, who themselves have minimal protection.

3. Impunity and Weak Enforcement of Laws

Robust legal frameworks on paper are undermined by corruption, weak investigations, survivor-blaming in courts, and politically motivated inaction.

SAFE – Embedding Political Analysis at the Hub on Safety of WHRDs.

Regarding systemic gaps, women continue to develop innovative methods and formats to demand justice and uphold the rule of law in Kenya. Their safety and security remain the most neglected among all categories of human rights defenders, with the government ignoring essential constitutional protections under Articles 29 (freedom from violence, torture, and cruel treatment) and 37 (right to assemble, demonstrate, and picket). Attacks on WHRDs' bodily autonomy have exposed broader violations, such as gender-insensitive arrest procedures, including the detention of women by male officers, which contravenes the National Police Service Act and established protocols.

This situation is compounded by a lack of accountability among police and organised groups responsible for violence and theft, leading to inadequate redress for gender-based violence and rendering certain acts of violence normalized within society. Additionally, the disproportionate application of digital laws, such as the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, to target defenders, undermines Kenya's leadership in digital innovation across Africa. This is increasingly eroding public trust and hindering young Kenyans' opportunities to engage with digital technologies.

The WHRD Hub plays a pivotal role in driving systemic change within Kenya's security sector. It conducts real-time monitoring and documentation of gender-based violence during protests, advocating for gender-sensitive policing protocols in line with Article 22(i) of the National Police Service Act. Additionally, the Hub engages with oversight bodies, such as the KNCHR, to demand accountability and works to develop safety guidelines for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) to ensure their protection during public mobilizations and protests.

Key Recommendations for Fostering a SAFE Future.

The Hub continues to call on the National Police Service to enforce constitutional protections (Articles 29 & 37) and gender-sensitive arrest provisions within the National Police Service Act, prohibiting warrantless digital searches of women human rights defenders' devices, and to reform the misuse of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act. As part of urgent action, the government must adequately fund county-level shelters and accessible safe houses to provide crucial support to survivors and victims of violations and, by extension, WHRDs. The government's political goodwill to support civil society in developing and implementing safety guidelines for protests and public mobilisations, especially under the pending Public Participation Bill, must take practical steps to strengthen collaborative rapid-response mechanisms that provide legal, medical, and psychosocial support across counties.

Strategic litigation efforts must be addressed as time-sensitive concerns to combat unlawful arrests, digital violations, and the impunity surrounding femicide. For funders, investing in long-term protection infrastructure, such as shelters, legal defence funds, and emergency relocation resources, remains crucial, complemented by flexible funding for security audits, digital safety tools, and well-being programs for women human rights defenders. These integrated practical steps are essential to building a resilient framework that safeguards rights, promotes justice, and ensures a secure environment for all.

PILLAR 2: SEEN: Visibility, Voice & Narrative Power

Stories that illuminate the invisible work by Kenya WHRDs.

Pillar Overview

WHRDs are often the first to document violations and the last to be recognised. The SEEN pillar focuses on how stories, data, and representation shape power: We explore this pillar under the following signals:

2.1 Storytelling & Awareness

2.2 Inclusion & Representation

2.3 Intergenerational Femtorship

2.4 Digital Advocacy

Here, visibility includes shaping narratives, reframing who is seen as a rights-holder, and protecting defenders from erasure.

A. Breaking Barriers of Silence and Highlighting Key Efforts.

Counties: Nairobi, Mombasa

Source: Korogocho WHRD Report, 2023, Kibra County Needs Assessment, 2023
Signals: 2.1 Storytelling & Awareness | 2.3 Intergenerational Femtorship

In Korogocho, Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) courageously champion environmental justice, fight gender-based violence, and combat social exclusion despite overwhelming obstacles. At an International Human Rights Day commemoration in 2023, a gathering of 50 WHRDs convened by the Hub and the Korogocho Peace and Justice Centre, the defenders highlighted persistent threats and intimidation they face after reporting GBV cases and exposed rampant corruption and bribery among some police officers who align themselves with perpetrators.

WHRDs are further strained by the expectation to care for abandoned or found children, stretching their limited resources to the breaking point mentally, financially and physically. Inter-generational divides threaten the movement's continuity, as younger advocates are unable to attract mentors due to limited resources and competing life priorities. At the same time, older defenders feel left behind by the shift to digital advocacy and, in some cases, by limited capacity, such as the affordability of data and technology devices. Despite severe economic barriers that hinder their ability to sustain activism, WHRDs in Korogocho remain steadfast in their commitment to justice and community resilience through peer groups and activism.

***"We're losing wisdom at the same pace
we're losing courage."
Community Elder, Korogocho.***

In Kibra, WHRDs such as those in Woman Beyond Borders (WBB) confront stigma around GBV, menstrual health, and reproductive rights. WBB evolved from an informal support group during the COVID-19 GBV surge into a registered organisation in 2020, offering end-to-end support to survivors in a welcome move to highlight support for GBV victims and survivors.

***“When we talk openly about our pain,
others learn they are not alone.” – WHRD, Kibra***

Their work focuses on:

- Creating awareness about GBV and menstrual hygiene.
- Building intergenerational bridges so young and older women can share experiences and strategies.
- Educating communities about legal aid and reporting mechanisms.

Storytelling and experience-sharing are central tools for revealing the truth, breaking the silence, normalising help-seeking, and creating community-level shifts in understanding GBV and rights.

WHRDs urged the Hub to establish structured Femtorship programs through a coordinated code of conduct that connects seasoned and younger defenders, fostering mentorship and mutual support. They also emphasised the importance of building capacity in security and risk management, enabling defenders to protect themselves better. Facilitating dialogue with law enforcement was highlighted as a way to reduce hostility and corruption, promoting cooperation and understanding. Additionally, supporting collective activities was seen as vital to building solidarity and reducing isolation among defenders.



Courtesy Call Gender Dept in Kwale County

B. Amplifying Voices of Muslim Women

Sources: MWARP Brief, 2023; Mombasa WHRD Summit, 2023

Signals: 2.2 Inclusion & Representation | 2.4 Digital Advocacy

The Muslim Women Advancement of Rights and Protection (MWARP) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to safeguarding and elevating the rights of marginalised groups, centring its efforts on Muslim women, women residing in rural and hard-to-reach areas, and those with minimal educational opportunities. Headquartered in Mombasa, MWARP's initiatives extend across coastal and north-eastern Kenya, notably in Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale, and Garissa. Led by Executive Director Ms Rahma Gulam, MWARP underscored the power of collective action. As Ms Gulam articulates, "the time has come for women to band together with one loud voice for change." Her conviction is rooted in the belief that only by ensuring women can participate in public life free from harassment can communities fully thrive.

Despite the significance of their mission, Muslim women human rights defenders (WHRDs) operating within MWARP's network confront several entrenched challenges. Their unique identities and the regions they serve expose them to profiling and securitisation, heightening both visibility and safety concerns. These WHRDs often lack sufficient capacity in applying Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBA), which limits their ability to anchor local struggles within international human rights frameworks or to advocate effectively for policy change. Further compounding this is their limited visibility in national media and policy spaces, resulting in exclusion from funding opportunities and critical decision-making platforms. Persistent safety threats and chronic resource shortages, including the absence of support structures for well-being, continue to impede the sustainability and effectiveness of their work.

Anchored in the vision of "a just society where women and girls realise, embrace, and enjoy their full rights and dignity," MWARP employs a strategic approach to remedy these barriers. Central to this strategy is a robust partnership with the WHRD Hub, designed to fortify the network's HRBA and documentation capacities and enhance digital and offline advocacy skills. By intentionally integrating safety, security, and wellbeing into every facet of advocacy, MWARP aims to build the visibility, resilience, and influence of Muslim WHRDs in national and regional dialogues.

The conveners of the Mombasa Women's Movement Summit are steering a crucial transition from problem identification to actionable, institutionalised protection and leadership for WHRDs. Their recommendations are aimed at embedding permanent structures of advocacy, security, and policy engagement to ensure that women's rights advances are not only achieved but also protected and expanded.

Next-Phase Priorities for Women's Leadership in Mombasa County:



*HRDs during the Finance
Bill Protest in 2024*

1. **Formalising the WHRD Alliance and Strategic Roadmap:** The foremost priority is the establishment of the Mombasa County Women Human Rights Defenders Alliance before the close of the year. This Alliance will define a mandate, governance model, and a five-year strategic roadmap, granting a unified institutional voice and consolidating support for women defenders across the country.
2. **Launching Issue-Focused Working Groups:** With the Alliance's foundation laid, targeted working groups will tackle systemic gaps, addressing areas such as legal reforms, incident data monitoring, capacity-building trainings (on adaptive security, self-care, and communications), and the dismantling of educational barriers that inhibit women's public participation.
3. **Systematising High-Level Policy Engagement:** The Alliance will establish structured, periodic briefings for county assemblies and security leaders, providing a nuanced narrative and data on women's experiences and needs. This ensures county strategies, policies, and protocols become genuinely responsive to the threats and realities facing women activists.
4. **Developing a Streamlined Rapid Response Referral Pathway:** To address immediate threats, the network will implement a rapid-response referral system. Modelled on global best practices, this pathway will connect threatened women defenders to specialised, pro bono support, psychosocial care, medical and legal aid, and emergency resources.
5. **Enlisting and Training Community First Responders:** Sustainability and swift intervention will be driven by cultivating a network of trained, empowered community volunteers. These first responders will offer emergency shelter, conflict de-escalation, and deterrence support, bridging the critical gap from crisis onset to the mobilisation of formal support services.
6. Collectively, these initiatives mark a paradigm shift toward building a unified, institutionalised framework, one that supports the safety (Usalama) and growth (Harakati) of the women's movement, securing the space for women's leadership and activism in the face of adversity.

C. Data Visibility & Human Rights Advocacy

Source: Kitui County Needs Assessment, 2023

Signals: 2.1 Data & Evidence | 2.2 Inclusion & Representation

A 2023 needs assessment by the The Hub in Kitui County, in partnership with the Kitui Women, Peace and Security (KWPS) network and other allies, reveals a stark reality: systemic and interlinked barriers fundamentally impede the work, safety, and sustainability of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs).

Key Systemic Barriers

- **Security and Physical Safety:** WHRDs frequently confront immediate threats from hostile communities and influential political actors, some of whom mobilise enforcers to obstruct justice, particularly in sensitive cases of sexual violence, land disputes, and forced evictions. The severe risk is compounded by the total absence of safe houses for survivors or defenders, leaving them exposed after rights violations.
- **Digital and Data Protection Vulnerabilities:** Most WHRDs lack both technical knowledge and infrastructure for data collection and digital security. The absence of strong data protection means vital evidence about issues such as femicide, FGM (notably in Tharaka Ward), and widespread sexual violence is either poorly documented or easily denied by duty bearers. As stated by one defender from Mwingi: “Our data is our defence; if we can’t prove it, they deny it.”
- **Socioeconomic Constraints:** The humanitarian burden on WHRDs is immense. Many struggle with severe psychological stress due to trauma, while pervasive poverty and insufficient resources undermine both their livelihoods and the effectiveness of their advocacy. This leads to intense emotional fatigue and an unsustainable balance between critical community work and personal well-being.
- **Capacity and Movement Sustainability:** The movement suffers from weak or short-lived networks that are often donor-driven and lack sustained coordination. Limited training opportunities and widespread illiteracy further erode the ability of WHRDs and civil society actors to advocate effectively, share knowledge, or build lasting coalitions.



Courtesy Call Governor's Office in Kitui County

WHRD Hub's Visioned Interventions in Kitui

The strategic response of the WHRD Hub is multi-pronged and explicitly aligned to the core needs identified:

- **Capacity Building:** Enhance WHRDs' ability to collect evidence, navigate security threats, and use digital tools by providing tailored training in data protection, digital security, and advocacy strategies. Measurable outcomes include an increase in reported cases of human rights violations and more policy-focused initiatives in Kitui, aimed at curbing corruption and strengthening accountability.
- **Financing and Economic Support:** Address the economic fragility of WHRDs by providing direct financial support and livelihood resources. This approach not only empowers defenders to sustain their community work but also bolsters their resilience and mental health, enabling them to withstand trauma and continue advocating for systemic change.
- **Linkages and Networking:** Foster a culture of sustainable, well-coordinated alliances by supporting long-term networking initiatives, information-sharing platforms, and coalition-building efforts. The aim is to move beyond fragmented, short-lived networks toward robust partnerships that generate quality data and support meaningful community participation in human rights decision-making.

This tested approach ensures WHRDs in Kitui are safer, better supported, and strategically strengthened, paving the way for a resilient and sustainable local movement that can effectively advance human rights. To enhance the impact of women human rights defenders (WHRDs) across Korogocho, Kibra, Kitui, and the coastal region, targeted policy interventions are required. There are significant visibility gaps, particularly affecting rural, Muslim, and disabled defenders, while dominant narratives controlled by mainstream actors often marginalise the lived experiences and knowledge of WHRDs. Moreover, there is a clear underinvestment in essential infrastructure for storytelling, documentation, and evidence collection, which are crucial to movement building.

To address these challenges, policymakers should increase funding for feminist data and storytelling initiatives, including the establishment of documentation labs and media fellowships such as Baraza Media Lab County Labs³. Supporting intergenerational femtorship should be prioritised as a central movement strategy. Policies must also ensure the inclusion and amplification of rural and faith-based WHRD perspectives in national dialogues, commissions, and media platforms. Lastly, integrating a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and providing digital advocacy training within all WHRD Hub programming will be essential for broadening the movement's reach and capacity.

³ Baraza Media Lab Announces Expansion to Mark 5 Years during Baraza@5 commemoration: Baraza Media Lab Announces Expansion to Mark 5 Years of Transforming Media Landscape | Tukio

D. Enhancing Access to Information and Service Delivery for GBV Survivors and Victims in Informal Settlements

Source: Turning Barriers Into Bridges: Enhancing Access To Service Delivery For GBV Survivors Report. Access here [Turning Barriers into Bridges: Enhancing Access to Service Delivery for GBV Survivors](#)

Signals: 2.1 Storytelling & Awareness | 2.2 Inclusion & Representation | 2.3 Intergenerational Femtorship | 2.4 Digital Advocacy

“No, there are major gaps, especially in terms of medical resources and consistent follow-up for mental health support. Survivors are often left without adequate ongoing care after initial assistance.” WHRD-Kisumu

Between 2024 and 2025, the project “Enhancing Access to Information and Service Delivery for GBV Survivors and Victims in Informal Settlements” significantly improved how GBV is understood, documented, and discussed in Nairobi, Meru, and Kisumu. A comprehensive baseline study conducted across the three counties generated critical evidence on survivors’ experiences, awareness levels, service gaps, and referral barriers. The final report, launched and shared during county dialogues and online, expanded public visibility of GBV trends and illuminated the lived realities of women and girls in informal settlements.

In November 2024, through a two-day sensitisation workshop, 15 WHRD first responders strengthened their knowledge of GBV forms, legal frameworks, trauma-informed care, and the role of cultural norms in shaping survivor behaviour. These sessions increased their confidence in documenting cases, speaking publicly about GBV, and engaging communities with clarity and accuracy.

To deepen community awareness, fifteen ward, sub-county, and county-level barazas were convened. These dialogues brought together residents, WHRDs, county officials, police, health workers, NGEK representatives, and community leaders. Participants collectively identified persistent response gaps, including stigma, weak referral pathways, limited shelter availability, and delays in medical and legal processes, while co-creating practical solutions grounded in local realities. Duty bearers publicly committed to strengthening coordination and prioritising GBV reporting.

Cross-county linking sessions held between May and June 2025 further enhanced visibility by enabling first responders to compare cases, share lived experiences, and identify common patterns in GBV reporting and survivor behaviour. Improved documentation emerged as a key achievement, with WHRDs actively monitoring cases involving women, children, and men, illustrating growing trust in community-based responders. Overall, this case study describes how structured evidence generation, public dialogue, and strengthened documentation practices amplified the visibility of GBV in informal settlements. Through their storytelling, monitoring, and community engagement roles, WHRDs ensured that GBV is seen, understood, and increasingly acted upon at community and county levels as a harmful act towards individuals, families, and communities.

PILLAR 3: SUPPORTED – Wellbeing, Livelihoods & Collective Care
No defender should stand alone.

Pillar Overview

The SUPPORTED pillar recognises that no movement can survive if its defenders are exhausted, impoverished, and emotionally broken. The signals focus on:

- 3.1. Institutional Support
- 3.2 Mental Health
- 3.3 Psychosocial Wellbeing
- 3.4 Livelihood Resilience

Climate shocks, economic crises, and relentless exposure to trauma have deepened WHRDs' vulnerability. Yet well-being is still rarely funded or treated as a core protection need.

A. Mental Health Toll of Climate Crisis

County: Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Nakuru

Source: Final Flood Impact Survey, 2024

Signals: 3.1 Institutional Support | 3.3 Wellbeing & Mental Health | 3.4 Livelihood Resilience

After Kenya's floods of 2024, 93% of WHRDs reported mental distress; 92% lost livelihoods. Community networks collapsed in 74% of areas. Women in Meru and Marsabit faced food insecurity and violence during displacement.

With support from the Urgent Action Fund, the Hub conducted a 2024 survey of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in eight counties across Kenya: Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Mombasa, Kisumu, Bomet, Nakuru, and Nairobi's informal settlements. The survey examined the impact of the floods on WHRDs' livelihoods, emotional well-being, and ability to continue advocacy, as well as the broader consequences for the sustainability of human rights work.

The findings revealed that flooding disrupted the primary source of income for an overwhelming 92% of WHRDs, with 77% suffering severe economic losses. Impacts on farming, small businesses, and employment have led to widespread financial instability, threatening food security and local economies, particularly in agricultural areas like Meru, Kitui, and Nakuru. Further compounding this crisis, 65% of WHRDs reported a total loss of property and assets. These results underscore not only the urgent need for recovery interventions but also for policy measures to support WHRDs in rebuilding their livelihoods.

Beyond the economic effects, the report detailed significant obstacles to continued advocacy. Some 38% of respondents were forced to reduce their human rights activities due to the flooding, while 7% had to stop completely. This disruption highlights WHRDs' vulnerability to environmental crises, which tend to exacerbate pre-existing challenges, including financial stress, resource shortages, and threats to personal safety. Notably, 58% of WHRDs reported a marked increase in violence or harassment following the floods, underscoring the need for targeted protection and support.

The importance of well-being for WHRDs cannot be overstated. The survey emphasised the need for prioritising health, especially regular mental health check-ups, to prevent depression that may arise in the line of duty. WHRDs were also encouraged to seek guidance and motivation from mentors with deep experience in women's human rights advocacy, and to support and mentor the next generation of defenders.



Women Peace and Security Summit in Nairobi, Kenya

B. Healing and Solidarity in Nakuru

Source: Nakuru County Needs Assessment, 2023

Signals: 3.2 Peer Support | 3.3 Psychosocial Wellbeing

In Nakuru our engagement with WHRDs since 2023 to date has been built of through an assessment and commemoration of IWDs where they shared their experiences and highlighted how stakeholders can improve engagement with community and WHRDs to ensure elimination of GBV.

The assessment concluded that WHRDs in Nakuru suffered from high levels of burnout and competition, stemming from a lack of resources and the systemic myth that 'women are their own worst enemies,' which is a belief that hinders teamwork and solidarity.

Based on these findings, the WHRDs and survivors collaboratively developed a forward-looking plan focused on strengthening their inner resilience and operational capacity:

- 1. Peer-Led Support Circles:** Establishing peer-led support circles across all 11 sub-counties to foster cohesion and provide self-care as a group, directly addressing the emotional fatigue and competition.

2. **County Safe House Campaign:** Launching a sustained campaign to push for the establishment of a formal County safe house, ensuring tangible physical safety for women escaping immediate danger.
3. **Inclusion and Outreach:** Specific efforts were proposed to ensure the inclusion of PWDs and the Muslim community in all future GBV awareness and support programs, making advocacy intersectional and impactful.
4. **Capacity Building:** Developing training on data security, personal security, and advocacy strategies to equip WHRDs with the best practices necessary to protect themselves and the sensitive data they handle.

The WHRDs were motivated by the goal of holistic engagement, aiming to hold county leaders accountable, agitate for the inclusion of special interest groups in decision-making, and foster effective teamwork and complementary efforts among local defenders.

“We need healing circles as much as we need justice.” – Survivor, Nakuru

C. Emotional Fatigue & Burnout Among WHRDs – Nairobi, Kitui & Meru

Sources: Nairobi Media Sources, Kitui & Meru County Needs Assessments, 2023

Signals: 3.1 Wellbeing | 3.3 Mental Health | 3.4 Peer Support

WHRDs in Nairobi, Kitui and Meru counties reported significant mental distress, insecurity, and high levels of burnout due to the nature of their work. The core drivers of this fatigue stem from their constant exposure to trauma, which includes documenting rampant issues like femicide, defilement, wife-beating, insecurity of WHRDs, FGM, child marriages, and teenage pregnancies. Compounding this trauma is the limited or absent psychosocial support available to them in addition to the current state of human rights deteriorating landscape.

- I. Inadequate capacity to advocate for human rights issues in Kitui County
- II. Inadequate resources - Most WHRDs networks/individuals lack funds to run their activities and follow up on issues identified at the grassroots level
- III. Data privacy issues - A larger percentage of the WHRDs have no data protection mechanisms, hence they always find themselves stuck when they need to access data and also to keep the data they have
- IV. Competing priorities - WHRDs find themselves in a fix, especially in balancing their own social life, such as family and following up on community issues
- V. Psychological Needs - Most WHRDs are unable to handle their post-traumatic experiences, especially if they underwent difficult situations while defending their rights and those of communities
- VI. Lack of political goodwill and impunity - Most of the human rights issues are orchestrated by political bigwigs within the counties, making it hard to advocate on issues.
- VII. Security - Most WHRDs are threatened by hostile communities and even the orchestrators of the violation of human rights. In Kitui, most of them have found themselves in loggerheads with goons mobilised by politicians or people who are rights violators.
- VIII. Lack of safe houses - Kitui has no safe house for those seeking asylum after their rights are violated, even for the WHRDs. This poses a risk to them
- IX. Loose and short-lived networks - most of the WHRD networks in Kitui County are donor-driven, making them short-lived. Most of the networks too have not been coordinated, hence loose.

A major driver of this fatigue is the reality that many defenders operate with competing priorities. As noted in the Kitui assessment, WHRDs often find themselves in a fix, “especially in balancing their own social life, such as family and following up on community issues”. They essentially juggle caregiving, advocacy, and survival work with minimal support, resources, or political goodwill. The assessment highlighted that WHRDs suffer from unaddressed psychological needs, stating, “Most WHRDs are unable to handle their post-traumatic experiences, especially if they underwent difficult situations while defending their rights and those of communities”.



Wellness Training for First Responders

The Overburdened Defender

The WHRDs in these regions face a unique set of challenges that blur the lines between their personal and professional lives:

- **Emotional desensitization to violence and tragedy (Nairobi):** In most discourse and engagement on civic participation and governance it is not strange to hear women from all walks of life highlighting how exhausted it feels to exist in
- **Competing Priorities (Kitui):** Defenders frequently find themselves in a fix, juggling caregiving, advocacy, and survival work, often with inadequate or no support. The Kitui report specifically cited “Competing priorities” where WHRDs struggled with “balancing their own social life, such as family and following up on community issues”.
- **Psychological Needs (Kitui):** Most WHRDs in Kitui reported being “unable to handle their post-traumatic experiences” especially if they underwent difficult situations while defending their rights and those of their communities.
- **Lack of Safe Spaces (Meru):** In Meru, the situation is worsened by the lack of safe infrastructure for those they serve. The report noted that most survivors lack a haven post-GBV as the county lacks operational shelters, especially in Tigania and Igembe regions, which adds pressure on WHRDs to provide informal support. Additionally, the closure of youth-friendly centres was linked to an increase in mental health cases among the youth.

The Hub's Actions and Response

In response to these dire well-being needs, the WHRD Hub initiated targeted support mechanisms focused on collective healing and resilience:

- **Peer Circles and Wellness Retreats:** Organising peer support sessions and wellness retreats to provide WHRDs with safe spaces for emotional release and collective self-care, directly addressing the demand for Peer Support.
- **Trauma Healing Sessions:** Implementing trauma healing sessions to help WHRDs process the secondary trauma associated with their constant exposure to violence and rights violations.
- **Resource Mobilisation:** Working to mobilise resources for the creation of safe spaces and trauma healing sessions to ensure sustained, professional psychosocial support is available.
- **Femntorship and Capacity Building:** Providing capacity building on personal and data security, and advocacy strategies, which indirectly improve wellbeing by making their work safer and more effective.



Wellness Clinic for First Responders

C. Gender Gaps and Reproductive Health Awareness – National Baseline

Source: Gender Baseline Survey, 2024

Signals: 3.2 Institutional Support | 3.3 Health & Rights Awareness

In Kenya, as in the rest of the world, a complex set of social and structural factors drives GBV. Harmful gender norms, which rigidly define and enforce gender roles, and support the right of men over women's bodies and sexuality, perpetuate GBV. Also, a culture of silence around violence against women and girls and acceptance of violence to discipline women and children and settle interpersonal disputes increases the risks of violence and harassment and contributes to a low level or lack of GBV reporting. Further, intersecting axes of inequality gender, poverty, class, age, ethnicity, disability, and others, heighten the risk of GBV for marginalised and vulnerable groups. In Kenya, GBV manifests in various forms, including domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, and other harmful practices. The country has made significant strides in addressing GBV through the development and implementation of robust legal and policy frameworks at both the national and county levels.

The 2010 Constitution of Kenya, along with laws such as the Sexual Offences Act 2006 and the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015, provides a solid legal basis for preventing and responding to GBV. Additionally, national bodies like the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) play a crucial role in promoting gender equality and protecting vulnerable groups. However, the effectiveness of these national frameworks depends significantly on their implementation at the county level.

Kenya has several laws to address gender-based violence (GBV), including:

- ♦ The Constitution of Kenya Guarantees equality, freedom from discrimination, and the right to security and freedom of the person. Article 10 of the Constitution is on the National Values and Principles of Governance. It highlights principles such as equality, equity, inclusiveness, and non-discrimination. These principles provide an anchorage for gender equality
- ♦ The Sexual Offences Act (2006): Defines sexual offences and provides for the investigation and prosecution of crimes.
- ♦ The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015): Addresses domestic violence.
- ♦ The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011): Prohibits female genital mutilation.
- ♦ The Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2011): Addresses trafficking in persons.
- ♦ The National Policy for Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence (2014): Accelerates the implementation of legislation, policies, and programs to prevent and respond to GBV.
- ♦ The Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act (2011) allows married women to confer citizenship on their husbands.
- ♦ Children Act 2022
- ♦ Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act 2025

County governments in Kenya are responsible for contextualising national policies, allocating resources, and ensuring that local laws and practices align with national standards. The three-County baseline “survey on understanding gender-based violence” aims to address the critical issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the three counties. Despite efforts made towards gender equality, GBV remains a persistent challenge in Kenya, affecting women disproportionately. In alignment with the project, Building Communities of Action Towards Ending GBV, this consultancy seeks to enhance community response and policy frameworks to address GBV at both the county and national levels.

The national survey, conducted across three diverse counties: Nairobi, Kitui, and Kwale (using Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions), identified a widespread and alarming lack of awareness concerning both Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Menstrual Health Management (MHM). This deficit was particularly pronounced in rural areas and among women with lower educational attainment, revealing an apparent failure in existing public health and education systems to reach the most vulnerable populations.

Key Data and Statistics from the Survey:

The survey highlighted significant deficiencies in knowledge regarding rights and reporting mechanisms:

- **Awareness of Referral Pathways:** A staggering 85% of respondents in Kwale County reported being unaware of the official reporting and referral pathways for GBV cases. This lack of knowledge is a primary barrier to survivors’ access to justice and institutional support.
- **Knowledge of Laws:**
 - Less than 25% of respondents in Nairobi and less than 10% in Kwale demonstrated adequate knowledge of the specific national laws designed to combat GBV.
 - Similarly, only 12% of respondents in Kitui had adequate knowledge of the existing laws.
- **Access to Information:** In Kitui County, 61% of respondents identified ignorance of the law as a significant barrier to seeking justice.

Furthermore, the study highlighted specific challenges within the health and support systems:

- **Trust in Institutions:** The police force had a moderate trust level of 71.7% across all counties, while Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) were the most trusted actors, with an average trust level of 91.1%.
- **Challenges in Reporting:** Respondents reported that the key barriers to reporting GBV included fear of stigma (30%), the cost of treatment (24%), and the cumbersome nature of reporting mechanisms.

Category	Finding	Percentage
GBV Knowledge	Overall, knowledge of where to report GBV was low among women, with a significant portion not knowing which institutions handle such cases.	24% of respondents did not know where to report GBV cases.
Referral Pathway Knowledge	Knowledge of the referral pathways for GBV survivors was alarmingly low across all counties.	71% of respondents had no knowledge of the GBV referral pathway.
Help-Seeking Behavior	Despite experiencing GBV, many survivors do not seek formal help due to a lack of knowledge and fear.	59% of survivors did not seek help from any institution.
Institutional Trust	Trust in institutions was generally low, indicating a significant hurdle for Institutional Support (Signal 3.2).	28% of respondents did not trust the police.
Menstrual Hygiene Education	Respondents, particularly in rural areas, reported a widespread lack of basic information and education on menstrual health.	25% of respondents stated they have never received education on menstrual hygiene.

These statistics underscore a disconnect: even where legal frameworks exist (Institutional Support), a large majority of women lack the basic awareness required to leverage them (Health & Rights Awareness).

The Baseline Survey concluded that a significant lack of awareness regarding GBV, referral pathways, and reproductive health rights was prevalent, particularly in the rural counties of Kitui and Kwale.

- 1. Knowledge Deficit:** Across the surveyed populations, the baseline established that many women and girls were unable to articulate their rights or accurately identify all forms of GBV, making them vulnerable to exploitation and less likely to seek institutional recourse.
- 2. Victim-Blaming:** The study highlighted that awareness campaigns were desperately needed in Kitui and Kwale to shift attitudes away from victim-blaming and foster open dialogue about GBV, suggesting that the current knowledge environment is poisoned by cultural misinformation.

- 3. Service Gaps (Institutional Support):** The survey's findings revealed a critical capacity gap within formal support systems. It specifically recommended specialised training for support staff in Kitui and Kwale, as well as targeted training for legal, medical, and psychosocial service providers to enhance their capacity to respond effectively to survivors.

The widespread lack of knowledge regarding rights, health, and reporting mechanisms severely compromises women's ability to seek justice and undermines the work of WHRDs. The study found that while media and social media were primary sources of general information, direct, localised outreach by WHRDs is essential to overcome cultural silencing.

The insights strongly emphasised the need for a programmatic shift, specifically to link reproductive health education directly to WHRD-led outreach. The high trust in CHVs and WHRDs suggests that integrating rights education into grassroots health awareness campaigns, such as those addressing menstrual hygiene and reproductive rights, is the most effective way to counter community silence and to build institutional support from the bottom up.

Institutional and CSO Recommendations: Call for WHRD-Led Education

The survey's findings directly led to targeted recommendations to fill the knowledge gap:

- 1. Government Action:** The government was advised to focus on developing and implementing specialised training programs for legal, medical, and psychosocial support providers, particularly in Kitui and Kwale, to ensure they can respond effectively.
- 2. CSO Action:** Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were urged to lead targeted educational outreach. The survey's recommendations for Community Service Organisations (CSOs) reflected this need for grassroots action:
 - **Targeted Educational Outreach:** In Nairobi, the focus was placed on programs for younger community members to sustain prevention efforts.
 - **Local Media Utilisation:** In Kitui, the report recommended utilising local media, such as TV and radio, for outreach, acknowledging the difficulty of relying solely on digital platforms in rural settings.
 - **Broadening Outreach:** In Kwale, the recommendation was to expand beyond social media to reach broader audiences and counter misinformation, indicating that a significant portion of the population remains outside digital advocacy channels.

A Community Trainer from Nakuru summarised the core challenge, stating: "You can't fight for rights you don't know exist." This emphasises that advocacy must begin with foundational rights and health education to empower women to recognise their entitlements and demand them safely. The baseline study strongly emphasised the need for WHRDs to be the primary drivers in linking reproductive health education with localised GBV awareness initiatives, effectively translating national policies into grassroots action.

PILLAR 4: STRENGTHENED

Building power for sustainable change.

Pillar Overview

The STRENGTHENED pillar examines how WHRDs transition from individual resistance to sustainable, intersectional power. It encompasses

- 4.1 inclusive leadership,
- 4.2 movement building,
- 4.3 capacity development,
- 4.4 Institutional resilience and policy change,
- 4.5 cultural transformation.

1. Disability-Inclusive Advocacy – Kiengu, Meru County

Source: Kiengu Women Challenged to Challenge (KWCC) Profile

Signals: 4.1 Inclusive Leadership | 4.2 Movement Building

Founded in 2009 by women with disabilities (WwDs), KWCC emerged from a context of “double invisibility”: mainstream women’s movements often directed them toward disability spaces, while disability spaces redirected them back to women’s organizations. The founder of KWCC stated, “We were invisible in women’s spaces and disability forums alike, so we built our own.” KWCC’s approach includes economic empowerment through table banking and merry-go-rounds, advocacy against gender-based violence focused on women and girls with disabilities, policy lobbying for inclusive services and accountability, reducing stigma and self-denial to enable WwDs to claim public space, and ensuring that children with disabilities have access to education and healthcare. Despite facing complex legal frameworks and resource constraints, KWCC demonstrates the power of intersectional, disability-led advocacy.

2. Institutional Strengthening and Intersectional Safety – Regional (Hivos Project)

Source: Hivos Bi-Annual Narrative, 2024

Signals: 4.3 Capacity Development | 4.4 Institutional Resilience

Through a partnership with Hivos, the Hub provided safety, security, and wellbeing capacity support to 17 We Lead grantees across Kenya, Uganda, and Niger, focusing on marginalized groups such as LGBTQ+ individuals, women and girls living with HIV, displaced persons, and persons with disabilities. The project recognized that risks are tripled for vulnerable defenders due to intersecting identities, repressive laws like Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Law and proposed Kenyan anti-LGBTQ+ bills, and social hostility. Key outcomes included conducting security assessments and audits in Kenya and Uganda, delivering a week-long training on safety and well-being for Kenyan grantees, providing counselling services for individuals and groups, developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) to mainstream safety and well-being institutionally, and establishing regional linkages with organizations such as Defend Defenders and the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Uganda. Challenges such as reliance on overburdened national organizations and mistrust surrounding wellness surveys were addressed through a bottom-up approach that engaged grassroots grantees directly and integrated wellness education into security training. As one defender remarked, “Safety isn’t just physical; it’s also emotional and systemic.”

3. Pastoralist Women Resisting FGM – Marsabit County

Source: Marsabit Report, 2023

Signals: 4.2 Movement Building | 4.5 Cultural Transformation

In Marsabit, WHRDs working with the Pastoralist People’s Initiative (PPI) confront FGM within communities where it is a central cultural pillar. The work carries significant risks, including ostracism, social exile, threats of violence, cases dropped due to bribery, and government failure to fund GBV and FGM sensitisation programs. One survivor-turned-defender described rescuing a girl from cutting, facing exile, and later gaining protection from the WHRD Hub and partners. Over time, she witnessed a profound shift, saying, “They called me a traitor. Now, they call me ‘Mama Rescue.’” The Marsabit workshop strengthened solidarity and mentorship, increased media visibility, and publicly reaffirmed the defenders’ commitment to never remaining silent in the face of human rights violations.



Intergenerational Conversation in Marsabit County

4. Building Sustainable Networks – Meru & Kitui

Sources: Meru & Kitui Needs Assessments

Signals: 4.1 Movement Building | 4.3 Institutional Strength | 4.5 Policy Advocacy

WHRDs in Meru and Kitui emphasized the importance of developing stronger networks and coalitions, gaining political goodwill, and fostering constructive relationships with local authorities. Continuous femtorship and capacity building were also highlighted. The Hub facilitates collaboration among community gatekeepers, media, and community-based organizations to coordinate responses to human rights violations, share resources and strategies, and amplify the voices of rural defenders at both county and national levels. One WHRD remarked, “When networks are strong, we don’t burn out, we build out.”

5. Gender-Sensitive Policing & Accountability – National Level

Source: Finance Bill Protests, 2024

Signals: 4.2 Legal Accountability | 4.3 Policy Change

During the protests against the Finance Bill, the Hub’s intervention extended beyond documentation to include advocacy for legal compliance and gender-sensitive policing. The Hub cited Article 22(i) of the National Police Service Act, which mandates special protection for vulnerable groups and requires that women be arrested by female officers, where possible. It condemned excessive force, sexualized violence, and illegal arrest procedures and highlighted how the leaderless nature of the Gen Z movement increased protesters’ exposure to risk due to limited organisational experience. Results included establishing Police–Civil Society Dialogue Forums to foster ongoing accountability and developing WHRD Safety Guidelines for public mobilisations, which inform both defenders and police practices. Nonetheless, the digital space remains a frontier of impunity, with rising online harassment, doxxing, and legal threats prompting some WHRDs to self-censor.

Cross-Cutting Analysis & Recommendations

Trends indicate that intersectional, locally rooted leadership, represented by Women with Disabilities (WWDs), Muslim WHRDs, pastoralist women, and LGBTQ+ advocates, is transforming the movement. Policy gains such as dialogue forums, guidelines, and recognition of femicide remain fragile without deeper institutional change and resources. Strong, coordinated networks are identified as the best defence against burnout, isolation, and targeted attacks.

Recommendations include formalizing county-level WHRD alliances with clear mandates and strategic plans, investing in leadership academies and femtorship pipelines, supporting cross-border and cross-county protection networks to address transgeographical risks, and backing strategic law and policy reforms related to policing, digital rights, femicide, and WHRD protection.

Legal Framework Expansions in 2024- 2025

How Emerging Reforms Shape Protection, Participation, and Civic Space for WHRDs.



Africa Union

In celebrated efforts over the past decade following the 2013 UN Resolution on the Protection of Women Human Rights Defenders A/RES/68/181⁴, which promotes the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, there has been a focus on protecting women human rights defenders and urging States to publicly recognise the vital and legitimate role they play in promoting and safeguarding human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and development. This is considered an essential element of ensuring their protection, including by publicly condemning violence and discrimination against women human rights defenders. The African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG), adopted in February 2025, now explicitly defines Women and Girls Human Rights Defenders.

“Women and Girls Human Rights Defender” means a national of a State Party who, individually or in association with others, acts or seeks to promote, realise, and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

The Hub warmly welcomes these positive legal changes that will enhance support and recognition for WHRDs’ efforts and work across our countries in Africa.

National Level Changes

Kenya’s legal and policy landscape experienced important shifts between 2024 and 2025. While the country continues to rely on the strong constitutional and statutory frameworks enacted over the past two decades including the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Sexual Offences Act (2006), the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (amendment 2025), and the National Police Service Act new legislative developments have begun to reshape the operating environment for civil society and, by extension, Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs).

This chapter highlights the most relevant legal expansions, policy debates, and systemic challenges affecting WHRDs during the reporting period.

4 <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/68/181>

1. The Operationalisation of the Public Benefit Organisations (PBO) Act (May 2024)

After eleven years in legislative limbo, the PBO Act, 2013 officially came into force on May 14, 2024, replacing the outdated NGO Coordination Act of 1990. This is one of the most significant changes to Kenya's civil society regulatory environment in over a decade. It has been challenged in the Kenyan courts on grounds of mandatory re-registration and automatic registration of existing registered organisations in the case of David Calleb Otieno & Others v. Attorney General & Others (Petition No. E519 of 2024), which found the Act unconstitutional. Implications for WHRDs and Women-Led Organisations

- Grants PBOs access to personal data, tax incentives, and potential government support.
- Requiring NGOs registered under the old system to transition within one year (by May 13, 2025).
- Introduces stronger governance and accountability obligations for organizations.

Emerging Concerns

Despite the strengthened regulatory framework, 2024 also saw intensified state scrutiny of civil society organizations, including accusations that 16 NGOs used foreign funding to support the 2024 Finance Bill protests. This demonstrates that regulatory improvements coexist, increasing the risks of weaponized compliance against WHRDs and advocacy groups.

2. Tax Reforms Affecting Civil Society Financing (December 2024)

The Tax Laws Amendment Act, 2024, expanded the Income Tax Act's definition of "donation" to include grants. It exempts the income earned by non-resident contractors, sub-contractors, consultants or employees involved in the implementation of a project financed through a one-hundred per cent grant under an agreement between the Government and a development partner, provided that the person (the non-resident contractors, sub-contractors, consultants or employees) maintains their status as non-residents for the tenure of the agreement. Any other income earned by the non-resident person not directly related to the project shall be subject to tax.

Implication and Why This Matters for WHRD Networks and Organisations

- a) This amendment promotes the inclusion of foreign expertise and resources in development projects. This measure reduces the financial burden on development partners and ensures that funds allocated to such costs and projects are used effectively for their intended purposes, rather than being reduced by tax obligations.
- b) It clarifies that grants are not regarded as taxable income, resolving previous uncertainties. This reform enhances the economic security of PBOs and WHRD-led groups for international cooperation with non-Kenyan residents based in Kenya, especially for organisations that often operate on limited budgets.

3. Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terror Financing Amendments (June 2025)

On June 17, 2025, amendments to Kenya's AML/CTF framework were signed into law. These modified several statutes, including the newly operationalised PBO Act and the [Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act \(POCAMLA\)](#). This requires NGOs to conduct risk assessments, implement internal controls, and comply with mandatory reporting requirements to bodies such as the [Financial Reporting Centre \(FRC\)](#). The changes also include enhanced oversight, mandatory risk-based due diligence, stricter record-keeping, and potential sanctions for non-compliance.

Risks and Impact on WHRDs

The changes introduce stricter reporting obligations for civil society organisations, encompassing additional operational and governance requirements. Failure to comply can lead to significant penalties, including fines, asset freezes, and other sanctions. These measures may place an undue burden on grassroots women human rights defenders (WHRD) collectives that often have limited knowledge and administrative capacity. Furthermore, there is a risk of misuse, in which legitimate advocacy efforts could be falsely portrayed as suspicious activities by actors aiming to discredit non-profits. This is especially concerning given that WHRDs who mobilise communities around protests, LGBTQ+ rights, and gender-based violence already face increased surveillance.

Persistent Gaps: The Unadopted Human Rights Defenders Protection Policy in Kenya

The 2019 National Gender and Development Policy emphasises the protection of human rights defenders as a vital step toward achieving gender equality. However, to-date Kenya currently lacks a comprehensive legal framework to support and safeguard human rights defenders as individuals on the frontlines. The development and enactment of national legislation to promote and protect the work of human rights defenders, including women, is recognised as a best practice. Despite Kenya's 2022 commitment to establish a formal Human Rights Defenders (HRD) Protection Policy, no such framework has been officially adopted as of 2025.

Existing protections remain fragmented:

- KNCHR developed a Model HRD Policy and Action Plan in 2017, but it has not been implemented.
- The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders has repeatedly sought a country mission, which is still pending.
- WHRD-specific protections, such as gender-sensitive policing protocols, remain inconsistently applied.
- The lack of a binding HRD protection framework continues to expose WHRDs to harassment, reprisals, and arbitrary policing.

Gender Equality Reform Processes (2024–2025)

In April 2024, UN Women Kenya and the International Development Law Organisation released the report “Strengthening Gender Equality Before the Law”, mapping discriminatory provisions in Kenyan legislation.

It was found that:

Kenyan women currently enjoy only 81% of the legal rights available to men. There are several gaps which remain in:

- The Marriage Act (2014)
- The Matrimonial Property Act
- The Law of Succession Act
- The Health (Amendment) Bill, 2025, proposes to create an offence for detaining patients in hospitals with outstanding fees and to develop regulations for the recovery of outstanding hospital charges. While this is a commendable and progressive step, we urge that any resulting regulations be developed through meaningful public participation and reflect the realities of women, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, when accessing maternal health services. The regulatory framework must be sensitive to socio-economic barriers and designed to enhance access to care, not restrict it.

Persistent inequalities in access to public health-maternal health, inheritance, marital property, guardianship and family relations continue to disadvantage women.

Ongoing Reform Efforts

- The Kenya Law Reform Commission is developing recommendations and draft amendments.
- Legal practitioners' forums in 2025 focused heavily on family law reform.
- National and county stakeholders are working toward the "Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030" agenda.
- The Health (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aims to establish an offence for detaining women patients in hospitals over unpaid fees and to formulate regulations regarding the recovery of outstanding hospital charges. While this represents a progressive step, it is essential that the development of these regulations involves meaningful public participation and considers the realities faced by women, especially those from low-income backgrounds, when accessing maternal health services. The regulatory framework should be sensitive to socio-economic barriers and aimed at enhancing, rather than restricting, access to care.

These reform processes intersect directly with WHRD advocacy, particularly around GBV, economic justice, land rights, and equality in public life.

Continued Relevance of Core Constitutional and Statutory Protections

Throughout 2024–2025, the most consistent reference point for WHRD protection remains the 2010 Constitution, especially:

Article 29 (Freedom from violence, torture, cruel and inhuman treatment)

Article 37 (Freedom of assembly and demonstration)

Article 48 (Access to justice)

However, the Finance Bill protests of 2024 sharply exposed the gap between legal guarantees and state practice, with systemic breaches. The National Police Service Act and the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2025) were frequently misapplied, creating new risks for WHRDs, particularly those engaged in online activism and protest documentation.

Implementation Gaps and Chilling Effects

Despite progressive legal frameworks, implementation remains inconsistent and, at times, hostile. The mismatch between legal protections and lived experience remains one of the most significant challenges facing WHRDs in Kenya.

Priorities Moving Into 2026–2027 for The Hub and Overall WHRD Work in Kenya.

To strengthen WHRD protection within Kenya's evolving legal landscape, the following priorities emerge:

- I. Adopt the Constitution of Kenya as part of the new education system in learning modules as part of holistic protection, civic and voter education.
- II. Adopt a practical community-led national HRD Protection Policy with gender-specific provisions.
- III. Ensure fair implementation of the PBO Act without punitive overregulation.
- IV. Advance family law reforms to eliminate discriminatory provisions affecting women and girls.
- V. Expand county-level protection mechanisms, including rapid response frameworks.
- VI. Monitor AML and PBO compliance burdens to prevent administrative harassment of WHRD organisations.
- VII. Strengthen accountability frameworks (IPOA, KNCHR, ODPP) for police conduct.
- VIII. Align digital safety reforms with WHRD realities, including device-seizure protocols and protections against online harassment.

Conclusion

The period from 2023 to 2025 marks an inflection point for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Kenya. Across legal, political, economic, and social spheres, the environment has shifted in meaningful ways: the long-delayed operationalisation of the PBO Act, renewed public conversations on civic space, emerging funding reforms, and growing visibility of community-based organising all signal steps toward a more enabling environment.

But progress has not come without contradiction.

Despite stronger laws, more national conversations, and heightened institutional commitments, WHRDs continue to operate in a landscape defined by structural impunity, deeply gendered threats, stigma, and uneven access to justice and services. For many defenders, especially those working in informal settlements, rural counties, or on politically sensitive issues, the gap between rights “on paper” and rights “in practice” remains wide.

The insights throughout this report underscore a critical truth: laws and policies alone cannot protect WHRDs. Real safety and resilience require cultural change, institutional accountability, and political will that affirms women’s leadership as essential and not optional to Kenya’s democratic and social progress.

Looking across the data, case studies, and county-level experiences, four interconnected needs consistently emerge. WHRDs must be:

- ♦ **SAFE** — protected from violence, threats, and retaliation;
- ♦ **SEEN** — recognised, legitimised, and valued in their communities and institutions;
- ♦ **SUPPORTED** — equipped with resources, networks, and systems that enable their work; and
- ♦ **STRENGTHENED** — empowered to lead, organise, and transform their contexts sustainably.

These Four Pillars form the backbone of an ecosystem that allows WHRDs not merely to survive threats, but to thrive, lead, and shape change.

As Kenya moves into the next phase of reform; legally, civically, technologically, and socially, the imperative is clear: the voices and lived experiences of WHRDs must guide the path forward. Transformative change will depend on sustained advocacy, cross-sector coordination, and a national commitment to building a society where women defenders are not only protected but celebrated as drivers of justice, accountability, and inclusive development.

ANNEXES

Key Resources

1. Core Legal Frameworks

- ♦ Constitution of Kenya (2010) – Article 10 , Article 27 , Article 29 , Article 37 , Article 48 Constitution of Kenya - Nairobi
- ♦ Sexual Offences Act (2006) Sexual Offences Act
- ♦ Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015) Protection Against Domestic Violence Act
- ♦ Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011) PROHIBITION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION ACT
- ♦ Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2011) Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act
- ♦ Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2025) Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act, 2025
- ♦ National Police Service Act (2011) National Police Service Act
- ♦ Kenya Citizenship & Immigration Act (2011)—Gender equality provisions Kenya Citizenship & Immigration Act 2011
- ♦ Penal Code – Morality provisions affecting SOGIE WHRDs (link)

2. Legal & Policy Developments (2024–2025)

- ♦ Public Benefit Organisations (PBO) Act (Operationalised May 2024) Public Benefits Organisations Act
- ♦ Tax Laws Amendment Act, 2024 – Grant taxation clarification Tax Laws Amendment Act, 2024
- ♦ AML/CTF Amendments (June 2025) Anti-Money Laundering and Combating of Terrorism Financing Laws (Amendment) Act, 2025
- ♦ UN Women & IDLO Report: “Strengthening Gender Equality Before the Law” (2024) Strengthening gender equality in law: Mapping discriminatory laws against women and girls in Kenya | Publications | UN Women – Africa
- ♦ KNCHR Model HRD Policy (2017) Model Human Rights Defenders Policy and Action Plan

3. Regional & International Instruments

- ♦ Maputo Protocol (African Union) Maputo Protocol on Women’s Rights
- ♦ UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998) The Declaration on human rights defenders in different languages | OHCHR
- ♦ CEDAW Convention Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- ♦ UN WHRD Guidelines PROTECTION OF WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS

4. Oversight & Accountability Institutions

- ♦ Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
- ♦ Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) The Independent Policing Oversight Authority
- ♦ National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) the National Gender and Equality Commission

- ♦ Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- ♦ National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) National Council on the Administration of Justice
- ♦ Court Users Committees (CUCs) Court Users Committees – National Council on the Administration of Justice

5. WHRD Hub Reports & Community Data Sources

- ♦ Finance Bill Protests Documentation (2024) Finance Bill Protest 2024
- ♦ Femicide Campaign Documentation (2024) Urgent Call to Action on the Alarming Rise in Femicide and Systemic GBV Issues in Kenya

Reach out to WHRD Hub for the following reports.

- ♦ Turning Barriers into Bridges Baseline (2025) Reach out to WHRD Hub.
- ♦ County Needs Assessments (2023): Meru, Kitui, Nakuru, Kibra, Korogocho
- ♦ Final Flood Impact Survey (2024) Report Launch: Livelihood and Well-Being Impacts of the Recent Climate Crisis and Flooding in Kenya for WHRDs
- ♦ National GBV Baseline Survey: Nairobi, Kitui, Kwale (2024)
- ♦ Policy Brief: Creating a Gender Equitable & Inclusive Response to GBV in Kenya

6. WHRD Networks & Partners

- ♦ Muslim Women Advancement of Rights and Protection (MWARP) Muslims Women Advancement Of Rights And Protections (MWARP)
- ♦ Pastoralist People's Initiative (PPI) Patoralist Peoples' Initiative
- ♦ Kiengu Women Challenged to Challenge (KWCC) KienguWcc
- ♦ Woman Beyond Borders (Kibra) (link) <https://whrdhub.org/nairobi/>
- ♦ Defenders Coalition – Kenya Defenders Coalition
- ♦ Urgent Action Fund–Africa (UAF-Africa) Urgent Action Fund-Africa
- ♦ Hivos – We Lead Program We Lead Manifesto - Hivos

7. Secondary Monitoring & Analysis

- ♦ CIVICUS Monitor – Kenya Kenya - Civicus Monitor
- ♦ Freedom House – Kenya Country Report <https://freedomhouse.org/country/kenya>
- ♦ KNCHR Protest Monitoring Briefs Statement on the 25th June 2025 Demonstrations
- ♦ IPOA Use-of-Force Reports <https://www.ipoa.go.ke/frontAssets/uploads/resources/1723535912130824.pdf>
- ♦ UN Women VAWG Data Resources Resources | UN Women Data Hub Global database on Violence against Women and Girls

[ENDS]

OUR PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful to all our partners for their continued support. As we look ahead to 2026, we remain firmly committed to this work and to the communities that make it possible



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