



26th November 2013

PRESS STATEMENT

TO ALL MEDIA HOUSES

A CALL FOR A PUBLIC, OBJECTIVE AND REFORM ORIENTED POLICE VETTING EXERCISE

- We, the undersigned governance and human rights organizations working under the auspices of the Police Reforms Working Group-Kenya (PRWG-K) wish to draw the attention of Kenyans to the process of vetting all police officers that was launched by the National Police Service Commission (Commission) yesterday. From the onset we wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to the commission and the family of the late commissioner Esther Colombini who until her untimely death yesterday was the Vice Chairperson of the NPSC.
- We wish to commend the National Police Service Commission for concluding the development of the vetting tools and regulations and initiating the police vetting process; an exercise that has been long overdue. It is worth noting that we have collaborated with the Commission especially in development and validation of the vetting tools and regulations and wish to commend the Commission for stakeholder in the overall process this far.
- For over 50 years now, policing in Kenya has mainly being centered on protecting the state at the expense of public safety and security.
- As such we wish to remind Kenyans that this is a golden opportunity to restore professionalism and public confidence in the Service. It is an opportunity that as a country, we can either choose to seize and transform national policing or forever mourn an incompetent and unprofessional service. For the first time the country has a realistic opportunity to realign policing towards public safety and security.

- The Police Reforms Working Group-Kenya has set up a Vetting Secretariat to:
 - Support the public and police officers to understand how to submit their information to the National Police Service Commission;
 - To monitor the vetting process in Nairobi and all counties
 - To collect, collate and submit information on individual police officers to the National Police Service Commission;

The Police Reforms Working Group can be contacted on **0734 520 500** and policevetting@gmail.com

Until 7th December 2013, all Kenyans, including police officers, have an opportunity to submit information and evidence on any of the **32 police officers** whose names were published in the newspapers on 23rd and 24th November 2013 respectively who:

- a) Has been involved in gross human rights violations including indiscriminate or extrajudicial executions, torture, illegal or arbitrary arrest and detention, and gender based violence
- b) Has been implicated in corruption, corrupt dealings and economic crimes
- c) Has, in the course of his service to Kenyans contravened any provision of Chapter six of the Constitution on leadership and integrity;
- d) Names of Officers in charge of police stations where gross human rights violations have taken place or continue to take place during their tenure;
- e) Has been involved in gross negligence of duty, including failing to act on requests for intervention by members of the public, resulting in escalation of crime or harm to individuals or groups

- We wish to assure police officers and Kenyans in general that we remain vigilant to ensure the vetting process is neither a **whitewash** to deceive the country nor a **witch hunt** to punish or victimize any innocent police officer. We wish to remind individual police officers that during this process they also have an opportunity and indeed a moral obligation to submit any credible information about their colleagues that can enrich the vetting process and guarantee its success.
- Article 7of the NPSA 2011 provides for vetting of all (approximately 77,000 serving police officers to ascertain their 'Competence and Suitability' to continue serving in the National Police Service (the Service) and to discontinue from the service any officer who fails in the vetting. Whereas we appreciate the commencement of this process we would like to

mention that police vetting as provided for in law should have been initiated two years ago upon the enactment of the National Police Service Act (NPSA) of 2011.

- We are alive to the many partisan interests, sideshows and self-serving political opinions that have bogged the police vetting process this far. As such we undertake to work with stakeholders against anyone bent on scuttling this noble exercise. We wish to remind the Commission as the body constitutionally mandated to undertake police vetting that history will judge them harshly if the process was to flop or a whitewash
- Finally, we wish to remind Kenyans that achievement of police reforms will be a long process that all of us must be prepared to take part in. The vetting process, a critical component of police reforms, is envisaged to take up to two years. As such we reiterate our call to Kenyans to remain vigilant to ensure the dream of a reformed and professional National Police Service becomes a reality. The PRWG-K commits to support the process, remain vigilant, monitor and continue to advocate for and support comprehensive security sector reforms to realize a reformed, transformed and service-oriented National Police Service.

Signed:



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Peter Kiama
Executive Director
Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU)

On behalf of the PRWG-K

- Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
- International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ-K)
- International Commission of Jurists –Kenya (ICJ-K)
- Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
- Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)
- Rights Promotion and Protection Centre (RPP)
- Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA-K)
- Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW)
- Centre for Minority Rights (CEMIRIDE)
- National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (NCHRD)
- Kenyans For Peace, Truth and Justice (KPTJ)