



# Commonwealth Lawyers Association

## **Statement in solidarity with the victims of police brutality in Kenya following public demonstrations over the cost of living**

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) strongly condemns the brutal use of force by the police service in Kenya following the recent protests that arose over the rising cost of living in Kenya. It is clear from several media reports and other sources that the Kenyan police service have used excessive force against civilians resulting in severe injury and even loss of life. Article 37 of the Kenyan constitution guarantees that “every person has the right, peaceably and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket, and to present petitions to public authorities”. This right must be upheld and respected by those in authority. The Kenyan police service also has a duty to maintain law and order without using excessive force against civilians.

In a wider international context, the CLA notes that Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states as follows:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.”

Freedom of assembly is a cornerstone of any democracy. The CLA is gravely concerned about the acts of aggression by the Kenyan police and wishes to stand in solidarity with all the victims of police brutality in Kenya following the protests. Subsequently, the CLA urges the Kenyan government to -

- **Respect the right to freedom of assembly;**
- **Ensure that the Kenyan police force immediately desists from using excessive force against unarmed civilians;**
- **Bear in mind that the people are at the heart of any democracy and they must be engaged respectfully;**
- **Take appropriate action against all the members of the police service who committed criminal acts against Kenyan citizens. The police uniform should not provide protection against accountability; and**
- **Uphold the Kenyan Constitution, in particular Article 37, and the rule of law at all times.**

**Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)**

**26<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

The **Commonwealth Lawyers Association** is an international non-profit organisation which exists to promote and maintain the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth by ensuring that an independent and efficient legal profession, with the highest standards of ethics and integrity, serves the people of the Commonwealth. [commonwealthlawyers.com](http://commonwealthlawyers.com)