



## **Statement regarding protests and unrest in Kenya on Saba Saba Day, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

The 7<sup>th</sup> of July is known in Kenya as Saba Saba Day. It recalls the day in 1990 when demonstrators took to the streets to demand fair elections. 20 demonstrators were killed, thousands injured, and many were arrested and charged.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 demonstrators again took to the streets. It is imperative to note that demonstration is a lawful activity expressly enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya in Article 37, which states:

**“Every person has the right, peaceably and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket, and to present petitions to public authorities.”**

Article 33 of the Constitution recognises that:

**“Every person has the right to freedom of expression”**

These are fundamental liberties that are guaranteed under the Constitution of Kenya and are to be respected by the authorities in Kenya.

On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025, the authorities set up roadblocks and deployed heavily armed police across the country. Widespread clashes with demonstrators occurred, and according to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) 31 people were killed, 107 injured, 532 were arrested and 2 recorded enforced disappearances.<sup>1</sup>

The Law Society of Kenya (LSK), jointly with the Police Reforms Working Group, issued a Statement on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025, highlighting the abject failure of the police to engage with the organisers of demonstrations, facilitate the demonstrations, publicise their proposed actions regarding routes and to act proportionately. Dereliction of duties by the police, or the abuse of police powers, must not be condoned or tolerated. It is a blight on the rule of law that deserves to be condemned. It is commendable that the LSK has again assumed an important role in speaking out to support the freedoms granted under the Constitution of Kenya and has courageously highlighted the failures of the policing approach to Saba Saba demonstrations.

Kenya is a member of the Commonwealth and has accepted the terms of the Commonwealth Charter. Article 7 states:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.knchr.org/Articles/ArtMID/2432/ArticleID/1232/Update-on-the-Saba-Saba-2025-Demonstrations>

**“We believe in the rule of law as an essential protection for the people of the Commonwealth and as an assurance of limited and accountable government.”**

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) supports the Law Society of Kenya and commends its measured statement highlighting policing obligations and the freedoms of assembly and expression.

The CLA calls upon the authorities in Kenya:

- to respect and uphold the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution.
- to adhere to Kenya’s international obligations;
- to ensure that policing is carried out proportionately and in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation and
- at all times to uphold and support the rule of law.

**Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)**

**14<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

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